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The Effect of Mobile Shopping Applications Usage Experience on Customers' WOM Intentions and Shopping Effectiveness

Mobil Alışveriş Uygulamaları Kullanım Deneyiminin, Müşterilerin WOM Niyetleri ve Alışveriş Etkinliği Üzerindeki Etkisi

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Öz

Mobil alışveriş uygulamaları işletmelerin pazarlama ve satış stratejilerini önemli ölçüde etkilemektedir. İşletmelerin müşterilerine etkili bir şekilde ulaşabilmeleri için teknolojik bir yönelim içerisinde olmaları ve müşterilerinin alışveriş davranışlarını dikkatle izlemeleri gerekmektedir. Tüketiciler, mobil alışveriş deneyimleriyle ilgili yorumlarını sosyal medya aracılığıyla paylaşmayı ve olumlu ya da olumsuz şekilde ağızdan ağıza (WOM) memnuniyetlerini yansıtma konusunda istekli davranmaktadırlar. Mobil alışveriş etkinliği, tüketicilerin alışveriş öncesi beklentileriyle gerçek mobil alışveriş deneyiminden elde edilen memnuniyet düzeyinin farklılığından kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu araştırmada, müşterilerin mobil alışveriş deneyimlerinden kaynaklanan memnuniyetlerinin, ağızdan ağıza (WOM) yorum niyetleri ve etkili alışveriş algıları üzerindeki etkisini incelemek amaçlanmaktadır. Bu çerçevede kolayda örnekleme yöntemine göre seçilen 295 mobil alışveriş uygulaması kullanıcısına anket uygulanmıştır. Hipotezler yapısal eşitlik modellemesi ile test edilmiştir. Araştırma bulgularına göre müşteri memnuniyeti, müşterilerin WOM niyetleri ve alışveriş etkinliği algıları üzerinde anlamlı, pozitif ve güçlü bir etkiye sahiptir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mobil Alışveriş Uygulamaları, Müşteri Memnuniyeti, WOM, Alışveriş Etkinliği, Teknolojik Yönelim.

The Effect of Mobile Shopping Applications Usage Experience on Customers' WOM Intentions and Shopping Effectiveness

Abstract

Mobile shopping context has affected marketing and sales strategies dramatically. Businesses should be technologically oriented to reach mobile consumers effectively and observe their shopping behaviors. Consumers like to share their comments about their mobile shopping experience through social media and reflect their satisfaction by emitting word of mouth (WOM). Mobile shopping effectiveness is the consumers' satisfaction level derived from pre-shopping expectations and the actual mobile shopping experience. In this research it is aimed to analyze the impact of customer satisfaction from mobile shopping experience on their WOM intentions and effective shopping perceptions. Within this context a questionnaire was applied to 295 mobile shopping application users who were selected according to convenience sampling method. Hypotheses have been tested through the structural equation modelling. According to research findings, customer satisfaction has a meaningful, positive and strong impact on customers' WOM intentions and their shopping effectiveness perceptions.

Keywords: Mobile Shopping Applications, Customer Satisfaction, WOM, Shopping Effectiveness, Technologic Orientation.

Introduction

The rapid technologic advancements in web, wireless and mobile technology made mobile phones very functional and an integral part of daily life. High mobile internet speed and high quality mobile software enabled customers use mobile technology in shopping activities. Smartphones are the leading devices used in mobile shopping. Based on the fact that 68% of the total world population are mobile users, businesses should pay special attention to mobile marketing. It is estimated that 52% of total website traffic is made through mobile devices (We Are Social, 2018).

The smartphones constitute indispensable communication channels for both businesses and consumers. Consumers who intend to purchase any products and services may reach relevant information about alternatives and WOM just by a click on their mobile devices. There are millions of paid and free applications downloadable about many categories (shopping, entertainment, finance, news, weather, maps, games, business, education, health, etc.) in mobile devices offered by app stores.

Today internet-based trade is vital for any businesses. Mobile shopping gradually increases its share in total internet sales. This trend poses new threats and opportunities for businesses. Parnell states that strategic decisions aim to utilize opportunities while being aware of the threats (Parnell, 2013:10). Mobile shopping is a strategic field for businesses.

Businesses that design their websites integrated with their mobile apps aim to provide the best service to their customers with user friendly mobile applications to gain competitive advantage. The brands who want to keep up with the intense competition in the online world have to design fast and convenient menu and process steps. Firms aim to create brand perception at customers by using same interface and menu arrangement in all type of online communication devices. Today's always busy people who are always short of time do not tolerate waiting. This is also true in the online world. The time-honored customers want to get instant access to the product and price information they seek.

Businesses with effective mobile marketing practices are able to better inform customers about campaigns. Customers who benefits from these opportunities will most probably prefer to use that brand's mobile applications. Mobile applications should direct and encourage customers, not only mobile shopping but also to the physical stores by integrated systems.. There are many customer data that the operators have obtained from physical stores, call centers, corporate internet sites or by different methods (such as cash registers, technical communication files etc.) which enable firms reach to potential customers.

The integration of the shopping cards and mobile applications of the brands may further enrich the customer databases. Firms utilize databases to promote products and services, provide information to customers, communicate better, increase brand image, increase customer satisfaction, understand consumer preferences and trends and carry out marketing and advertising activities in mobile marketing. Mobile marketing enable businesses to deliver ubiquitous and personalized communication with target customers.

The brand's mobile applications should integrate online and offline stores. The customers should be able to get information about alternative products and campaigns fast and easy and complete purchase through the application without any safety concern. Mobile shopping applications are effective communication and advertisement tools and and an information source for customers.

1. Literature Review

1.1. Mobile Shopping Applications Usage

The increasing digital dependence of today's mobile users also shapes consumers' online and in-store shopping behavior. Businesses should focus on efforts to benefit from this transformation by using new opportunities in uncertain market environment to gain competitive advantage by closely watching and understanding how these digital advancements affect consumers' purchasing habits and styles. This requirement has led businesses to think about how they can make their mobile applications more effective and easier by shaping and renewing them in the context of technologic orientation. Consumers are able to examine products at physical stores and buy them online, or vice versa. Businesses should analyze consumers' mobile device usage habits, satisfaction levels from their mobile shopping experience and ways of purchasing very well.

According to Nielsen (2016), mobile devices are indispensable shopping tools used to compare prices (53%), look up product information (52%), look for coupons or deals (44%), make better shopping decisions (42%), make shopping trips quicker or more efficient (41%) and purchase products (38%) (Nielsen, 2016: 2).

Research published in 2015 (Deloitte) showed that US customers prefer to use their own mobile devices to get assistance in stores, instead of asking staff for help for their purchase decision. Also Biglight research (2015) indicates that, 60% of customers claim that they would prefer to use their own mobile devices to support their purchase decision. The most common activity on mobile devices in stores taking pictures of products and sharing them on social media which starts emitting word of mouth (WOM) (Biglight research, 2016).

Customers prefer to use mobile applications and devices which are quite simple to use and applications which provide more information about products, services and stocks. So businesses need to find solutions to encourage customers to use their mobile shopping applications both in and out of the store contexts. Mobile shopping sector is growing very fast and vigilant retailers are eager to find ways to use mobile technology to increase sales in or out of store context. Consumers increasingly tend to use mobile applications than web browsers (Robles, 2015:1). Arthur states (2015) that people prefer to use relevant mobile applications any more instead of using generic websites (Arthur, 2015:1).

Retailers should explore methods to grab the attention of mobile users. This means mobile shopping applications have to be distinguished and add real value to customers' shopping experiences. Rewards, loyalty programs, augmented reality applications or similar innovations may be useful tools to differentiate firms' mobile shopping applications. Mobile applications have to be functional and inspire customers (Gilliland, 2015:1).

According to Vibes mobil consumer survey (2012) 80% of smartphone owners carry their phones with them while shopping. Of those consumers (33%) have used their device to lookup a product on a competitor's site and (20%) of them have chosen to search the store's own website. Most popular activities of those consumers were was looking up a product review (31%), scanning QR codes for more information (27%). As smartphones become more prevalent more informed purchase decisions will be possible and this will seriously affect competitive advantage (Moth, 2012:1).

1.2. Technologic Orientation

Proactive businesses focus on research and development activities to acquire new technologies with an intention to use technology as a competitive element. Srivastava et al. (2013) states that technological orientation points out to an organizational culture in which a firm harmonizes its structures, systems, and resources with technology. A technology-oriented firm stands up for a commitment to R&D and utilizing new technologies (Srivastava et al., 2013:431). In uncertain markets providing information about customer preferences becomes difficult. Besides new product development, businesses may pursue to set business strategies based on technological orientation (Gatignon & Xuereb, 1997:81).

Marketing has a broad capability and meaning for businesses in strategic concept. The aspects of strategic context in marketing perspective include analysis of competitive market behavior, viable organizational boundaries and resource allocation processes (Day & Wensley, 1983:85). Technological orientation relates to the long term strategies of an organisation which leads developing new ideas, new processes and new products. Firms' strategic

orientation reflects its' innovative attitude and commitment to innovation. However strategic orientation should include whole process of transformation geared towards value-added services rather than core technology innovations (Salavou, Baltas & Lioukas, 2004:1096).

Technology orientation is accepted as a factor that positively contributes to innovation and firm performance. Technologically oriented firms can better recognize and exploit new opportunities in the market. Studies show that technology orientation improve firm performance through innovativeness (Lee, Choi & Kwak, 2014:83).

Studies suggest that the credibility of WOM is higher than the commercial information created or provided through the net. According to the theory of adoption and diffusion of innovations, in mobile shopping, marketing efforts should be directed to the consumers categorized as innovators and early adopters. Customer satisfaction in mobile commerce is accepted as a relational variable and implies fulfilling expectations and a positive affective state based on the result of mobile shopping. Customer satisfaction has an impact on client loyalty and future purchase intention. Therefore customer satisfaction and WOM are highlighted as main drivers in mobile shopping context since their roles in repurchase intention and recommendation functions (San-Martin, Prodanova & Jimenez, 2015:3).

Mobile shopping can be viewed as technical innovation. Studies show that the main determinants of mobile shopping adoption are perceived enjoyment, usefulness and convenient access which lead to customer satisfaction. The barriers related to usage, value, risk concerns, tradition and image are the factors which affect the consumers' adoption of new technology in mobile shopping negatively. Among the factors hindering customer satisfaction in mobile shopping are privacy and security concerns as well as mobile payments (Gupta & Arora, 2017:2). Mobile shopping has drawn attention in industry. Researchers predict that media companies and retailers receive more than 50% of online traffic from mobile devices. Mobile commerce grows substantially and provides important opportunities and potential for businesses. As customers get used to mobile shopping they start to place orders more frequently in time. The satisfaction from the mobile shopping experience affects the subsequent purchase behavior. As customers become accustomed to mobile technology, they start to interact with the firms that provide mobile applications. In order to gain competititve advantage businesses should plan their marketing strategies and campaigns by taking into account the mobile customers' preferences (Wang, Malthouse & Krishnamurthi, 2015:232).

WOM is defined as all informal communications directed at other consumers about the ownership, usage, or characteristics of particular goods and services or their sellers. Because of its portability and ease of use mobile WOM has become an important factor on consumer shopping decision process especially in young people. Mobile phones motivate users to be

more active in WOM. Researchs indicate that the second most frequently exchanged information were shopping information in mobile WOM (Okazaki, 2009:463).

Technologic advancement in wireless network and mobile technology has created an ubiquitous society where mobile services have infiltrated in every activities of daily life. Such improvement has changed people's way to shop dramatically. Mobile electronic word-of-mouth provide online costumers a platform to share their shopping experience through online communications. Mobile business providers should integrate their web and mobile services in order to gain customer trust in their mobile services (Wang, Shen & Sun, 2013:1401).

Word of mouth is informal advice between consumers and usually interactive and swift. Researchs show that WOM has a powerful impact on consumers' purchase intent and behaviors and positive WOM is much more effective than negative WOM (East, Hammond & Lomax, 2008:222).

Customers perceive an increase in shopping effectiveness when they can perform a mobile transaction with increasing speed, control, and convenience (Collier et al., 2015). If customers are satisfied with their mobile shopping experience, they are more likely to perceive their shopping experience as effective (Roy et al.,2017:262). Effective mobile shopping means that the benefits of products and services purchased by customers engaged in mobile shopping have adequately met their expectations.

2. Field Research

2.1. The Objective and Hypothesis of the Research

The main purpose of the research is to reveal the effects of customers' mobile shopping aplication usage satisfaction level on their word of mouth (WOM) emission intentions and shopping effectiveness. It is also aimed to examine how mobile shopping technology presents firms opportunities and threats in the market within technological orientation context.

The hypotheses formed in accordance with the objective of the research are as follows:

H1: Customer satisfaction of mobile shopping application users have a positive impact on their WOM emission.

H2: Customer satisfaction of mobile shopping application users have a positive impact on their mobile shopping effectiveness.

2.2. Research Method

In this descriptive research, the variables related to Satisfaction, Word-of-Mouth and Shopping Effectiveness are composed of expressions formed in

five-point Likert scale. The scales and the resources used to construct expressions about Satisfaction, Word-Of-Mouth and Shopping Effectiveness scales are given in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Scales Used in the Research and Resources

Expression	Resource
Satisfaction SAT1: Overall I am satisfied with using mobile shopping applications. SAT2: The benefits I get from mobile shopping applications exceed my expectations. SAT3: Mobile shopping application usage is an ideal retail technology.	(Roy et al. 2017; Wang et al. 2012).
Word-Of-Mouth WOM1: I would like to introduce mobile shopping applications to others. WOM2: I would speak favorably about mobile shopping applications to others. WOM3: I would asist other customers with mobile shopping applications if they need my help.	(Babin et al., 2005; Cheung and Lee, 2012).
Shopping Effectiveness EFF1:Using mobile shopping applications allows met o have a more efficient shopping experience. EFF2:Using mobile shopping applications improves the productivity of my shopping experience EFF3:I find that using mobile shopping applications can help met o have a smoother shopping experience.	(Roy et al., 2017; Collier et al., 2015).

The universe of research is composed of smartphone user customers who have installed mobile shopping applications belong to any brand or firm. The data of the research were collected through an online survey. With convenience samling method a total of 295 consumers participated in the survey voluntarily. An average of about 200 sample sizes is accepted sufficient for analysis in studies designed on the basis of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)(Kline, 2011: 12).

The questionnaire consists of two main sections. The first section includes expressions evaluating the customer satisfaction of mobile users, their WOM contribution attitudes and shopping effectiveness. Second part consist of questions related to demographic information of the participants. The

research hypotheses were tested through the structural equation modelling (SEM). SEM is a comprehensive statistical technique that is used to analyze the relationships between observed variables and latent variables. (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004: 2) In this context, IBM SPSS 25 and IBM AMOS 21 programs were used to analyze the data.

3. Findings

3.1. Demographic Statistics

Demographic statistics about the participants are given in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Demographic Specifications of Participants

Gender	N	%	Monthly Income Level	N	%
Male	197	67,9	Below 1300 YTL	90	31,0
Female	93	32,1	1301-2600 YTL	79	27,2
Education	N	%	2601-3900 YTL	52	17,9
High School Grad.	16	5,5	3901-5200 YTL	37	12,8
Associate Degree	166	57,2	Over 5200 YTL	32	11,0
Bachelor Degree	77	26,6	Age	N	%
Masters Degree and over	31	10,7	18 and under	3	1,0
			18-36	255	87,9
			37-55	32	11,0

As seen in Table 2 the majority of the participants in the survey is consisted of male (67,9%), in the 18-36 age group (87,9%), associate graduates (57,2%) and monthly income range 1300 TL and under (31,0%). Since the majority of the participants are between 18-36 years old range and mobile shopping applications usage are more prevalent among younger customers, this result is considered to fit the scope of this study. It was also observed that approximately 95% of the participants completed a minimum of 2 years of university education. Participants are considered to have a homogenous distribution by their income level.

3.2. Evaluation of Structural Equation Model

The reliability of the scales were tested and verified. The structural model was evaluated as a whole applying (Exploratory Factor Analysis) EFA and Confirmatory Factor Analysis) CFA to the variables.

3.2.1. Reliability and Exploratory Factor Analysis

All of the 9 Likert type expressions used in this study were subjected to reliability analysis and Cronbach's Alpha value was calculated as α = 0,900. The reliability coefficient (cronbach's alpha) is a value between 0 and 1, and as you approach 1, the reliability of your scale increases. Values between 0.80 and 1 indicate high reliability (Kalayci, 2010: 405). Since the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test result is 0.907> 0.70, the sample size is sufficient; Since the result of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is also 0.00 <0.01, it is concluded that the scale-forming expressions are consistent with each other. Explained total variance is calculated as 74,280%. As a result used scales are highly reliable. Reliability and exploratory factor analysis results are given in Table 3 below;

Table 3. Reliability and Exploratory Factor Analysis

Scales	Expressions	Factor Load	Values
Satisfaction	SAT1	,738	KMO: ,713; Bartlett S.T. : ,000 ;α: ,811; Var.: 26,8
	SAT2	,774	
	SAT3	,812	
WOM	WOM1	,736	KMO: ,713; Bartlett S.T. : ,000; α: ,772; Var.: 25,8
	WOM2	,608	
	WOM3	,833	
Shopping Effectiveness	EFF1	,846	KMO: ,712; Bartlett S.T. : ,000; α: ,856; Tot. Var.:21,6
	EFF2	,769	
	EFF3	,740	

3.2.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Model

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is generally used for confirmation and validation after the theoretical background and structure has been established (Byrne, 2009; Brown T., 2006; Meydan and Şeşen, 2011). In other words, CFA has been used to verificate Exploratory Factor Analysis.

After applying CFA to each scale, the whole scale was subjected to CFA. The regression coefficients after CFA are shown in Figure 1.

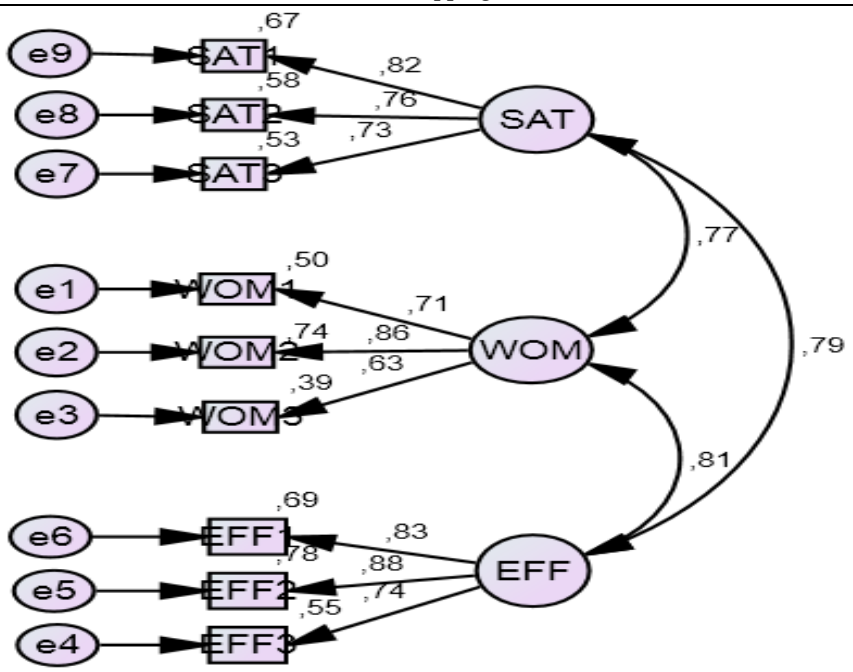


Figure 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis for the whole model

It was observed that the regression coefficients after CFA were found to be at desired levels (Byrne, 2016).

Table 4 below shows the acceptable ranges at goodness of fit index available in related literature.

Table 4: Goodness of Fit Index

Fit indices	Good fit	Admissible fit
$\chi 2/df$	$0 \leq \chi 2/df \leq 2$	$2 < \chi 2/df \leq 5$
RMSEA	0≤ RMSEA ≤,05	,05< RMSEA ≤,09
GFI	,90≤ GFI ≤1	,85≤ GFI <,90
AGFI	,90≤ AGFI ≤1	,85≤ AGFI <,90
CFI	,97≤ CFI ≤1	,95≤ CFI <,97
TLI	,95≤ TLI ≤1	,90≤ TLI <,95

Source: Hu and Bentler 1999: 27; Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003: 52; Schumaker and Lomak, 2004: 148.

Each scale and the whole model were subjected to CFA. The goodness of fit values for the whole research model obtained after CFA are shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Goodness of Fit Values for the Model after CFA

p	χ2/df	RMSEA	GFI	AGFI	CFI	TLI
,000	1,360	0,035	,976	,956	,993	,990

Examining Table 5 shows that the goodness of fit values of structural model is at desired levels. In other words, structural model of the research showed a good fit.

Finally the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) and CR (Composite Reliability) values which show the reliability of the model are shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Structural Equation Model AVE & CR Values

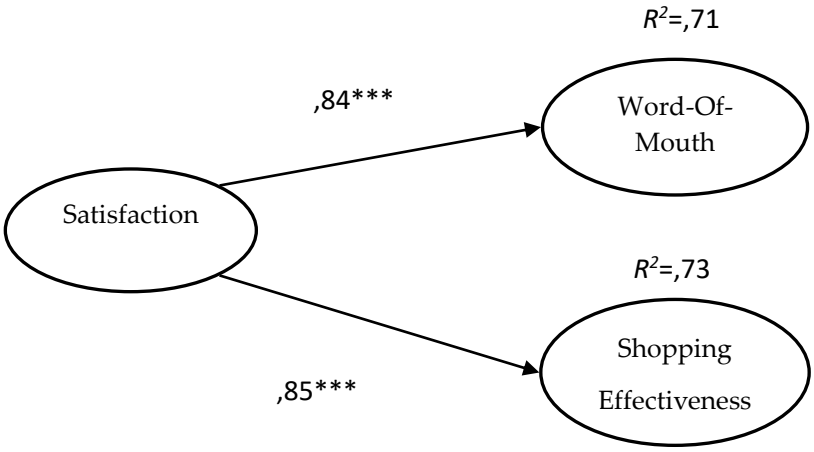
Variables	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Satisfaction	0,862	0,676
WOM	0,778	0,543
Shopping Effectiveness	0,813	0,592

CR > ,70 ve AVE > ,50

Internal consistency of Satisfaction, WOM and Shopping Effectiveness dimensions were determined by examining Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. In literature acceptable CR value is at least 0.70 and acceptable AVE value is at least 0,50 (Berthon et al., 2005: 164). According to the values seen in Figure 1, Table 4 and Table 5 and Table 6, the regression coefficients, goodness of fit values and AVE/CR values are at desired levels. Thus, the tested structural model has a good fit and the model variables are reliable. This indicates that the structural model path analysis can be performed after CFA.

3.2.3. Structural Equation Model

The reliability of the scales were tested and verified by using EFA and CFA. As a result the whole research model and evaluation of all variables is shown in Figure 2 and post path analysis goodness of fit values are shown in Table 7 below.



Not: *** p<0,001; ** p<0,01 ; * p<0,05; " p>0,05 (non-significant).

Figure 2. Structural Model and Hypothesis results

Table 7. Post Path Analysis SEM Goodness of Fit Values

p	χ2/df	RMSEA	GFI	AGFI	CFI	TLI
,000	2,307	0,067	,956	,921	,975	,964

As seen in Figure 2, according to R^2 values, the satisfaction explains WOM at 71% level and shopping effectiveness at 73% level. According to regression coefficients, satisfaction has as significant, positive and high level effect on WOM (0,84) and Shopping Effectiveness (0,85). This reveals that satisfaction is an important factor on WOM and shopping effectiveness. As a result H1 and H2 hypotheses are accepted. As seen in Table 7, according to the compliance values of the structural model, all values are in the desired range (Schermelleh-Engel, 2003) and the model shows a good fit.

4. Conclusion and Discussions

Today customers obtain information related to their purchase decision from multiple channels as stores, online, mobile applications and social media. (Brynjolfsson, 2013). The advancements in internet together with mobile technology have substantially changed retail business models and consumer behaviors. Customers are eager to have consistent shopping experience with rapid evolving needs. They are empowered in getting information faster and easier with mobile technology and can choose from many options. Increased preferences also increase competition. Businesses should find creative ways to satisfy their customers and meet expectations. They also need to

understand how mobile shopping technology affect customer behaviors (Samarhan, 2016: 6).

Findings in this research show that consumers' satisfaction of using mobile shopping applications has a positive and strong impact on their WOM intentions and effective shopping perceptions. Consumers tend to share their feelings related to mobile shopping experience with their environment through WOM, and like to comment about it. Satisfied customers choose to continue using mobile applications again and their positive WOM emissions encourage others to use mobile shopping channels. Positive experience also make customers feel their purchase process as effective and, seamless.

If mobile shopping applications offered by firms meet the needs of customers and add value to shopping process, customers have more satisfaction. Customers consider their expectations and the results of the shopping experience to rate the performance of the applications. Our research show that people share their post-shopping opinions with their environment. Also satisfaction has increased the motivation of the consumers and supported the use of mobile applications in their future purchases. As a result, consumers have benefitted from mobile applications usage and increased their shopping effectiveness. Customers believe that their mobile shopping satisfaction is basically the result of effective shopping technology. Satisfaction has a direct positive impact on shopping effectiveness. Businesses need to offer more useful, easy and convenient mobile applications for mobile users to offer them an effective shopping experience.

Businesses aiming to have customers experience a pleasant shopping in all channels can not ignore the power of mobile technology and have to pay regard to mobile marketing strategies in their overall strategic management marketing strategies. Mobile marketing grow substantially. Businesses that ignore smart shopping technology are thought to become weak at gaining sustainable competitive advantage over time. Businesses who want to implement an effective customer relationship management, should actively use the mobile tools such as mobile shopping applications, mobile advertising, mobile payment, QR code, mobile social media and location based marketing. Lack of effective marketing strategies in mobile channels cause loss of customers. Integration of business and marketing processes with mobile shopping technology will enable businesses to utilize the opportunities in markets. Digital mobile shopping technology change consumer behaviors dramatically. Firms which analyze and understand the evolution in mobile customer behavior are able to be in a better position among their rivals.

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