THE INFLUENCE OF MARKETING MIX ELEMENTS ON BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS TOWARDS THE DESTINATION: THE CASE OF SAFRANBOLU[1]

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to reveal the influence of marketing mix elements on the behavioral intentions of tourists visiting Safranbolu. Questionnaire technique was used in this research, which was designed as quantitative. Convenience sampling method, which is one of the non-random sampling methods, was preferred as the sampling method. Questionnaire forms were implemented to 511 domestic tourists in a face-to-face environment. As a result of the data obtained, it was determined that the participants found the products and services offered in the destination sufficient, they wanted to visit this destination again, and they found the prices of the products and services reasonable. Moreover, the participants stated that the package tours to Safranbolu are sufficient, they care about the qualifications of the employees and they find the local people hospitable. As a result of the regression analysis to determine the purpose of the research, it was determined that the product and human variables positively affected the behavioral intentions towards the destination.

Keywords: Marketing Mix, Behavioral Intentions, Safranbolu.
JEL Classification: M31, L83, Z32

PAZARLAMA KARMASI ELEMANLARININ DESTİNASYONA YÖNELİK DAVRANIŞSAL NİYET ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ: SAFRANBOLU ÖRNEĞİ

Öz

Bu araştırmanın amacı, pazarlama karması elemanlarının Safranbolu'yu ziyaret eden turistlerin davranışsal niyetleri üzerindeki etkisini ortaya koymaktır. Nicel olarak tasarlanan bu araştırmada anket tekniği kullanılmıştır. Örnekleme yöntemi olarak ise tesadüfi olmayan örnekleme yöntemlerinden biri olan kolayda örnekleme yöntemi tercih edilmiştir. Anket formları 511 yerli turiste yüz yüze ortamda uygulanmıştır. Elde edilen veriler sonucunda, katılımcıların destinasyonda sunulan ürün ve hizmetleri yeterli buldukları, bu destinasyonu tekrar ziyaret etmek istedikleri ve ürün ve hizmetlerin fiyatlarını makul buldukları belirlenmiştir. Bunun yanı sıra, katılımcılar Safranbolu'ya yapılan paket turların yeterli olduğunu, çalışanların niteliklerini önemsediklerini ve yerel halkı misafirperver bulduklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Araştırmanın amacını belirlemeye yönelik yapılan regresyon analizi sonucunda, ürün ve insan değişkenlerinin destinasyona yönelik davranışsal niyetleri olumlu yönde etkilediği tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Pazarlama Karması, Davranışsal Niyet, Safranbolu.
JEL Sınıflandırması: M31, L83, Z32

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1. Introduction

Destination marketing is a management philosophy that aims to research, predict and make a selection regarding the product, considering the characteristics of tourism demand, in order to ensure that the touristic products produced by a touristic destination in accordance with the goal of making the highest profit, and that includes decisions and practices regarding these (İçöz, 2001). In general, it is possible to categorize the purpose of destination marketing under two main headings. According to Aktaş (2007), the first of these aims is to identify and define the market or markets that will help the most efficient use of touristic products, services, and resources of a destination. The second is planning, production, and promotion activities that will affect the purchasing decisions of potential tourists in the target market in favor of the touristic products and product packages that the destination has (Özer, 2012).

Marketing mix elements play an essential role for the tourism sector as in all other industries. Without considering these elements, it is unexpected for a business to have a successful sales policy. The marketing mix is described as "the mix of elements that are beneficial in monitoring a particular market response." (Van Waterschoot and Van Den Bulte, 1992). Neil Borden introduced the concept of the marketing mix in 1953 (Van Waterschoot and Van Den Bulte, 1992), which involves the 4Ps (product, price, place, and promotion). After that, Booms and Bitner (1981) suggested incorporating three more Ps into services marketing mix elements – participants/people, physical evidence, and process. According to Wirtz, Chew and Lovelock (2013), they elaborated the 7Ps in the services marketing context. Moreover, Rafiq and Ahmed (1995) profoundly examined and found that "there are greater strengths and lesser weaknesses of using 7Ps than 4Ps; the main strengths of 7Ps include, but are not limited to, that it is more comprehensive and detailed" (Loo and Leung, 2016). Then, in terms of tourism marketing, the number of marketing mix elements has increased to eight with the new four components developed by Morrison (2010). Four new components; called programming, packaging, partnership and people (Middleton, 1997; İçöz, 2001; Çakıcı, Atay and Harman., 2008; Özer, 2012).

Marketing mix elements are closely related to the profitability of a business. Without developing marketing strategies, it seems quite difficult to reach the targets in business life where competition is very fierce. It is obvious that marketing has crucial place in the tourism sector. While there are studies in the literature on the factors affecting the service quality and destination choice, it was detected that there is a limited number of research on the effect of marketing mix elements on behavioral intentions towards the destination. Hence, it is outstanding to specify which factors the tourists -who make a choice of destination decision and recommend this destination- take into account when making an evaluation among various destinations and to determine the dimensions under which these elements are collected.

In the light of these, the purpose of this research is to determine the impact of marketing mix elements on the behavioral intentions of tourists coming to Safranbolu. For this purpose, answers to the following questions are sought:

- Do marketing mix elements affect tourists' behavioral intentions?

- What are the dimensions that the participants perceive the most and attach importance to?

2. Literature Review

Behavioral intention refers to the after-service statements of customers. It is a motivational factor that can affect later behavior and indicates that such behavior is done with effort (Duman and Mattila, 2005). "That is, it is likely for customers to act on their intentions by using the service happily and willingly, recommending the service to others, and revisiting" (Boulding, Kalra, Staelin and Zeithaml, 1993; Cronin & Taylor, 1994; Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996; Ajzen, 2004; Manirochana, Junead and Jamnongchob, 2021). Tourist behavioral intent studies can be used to further examine tourists' future behavior and their tendency to revisit and suggest to others (Cao and Chen, 2011).

Behavioral intention can be considered under two dimensions. First, it is the re-visit intention, which refers to tourists' intentions towards destinations and their future revisit. Second, the recommendation intention refers to the post-service behavior in which tourists suggest the service they receive to others or tell their positive experiences and impressions so that different potential tourists can also travel to the same tourism destinations.

Behavioral intentions include the behavior that customers think and do about the service after receiving the service (Koçoğlu, 2019). Lin and Hiesh (2005) defined behavioral intention as a sign that customers will continue to receive service from any business or not leave these businesses.

Behavioral intentions include the purchasing and consumption of the product/service and the actions of the customer after the processes related to the product/service (Anderson, Fornell and Lehmann, 1994: 59). The customer's experience with the product or service he/she has received, the idea of re-purchasing the product or service, and generally expressing his/her satisfaction with the product or service, demonstrates the behavioral intention of the customer (Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuaraman, 1996: 40). Güven and Sarıışık (2014) listed behavioral intention dimensions as customer loyalty, abandonment, more payment, and reasons for complaint.

Looking at the previous studies on behavioral intention, destination choice, and destination recommendation in the literature, according to Zeithaml and Bitner (2003), while customers having behavioral intentions have positive thoughts about businesses, at the same time they purchase goods and services repeatedly, make multiple purchases and express that they will recommend these businesses to other customers. Liu, Marchewka, Lu and Yu (2005) created the dimensions of behavioral intentions in the form of repeated purchases and visits, advices to others, and positive observations.

The research was done by Loo and Leung (2016) aimed to identify and classify service failures in luxury hotels operating in Taiwan. In that study, a theoretical analysis has been put forward by adapting the marketing mix elements. According to the results of the research, it was stated that customers' expectations from luxury hotels were higher, but Taiwan hotels were very disappointing. Few hotels are perfectly located and occupancy rates are high. Room prices are also relatively higher than others due to its decent location. "In the meantime, based on customer reviews, it shows that the stays are not valued for money due to poor product quality (e.g. dated design and shabby furniture), physical environment (such as damp smell from carpet), and level of service (e.g. unfriendly employees)" (Loo and Leung, 2016).

Özer (2012) aimed to investigate the influence of the eight elements of the marketing mix, as being product, price, distribution, promotion, person, partnership, program, and package, upon choosing a destination. The findings of the study revealed that the product and people variables have an effect on the choice for the Dalyan destination. This result shows that the Dalyan region, which stands out within the scope of eco-tourism, is also preferred by tourists, as expected, the product factor is at the forefront. In addition, for the Dalyan region, the people factor plays a key role in the preference of the region. Davras and Uslu (2019) intended to specified the determinants influencing the destination choice of British tourists in Fethiye, the effects of the factors that influence their destination choice on their overall satisfaction, and to reveal the discrepancies between demographic characteristics and destination choice determinants.

The findings of the research presented that seven factors were found, namely, knowledge and adventure, transportation and activity possibilities, socio-cultural activities, natural attraction, travel show, and entertainment & recreation within the scope of behavioral intentions of tourists in destination choice. It has been determined that the transportation and activity possibilities and the dimensions of natural charm are the most important factors on the destination satisfaction of the tourists. Besides, it has been concluded that demographic characteristics are not very effective in destination choices.

McGehee, Murphy and Uysal (1996) identified driving factors such as sports and adventure, cultural experience, being with family, prestige, and escape from the environment in their study on Australian tourists. Attractive factors are listed as heritage and culture, recreational activities, recreation, outdoor activities, and affordable prices. In a study conducted on tourists in Northern Cyprus, Yoon and Uysal (2005) named the driving factors as being with the family, success, escape from the environment, rest, education, entertainment and staying at somewhere away from home, exciting and sightseeing, while the attractive factors were activities, natural landscape, different cultures, nightlife, hygiene conditions, interesting cities, modern atmosphere, water activities, and suitable weather conditions.

Yousefi and Marzuki (2012) identified the driving factors as information seeking, rest, and ego satisfaction as a result of the research conducted on tourists visiting Malaysia, while the attractive factors were stated as cultural and historical attractions, environment and security, and tourism opportunities. Sangpikul (2008) found in his study that seeking information and cultural attractions have an effect on the destination choice of tourists coming to Thailand.

3. Data Set and Methodology

In this research, quantitative research method based on numerical data was used and questionnaire technique was used in data collection.

3.1. Preparation of Data Collection Tool

The questionnaire form used in the study consists of three parts. In the first part, there are 5 questions to measure demographic information. In the second part, there are 37 statements to measure the marketing mix component and in the last section 4 statements to measure behavioral intentions towards the destination. Statements for the marketing mix components were created by taking into account eight marketing mix components developed by Morrison (2010). Statements about behavioral intentions towards the destination are taken from the research conducted by Yang & Peterson (2004). A 5-point Likert scale was used in the 2nd and 3rd parts of the questionnaire. On the scale, it is stated as 1-Strongly agree, 5-Strongly disagree. In order to determine the validity of data collection tool, academics who are familiar with the subject were interviewed and as a result of this interview, the ones that could cause meaning difficulties in the expressions were corrected. Before implementing the questionnaire, a pilot study was carried out with 40 local tourists to foresee possible problems related to the variables included in the content of the questionnaire and the scale used (Yüksel and Yüksel, 2004), and the questionnaire form was finalized.

Domestic tourists coming to Safranbolu constitute the research universe. Safranbolu is one of the tourism destinations that attract attention with its natural and cultural values and attract visitors. Besides, the fact that no similar research has been conducted in Safranbolu before has been effective in conducting the research in this destination as the research universe. The surveys were conducted in april and may 2022. The convenience sampling method, one of the non-random sampling methods, was used as the sampling method in the research. According to Yüksel and Yüksel (2004), since many variables are affecting the sample, the researcher should reach a size that the appropriate data can be obtained rather than calculating the sample. Therefore, 511 participants made up the sample number.

3.2. Research Model and Hypotheses

There are some previous studies in the relevant literature that marketing mix elements have a positive effect on behavioral intention towards the destination. In his study, Özer (2012) revealed that product and people elements have a positive impact on tourists' destination choices. Liu et al. (2005) dimensioned behavioral intentions in their studies. These dimensions are listed as repeat purchasing and visiting, recommending to others, and positive observations. Güven and Sarıışık (2014) listed behavioral intention dimensions as customer loyalty, abandonment, more payment,

and reasons for complaint. Loo and Leung (2016) identified and classified service failures caused by luxury hotels in Taiwan in terms of marketing mix elements in their study. Manirochana et al. (2021) also analyzed the relationship between marketing mix elements and customers' behavioral intentions and found a moderately significant relationship. Similarly, Lee, Huang and Chen (2010) investigated which variables affect honeymoon couples' choice of destination within the context of their behavioral intentions towards the destination. At this point, when considered in terms of marketing mix elements, the findings revealed that "safety," "excellent quality of accommodation," and "reasonable travel cost" are the three most important features that revealed the attractiveness of a honeymoon destination. Significant differences in perceptions of destination attributes exist across groups of different sociodemographic and traveling characteristics of potential honeymooners.

Based on the mentioned researches in the literature, the hypotheses were formed as follows:

H1: The product, one of the marketing mix elements, has a positive impact on behavioral intentions towards the destination.

H2: The price, one of the marketing mix elements, has a positive impact on behavioral intentions towards the destination.

H3: The promotion, one of the marketing mix elements, has a positive impact on behavioral intentions towards the destination.

H4: The place, one of the marketing mix elements, has a positive impact on behavioral intentions towards the destination.

H5: The people, one of the marketing mix elements, have a positive impact on behavioral intentions towards the destination.

H6: The packaging, one of the marketing mix elements, has a positive impact on behavioral intentions towards the destination.
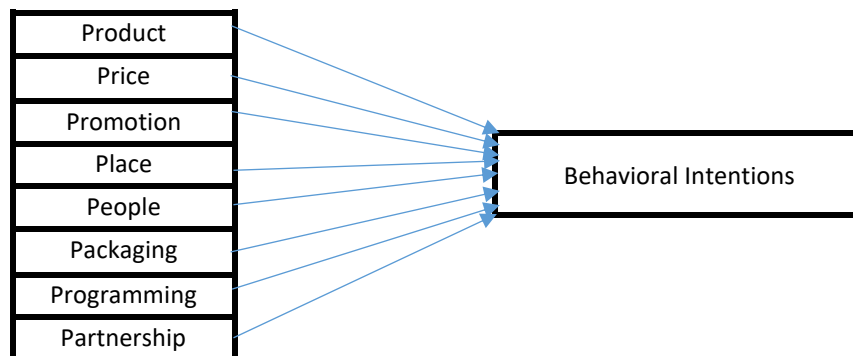
H7: The programming, one of the marketing mix elements, has a positive impact on behavioral intentions towards the destination.

H8: The partnership, one of the marketing mix elements, has a positive impact on behavioral intentions towards the destination.

A formal model has also been introduced to test the hypotheses of the research. As can be seen in Figure 1, the influence of each of the 8 marketing mix elements on behavioral intention has been demonstrated by multiple regression test. The results are given in the findings section of the research.

Figure 1: **Model of the Research**

Marketing Mix Components

4. Empirical Evidence

In this section, demographic information of the participants, factor analysis results, mean importance, and multiple regression results are included.

4.1. Demographic Information

Table 1: **Demographic Data**

	FREQUENCY	%
Gender		
Female	233	45,6
Male	278	54,4
Age		
18-27 years	92	18
28-37 years	108	21,1
38-47 years	121	23,7
48-57 years	94	18,4
58 years and over	96	18,8
Marital Status		
Married	331	64,8
Single	180	35,2
Education		
Primary Education	49	9,6
High School	119	23,3
Associate's Degree	120	23,5
Bachelor Degree	195	38,2
Postgraduate Degree	28	5,5
Number of Arrivals		
First	204	39,9
Twice	185	36,2
Third	93	18,2

The demographic characteristics of the tourists participating in the research are shown in Table 1. Looking at the gender of the participants, it seems that male participants form the majority. When the ages of the participants were examined, it was determined that approximately 45% of them were between the ages of 28-47. In terms of the marital status of the participants, it is seen that the majority of them are married. Considering the educational status of the participating tourists, it was determined that 38% of them are bachelor's degrees. When the number of participating tourists coming to Safranbolu is examined, it is noteworthy that about 40% of them came for the first time, and 60% of those who came more than once were in the majority.

4.2. Explanatory Factor Analysis for Marketing Mix Elements and Behavioral Intent Perceptions

Explanatory factor analysis was carried out to reveal the dimensional structures of behavioral intention perceptions and marketing mix elements scale and to determine their validity and reliability. First of all, reliability analysis was performed on both scales and it was determined that the internal consistency (Cronbach alpha) coefficient was ",896" and ",706", respectively. According to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), these values are above 0.70, which is necessary for both scales to be considered reliable and valid.

Table 2 contains the explanatory factor analysis made to the marketing mix elements and behavioral intention variable. According to the Kaiser normalization, in the factor analysis made taking into account the factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1, it was determined that the marketing mix elements consist of eight dimensions. The total variance percentage of the scale is

60.53. Since this rate is higher than 50%, the analysis seems valid (Scherer, Wiebe, Luther and Adams, 1988). When the marketing mix elements are examined as a result of the factor analysis, factors are named as follows: first factor (7 expressions) Product, second factor (6 expressions) Price, third factor (4 expressions) Programming, fourth factor (4 expressions) Partnership, fifth factor (4 expressions) Place, sixth factor (4 expressions) Promotion, seventh factor (4 expressions) People and eighth factor (4 expressions) Packaging.

Table 2: **Explanatory Factor Analysis for Marketing Mix Elements and Behavioral Intent**

Components	Factor Loading	Variance (%)	Reliability Analysis
Price		8,43	,797
Nightlife and entertainment prices in Safranbolu are affordable for every budget.	,731		
Souvenir prices in Safranbolu are affordable for every budget.	,729		
Food and beverage prices in Safranbolu are affordable for every budget.	,718		
Transport prices in Safranbolu are affordable for every budget.	,702		
Package tour prices in Safranbolu are affordable for every budget.	,608		
Accommodation prices in Safranbolu are affordable for every budget.	,530		
Programming		7,99	,818
I have the convenience of getting information about Safranbolu.	,764		
Tour programs organized to Safranbolu are suitable.	,752		
I have various facilities for purchasing a tour to go to Safranbolu.	,721		
I can get information about alternative tour options in Safranbolu.	,634		
Partnership		7,96	,915
Cooperation between accommodation facilities and travel agencies in Safranbolu is sufficient.	,791		
Cooperation between travel agencies and public institutions in Safranbolu is sufficient.	,784		
Non-governmental organizations and tourism enterprises in Safranbolu work in cooperation.	,749		
Cooperation between travel agencies and transportation companies in Safranbolu is sufficient.	,744		
Place		7,65	,783
There are different travel options to Safranbolu.	,732		
The reliability of the services of tour operators that organize tours to Safranbolu is quite good.	,705		
Safranbolu is a place that is easy to reach.	,704		
There are many reservation possibilities for events to be held in Safranbolu (Hotel, Restaurant, etc.).	,655		
Promotion		7,26	,817
Tourism information offices in Safranbolu work effectively.	,746		

Table 2 (Continued): **Explanatory Factor Analysis for Marketing Mix Elements and Behavioral Intent**

Components	Factor Loading	Variance (%)	Reliability Analysis
Advertising and sales development activities for Safranbolu are sufficient.	,725		
I can easily access information about Safranbolu.	,563		
Internet-web pages and last-minute sales for Safranbolu are sufficient.	,500		
People		6,65	,832
Local people are very welcoming in Safranbolu.	,748		
Officials working in public institutions in Safranbolu are qualified.	,723		
Employees in the accommodation facilities in Safranbolu are qualified.	,643		
Employees in transportation companies in Safranbolu are qualified.	,600		
Packaging		4,89	,707
Tour organizations for Safranbolu are sufficient.	,730		
Travel insurance application for Safranbolu is sufficient.	,695		
Alternatives for accommodation facilities in Safranbolu are sufficient.	,584		
Transportation alternatives to Safranbolu are sufficient.	,435		
Reliability Analysis: **0,896**; Variate Difference Method: **Principal Components Analysis;** Spinning Method: **Varimax with Kaiser Normalization**, Number of Iterations**: 9**, Sum of Variance: **60,53;** KMO Eligibility Criteria: **0,897;** Bartlett's Test of Sphericity x2: **8810,366** p: **0,000**			
Statements of Behavioral Intent		53,83	,706
Safranbolu will be my first choice in the future.	,779		
I would like to visit Safranbolu again in the future.	,728		
I would also recommend others to visit Safranbolu.	,721		
I advertise Safranbolu voluntarily.	,704		
Reliability Analysis: **0,706;** Variate Difference Method: **Principal Components Analysis;** Spinning Method: **Varimax with Kaiser Normalization** Sum of Variance: **53,83;** KMO Eligibility Criteria: **0,752;** Bartlett's Test of Sphericity x2: **355,391** p: **0,000**			

According to the explanatory factor analysis made to the second scale, it is seen that the behavioral intention variable consists of a single factor and the total variance is 53.83% and the Cronbach alpha coefficient is 0.706.

Table 3: **Mean Significance and Standard Deviation of Variables**

Dimensions	Mean	Standard Deviation
Behavioral Intention	4,18	,68968
Programming	4,07	,77878
Product	4,00	,74413

Table 3 (Continued): **Mean Significance and Standard Deviation of Variables**

Dimensions	Mean	Standard Deviation
Promotion	3,92	,76671
Packaging	3,88	,86553
Place	3,87	,79080
People	3,78	,98034
Partnership	3,62	1,21196

Table 3 includes the mean and standard deviations of the marketing mix elements and behavioral intention variables. It has been revealed that "Behavioral Intention" dimension is the one that the participants perceive at the highest level (4.18). Examining the averages of the marketing mix elements, it was determined that the "Program" dimension (4.07) and the "Product" dimension (4.00) had high averages while "Common" (3.62) and "Human" (3.78) perceived relatively low. When the averages of all these dimensions are evaluated, it is thought that the participants would like to come Safranbolu again, the products and services offered for sale in Safranbolu are sufficient and the prices of these products and services are at reasonable levels. Besides, it can be said that there should be better coordination between tourism establishments operating in Safranbolu.

4.3. The Influence of Marketing Mix Elements on Behavioral Intentions Towards The Destination

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the influence of the marketing mix elements which are product, price, promotion, place, people, programming, packaging, and partnership dimensions on behavioral intentions towards destination.

Table 4: **Findings Regarding Multiple Regression Regarding The Influence of Marketing Mix Elements on Behavioral Intentions Towards The Destination**

Independent Variables	Beta	t	P	Tolerance	VIF
Product	,394	8,810	,000	,560	1,784
Price	,193	4,944	,000	,739	1,354
Promotion	,170	3,987	,000	,616	1,624
Place	,095	,2,291	,022	,656	1,524
People	,070	1,582	,114	,564	1,772
Packaging	,076	1,806	,072	,627	1,596
Programming	-,028	-,689	,491	,692	1,444
Partnership	-,052	-1,223	,222	,614	1,627

R=,661; **R²=**,437; **Adjusted R²=**,428; **D-W=**1,810; **F=**48,72; **p=**0.000 **Dependent Variable:** Behavioral Intentions

First of all, multiple correlation and autocorrelation, which are the assumptions of multiple regression analysis, have been examined. Table 4 contains VIF and Tolerance values for marketing mix elements. Autocorrelation (Durbin-Watson value: 1.810) and multiple correlations (lowest tolerance value: 0.560, highest VIF: 1.784) were not detected in the analysis results. The fact that the Durbin-Watson value is between 1.5-2.5 and VIF values are below 10 indicates that there is no autocorrelation and multiple correlations between variables (Field, 2000).

In Table 4, multiple regression analysis performed to determine the influence of marketing mix elements on behavioral intentions towards the destination was found to be statistically significant (F = 48.72; p = 0.000). According to the model, the rate at which marketing mix components disclose behavioral intentions towards the destination is 43%.

When looking at the results of the standardized regression coefficients and the t-test regarding the significance of the regression coefficients, Significant and positive effects of the product (H1, β

=,394 p =,000); price (H2,β= ,193 p =,000); promotion (H3,β =,170 p=,000) and place (H4,β =,095 p=,022) elements on behavioral intentions towards destination were determined and related hypotheses were accepted. However, it has been determined that the variables that affect the behavioral intentions variable towards the destination the most are the product and the price. It was determined that people (H5,β=,070 p=,114); packaging (H6,β=,076 p=,072); programming (H7,β = -,028 p=,491) and partnership (H8,β=-,052 p=,222) elements had no effect on behavioral intentions towards the destination and related hypotheses were rejected.

5. Conclusion

Marketing mix elements have an important place in the tourism sector as in every sector. It is the lifeblood of businesses in terms of being able to compete with competitors and increasing sales and profitability. Besides, behavioral intention is very important for tourists to revisit their destination, to recommend it to others, and to advertise that destination voluntarily. In this research, the influence of marketing mix elements on the behavioral intention towards the destination has been a matter of curiosity and this situation has been tried to be determined by the researchers.

Considering the findings obtained from the research, it was determined that the statements in the marketing mix elements scale were gathered under 8 dimensions, and the statements in the behavioral intention scale under one dimension as a result of the factor analysis. In addition, the sum of the variance of the marketing mix elements scale was 60.53%, while the sum of the variance of the behavioral intention scale was 53.83%. When the mean significance of the variables were examined, it was found that the average of the 'Behavioral Intention' variable was 4.18 out of 5, and the 'Programming' variable was 4.07. In terms of mean significance, the 'Partnership' variable had the lowest average with 3.62. As a result of the multiple regression applied, the effect ratio between variables was determined. As a result of this analysis, multiple regression analysis performed to determine the effect of marketing mix elements on behavioral intentions towards destination was found to be statistically significant (F = 48.72; p = 0.000). According to the model, the rate of explanation of the behavioral intentions towards the destination of the marketing mix elements is 43%.

This study focused on measuring the impact of marketing mix elements on tourists' behavioral intentions towards the destination. According to the results of the research, as a result of the factor analysis, the marketing mix elements were gathered under 8 dimensions: product, price, promotion, place, people, packaging, programming, and partnership. When the previous researches on the subject in the literature were examined, it was seen that there were some similarities and differences. It is similar to the researches with the destination choice within the scope of behavioral intention, especially on issues such as revisiting a place and being the first option to visit a certain destination in the future (Matejka, 1973; Mayo, 1973; Scott, Schewe and Frederick, 1978; Goodrich, 1978; Lai and Graefe, 2000; Awaritefe, 2004; Liu et al., 2005; Güven and Sarıışık, 2014). It differs from some previous researches (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2003; Özer, 2012; Loo and Leung, 2016) because it deals with the effect of marketing mix elements on behavioral intention in a broader framework and specifically in Safranbolu. On the other hand, it is thought that this research conducted in Safranbolu, one of the most important touristic places of Turkey, will contribute to the literature as it deals with behavioral intention as a whole rather than destination preference and includes destination preference in it. In addition, this study has a unique value due to both the model it provides and the multiple regression analysis performed between two variables.

In addition to the theoretical contribution that this research will make to the relevant literature, it is thought that it will provide some benefits in practice. When the results of this research are examined by the relevant public institutions and accommodation operators, food and beverage operators, etc. who have the right to comment on tourism in Safranbolu, it is assumed that these

institutions will have more accurate information about the behavioral intentions of potential customers and their thoughts on marketing. Thus, it is thought that it will provide practical contributions to the development of Safranbolu tourism in terms of consumer behavior and sales-marketing. In the light of what has been explained, recommendations developed based on the research findings are presented below:

- For destinations to create a competitive advantage in international tourism markets, the current situation of the destination should be analyzed correctly and, according to the analysis result, correct and valid strategic marketing methods should be used for the markets.

- Other researchers can compare the perspectives of the tourists visiting Safranbolu region daily and the tourists staying in Safranbolu regarding the product.

- Cohesion and cooperation between tourism enterprises should be improved.

- Qualifications of individuals working in transportation vehicles and accommodation establishments in Safranbolu should be increased.

- Reservation opportunities should be diversified for the events to be organized.

- Transportation alternatives to Safranbolu should be improved.

- Internet-web pages and last-minute sales for Safranbolu should be developed and diversified.

- It can be investigated whether the attitudes and behaviors of local people play a complementary role in the product.

- Opinions and judgments of operators and local people regarding sustainability can be investigated.

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