

T.C.
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES



**THE IMPACT OF ONLINE CONSUMER REVIEWS ON ONLINE HOTEL
BOOKING INTENTION**

MASTER'S THESIS

Yiğit Can GÜLER

Department of Business
Business Administration Program

December,2021

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December,2021

ONAY FORMU



DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the research “The Impact Of Online Consumer Reviews On Online Hotel Booking Intention” that I submitted as a Master’s thesis represents my own work and all stages of the study were carried out without any assistance contrary to scientific ethics and traditions. I further declare that the sources benefited writing of the thesis are from those shown in the References. This thesis has not previously formed the basis of any award of any degree, diploma or other similar title of recognition. (22.12.2021)

Yiğit Can GÜLER

FOREWORD

First of all, I feel very fortunate to have Doç. Dr. Farid Hüseyinov as my supervisor and I would like to express my endless thanks to him for guiding me at every stage of the study in a patient and effective manner and support to concentrate me when I did not believe in myself.

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Yiğit Can GÜLER

THE IMPACT OF ONLINE CONSUMER REVIEWS ON ONLINE HOTEL BOOKING INTENTION

ABSTRACT

People take into account other individuals' opinions and comments when shopping online. This is particularly prominent in service sectors such as hotels that do not sell a tangible product. This study has investigated that the characteristics of online consumer reviews which are influencing consumers' perceived credibility and online hotel booking intention. There are nine factors in this model. Two out of these nine factors are dependent variables (Perceived credibility and online hotel booking intention). A self-administrated online questionnaire was conducted, and data were collected from 204 participants. In this study, it was found that positive and negative reviews positively influence perceived credibility of online consumer reviews. In addition, review volume and perceived credibility of online consumer reviews was found to have a positive impact on online hotel booking intention. However, review volume, review source, reviews quality, review consistency and review recency were not found to have any impact on perceived credibility of online consumer reviews.

Keywords: Online Consumer Reviews; Online Hotel Booking; Booking Intention; Tourism; Online Consumer Behavior



ÇEVİRİM İÇİ TÜKETİCİ DEĞERLENDİRMELERİNİN ÇEVİRİM İÇİ OTEL REZERVASYONU YAPMA NİYETİNE ETKİSİ

ÖZET

İnsanlar çevrim içi alışveriş yaparken diğer bireylerin yorumlarına ve görüşlerine önem vermektedirler. Bu durum özellikle oteller gibi somut bir ürün satmayan hizmet sektörlerinde daha belirgindir. Bu çalışma, tüketicilerin algılanan güvenilirliğini ve çevrimiçi otel rezervasyonu yapma niyetini etkileyen çevrim içi tüketici değerlendirmelerinin özelliklerini araştırmıştır. Çalışmanın modelinde dokuz faktör vardır. Bu dokuz faktörlerden ikisi bağımlı değişkenlerdir (Algılanan güvenilirlik ve çevrimiçi otel rezervasyon niyeti). Çalışma için veriler, anket yöntemiyle ve 204 katılımcıdan toplanmıştır. Bu çalışmada, olumlu ve olumsuz incelemelerin çevrim içi tüketici değerlendirmelerinin algılanan güvenilirliğini olumlu yönde etkilediği bulunmuştur. Ayrıca, çevrim içi tüketici değerlendirmelerinin miktarının ve çevrim içi tüketici değerlendirmelerinin algılanan güvenilirliğinin, çevrimiçi otel rezervasyonu niyetini olumlu etkilediği bulunmuştur. Ancak çevrim içi tüketici değerlendirmelerinin miktarının, kaynağının, kalitesinin, tutarlılığının ve güncelliğinin, çevrim içi tüketici değerlendirmelerinin algılanan güvenilirliği üzerinde herhangi bir etkisi bulunmamıştır.

Keywords: Çevrim İçi Tüketici Değerlendirmeleri; Çevrim içi Otel Rezervasyonu ; Rezervasyon Niyeti; Turizm ; Çevrim içi Tüketici Davranışı



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ABBREVIATIONS

AMOS	: Analysis of a Moment Structures
ASTA	: American Travel Agencies Association
AVE	: Average Variance Extracted
CFA	: Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	: Comparative Fit Index
CMIN / DF	: Minimum Discrepancy Per Degree of Freedom
CR	: Composite Reliability
CRS	: Central Reservation Systems
EWOM	: Electronic Word of Mouth
EWOMs	: Electronic Word of Mouth Systems
GDS	: Global Distribution Systems
IBM	: International Business Machines Corporation
ICT	: Internet Communication Technologies
IFI	: Incremental Fit Index
IHA	: International Hotel Association
INT	: Online Hotel Booking Intention
NR	: Negative Reviews
OTA	: Online Travel Agencies
PC	: Perceived Credibility of Online Consumer Reviews
PR	: Positive Reviews
RC	: Review Consistency
RMSEA	: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
RQ	: Review Quality

sRR	: Review Recency
RS	: Review Source
RV	: Review Volume
S.E.	: Standart Equation
SEM	: Structural Equational Model
SPSS	: Statistical Package for the Social Science
SRMR	: Standardized Root Mean Square Residual
TL	: Turkish Lira
TLI	: Tucker-Lewis Index
UFTAA	: World Federation of Travel Agencies Associations
USA	: United States of America
USD	: United States Dollar
WOM	: Word of Mouth

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of The Problem

The rise of new technologies such as the broadband internet and Web 2.0, have swiftly increased the numbers of consumer-generated social media platforms and enabled consumers to express their feelings and opinions. Consumers share their opinions about a product, service or brand with other consumers, through various platforms over the internet. Thus, the influence of brand owners is reduced. Traditionally, oral communication, in other saying word of mouth (WOM) has been the main source for consumers to share their opinions about a product or service with others. After the rapid development of the internet and social media, people began to share their opinions as online reviews with others, using these technologies as well. As a result, this development created a new communication way, which is electronic word of mouth (EWOM), for manufacturers, service providers and consumers. Thus, WOM is no longer just a verbal, mutual and simultaneous form of communication between the sender and the receiver (Lopez and Sicilia, 2014). EWOM differs from traditional WOM in many ways, since it mostly consists of written words through unilateral communication processes with indirect interaction, which creates many-to-many communication without geographical limitation or social boundaries.

Online consumer reviews are a EWOM format that provides information to help potential consumers evaluate products and make purchasing decisions. Online consumer reviews are peer-generated product evaluations posted on the company or third party websites Many online business establishments provides a functionality on their online platforms to leave comments and reviews about the products/services. Unlike traditional communication channels, online platforms do not allow consumers to look directly at the product or service. Instead, customers obtain information either from information provided by vendors or service providers, or from the experiences and opinions of other consumers (Dhakak and Huseynov, 2020). These platforms enable individuals to share and express their ideas and experiences about the products/services through virtual environment (Dash, Zhang, and Zhou, 2021).

Online consumer reviews influence potential consumers to spend more on products or services and they are often have been considered as more reliable way of getting information than others (Fang, Ye, Kucukusta, and Law, 2016).

In the tourism industry, consumption takes place differently in terms of time and space. In addition, tourism products show abstract features. Online consumer reviews on hotels are have been considered to be an important source of travel information for customers, Because online consumer reviews increase potential customers' knowledge and improve their perceptions of travel products and they are considered and seen as an essential source of information (Memarzadeh and Chang, 2014). People tend to rely on information provided by online consumer reviews in service sectors like hotels and restaurants, since it is not possible to visit and try these kind of products beforehand (Fang et al., 2016). Consumers facilitate from online consumer reviews to decide on travels, restaurants, purchases and online hotel bookings. They have become a substantial information provider for travellers to evaluate product quality, service excellence and consumption experiences (Ye, Law, Gu, and Chen, 2011). The majority of opinions about hotels are often expressed as online consumer reviews. The key point is that consumers tend to rely on information about hotel products and services provided by other customers. In order to reduce the risk, people need the opinions of others. In this context, the information they can obtain from their surroundings are insufficient and they try to make the right decision with more information that can be obtained through a more detailed search. Since online consumer reviews give people more confidence than commercial websites, more and more people are reading these review websites. Due to this intangibility of tourism products, the importance of online consumer reviews are of great importance in consumers' decisions (Kim and Hollingshead, 2015).

It is generally accepted that online consumer reviews related to hotels, have positive or negative effects on the reputation of a hotel, and as a result, they are considered to increase or decrease the number of potential customers (Sparks and Browning, 2011). For this reason, many studies focus on studying the causal relationship between online consumer reviews and the intentions and behaviours of consumers. For instance, Ye et al. (2011), examined the effects of online consumer reviews on online sales and they concluded that the increase in online review ratings would increase online bookings. Vermeulen and Seegers (2008) have stated that

exposure to online consumer reviews would increase the likelihood that the consumer will consider the hotel.

However, as the popularity of online consumer reviews increase, so does the information pollution in the online environment. Thus, redundancy in review resources makes it difficult for people to seek information (Hlee, Lee, Yang, and Koo, 2018). Some researchers have examined the indicators that consumers use to evaluate online reviews in terms of source or review characteristics. However, the number of studies conducted on these two perspectives synchronically is very small. To emphasize this gap in the literature, this study will investigate the effects of the source of the reviews and the effects of reviews' attributes simultaneously.

In addition to being like traditional word of mouth (WOM), online consumer reviews have some additional characteristic features. People encounter both positive and negative comments on the internet at the same time. Since it is the most salient feature of online consumer reviews, there are many studies in the literature comparing and analysing the effects of positive and negative reviews on consumers (Lee, Park, and Han, 2008; Sparks and Browning, 2011; Zhao, Wang, Guo, and Law, 2016; Folse, Porter III, Godbole, and Reynolds, 2016; Ghasemaghahi, Eslami, Deal, and Hassanein, 2018). Online consumer reviews allow consumers to intuitively measure the review content in terms of quality, consistency, and volume. Review quality reflects consumers' satisfaction level and mostly measured from the point of its relevance, accuracy, information content and comprehensiveness. It is the research focus of many studies related to product/service reviews in the literature (Park, Lee, and Han, 2007; Dellarocas, Zhang, and Awad, 2007; Cheung and Thadani, 2012). Consistency of reviews indicates the level of agreement among consumers about a product/service and measures the consistency between opinions (Chakraborty, 2019). Volume of reviews or the number of reviews indicates the brand awareness and popularity of a product or service (Zhu and Zhang, 2010). Moreover, the recency of reviews refers to the agedness of the online consumer reviews. Different consumers or same consumers can share their opinions on a hotel in different periods. Thus, recency of reviews may influence consumers' decisions.

Some recent studies have analysed the impact of online consumer reviews on consumers' travel decisions, online hotel booking intentions and consumer's satisfaction. However, there are few studies in the literature that have addressed and

analysed the credibility of online consumer reviews. In addition, the current literature neglected the theoretical justification behind the relationship between the credibility of online hotel reviews and the hotel booking intention of consumers.

A. Purpose of The Study

Overall, this study aims to identify and investigate the effects of the features of online consumer reviews on the intention of online hotel booking of consumers within the scope of credibility of online consumer reviews, as well as explaining their relationships. In order to have detailed and deep analysis, this research aims to evaluate two perspectives:

Firstly, the effects of online consumer reviews' characteristics (Review Source, Review Quality, Review Consistency, Review Volume, Review Recency and Review's Positivity-Negativity on Perceived Credibility of Online Consumer Reviews will be explained and analysed.

Secondly, as a main objective of this research, the impact of Perceived Credibility of Online Consumer Reviews on the Online Hotel Booking Intention, will be examined. This variable is dependent to characteristics of online consumer reviews and it refers to consumers' trust to written statements. There are very few studies in the literature that have addressed and analysed the credibility of online consumer reviews associating with characteristics of online consumer reviews. If the impact is largely determined, it would be helpful to hotel businesses in Turkey, to re-evaluate their strategies, marketing activities and to improve their service quality, especially for those that have not yet discovered the importance of online consumer reviews. Online consumer reviews might help hotel brands create a more professional and effective marketing plan by increasing consumers' contribution to the business development process. It might also be beneficial for consumers to better understand online consumer reviews to facilitate their decision-making about a hotel.

B. Significance of The Study

The significance of the study can be described as the following points:

1. The primary objective of this study is to identify and investigate the characteristics of online consumer reviews that influence the level of perceived credibility of online consumer reviews, then the analyze effect of perceived

credibility of online consumer reviews on the online hotel booking intention and analyse their relationship in order to establish a structure by which the proposed hypothesis can be checked and assessed.

2. This study indicates the features of online consumer reviews, which invigorate consumers' online hotel booking intention in Turkey

3. This study may provide some useful information and recommendations to hotel brands, hotel businesses as well as to online hotel booking platforms and consumers in Turkey.

4. Findings of this study might draw attention by related Turkish authorities to think seriously about the factors of online consumer reviews that drive consumers whether to book online. Therefore, it may increase the overall satisfaction in an online booking process.

5. While there are few studies in the literature that have addressed and analysed the credibility of online consumer reviews and its effects on consumers' decisions, it was implemented in this study as an influencing factor on consumers.

6. Maybe this study will attract many other researchers to the area of online consumer reviews within the framework of hotel business and further increase the impact of the study.

C. Research Questions

The research questions of this dissertation are formulated based on the discussion above and generated as below:

- Do online consumer reviews have any impact on online booking intention of online consumers? If yes, which characteristics of online consumer reviews have a significant impact on booking intention?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Online Hotel Booking

1. Description of The Reservation

One of the main transactions of travel agencies is reservation. Reservation means reserving a place for and opening a name in tourism companies. It includes rooms in accommodation enterprises, plane seat numbers in airline companies, allocation of tables or areas in the food and beverage field, and similar processes. Reservation can be made individually on behalf of an individual or groups or with a travel agency. Reservation; It can be defined as booking a place on behalf of the customer in all accommodation, restaurants and entertainment venues for scheduled or non-scheduled flights of land, sea and aircraft. Travel agencies mostly make reservations on behalf of airline companies.

Booking in travel agencies is very important for both the third party and the individual. The purpose of the agreement for hotel reservation and purchase between the World Federation of Travel Agencies Associations (UFTAA) and the International Hotel Association (IHA) is to regulate the rights and responsibilities of tourism business certificate holders in line with international standards due to their mutual relations with each other, their consumers and the Ministry of Tourism. The relations between the World Travel Agencies Associations Federation and the International Hoteliers Association have been arranged. In cases where the parties comply with the agreement, a good advertisement will be made when it is considered positively against foreign country citizens. Apart from this, the other positive aspect is the formation of a sense of trust.

It is a process that is used in tourism enterprises and provides convenience when people realize a tourism event. There are various units that carry out this process, travel agencies, related departments of accommodation businesses, and these units ensure the smooth progress of the system.

2. Use of New Technologies in Reservation Systems

Electronic booking applications were implemented in the early 1950s with the joint initiative of American Airlines and IBM (International Business Machines). The reservation application has been developed in order to collect information about airline customers at one point and for airline companies to make their own reservation in a short time.

In the 1980s, electronic booking applications, which are used by airline companies in almost all regions of the world and improved day by day, started to establish a connection between them. Subsequently, developments in the field of informatics led to an innovation in the content of electronic reservation applications and spread its use (Özmen, 2011).

The companies that mediate their trips for rest, accommodation, entertainment, sightseeing, recognition and similar purposes started to use electronic systems later than airline companies. The first automation application used by the agencies mediating tourism is the electro-mechanical applications called “teleticketing”. This application allows companies that mediate their trips for recreation, accommodation, entertainment, sightseeing, recognition and similar purposes, to print and sell tickets to their customers. However, as a result of the developments in the field of informatics over time, these booking applications are not sufficient and the focus has been on an inclusive booking application. However, the antitrust laws in the United States of America (USA) were suspended in the 1970s due to the prevention of the development of an application of this content. Subsequently, the American Travel Agencies Association (ASTA) developed an application called "multiaccess". With this application, companies that mediate their trips for recreation, accommodation, entertainment, sightseeing, recognition and similar purposes have enabled direct connections by adding more than one airline company to the communication network instead of a single airline company. With this application, bookings for flight transactions, automatic ticketing, invoice, travel guide, flight tickets and entry-exit documents can be created easily. In addition, users were provided with car rental, accommodation reservation transactions and similar facilities.

Developments in electronic systems and booking applications developed by airline companies have gone beyond being an application that only exchanges data between airlines and other tourism companies. Electronic reservation applications are also integrated with non-tourism fields in order to increase their market shares (Hacıoğlu, 2001). Benefiting from the use of electronic media while performing the reservation process provides great convenience to individuals and businesses. Following the advances in information technologies and integrating them into the programs in the reservation system takes businesses one step ahead and also provides convenience for customers or guests.

a. Central reservation systems

Central reservation systems (CRS), which emerged due to developments in information technology, have complicated the structure of distribution channels in tourism. It is known that hotels mostly use the traditional distribution channel consisting of travel agency, tour operator, airline company and ground operator. These technological developments reshaped the touristic service distribution channels and provided significant competitive advantages to the enterprises using them. On the other hand, businesses that do not use them face significant difficulties in marketing and sales (Yılmaz, 2001).

Despite all conservative approaches, electronic distribution systems have a large place in the accommodation sector with the developing technological approaches. Effective distribution plays a particularly important role for the hospitality industry, which requires increased competition, varying costs and high capital. In optimum pricing, the sale of every room is critical to every overnight hotel earnings. Despite the increasing demand, it is getting harder to fill hotel rooms. Distribution systems play a key role to overcome this (O'Conner and Frew, 2004).

Hotel distribution systems have two main interrelated functions. The first is to inform consumers to make their purchasing decisions, to prepare them for purchase, and the second to facilitate purchasing. Effective information systems have gained importance with the awareness of consumers. Access to appropriate information, easy reservation and ease of payment processes are important for the consumer. It is information technology that makes information distribution and reservation processes easier. The hotel distribution system, which is in a transition period as a

result of technological developments, needs new and urgent players, participants, buyers and sellers (O'Conner and Frew, 2003).

All hotels, large or small, independent or chain, should analyze their current markets very well and their markets where they expect an increase in the near future. This analysis will help them decide whether to make the investment required for this central reservation system by revealing what kind of central reservation system they should be connected to. Those who do not participate in the central reservation system and who are late to participate may face the danger of losing their market share. There are some points that hotels should consider when deciding to connect to a central reservation system, check-in and post-entry stages.

When making a decision on this issue, hotel managers are expected to study the issue very well and make the right decision. The investment for the use of distribution channels must be justified from a financial perspective. To achieve this, financial analysis techniques are the most preferred. Among the financial techniques, it is accepted that cost / benefit analysis is well defined as direct and short term. Approximately 75% of the investments made in information technologies do not have easily calculated risk values. Economic approaches generally suggest that those with an objective and solid infrastructure should be preferred. This limits the use of information technologies (O'Conner and Frew, 2003).

The investments required to enter the system are very costly for small businesses. However, accommodation businesses entering this system have to add approximately 30% to their room rates in order to cover the system expenses and commissions. This is because 25-30% of the revenues generated from the products sold through these systems go directly to the electronic distribution system. Apart from that, if the booking is made by a travel agency, a 10% commission must be paid to the agency. If the customer makes the payment by credit card, a commission of 2 - 8% is given to the credit card company. Therefore, businesses should analyze their own situation very well before entering these systems (Yılmaz, 2001).

b. Internet based reservation systems

Online-based reservation applications have been quickly made more functional and widely available. These online systems, which were originally designed to serve the marketing purpose, have evolved rapidly in our age and have

turned into large systems that contain a very comprehensive database in the background and act in integration with all applications in companies (Argan, 2014).

Online reservation applications have emerged as a result of the integration of electronic reservation applications with online systems. The fact that online transactions are an unmediated channel between service providers and consumers has increased the online transaction capacity. All users with suitable equipment can easily benefit from these services. A consumer can access information quickly and practically with these online applications, and at the same time, they have the opportunity to compare companies (Çavuşoğlu, 2012).

3. Online Marketing and Online Reservation

Online systems are a very important and almost indispensable tool used in marketing applications. These systems are frequently used when making and implementing marketing decisions. Online booking and online ticket sales are also frequently used online as a marketing activity. Nowadays, online reservation applications and related programs also allow the booking and purchasing activities to be carried out separately.

Online booking and online ticket sales allow consumers to purchase a number of services on their own, without the assistance of an intermediary. With online booking applications, businesses enable consumers to book online for vacations, accommodation and excursions and similar activities. Online ticket sales also allows consumers to buy tickets online, just like online booking. Online booking and online ticket sales offer the relevant company's online content that can perform the booking and ticket purchase processes without using an intermediary. These activities can also be carried out on the company's website.

With online booking applications, they can determine their accommodation rooms, seats during the travel process, places where they can watch movies and listen to music online before purchasing. Online reservation applications and being online based make all these processes possible. The features of secure online booking and purchasing sites, which cover the choices regarding bookings, are listed below (Uygur and Bayram, 2013).

- Being easily accessible from the website,

- The website should be easily distinguishable,
- The website should be remarkable,
- It should be opened with a single click,
- There should be personal information about the consumer in the reservation form,
- Booking information, payment information and relevant sections need to be created.

With online ticket sales, consumers can make the purchase according to the nature of the service they will receive, that is, they can benefit from the installment sales, after-payment, postponement and similar opportunities of the businesses and can buy tickets without going to the service location. With online ticket sales, consumers can obtain their services online by making secure payments.

4. Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Reservation Systems

The effects of the Internet on the tourism industry have been two-dimensional. While the first of these is the effect on the distribution channel, the other is on the internet usage while the consumers plan their vacation. The Internet, the proliferation of smart phones and social networks have also significantly affected the tourism industry (Xiang, Magnini, and Fesenmaier, 2015).

In the tourism sector, as in many other sectors, the use of computers started in the 1980s. But the evolution of the Internet brought many changes to the sector. Before the Internet, the tourism distribution system consisted of tour operators, global distribution systems (GDS) retailer travel agencies, incoming agencies and local suppliers. GDS is a computerized reservation system (CRS) called Sabre, which was first implemented by American Airlines in the 1960s. Later, systems such as Amadeus, Galileo, Abacus and Worldspan were included in this market. Through these systems, travel agencies can make online reservations for hotels (Kracht and Wang, 2010).

After the internet started to be used, suppliers in the tourism market started to establish a website to communicate directly with consumers (Kracht and Wang, 2010). Especially large hotel enterprises have started to prefer direct sales to

consumers. This situation has changed the roles of travel agencies as a distribution channel. Online booking sites such as Booking.com, Tripadvisor, Rocketmiles and Expedia, which have emerged in recent years, are trying to increase their share of this market, which is around USD 1.3 billion. Booking.com and Tripadvisor have become the world's largest travel agencies (The Guardian, 2020). Of these sites, only Tripadvisor is visited by an average of 340 million people per month. These booking sites are called online travel agencies (OTA) (Dev and O'Connor, 2015).

5. Consumer Service Purchase Intention

The purchasing decision process of consumers consists of determining the problem, researching information, evaluating the alternative, purchasing decision and post-purchase behavior phases. These topics are briefly mentioned below. The purchasing process starts from the moment the consumer encounters a problem or requirement. This requirement can also be activated by internal and external stimuli. In the first case, that person's normal needs are thirst, hunger, etc. It rises to the threshold of endurance and becomes a stimulant (Kotler, 2000). The purchase decision process begins with the tension of an unsatisfied need. This is caused by an external element such as advertisements or seeing the biological requirement. When the need arises, it is faced with the problem of how to fix it (Mucuk, 2012).

As a result of the process, consumers decide on information about brands that are in competition with each other. There is no single evaluation process used by all consumers for all purchases. There are different evaluation processes and the most used of these evaluation processes show that consumers often make conscious and rational decisions about products (Kotler, 2000). The time factor plays a role in the evaluation of alternatives. If the product needed is not urgent, more time is spent on alternatives. Past experiences, knowledge and attitudes about different brands, and the effects of groups are effective in making these evaluations (Mucuk, 2012).

Consumers choose among the brands to be selected during the evaluation phase. Consumers may, however, consider purchasing the most preferred brand. At the same time, two factors can interfere between purchase desires and purchasing decisions.

a. Consumer concept and scope

Considering the consumers as beings “living in a material world” is to reveal

the internal mechanism of consumption. As consumers, people try to shape their lives thanks to their purchasing power and to make their existence meaningful by using their freedom to choose in a market where there is “abundance” of products and services (Çınar and Çubukçu, 2009).

A consumer is a person who buys or has the capacity to buy goods and services to meet their personal needs and wants. Behavior is a process of interaction with one's environment. This forms the basis of consumer behavior. Emotions, thoughts, actions cover a large part of human behavior. Based on this, it would be correct to analyze consumer behavior within human behavior. Consequently, consumer behavior includes the decisions and activities of the person before and after purchasing the products and services (Odabaşı and Barış, 2007).

b. Consumer behavior concept, development and characteristics

Consumer behavior as a process is the process of individuals' decisions regarding from whom, how, where, when and whether they will be purchased or not, and tries to examine how consumers use their limited resources such as time, energy and money for consumption (Odabaşı and Barış, 2007). In its broadest definition, consumer behavior, is a branch of science that examines the behavior of consumers by considering their reasons. Consumer behavior encompasses the acquisition, consumption and post-consumption behavior of products or services. Odabaşı and Barış (2007), defines consumer behavior as the behavior of consumers regarding their shopping in the marketplace. Similarly, İslamoğlu and Altunışık (2010), discussed consumer behavior as a set of behaviors they carry out in the consumption process in order to satisfy consumers' demands and needs. Consumer behavior includes the methods used by the person during the purchasing decision, the attitudes formed by the person towards the goods or services, and the features of choosing and using them. It is a decision-making process that affect actions such as searching, purchasing and using the product or service that people turn to to meet their needs. As stated by various researchers, consumer behavior is the purchasing behavior made by individuals with the potential to purchase to achieve a purpose. The goal to be achieved with this behavior; It is to satisfy needs and desires. Consumers: While some of his thoughts, decisions, experiences and evaluations are fulfilled willingly and planned, some of them are made by chance (Korkmaz, 2009). Consumer behavior includes individual activities aimed at selecting, purchasing and using

products to satisfy wishes, wants and needs. Consumer behaviors are also considered as motivated, varying in terms of timing, consisting of various environmental factors, varying from individual to individual, related to different roles, complex and diverse activities.

The most general and basic feature of consumer behavior, which has been discussed by various researchers from past to present, is that these behaviors change from person to person. Odabaşı and Barış (2007), explained the characteristics of consumer behavior in detail. Accordingly, consumer behavior is a motivated behavior and it is a dynamic process with three stages: pre-purchase, purchase order and post-purchase activities. Consumer behavior, which deals with the different roles that consumers acquire in the purchasing process, consists of various activities, is affected by environmental factors, and differs for different people.

According to consumer behavior, individuals have different thoughts, decisions, experiences and evaluations consisting of various activities. For example, watching advertisements on television is not a deliberate activity, but mostly by chance. As another example, going to a store and buying a differently liked product instead of the product we want is an example of an activity that the consumer does by chance.

The fact that consumer behavior is affected by external factors shows that it can both change and adapt. For example, the effect of advertisements on people's purchasing behavior is much shorter than the effect of culture. Consumer behavior differs from person to person. The existence of personal differences, the fact that countless consumers have numerous tastes different from each other, the characteristics of the consumers are different, and the purchase criteria differ, cause the consumer behavior to differ between individuals. Purchasing preference is also a situation that reveals the difference between people.

c. Factors affecting consumer behavior

Consumer behavior models examine the structural shape of consumer behavior and the factors that affect this structure. Each model advocates the formative importance of a separate element on these behaviors. As a result, no model can fully explain consumer behavior. Based on these models and many studies, the factors that shape consumer behavior can be categorized into three main groups:

- Demographic factors
- Psychological factors
- Socio-cultural factors

According to research, people consume different products during childhood, youth, adulthood or maturity. The reason, that people go through different stages throughout their lives and the levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction change during these transitions. As a result, purchasing behaviors are shaped by this change, also known as the age factor (Korkmaz, 2009).

The gender factor affects brand preferences for products and services. Because these preferences vary according to the person who makes the decision, uses and purchases. In this sense, the gender roles of individuals and their position in society play an important role in the decision to purchase some products and services (Aktuğlu and Temel, 2006).

Among the psychological factors that affect consumer behavior, factors such as learning, perception, personality, interest and motivation, attitudes and beliefs play an important role. Perception occurs in a wide range from the stage of choosing the information around them to the stages of how they comprehend, organize and interpret them. Motivation, past experiences, attitudes and beliefs, and finally, learning factors play an important role in this formation (Cömert and Durmaz, 2006).

In terms of consumer behavior, the learning element refers to the change in perceptions and actions towards products and brands in relation to past experiences. Learning happens faster when it is repeated. In this context, repetitions made especially with advertisements have a strong effect on consumers' perception of the messages given in the advertisements and in taking actions appropriate to the targeted sales message.

One of the most important phenomena in consumer behavior is the concept of interest, which is also related to motivation. An interest in any product or service, depending on the person's needs, values and interests. In other words, the consumer buys the product he needs in accordance with his own value judgments and opinions.

Another factors that affects consumer behavior are socio-cultural factors. It is possible to observe the religious, social and cultural views of that society in people's

behavior (Deniz, 2011). The phenomenon of culture includes all the skills and habits that a person gains due to being a member of a society. Cultural factors shape our consumption-oriented behavior as an important part of our daily life (Deniz, 2011). Among the socio-cultural factors that affect consumer behavior, elements such as reference groups, social class, culture and subculture are at the forefront.

Social class is a phenomenon present in every society. Social classes are formed by many criteria such as income source, professional status, education level, family base, and welfare level (Korkmaz, 2009). The social class factor has an important place in terms of consumer behavior. There are also differences between different social classes in terms of consumption. For example, it has been observed that upper middle- and upper-class members mostly consume products and places that contain prestige and symbolic values. (Odabaşı and Barış, 2007).

Odabaşı and Barış (2007), emphasize that all psychological and social factors that affect consumer behavior are under the influence of culture. It is a collection of behavior results shared and transmitted by members of a particular community and learned behaviors that affects individual's way of living.

Culture is a complex of the knowledge, belief, art, law, morality, habit and other traditions and customs that a person as a member of society acquires. As a powerful system, culture is the material and spiritual power of society, and therefore it carries the task of transmitting material and spiritual values from generation to generation throughout the lives of societies. The attitude, behavior and most importantly the way of life of the individual and family are determined within the framework of culture on a large scale. Culture has three important functions: cultural values, norms and sanctions. Cultural values are the beliefs and thoughts system that enable the formation of a social identity. Norms are the constraints that culture puts on behavior. The sanctions have the duty to ensure that the criteria determined by cultural values are complied with (İslamoğlu and Altunışık, 2010).

6. Intention to Make Online Hotel Reservation

After the development of internet communication technologies (ICT), the internet has been used widely by travel agencies as a new communication tool and way of sales. Internet plays a very important role as a distribution channel, for both travel and hotel industry. Back when internet use was not so common, the travel and

hospitality industry relied on intermediaries to reach consumers. Online travel agencies (OTAs) and search engines have become a new generation of agents that can distribute fixed and dynamic information such as availability and price. The Internet not only added new products and services to the hospitality industry, but also contributed to the development of the competitive environment.

There are many determinants that are effective in online hotel reservation intention of the consumers. These determinants (Bakar and Hashim, 2008).

- Perception is one of the important determinants of individual behavior. However, it is also a determinant that triggers online purchase intention.
- Convenience is one of the main determinants of internet users' purchases of online travel products / services. For online consumers, convenience is important.
- Price comparison and low price are the most important determinants of online purchases for consumers. The price is set as a key motivation for consumers buying online. According to a study conducted in the USA in 2017, the top 3 determinants that drive people to buy online were the ability to shop 24/7 (58%), price comparison (54%), and cheaper online sales (46%) (Chaffey , 2019).
- Product / service information is another factor that influences online consumer purchases. Especially in the service sector, travel suppliers should support their services (hotel, tour, etc.) with informative visuals. Today, it is very important for the consumer to have detailed information about the product or service to be purchased.
- Although site design does not make much sense at first sight, researches show that it is one of the important determinants of online shopping. It is important that online consumers can easily access the product or service and product / service categories they are looking for through the site.
- Financial security, which can also be named as the security of the payment instrument, is very important for the determinant online

consumer to feel safe during payment. The fact that consumers who buy products or services online know that the card information they pay is safe is decisive for subsequent purchases.

- Flexibility is one of the dominant determinants in some studies affecting consumers who book hotels online. In particular, the flexible conditions provided by hotels to their customers regarding room, date, cancellation and payment increase the rate of consumers to re-choose hotels and online service providers.
- User-friendly systems are seen to be one of the important determinants in studies conducted in recent years. The smooth operation of the systems used to make online hotel reservations on different devices such as computers, mobile phones, tablets and different browsers such as opera, chrome, internet explorer, safari is an important determinant for consumers to prefer the hotel or service provider again. Studies generally emphasize that the determinants are important for online shopping (hotel reservation) of consumers. In addition to these determinants, factors such as unique (extraordinary) products and services, user reviews, and information quality also affect online purchasing.

Studies using individual cultural dimensions and human-technology behavioral theories together are quite limited. Most of the studies examine the issue in the form of national culture or cross-cultural comparison. There are many factors that affect the online shopping behavior of consumers, and these factors have been explored with various human-technology behavioral theories.

B. Online Consumer Reviews

1. Theoretical Backgrounds of Word of Mouth (WOM)

Researchers have studied word of mouth (WOM) more than half century. Many researches consistently denoted its importance shaping individuals' ideas and attitudes. Initial studies focused on how and why WOM was generated, identifying that greater levels of involvement, including involvement with the product/service being described, with other consumers, with messages about the product/service, and

even involvement with and awareness of one's own needs as a consumer—lead to increased WOM (Dichter, 1966). From these studies, researchers have made inferences that WOM communication is a significantly important and effective process through which individuals share opinions, information and experiences about goods and services (Mothersbaugh and Hawkins, 2015). In a study, it was found that WOM was seven times more influential compared to newspapers and magazines. Four times more efficient than personal selling (Brown and Reingen, 1987).

Dichter (1966), identified four main motivational characteristics of individuals who engage in WOM activity. The first category of individuals, product-involvement people, who feels so sound about the product/service that in need of to do something about it. (Recommending product to others etc.). The second category of individuals, self-involvement people, who feels that the product serves as perfect as they want and satisfy their emotions. (be proud of themselves while using the product etc.). The third category of individuals, other-involvement consumer, who feels they need to give something to other consumers (Sharing experiences with others about the product or service etc.). And the fourth category of people, message-involvement consumers who is encouraged by advertisements, commercials etc.

Sundaram, Mitra and Webster (1998), carried forward Dichter's categories of individuals who engage in WOM and created eight categories as followings:

1. Positive altruism category person, who do something for others without no individual benefit.
2. Product involvement category underlines an individual, who has a personal interest in the product or service and be happy to use it or own it.
3. Self-enhancement category refers to a person, who likes to enhance his/her image among other consumers by putting himself/herself forward as an intelligent shopper.
4. Company helpers category expresses a person who wants to help the manufacturer/service provider.
5. Negative altruism category person who wants to help others by preventing them from experiencing the same or other problems he/she had encountered with the product/service.

6. Anxiety reduction category indicates a person who is comforting anger, anxiety and frustration with the product or service.

7. Vengeance category refers to a person who had negative experience with company and wants to hit back against the company.

8. Advice seeking category emphasizes an individual who needs advice to resolve the problems.

Generally, negative experiences spread among the people more swiftly than positive ones and reaches more people. One dissatisfied customer can be expected to tell nine other people about the dissatisfied experience that she/he had, whereas it can be expected that one satisfied customer will notify his/her satisfying experience to an average of five other people (Mangold, Miller, and Brockway, 1999).

Berger (2014), has created 2 categories of consumer behaviour because of the effects of WOM. First, WOM affects awareness of consumers and informs them about the existence of a product/service or thoughts which is an important mechanism exclusively for new, unknown, or low-risk products/services and opinions. Second, WOM have a convincing impact on consumer attitude that can change opinions of consumers about something, drives people to change their behaviour to be liked or refraining to be disliked and generates competition related to their status. Besides, WOM can have an impact on the social identity of consumers with respect to product/service utilization which may affect the potential of purchase or usage. When the uncertainty risk is high, WOM become very beneficial information source to consumers. WOM appears to be more effective and reliable than conventional marketing channels, because people generally receive WOM from other persons they know. In addition , WOM is more effective when the individual has no idea about the product/service (Solomon, 2013).

Consequently, WOM is playing a significant role, as an important source of information and expectations that have an influential power on consumers' attitude and decisions. (Karakaya and Barnes, 2010).

2. Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM)

With the inclusion of the Internet in all areas of life, the traditional word of mouth (WOM) has been replaced by electronic word of mouth (EWOM). EWOM is

a positive or negative opinion of potential, current or former customers about a product, service or company, which is made available to many people and organizations via the Internet (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, and Gremler, 2004). EWOM is a type of the information exchange that consumers perform online (Wu and Wang, 2011). Through the Internet, consumers have created virtual communities and social networks amongst themselves without knowing each other face to face and began sharing their opinions and experiences about the products or services with other individuals (Dellarocas, 2003). Consumers can share their opinions and experiences via different platforms by usage of Internet. These platforms contain personal blogs, product/service review web sites (e.g. consumerreports.org, trustpilot.com), brands' websites (e.g. talk.sonymobile.com), retailers' websites (hepsiburada.com), forums (reddit.com), social network sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) and mobile apps (e.g. Zomato, TripAdvisor). EWOM can be described as improve and expansion of conventional interpersonal communications and carries those communications into new age (Chan and Ngai, 2011).

a. Electronic word of mouth systems (EWOMs)

The widespread use of EWOM communication among consumers has paved the way for the formation of electronic word of mouth communication systems (EWOMs). EWOMs are those places on the internet where interactive services are provided by e-sellers to consumers, that based on technological channels to enable interpersonal EWOM communications (Hashmi and Khan, 2016).

Yoon (2008), stated that EWOMs are the technological supporting and information systems of EWOM, for products or services, buyers and sellers presented on the Internet. It enables the consumers, who have had previous experiences of using products or services to provide their opinions, assess the quality and evaluate or recommend those products or services in the form of electronic reviews or rating systems. Hence, also the readers who need advice or information about the products or services can benefit from others' experiences and opinions.

Reviews in an EWOMs usually consist of both personal experiences, opinions and a formalized rating scale. In this way readers have ability to measure quality and reliability of the reviews in conjunction with their ratings (Hennig-Thurau and Walsh, 2003). Table 1 represents some of the website examples of

EWOMs regarding their feedback systems and ranking methods.

Table 1 Examples of Feedback Systems and Score Ranking Methods

Website	What is reviewed?	Who reviews?	Reviewing method
Imdb.com	Movies, Series	Users	Average of 10 scaled ratings with a comment section.
N11.com	Products	Users/ Buyers	Average of 5 scaled ratings related to product. And a detailed comment section.
Turkish.alibaba.com	Products	Users/ Buyers	Average of 5 scaled ratings with a detailed comment section between 20-8000 characters.
Yelp.com	Services	Users/ Buyers	Average of 5 scaled rating related to provided service with a comment section.
Tripadvisor.com	Hotels, tourist activities	Users/ Buyers	Average of 5 scaled ratings with detailed comments on 1 to 5 scale Show overall score out of 100.
Foursquare.com	Any business, mostly restaurants	Users	It has a rating system that gives locations a score from 1 to 10 with a like-dislike metric.
Amazon.com	Products	Users/ Buyers	The rating system is average of 1 to 5 stars with a comment section below.
Cnet.com	Products	CNET Buyers	It has a review system using 1 to 5 scale with a comment section that uses percentile scale
Truspilot.com	Any business	Users	Average of 5 scaled ratings with a detailed comment section.
Zomato.com	Restaurants	Users/ Buyers	It has two types of rating, restaurant rating and delivery rating. They both contain 1 to 5 scale ratings.
Orbitz.com	Hotels, tourist activities	Users/ Buyers	Average of 5 scale ratings with a detailed comment section.
Trivago.com	Hotels, tourist activities	Users/ Buyers	Average of 10 scale ratings that evaluates in many aspects (Food, service, comfort, price etc.) along with detailed comment section.

Although only the EWOM and EWOMs were used as terms in this research, it is better to underline that they were expressed in various other terms throughout the years in the literature. Such as; web reviews, digital WOM, electronic reputation or feedback mechanisms, virtual opinion platforms, web based consumer opinion platforms, online consumer reviews, online WOM systems , word of web, customer feedbacks, feedback text comments in online marketplace, online product reviews, online reviews, online WOM (Dellarocas, 2003; Hennig-Thurau and Walsh, 2003; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Chevailier and Mayzlin, 2006; Pavlou and Dimoka, 2006; Dellarocas et al., 2007).

3. The Distinction Between WOM and EWOM

EWOM is an enlargement of traditional WOM. It offers a completely new perspective to WOM, even though it has great similarities with traditional WOM communication (Al Mana and Mirza, 2013). EWOM is very similar to traditional WOM in many ways, that they both provide person to person recommendations and experience sharing. (Yoon, 2008). Consumers are seeking information to reduce uncertainty in decision making. Since the information has intensive, intangible, and impersonal characteristics in an online environment, it creates considerable uncertainty while consumers trying to decide.

Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), came up with that there are many factors that sustain consumers' will to contribute in online platforms and motivate them to attend in EWOM activities. Further, they stated that those findings from EWOM participants exhibit the analogous set of motivation as traditional WOM participants which suggests that EWOM mechanisms act in the same manner on consumers as traditional WOM. EWOM has greater credibility, clearer relevance, and a better ability to create empathy between customers than conventional source of information.

According to Yoon (2008) there are 2 considerable dissimilarities between EWOM and traditional WOM. Firstly, in the physical world people can see and judge information sources' validity with regards to their reliability, expertise, and closeness of those sources to the receiver. Conversely in an online, virtual context information sources generally are not very well known. Secondly, there is a huge distance between EWOM and WOM with regards to amount of information

available. For some products/services in EWOMs there can be more than several hundred review type information available, whereas the availability of review type information in physical.

EWOM provides more credible and neutral information; derives broader amount of information to potential customers from the point of price and non-price features of completing product offerings; decreases information asymmetry and informational convergence between sellers and consumers; lowers consumer reliance on authorities without information about product/service quality; offers greater ease of information search and makes getting it easier; gives information with higher quality; provides greater regulation and configuration of information; provides ease of comparison and assessing alternatives in the consumer's evoked set (Varadarajan and Yadav, 2002). Even though WOM and EWOM both provide consumers' opinions, experiences about a product, service or brand to another individuals who needs information, they do not use the same channels to transmit information as shown in the Figure 1 below.

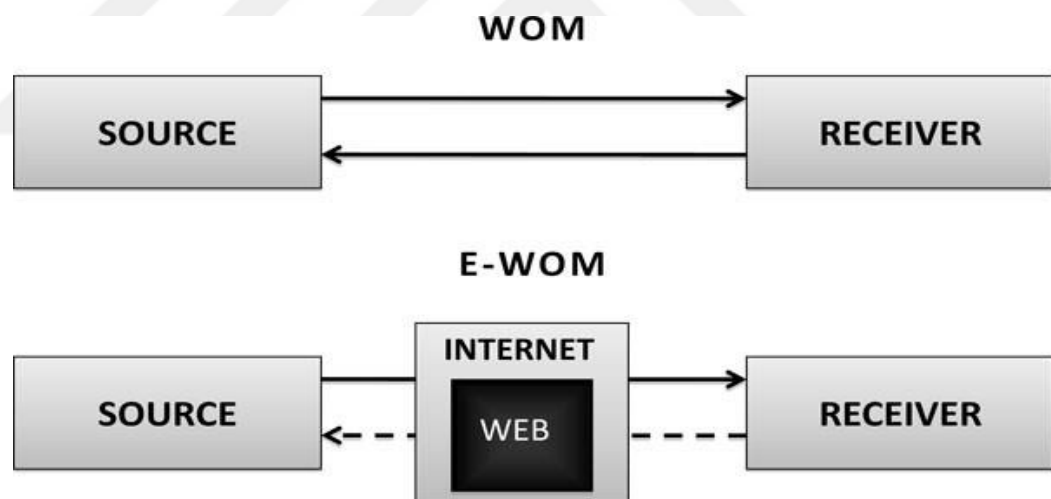


Figure 1 WOM vs EWOM

Source: Lopez and Sicilia, 2014

The transfer of information between source and receiver occurs in a simultaneous and bidirectional, face to face dialogue in WOM. On the other hand, this is not the case in EWOM. The conversation does not be obliged to be bidirectional and simultaneous. In addition, source or informant, generally provides his/her opinion in a written form which can stay on Internet heaps of time. Thereby more people can see and benefit from these experiences. Also, the long life of the

opinions increases the amount of information sharing in EWOM compared to that in traditional WOM (Hennig-Thurau, et al., 2004).

Furthermore, in EWOM, consumers have an ability to decide whether to answer the source or not. (Lopez and Sicilia, 2014). Differently from traditional WOM, the source and receiver generally do not know each other completely and often, the source is perceived as anonymous by receiver (Jalilvand, Esfahani, and Samiei, 2011).

The hallmarks of traditional WOM and EWOM are presented comparatively in the Table 2 below:

Table 2 The Characteristics of Traditional WOM and EWOM

Traditional WOM	e-WOM
Personal/ Face to face (Offline)	Non-personal/ Online
One to one	Many to many
Spoken word	Written word
Geographic limitations	No geographic limitations
Identifiable	Identifiable plus Anonymous
Immeasurable	Measurable
Direct interaction	Indirect interaction
Short-lived	Timeless
Spontaneous	Planned and effortless
Indirect observation	Direct observation
Social boundaries	No social boundaries
Difficult to transmit	Easy to transmit/forward
Bilateral communication	Unilateral or bilateral communication
Synchronous communication	Synchronous or Asynchronous
Low ripple/multiplier effect	High ripple/multiple effect

Source: Ferris-Costa, 2011; Huang, Cai, Tsang, and Zhou, 2011

As emphasized, there are some similarities but much more differences between traditional WOM and EWOM. Ultimately, it may not be possible to implement some practical theory and theoretical knowledge of traditional WOM to EWOM properly and effectively.

4. Advantages and Disadvantages of EWOM

EWOM enables the consumer to establish unlimited dialogue with other internet users (Heyne, 2009). EWOM is also referred to as consumer communication

on the internet (Heyne, 2009), as it provides a tight communication environment between consumers, which is a global feature of the Internet and can never come together (Jalilvand et al., 2011). EWOM includes comments on product performance, service quality, product impressions and reliability transferred from current or previous consumers to others. EWOM is a collection of informative, advisory and commercial information consisting of good and bad experiences of individuals.

Most of the people who share information in the virtual environment are usually customers who have information experience about a product or service. Others are potential consumers who want to learn more about the product. Nowadays, people can share their thoughts with other people quickly and easily with EWOM activities over the internet in various platforms. These platforms are the places where people come together virtually. For example blogs, newsgroups, chat rooms, hate sites, rating sites, online games and social networking sites. Information sharing is easier in these kind of virtual environments. EWOM is an application of traditional interpersonal communication in the virtual environment.

There are various reasons-motives that direct consumers to EWOM (Gruen, Osmonbekow, and Czaplewski, 2006). Consumers turn to EWOM for reasons such as reducing perceived risk, shortening the process of obtaining information, learning how to use the product, learning which products are new in the market, reducing post-purchase negativity, determining social position and belonging to a virtual community. In addition, it is also a freely accessible resource for consumers who do not prefer communication such as face-to-face or telephone consultation. Due to the insistence of some consumers in sharing positive or negative opinions, EWOM sharing may also become a habit for this segment. However, there are some prerequisites for the realization of EWOM applications. These are (Okutan, 2007):

1. Internet social network: People with a lot of internet social connections are more prone to WOM communication, as opinion leaders interact with more people.

2. Innovativeness: As with the opinion leaders, people who are open to innovation and adapt quickly in the internet environment also interact more WOM.

3. Internet usage: Those who use more interaction channels on the Internet are more likely to be affected and affected by WOM. For example, chat rooms, forums, e-mails.

4. Interest: As in traditional WOM communication, there may be interests that unite people on the Internet. In other words, ongoing interest in a certain subject or only purchase interest may cause a desire to contact the resources on the internet.

Today, consumers publish their opinions, thoughts, ideas and feelings about the product by sending e-mails directly to businesses or by writing on related sharing blogs. Thus, EWOM has expanded consumer choices in order to collect information about the product and service from other consumers. In other words, EWOM is a tool for collecting reliable information in a virtual environment. The information collected in this environment is considered and evaluated as cheap and easily accessible data not only for the decisions of potential consumers, but also for the businesses to determine their future strategies.

5. Online Consumer Reviews As a Form of EWOM

Online consumer reviews, is one type of EWOM, composed of negative or positive statements made by consumers about products or services that includes their experiences, evaluations and opinions. According to Khammash (2008), online consumer reviews serve as a decision aid, a consumer feedback mechanism, and a recommendation system in an online purchasing contexture. As an independent information resource, online consumer reviews are increasing in popularity and importance (Hennig-Thurau and Walsh, 2003). This consumer created information facilitates decision making while purchasing because it provides consumers indirect experiences from previous users (Park et al., 2007).

Online consumer reviews are manners to create social influence that plays two roles as informant and recommender (Park et al., 2007). They deliver additional consumer-oriented information as an informant and provide negative or positive indication about service or product as a recommender (Park et al., 2007). Khammash (2008), concluded that online consumer reviews have been used as a basis by consumers in order to search and achieve information about products or services and online consumer reviews have influenced their purchasing behavior. They have shown a stronger impact on purchase decision process than information provided by companies (Moon, Kim , and Bergey, 2019).

6. The Components of Online Consumer Reviews

a. Text reviews

Text reviews are one of the most influential and popular elements of online consumer reviews. They provide vast amount of information about products and services in internet environment and consumers benefit from them before making decisions. Text reviews about a product or service are drivers that affects consumer satisfaction and loyalty, plus virtual context of internet eases sharing information amongst people and dynamize text reviews' effects. Besides, text reviews also provide vast amount of selection that makes consumers to buy unusual product or services that they never heard before (Solomon, 2013).

Pavlou and Dimoka (2006), have indicated that role of qualitative text comments that accompany the numerical ratings are mostly ignored in many literatures as those studies more focused on numerical ratings rather than text reviews. On the other hand, in one research Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006) also noted that text reviews involve more fine-grained, complete and comprehensive information about the product that cannot be delivered by ranking numerical ratings. Also, in their studies Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006) concluded that the length of reviews affects sales of book more than same level of the overall rating score, when given to respondents. Besides, Pavlou and Dimoka (2006) presented that single point estimation (mean) of rating score may not be enough to predict true quality of a product/service due to under-reporting by consumers with moderate product reviews.

Some reasons are sorted by Yoon (2008) to indicate why text comments should be considered. First, text reviews involve providers' post-consumption information that cannot be comprehended by looking on a star-rating or positive-negative rating. Secondly, even though websites enable consumers to rate on vary aspects of a product or service characteristics, text reviews can involve more information than those given. Thirdly, due to subjective characteristics of text reviews and ratings, rating on a star scale may not be in harmony with the content of text reviews. Ultimately, when provided number of reviews very few (e.g., ratings with less than ten), one added rating can cause an abnormal (very low or high) average rating. Thus, text reviews are proposed to provide better off data about product's or service's true quality beyond ratings.

b. Rating reviews

Most social media platforms and hotel websites allow consumers to provide ratings (like 5 star) to evaluate their experience with a product or service (Chu, 2009). According to Jeong and Jeon (2008), ratings can be closely assimilated to an overall service evaluation. In that sense, the customer uses a single scale to express his or her judgment of the service experience.

7. The Effects of Online Consumer Reviews

The consumer, who is confused by the similarities of the products and many advertising messages, finds the remedy more confident in the advice of the consumers who have used similar goods and services before, especially in the immediate environment. It is possible to define it as user-created content that includes the information they give about the product, the company or the service and the evaluations they make (Erdil, 2014). In the society we live in, the importance given to online advice, especially to peers, is increasing. Online advice is an important determinant in purchasing decisions in almost every sector, from tourism to travel, entertainment, technological devices, electrical devices and other consumer products (Gavilan, Avello, & Martinez-Navarro, 2018).

There are studies showing that online consumer reviews affect the purchasing decisions and product sales of consumers. Zhu and Zhang (2010) suggested that the effect of online consumer reviews on product sales depends on product and consumer characteristics, and therefore, companies' online marketing strategies should be adjusted accordingly. Studies show that negative consumer comments are perceived as more useful and reliable compared to positive consumer comments. It is stated that negative comments are more decisive in choosing between the internet or the store while making a purchase decision. In general, it is stated that negative comments affect the preference of purchasing from the store, while positive comments affect the preference of purchasing online (Erdil, 2014).

However, consumers' trust in online ratings and reviews is increasing year by year and becomes as important as personal advice when making purchasing decisions. In the sectors where consumers read the most online advice in the categories of doctors, restaurants, hotels, shops, cafes, hairdressers, car rental, accounting, driving school, restaurant is in the first place and hotels are in the second

place. Doctors and dentists rank third (BrightLocal, 2020). Zhu and Zhang (2010) stated that consumers may have less need to consult online reviews for popular products, so online consumer reviews may be less effective for popular products. Researchers have noted that an important reason consumer use online reviews is to find quality information to reduce risk. Because it is known that perceived risk negatively affects the purchasing decision of consumers (Khammash and Griffiths, 2011). Therefore, it can be said that online consumer reviews reduce the risk perceived by potential customers by providing useful information about goods and services. In addition, it is thought that online consumer reviews do not have a commercial nature, making this information perceived as more reliable by consumers and playing a more effective role in purchasing decisions (Eslami et al., 2018). In general, it can be said that online consumer reviews including product recommendations reduce the research costs of consumers.

For the customer, the first indicator in the decision-making process is usually the scores, expressed as an asterisk, indicating the user rating of a product. Ratings are applications that can be used to deal with large amounts of information, are easy to process and help determine selection criteria. Stars or ratings, which are indicators of ratings, are effective as they are easily accessible information when choosing a product. However, product ratings are usually shown with a certain number of reviews. The number of reviews is an indicator of popularity as well as raising awareness (Gavilan et al., 2018). Therefore, the rating score resulting from a small number of reviews is not found to be very reliable, while the rating score resulting from many reviews positively affects the trust in comments. It is thought that more stars show better scores. However, if a product has, for example, 100 user reviews and the product received an average of 1 star out of 5, it is unlikely that the customer will click on this product (Lackermair, Kailer, and Kanmaz, 2013).

With the higher number of users in social media, the usability of social media channels has increased. This, in turn, has led to an increase in the information generated in social media, and therefore, an increase in the amount of online consumer reviews, suggestions and offers that can be used by consumers who research online communities in purchasing decisions (Nolcheska, 2017). Therefore, social media has been an important facilitator in online communication behaviors of consumers. For example, with the prevalence of social media platforms in the

hospitality industry, most people have concentrated on online consumer reviews, including reviews of destinations and hotels before, during or after their travels. Similarly, Yogesh and Yesha (2014), stated that social media is the most widely used source of information for perceived convenience, effectiveness, and perceived reliability, and that social media reviews and opinions affect the purchasing decision process of the consumer.

8. Perceived Ease

According to the studies of Berry, Seiders and Grewal (2002), perceived ease of service is five-dimensional. Dimensions are named as ease of decision making, ease of access, ease of operation, ease of benefit and post-benefit convenience. In another similar study (Duarte, e Silva, and Ferreira, 2018), the perceived ease of online shopping was examined and reported to be seven-dimensional. These dimensions are transportation, search, evaluation, transaction, attention, obtaining and post-purchase convenience. In another study, perceived ease of online shopping is explained in two dimensions as saving time and reducing effort. Chen and Chang (2003), on the other hand, conceptualize the perceived ease, location, time and diversity in 3 dimensions. Jiang, Yang and Jun (2013), defines the perceived convenience of online shopping in 5 dimensions: transportation, search, evaluation, transaction and acquisition / post-purchase convenience in their studies on online retail service.

Working hours, physical location and accessibility are factors that determine ease of access. It is stated that ease of access is one of the most important dimensions of perceived ease of online shopping. Indeed, time and space factors play a primary role in enabling consumers to switch from traditional shopping methods to online purchasing methods (Jiang et al., 2013). The main reason why consumers choose online shopping is to save time and energy, in other words, to provide accessibility that can reduce the total purchasing workload (Wolfenbarger and Gilly, 2001).

Ease of searching is the consumer's perception of the time and effort spent searching for the product (Chen and Chang, 2003). For most products, consumers visit more than one physical store to compare products for price and product features before making a purchase decision. In online shopping, consumers can more easily search for information about products offered on web pages for comparison and

analysis. Consumers can search for prices for products on the internet, browse similar products, narrow the search scope according to their desired features and make comparisons (Chen and Chang, 2003). Thus, the energy and time that consumers spend searching for information is reduced (Duarte et al., 2018). In other words, online search cost is relatively lower (Wolfinbarger and Gilly, 2001).

The ease of search perceived by consumers is affected by factors such as the loading speed of the web page, its design, the simplicity of the search function, and the classification of products. (Jiang et al., 2013) Therefore, the ease of searching depends on the variety of product information available to consumers and how quickly and easily they can access this information. It is stated that the more comprehensive the website design, navigation function and search engine function, the higher the website sales and consumer satisfaction (Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2001).

Information about online retailers' product prices, product categories, and other customers' purchasing experiences and comments can help consumers evaluate products (Jiang et al., 2013). Although online shopping provides ease of searching, due to the variety and complexity of the products and information that can be accessed, their accuracy is questioned and all possible options cannot be evaluated in depth (Wang and Le, 2015). As a matter of fact, since the product quality in online shopping cannot be fully evaluated, it can only be evaluated and defined with the information provided by the seller. At this point, if retailers provide accurate and reliable product information, it may contribute to increasing consumer confidence (Wang and Le, 2015).

Online stores provide fast payment and convenient return policies, unlike traditional stores. Since transactions take place in a virtual environment rather than a physical environment online stores have advantages in terms of ease of operation. Ease of transaction has a direct impact on consumers' online purchase intention. There is a negative correlation between the transaction costs of online shopping for consumers and the intention to buy online. In the online shopping process, consumers are encouraged to combine self-service technology for convenience, which greatly reduces transaction costs, which has a direct positive impact on consumers' purchase intention (Pham, Tran, Misra, Maskeliūnas, and Damaševičius, 2018).

In the online shopping process, consumers must wait for the order to be processed, moved, and delivered by the seller to obtain the product. In addition, returns and invoice disputes, return policy, product quality problems, consumer privacy and security issues, after-sales services are considered as non-monetary costs. There may be risks perceived by consumers in terms of delivery dates, excessive shipping costs, warranty services, return and exchange policies, confidentiality and security of shopping. In case of a transaction problem during or after the shopping process, how the customer complaint is handled changes consumers' perceptions of online convenience (Chen and Chang, 2003).

Logistics is one of the most important elements that ensure customer satisfaction in online shopping. The good service perception of the consumer regarding all logistics means that the products and goods received by the customer are well packaged and that the quality and characteristics of the products are consistent with the order. In addition, products delivered on time will increase customer satisfaction, but delayed delivery will bring dissatisfaction of customers.

9. Previous Studies on Online Consumer Reviews

Udo et al. (2010), in their studies on university students in the United States, found that website quality had a statistically significant positive effect on repeat purchasing intention and satisfaction. In a similar study conducted on 297 consumers in Taiwan, it was concluded that web design, reliability, responsiveness and general e-service quality had an indirect effect on customer satisfaction directly on purchasing intention. The results of another study conducted in Taiwan (Che-Hui, Wen, and Chung-Cheng, 2011), show that e-service quality has a significant positive effect on consumer purchase intentions through satisfaction and perceived value. In another similar study (Lee and Lin, 2005), the factors affecting the perceived e-service quality were determined as website design, reliability, sensitivity, trust and customization. In the study, a positive relationship was found between e-service quality, customer satisfaction and purchasing intention (Lee and Lin, 2005).

According to Khammash and Griffiths (2011), among the reasons for consumers to consult online consumer reviews are, accessing information about the product, shortening the information seeking process and reducing incompatibility in order to minimize the risk they will encounter during the decision-making process.

According to Fan (2011), consumers decide to comment online due to altruism, desire for social interaction, degree of satisfaction, help and attempt to take revenge. In this case, consumers resort to online consumer reviews to help other consumers, interact with people in social settings and meet the need to realize themselves, share their satisfaction with the product they use or take revenge on the company for their dissatisfaction.

When previous studies on online consumer reviews are examined, it is seen that these comments are generally thought to have an impact on the purchasing decision of consumers. The effect of online consumer reviews on consumers who take the recommendations of other consumers into account is becoming undeniable. Cengiz and Başaran (2016), in their research on online consumer reviews using the netnography method, concluded that online consumer reviews are worth examining by consumer researchers. Torun (2017), in her research to investigate how consumers benefit from the internet in the purchasing decision process, concluded that the first place where the consumers participating in the research reach information about the product is internet resources.

Previous studies (Kwon, Bae, and Phelan, 2011), show that consumers are affected by both positive and negative comments while making a purchasing decision. Positive online consumer reviews can positively influence sales by guiding the user in the decision-making phase.

Kwon et al. (2011) also concluded that positive comments are effective in terms of the sales process in hotel management. Özbay (2013), in his study on online consumer reviews, concluded that negative comments are much more effective than positive comments in consumers' purchasing decisions. Similarly, Erdil (2014), concluded that online consumer reviews affect the purchasing decision of the consumer, especially on the choice of the store, and again, negative comments are more effective than positive comments



III. RESEARCH MODEL DEVELOPMENT AND HYPOTHESES FORMULATION

A. Conceptual Model

The research model of the study is illustrated in Figure 2. The model visually defines the structure of the variables to be examined. Characteristics of online consumer reviews are as follows: Review source, review quality, review consistency, review volume, review recency positive reviews and negative reviews; and the other variables, which are perceived credibility of online consumer reviews and online hotel booking intention. The relationship between the variables will be tested in order to understand how much they affect each other.

In this model, characteristics of online consumer reviews are independent variable, while the rest of the variables are dependent.

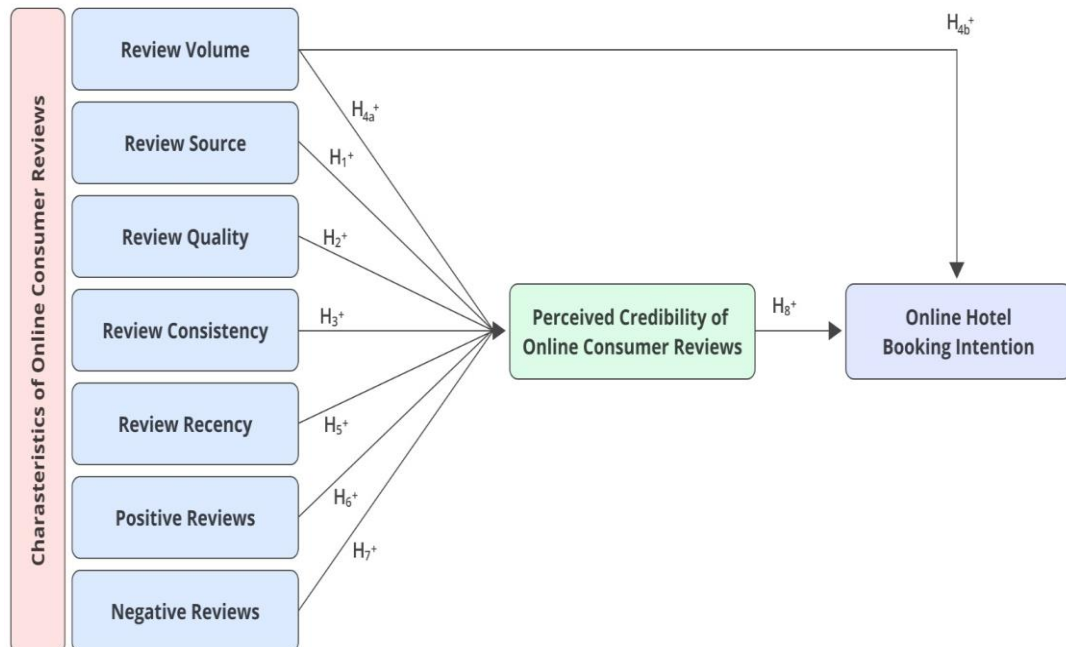


Figure 2 Research Model

B. Review Source

Review source is a factor that affects the originality and competence of the source of the message. Consumers are more likely to trust the information that they get from credible review sources. While reading a review, consumers consider both the review content and the information about the source of the review. In other words, review source is the expertise or motivation of the review provider to offer accurate and credible information to others (Cheung and Thadani, 2012). Expertise and trustworthiness are generally found to be remarkable, which are significant indicators of the communicator's credibility (Shan, 2016). Expertise refers to the knowledge, experience and ability of the sender of review to convey accurate information to other people (Ohanian, 1990).

Trustworthiness is the other significant indicator that enhances perceptibility of the review source. Trust, is a positive attitude towards the thoughts and behaviors of others (Oliveira, Alhinho, Rita, and Dhillon, 2017). The extent to which the source is perceived as being capable of providing correct information and expertise, in other words perceived as credible, is expected to be more convincing because receivers have few urges to check the reality of the source's claims by retrieving and rehearsing their own thoughts (Bristor, 1990). When recommendations come from reliable sources, other people's trust in that recommendation will be even greater (Reimer and Benkenstein, 2016).

According to Van Der Heide and Lim (2015), review source is considered as one of the determinants of perceived credibility of online consumer reviews. Review source plays a role as environmental cue which enhances the credibility of the online consumer reviews (Filieri, Hofacker and Alguezaui, 2018). An information originated by a credible review source usually has an impact on the decision-making process of the consumers, that influences consumer's actions in the end (Hayes and Carr, 2015). It is difficult for information seekers to assess the knowledge and competence of a review source, owing to the limited access to personal characteristics and background in an online context. However, high credibility of the review source has impact on consumer's actions in the decision-making process. It affects consumers' attitude towards whether to purchase or not. Lo and Yao (2019), found that the source of the review, greatly influences the perceived credibility of the review.

As a consequence of the above-mentioned discussion following hypothesis has been proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Review source has a positive impact on the perceived credibility of online consumer reviews.

C. Review Quality

Rational action theory established by Becker (1976), asserts that a rational individual tends to desire good rather than bad. According to this theory, consumers tend to choose a higher quality product/service instead of a lower quality one. On the basis of this theory, if consumers are assumed as rational, it is quite likely that they would have more intention to purchase a product/service with a higher review quality stated by other consumers than a product/service with a lower review quality (Chen, Wu, and Yoon, 2004).

Review quality has frequently been described as a persuasive aspect and force of online consumer reviews and mostly measured from the point of its relevance, accuracy, information content and comprehensiveness (Cheung and Thadani, 2012). According to Chakraborty (2019), consumers are looking for reviews, which are based on logical justifications and rational thoughts and find those more credible. It is not the case that a reviewer who writes more reviews is capable of writing helpful reviews (Huang et al., 2015). Consumers generally do not consider the subjective judgments in reviews. They interrogate the logical factors that have driven the reviewer to write that statement. When consumers believe that the reviews have logical reasons behind the writings, then they mark such reviews as credible and act in a positive manner towards them.

As an evidence to prior phrases, studies regarding to review quality, have found that online consumer reviews which have high-quality characteristic, reveal more impact on the consumers' purchase intention than low-quality online consumer reviews. To give an example, according to a research done by Park et al. (2007), they admitted high-quality reviews as comprehensible, realistic, informant and directly related to the product. Then checked their effects against the low-quality ones, which contain mostly source's personal opinions and feelings without any useful information about the product. They came to conclusion that online reviews with the

high-quality characteristic, have greater impact on consumers' purchase intention than the online reviews which pose low-quality aspect. In another research, participants in an online community who provide feedbacks on the restaurants in Hong-Kong were surveyed. According to this survey, perceived relevance and comprehensiveness of online consumer reviews were directly related with usefulness of the online consumer reviews. In other words, participants found the reviews better quality which contain relevant and useful information about the service of the restaurants (Cheung, Lee, and Rabjohn, 2008). The higher quality of the review, the more confidence information seekers have in that recommendation. Because previous notable statement written by former reviewers, soothes the uncertainty risks and decreases the potential risks related with the purchase, and empowers the decision-making process, just as the decisions former reviewers have made (Xie, Zhang, and Zhang, 2014).

Review quality refers to what extent the reader perceives the online consumer reviews as valid, accurate or convincing, when potential customers needs supportive information in the decision-making process (Myers, 2014). Moreover, internet users mostly depend on information quality of the online consumer reviews (Nilashi et al., 2016). Therefore, based on the discussion above, following hypothesis has been proposed:

Hypothesis 2: Review quality has a positive impact on the perceived credibility of online consumer reviews.

D. Review Consistency

Review consistency refers up to what extent a reviewer's recommendation is in line with other reviewers' opinions, associated with the same product/service (Cheung and Thadani, 2012). In an online context, wide range of online consumer reviews do exist. For this reason, it is impossible for an individual consumer to pursue one specific review and determine the true quality of the product/service. So, consumers seek for more frequent, highly voted and similar recommendations, that supports one another.

As stated in rational action theory (Becker, 1976), consumers are risk averse. In order to lower the uncertainty risk, an individual consumer pays more attention to

series of online consumer reviews which positively supports each other and relies on such reviews. As expressed by Kirby (2000), one individual may not trust just another, but if nine individuals out of ten agree, it is probably worth buying. Opinions consistent with the others will be considered as more accurate in terms of objectivity and credibility (Zhao, Stylianou, and Zheng, 2018; Chakraborty, 2019). The series of online consumer reviews that have high variation among itself carries great risk, while the series of online reviews with low variation provides certainty (Zhu and Zhang, 2010). Thereby, the perceived consistency of recommendations from the online consumer reviews affects the consumers' decisions (Mannes, 2009). The more received similar recommendations from various online consumer reviews, the more they will be considered as accurate in terms of objectivity and representativeness (Zhao et al., 2018). Consumers pay attention to consistency in online consumer reviews and perceive any particular online review as credible if it is in harmony with others. Conversely, if the subject review is inconsistent with others, then the consumers do not attach importance to it (Zhao et al., 2018).

Consequently, in the light of the discussion above, the following hypothesis has been proposed:

Hypothesis 3: Review consistency has a positive impact on perceived credibility of online consumer reviews.

E. Review Volume

Review volume is related to the number of posted online consumer reviews (Liu, 2006). Park et al. (2007) concluded that, a high number of online consumer reviews, is a driving factor, which lead consumers to establishing logical connections such as: “ If there are many online reviews regarding to this product/service, it is probably a worthy choice to buy.” Such logical connections may also lower the perceived uncertainty risk by the consumer and induce to higher purchase intentions. Also, higher volume of online consumer reviews can provide consumers with more information, reducing their uncertainty, and strengthening their purchase intention towards a product or service (Brynjolfsson and Smith, 1999).

If potential consumers do not have or have limited information about the product/service they want to buy, they need to gather information about that

product/service and increase their awareness. The volume of online consumer reviews has an informative role, since it increases product awareness. In the online communities, higher review volumes regardless of their negative or positive characteristics, more likely to lure information seeking consumers and afterward enhance the product awareness (Davis and Khazanchi, 2008). Thus, the greater review volume about a product or service, increases the chance for other consumers to hear about it (Liu, 2006). Since more people have experienced it and shared their opinions, it is probable that high review volume can give the consumer a more credible signal of the true consequences of using that product (Van Birgelen et al., 2010). When consumers see higher volume of online consumer reviews about a product, they think that many people have purchased that product, and they would like to realize their purchase intentions on this conviction (Park et al., 2007).

The volume of reviews can be considered as a pointer, which indicates the performance of a product or service in the market (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006). From this point of view, consumers can make inferences about the quality of the product (Lopez and Sicilia, 2014). Since review volume gives some hints related to the product, it provides credible information to other consumers. On the basis of the above-mentioned discussion, following hypotheses have been proposed:

Hypothesis 4a: Review volume has a positive impact on perceived credibility of online consumer reviews.

Hypothesis 4b: Review volume will positively influence online hotel booking intention.

F. Review Recency

Every day, more than necessary online consumer reviews are created, processed and shared among the wide range of communities in the internet. Many platforms on the internet (social media platforms, shopping platforms etc.) have systems that order online consumer reviews in terms of timeliness (TripAdvisor, 2020). Timeliness mentions that whether the online consumer reviews are recent, timely and newsworthy (Cheung et al., 2008). Online platforms should be updated regularly, in order to provide and transmit valuable and recent information to its users.

In accordance with the serial position effect, consumers are inclined to recall or mostly consider the last unit in a list or sequence preferably to previous ones (Colman, 2015). As time goes on, the benefits which consumers obtain from online consumer reviews decrease at the same rate (Liu, 2006). Specially, the order of emergence of online consumer reviews has been found to influence consumers' purchasing decisions and perceived usefulness (Hu and Li, 2011). As Xie, Chen, and Wu (2016), expressed that giving prominence to the data which are crucial on decision-making process of consumers is relevant since consumers pay more attention to recent, up to date information than expired ones. Karen, Xie, Chihchien, and Shinyi (2016), concluded that consumers are likely to be influenced by the recently posted reviews since they get more attention and they are found to be more useful. Additionally, Jindal and Liu (2008) concluded that more recent online consumer reviews about a product/service would attract more attention. Since the online consumer reviews are sorted by date on many online platforms, it is possible that recently posted online consumer reviews have more impact on consumers' decisions, plus they are found to be more useful and requires less effort to achieve. Therefore, another hypothesis has been proposed:

Hypothesis 5: Review recency has a positive impact on perceived credibility of online consumer reviews.

G. Positive and Negative Reviews

Online consumer reviews differ from each other not only in content, but also in the valence they carry. Review valence refers to the aspect of the statements in the message, in terms of positivity or negativity (Buttle, 1998). According to Tirunillai and Tellis (2014), the valence of the review is the expression of positive versus negative performance on a product/service or experience. Information, advice or experiences given in the online consumer reviews can be classified as positive or negative. While the positive online consumer reviews contain delightful, pleasant and satisfied experiences and sometimes recommendations to others; negative online consumer reviews are in the shape of complaint that consumers express their unpleasant experiences, grievances and troubles related to a product/service (Anderson, 1998). In other words, the former provides information related to pros of an experienced product/service while the latter informs about cons.

In the literature, both positive and negative online consumer reviews are examined. Some studies argue that positive comments are more effective than negative comments, while others claim the opposite. For instance, in series of studies done by Maheswaran and Meyers-Levy (1990), they found that some results support that positive messages are more influencing whereas others state the opposite. From this point of view, it would be more reasonable to examine the effects of positive and negative online consumer reviews, respectively, by mentioning the literature.

Consumers' positive opinions and recommendations can be more impactful than negative ones in terms of persuasiveness (Zhao et al., 2015). Also, such statements about brands can affect consumers' purchase intention (Ghasemaghaei et al., 2018). Positive online consumer reviews can break down the prejudices of consumers about a hotel, before consuming its services (Ladhari and Michaud, 2015). According to Sparks and Browning (2011), positive online consumer reviews increase the consumers' trust toward a hotel.

One can perceive negative reviews as the mirror image, which is noteworthy from corporate's perspective, conversely it may be regarded as extremely positive from consumer's perspective (Buttle, 1998). On the other hand, if we talk about the impressions of negative online consumer reviews, we should also mention the negativity effect. According to negativity effect consumers place more emphasis on negative information than positive information when making evaluative decisions (Herr et al., 1991). It can be understood that the negativity effect is very relevant to the online consumer reviews context, which is evaluative judgments about previous experiences expressed online to facilitate other consumers to generate their own judgments before making a decision (Manganari and Dimara, 2017). Consumers take more into consideration the negative information than positive, since they find negative one is more diagnostic and informative in the decision-making process (Fiske, 1980; Maheswaran and Meyers-Levy, 1990). Furthermore, dissatisfied consumers are more likely than satisfied ones to share their experiences with their relatives and friends; therefore, negative information spreads faster than positive information (Richins, 1983). Consumers consider negative reviews to be reliable because they believe that the manufacturer or seller of products or services cannot spread such information, therefore negative reviews can be acknowledged as actual thoughts of the sender (Eslami et al., 2018; Folse et al., 2016). Lee and Koo (2012),

have stated that consumers perceive negative reviews as more credible and useful than positive reviews. In addition to this, consumers may have a greater urge to trust negative information rather than positive with the intention of avoiding potential risk and losses, since there are many other substitute products and services utilizable (Highhouse and Paese, 1996). Besides, in a study Westbrook and Oliver (1991), has presented that whether the reviews carry positive or negative information, they affect consumers' brand loyalty, trust, assessments on products/services, and purchase intentions. Drawing on the negativity effect, it can be claimed that negative online consumer reviews will be perceived as equal as or more useful and credible compared to positive online consumer reviews. According to Weinberger and Dillion (1980), negative consumer reviews are more influential than the same amount of positive consumer reviews on the purchasing intention of consumers.

Finally, based on the discussion and the findings mentioned above the following hypotheses has been proposed:

Hypothesis 6: Positive online consumer reviews have a positive impact on perceived credibility of online consumer reviews.

Hypothesis 7: Negative online consumer reviews have a positive impact on perceived credibility of online consumer reviews.

H. Perceived Credibility of Online Consumer Reviews

The perceived credibility of online consumer reviews can be describable as an assessment of the authenticity of reviews based on the consumer's perception (Zha, Li, and Yan, 2015). It refers to extent to which the review is perceived as true, reliable, rational and trustworthy (Lee and Shin, 2014). There are some studies in the literature concerned with the information credibility of the online consumer reviews, which are irrelevant to credibility of source. When consumers need opinions of others, they are more likely to consider reviews which contain credible, informative details. (Kim, Kim, and Heo, 2016). Also, there is a possibility that online reviews are intervened. Since consumers are accepted as rational according to rational action theory (Becker, 1976), they are expected to seek for reviews, in which the expressions are reflecting the truth and being credible. In the literature, many researches concerned with the online consumer reviews, concluded that, when a

review is perceived as credible, consumers are more likely to adopt it and use it for further actions, such as in their decision-making process whether to purchase a product/service (Cheung et al., 2009; Eslami et al., 2018; Sparks and Browning, 2011; Lee and Koo, 2012; Filieri et al., 2018). Credible reviews may also represent the source's knowledge on the product/service. Thus, in this study, source also will be examined as an influencing factor of the perceived credibility. When individuals sense that the online consumer reviews are reflecting the truth and credible source of hotel related information, they are more likely to make their hotel booking decisions based on them (Kim et al., 2016; Chakraborty, 2019). Since online consumer reviews are treated as one of the crucial factors that influences consumers' purchase decision, particularly in the hospitality industry, based on the prior studies and findings another hypothesis has been proposed:

Hypothesis 8: Perceived credibility of online consumer reviews has positive impact on consumer's online hotel booking intention.

I. Online Hotel Booking Intention

Online hotel booking intention described as a consumer's eagerness to stay at a specific hotel (Sreejesh and Anusree, 2016). When consumers perceive that the online consumer reviews about a hotel are reliable, they highly likely to consider staying at that hotel. As a result, online consumer reviews affect people's booking intention in various ways. (Chakraborty, 2019). The hypotheses described in the previous sections were established to prove this effect.

IV. RESEARCH METHOD

A. Research Design and Instrument Development

The research model of the study was formulated based on the previous empirical researches from the relevant literature. This study utilizes quantitative research techniques. Quantitative research focuses on collecting numerical data and generalizing them among groups of people or explaining a particular phenomenon. The online questionnaire used in this research consists of multiple-choice questions, open-ended questions and category questions in order to collect data for demographic information. To measure the validity of the proposed hypotheses 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree was used which was adapted from previous studies. The scale items for Review Source were adapted from Mahapatra and Mishra (2017), Dou, Walden, Lee, & Lee (2012), Todd and Melancon (2018) and Cheung and Thadani, (2012). The scale items for Review Quality were taken from Lee (2018), Xu and Yao (2015) and Zhang, Zhao, Cheung, & Lee, (2014). Review Consistency items were derived from Cheung et al. (2009), Luo, Luo, Xu, Warkentin, and Sia, (2015) and Viglia, Minazzi, & Muhalis, (2016). Review Volume items were adapted from Duan, Gu, & Whinston, (2008). The scale items for Review Recency were derived from Bailey and Pearson (1983). Positive Review and Negative Review items were taken from Chiou, Hsiao, & Chiu, (2018), Zhao et al. (2015), Sparks and Browning (2011) and Vermeulen and Seegers (2008). The scale items for Perceived Credibility of Online Consumer Reviews were adapted from Zha et al. (2015) and Luo et al. (2015). Lastly, the scale items of Online Hotel Booking Intention were derived from Li et al. (2017), Viglia et al. (2016), Zhao et al. (2015) and Zhang et al. (2014).

B. Data Collection and Sample Size

This research was conducted in the form of fieldwork by applying a self-administrated online questionnaire empowered by Google forms. The study

questionnaires were made available to the participants in English and Turkish language as 2 different versions. The surveys were distributed via WhatsApp, Discord, Instagram, and Facebook. The online questionnaire was preferred for reasons such as providing convenience in terms of cost, time, and being easily accessible to the participants. In addition, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this data collection tool was preferred since it would be healthier way.

For the collection of data, a method of convenience sampling was used in this research which is known to be a non-probability sampling technique. As per Smith and Albaum (2005), this method is based on the researcher's judgments and does not involve any probabilities techniques. For the multiple regression techniques which require a large sample size for generalization purposes, Pallant (2011) has recommended using the following formula generated by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007): $N > 50 + 8m$. Where: N = sample size, m = the number of independent variables. According to this formula, the sample size required for this research should be $N > 106$ (Number of independent variables equals seven). Besides, as indicated by Hoelter's index, the SEM method should exceed 200 for a sufficient size because it represents the data inadequate way (Byrne, 2010). Thus, this study tried to reach a minimum of 200 responses to meet the above-mentioned requirements. A total of 204 participants filled out the questionnaires. Data were collected from people at various ages and different nationalities for the sake of generalization.

C. Statistical Techniques

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equational Model (SEM) were applied to current research as statistical techniques. With the help of CFA, relationships between factors and their observed variables can be measured (Byrne, 2010). In the meantime, CFA is able to evaluate the validity of the measures while SEM allows theories to be tested quantitatively and it depends on the error factor.

The main difference between CFA and SEM is that CFA focuses on the relationship between latent and observed variables, while SEM covers the structural path between focused (latent) variables. As per Harrington (2009), CFA can stand out as a unique analysis and can be considered as part of SEM. In the analysis of this study, IBM SPSS version 25 and IBM SPSS AMOS version 21 have been used as

statistical software.



V. DATA ANALYSIS

A. Demographics of the Participants

The sample size of the current research consists of 204 fully answered questionnaires. %50.98 of respondents were female and %49.02 of respondents were male. The age of survey participants ranged between 18 and 55 years. Most of the participants were single and the majority of them earn 3000 TL or below monthly. The majority of the responders were students and employed people (in private or public sector). Although the education levels were varied, they were mostly people with a master's degree, and they were people of various nationalities. (Turkish 57.84%, Azerbaijani 9.80%, Afghan 8.82%, and other nationalities 23.54%). The time that respondents spend daily on the Internet was mostly more than 5 hours or more. The participants have stated that they make use of many different online booking sites such as: Trivago, Agoda, Booking, Hotels, Priceline, and TripAdvisor etc. The huge portion (96.5%) of participants have answered “Yes” to paying attention online consumer reviews while booking a hotel online. Tabulated form of the demographic data is shown below (Table 3).

Table 3 Demographic Profile of Respondents

DEMOGRAPHICS PROFILE	ELEMENTS	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGE (%)
Gender	Male	100	49,02
	Female	104	50,98
Age Range	18 to 25	111	54,41
	26 to 35	68	33,33
	36 to 45	23	11,27
	46 to 55	2	0,98
Marital Status	Single	157	76,96
	Married	40	19,61
	Widow	7	3,43

Table 3 (con) Demographic Profile of Respondents

DEMOGRAPHICS PROFILE	ELEMENTS	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGE (%)
Educational Background	High School or Below	9	4,41
	Associate degree	23	11,27
	Bachelor's Degree	76	37,25
	Master's Degree	90	44,12
	Doctor's Degree	6	2,94
Occupation	Student	92	45,1
	Public Sector Employee	8	3,92
	Private Sector Employee	71	34,8
	Self-Employment	17	8,33
	Retired	1	0,49
Monthly Income (TL)	Unemployed	15	7,35
	3000 or below	92	45,1
	3001 to 3500	34	16,67
	3501 to 4000	38	18,63
	4001 to 5000	29	14,22
Daily Internet Usage	5001 or above	11	5,39
	1 Hour or less	7	3,43
	2-3 Hours	64	31,37
	4-5 Hours	60	29,41
	5 Hours or more	73	35,78
Number of Online Bookings	Once	68	33,33
	Twice	41	20,1
	3 Times	28	13,73
	4 Times or more	67	32,84

Note: Percentages may not sum up to 100% due to missing data

B. Normality Assessment

One of the main assumptions of SEM analysis is multivariate normality. In this study, kurtosis and skewness were considered when analyzing the normality of the data. Skewness means lack of symmetry in statistics. It shows the shape of the distribution of data (Kline, 2011). Kurtosis, on the other part, expresses the pointedness of a peak in the distribution curve (Kline, 2011). When the distribution peaks higher than the normal distribution, it is called positive kurtosis (leptokurtic), while it peaks less than the normal distribution it is called negative kurtosis (platykurtic) (Kline, 2011). Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson, (2009) and Bryne (2010) argued that data is normal if kurtosis is between -7 to +7. Since kurtosis values of all items were found to be within the recommended thresholds of (George and Mallery, 2016; Hair et al., 2009; Bryne, 2010), it can be concluded that

normality assumption of this paper was not violated.

C. Validity and Reliability Assessment

Validity and reliability are among the important elements of a quantitative research. And in order to conduct confirmatory factor analysis, it is significant to provide reliability and convergent validity. Validity checks whether variables are measured correctly. Reliability assessment refers to how consistently a method measure something. If the same result can be consistently achieved by using the same measure methods under the same circumstances, the measurement is considered reliable. Reliability, investigates the consistency of the same element, measured among respondents and stability of the features in each time (Smith and Albaum, 2005).

Hair et al. (2009) proposed the thresholds of validity and reliability assessments as follows: To provide validity, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) should be greater than 0.5, and to procure reliability, Composite Reliability (CR) should be greater than 0.7.

Table 4 below represents the outcome of validity and reliability assessments conducted for current research. The table were obtained based on Correlations and Standardized Regression Weights tables with the help of IBM SPSS AMOS software. Convergent validity has been established and found and proven by an average variance extracted (AVE) greater than 0.5 except for the Positive Reviews (PR). Since it has a value of 0.486 which is very close to 0.5, and it is acceptable. If a larger sample size were included in the study, it would probably be within the normal range of value. Composite reliability has also been established and resulted to be greater than 0.7.

Table 4 Validity and Reliability Assessments

	CR	AVE
PC	0.905	0.656
RS	0.891	0.622
RQ	0.877	0.589
RC	0.878	0.591
RV	0.916	0.687
RR	0.932	0.775
PR	0.821	0.486
NR	0.856	0.601
INT	0.936	0.745

The CR of Review Source (RS), Review Quality (RQ), Review Consistency (RC), Review Volume (RV), Review Recency (RR), Positive Reviews (PR), Negative Reviews (NR), Perceived Credibility of Online Consumer Reviews (PC) and Online Hotel Booking Intention (INT) are above the suggested threshold of 0.7. This concludes that CR of all the variables of the current study are admissible.

Only the AVE of PR is slightly lower than the determined threshold value of 0.5. However, it is acceptable, since it has a value of 0.486 which is very close to 0.5 and it should not be considered as a major problem. Therefore, convergent validity of all variables of the current research is at acceptable levels.

D. Confirmatory Factory Analysis (CFA)

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is a kind of factor analysis, which is mostly used in social researches (Kline, 2011). It is used to test whether the measurements of a structure are consistent with a researcher's understanding of the nature of the factor. The aim of the CFA is to examine the data fit of the hypothesized model. The result of CFA analysis (Figure 3), showed that factor loading of all items were found to be highly significant ($p < 0.05$). Only two items were removed from further analysis due to their negative standardized regression weight. These two items were RR5 (Review Recency) and NR3 (Negative Reviews). In order to assess multivariate assumption of CFA, kurtosis values were obtained

from SPSS AMOS version 21 and analyzed. There are specific measures that can be calculated to determine goodness of fit. The measures with their acceptable thresholds are shown below (Table 5). All regression weights of CFA model are given in the Appendix 4. As a result of CFA analysis all factor loadings were found to be highly significant.

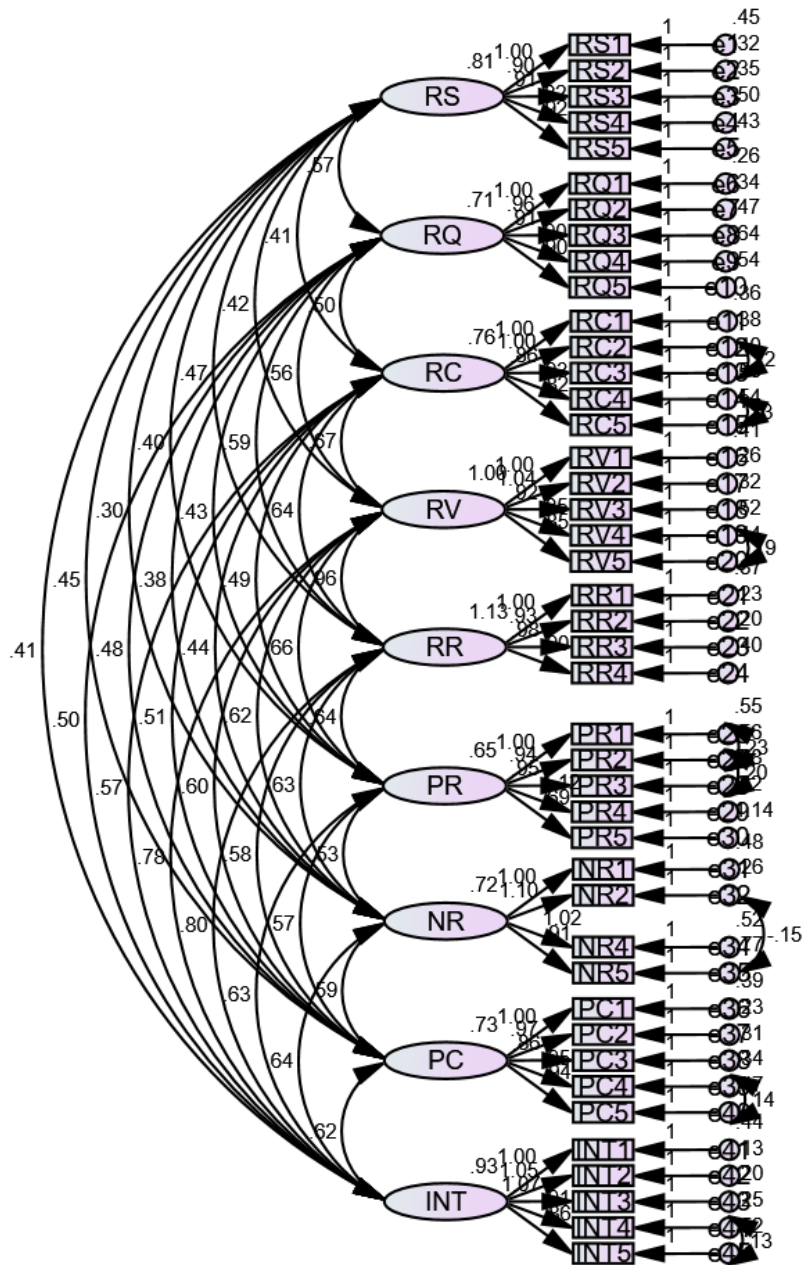


Figure 3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Table 5 Model Fit Analysis for CFA

Measure	Thresholds (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Schreiber et al., 2006; Hooper et al., 2008)	Proposed Model Results
CMIN / DF	< 3 good; < 5 permissible	2.413
CFI	> 0.95 great; > 0.90 traditional; > 0.80 sometimes permissible	0.854
RMSEA	< 0.05 good; between 0.05 - 0.10 moderate; > 0.10 bad	0.083
SRMR	<0.08 good; <0.05 excellent	0.062
TLI	< 0.95 excellent	0.839
IFI	< 0.90 excellent	0.856

The results of the measurement, namely, minimum discrepancy per degree of freedom (CMIN / DF) = 2.413, comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.854, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.083, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = 0.062, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = 0.839 and incremental fit index (IFI) = 0.856. All results were within the acceptable level (Table 5) according to Hu and Bentler (1999), Schreiber, Nora, Stage, Barlow, and King (2006), and Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen (2008), and refers to goodness of fit.

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is the expansion of CFA, which is the measurement part of the SEM that focuses on relationships among latent variables and their indicators. The other part is the structural component, which shows how the latent variables of the proposed research are related.

In order to examine hypotheses, path analysis has been conducted through Structural Equation Modelling (Figure 4). In this model there are 7 independent variables (RS, RQ, RC, RV, RR, PR and NR) and 2 dependent variables (PC and INT).

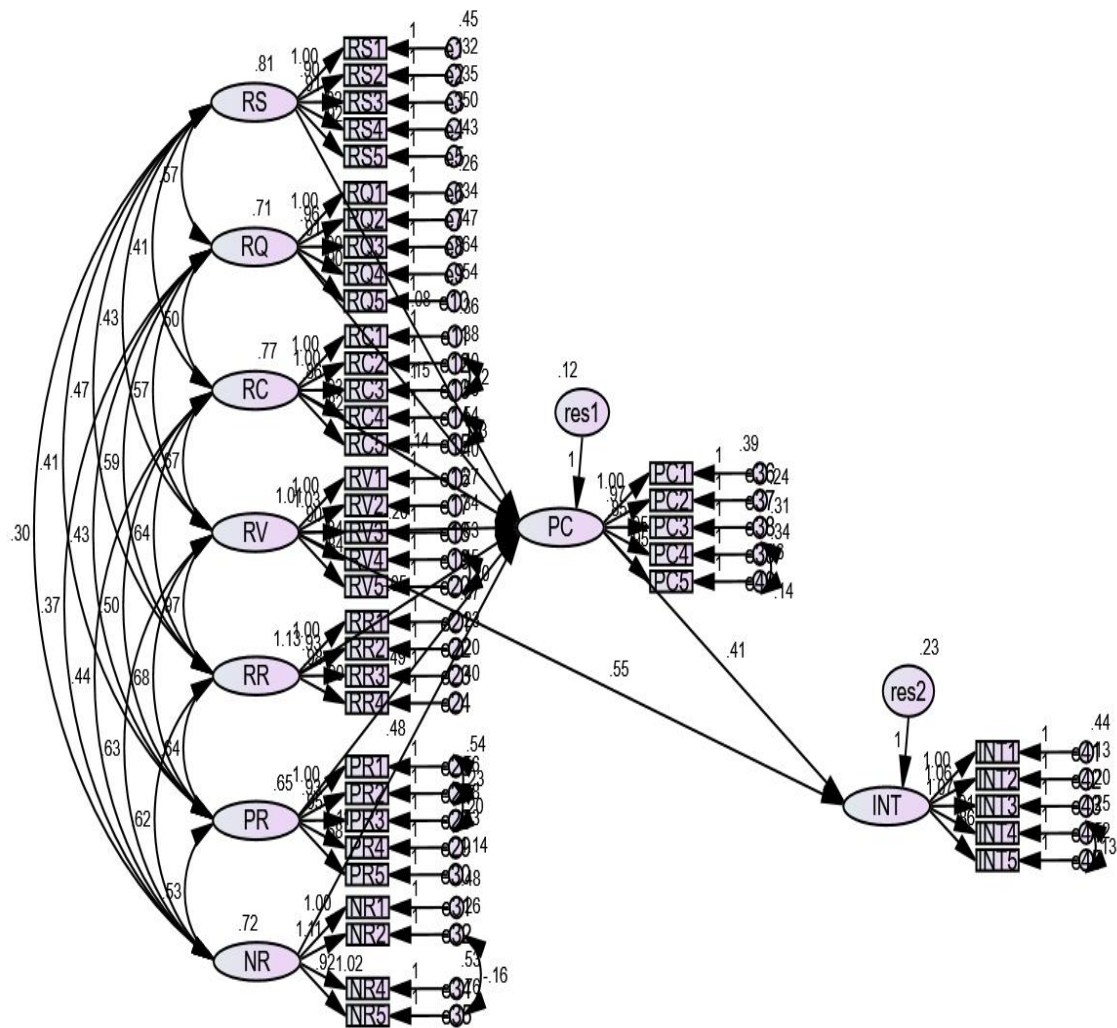


Figure 4 Structural Equation Model

As per Byrne (2010), Squared Multiple Correlations (SMC) or R-squared is an indicator of the degree of variance that represents the proportion of the variance for a predicted variable that's explained by a predictor variable. SMC values of the predicted variables of PC and INT were 0.832 and 0.754 respectively.

The results of hypotheses testing are summarized below with unstandardized regression weights (β), standard error (S.E.) and p-values.

- Review Source (RS), was not found to have any statistically significant impact on the Perceived Credibility of Online Consumer Reviews (PC) (H1: $\beta = 0.084$, S.E. = 0.082 and p-value = 0.307).

H1: Review source has a positive impact on the perceived credibility of online consumer reviews. = **Not Supported**

- Review Quality (RQ), was not found to have any statistically significant impact on the Perceived Credibility of Online Consumer Reviews (PC) (H2: $\beta = 0.151$, S.E. = 0.099 and p-value = 0.126).

H2: Review quality has a positive impact on the perceived credibility of online consumer reviews. = **Not Supported**

- Review Consistency (RC), was not found to have any statistically significant impact on the Perceived Credibility of Online Consumer Reviews (PC) (H3: $\beta = 0.144$, S.E. = 0.087 and p-value = 0.095).

H3: Review consistency has a positive impact on the perceived credibility of online consumer reviews. = **Not Supported**

- Review Volume (RV), was not found to have any statistically significant impact on the Perceived Credibility of Online Consumer Reviews (PC) (H4a: $\beta = -0.205$, S.E. = 0.167 and p-value = 0.219).

H4a: Review volume has a positive impact on the perceived credibility of online consumer reviews. = **Not Supported**

- Review Volume (RV), was found to have statistically highly significant impact on the Online Hotel Booking Intention (INT) (H4b: $\beta = 0.546$, S.E. = 0.070 and p-value = $p < 0.001$).

H4b: Review volume will positively influence the online hotel booking intention. = **Supported**

- Review Recency (RR), was not found to have any statistically significant impact on the Perceived Credibility of Online Consumer Reviews (PC) (H5: $\beta = -0.046$, S.E. = 0.110 and p-value = 0.676).

H5: Review recency has a positive impact on the perceived credibility of online consumer reviews. = **Not Supported**

- Positive Reviews (PR), was found to have statistically significant impact on the Perceived Credibility of Online Consumer Reviews (PC) (H6: $\beta = 0.494$, S.E. = 0.154 and p-value = 0.001).

H6: Positive online consumer reviews have a positive impact on the perceived credibility of online consumer reviews. = **Supported**

- Negative Reviews (NR), was found to have statistically highly significant impact on the Perceived Credibility of Online Consumer Reviews (PC) (H7: $\beta = 0.481$, S.E. = 0.095 and p-value = $p < 0.001$).

H7: Negative online consumer reviews have a positive impact on the perceived credibility of online consumer reviews. = **Supported**

- Perceived Credibility of Online Consumer Reviews (PC), was found to have statistically highly significant impact on the Online Hotel Booking Intention (INT) (H8: $\beta = 0.412$, S.E. = 0.078 and p-value = $p < 0.001$).

H8: Perceived credibility of online consumer reviews has positive impact on the online hotel booking intention. = **Supported**

The summary of the hypotheses testing is provided in Table 6 below.

Table 6 Results of Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Relationships	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Status
H1	PC $\leftarrow$ RS	.084	.082	1.023	.307	Not Supported
H2	PC $\leftarrow$ RQ	.151	.099	1.528	.126	Not Supported
H3	PC $\leftarrow$ RC	.144	.087	1.667	.095	Not Supported
H4a	PC $\leftarrow$ RV	-.205	.167	-.1228	.219	Not Supported
H4b	INT $\leftarrow$ RV	.546	.070	7.769	***	Supported
H5	PC $\leftarrow$ RR	-.046	.110	-.418	.676	Not Supported
H6	PC $\leftarrow$ PR	.494	.154	3.215	.001	Supported
H7	PC $\leftarrow$ NR	.481	.095	5.063	***	Supported
H8	INT $\leftarrow$ PC	.412	.078	5.244	***	Supported

Note: *** $p < 0.001$



VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

A. Theoretical Contributions

Theoretical implications part compares and contrast findings of this study with the findings of other researchers. The results of the study concluded that positive reviews (PR) had a significant positive impact on the perceived credibility (PC). PR can break down the prejudices of consumers and increase the consumers' trust toward a hotel (Ladhari and Michaud, 2015; Sparks and Browning, 2011). Negative reviews (NR) had a significant positive impact on the PC. Consumers consider negative reviews to be reliable because they believe that the manufacturer or seller of products or services cannot spread such information, therefore negative reviews can be acknowledged as actual thoughts of the reviewer (Folse et al., 2016; Eslami et al., 2018). The results reached, show that people in Turkey consider both NR and PR in terms of credibility. People take into consideration not only the positive information but also the negative information while booking a hotel online, since they find NR diagnostic and informative in the decision-making process (Fiske, 1980; Maheswaran and Meyers-Levy, 1990; Herr et al., 1991; Özbay, 2013; Erdil, 2014).

Contrary to the hypothesis, review source (RS) found to be statistically insignificant as a positive influencer on PC. So, people in Turkey do not consider RS as a factor of credibility. Nevertheless, this finding is consistent with the study of Cheung et al. (2008) and Chakraborty (2019). But the findings were inconsistent with Van Der Heide and Lim (2015), Filieri et al. (2018) and Lo and Yao (2019). These studies concluded that RS has a significant positive impact on the PC. The reached conclusion may be due to the difference in the research designs used in the studies.

Opposite to the hypothesis proposed, no significant positive effects of the reviews quality (RQ) has found on the PC. Consumers in Turkey seems to do not care much about the justifications of the reviews. Park et al. (2007) concluded that

consumers care more about non-subjective high-quality reviews. Also Chakraborty (2019) found that people in India do not look just for any review. But the current study showed the opposite. People in Turkey do not perceive more credible, if online consumer reviews include more realistic judgments than the subjective ones. The opposite conclusion may be due to cultural, sample size, or knowledge level related reasons.

In contrast to the hypothesis formulated, review consistency (RC) found to be statistically insignificant in determining the PC. The result is inconsistent with the studies of Zhao et al. (2018), Zhu and Zhang (2010) and Mannes (2009). One of the possible reasons might be the consumers in Turkey pay more attention to the reviews themselves, than to the consistency between them.

Contrary to the hypothesis suggested, no statistically significant positive impact has found of review volume (RV) on PC. The result is inconsistent with the studies of Davis and Khazanchi (2008) and Van Birgelen et al. (2010). One of the possible reasons might be, consumers in Turkey believe that the reviews themselves are more important than the overall volume of the reviews in terms of credibility. However, RV also had a positive impact on the INT. This implies that consumers in Turkey think that higher RV can provide more information, reduce the uncertainty, and strengthen the purchase intention (Brynjolfsson and Smith, 1999). And they believe that RV is a pointer, which indicates the performance of a product or service in the market (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006).

Opposite to the studies of Hu and Li (2011) and Xie et al. (2016), review recency (RR) also had found to be statistically insignificant in determining the PC. The opposite conclusion may be due to sample size or consumers in Turkey simply do not find a connection between the RR and PC. One of the possible reasons might be, consumers in Turkey believe that the reviews themselves are more important than the recency of the reviews in terms of credibility.

Further, the current study has found that PC had statistically significant positive impact on INT. Proving this hypothesis was the targeted aim of the research, and it is concluded to be consistent with the findings of Chakraborty (2019). When consumers sense that the online consumer reviews are reflecting the truth and credible source of hotel related information, they are more likely to make their hotel

booking decisions based on them (Kim et al., 2016). The result implies that consumers in Turkey look for credible reviews while making their online hotel booking decisions and they are affected by them.

B. Practical Implications

Current research contributes to the literature by addressing online consumer reviews on hotels in terms of credibility, which have a strong impact on consumers' INT. The findings in the study could provide guidance to the hotel brands in reviewing and changing their online strategies and promoting themselves as a more reliable brand. Peer-rating system can be implemented in order to evaluate the PC. Marketers and hotel brands should pay special attention to both PR and NR. These variables had found to have a significant influence in determining the PC. Therefore, it would be better for hotel brands and marketers to consider online consumer reviews regardless of the positive or negative value they carry. In this way, they can plan more effectively in responding to customers' requests. In addition, marketers and hotel brands could provide a better structured review format, that can facilitate customers to express opinions in a more understandable and categorizable manner (such as cleanliness, food quality, internet, staff etc.).

Further, current research indicates that RV has a significant positive influence on INT. When consumers are exposed more online consumer reviews on a hotel, their decision-making processes are affected in this direction. Therefore, hotel brands and marketers could devote more efforts to increase RV. It might be achieved by providing new campaigns, special offers or providing unique information to consumers to foster them spread the word via Internet. Thus, the number of online consumer reviews will increase, and the impact of RV will be higher.

C. Limitations and Future Research

This study tried to depict an understanding of the effects of online consumer reviews features on perceived credibility (PC) and online hotel booking intention (INT). Firstly, current study considers online consumer reviews on hotels. In addition, the data that was used for analysis has been obtained by online survey from the people who lives in Turkey. Therefore, the generalizability of the study is

limited. Same theoretical framework can be implemented to determine the factors that affects consumers' PC and INT in the other marketing areas such as restaurant, fashion and electronics. It will be beneficial for concerning companies to better understand their consumer group and help them improving their lacks. Secondly, only seven of the characteristics of online consumer reviews have been considered and analyzed in the current study. There might be other important characteristics of online consumer reviews that affects PC and INT of the consumers in Turkey. Since cultural aspects and purchase behaviors differ amongst countries, it would be better to implement same theoretical framework in other countries. The theoritical model should be examined whether the results show differences according to demographic information. Thirdly, although detailed objectives and information were given to the participants in the questionnaires prior to the filling process, they carried self-reporting nature. Fourthly, further researchers could add or change some elements in theoretical framework with different theoretical context. Fifthly, due to Covid-19 pandemic the researcher had difficulty finding enough samples and the sample size was limited. If a larger sample size could be reached, perhaps different results would have been obtained. Finally, the limited research time was another challenging factor for the researcher. It would be better to do further analysis to see different outcomes that will include consumers and hotel brands in business perspectives. In this way, the existing gaps in the literature can be filled in a more efficient manner. The importance of online consumer reviews amongst consumers is increasing whether to look for information or purchase decision process. Companies that do not support consumers to share their ideas will fall behind the companies that provide this in terms of competition, regardless of the sector they entity.

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VIII. APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire (English Version)

APPENDIX 2: Questionnaire (Turkish Version)

APPENDIX 3: Ethic

APPENDIX 4: Regression Weights





APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire (English Version)

The Impact of Online Consumer Reviews on Online Hotel Booking Intention

Dear participants,

This questionnaire was prepared to gather information for a master thesis study, which is administrated by Dr. Farid Huseynov at Istanbul Aydin University. Your responses will only be used for scientific research and kept confidential from third parties.

Thanks in advance for your participation and contributions.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Gender

Male

Female

Age

18-25

26-35

36-45

46-55

56-65

Above 65

Marital Status

Single

Married

Divorced / Widowed / Seperated

Educational Background

High School or below

Associate's Degree (2 years)

Bachelor's Degree (4 years)

Master's Degree

Doctoral Degree

Occupation

Student

Public Employee

Private Sector Employee

Self-Employment

Retired

Unemployed

Nationality (Short answer question)

Country of Residence (Short answer question)

Monthly Income (TL)

3000 or below

3001-3500

3501-4000

4001-5000

5001 or above

How much time do you spend on the internet during the day?

1 hour or less

2-3 hours

4-5 hours

More than 5 hours

How many times have you booked a hotel online ?

Once

Twice

3 Times

4 Times or more

Which platform do you prefer when booking a hotel online ? (Checkboxes)

Booking.com

Hotels.com

TripAdvisor.com

Trivago.com

Google Trips

Priceline.com

Agoda.com

Trip.com

Otel.com

Others (Please specify the platform that you use in the blank)

Do you take into consideration the reviews posted by other individuals when booking a hotel online ?

Yes

No

MARK THE DEGREE TO WHICH YOU AGREE WITH THE STATEMENTS BELOW (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree)

Review Source

	1	2	3	4	5
Online reviewers of hotels are reliable.					
Online reviewers of hotels are knowledgeable.					
Online reviewers of hotels are realistic.					
Online reviewers of hotels are trustworthy.					
Online reviewers of hotels are people of some prominence.					

Review Quality

	1	2	3	4	5
Online reviews on hotels are properly defined.					
Online reviews on hotels are clearly explained.					
Online reviews on hotels are sufficiently detailed.					
Online reviews on hotels are objective.					
Online reviews on hotels are comprehensible.					

Review Consistency

	1	2	3	4	5
Online reviews on hotels related to other reviews.					
Online reviews on hotels support other reviews.					
Online reviews on hotels are in harmony with other reviews.					
I pay more attention to the reviews, which are in compliance with the other reviews.					
I find the reviews more credible, which are in compliance with the other reviews.					

Review Volume

	1	2	3	4	5
Volume of online reviews on hotels are important.					
I pay more attention to hotels having larger volume of online reviews.					
Volume of online reviews relates the attentions that a hotel gets.					
Larger volume of online reviews reflects that many people has information related to a hotel.					
Larger volume of online reviews improves the overall reliability of the reviews on a hotel.					

Review Recency

	1	2	3	4	5
Recently posted reviews on hotels are important.					
Most recent reviews can reflect the up-to-date information about hotels.					
I pay more attention to the reviews on hotels, which are more recent.					
Recently posted reviews on hotels are more reliable.					
I find the reviews on hotels more beneficial, which are more recent.					

Positive Reviews

	1	2	3	4	5
Positive online reviews on hotels are reliable.					
I pay more attention to positive online reviews on hotels.					
Positive online reviews on hotels are more valuable than negative online reviews.					
I pay more attention to hotels, which have larger volume of positive online reviews.					
An abundance of positive reviews on a hotel, make me doubt.					

Negative Reviews

	1	2	3	4	5
Negative online reviews on hotels are reliable.					
The volume of negative reviews on hotels is important.					
I ignore the hotels, which have a large volume of negative online reviews.					
I pay more attention to negative online reviews when I book hotels online.					
Any negative reviews I have seen about the hotel end my booking intention.					

Perceived Credibility

	1	2	3	4	5
Online reviews on hotels are realistic.					
Online reviews on hotels are logical.					
Online reviews on hotels are accurate.					
Online reviews on hotels provide confidence.					
Online reviews on hotels are encourager.					

Online Hotel Booking Intention

	1	2	3	4	5
I always pay close attention to online hotel reviews when I book hotels					
Online reviews help me to decide, which hotel I am likely to stay					
Online reviews facilitate me to decide, which hotel I would consider to stay.					
Online reviews guide me to consider the hotel that I am likely stay					
Online reviews are my main information channel when booking a hotel online.					

APPENDIX 2: Questionnaire (Turkish Version)

ÇEVİRİM İÇİ TÜKETİCİ DEĞERLENDİRMELERİNİN ÇEVİRİM İÇİ OTEL REZERVASYONU YAPMA NİYETİNE ETKİSİ

Sayın katılımcılar,

Online tüketici eleştirilerinin, online otel rezervasyonu yapma niyetine etkisini ölçtüğümüz bu anket, yüksek lisans tezi çalışmasına bilgi toplamak amacıyla, İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi'nden Dr. Farid Huseynov yönetiminde ve gözetiminde yapılmaktadır. Yanıtlarınız yalnızca bilimsel araştırma için kullanılacak olup, asla üçüncü taraf kişilerle/kurumlarla paylaşılmayacaktır.

Katılımınız ve katkılarınızdan dolayı şimdiden teşekkür ederim.

DEMOGRAFİK BİLGİLER

Cinsiyetiniz

Erkek

Kadın

Yaşınız

18-25

26-35

36-45

46-55

56-65

65 üzeri

Medeni Haliniz

Bekar

Evli

Boşanmış / Dul / Ayrı

Eğitim Durumunuz

Lise veya daha alt derece

Ön Lisans

Lisans

Yüksek Lisans

Doktora

Mesleğiniz

Öğrenci

Kamu Sektörü Çalışanı

Özel Sektör Çalışanı

Serbest Meslek

Emekli

İşsiz

Uyruğunuz (Kısa yanıtı soru)**İkamet Ettiğiniz Ülke (Kısa yanıtı soru)****Aylık Geliriniz (TL)**

3000 veya altı

3001-3500

3501-4000

4001-5000

5001 veya üzeri

Gün içerisinde internete ne kadar vakit ayırıyorsunuz ?

1 saat veya daha az

2-3 saat

4-5 saat

5 saat veya daha fazla

Kaç defa çevrim içi (online) hotel rezervasyonu yaptınız?

1 defa

2 defa

3 defa

4 defa veya daha fazla

Çevrim içi otel rezervasyonu yaparken hangi platformları tercih edersiniz ?

(Onay kutuları)

Booking.com

Hotels.com

TripAdvisor.com

Trivago.com

Google Trips

Priceline.com

Agoda.com

Trip.com

Otel.com

Diğer (Lütfen belirtiniz.)

Çevrimiçi otel rezervasyonu yaparken diğer kullanıcılar tarafından yapılan değerlendirmeleri dikkate alır mısınız?

Evet

Hayır

AŞAĞIDA BELİRTİLEN İFADELERE NE ÖLÇÜDE KATILDIĞINIZI İŞARETLEYİNİZ (1=Kesinlikle katılmıyorum, 2=Katılmıyorum, 3=Kararsızım, 4=Katılıyorum, 5= Kesinlikle katılıyorum)

Değerlendirmenin Kaynağı

	1	2	3	4	5
Oteller hakkında online değerlendirmeler yapan kişiler bilgili insanlardır.					
Oteller hakkında online değerlendirmelerde bulunan kullanıcılar inanılırdır.					
Oteller hakkında online değerlendirmeler yapan kişiler güvenilirirdir.					
Oteller hakkında online değerlendirmelerde bulunanlar önemli insanlardır.					
Oteller hakkında online değerlendirmeler yapan kişiler gerçekçidir.					

Değerlendirmenin Kalitesi

	1	2	3	4	5
Oteller üzerine yapılan online değerlendirmeler doğru olarak tanımlanmıştır.					
Oteller üzerine yapılan online değerlendirmeler kullanıcılar tarafından açıkça anlatılmıştır.					
Oteller hakkındaki online değerlendirmeler yeterince ayrıntılıdır.					
Otellerle ilgili yapılan online değerlendirmeler tarafsızdır.					
Oteller üzerine yapılan online değerlendirmeler anlaşılırdır.					

Değerlendirmenin Tutarlılığı

	1	2	3	4	5
Otellerle ilgili online değerlendirmeler diğer değerlendirmelerle ilişkilidir.					
Oteller üzerine yapılan online değerlendirmeler birbirlerini destekler.					
Otellerle ilgili online değerlendirmeler diğer değerlendirmelerle uyumludur.					
Diğerleriyle uyum içinde olan değerlendirmelere daha fazla dikkat ederim.					
Diğerleriyle uyumlu olan değerlendirmeleri daha güvenilir bulurum.					

Değerlendirmenin Miktarı

	1	2	3	4	5
Oteller üzerine yapılan değerlendirmelerin miktarı önemlidir.					
Hakkında daha fazla değerlendirme yapılmış oteller daha çok dikkatimi çeker.					
Yapılan değerlendirme miktarı, otele duyulan ilgi ile doğrudan ilişkilidir.					
Daha fazla değerlendirme sayısı, çoğu kişinin otel hakkında bilgi sahibi olduğunu gösterir.					
Daha fazla değerlendirme hacmi, bir otel üzerine yapılan değerlendirmelerin genel güvenilirliğini artırır.					

Değerlendirmenin Güncelliği

	1	2	3	4	5
Oteller hakkında yapılan güncel değerlendirmeler önemlidir.					
Güncel değerlendirmelerin büyük bir kısmı oteller hakkında taze bilgi sağlarlar.					
Online otel rezervasyonu yaparken, güncel değerlendirmeleri daha fazla önemserim.					
Otellerle ilgili güncel değerlendirmeler daha güvenilirirdir.					
Oteller hakkında yapılan güncel değerlendirmeler daha faydalıdır.					

Pozitif Değerlendirmeler

	1	2	3	4	5
Oteller üzerine yapılan pozitif değerlendirmeler güvenilirirdir.					
Otellerle ilgili pozitif değerlendirmelere daha fazla dikkat ederim.					
Oteller hakkındaki pozitif değerlendirmeler daha değerlidir.					
Daha çok pozitif değerlendirme almış oteller daha fazla ilgimi çeker.					
Bir otel hakkında yapılmış pozitif değerlendirmelerin bolluğu beni şüpheyeye düşürür.					

Negatif Değerlendirmeler

	1	2	3	4	5
Oteller üzerine yapılan negatif değerlendirmeler güvenilirdir.					
Oteller üzerine yapılan negatif değerlendirmelerin miktarı önemlidir.					
Fazla negatif değerlendirmeye sahip otelleri göz ardı ederim.					
Online otel rezervasyonu yaparken, negatif değerlendirmelere daha fazla önem gösteririm.					
Otel hakkında gördüğüm herhangi bir negatif değerlendirme rezervasyon isteğimi bitirir.					

Algılanan Güvenilirlik

	1	2	3	4	5
Oteller üzerine yapılan değerlendirmeler gerçeği yansıtır.					
Oteller hakkındaki değerlendirmeler mantıklıdır.					
Oteller üzerine yapılan değerlendirmeler isabetlidir.					
Oteller üzerine yapılan değerlendirmeler güven sağlayıcıdır.					
Otellerle ilgili değerlendirmeler teşvik edicidir.					

Online Rezervasyon Niyeti

	1	2	3	4	5
Online otel rezervasyonu yaparken, her zaman diğer bireylerin yaptığı değerlendirmelere yakın ilgi gösteririm.					
Online değerlendirmeler, kalmak istediğim otel için karar vermemde bana yardımcı olur.					
Online değerlendirmeler, rezervasyon yapmak istediğim otel hakkındaki kararımı kolaylaştırır.					
Online değerlendirmeler, seçeceğim otel hakkında bana yol göstericidir.					
Online otel rezervasyonu yaparken, online değerlendirmeler ana bilgi kanalımdır.					

APPENDIX 3: ETHIC

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 07.12.2020-4151



T.C.
İSTANBUL AYDIN ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ
Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü Müdürlüğü

Sayı : 88083623-020
Konu : Etik Onayı Hk.

Sayın Yiğit Can GÜLER

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Bilgilerinize rica ederim.

e-imzalıdır
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Alper FİDAN
Müdür Yardımcısı

Evrak Doğrulamak İçin : <https://evrakdogrula.aydin.edu.tr/enVision.Dogrula/BelgeDogrulama.aspx?V=BE5F3FPPEM>

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Elektronik Ağ: <http://www.aydin.edu.tr/>

Bilgi için: Tuğba SÜNNETÇİ
Unvanı: Yazı İşleri Uzmanı





APPENDIX 4: Regression Weights

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
RS1	<---	RS	1.000			
RS2	<---	RS	.897	.070	12.842	***
RS3	<---	RS	.912	.072	12.739	***
RS4	<---	RS	.821	.075	10.979	***
RS5	<---	RS	.918	.076	12.133	***
RQ1	<---	RQ	1.000			
RQ2	<---	RQ	.957	.069	13.894	***
RQ3	<---	RQ	.915	.074	12.291	***
RQ4	<---	RQ	.901	.082	10.964	***
RQ5	<---	RQ	.902	.077	11.642	***
RC1	<---	RC	1.000			
RC2	<---	RC	.997	.079	12.563	***
RC3	<---	RC	.858	.075	11.510	***
RC4	<---	RC	.933	.083	11.255	***
RC5	<---	RC	.817	.078	10.457	***
RV1	<---	RV	1.000			
RV2	<---	RV	1.041	.062	16.890	***

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
RV3	<---	RV	.919	.060	15.329	***
RV4	<---	RV	.848	.066	12.842	***
RV5	<---	RV	.845	.063	13.510	***
RR1	<---	RR	1.000			
RR2	<---	RR	.927	.051	18.165	***
RR3	<---	RR	.979	.051	19.015	***
RR4	<---	RR	.899	.057	15.672	***
PR1	<---	PR	1.000			
PR2	<---	PR	.936	.073	12.854	***
PR3	<---	PR	.954	.102	9.385	***
PR4	<---	PR	1.119	.096	11.713	***
PR5	<---	PR	.687	.110	6.269	***
NR1	<---	NR	1.000			
NR2	<---	NR	1.099	.083	13.195	***
NR4	<---	NR	1.020	.088	11.602	***
NR5	<---	NR	.913	.097	9.382	***
PC1	<---	PC	1.000			
PC2	<---	PC	.970	.067	14.376	***
PC3	<---	PC	.856	.067	12.840	***

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
PC4	<---	PC	.953	.072	13.156	***
PC5	<---	PC	.942	.078	12.052	***
INT1	<---	INT	1.000			
INT2	<---	INT	1.055	.060	17.683	***
INT3	<---	INT	1.068	.063	16.904	***
INT4	<---	INT	.911	.059	15.484	***
INT5	<---	INT	.860	.069	12.465	***
Note: *** p<0.001						



RESUME

Name –Surname : Yiğit Can GÜLER

Education Status

Master’s Degree : İstanbul Aydın Universtiy –

Master of Business Administration (Thesis, English)

Bachelor’s Degree : Akdeniz University – International Relations (Turkish)

High School : Dede Korkut Anadolu Lisesi

Professional Experience

Migros Ticaret Anonim Şirketi : Market Attendant (June 2016 –July 2016)

DeFacto Perakende A.Ş. : Salesman (June 2019 – August 2019)

Asav Lojistik Hizmetleri A.Ş. : Intern (September 2020 – December 2020)

Asav Lojistik Hizmetleri A.Ş. : Ocean Freight Import Operation Customer
Repesantative (December 2020 –)

