

Customer Objections and Statistical Investigation In Marketing Communication

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ABSTRACT

The study is based on the extraction of objections by method of distribution into groups in sales training meetings held over a period of four years from 1999-2003. In this study 9 enterprises were examined. From this primary study group of 9 enterprises, 388 sales representatives participated in 20 training meetings to make up the team studies. It was also examined as to the extent of similarity or difference in the nature of objections among the various firms. In this communiqué, the aim was to compile and classify objections raised in various enterprises during the course of sales negotiations according to type and put forward statistical distributions in the form of tables according to these types. The statistical findings of this study have been explained with the help of sixteen tables and a graph, for which evaluations and proposals have been put forward.

Key Words: Personal selling, personal selling process, integrated marketing.

Pazarlama İletişiminde Müşteri İtirazları ve İstatistik İncelemesi

ÖZET

1999-2003 yılları arasındaki dört yıllık dönemde yapılan satış eğitim toplantılarında gruplara ayırma yöntemi kullanılarak itirazlar çıkartılmıştır. Toplam 9 işletmenin incelendiği bu çalışmada 388 satış temsilcisi ile yapılan 20 satış eğitim toplantısında oluşturulan takım eğitim toplantılarında elde edilen bilgilerden yola çıkarak farklı itiraz konuları bakımından firmalar arasında itirazların benzerlik gösterip göstermediği incelenecektir. Amaç farklı işletmelerin satış gücünün piyasada müşterilerle yaptığı satış görüşmesi sırasında karşılaştığı çeşitli itirazları toplamak, itiraz şekillerine göre sınıflandırmak ve bu şekillere göre tablolar ile istatistik dağılımlarını ortaya koymaktır. Araştırmanın istatistik bulguları on altı tablo ve bir grafik yardımı ile değerlendirme ve öneriler yapılarak açıklanacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kişisel satış, kişisel satış süreci, bütünleşmiş pazarlama.

I. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to help towards executive decision-making by collecting, classifying and commenting on customer or buyers objections made to sales representatives of firms. It is anticipated that there are benefits to be gained from this study by firms, customers and the community in general.

The study is based on the extraction of objections by method of distribution into groups in sales training meetings held over a period of four years from 1999-2003. In this study 9 firms have been examined. From this primary study group of 9 firms, 388 sales representatives participated in 20 training meetings to make up the team studies. It is also examined as to the extent of similarity or difference in the nature of objections among the various firms.

Customer objections are compiled from such objections made to sales representatives and firm authorities involved in purchasing in the following areas

of sales; newspaper advertisements, TV commercials, photocopiers, retail sales, wholesale, hair care products, vendor sales, hotel room dealers and tourism agency.

In this study, the aim is to compile and classify objections raised in various firms during the course of sales negotiations according to type and put forward statistical distributions in the form of tables according to these types.

Within the framework of marketing communication considerations, there are some hypotheses, which are aimed to be tested;

(H1) Variation in objection distribution in terms of firm.

(H2) Variation in objection distribution in terms of objection type.

(H3) Relationship among customer objections in terms of nature of objection.

(H4) Inter-relationship of customer objections in terms of the various firms.

The statistical findings of this study have been explained with the help of sixteen tables and a graph, for which evaluations and proposals have been put forward.

Many changes have occurred in marketing and sales. In this study, authentic objections were examined as raised by real customers using their own original wording during sales dealings as opposed to post-sale objections. Additionally, in this study, rather than concentrating on what pleased the customers, the matters that displeased them while making the decision to purchase were taken into consideration as conveyed directly by the sales representative involved.

In order to maintain the competitiveness and confidentiality of the study, no company titles have been disclosed, instead only their area of sales and products have been stated while examining objections in order to reach a better understanding.

In terms of an aspect of marketing communication under the heading of examination of customer objections, primarily the scope of marketing communication shall be clarified and with its definition the place of customer objections in integrated marketing communication will shortly be touched upon. Towards this end, nine different firms have been examined. During the course of the study customer objections are classified, the duration of compilation is examined and numerical information is reached in the form of tables while taking into consideration the primary study group and the firms involved. All findings and data gathered are evaluated and commented upon in the study. Ultimately, study constraints and conclusions and proposals are offered so that the examination of customer objections as an aspect of marketing communication may reach completion.

Research shows that very few customers ever buy without raising a number of objections. Interestingly, the same objections come up again and again irrespective of the business you are in, or the product or solution salesperson are selling (<http://journeylearning.com/objection-handling.htm>,2005).

All sales representatives encounter objections during the selling process. All customers, at some time or other, voice an objection to something the sales representatives say or do. In fact some customers may raise irrational or irrelevant objections that have nothing to do with the product, company, or the sales representatives. Of course buyers also valid concerns and questions. Sales skill in responding to objections is necessary. When new sales representatives realize buyers' objections are normal and natural part of the sales process, they can treat such objections as sales opportunities (Weitz, 2001).

During the sales trainings the following objections were raised in the study:

- *"I don't have time"*
- *"Let me think it over"*
- *"I haven't got time"*
- *"Come back in eight weeks' time"*
- *"Please just send me information"*
- *"Send me something"*
- *"I'll come back to you"*
- *"I don't know your company"*
- *"Your competitors need to earn a living too"*
- *"Your solution is inadequate"*
- *"We already have a supplier in that area"*
- *"We're actually reducing the number of our suppliers"*
- *"We don't want a single supplier"*
- *"I'm satisfied with my present supplier"*
- *"We buy from one of our customers"*
- *"We have a local supplier"*
- *"We buy from a business colleague"*
- *"We're in good hands"*
- *"Your competitor's product is better"*
- *"The competition is cheaper"*
- *"Your company is too small."*
- *"You're too expensive."*
- *"That's too much money at the moment."*
- *"That's too much for that sort of product."*
- *"I don't agree with your selling price."*
- *"My budget doesn't allow this."*
- *"My budget is quite tight give me a discount."*
- *"I insist on a quantity discount"*
- *"We really don't need your services"*
- *"We're happy with what we've got"*
- *"I have to speak with the manager"*
- *"We couldn't get approval"*
- *"It's against Company Policy"*

To be successful the sales representative must be able to overcome such objections before he can move to close the sales. If sales representative fails to respond to them satisfactorily, then all of his careful planning and preparation will have been in useless (McDonald and Leppard, 1990).

Sales objections are an inevitable part of most sales situation. But objections should not be viewed as unmovable obstacles. In most sales, the prospect will raise some sales objections or challenging questions. It doesn't mean that he or she is not interested. It is all part of the process.

Objections are the big part of the sales process, but they don't have to mean the sales representative have lost the sale(Friedman, 1992).

II. THEORETICAL DISCUSSIONS ON HANDLING OBJECTIONS

Customers almost always have objections during the presentation or when asked to place an order. The problem can be either logical or psychological and objections often unspoken. In customer objections, the sales representative should use a positive approach, seek out hidden objections, ask the buyer to clarify any objections, take objections as opportunities to provide more information, and turn the objections into reasons for buying. Every sales representative needs training in skills of handling objections (Kotler and Armstrong, 2006).

Objections highlight the issues which are important to the buyer. Customer's objections are signposts to what is really on their minds (Jobber and Lancaster, 2002).

In the selling tradition, a rich literature stream has developed where the scope of inquiry in understanding customer objections. Recently examined scholarly literature is quiet with regard to sales resistance and its definition. As such, we chose to review personal selling and marketing textbooks to determine how the textbook authors have defined sales resistance. A review of textbook authors find that although some are silent with regard to sales resistance, all mention sales objections. They define objections as "(any) concern or question raised by the buyer" and "an expression of confusion, doubt, or disagreement with the statements or information presented (by the salesperson)" (Hunt and Bashaw, 1999).

Clark and Bashaw have conducted research into one of the most common and economically consequential junctures where sales resistance emerges during real-life selling encounters (Clark and Bashaw, 2001).

Doyle and Roth have conducted relationshipselling research. They think handling objections are antiquated and dysfunctional. Relationship selling and coaching must now teach a new way of thinking about selling. Relationship selling requires the learning of new skills particularly in the areas of understanding customer needs and relationship development. Coaching strategies and programs developed for teaching selling skills Strategic shift to relationship-based selling offers significant competitive advantages (Doyle and Roth, 1992).

II.1 PERSONAL SELLING FUNCTION

This millennium is time of considerable change. Social and technological developments create new options and possibilities for consumers and for marketing management are related to distribution, pricing, retention marketing and marketing communication. Marketing communication encompass the other marketing-mix elements of product, price and distribution. Marketing communications are not only used to attract new customers but now more and more to reinforce and to retain loyal customers. In both cases, it is important to study the processing and effects of marketing communication under different conditions and for different customer objections(Raaij *et.al.*, 2001).

The personel selling function in marketing management has gained corporate, academic, and educational status. The vast majority of business organizations utilize personal selling to some degree to achieve marketing success.

Personel selling communications involve feedback, clarification, and what may be most important, a face-to-face attempt and opportunity to obtain an order. It is precisely the direct, intimate, and flexible nature of personal selling that makes it the predominant aspect of the marketing mix for many companies.

Personal selling involves locating prospects for the firm's offering, converting these prospects into customer, and maintaining customer satisfaction. Managing this selling fonction requires many interrelated planning, imlementation, and evolution activities (Wotruba, 1981), e.g., when seller firms use an agenda selling strategy, target produts receive higher evaluations and have higher probabilities of being considered and chosen. Buyer expertise moderates this effect(Wagner *et.al.*, 2001).

Especially in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry, is a testimony to the potential strength of brand partnership and to the power of marketing communications(Fill, 1995).

There are emprical survey investigations on handling objections, sales performance, managerial actions, sales performance, subjective and objective outcames (Dwyer, *et.al.*, 2000; Mengüç, 2000; Smith, *et.al.*, 2000; Venkatesh, *et.al.*, 2000; Wagner, *et.al.*, 2000; Chandrashekar, *et.al.*, 2000; Wang and Netemeyer, 2002; Speier and Venkatesh, 2002).

II.2 MARKETING COMMUNICATION

This section of the study reviews four marketing communication mix elements that often work in partnership with advertising-personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, and direct marketing. In designing an effective and efficient marketing communication program, an advertiser seeks to strike an appropriate balance between advertising and these other elements (Murphy and Cunningham, 1993).

Personal selling is one of a number of marketing mix elements which can be used in firm's marketing strategy. The marketing executive's task is to select which elements to use and to also decide how they are to be used. When this task

is completed, the role of personal selling, as well as advertising, packaging, sales promotion, and other marketing mix elements, will be defined (Wotruba, 1981).

Having examined the elements that make up the marketing communication mix, advertising is a subset of marketing that relies on the evaluation and coordination of product-centred and consumer-centred strategies. Even products that have a similar marketing mix may use different advertising strategies (Wells *et.al.*,1998).

Marketing mix has to create synergies among the various marketing communications programs. For these reasons, many marketing scholars are increasingly recognizing the importance of integrated marketing communications. Integrated marketing communication is a concept that recognizes the added value in a program that integrates a variety of strategic disciplines-for example, advertising, direct sales, sales promotion, and public relations-and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum communication impact (Sirgy, 1998).

For maximum communication impact are the following:

1. Who should receive the messages.
2. What the messages should say.
3. What image of the organisation/brand we want receivers to retain.
4. How much is to be establishing this new established image.
5. How the messages are to be delivered.
6. What actions the receivers should take.
7. How to control the whole process once implemented (Fill, 1995).

Broadly within the instigating mix of maximum marketing communication are the advertisement, public relations and the elements of presentation. However, the commercial dialogue to convince the customer only takes place between the sales representative and the potential customer. This dialogue, reciprocating the customer's disapprovals and objections, is what instigates the sale. So in this sense the primary function realized by a sales representative is seen to be that of his/her individual sale. With this aspect of marketing communication a potential customer becomes an existing customer and the aims of the sales representative and the firm are realized. Customer objections, as an aspect of marketing communication, bring about varying sales techniques to consistently reciprocate and respond to customer apprehensions, thus ultimately leading to concordance in customer relations.

When referring to objection, the words demur, dissent, protest, refuse, resistance, reaction, opposition, rejection, disagreement and saying "no" come to mind. Objections to sales, indicates the sales representative personally experiencing the customer displaying resistance to purchase. This resistance presents obstacles to the sales representative attaining his/her goal. If there is an objection to the sales representative's offer, it means that the customer is reacting. Or it could imply that there is a disagreement between the customer and the sale

representative. But, as successful sales representative always say, there would be no sale without any objections (Anderson, 1995).

Sales representatives face many similar objections during sales negotiations. However, learning the right response beforehand to reciprocate such objections helps facilitate the sale. Objections are an inseparable part of the life of a sales representative.

The sales representative, without learning how to respond to various objections and resistances can never reach the peak of the sales profession. Reciprocation of objections should become a known and inseparable part of sales.

The sales representative should first come to an understanding as to what the objection is and embodies and then select the most appropriate method to respond to it. In fact, on the contrary, one should become anxious in the event that no objection is raised. As *Tom Hopkins* says, it is for this reason that objections should be appreciated (Hopkins, 1994).

These have only been a few of the most common objections, but if sales representative are faced with a situation sales representative are not sure how to handle, handle it in a step by step fashion:

- Find out what the objection is
- Question the objection and try to find/guess the root of it
- Acknowledge the objection
- Try to highlight other benefits in your product/service (Cooper, 2005).

There are many variables affecting the sale of a sales representative. In terms of the commercial customer or end customer making the decision to purchase, proper response to objections is just one of many variables affecting their decision to select a product or service offered by a sales representative?

Today, to ensure that a sales representative success will last from customer to customer and from sales call to sales call, getting the individual order is never enough.

A sales representative also need:

- Satisfied customers,
- Long-term business relationships,
- Solid, repeat business with a sales representative 'regular' customers,
- Enthusiastic referrals to new prospects (Heiman et.al.2004).

II.3 CUSTOMER OBJECTIONS

Sales representatives should not always view objections with dismay. Many objections are simply interest by the buyer. The effective approach for dealing with the buyer's objections involves two areas: the preparation of convincing answers; and development of a range of techniques for answering objections in a manner which permits the acceptance of these answers loss of face on the part of the buyer (Lancaster and Jobber, 1990).

From the outset, it may be useful to separate customer objections into six types; price, product, time, administrative, service and requirement objections. In

this way, it will be easier to comprehend and classify objections. In addition to this it should be kept in mind that some objections, such as those concerning forward sales and fixed terms, are related both to time as well as price, thus it is quite possible they may overlap in some instances.

For this reason, it is imperative that sales representatives make further inquiries as to the reasons of purchase and understand the essence of any objection. Once reasonable answers are obtained for these inquiries it will become possible to respond to any objection in an appropriate manner. Following study examine the six major types objections, which are summarized in the Table I (Weitz et.al. 2001).

Probably the best way to get to this more rational position is simply for the salesperson to be well prepared. This is the first step in the selling process and this is one place where preparation pays off handsomely (Godfrey, 1995).

A salesperson interview represents a process that attribution theorists call “naive psychology”. Unfortunately, unexpected and sometimes negative outcomes are just a part of the job for people engaged in sales process. Salespersons aspire to minimize important negative occurrences and customer objections, such as failing to close a sale (Dixon et.al. 2001).

II.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF OBJECTIONS AND THEIR BENEFITS

In terms of marketing communication, there are innumerable benefits to compiling, classifying and evaluating customer objections.

Contradictory objections coming from different customers must be notified to the concerned departments of the firm. Customer objections should be carefully monitored by firms along with additional resources in the form of marketing analyses, observation rates, anonymous customer/consumer studies, call centres, etc. This, such information should be shared widely within the firm. By taking heed of and understanding these objections, employees and authorities at all levels can comprehend future needs of the firm (Gronstedt, 2000).

Objections keep sales representative from making the mistake of selling when you should not, and they give sales representative valuable information about his or her customer.

This means, most objections do not need to end the sales. Some objections result from poor communication on sales representative part, and some are due to lack of understanding or trust from customer. Sales representative must learn to tell the difference between the types of objections, so sales representative can face them truly and frankly (Dion, 1995).

By benefiting from these objections, marketing managers can re-project elements of their marketing mix in line with their customers. By investing in objecting customers marketing expense yields can be boosted. It may be possible to provide for establishing and maintaining a continuous, quality and long-term relationship with existing customers. Firm gains may be increased in connection with raising the number of loyal and partisan customers through reciprocated objections.

III. AIM OF THE STUDY AND EXPECTED BENEFITS

Within marketing communication customer objections figure strongly in individual sale. In the first part of this study, various objections gathered from sales training practice and real customers are taken up and examined in detail.

Customer objection are an inevitable hurdle between sales representatives and the sale. They have to learn how to overcome them. These include the need for constant exposure the creative solutions (Kennedy, 1998).

The objections listed herein will be those raised by real customers using their own original wording as conveyed to us by sales representatives in sales training held by us. For this reason conversations have been given without any alterations.

Also, again under this heading, there will be customer objections made to a GSM operator's mobile telephone and line-selling vendor as conveyed during another sales training.

In this portion, certain examples will also be given relating to the manner in which a hotel customer's objections were made to receptionists at a hotel in Bodrum (a coastal town located in the southwest of Turkey). Other than these, there will be objections from customers to sales representatives in a travel agency that is a subsidiary of a holding company owning a hotel in Bodrum and a holiday resort in Side, and responsible for arranging and providing meetings and conference services to other tourism agencies and large-scale firms.

Other objections listed for this study are from a shampoo and hair-gel hair care product-manufacturing firm where objections raised during sales came up in an in-house sales training.

There are also more abstract objections from sales representatives in the advertisement industry dealing with advertisement space; objections from here were numerically greater and more diverse.

All objections and offer able responses are analysed and solved in sales trainings. At this point it should be mentioned that it is beyond the scope of this article to discuss how logical or emotional the objections and responses are. All that is done is objections are collected and compiled, classified according to type and put forward in the form of tables and distributions. The findings reached in this study may form points of initiation for activities that need to be done in firm management and marketing departments of organizations. Furthermore, before reaching the customer, responses to objections may be able to provide towards preparation in the sales planning phase.

All actual and trustworthy information conveyed from the customers to the sales representatives as well as the objections themselves can be accumulated in a data warehouse for sales trainings.

As *Berry and Linoff* have expressed, the aim is for firms to understand their customers better and with data mining as a basis, develop their marketing,

sales and customer relationship management accordingly (Berry and Linoff, 1997).

Customer' evaluations of quality and satisfaction are critical inputs in the development of marketing strategies. A question that naturally arises is whether and in what way expecting to evaluate the quality of a sales call. This question can have significant theoretical and practical implications (Ofir and Simonson, 2001).

Also this question can have supervisory orientations and salesperson location (Challagalla et.al. 2000).

Within the scope of this study, after objection data has been gathered it is analysed in terms of marketing, evaluated and presented to decision-makers with proposals.

In this study, the objective is to aid in the decision-making of senior management through gathering, classification and interpretation of customer objections at any period in time. There are various benefits of this investigation in terms of the firm, consumer and society at large.

1. Firm Impact:

With this study, all participating firms were able to attain the most important customer objections through its sales representatives.

Along with other related data from other sources, these objections indicated various important activities that needed to be done or corrected. With the removal of these problem issues it is possible to reduce the marketing costs and increase firm gains.

2. Consumer Impact:

The customers examined in this study were commercial customers from within the distribution channel.

Much benefit may be attained for more effective service to the consumers in terms of price, product, distribution and support, for consumer preservation, creation of loyal consumers, consumer satisfaction and other such similar benefits.

3. Social Impact:

Sales realized to customers whose objections are reciprocated lead to mutual increase in gains, work satisfaction in sales representatives rises with satisfied customers, an overall fall in firm issues provides towards a multi-dimensional social marketing understanding framework.

This study may also help researchers and practitioners alike to produce more effective prescriptive advice about the particular objections handling skills and sales knowledge structures that salespeople need to employ in order to sell more adaptively and more successfully.

IV. PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY

The study is based on the extraction of objections by method of distribution into groups in sales training meetings held over a period of four years

from 1999-2003. In this study it is examined as to the resemblance or difference in the nature of objections among the firms.

During the course of the sales training meetings customer objections were subjected to the following stages in the given order;

1. The whole group was briefly enlightened as to the difference in customer objections and customer complaints.
2. During the course of the training the sales representatives were divided into teams of 4-7 people.
3. These teams were furnished with markers and large, white 70x100 cm paper.
4. Each team was told to designate a leader, a clerk and a timekeeper.
5. The teams were given 20 minutes to note down objections faced during the course of sales in the original words of the customer.
6. The team clerks legibly wrote each of the objections within the time allotted to the timekeeper and each of the team leaders were asked to present each of the objections to all participants.
7. It was explained as to how each of the exposed objections would generally need to be answered.
8. Each team was then asked to discuss how they would need to respond to each of their presented objections.
9. Following this, the sales representatives within each team were consecutively asked to play the roles of sales rep and customer and respond to each objection raised.
10. With this practice, all participating sales representatives played their roles to respond to each objection in the same manner.

In order to determine and gather customer objections the telephone, fax and Internet may be implemented. However, for an effective analysis it is difficult to get the same effect as face-to-face communication. Although this method may be more costly and time consuming, data regarding objections is most realistically gathered in this manner as opposed to the other methods.

The data gathered is up-to-date. From the fatal earthquake of August 1999 to the current Gulf crisis, and all external current issues, customer objections are affected and obstacles to purchasing are created. Objections have been listed in accordance with current data and classified therein. At the end of this ordering classification was done in terms of price, product, time, administrative, service and requirement objections. This classification has been displayed in the form of tables further in this study.

V. STUDY MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

The study model is descriptive and establishes as to how variable the distribution is in terms of firm as well as nature of objection, it also examines as to whether the firms and the nature of objections are related or not.

The study does not aim to establish cause and affect relationship; however, once such a relationship is defined it is thought that it may be beneficial for future projections. We considered relationships that connect the various constructs.

A relationship is a meaningful link believed to exist between two constructs. Once we take a set of constructs and order their relationships with some understandable logic. And we generate hypotheses for the upcoming study (Burns and Bush, 1998).

The hypotheses, which are aimed to be tested in this study within the framework of considered topics, are as follows;

Hypothesis 1: Distribution of objections shows variations in terms of firm.

Hypothesis 2: Distribution of objections shows variations in terms of the subject of the objection.

Hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between the customer's objections in terms of the subject of objection.

Hypothesis 4: There is an inter-relationship between customer objections by firm.

Table I. Sales Training Meeting Participant Objection Numbers and Averages

FIRMS	N. OF MEETINGS	N. OF PARTICIPANTS	N. OF OBJECTIONS	AVERAGE N. OF MEETINGS	AVERAGE NO. OF PARTICIPANTS
Newspaper Advertisement.	4	115	167	41.8	1.5
TV Commercials	2	19	44	22.0	2.3
Photocopiers	1	16	49	49.0	3.1
Retail Sales	5	111	83	16.6	0.7
Wholesale Sales	3	67	112	37.3	1.7
Hair care products	2	28	101	50.1	3.6
Vendor Sales	1	12	26	26.0	2.2
Hotel room dealers	1	8	14	14.0	1.8
Tourism Agency	1	12	21	21.0	1.8
Total of enterprises	20	388	617	30.9	1.6

From the primary study group of 9 firms, 388 sales representatives participated in house 20 sales training meetings to make up the team studies. For this investigation, written examples of customer objections were taken. There was a relationship between the model sales representatives chosen and the selected model individual examples chosen for face-to-face dealings as potential and existing customers that needed to be convinced.

Customer requests and issues can possibly be put forward relating to the firm characteristics such as for production, export, public relations, accounts,

advertisements, customer services, accounts receivable, procurement, purchase, security, transportation, shipping, etc., however, the other departments in the firm or individuals from other departments are not responsible for handling such issues relating to provision of suitable goods, provision of services, taking of orders or ultimately realization of sales. In terms of varying firm characteristics, examples of customer objections were obtained from those responsible for taking orders under varying titles and, as such, a total of 617 objections from sales representatives were selected for the primary study.

For the appraisal of the study data the statistics program SPSS, version 10.0 for Windows, was implemented and this was used to evaluate averages, variables and correlation analyses for evaluation of the hypotheses. In this study 9 firms were examined. The subject of sales of these firms was;

1. Firm: Newspaper Advertisements,
2. Firm: TV Commercials,
3. Firm: Photocopiers,
4. Firm: Retail Sales,
5. Firm: Wholesale Sales,
6. Firm: Hair care products,
7. Firm: Vendor Sales,
8. Firm: Hotel room dealers,
9. Firm: Tourism Agency

Customer objections were obtained from institution authorities and individuals responsible for making purchasing decisions.

VI. STATISTICAL FINDINGS OF THE INVESTIGATION

Table I gives some statistical data which were obtained from the study. In the table the number of meetings which were held, the number of participants, the number of objections can be seen. The table also gives the average number of meeting and the average number of participants according to the firms. As seen from Table I above, the numbers of meetings for each stated enterprise are different. The most meetings are held for Newspaper Advertisements and Retail sales, and these also displayed the highest number of participants. In terms of numbers of objections, Newspaper Advertisements again take the top spot followed by Wholesale and Hair care products as second and third respectively. If newspaper advertisements are held apart, it is seen that the number of objections and the number of meetings held with the given numbers of participants is closely related to relevant sector of other firms along with products sold and/or characteristics of services provided. The striking point in this table is that the ranges of average number of meetings and average number of participants are high. (Ranges are 36.1 and 35.3 respectively.) The result of the statistical investigations shows us that the distributions of objections are varied in terms of firms. The reason of this situation can be partly explained by suggesting the differences of the participants and meetings. But the most important causes of the differences are related with the subject area of the firms and types of product

and services. In summary H_1 Hypothesis is accepted .In other words, it can be said that the distribution of objections shows variations in terms of firms. In order to test the second (H_2) Hypothesis, the distribution of objections in terms of subjects has been investigated:

Table II gives the distribution of type of objection to subject. Table II, Table II-1 to Table II-10 give percentage distributions in detail.

Table II. Distribution of Type of Objection to Subject (n=617)

SUBJECT OF OBJECTION FIRMS	PRICE	PRODUCT	TIME	ADMINISTRATIVE	SERVICE	REQUIREMENTS.
Newspaper Advertisements	36	38	20	18	23	32
TV Commercials	13	7	3	8	4	9
Photocopiers	20	8	5	1	12	3
Retail Sales	24	13	2	5	34	5
Wholesale Sales	21	9	4	5	50	23
Hair care products	16	35	1	8	32	9
Vendor Sales	12	2	1	1	9	1
Hotel room dealers	8	3	-	-	3	-
Tourism Agency	17	-	-	-	4	-
<i>T o t a l</i>	1 6 7	1 1 5	3 6	4 6	1 7 1	8 2

Table II-2 Distribution of Objection Types In TV Commercial Objection Types (n=44)

OBJECTION	AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE (%)
Price	13	29.5
Product	7	15.9
Time	3	6.8
Administrative	8	18.2
Service	4	9.1
Requirement	0	20.5
<i>Total</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Table II-3 Distribution of Objection Types In Photocopier (n=49)

OBJECTION	AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE (%)
Price	20	40.8
Product	8	16.3
Time	5	10.2
Administrative	1	2.1
Service	12	24.5
Requirement	3	6.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Table II-4 Distribution of Objection Types In Retail Sales (n=83)

OBJECTION	AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE (%)
Price	24	28.9
Product	13	15.7
Time	2	2.4
Administrative	5	6.0
Service	34	41.0
Need	5	6.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Table II-5 Distribution of Objection Types In Wholesale Sales (n=112)

OBJECTION	AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE (%)
Price	21	18.7
Product	9	8.1
Time	4	3.6
Administrative	5	4.5
Service	50	44.6
Requirement	23	20.5
<i>Total</i>	<i>112</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Table II-6 Distribution of Objection Types In o Hare care Products (n=101)

OBJECTION	AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE (%)
Price	16	15.8
Product	35	34.7
Time	1	1.0
Administrative	8	7.9
Service	32	31.7
Requirement	9	8.9
Total	101	100.0

Table II-7 Distribution of Objection Types In Vendor Sales (n=26)

OBJECTION	AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE (%)
Price	12	46.2
Product	2	7.7
Time	1	3.8
Administrative	1	3.8
Service	9	34.7
Requirement	1	3.8
Total	26	100.0

Table II-8 Distribution of Objection Types In Hotel Room dealers' (n=14)

OBJECTION	AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE (%)
Price	8	57.2
Product	3	21.4
Time	-	-
Administrative	-	-
Service	3	21.4
Requirement	-	-
Total	14	100.0

Table II-9 Distribution of Objection Types In Tourism Agency (n=21)

OBJECTION	AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE (%)
Price	17	80.9
Product	-	-
Time	-	-
Administrative	-	-
Service	-	-
Requirement	4	19.1
Total	21	100.0

Taking Advantage of Table I and Table II, Table III calculates and compares

- (1) Participation per Meeting,
- (2) Number of Objections per Meeting, and
- (3) Number of Objections per Participant to the Subjects of Training of each firm.

Tables given above give us important clues for the variations in terms of the objections. In these tables the percentages of the objections according to the subjects of the objections are meaningfully different. Therefore, H₂ hypothesis is accepted.

By using the data given in Table I and Table II number of objections per meeting participation per meeting and number of objections per participant have been demonstrated according to the firms.

Table III. Participation per Meeting, Number of Objections per Meeting and Participant

FIRMS	PARTICIPATION PER MEETING	N. OF OBJECTIONS PER MEETING	N. OF OBJECTIONS PER PARTICIPANT
Newspaper Advertisements	28.8	41.8	1.5
TV Commercials	9.5	22	2.3
Photocopiers	16	49	3.1
Retail Sales	22.2	16.6	0.7
Wholesale Sales	22.3	37.3	1.7
Hair care products	14	50.5	3.6
Vendor sales	12	26.0	2.2
Hotel room dealers	8	14.0	1.8
Tourism Agency	12	21.0	1.8
TOTAL	19.4	30.9	1.6

The statistical findings relating to the distribution in Table III are given in Table IV. As can be understood from the findings, where there are more objections in sales training or sales meetings divided by participation that is lower in some groups renders it more beneficial.

The central inclination and distribution measurements have been given in Table IV relating to the above calculated rates. In this way it can be possible to get an idea as to the amount of deviation shown and to what extent the participation per meeting, number of objections per meeting and number of objections per participant have deviated away from the central values (Bowen and Starr, 1982).

Table IV Participation per Meeting, Deviation Characteristics of Number of Objections per Meeting and Participant

STATISTICAL VALUE	PARTICIPATE IN PER MEETING (1)	NO. OF OBJECTIONS PER MEETING (2)	NO. OF OBJECTIONS PER PARTICIPANT (3)
Minimum Value	8	14	0,7
Maximum Value	28,8	50.5	3,6
Average	16.09	30,91	2.08
Standard deviation	6.93	13.98	0.86
Variation Coefficient (%)	0.43	0.45	0.41

When examining the statistical values given in Table IV, it may be noted that the rates, averages and minimum-maximum values of participation per meeting, number of objections per meeting and number of objections per participant all differ. However, since the variation coefficients may be counted as being the same it can be said that variability is of the same level. These results are supporting the H_1 and H_2 Hypotheses.

When analysing the direction of the relationship between these rates by applying a correlation analysis (Hanke-Reitsch, 1991) it is found that although there is an opposite direction to the rates of participation per meeting, number of objections per meeting and number of objections per participant it exposes an insignificant relationship. In a similar way, the correlation between the direction of the number of objections per meeting and the number of objections per participant is the same; however, there it displays a 5% level of significance in the relationship.

Table V Pearson and Spearman Correlation Coefficients

CORRELATION COEFFICIENT	PEARSON COEFFICIENT	SPEARMAN COEFFICIENT
r_{12}	0.40	0.50
r_{13}	-0.42	-0.47
r_{23}	0.67 *	0.50

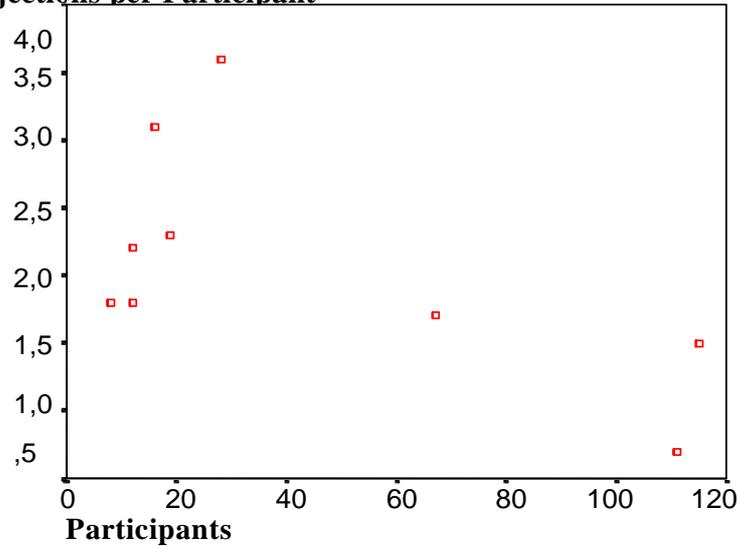
* 5% level of significance accepted with a unilateral test.

Another noteworthy matter relating to Table V is the indication that the number of objections per meeting and number of objections per participant have developed the opposite directions. Graph 1 shows the opposite distribution of number of participants and number of objections.

In fact, the relation with the distribution of number of participants and number of objections can be seen in Graph 1.

$r=-0.62$ $\alpha =5\%$ level of significance accepted with one-tail test.

Objections per Participant



Graph 1 Distribution of Participants and Objections

As an interpretation of Table II, when examining the Pearson Correlation Coefficients for the distribution of objections per firm, a relationship can be seen between 5% level of significance for the correlation coefficients and the distribution of objections of these firms. Refer to Table VI for this relationship.

Table VI Pearson Correlation Coefficients

FIRMS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	1.000	.600	.498	.219	.051	.476	.291	.600	.531
2	.600	1.00	.432	.091	-.085	-.049.	.397.	.603.	.836*
3	.498	.432	1.00	.778*	.449	.413	.944**	.965**	.761*
4	.219	.091	.778*	1.00	.836	.704	.878*	.697	.317
5	.051	-.085	.449	.836*	1.00	.517	.630	.306	.095
6	.476	-.049	.413	.704	.517	1.000	.387	.429	-.099
7	.291	.397.	.944* *	.878*	.630	.387	1.000	.890**	.703
8	.600	.603	.965* *	.697	.306	.429	.890*	1.000	.814*
9	.531	.836*	.761	.317	.095	-.099	.703	.814*	1.00

** 1% level of significance

* 5% level of significance

Acceptable correlation coefficients for the 1% and 5% levels of significance are valid for the following pairs of firms:

Vendor Sales ↔ Photocopiers (1%)
Vendor Sales ↔ Hotel room dealers (1%)
Vendor Sales ↔ Retail Sales (5%)
Hotel room dealers ↔ Tourism Agency (1%)
Hotel room dealers ↔ Photocopiers (1%)
Wholesale Sales ↔ Retail Sales (5%)
TV Commercials ↔ Tourism Agency (5%)

This situation indicates a resemblance in the distribution of subject of objections in some firms.

The result of the correlation analyses verifies that there is an interrelationship between customer objections by firm. For that reason H₄ hypothesis is accepted. This shows that it could be beneficial if common modifications in marketing policies for designated firm domains.

The last part of our research is to test the relationship between customer's objections in terms of subject of objections. (H₃ Hypothesis)

When examining the distribution for the subjects of objections, it was considered it was or was not worth investigating as to the relationships between these subjects forming the principal sales functions. In this way, for those functions having relationships, it was thought that it could guide holding companies or enterprises to seek a common sales policy in terms of marketing management for different products or services offered.

The variables of price, product, time, administration service and requirement have been listed from 1 to 6 and the calculated Pearson Correlation Coefficients are given in Table VII below.

Table VII Calculated Pearson Correlation Coefficients among Subjects of Objection

SUBJECTS	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Price	1.000	0.646	0.858**	0.746*	0.481	0.772*
2. Product	0.646	1.000	0.656	0.848**	0.455	0.672*
3. Time	0.858**	0.656	1.000	0.842**	0.188	0.833**
4. Administ.	0.746*	0.848**	0.842**	1.000	0.348	0.857**
5. Service	0.481	0.455	0.188	0.348	1.000	0.580
6. Require	0.772*	0.672*	0.833**	0.857**	0.580	1.000

** 1% level of significance

* 5% level of significance

Acceptable correlation coefficients for both the levels of significance show variation in the same direction between the following objections:

Price ↔ Time	Product ↔ Administration	Time ↔ Administration
Price ↔ Administration	Product ↔ Requirement	Time ↔ Requirement
Price ↔ Requirement		

As can be seen, apart from Service there is a relationship among the remaining subjects of objection. As a result, it is possible to say that the variable of Price has a relationship with Time, Administration and Requirement variables. The variable of Product shows a relationship with Administration and Requirement variables, while the Time variable, apart from Price, also shows a relationship with Administration and Requirement.

A suitable and proper attitude along with standard and sales techniques while responding to all objections will ease the convincing of the customer and increase sales of the enterprise. Through the provision of higher quality sales training sales hit rates during sales negotiations of the sales group will surely raise.

Finally' a summary table for the tests which have been applied for the research hypotheses is given in the following:

Hypotheses	Explanations	Results
H ₁	Disribution of objections shows variations in terms of firm	Accepted
H ₂	Distributions of objections shows variations in terms of the subject of objection.	Accepted
H ₃	There is a relationship between the customer's objection in terms of the subject of objection	Accepted
H ₄	There is an interrelationship between customer's objection by firm	Accepted

The results of the test study may give us some important points about the realities for handling customer objections. By using these evidence personal selling management may take some course of action when there are some differences between various firms in terms of business area. Since there is a significant relationship between the number objections within the firms which are in the same area managers have to pay attention to this point. Similarly the same relationship can be seen on the subject of objections. This point will also help managers for taking sipecific policy for customers.

VII. CONSTRAINTS TO THE STUDY

In terms of marketing communication, the characteristics of customer objections gathered from the sales force are very different. There are a diversity of reasons behind these designated objectives.

Without getting into the details of the background of the reasons for objections, the data have been taken and classified in terms of quantity.

Due to the duration of the study being over a long term of four years, so many external factors were active during this uncertainty-filled time segment, such as the disastrous earthquake, the domestic economic crisis, political change and war, that it became difficult to generalize and keep current all interpretations.

The results obtained from this study do not necessarily tie in the objections in question particularly to the participating firms. Similar studies of this kind may be made with different scale firms having a varying diversity of qualified sales representatives reaching out to a customer mass with different characteristics and, in particular if such a study were to be carried out for customers or vendors outside of Istanbul within central Anatolia, very different conclusions would probably be reached. For this reason, the objections in this study are not meant to cover or be omni-valid for all firms in Turkey.

A study such as this may be carried out according to sales terms for usage towards sales management functions. However, all of the customer objections were not included in the scope of these studies. But all salespeople need to be careful not to overreact to an objection.

After all, they may be dealing with a customer who just likes to complain. Complaints are irritating and time consuming. Making sales is more pleasant and enjoyable than handling complaints from their customers.

Buyers also have a number of techniques, which they use in negotiations. Sellers should be aware of their existence, for sometimes their effect can be devastating. *Lancaster and Jobber* (1990) describe a number of techniques designed to weaken the position of the unsuspecting sales negotiator.

A sales negotiation is sometimes like an iceberg. The customer sees the tip of the iceberg but does not see the value-added features below the surface (Manning and Reece, 1998).

IX. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There have been previous studies relating to customer or consumer complaint behaviour. By definition, complaint behaviour may be stated as being the expression of a consumer's dissatisfaction in a variety of ways.

The concept of marketing communication encompasses the execution of all marketing actions and transactions of a marketing executive towards instigating the decision of making a purchase. Other than just marketing communication, the product, price and distribution also need consideration as variables to the communication. In a broad sense, one may consider marketing communication as the continuous dialogue between the customer and the firm.

A number of sales techniques reviewed to how the objectives may be accomplished. It is unrealistic for the sales representative to get through the sales techniques without the buyer raising an objection. Whenever an objection is raised, it has to answer, otherwise the sales representative will be unable to progress to closing the sale. By using an objections analysis process the sales representative can identify the main objections he can expect, categorize them price, product, time, administration service, requirement, and plan ways to forestall them or answer them.

The study model is descriptive and establishes as to how variable the distribution is in terms of firm as well as nature of objection, it also examines as to whether the firms and the nature of objections are related or not. The study does not aim to establish cause and effect relationship; however, once such a relationship is defined it is thought that it may be beneficial for future projections.

It is possible to reach the following conclusions from this study:

Customer objections, when examined by subject as well as by firm, were found to be different. As an important factor, the variation coefficients of the distribution of objections according to both criteria were found to be sufficiently high for acceptance of the first and second hypotheses of this study.

Customer objections, from the point of view of subject, were found to be inter-related. As such, it is possible to state that as a result of the acceptance of the third hypothesis of this study, knowledge of subjects for which objections were found to be inter-related would allow for sales management to be prepared for potential objections in similar subjects.

A similarity was found in customer objections distributed by firm. The acceptance of the fourth hypothesis indicates that firms active in different fields could find the opportunity to implement a common sales management policy for their groups and plan their training accordingly.

Problem subjects could be determined through various studies and concretized with customer objections. With these objections, customer needs and requirements, requests and expectations could be learnt and planning by the marketing departments done accordingly.

The stated objections, if learnt about and shared with relevant firm employees other than the sales group, would ease the solution of problems, prevent the raising of objections and also ease the responses of the sales group.

Current objections could be conveyed to and solved by relevant departments, units and authorized individuals. The most suitable responses and answers to such objections could be prepared beforehand during the sales planning phase. The sales group could be made conscious of responses through sales training, daily, weekly and monthly sales meetings. With such preparation, the sales representatives could be made to feel more confident during individual sales, which, in turn, would raise market yields. Sales costs could well be reduced and increased sales instigated.

Future studies could be made in relation to this subject by independent marketing research institutions, firm marketing and sales departments or by sales

training directorates, for instance, to investigate objection variation percentages in different time segments. By taking advantage of these objection percentages, better and more suitable marketing strategies, sales management policies and sales techniques could be developed. (Shao, 2002) A study such as this would need to be conducted frequently, the reason being that the nature of objections may be affected by the internal resources of the marketing department and firm and by fast-changing external factors. Thus, it may be necessary to conduct studies for every sales term.

It could be very beneficial if, later on, a broader sample primary study group was selected for research work under a single business area and focus was upon vendors or existing customers or if a study was conducted in a different field in order to create awareness of potential objections for sales representatives and then the data and findings were made more easily comparable.

Magazine advertising space sales representatives who wants to sell ads more effectively should consider trying to understand their clients better, rather than pressure them into buying. By listening to a client's objections, a sales representative can surmise what it is the client wants and how that client wants to buy advertising space. Sales reps should stop making sales pitches and more active listening (Gordon, 1995).

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