

## **A Research to Determine the Problems of Real Estate Consultants in the Housing Marketing Process**

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### **Abstract**

Real estate consultants are economic units that establish a link between housing supply and demand and support the efficient maintenance of commercial operations in the housing marketing process. Real estate consultants experience many different problems during a relevant process similar to other units in the system. This study aims to define the problems faced by real estate consultants in the housing marketing process in a qualitative pattern. Using the interview technique, based on the data of 22 real estate consultants, the basic problems experienced in the housing marketing process can be classified under four headings: problems arising from the housing marketing process, problems related to the real estate consultancy profession, customer data storage, and customer communication.

**Keywords:** Housing Market, Housing Marketing, Real Estate Consultants.

**JEL Classification Codes:** M30, M31, M39

### **Gayrimenkul Danışmanlarının Konut Pazarlama Sürecinde Yaşadığı Problemlerin Belirlenmesine Yönelik Bir Araştırma**

### **Öz**

Gayrimenkul danışmanları konut arzı ile talebi arasında bağ kuran, konut pazarlaması sürecinde ticari işleyişin etkin şekilde sürdürülmesine destek veren ekonomik birimlerdir. Gayrimenkul danışmanları, konut pazarlama sürecinde sistemde yer alan diğer birimlere benzer şekilde birçok farklı problem ile karşılaşmaktadır. Bu çalışma, gayrimenkul danışmanlarının konut pazarlama sürecinde karşılaştıkları problemleri nitel bir desende tanımlama amacı ile hazırlanmıştır. Görüşme tekniğinden yararlanarak 22 gayrimenkul danışmanına ait verilerden hareketle konut pazarlama sürecinde yaşanan temel problemlerin; konut pazarlama sürecinden kaynaklanan problemler, gayrimenkul danışmanlığı mesleğine ilişkin problemler, müşteri verisinin saklanması ve müşteri iletişimi ile ilgili problemler olmak üzere dört başlıkta sınıflandırılabilen bulgulanmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Konut Pazarı, Konut Pazarlaması, Gayrimenkul Danışmanları.

**JEL Sınıflandırma Kodları:** M30, M31, M39

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## 1. Introduction

The concept of “house” can be named in different forms in every era and displays a complex and multi-dimensional feature (Kellekçi and Berköz, 2006, p.168) that involves different individual needs and the need for housing which is the most basic need of people in their life cycle (Aktürk and Tekman, 2016, p. 424). While “house” is considered as the symbol of housing, family, and unity through the development of individuals and humanity, in fact, is a total of physical and moral areas which hold the family together (Er and Durucasu, 2016, pp. 2-3) and which has economical, exchange, usage, aesthetic values (Su and Kaplan, 2017, p. 2), different physical appearances and different purposes of usage (Yüksel, 2014, p. 25).

When the house is considered as a product that produces solutions for consumers’ needs, marketing science has vital contributions to the movements of the product toward consumers, determining potential needs and providing communications between consumer and producer. “House Marketing” is realized by sections organized for satisfying the need which is called “house need”. House marketing involves activities that answer the demand of consumers by carrying out studies such as investigation, planning, implementation, and evaluation in order to realize the aims of individuals and companies in the real estate, construction, and real estate investment partnership sector (İçli, 2008, p. 8). Changing the means of the house in the consuming society (Çelikbilek, 2017, p. 95) and high prices of houses (Er and Durucasu, 2016, p. 1) cause the description of the house as concrete and expanded product rather than a narrow asset during the housing marketing process (Anbarcı, 2012, p. 137).

The main pillars of the housing market are contractors/sellers, buyers, and real estate consultants who bring together buyers, real estate owners, and tenants (Karakurt Tosun, 2016, p. 329). Today it is possible to mention many alternative communication means for a person who wants to sell or rent a real estate to potential clients. While communication technologies were not developed as they are nowadays, individuals used to depend on real estate consultants in order to have information about neighborhood features (Palm, 1976, p. 28), but today with the help of the internet and information technologies, individuals can easily carry out the research and obtain detailed information about the real estate. Although the internet turned into an important means of marketing in terms of communication, it is obvious that experts and individuals who have a client portfolio in the sector may conclude the process of real estate selling and marketing. Real estate consultants are the individuals who perform this mentioned aim, realize the aims of sellers and buyers, and gain the right to earn (commission) according to laws. This mentioned commission is calculated with the same percentage even for the real estate which has differences in terms of dimension, price, and selling facilities (Barwick and Pathack, 2015, p. 103). In exchange for the mentioned commission “marketing research, the confidence of the client, bringing together sellers and buyers, making

a portfolio, presenting price tag, logistical services, making contract and bureaucratic supplies” are served (Dilek, 2014, pp. 96-100). According to Becker (1975) the success and resulting gains of real estate consultants are directly connected to factors such as the degree of their professional license level, weekly working hours, education level and experience, and ownership of professional vocational education. Besides “the economical volume that the construction sector creates by moving more than 250 different sectors obliges real estate consultants to be qualified in terms of continuity of the development of the sector” (Karakurt Tosun, 2016, p. 333). In this respect, the analysis of the problems faced by real estate consultants in their marketing efforts and the sharing of solutions will allow the creation of better practices in the sector and increase productivity and added value. This study aims to present a systematic response to problems that real estate consultants face during the housing marketing process. It is considered that the studies focused on real estate consultants, who play an important role in this process, are insufficient in terms of numbers since researches focused on housing marketing are mostly focused on the structure of the marketing process, the relationship between housing and marketing, and housing purchasing behavior. Thus, with this research, it is planned to determine and evaluate the marketing problems experienced by real estate consultants in the housing marketing process and to present a unique contribution to the literature. In accordance with the stated purpose, semi-structured interviews were conducted with real estate consultants in the city of Kırklareli, and suggestions were presented by determining the problems related to the housing marketing process.

## 2. Literature Review

It can easily be observed that there is a deep academic interest related to problems that appear in the process of housing marketing. These problems are described by Benjamin, Jud and Sirmans (2000, p. 217) under eight titles as “intermediary firm qualities”, “commissions”, “duration of the house spent in the market”, “intermediary firm’s profits”, “effect of consultancy services to house prices”, “legal arrangements”, “reliability”, “international comparison”. Moreover, it is possible to classify the problems in the light of literature under three titles as “problems related to the features of the house” (Kellekçi and Berkoz, 2006; Akturk and Tekman, 2016; Karagöz, Eş and Yavuz, 2015; Memiş, 2018; Memiş, 2019; Calmasır and Emre Aysin, 2019), “problems related to the qualification of real estate consultants” (Little and Myers, 1988; Bleasdale, 1991; Day and Nurse, 1991; Nelson and Nelson, 1995) and “problems between real estate consultants and clients” (Dunlap, Dotson and Chambers, 1988; Jud and Winkler, 1994; McDaniel and Louargand, 1994; Levitt and Syverson, 2008).

In the literature review “problems related to house features” are taken into consideration in the scope of factors that affect the housing choice of clients. According to Memiş (2019, p. 792) “location of the house”, “facing sunlight”, “potential profit amount in case of future selling”, “number of the rooms and

bathrooms”, “how secure the house is”, “energy efficiency of the house”; and according to Memiş (2018, p. 663) “social facilities” are the main factors in housing choice. Karagöz et.al., 2015, p. 258) explain the related factors as “price of the house”, “payment preference”, “number of the floors in the building”, “the way the person is aware of the housing projects, and house possession of the person”. According to Kellekçi and Berköz (2006), "easy accessibility", "environmental quality variables", "safety of the environment", "neighborhood relations", "residential environment view" and "economic value" are influential factors in housing choice. According to Aktürk and Tekman (2016, p. 438), the most important determinant of housing demand is "price". Moreover, consumers also consider variables such as "the reliability of the contractor firm", "whether the house is in a secure site", "size", "material quality", "proximity to the city center", and "spaciousness" while demanding a house. Similarly, according to Çalmaşur and Emre Aysin (2019, pp. 77-78), "price" is an important factor that can be effective in the housing marketing process. Besides “religious beliefs and values” of the consumer affect the housing demand. For example, conservative people evaluate their savings in the direction of buying houses rather than investing in financial instruments such as interest, stocks, and bonds. That is, the demand for housing emerges as a phenomenon that is also affected by the “values” and “beliefs” of the people. In their study, Su and Kaplan (2017) stated that the “demographic and socio-economic characteristics” of consumers affect their housing preferences, and “existing housing types” and “structural features” related to housing are also effective on future housing preferences.

Another problem dimension included in the literature review is "problems related to the qualification of real estate consultants". In order to manage a successful housing marketing process, the necessary features of a real estate consultant that he/she has to have are becoming the subject of many academical studies. Findings regarding the qualifications that real estate consultants should have been presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: The Qualifications That Real Estate Consultants Should Have**

	<i>Qualifications</i>
Bleasdale (1991)	Customer Retention, Up-to-Date Information, Market Recognition, Professionalism
Day and Nourse (1991)	Competence, Market Knowledge
Little and Myers (1988)	Negotiation
Nelson and Nelson (1995)	Professionalism, Convenience
Dilek (2014)	Experience
Zumpano, Elder and Baryla (1996)	Financial Consultancy, Market Research

**Table 1: The Qualifications That Real Estate Consultants Should Have  
(continued)**

Becker (1975)	License Ownership, Professional Education Level, Experience
Levitt and Syverson (2008)	Persuasion, Reputation and Image
Dabholkar and Overby (2005)	Communication, Willingness to Sell, Advertising Efforts, Guidance, Professionalism, Personifying and Result Orientation
Dunlap <i>et.al.</i> (1988)	Customer Focused Sales Approach

According to Table 1, it is understood that real estate consultants should have many different qualifications. However, a classification related to acquired qualifications is probable. The qualifications that affect the success of real estate consultants during housing marketing can be examined in four different dimensions as “customer communications feature”, “features regarding financial decisions”, “market knowledge and experience” and “vocational education and professionalism”. Therefore, achieving marketing success in the real estate sector depends on the high level of professional knowledge of real estate consultants, their ability to be honest, ethical, persuasive, solution-oriented, and experience in the housing buying and selling process (Karakurt Tosun, 2016, pp. 337-338; Dilek, 2014, p. 95).

The third dimension stated regarding the problems encountered in the housing marketing process is the “relationship-oriented problems” between real estate consultants and customers. Relationship-related problems are considered to emerge in the focus of "commission amount, internet and perceived quality". It is seen that “commission” which is taken in return for the role real estate consultants take in during the housing marketing process, is an important problem. Although it is known that the houses purchased through real estate consultants are sold at higher prices (Zumpano *et.al.*, 1996, p. 170), according to Brown (1987), 40% of the house sellers state that the commission amount they give is not proportional to the service they receive. Other than the commission amount, the effort of real estate consultants to convince the sellers of the fast and lower prices in the housing sales process causes a different perception towards them. Additionally, Barwick and Pathack (2015, p. 103) mention that attempting to provide brokerage services in the housing market does not require a very large amount of investment and that the commission amount in the sector is flat and the competition conditions that are getting worse day by day have a negative impact on the business processes of real estate consultants. Even if the amount of commission earned for consultancy is considered as a negative aspect for buyers and sellers, it should not be forgotten that the real estate consultancy activity is a commercial business, so it should not be equated with a voluntary service. However, Levitt and Syverson (2008, p. 609) state that real estate agents sell their own properties for 3.7% (average \$ 7600) higher than customer residences and keep them in the housing market for an average of 10 days longer. In addition, it is known that they buy similar houses with prices 2.54% lower

than similar houses purchased by other buyers (Agarwal, He, Sing and Song. 2019, p. 715). Moreover, as an equivalent of the requested commission amount, Zumpano et al. (1996, p. 180) emphasizes the “opportunity and information cost” created by working with real estate consultants in housing purchases for buyers and sellers. Thus, for example, those who are in a high-income group or who intend to buy houses in suburbs and who are to buy houses because of changes in their working conditions demand real estate consultancy services more due to lack of time for reaching necessary information.

Another factor that makes the housing marketing process difficult in terms of real estate consultants is the “internet”. Especially in recent times tendency of consumers to online searching cause a significant pressure upon real estate consultants (Dabholkar and Overby, 2015, p. 557). The aforementioned pressure also displays itself in the online sales process of real estate consultants. According to Gedik and Etlioğlu (2017, p. 93) real estate consultants have quite high expectations for intermediary websites in the process of housing marketing however web sites are not able to meet the sufficient satisfaction.

Another important problem area that real estate consultants face in the housing marketing process is related to the expectations and perceived quality of the regarding service they provide. Dabholkar and Overby (2015, p. 557) found that sellers use seven different criteria in the quality-oriented assessment process for the services they receive from real estate consultants: "communication, effort, advertising, guidance, professionalism, representation, and results". Customers make their quality evaluations for consultancy services within the scope of the factors listed. However, the only determinant of customer satisfaction is connected with the selling of the house in the shortest time. For this reason, meeting the service quality expectations of real estate consultants depends on a single factor - the sale of the house (Dabholkar and Overby, 2005, pp. 22-23). According to McDaniel and Louargand (1994, p. 346), real estate consultants are almost not interested in the perceived quality level of their services and prioritize some criteria that they consider more important than service quality. Thus it is obvious that meaningful efforts focused on education are needed to prevent such a problem. An important contribution that supports the concept of quality to real estate consultants' success is acquired by focusing on customers.

According to Dunlap et al. (1988, p. 185), although the perceptions of the individuals who receive real estate consultancy services are far from the customer-oriented approach, the real estate consultants who provide the service state that they exhibit a sufficient customer-oriented approach. Therefore, another important problem area that real estate consultants have is that the customer perspective is still included in the marketing approach at the stage of the production concept and cannot relate to the modern marketing concept.

In this context, it is evaluated that the problems experienced in the housing marketing process are deeply focused on the housing supply and demand side of the subject, and the studies targeting real estate consultants are quite limited. Thus, in the light of the findings obtained from the literature review, the main problem of the research is "Which problems do real estate consultants encounter during the housing marketing process?". In order to acquire the detailed data for the target problem of the study, sub-questions were used. These questions are "What are the vocational problems of real estate consultants?", and "What are the communication-oriented problems occurring in the housing marketing process?".

### 3. Methodology

The real estate sector plays a key role in ensuring the economic continuity of many different sectors. Even though it is possible to mention about different factors in the appearance of housing demand, it is possible to solve the problem by creating the right marketing mix by obtaining the expectations about the house as the basic supplier of a physical need. In solving such a problem, especially minimizing the problems that will arise in the sales process of the house will allow the process to proceed effectively and efficiently. Therefore, determining and solving the problems faced by real estate consultants, who are intermediaries in the process of buying and selling houses, for both the buyer and the seller, will support the turning of positive values in the growth figures of the sector into a sustainable position. Hence, the main purpose of the research is to identify the main buyer and seller-oriented problems experienced by real estate consultants in the housing marketing process and to produce solutions that focus on the development of the sector.

As the area where the research is carried out, Kırklareli finds its place within TR 21 (Edirne, Kırklareli, Tekirdag) in the classification of statistical regional units, and national statistical evaluations are carried out within this scope. The Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey and the Turkish Statistical Institute take part in the realization of the relevant evaluations. Data on house price index (2007=100) calculations and house sales statistics carried out by the relevant institutions are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Housing Price Index and Sales in Kırklareli**

Monthly Periods (2021)	Housing Price Index (Kırklareli)	Housing Sales (Turkey) (Unit)	Housing Sales (Kırklareli) (Unit)	(%)
January	155,20	70.587	359	0,0050
February	158,60	81.222	377	0,0046

**Table 2. Housing Price Index Values and Sales in Kırklareli (continued)**

Monthly Periods (2021)	Housing Price Index (Kırklareli)	Housing Sales (Turkey) (Unit)	Housing Sales (Kırklareli) (Unit)	(%)
March	162,10	111.241	531	0,0047
April	163,00	95.863	527	0,0054
May	167,10	59.166	213	0,0036
Jun	174,00	134.731	557	0,0041
July	179,20	107.785	576	0,0053
August	185,10	141.400	688	0,0048
September	190,40	147.143	799	0,0054
October	201,40	137.401	690	0,0050
November	219,00	178.814	968	0,0054
December	232,30	226.503	1302	0,0057

Source: TCMB, (2022); TUIK, (2022) compiled by the author using data statistics.

As can be seen in Table 2, house sales in Turkey and Kırklareli follow a relatively increasing trend in 2021. While an average of 124,321 houses are sold monthly in Turkey in 2021, this value is 632 in Kırklareli. Although the information is not presented in the table, there is a finding that the highest sales value was 8613, although the housing sales values realized in Kırklareli between the years 2015-2021 showed a fluctuating trend over the years. In terms of the housing price index, it is seen that the housing unit prices have an increasing trend in 2021 and the change during the year has reached 66.8%. Therefore, the existence of consumers' demands for housing is evaluated, and real estate sales consultants have important duties in the process of meeting the housing demand.

The research shows a "qualitative" pattern by using the "interview method". During the data collection process, regarding the emphasized subjects in the literature review of the research, a semi-structured interview form has been prepared. In the preparation of the interview form, Dilek (2014) (financial flexibility, experience, market research, professional development, bureaucracy), Zumpano et al. (1996), Little and Myers (1988) (commission), Bleasdale (1991) (customer retention, current knowledge, market recognition, professionalism), Dunlap et al. (1988) (customer visit, price range of houses sold, experience in the sector), McDaniel and Louargand (1994) (quality focus), Gedik and Etlioğlu (2017) (internet use) were referred to. The semi-structured interview form consists of 5 questions. The related questions are:

- What are the most important problems that you face during the housing marketing process?



- What are the basic problems related to your professions? What should be done in order to solve these problems? Is your profession “A profession that everybody can do?”
- According to you what are the subjects that your seller and buyer customers object to most during the home purchase and rental process?
- Are you a member of web sites? If yes, what are they? Could you give information about your membership fee? Are you having problems related to web sites?
- How do you communicate with your customers? How do you keep the customer data? How often do you call your customers whom you supported during selling or renting?

The population of the research consists of real estate consultants operating in Turkey, and it was planned to collect data with the help of a sample due to the impossibility of access of the researcher to all units that make up the population. The city of Kırklareli was selected as the sample in the study and the people who work in real estate consultancy in the province were determined as the target audience. Real estate consultants execute their vocational activities depending on the Chamber of Electricians, Chamber of Coffeehouse Keepers, and Chamber of Commerce in Kırklareli province. Therefore, in order to determine the sample size, three different chambers were contacted and the figures were obtained. At the time of data collection of the research 57, real estate consultants were active and registered to the chambers. The acquired number constituted the sample size and with the method of “accessible and convenient sampling method” (Baltacı, 2009: 29) the data were collected. In qualitative research, the determination of sample size is contextual and depends in part on the scientific paradigm in which the research is conducted (Boddy, 2016). While Başkale (2016, p. 27) stated that the sample can be formed with "approximately 30 interviews" in the interview technique, according to Shenton (2004), when the target is to acquire information at a maximum level and if the new sample units bring no longer new information, that is, the saturation point and sampling should be stopped (Baltacı, 2019, p. 262). Therefore, the researcher's satisfaction with the research aims shows that a sufficient number is represented for the sample. During the interviews, it was found that the satisfaction issue mentioned by Shenton (2004) was realized after the twelfth interview for the first two questions aiming to obtain data on the main problem of the research, twenty-two interviews were conducted in order to diversify the sample. 6 of the real estate consultants participating in the study are women and 16 of them are men, and all of them work with real estate trade authorization certificates. The findings obtained as a result of the interviews were classified, and the direct transfer method was preferred for commenting on the data. The research data were obtained by making an appointment with twenty-two real estate consultants who work in Kırklareli province between 20/12/2020- 05/02/2021. As the study was carried out during the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was

stated that the results of the research would be shared with him/her within the framework of the voluntary principle, and at the end of the interview, by complying with the necessary hygiene rules in order to eliminate health concerns.

The research has been prepared in accordance with scientific ethical rules. Ethics committee approval of the research is taken with the number 355235585-199-E.17364 on 19/11/2020.

#### 4. Findings

In the evaluation of the research data, first of all, the statements related to demographical and vocational information of the twenty-two real estate consultants participating in the research are evaluated. Relevant findings are shown in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Demographic and Professional Findings Regarding Real Estate Consultants Participating in the Research**

		<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Female	6	27,2
	Male	16	73,8
<b>Age</b>	20-30	4	18
	31-40	4	18
	41-50	7	32
	50 and above	7	32
<b>Education</b>	Primary School	2	9
	Secondary School	3	13,6
	High School	8	36,3
	Associate's Degree	1	4,5
	Bachelor's Degree	8	36,3
<b>Office ownership</b>	Tenant	18	82
	Owner	4	18
<b>Real estate trade authorization certificate</b>	Have	22	100
	Have not	-	-
<b>Certificate of professional competence</b>	Level 4	-	-
	Level 5	6	27,2

When Table 3 is observed, it is seen that 6 female and 16 male real estate consultants participated in the study. 8 people between the ages of 20-30 and 31-40; there are 14 people between the ages of 41-50 and 51 and over. In terms of education level, 77% of the participants have a high school and above graduation.

82% of the real estate consultants participating in the research are in the position of the tenant in the office they work, and all of the participants have a certificate of authority for real estate trading and only 6 consultants have a level of professional competence certificate at Level 5. The research planned in qualitative design consists of five questions. The evaluation of the data obtained regarding the relevant questions constitutes another subject examined under the heading of findings. In accordance with the purpose of the research, the first question asked to the interviewees is "What are the most important problems that you face during the housing marketing process?". The findings obtained regarding the question are shown in Table 4 below.

**Table 4: Problems Encountered in the Housing Marketing Process**

Problems	f	%
Problems Arising from Real Estate Consultants	15	34,09
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to sign a contract with the customer</li> <li>• Presence of unauthorized intermediaries</li> <li>• Presentation of a house by more than one consultant</li> <li>• The emergence of different pricing for the same house</li> </ul>	6 3 3 3	13,63 6,81 6,81 6,81
Problems Arising from Financial System	10	22,72
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High interest rates</li> <li>• Extraordinary increase in housing prices</li> </ul>	6 4	13,63 9,09
Problems with the Sales Process	7	15,9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request to exclude the real estate agent from the process</li> <li>• Last minute conflicts</li> <li>• Opportunity for homeowners to advertise directly via the Internet</li> <li>• Problems experienced after the sale</li> </ul>	4 1 1 1	9,09 2,27 2,27 2,27
Problems Arising from Housing	7	15,9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of sharing adequate information about the house</li> <li>• Inadequate housing qualifications</li> </ul>	5 2	11,36 4,54
Problems with Home Owners / Builders	5	11,36
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-qualified housing contractors</li> <li>• Huge number of housing production</li> </ul>	3 2	6,81 4,54
	44	100

When Table 4 is observed, it is seen that problems that real estate consultants face during the housing marketing process are classified under five titles as "sourced from real estate consultants", "sourced from financial system", "sourced from sales process", "sourced from housing" and "sourced from home owners / producers". In transferring the answers to the questions used in the study, the interviewees are coded by adding the abbreviation "I" and the interview number. As indicated in the table "Failure to sign a contract" with customers for the purchase-sale or lease process is stated as the most repeated of recurring problems. While I (5) regarding

this issue, "Customers are afraid of making a contract, frankly they may think they will have problems in the future", they say "you will only show us a flat what is the sense in making a contract?" and I (2) explains the case as "A contract needs to be made with a person who is eager and a contract which sheds a light specifically to the whole process is beneficial for both sides but most of the customers refrain from this". Stating that making a contract is important for all parties, I (4) explains his/her opinion with the expression "How will I know whether the house I advertised is sold when I wake up tomorrow morning, a house should not be in five different real estate agents portfolio". Other problems with high-frequency values encountered in the housing marketing process are seen as "high-interest rates" and "lack of sharing adequate information about the house". Indicating high interest rates as an important obstacle to housing sales, I (10) stated his/her thoughts as "When interest rates fell in the previous period, owners increased the prices abnormally and prevented many people from buying houses despite low interest rates, and when the interest rates increased, not a leaf stirred"; I (12), on the other hand, recommends that "the 0.64 interest rate revived the market, but now there is a recession, low interest rates must be maintained". I (1) evaluates the issue of not sharing sufficient information about the house as "the owner or the contractor does not give us enough information, the problem arises at the last minute, we agreed for the sale of the house whose boiler was not connected, the sale was canceled when the customer heard this issue at the last minute" and I (7) on the other hand, "The contractor is trying to sell the houses without getting settlements, there is injustice among the users when electricity and water are bought over a single meter" and similarly, I (8) expresses his/her opinion on the subject as "many houses are tried to be sold without a residence permit, since contractor companies cannot get electricity and water subscription without these permissions, the sale becomes very difficult, 90% of buyers give up". Regarding the same problem, I (13) said, "I have to inform my customers up to neighborly relations of the house sold, but how can we get this information? We sell the house, after two months, there is a discussion in the apartment because of the carpet shrug, the buyer comes and reproaches me".

The second question posed to the interviewers within the scope of the research is "What are the basic problems related to your professions? What should be done in order to solve these problems? Is your profession "A profession that everybody can do?". The findings obtained within the scope of the relevant question are shown in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: Problems Related to the Real Estate Consultancy Profession**

Problems	f	%
"Everyone" works as real estate agent	22	42,3
Lack of Vocational Education	7	13,4
Intend to Exclude Real Estate Consultant out of process	7	13,4
Failure to Sign Contract	5	9,6

**Table 5: Problems Related to the Real Estate Consultancy Profession  
(continued)**

Problems	f	%
Avoiding Commission Payments	4	7,7
Lack of Control	4	7,7
Lack of Trust and Image	3	5,7
TOTAL	52	100
Suggestions		
State made professional regulations	14	50.0
Providing professional rules and expertise	6	21,4
Involvement of a single contracted authority in the housing marketing process	4	14,3
Determination of housing prices within the framework of objective rules	4	14,3
TOTAL	28	100

Before making the comments on Table 5, it should be emphasized that the common opinion of all interviewees is that the real estate consultancy profession is not a job that can be done by “everyone”. According to I (3), the profession should be carried out by people who are "honest" according to I (4), who “knows the city and the market, knows the legal legislation and follows the current”, according to I (17) who “has communication skills” and according to I (13), who "provides technical information on issues such as housing / land / zoning". The related issue was also found to be the most common problem about the profession during the interviews. In its simplest form, this problem stems from the involvement of unauthorized persons in the housing marketing process. During the interviews, it was determined that more than one name was attributed to such unauthorized intermediaries, such as “grunt”, "footman", and "bagman". Regarding the related problem, the evaluations are as I (1) "There are two advertisements for two apartments for sale in the barbershop next door ...", I (3) "The number of unregistered workers in the sector is 100 times higher than the registered employees ...", I (5) “even a chicken döner shop, a hawker is a real estate agent. Is it normal for a car wash owner to sell flats?"; I (11) “For God's sake, what is a residential ad for sale doing in the barber window?"; I (12) “there is no unemployment in the country, everyone is a real estate agent...” and I (19) “these unofficial persons cause abuses in the process. Almost everyone who does not have a job is a real estate agent and they have no training at all”. Other problems identified by the real estate consultants participating in the study are detected as "lack of professional training", "desire to exclude the real estate consultant from the process", "failure to sign a location contract", and "avoidance of commission payments", "lack of supervision" and "lack of trust and

image". At this stage, considering that the "contract" and "commission" components are also important criteria under the title of the problems experienced within the scope of the housing marketing process, it is thought that the solution to be realized is important in terms of providing both professional and marketing oriented development.

It is possible to explain the suggestions of real estate consultants for solving the problems they experience under four headings. These are "professional regulations by the state", "providing professional rules and expertise", "involvement of the only contracted authority in the housing marketing process" and "determining the housing prices within the framework of objective rules". The proposal "professional regulations by the state" obtains the highest number of repetitions of all recommendations. Within the scope of this issue, I (5) proposed that "the state does not take adequate measures in solving professional problems, in fact, if tax officers are directed to this issue, those who do not have real estate consultancy cannot do this job and tax loss will not be experienced", I (7) "the state does not provide sufficient control. Let's go there to Atatürk Park, we see a lot of people trying to sell/rent houses after work. If I get a document, the state must do what is necessary, the morale of the people who try to do their job properly deteriorates", I (8) said, "I don't know why they gave the authorization certificate. I employ staff, I pay taxes, but everyone is a real estate agent. We should be given wider powers and legal arrangements should be made as soon as possible" and I (11) states that "the actions of persons who do not have a certificate of authority in the land registry should be prevented from intermediary transactions".

The third question posed to the interviewers in the research was "what are the subjects that your seller and buyer customers object to most during the home purchase and rental process?". The answers to the relevant question are shown in Table 6 below.

**Table 6: Objections During Housing Purchase / Rental Process**

<b>Problems</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Objections to commission fee	17	38,7
Objections regarding the purchase / rental price of the house	9	20,5
Objections to housing quality	8	18,2
Objections to sharing the title deed fee	4	9,0
Objections to the amount of down payment	3	6,8
Objections regarding discounts after achieving agreement	3	6,8
TOTAL	44	100

When Table 6 is analyzed, it is seen that among the objections faced by real estate consultants, the one with the highest frequency is towards "commission fees". During the interviews, I (13) explains the related objection as "we almost cannot complete any sale without having an objection to the commission fee". I (2), on the other hand, makes the assessment that "nobody, whether the buyer or seller, does not want to pay commission, in fact, this job must be settled with a contract at the very beginning of the process". According to I (10), sellers adopt a stricter attitude in not giving commission. "The people who sell the property tell us a minimum price level and will not give commission. So I give him/her the minimum amount of money which he/she determine and sell up to what I can, and under this condition, abuses occur". I (14), who shared a similar view on this subject, said, "When sellers tell us a specific price and what's on top is yours, it actually pushes real estate consultants to do business undercover. If we sell the house far beyond the price he sets, then it creates a problem". I (22) stated that the commission should be seen as a return to the service received, saying, "I help the buyer to buy as best as a possible house with a limited budget, for example, ₺300.000. When he/she buys the house, 2% commission occurs, I do not set this amount but it comes to him/her a lot, he/she begins to bargain...". Other objections encountered in the housing marketing process are found as "purchase/rental price of the house", "the quality of the house", "sharing of the title deed fee", "the determination of the down payment amount", "discount after the agreement is reached". While it may be accepted that the objection to the price has a traditional structure, I (12) makes a different interpretation of the price objection in terms of housing: "The price is directly proportional to the quality, there is almost no price objection in the housing whose quality is obvious". The objections arising due to the quality of the house are considered to be specific to housing marketing. In terms of objections to the property quality, I (5) "The real value of the square meter measurement of the house sold is not communicated to the customer, we are introducing the house as 110m<sup>2</sup>, whereas the house is 90m<sup>2</sup>"; on the other hand, I (7) evaluates the issue as "there is a distorted construction, ambitious contractors are reducing their square meter to increase the number of one bedroom and two bedrooms residences, which raises objections".

The fourth question asked to the interviewers within the scope of the research is "Are you a member of web sites? If yes, what are they? Could you give information about your membership fee? Are you having problems related to web sites?". The answers to the relevant question are shown in Table 7 below.

**Table 7: Findings Regarding Real Estate Consultants' Internet Use**

		f	%
Membership of websites	sahibinden.com	16	50,0
	hürriyetemlak.com	7	21,8
	emlakjet.com	4	12,5
	zingat.com	2	6,25
	No membership	3	9,30

**Table 7: Findings Regarding Real Estate Consultants' Internet Use  
(Continued)**

		f	%
Membership fee	₺ 0 - ₺ 500	2	10,5
	₺ 501 - ₺ 1000	7	36,8
	₺ 1000 and above	10	52,7
Satisfaction with websites	Satisfied	8	42,1
	Not satisfied	11	57,9

When Table 7 is examined, 90% of the participants have a membership to a website and it is seen that the highest membership is for "sahibinden.com", followed by "hurriyetemlak.com", "emlakjet.com" and "zingat.com". Subscription amounts paid to the websites are at the level of ₺ 1000 and above. When the evaluations regarding the fees paid and the services received in return are examined, 57.9 % of the participants are not satisfied, while 42.1% are satisfied. Evaluations directed to web sites with dissatisfaction as are like I (4) "fees are too high, a monopolistic attitude prevails"; I (8), on the other hand, states that "the fees are too high, the owner who does not pay fee uploads his/her house to the same site with an individual membership and there appears a conflict with the proposal" and I (12) evaluates, "I am not very satisfied, in fact, my membership continues because everyone has a membership". I (2), on the other hand, approaches the subject from a different perspective and explains his/her opinion as "sahibinden.com membership fee is very high, and at the same time, people who have access to specific information through advertisements are trying to reach homeowners and try to get us out of the way". I (11) explains by stating that he/she is satisfied with the service he/she received from the websites, "even though the fee is high, there is an aspect to increase the income obtained", I (14) "with the help of these web sites I stay in my office, I present my advertisements and communicate without disturbing anyone".

The last statement sent to the interviewers within the scope of the research is "How do you communicate with your customers? How do you keep the customer data? How often do you call your customers whom you supported during selling or renting?". It has been observed that the answers to the relevant question, which aims to determine the customer-oriented communication efforts of real estate consultants, are far from the modern marketing concept. A significant size of the participants (17 participants) derives the meaning of "contact number" from the expression of customer data and continues their activities without any customer classification. Only five of the participants stated that they recorded information about customers on a computer. Therefore, it was found that real estate consultants use intensely traditional ways to store data (index/ledger) and communicate (using a mobile phone) with customers. The interviewer evaluations regarding the subject are given in Table 8 below.



**Table 8: Evaluations of Real Estate Consultants Regarding Customer Data and Communication**

Interviewer	Evaluation
I (4)	"I have a notebook, I take notes about the potential of the customer in this notebook".
I (6)	"The information of my customers is on my phone, the business is very busy, I can't find time to call customers".
I (8)	"We live in a small city, I am in contact with customers face to face, there is no need to keep data".
I (9)	"I think there is no point in constantly disturbing the customers".
I (10)	"We sold the house, the transaction is over, why should we keep the data of the place where no work will ever come?".
I (7)	"A customer is a thousand customers, I always meet with the customer not only when shopping for housing, I never miss birthdays, holidays and candles".
I (11)	"We keep the customer's record on the computer, we have information such as name / parcel name and surname".
I (12)	"We back up customer data recorded on a computer periodically. I send messages on important days, on teachers' day for example, I sent flowers to our teacher customers".
I (22)	"Customers usually use the phone, and I send message via sahibinden.com. I call the customers to say good luck after transaction ends, customers passing by the office do not pass without greeting ... "
I (16)	"Customer data is available both on the notebook and on the computer. We definitely call our important customers every month".
I (17)	"Customers usually send messages over the internet to get information, so the density is on this channel. I send messages to my customers on special occasions. If there is a customer stating a request, I call when I find a suitable place".

When Table 8 is examined, it is seen that some of the interviewees have a very low interest in customer data retention and the importance of effective communication, while others have a communication and data storage process involving the use of routine and different channels with customers. However, it is observed that sustainable customer communication, which plays a key role in the realization of the modern marketing approach's customer-oriented and long-term value creation target, is not adequately undertaken by real estate consultants.

## 5. Conclusion

Real estate consultancy is a communication-based professional activity that plays a role in the effective functioning of the housing market, providing services to compare the demand and supply of housing in the best conditions and in the most appropriate time period. Today, although the demand and supply of housing has the opportunity to meet without using an intermediary within the scope of technological possibilities, real estate consultants who take the role of intermediaries help consumers who have the problem of decision-making among many alternatives to choose the fast, reliable and correct alternative. The fact that real estate consultancy has a service-intensive business process mainly related to residential / land / commercial space trade brings along the existence of many different problems among the units involved in the process. Related problems are the focus of many researchers in the literature, and the emerging problems are defined under three dimensions as "problems related to housing characteristics", "problems with the qualifications of real estate consultants" and "problems related to the relationship between real estate consultants and customers". However, in the relevant literature, it is determined that there is not enough research on the problems that arise in the housing marketing process, especially from the perspective of real estate consultants. For this reason, this study, prepared in a qualitative pattern in order to define the problems that arise in the housing marketing process from the perspective of real estate consultants, makes a unique contribution to the literature. Other factors evaluated within the scope of the study are the "professional problems" experienced by real estate consultants, "objections" arising during the housing marketing process, the level of "internet usage" and "customer data storage" and "customer communication".

In the study, it has been determined that the problems experienced by real estate consultants in the housing marketing process arise in five dimensions: "sourced from real estate consultants", "sourced from the financial system", "sourced from the sales process", "sourced from housing" and "sourced from home owners / producers". Among the related classifications, the most frequently recurring sub-problems were found to be "failure to sign a location contract", "high-interest rates", "not sharing sufficient information about housing", "extraordinary increase in housing prices" and "desire to exclude real estate consultants from the process". It is possible to examine the findings obtained in two stages. Firstly, during the research process, it is seen as the effects of the current financial conditions (interest rates and housing prices) in Turkey on the housing market. Secondly, it is evaluated that real estate consultancy is not perceived at an institutional level for both buyers and sellers, therefore the consultancy service provided is not seen as valuable for the parties and there are unethical practices that damage the process. The findings show similarities with Benjamin et al. (2000), Su and Kaplan (2017), and Jud and Winkler (1999).

Another issue evaluated within the scope of the study is the problems related to the "real estate consultancy profession". A surprisingly important finding on the relevant issue is the statement of all the consultants participating in the research that "everybody" is trying to do real estate consultancy. Therefore, it is considered that a procedure opens to abuse frequently occurs by people who have not received professional training and do not have sufficient experience in the housing marketing process. Other problems found regarding the real estate consultancy profession are "lack of vocational training", "request to exclude real estate consultant from the process", "failure to sign a location contract", "avoiding commission payments", and "lack of audit and trust". The suggestions of real estate consultants in solving the related problems are primarily expressed as "the state to make professional regulations" and "to provide professional rules and expertise". According to these results, it is deemed necessary for those who will perform the real estate consultancy profession to have certain personal and professional qualifications. In the study, these qualities are especially found as "honest", having the technical knowledge required in the housing market, "mastering the housing market and legal legislation", "following the current" and "having communication skills". These findings have in common with Bleasdale (1991), Day and Nourse (1991), Dilek (2014), Zumpano et al. (1996), and Dabholkar and Overby (2005).

Following the problem of the profession, "objections" are focused on problems faced by real estate consultants in the housing marketing process. The most intense area of objection concerns the "commission" paid for consultancy services. The related appeal is evaluated in a similar way by Zumpano et al. (1996), Brown (1987), Lewitt and Syverson (2008). In this regard, customers' refraining from making payments or requesting a discount is seen as an additional evidence that the institutionalization process of the profession is still not completed. Therefore, in order for the commission to be perceived as a fee arising from the purchase of a certain service, it is necessary to provide mass communication with the aim of changing the social understanding.

The last issue investigated within the scope of the study is related to real estate consultants' internet usage, customer communication, and customer data storage. 90% of the consultants participating in the interview have at least one website subscription and 50% of them pay a monthly fee of more than ₺1000. However, similar to the findings of Gedik and Etlioğlu (2017), it has been determined that the satisfaction levels of the websites are low, especially due to the high fee payments and the individual advertisements being on the same site. In terms of customer data and communication dimension, it was found that real estate consultants mostly store customer data using index / ledger and do not carry out routine customer communication in the context of relational marketing. This situation indicates that real estate consultants do not have a sufficient understanding of marketing and the process is carried out with traditional methods. For this reason, it is of great

importance to convey the teachings of marketing science to real estate consultants in the process of professional development.

As a result, real estate consultants form the communication bridge between the customer and the landlord in the housing marketing process and become an important marketing component. For this reason, real estate consultants play a very important role in the successful continuation of the process. By abandoning the traditional structure in the roles that real estate consultants assume for the marketing-oriented development, they need to undergo a transformation that can also help with additional services such as market and marketing knowledge, price determination, and the ability to convince the parties to reach the agreement and the parties to reach the result, transportation, cleaning, security, etc. that the buyer will need after the purchase of the house. On the other hand, marketing communication objectives for real estate consultancy to gain a corporate professional identity and to eliminate the existing negative image regarding the profession should be undertaken without delay. The last point that needs to be emphasized is that the findings obtained within the scope of the research were evaluated only in the light of the data obtained within the study sample. Therefore, although it is not possible for the study to make any generalizations, it is possible to make a meaningful contribution to the literature through further research to be carried out on the basis of the sector.

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