

THE IMPACT OF CONSUMERS' VIEWS ON CLEAR AND AMBIGUOUS STATEMENTS REGARDING DISCOUNTS ON ONLINE STORE PREFERENCE*

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Abstract

During the sales-enhancing offer process, businesses can use vague (unclear) expressions such as a discount of up to 70% or 30%, or clear expressions such as a net discount of 70% or 30%. It is thought that the clear and ambiguous expressions used for the discount significantly affect the store preference. The effect of clear statements and ambiguous statements about discounts on consumer preference for online stores was determined as the aim of the research. The questionnaire, which was created in accordance with the purpose of the research, was applied to 421 people determined instantly using the convenience sampling technique, taking into account time, ease of use and cost factors. Least squares path analysis (PLS-SEM) method was used to analyse the research model. According to the beta values calculated in the analyses, it is seen that the dimensions of discount-related statements are ranked as clear statements and ambiguous statements according to the effect size value on the online store preference variable. In this direction, it can be said that clear statements are more effective in online store preference.

Keywords: Discount, Clear Statements About Discount, Vague Statements About Discount, Online Store Preference

JEL Codes: M31, M39

TÜKETİCİLERİN İNDİRİME YÖNELİK NET VE MUĞLAK İFADELERLE İLGİLİ GÖRÜŞLERİNİN ÇEVİRİM İÇİ MAĞAZA TERCİHİNE ETKİSİ

Öz

İşletmeler satış arttırıcı teklif sürecinde %70'e varan, %30'a kadar indirim gibi muğlak (net olmayan) ifadeler veya %70, %30 net indirim gibi belirgin ifadeler kullanabilmektedirler. İndirime yönelik kullanılan net ve muğlak ifadelerin mağaza tercihinin önemli ölçüde etkilediği düşünülmektedir. İndirime yönelik net ifadeler ile muğlak ifadelerin tüketici çevrim içi (online) mağaza tercihinin etkisi araştırmanın amacı olarak belirlenmiştir. Araştırmanın amacı doğrultusunda hazırlanmış olan anket zaman, uygulama kolaylığı ve maliyet faktörleri dikkate alınarak kolayda örnekleme tekniği ile anlık belirlenen 421 kişiye uygulanmıştır. En küçük kareler yol analizi (PLS-SEM) yöntemi araştırma modelinin analizinde kullanılmıştır. Araştırmada elde edilen sonuçlardan, indirime yönelik net ve muğlak ifadelerin online mağaza tercihinde pozitif yönlü etkilerinin olduğu belirlenmiştir. Analizlerde hesaplanan beta değerlerine göre, indirime yönelik ifade boyutlarının online mağaza tercihi değişkeni üzerinde etki büyüklük değerine göre net ifadeler ve muğlak ifadeler şeklinde sıralandığı görülmektedir. Bu doğrultuda net ifadelerin online mağaza tercihinde daha etkili olduğu söylenebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İndirim, İndirime Yönelik Net İfadeler, İndirime Yönelik Muğlak İfadeler, Online Mağaza Tercihi

JEL Kodları: M31, M39

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INTRODUCTION

In today's marketplace for goods and services, where competition is escalating day by day, retail businesses are presenting an extensive array of sales-enhancing (promotional) offers to consumers, both through physical and online stores. This approach aims to sustain their presence and augment their profitability. In essence, sales promotion offers are employed to motivate consumers to make purchases. These offers form a significant component of marketing activities, contributing to the enhancement of profitability (Yemez & Sağır, 2021, p. 2).

Businesses utilize various techniques (such as coupons, buy-two-get-one, buy-one-get-one-free, etc.) in their promotional strategies. Price discounts are also among the promotional offers that businesses employ. Price holds a significant role as a purchase decision factor for consumers during the decision-making process. In this context, consumers exhibit favorable behaviors towards price discount offers, as these offers enable them to spend less on goods and services (Lennon, Johnson & Lee, 2011, p. 120).

It is understood that the majority of sales-enhancing offers proposed by businesses do not vary significantly in terms of economic value. Instead, they are presented to consumers in diverse ways, employing different styles of expression. It is observed that distinct pricing strategies are occasionally employed, such as providing a discount (e.g., 20% off), offering additional products without a price reduction (e.g., buy two products and receive one free), or even implementing a combination of both approaches (Uzkurt & Kimzan, 2011, p. 72). Enterprises employ various slogans during the sales-enhancing offer process. These slogans might include vague expressions such as "up to 70% discount" or "up to 50% discount," as well as clear statements like "25% discount." Clear and ambiguous statements related to discounts play a pivotal role in consumers' decision-making process, influencing their choice of store, brand, or product. These statements can either guide consumers toward a well-informed decision or lead to confusion, increased risk, and skeptical thoughts regarding store preference and purchase decisions. Furthermore, this situation significantly impacts consumers' preferences not only for brands and products but also for specific stores.

In light of the provided explanations, the research aimed to investigate "The impact of clear statements and ambiguous statements about discounts on consumer online store preference.



CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Clear and Ambiguous Statements Regarding Discounts

The concept of "clear" is defined in the dictionary of the Turkish Language Association as "perceived distinctly with all visual details, visually appealing, lucid, not unclear or incomprehensible." On the other hand, "ambiguous" is defined as "difficult to understand, incomprehensible, confused, and perplexing" (source: www.tdk.gov.tr). Based on these definitions, we can articulate "clear expressions" as those that are entirely comprehensible from every angle, lacking complexity in comprehension, and devoid of any component that remains unclear. Conversely, "ambiguous expressions" can be delineated as those which lack full clarity, possess unclear components, befuddle the human mind, and complicate decision-making processes.

As is widely recognized, enterprises engage in sales-enhancing activities at various intervals or periods due to various reasons, all aimed at boosting their sales and profitability. The objective of these sales' promotion activities is to directly impact customer behavior (Santini, Sampaio, Perin & Vieira, 2015, p. 417). Research conducted by Lattin and Bucklin in 1989, as well as by Alvarez Alvarez and Vázquez Casielles in 2005, has demonstrated the effectiveness of sales promotion activities, both in terms of monetary outcomes and consumers' attitudes and responses.

Businesses often undertake sales-enhancing activities for reasons like converting seasonal products into cash, depleting excess warehouse inventory, dealing with out-of-fashion products, or swiftly utilizing items nearing their expiry dates. Price reductions also stand out as significant sales-enhancing strategies. When consumers come across such offers, they expect the conveyed messages to be accurate, dependable, and transparent to facilitate informed decisions and to mitigate monetary losses and perceived risks. Tan and Hwang Chua (2004) concluded in their study that consumers view monetary promotions as a means of minimizing losses. Ho and Ng (1994) similarly suggested in their study that monetary incentives serve as effective alternatives for reducing consumers' perception of risk.

Clear and ambiguous statements directed at discounts are employed by both online and physical stores to entice consumers during discount periods. These expressions are commonly utilized, particularly on special occasions (such as Black Friday, Mother's Day, Father's Day, etc.) or for end-of-season and seasonal discounts. It is well understood that these statements significantly influence consumers' store preferences and preferences for goods and services. As per Teunter (2002), promotional activities account for over 20% of product sales in certain food sectors.



Online Store Preference

The rise of social networks and social media platforms within the realm of Web 2.0 has facilitated the emergence of virtual markets. As a result of these developments, virtual markets have become increasingly discussed alongside physical markets. Due to the advantages such as lower costs in meeting consumer needs (Goby, 2006, p. 423), the convenience of quick shopping, easy access to product information, and more, consumers are increasingly gravitating towards virtual markets. Consequently, the significance of online shopping has steadily grown. In alignment with this trend, a study conducted by Vazquez and Xu (2009) revealed that consumers' attitudes toward online stores and information-seeking behavior have a bearing on their intentions to utilize online stores.

Numerous factors drive consumers to shop in virtual stores. Factors like the absence of time and space constraints, comparative opportunities, virtual store design, user-friendliness, product descriptions and information, product variety, financial incentives, reliability, and perceived risk, as well as promotional campaigns and discounts, contribute to this trend (May So, Danny Wong & Sculli, 2005, p. 1227; Oskaybaş, Dursun & Yener, 2015, p. 121; Erdoğan, 2020, p. 1304; Bayır, 2021). Degeratu, Rangaswamy, and Wu (2000) sought to understand the influence of sales promotions on the motivations prompting consumers to shop at e-stores. The study concluded that price sensitivity is more pronounced in online environments due to stronger indications of price reductions from online promotions. In their study, Jayawardhena, Tiu Wright, and Dennis (2007) discovered that online shoppers are inclined to engage in comparison shopping via the Internet to locate the best prices. Mathwick, Malhotra, and Rigdon (2002), in their research, identified significant factors influencing consumers' preference for virtual stores, including economic value, shopping enjoyment, alignment of channel attributes with consumer shopping orientation, and effective presentation of retail information. Fenech and O'Cass (2001) deduced from their study that virtual store shoppers strive to buy online to secure the lowest possible prices. Karlsson, Kuttainen, Pitt, and Spyropoulou (2005) found that consumers are willing to try to shop online in pursuit of cost savings, emphasizing that lower prices are an essential motivator for online shopping. Joines, Scherer, and Scheufele (2003) established in their study that online convenience and swift price comparison drive consumers to search for the best price offers more efficiently, making this a potent incentive for online shopping. Similarly, Watchravesringkan and Shim (2003) asserted that while price alone is a relatively less significant motivator for online shopping, the synergy of price information and time savings is a crucial determinant for online shoppers. Furthermore, in the literature addressing factors propelling consumers to shop in virtual stores, there are studies examining the impact of virtual store design and information content (Huang, 2000; Menon & Kahn, 2002), perceived usefulness, ease of use, time efficiency, and product alignment (O'Cass and Fenech, 2002; Jiang, 2002), as



well as the role of trust (Dong-Her, Hsiu-Sen, Chun-Yuan & Lin, 2004; So & Sculli, 2002), security, and privacy concerns on shopping intentions and decisions in virtual stores (Liao & Cheung, 2001; Salisbury, Pearson, Pearson, & Miller, 2001).

Today's consumers are those who consistently seek the most convenient shopping experiences, aiming to acquire the finest quality products at affordable prices. In this pursuit, while they remain loyal to their regular shopping destinations, they are also inclined to explore alternative stores to make the most of opportunities and maximize benefits (Gülçubuk, 2008, p. 16). The assessment of alternative stores primarily revolves around considerations of quality, reasonable pricing, user-friendliness, and cost-effectiveness, with particular attention directed towards stores' discount offerings. The clarity, comprehensibility, appropriateness, and reliability of these offers hold significant importance for consumers' store preferences and purchase decisions.

An important issue that consumers consider alongside price discounts in terms of store preference and purchasing transactions and decisions is trust and perceived risk. Trust is a crucial building block for the sustainability of the relationship between the consumer and the business (Koç & Kaya, 2012: 193). Establishing consumer trust is possible when both parties (business-consumer) know each other well. To ensure trust, the parties need to understand each other well and avoid opportunistic behaviors (Bozkurt & Tayfun, 2024: 409-410). Trust in a product or service stems from the existence of a quality product or service, while trust in the store arises from the quality and prices of the goods and services offered in a virtual or physical store that meet consumer demands. This situation significantly affects consumers' purchasing decisions (Tantya & Rosyadi, 2024: 2087). Establishing trust is also influential on the level of perceived risk by the consumer and is considered important. Generally, since consumers cannot clearly evaluate the outcomes of their purchasing behaviors, consumer risk perception is deemed significant in the decision-making process (Sohn, 2024: 2). Perceived risk is related to the negative processes experienced by the consumer in the selection of goods and services, such as information seeking, brand loyalty, etc. In this context, the consumer's behavior toward the goods and services during the preference stage is dependent on the level of risk they perceive. Perceived risk generally arises when the consumer senses the danger of making the wrong decision and fears the potential losses (such as loss of money, time, prestige, etc.) that can be evaluated as losses for themselves (Demirgüneş & Dağistan, 2024: 31).



METHODOLOGY

Ethical Approval of the Study

Ethics committee approval was obtained for the study with the decision number 34 of the ethics committee meeting dated 19.09.2023 and numbered 2023/05.

Purpose and Hypotheses of the Research

The effect of clear statements and ambiguous statements about discounts on consumer preference for online stores was determined as the aim of the research. The research hypotheses, established within the framework of the research's purpose and model, are presented below. These hypotheses comprise one main hypothesis and two sub-hypotheses.

H1: Discount-related statements have effect on online store preference.

H1a: Clear statements about discounts have a positive effect on online store preference.

H1b: Ambiguous statements about discounts have a negative effect on online store preference.

Population of the Research and Sampling Process

The population of this study comprises individuals who make purchases from online stores. To ascertain a sample size that is representative of this population, the "Sample Calculation Formula for Quantitative Variable Research" by Bartlett, Körtlik, and Higgins (2011, p. 46) was employed. With a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%, the sample size was determined to be 384 (Bartlett et al. 2011, p. 46).

In selecting the sample, factors such as the study's lack of need for a specialized sampling method, ease of implementation, alignment with the study's objectives, as well as time and cost constraints were considered. In light of these considerations, the convenience sampling method, which is one of the non-probability-based sampling methods, was chosen to determine the sample. This approach was adopted to ensure that only accessible participants took part in the sample.

Data Collection Method and Instruments

To gather research data, the decision was made to employ a questionnaire as the primary data source. Throughout the process of questionnaire administration, including the pilot study phase, the questionnaires



were distributed online. In crafting the questionnaire for data collection within the research's scope, an initial stage involved conducting a literature review aligned with the research's objectives and the constructs to be measured. Subsequently, a preliminary questionnaire was developed by consulting experts and academics to ensure its accuracy.

The preliminary questionnaire draft underwent a pilot application, and data were collected from 40 participants. As a result of the pilot application, the questionnaire's reliability (Cronbach's Alpha value) was calculated to be 0.978. Subsequently, the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy) and Bartlett's tests were conducted. The KMO value for the questionnaire was 0.795, and the Bartlett's test values (Approx. Chi-Square: 1348.024; df: 300; sig: 0.000) were found to be within suitable ranges. Given that the pilot study data yielded satisfactory results, the primary data collection phase was initiated.

The questionnaire employed in the study is divided into two sections. The initial part comprises seven questions addressing gender, marital status, age, educational background, occupation, economic status, and whether respondents follow discounts in online stores. In the subsequent section, there are nine statements corresponding to the dimension of clear statements about discounts, ten statements relating to vague statements about discounts, and six statements linked to the dimension of online store preference. These statements were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree). The research data were collected from 421 participants.

FINDINGS

Participants' Demographic Characteristics

The information of the 421 participants who took part in the study is that 58% were male, and 42% were female. Furthermore, 55.8% were married, while 44.2% were single. The data reveals that the majority of the participants fall under the age of 30 (43.5%), followed by the age group of 31-45 years (39%). In terms of educational background, the study found that the majority held bachelor's degrees (50.4%), followed by graduate degrees (27.1%). The predominant occupational category among the respondents was those with regular income (civil servants, workers, and retirees). Roughly 60% of the participants reported having a middle-level income, and approximately 70% stated that they actively follow online stores for discounts.

Reliability and Validity Analysis Results for the Scales Used in the Research

Explanatory factor and reliability analysis results

In the initial phase, exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis were conducted using the SPSS statistical analysis program. The results of the analyses are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Explanatory factor and reliability analysis

	Variables / Expressions	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Explained Variance Ratio
Clear Statements on Discounting	CS1 Clear statements make it easier for me to make a decision.	,811	0,979	33,943
	CS2 Clear statements make it easier for me to choose a store.	,834		
	CS3 Clear statements facilitate my brand preference.	,834		
	CS4 Clear statements reduce my scepticism about the store.	,810		
	CS5 I am pleasing that the expressions for the discount are clear.	,831		
	CS6 Clear statements reduce the perception of risk towards the store.	,820		
	CS7 Clear statements increase the sense of trust towards the store.	,825		
	CS8 I believe that discount messages given with clear statements are correct.	,749		
	CS9 Clear statements reduces confusion.	,841		
Ambiguous Statements on Discount	AS1 Ambiguous statements make it difficult for me to make a decision.	,781	0,978	30,974
	AS2 Ambiguous statements make it difficult to choose between alternatives.	,816		
	AS3 Ambiguous statements make it difficult to choose a store.	,826		
	AS4 Ambiguous expressions make it difficult to choose a brand.	,812		
	AS5 Ambiguous statements increase me scepticism about the store.	,863		
	AS6 The ambiguity of the expressions for the discount creates uneasiness for me.	,844		



	AS7	Ambiguous statements increase the risk perception towards the store.	,842		
	AS8	Ambiguous expressions reduce the sense of trust towards the store.	,841		
	AS9	I do not believe that discount messages given in ambiguous terms are correct.	,849		
	AS10	Information given in ambiguous terms is deceptive information.	,802		
Online Store Preference	OSP1	I trust stores that use clear statements about discounts (such as a net 25% discount) more.	,546	0,902	16,235
	OSP2	I believe that the products of stores that use clear statements about discounts are of better quality.	,793		
	OSP3	I prefer to shop in stores that use clear statements.	,670		
	OSP4	I recommend shops that use clear statements.	,734		
	OSP5	I share stores that use clear statements on online platforms.	,816		
	OSP6	I like to browse in stores that use clear statements.	,679		
	Total				81,152
Overall Reliability Value (Cronbach's Alpha)				0,976	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy				0,964	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity			Approx. Chi-Square	14689,326	
			Sig. (p)	0,000	

As a result of the conducted analyses, for explicit expressions related to discounts, the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.979, the explained variance rate is 33.943; for ambiguous expressions related to discounts, the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.978, and the explained variance rate is 30.974; concerning statements about online store preferences, the Cronbach's Alpha value is calculated as 0.902, and the explained variance rate is 16.235. Furthermore, the overall reliability value (Cronbach's Alpha) for all variables is 0.976, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Sample Adequacy is 0.964, and the total explained variance rate is 81.152. In addition to these values, the Bartlett's Sphericity Test resulted in a Chi-Square value of 14689.326 and a p-value of 0.000.

Upon analyzing the results, it is seen that the factor loadings of statements, excluding OSP1 (0,546), OSP3 (0,670), and OSP6 (0,679), pertaining to online store preference, surpass the threshold value of ≥ 0.70 (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 2006). For other three (OSP1, OSP3 and OSP6), the factor loadings of the remaining three statements were assessed in terms of AVE (Average Variance Extracted)



and CR (Composite Reliability) values within the ambit of confirmatory factor analysis. As Cronbach's Alpha and CR coefficients of these variables exceeded ≥ 0.70 , and AVE values surpassed ≥ 0.50 thresholds (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2017), they were incorporated into the measurement model.

Confirmatory factor and reliability analysis results

As part of the confirmatory factor analysis, the convergence and divergence validity, as well as the internal consistency reliability of the variables, were examined. Convergence validity was assessed through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) coefficients, representing the average variance accounted for by the factor loadings of the statements. For internal consistency reliability, both Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) coefficients were computed. In accordance with Hair et al. (2006; 2017), the factor loadings of statements should be ≥ 0.70 , Cronbach's Alpha and CR coefficients for variables should be ≥ 0.70 , and AVE values should be ≥ 0.50 . These results are explained in Table 2.

Table 2: Measurement model results

Variables	Expression Codes	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Unified Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Explained (AVE)	VIF	
Discount Related Statements	Clear Statements	CS1	0,948	0,979	0,979	0,837	
		CS3	0,945				
		CS9	0,932				
		CS5	0,923				
		CS8	0,906				2,191
		CS6	0,905				
		CS7	0,905				
		CS2	0,891				
	CS4	0,878					
	Ambiguous Statements	AS8	0,964	0,978	0,978	0,817	2,191
		AS7	0,946				
		AS9	0,940				
		AS1	0,915				
		AS4	0,902				
		AS6	0,891				
AS10		0,889					



Online Store Preference	AS3	0,867				
	AS2	0,860				
	AS5	0,859				
	OSP3	0,967	0,903	0,902	0,618	
	OSP6	0,880				
	OSP4	0,874				
	OSP1	0,820				
	OSP2	0,555				
	OSP5	0,504				

According to Hair et al. (2017), factor loadings should be ≥ 0.708 , which is considered the threshold value. They indicated that if factor loadings fall below these thresholds, the examination of AVE and CR values is necessary. If the calculated AVE and CR values exceed the threshold, the statements should not be eliminated from the model (Hair et al., 2017). In this study, the factor loadings of the OSP2 and OSP5 statements within the online store preference variable were below 0.708. However, since the AVE and CR coefficients of the variable encompassing both statements surpassed the threshold value, the statements were retained within the measurement model.

Upon reviewing the results of the analyses, it becomes evident that Cronbach's Alpha coefficients range from 0.903 to 0.979, while CR coefficients range from 0.902 to 0.979. These outcomes indicate that the research variables maintain sufficient internal consistency reliability. Furthermore, considering the factor loading values of the statements assessing the variables, ranging from 0.504 to 0.967, and the AVE coefficients, spanning from 0.618 to 0.837, it is apparent that the research variables exhibit convergent validity.

To assess the presence of discriminant validity in the study, cross-loadings were evaluated using the criteria established by Fornell and Larcker (1981), along with the HTMT criterion introduced by Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2015). Fornell-Larcker results and HTMT coefficients are presented in Table 3. Based on cross-loadings results, it was observed that there were no instances of overlapping items among the statements assessing the research variables.

**Table 3:** Fornell - Larcker discriminant validity and HTMT coefficients results

Fornell - Larcker Dissociation Validity	Online Store Preference	Ambiguous Statements on Discount	Clear Statements on Discounting
Online Store Preference	0,786		
Ambiguous Statements on Discount	0,679	0,904	
Clear Statements on Discounting	0,741	0,737	0,915
HTMT Coefficients	Online Store Preference	Ambiguous Statements on Discount	Clear Statements on Discounting
Online Store Preference			
Ambiguous Statements on Discount	0,666		
Clear Statements on Discounting	0,731	0,737	

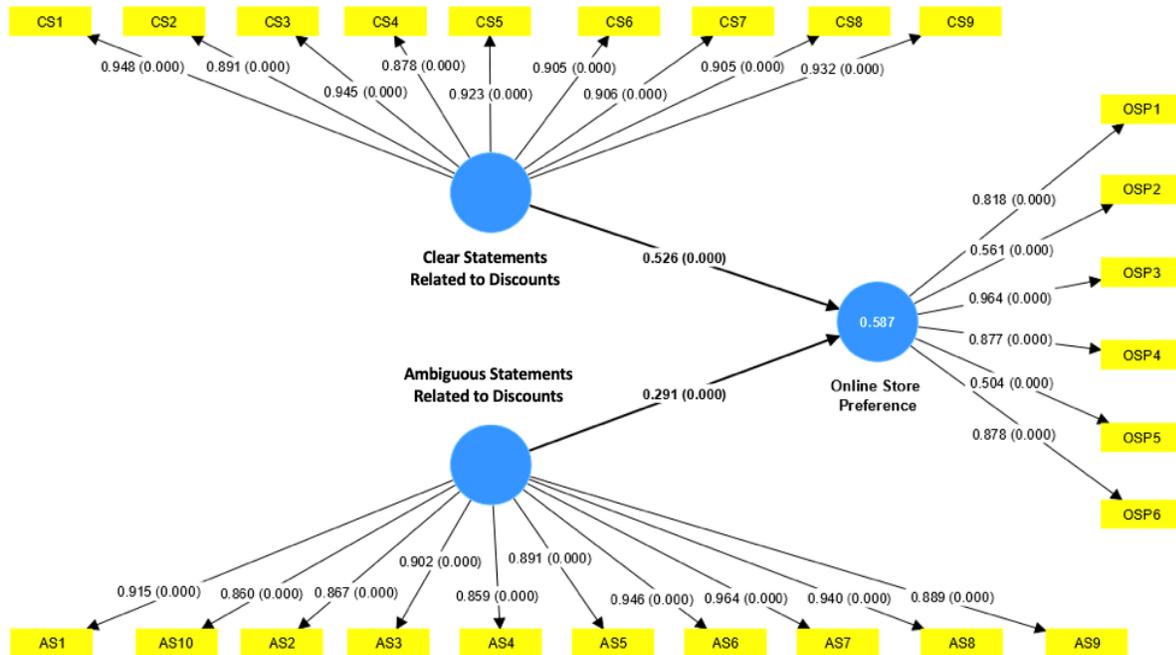
According to the criterion established by Fornell and Larcker (1981), the square root of the average variance explained (AVE) values for the constructs within the research should exceed the correlation coefficients among the constructs. The bold values in the Table 2 represent the square root of the AVE, while the remaining coefficients denote the correlation values between the variables. Upon examining the values within the Table 2, it was ascertained that the square root of the AVE for each construct surpassed the correlation coefficients with other constructs.

Henseler et al. (2015) asserted that the HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio) value theoretically ought to be under 0.90 for closely related concepts and under 0.85 for less closely related concepts. Upon analyzing the table, it becomes evident that the HTMT coefficients range from 0.666 to 0.737, all below the threshold value of 0.85.

Testing the Research Model and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model devised within the scope of the research model, designed to serve the research's objectives and facilitate hypothesis testing, is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Structural model and hypothesis testing



The study employed the PLS-SEM (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling) method to assess the hypotheses. The assessment of the structural model was carried out using the SmartPLS 4 statistical analysis software (Ringle, 2015; Yıldız, 2021). In the initial phase, an evaluation was conducted to ascertain the presence of any linearity issues among the variables. This involved computing Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) coefficients and the R^2 value of the endogenous variable. Additionally, Blindfolding analysis was executed to determine the model's predictive power (Q^2), with the resulting Q^2 , R^2 , VIF coefficient values, structural model effect coefficients with lower and upper confidence intervals detailed in Table 4.

The authors indicated that if the VIF coefficients among variables are below 5, there would be no linearity issue (Hair et al., 2017). In Table 4, both dimensions exhibit a VIF coefficient of 2.191, signifying the absence of linearity problems among variables. Upon analyzing the R^2 value, it became evident that the online store preference variable could be explained by approximately 59%. Hair et al. (2017) proposed that if the coefficient of predictive power (Q^2) is greater than zero, exogenous variables within the research model possess the capacity to forecast endogenous variables. An effect size coefficient (f^2) equal to or greater than 0.02 is considered low, ≥ 0.15 is deemed medium, and ≥ 0.35 is viewed as high (Cohen, 1988). Some scholars suggest that an effect is negligible if the coefficient is below 0.02 (Sarstedt et al., 2017). Upon scrutinizing the (f^2) values of the study, it is evident that clear statements about discounts have a

medium effect size, whereas vague statements about discounts have a low effect size on online store preference. In the study, the Q^2 coefficient was computed as 0.529. Given that this calculated value surpasses zero, it can be concluded that both clear and vague statements about discounts possess predictive influence on the online store preference variable.

Table 4: Structural model coefficients, structural model effect coefficients with lower and upper confidence intervals

Variables		VIF	R ²	f ²	Q ²		
Clear Statements on Discounting		2,191	0,587	0,306	0,529		
Ambiguous Statements on Discount		2,191		0,093			
Size/Variable	Standardised β	Standard Deviation	t value	p value	Lower Level Confidence Interval (%2.5)	Upper Level Confidence Interval (%97,5)	
Clear Statements on Discounting	Online Store Preference	0,526	0,076	6,886	0,000	0,378	0,678
		Ambiguous Statements on Discount	0,291	0,078	3,722	0,000	0,137

To assess the research hypotheses, 10,000 sub-samples were generated from the main sample using the resampling method. Subsequently, t and p values were computed, alongside lower and upper level confidence intervals.

Upon examining the table, it is evident that the clear dimension ($\beta=0.526$; $p<0.000$) and the ambiguous dimension ($\beta=0.291$; $p<0.000$) each exert positive effects on online store preference. Consistent with the obtained results, both the sub-hypotheses and the main hypothesis find support. Additionally, a scrutiny of the lower and upper level confidence intervals confirms the support for the hypotheses, as the values are positive and encompass no zero (0) within the range.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Alterations in consumer lifestyles and preferences rank among the prominent factors influencing store preferences. Within this context, consumers gravitate towards establishments that provide cost-effective goods and services, aligning with prevailing economic conditions, in addition to factors that grant them a



pleasurable shopping experience. These factors encompass a diverse array of elements, including a wide product assortment, convenient accessibility, and appealing store aesthetics. In order to ensure their sustainability, enhance profitability, and thrive in competitive environments, businesses strategically deploy sales promotion offers within specific time frames. These promotions are designed to stimulate consumer purchases, cultivating store and brand preferences amid contemporary marketing dynamics. Businesses present their promotional incentives through various strategies, such as coupons, "buy two, get one," "buy one, get one free," or seasonal and special-day discounts. Notably, price discounts, occupying a significant role among these promotional endeavors, command substantial attention from businesses.

The conducted study has revealed a noteworthy impact of both clear and ambiguous discount statements on consumer online store preference. Furthermore, the results suggest that consumers consider the issue of discounts with regard to numerous factors in the context of store preference. In light of these findings, it is conceivable to assert that sales promotion activities hold sway over both monetary outcomes and consumer attitudes and reactions. This outcome aligns with the conclusions drawn by Lattin and Bucklin (1989) as well as Alvarez Alvarez and Vázquez Casielles (2005). Within the study, it was discerned that consumers attribute greater significance to clear statements when making online store preferences, likely aiming to mitigate the risk of monetary loss. This observation resonates with the outcomes of previous research by Ho and Ng (1994) and Tan and Hwang Chua (2004).

Within the study, the outcomes pertaining to consumers' attentiveness towards clear and ambiguous discount statements in the context of online store preference can be interpreted as evidence of their engagement in real-term price comparisons, their pursuit of the most precise and economical pricing, their active pursuit of information on this matter, and their heightened sensitivity towards discounts. These findings closely parallel the conclusions reached by Degeratu, Rangaswamy, and Wu (2000), Jayawardhena, Tiu Wright, and Dennis (2007), Fenech and O'Cass (2001), and Karlsson, Kuttainen, Pitt, and Spyropoulou (2005).

Based on the gathered data, it became evident that consumers perceive clear statements as facilitating decision-making processes, enhancing store and brand preferences, alleviating uncertainties, and lowering risk perception associated with the store. Additionally, clear statements contribute to bolstering the sense of trust and confidence in the accuracy of conveyed messages. Conversely, it was observed that ambiguous expressions yielded contrasting outcomes. Hence, in order to maintain their competitiveness, ensure profitability, and foster brand and store preferences, it becomes imperative for businesses to adopt a strategic approach. This entails employing both clear and unambiguous expressions when offering discounts, being attuned to consumer expectations and sensitivities, and fostering effective communication with their



cliente. The prioritization of clear statements, fostering consumer trust and minimizing vague expressions that could provoke suspicion among consumers, alongside the formulation and execution of well-conceived plans, projects, and strategies, will significantly contribute to the sustainability of businesses.

The study discusses the impact of clear and ambiguous expressions related to discounts on online store preference in a broad context, without differentiation based on sectors. The focus remains solely on online store preference. Another limitation of the study lies in the exclusion of other factors influencing store preference, apart from the clarity or ambiguity of messages regarding financial benefits directed at consumers. Future research could delve into specific sectors (such as electronics, clothing, etc.), offering distinct perspectives and deeper insights into the subject matter. Furthermore, a comparative analysis between physical stores and online stores could provide valuable insights. Exploring the realms of different fields through studies investigating the role of clear and ambiguous expressions is anticipated to yield additional contributions to the literature by scholars.

Based on the provided explanations, the study's objective was to investigate the impact of clear and ambiguous statements on consumer online store preference, with the anticipation that the findings would enrich the existing literature. Following the analyses, the sub-hypotheses were validated, thereby lending support to the main hypothesis. Drawing from the gathered data, it was deduced that both clear and ambiguous statements significantly influence consumers' online store preference.

AUTHOR STATEMENT / YAZAR BEYANI

Researcher declared that all contributions to the article were his own. Researcher have not declared any conflict of interest.

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from Batman University's Ethics Committee with Decision No. 34, taken at its meeting dated 19/09/2023 and numbered 2023/05.

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