

Investigation of Digital Retail Consumer Complaints in The Food Industry During COVID-19: Market Chain Example of Turkey

COVID 19 Sürecinde Gıda Sektöründe Dijital Perakende Tüketici Şikayetlerinin İncelenmesi: Türkiye Marketler Zinciri Örneği

Abstract

Today, with the widespread use of the internet, the concept of digital consumer comes to the fore as well as the traditional consumer concept. Many countries and sectors have been adversely affected by the disaster that occurred in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and which the World Health Organization expressed as the epidemic called COVID-19 on January 12, 2020. This situation caused consumers to spend more time and shop in digital environments. For this reason, knowing the e-commerce food retail sector consumer complaints is very important for companies to ensure customer satisfaction. This study aims to examine the customer's complaints of two major grocery chains in the e-commerce retail sector in Turkey by using the content analysis method. In this context, a total of 443 complaints about e-commerce food retail businesses obtained from www.sikayetvar.com between 01 July - 26 August 2020 were resolved according to the issues. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the majority of the related e-commerce food retail consumer complaints were product and price refunds and delay in product delivery.

Öz

Günümüzde internetin yaygın olarak kullanılmasıyla birlikte geleneksel tüketici kavramının yanı sıra dijital tüketici kavramı da gündeme gelmektedir. Aralık 2019'da Çin'in Wuhan kentinde ortaya çıkan ve Dünya Sağlık Örgütü'nün 12 Ocak 2020'de COVID-19 adlı salgın olarak ifade ettiği felaketten birçok ülke ve sektör olumsuz etkilenmiştir. Bu durum ise tüketicilerin dijital ortamlarda daha fazla zaman geçirmelerine ve alışveriş yapmalarına sebep olmuştur. Bu nedenle e-ticaret gıda perakende sektörü tüketici şikayetlerinin bilinmesi, firmaların müşteri memnuniyeti sağlamaları açısından oldukça önemlidir. Bu çalışmanın amacı Türkiye genelinde e-ticaret perakende sektöründe faaliyette bulunan iki büyük market zinciri müşterilerinin yapmış oldukları şikayetlerin içerik analizi yöntemi ile incelenmesidir. Bu kapsamda 01 Temmuz - 26 Ağustos 2020 tarihleri arasında www.sikayetvar.com sitesinden elde edilen e-ticaret gıda perakende işletmelerine yönelik toplam 443 şikâyet konulara göre çözümlenmiştir. Gerçekleştirilen çözümleme sonucunda ilgili e-ticaret gıda perakende tüketici şikayetlerinin büyük çoğunluğunun ürün ve ücret iadesi, ürün teslimatında gecikme olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

Introduction

The internet is a communication tool that is constantly growing worldwide and offers important opportunities to users. Internet perhaps the most important technological tool of the information age (Castells, 2010: 45), offers users the opportunity to store and share the generated information. In general, it is possible to define the internet as a communication network that changes the lifestyle of society, shapes its life and offers new opportunities to its users every day. Besides, effective use of information and communication technologies is an important issue to make the sources of economic development more functional (Yıldız et al., 2018: 11). Today, developments in internet networks and

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Bilgilendirme

Bu çalışma 23-25 Eylül 2020 tarihinde Macaristan'da gerçekleştirilen 7. Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Kongresinde sunulan bildiriden genişletilerek türetilmiştir.

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social media are important developments that increase consumer power in the digital age (Labrecque et al., 2013: 257). The developments in internet and communication and information technologies have converted consumers' traditional purchasing practices into digital purchasing practices (Onurlubaş and Yılmaz, 2016: 127). With the development of the Internet, the increase in the power of the consumer has created changes in the form of relations between the consumer and the firm (Kozinets 1999; Shipman 2001; Rezabakhsh et al., 2006: 3). The internet, which changed the balance of power between the consumer and the firm, did more than allow people to purchase a product or service in virtual environments (Lee and Cude, 2011: 90). Therefore, it is stated that the development of internet technologies and related features are important factors in consumer empowerment (Kozinets et al., 2010: 71). Strategic and tactical marketing approaches need to be developed in this area, especially since it is important to understand how benefiting from the opportunities of information technology affects individuals and their behaviors. (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010: 312). The marketing is a field that changes and develops day by day, the importance of the digital age has been emphasized with the concept of "after digital" (Kotler, 2001: 6). For this reason, businesses need to use digital technologies and media effectively to achieve their marketing goals and to ensure customer satisfaction and loyalty on these platforms.

For digital marketing to be successful, it is stated that companies in developed countries understand the importance more, and multi-channel marketing communications as traditional and modern media must be integrated. The interaction between these channels is very important for developing a digital marketing strategy (Chaffey and Chadwick, 2016: 11). With digital technologies, companies can have data such as the past purchasing status of consumers. Firms can develop personalized products as a result of these data and increase the probability of purchasing by consumers (Kotler et al., 2017: 142). Digital platforms offer better-personalized marketing (Wind and Rangaswamy, 2001: 13). Digital consumers can interact more with companies. This provides companies with monitoring and performance scale opportunities (Chaffey and Patron, 2012: 35). Therefore, it can be said that digital marketing enables easier measurement compared to traditional marketing (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010: 312; Makrides et al., 2019: 4). Situations such as creating a sincere customer understanding and protecting brand reputation are expressed as important challenges of digital marketing (Leeflang et al., 2014: 2). However, digital platforms provide significant opportunities for users to broadcast their feelings and thoughts about products or services (Dellarocas, 2003: 30). Especially digital consumers, who have been growing day by day do not want to be passive communication buyers. Thus, consumers want to interact with and compare their services and prices (Tkaczyk, 2016: 356).

Online shopping recently offers convenience for consumers to reach the desired product or alternative compared to traditional shopping. Consumers open any search engine and type what they are looking for. This situation can be seen as the biggest advantage of digital shopping channels compared to traditional shopping (Chang and Chin, 2011: 125). There may be product or service mistakes that cause customer dissatisfaction in all areas of trade. However, it is stated that effective complaint management by companies can provide benefits such as consumer satisfaction and loyalty (Gilly and Hansen, 1985: 5). Customer complaints can cause firms to improve their goods or services (East, 2000: 1077). Undoubtedly, it can be said that both businesses and customers can benefit from the result of this action. For this reason, it is seen that companies are increasingly interested in understanding and responding to consumers' dissatisfaction and complaints more effectively (Liu and McClure, 2001: 54). Because customer complaints are related to the value given to customers (Cho et al., 2002: 1). Information technologies have been used to evaluate customer complaints since the spread of the Internet (Mattila and Mount, 2003: 135). Considering that approximately two-thirds of the population are internet users in today's world (Statista, 2020), it can be said that information technologies are used more effectively. However, although there are studies on customer complaint behavior in traditional marketing approaches (East, 2000), it can be seen that studies on online customer complaints are limited (Kim et al., 2003; Chang and Chin, 2011: 125; Lee and Cude, 2011: 90). For this reason, it is thought that the study will be useful for companies that

operate or will operate in the e-commerce food retail sector in terms of determining digital consumer behaviors, expectations and ensuring customer satisfaction.

1. Purpose and Importance of the Research

The purpose of this research is to examine the methods of content analysis of the two largest supermarket chains that operate e-commerce complaints of customers in the retail sector in Turkey. In recent days, along with the developments in information technologies, complaint websites are seen as important platforms in collecting consumer problems and reporting to relevant companies. For this reason, the study aims to examine the complaint issues of e-commerce food retail customers objectively and systematically on complaint sites and to make suggestions to e-commerce retail companies in the context of production management and digital marketing. Many countries and sectors were adversely affected by the disaster, which emerged in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and expressed by the World Health Organization as the epidemic called COVID-19 on January 12, 2020. The World Health Organization has reported that since the emergence of COVID-19, there have been millions of COVID-19 cases worldwide, including hundreds of thousands of deaths (WHO). This situation necessitates the review and improvement of e-commerce and infrastructure systems in the sector. Therefore, the study is considered to be important in terms of classifying the consumer problems related to digital marketing opportunities and e-commerce infrastructures of the companies through content analysis and reporting to the companies.

2. Method of the Research

The content analysis method was used in the research. Content analysis, which is a qualitative research technique, is a widely used method to interpret the meaning coming from the content of the data. It is stated that this method is used in three approaches as traditional, directed and summative (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005: 1277). Therefore, in this study, traditional content analysis was preferred because the coding categories were directly obtained and interpreted from text data. With this preferred method, digital consumer problems for companies operating in the e-commerce food retail sector are tried to be examined and interpreted from a holistic perspective. It is thought that the suggestions made as a result of these results will be beneficial for the companies that operate or will operate in the e-commerce food retail sector in terms of production management and marketing.

3. The Universe and Sample of the Research

A purposeful sampling method was used to collect information about an event or situation in this study, which was conducted to examine consumer complaints within the scope of understanding consumer problems in the e-commerce food retail sector in the digital market. This research was conducted for the two major food retail supermarket chain in Turkey due to both time and cost constraints. Especially today, food retail shopping has gained importance in e-commerce due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Therefore, the study was conducted for e-commerce food retail consumers. For this purpose, the website www.sikayetvar.com, which has a high number of members and is thought to be effective in complaint management, was preferred for the research sample. Therefore, the research data includes customer complaints made as a result of e-commerce food retail shopping on the website www.sikayetvar.com where customer complaints are shared. Consumer complaints between 1 July - 26 August 2020 were included in the analysis. The number of complaints made in the relevant e-commerce companies regarding food shopping is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of Complaints (01 July - 26 August)

Company	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
A	380	86
B	63	14
Total	443	100

Table 1 shows the number of complaints against e-commerce food retail companies in the online food shopping category on the dates specified on www.sikayetvar.com. It is seen that 380 complaints about firm A and 63 complaints about firm B were made on the specified dates. It is considered that the number of complaints made against the companies within the scope of the research should be evaluated in direct proportion to the capacity of the companies, the number of employees and the density of customers.

4. Analysis of Research Data

After the data obtained as a result of the research were transferred to the computer environment, it was tried to be analyzed using content analysis. In this context, the problems of two large food retail customers were evaluated in terms of similarities.

4.1. Findings

Within the scope of the research, the findings resulting from the analysis of the data obtained by classifying the complaints made by the customers of the company, which is designated as enterprise A in the e-trade food retail sector, according to their subjects are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Number and Rate of Complaints by Subject of Company A

Complaint Subject	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Product and Refunds	97	25.52
Broken-Out-of-Date Product	69	18.16
Delay in Product Delivery	58	15.25
Missing-Wrong Item Delivery	50	13.16
Spoiled Vegetable or Fruit	27	7.11
Different Product Delivery	25	6.58
Customer Service Representative	24	6.32
Campaign Implementation	22	5.79
Excessive Bag Use	8	2.11
Total	380	100

As can be seen in Table 2, complaints against firm A are grouped according to their subjects. It is observed that approximately 26% of the complaints are related to product and price refunds, 18% to defective products or products close to the deadline, 15% to delay in product delivery and 13% to missing or wrong product delivery. Besides, it can be said, about 7% of the complaints were related to spoiled vegetables or fruit, 6% to the delivery of products other than the request, 6% to customer service or representative, 6% to the implementation of the campaign and 2% to the use of excess bags.

Table 3. Number and Rate of Complaints by Subject of Company B

Complaint Subject	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Stock Problem	18	28.57
Delay in Product Delivery	14	22.22
Broken-Out-of-Date Product	11	17.47
Missing-Wrong Item Delivery	10	15.87
Product Return or Refund	10	15.87
Total	63	100

In Table 3, complaints about the firm coded as B are grouped according to their subjects. It can be seen that Approximately 29% of the complaints made are related to stock problems, 22% of them are about the delay in product delivery, 17% of them are about damaged or expired products, and 16% of them are related to missing or wrong product delivery, product return and reimbursement. When Table 2 and Table 3 are evaluated together, it can be seen that there are common complaints against A and B firms.

Conclusion

As a result of the internet technologies that are constantly growing worldwide and offer important opportunities to its users, the concept of digital consumer has come to the fore with the traditional consumer concept. Understanding of digital consumers, who can generally be defined as people who search for products on digital platforms, buy them and benefit from online content, is very important in today's competitive environment. Nowadays, consumers can realize their negative shopping experiences at no cost, regardless of distance and time. Developments in internet technologies that change the way consumers express their complaints about products, services and companies offer important opportunities to consumers and companies in this regard. Many countries and sectors have been adversely affected by the disaster, which occurred in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and expressed by the World Health Organization as the epidemic called COVID-19 on January 12, 2020. This situation caused consumers to spend more time and shop in digital environments. After all these developments, consumers have turned to digital platforms for food shopping.

Recently, with the developments in information technologies, complaint sites are seen as important platforms in collecting consumer problems and reporting to the relevant companies. Therefore, in this study, it is aimed to examine complaints of customers of the two largest market chains in the e-commerce food retail industry in Turkey with the content analysis method. When the results of the analysis are evaluated in general, it can be said that the vast majority of the related e-commerce food retail consumer complaints are product and fee refunds, delay in product delivery, spoiled or out of date products, stock problems and incomplete or incorrect product delivery. It is thought that knowing consumer complaints is very important for companies to ensure customer satisfaction and loyalty. Therefore, it can be said that researching consumer complaint behavior to understand consumer dissatisfaction and its consequences has become even more important in today's digital environment. It is recommended to reach consumers in future studies, to conduct studies with different research methods and to examine them in terms of demographic variables.

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