



AKDENİZ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ



Merve TÜKENMEZ

THE DEVELOPMENT OF E-COMMERCE IN TOURISM SECTOR AND MARKET
SHARE: A CASE STUDY IN ANTALYA PROVINCE RESORT HOTELS

Turizm İşletmeciliği Anabilim Dalı
Yüksek Lisans Tezi

Antalya, 2024



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Antalya, 2024

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B2B	– Business to Business
B2C	– Business to Consumer
B2G	– Business to Government
C2B	– Consumer to Business
C2C	– Consumer to Consumer
C2G	– Consumer to Government
CRM	– Customer Relationship Management
CRS	– Computerized Reservation System
E-COMMERCE	– Electronic Commerce
EDI	– Electronic Data Interchange
EFT	– Electronic Fund Transfer
ETBIS	– Electronic Commerce Information System
E-WOM	– Electronic-Word-of-Mouth
GDS	– Global Distribution System
G2B	– Government to Business
ICT	– Information and Communication Technology
METU	– Middle East Technic University
OECD	– Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OTA	– Online Travel Agency
POS	– Point of Sale
SET	– Secure Electronic Transaction
SPAM	– Stupid Pointless Annoying Messages
SSL	– Secure Socket Layer
SWOT	– Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TÜBİTAK	– Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye
TÜİK	– Turkish Statistical Institute
TÜSİAD	– Turkish Industry and Business Association
UK	– United Kingdom
USA	– United States of America
VPOS	– Virtual Point of Sale
WTO	– World Trade Organization
QR	– Quick Response

ÖZET

E-TİCARETİN TURİZM SEKTÖRÜNDE GELİŞİMİ VE OLUŞTURDUĞU PAZAR PAYI: ANTALYA İLİNDE RESORT OTELLERDE BİR ARAŞTIRMA

Bilişim teknolojilerindeki gelişmeler topluma yeni olanaklar sunduğu gibi, turizm sektörüne de yeni fırsatlar vermektedir. Bu kapsamda gelişen teknoloji sayesinde yeni olanaklar da ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı turizm sektöründe trend ve gelişmekte olan e-ticaret alanının gözle görülür gelişimini analiz etmek ve oluşturduğu pazar payı etkilerini araştırmaktır. Bu bağlamda tüm sektörlerde hızlı gelişen ve büyük bir paya sahip olan e-ticaretin turizm alanında sağladığı katkılar ve işletmelerin bu trend kanallardan nasıl faydalandıklarına dair bir araştırma yapılmıştır. Çalışmanın evrenini Türkiye’de Antalya ilinde hizmet veren 5 yıldızlı Resort Oteller’de online satış kanalı ile ilgilenen yöneticilerin tamamı oluşturmaktadır. Bu bağlamda araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanılmış olup yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme tekniği ile veriler elde edilmiştir. Nitel araştırma kapsamında düzenlenen görüşme formu 9 sorudan oluşmaktadır. Görüşme sonucunda katılımcılardan elde edilen verilerin analizinde betimsel analiz yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda yöneticilerin görüşleri, otellerin kendi oluşturdukları e-ticaret platformlarını kullanmaları sayesinde birçok kitleye ulaşma imkanının sağlanarak satış hacimlerini artırabileceği, maliyetlerde azalma meydana geleceği ve misafirler ile daha yakından ilişkiler kurularak uzun dönemli fırsatlar sağlayacağı yönünde olmuştur. Bu çalışma hem sektör liderlerine hem de literatürde bu bağlamda fazla çalışma olmaması sebebiyle gelecek çalışmalara ışık tutmayı hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Elektronik Ticaret, Bilgi & İletişim Teknolojileri ve Turizm

ABSTRACT

Developments in information technologies offer new opportunities to society, as well as provide new opportunities to the tourism sector. In this context, new opportunities have also emerged thanks to the developing technology. The purpose of this study is to analyze the visible development of the trend and emerging e-commerce field in the tourism sector and to investigate the market share effects it creates. In this context, the research has been conducted on the contributions of e-commerce, which is rapidly developing in all sectors and has a large share, in the field of tourism and how businesses benefit from these trend channels. The population of the study is made up of all the managers who are interested in the online sales channel at the 5-star Resort Hotels located in Antalya province in Türkiye. In this context, qualitative research method was used in the study and data was obtained with semi-structured interview technique. The interview form prepared within the scope of qualitative research consists of 9 questions. Descriptive analysis method was used to analyze the data obtained from the participants as a result of the interview. As a result of the research, the opinions of the managers are that hotels can increase their sales volumes by providing the opportunity to reach many audiences by using the e-commerce platforms they have created, reduce costs, and provide long-term opportunities by establishing closer relationships with guests. This study aims to shed light on both industry leaders and future studies due to the lack of much work in the literature in this context.

Keywords: Electronic Commerce, Information & Communication Technology and Tourism

PREFACE

I would like to thank my consultant teacher Prof. Dr. Ahmet Akın AKSU, who guided me in the most accurate way during the execution and editing of the thesis in this study, which was prepared to determine the development of e-commerce and market share of 5-star accommodation establishments operating in Antalya.

Eternal thanks to my dear mother Hanife ÇELİK, who has supported me unconditionally throughout my life... I would also like to thank my brother Zeki TÜKENMEZ for always being with me at every moment and for his endless understanding..

Merve TÜKENMEZ

Antalya, 2024

INTRODUCTION

Considering the globalizing and rapidly developing world order, it is clearly seen that technology dominates all processes. The notion of electronic commerce appeared at the end of the 20th century, with the rapid increase in Internet usage and the transfer of commercial transactions to the electronic environment (Karacan and Çiftçioğlu, 2018: 246). It is clear that electronic commerce will be very popular both in today's conditions and in the future and it will find a place among the trends. Considering the e-commerce activities, it is possible to shop easily from the place of residence with a few clicks, however, many options can be accessed under the leadership of consumer groups and comparisons can be made between these options, very important advantages can be obtained in terms of prices and costs of products and services, and in addition to these advantages, it is clearly seen that time, which is seen as the most important advantage, allows for a very effective and efficient use.

Rapid developments in information technologies have not only provided new opportunities to the society, but also created new opportunities for the service sector. The use of information technologies in tourism sector has come out as three stages of technological development. The use of computerized reservation systems (CRS) in the 1970s was followed by the emergence of global distribution systems (GDS) in the 1980s, and finally in the 1990s, the ongoing development process began with the widespread use of the Internet in tourism industry (Kılınç, 2007: 199).

Tourism sector is an industry that closely follows technological developments and at the same time can implement them immediately. In this study, the concept of e-tourism, which emerged with the birth of electronic commerce, was examined, various applications in the sector were included within the framework of the analysis and future expectations were determined.

FIRST PART

DEVELOPMENT, IMPORTANCE, TYPES AND SCOPE OF ELECTRONIC COMMERCE

1.1. Concept of Electronic Commerce

Electronic commerce (e-commerce) is the buying and selling of products and services over the Internet. In other respects, e-commerce has a structure that includes not only the buying and sale of goods and services for the purpose of generating income, but also transactions that assist the generation of income. These activities include creating demand for products and services, providing sales back up and customer service, or making easier communication between business partners (Fayyad et al., 2020: 20). With the deep involvement of the Internet in our daily life, e-commerce has no longer become a way of life from seller to buyer, but a way of life in the age we are in (Mou et al., 2019: 219). The increase in Internet usage has led to e-commerce, which has revolutionized the way business is done today's world. Electronic commerce links local industries and decreases dependence on imports, while providing shorter shipping times, flexible payment options for consumers. With e-commerce, businesses can sell their products or services in any country with very limited physical presence, operate without intermediaries, and communicate directly, easily and inexpensively with customers worldwide (Mwencha, 2019: 70).

E-commerce was explained by the WTO, that is, World Trade Organization, in 1998 as the generating, distributing, marketing, sale or delivery of products and services by electronic means (İsmaıl, 2020: 1). E-commerce is the utilization of electronic communications and digital information processing technology in business transactions to constitute, convert and redefine value-creating relationships between businesses and individuals. In simpler terms, e-commerce is the extension of traditional business transactions into the electronic realm (Khosla and Kumar, 2017: 91). Electronic commerce is defined as all aspects of business and marketing processes made possible by the Internet. E-commerce is a web-based platform that enables a variety of increasingly important economic transactions to be carried out and facilitated on the Web (Satar et al., 2019: 454). New community uses the Internet for information, research, entertainment, recreation and individual communication purposes. The importance of the Internet has increased with the rapid addition of commercial shopping to its usage areas. The type of shopping done on the Internet is called "electronic" or "e-commerce" (Bayekeyeva,

2009: 3). It is also possible to define electronic commerce from different perspectives. According to the general approach, four different angles can be considered (Turban and King, 2003: 3);

- In terms of communication: E-commerce is the distribution of goods, services, information and payments via computer networks or any electronic medium.
- In terms of business process: E-commerce is the application of technology through the automation of business processes and workflows.
- In terms of service: E-commerce is an instrument that helps company, customer and management realize their desires to improve quality of customer service and increase speed of service while reducing costs.
- In terms of online: E-commerce is the buying and selling of products and information with the help of the Internet and other online services.

E-commerce is not just a mechanism to maintain or improve existing business practices. It is a paradigm shift that radically changes traditional business methods and forces businesses to be perfectionist and customer-centered in production (MacGregor and Vrazalic, 2005: 5). Electronic commerce is a tool used to improve organizational performance. Although there is no single universal definition of e-commerce, it can be defined as the use of networks to execute business activities consisting of buying and selling goods and services electronically between both suppliers and customers (Mou et al., 2019: 219). As for the definition of e-commerce, different definitions are being put forward by organizations of different countries. However, the most largely approved definition of e-commerce is the definition made by the OECD in 1997. Within this framework, e-commerce is defined as a process that includes the following actions (Küçükyılmazlar, 2006: 6);

- Informing and doing research of companies in electronic environment before trading
- Coming together of companies in electronic environment
- Fulfillment of the payment process
- Meeting of the commitment, delivery of goods or services to the customer
- Provision of services such as maintenance, support, etc. after-sales

Table 1.1 shows definitions of e-commerce from different perspectives in the literature:

Table 1.1 Definitions of Electronic Commerce. Adapted by Holsapple and Singh (2000: 152-158)

Writers	Definitions
McGee and Prusak, 1993	It is used to define a large variety of business-related transactions, but it is fundamentally data used to conduct daily business operations with vendors and customers.
Gardner, 1994	Electronic commerce is the communication of any objects of commercial exchange by electronic vehicles.
Adam and Yesha, 1995	It can be defined as all the actions that support commercial activities on a network.
Sommers, 1995	Trade is the exchange of goods, usually large scaled. The practice of e-commerce is the act of exchanging goods facilitated in whole or in part by electronic means.
Hayashi, 1996	It is the use of computer networks to execute business electronically with suppliers, customers and/or competitors (primarily purchase and sale of goods and services).
Wigand, 1997	It includes any economic activity carried out through electronic connections.
Kumar, 1998	It is a business methodology that assists organizations enhance customer service, cut the cost, improve quality, and thus build a competitive advantage for the organizations.

1.2. History of Electronic Commerce

After mentioning the definition and scope of e-commerce on a wide scale, this section deals with the development of commercial activities conducted in the electronic medium from past to present.

Even if the commercial activities conducted in the electronic environment date back to the 90s, the last 18-year process is emerging as the period when it began to be in demand (Bozkurt, 2000: 64).

A research group led by the United States was established to conduct research on commercial activities being carried out in the electronic field, and through this research group, the first reporting on commercial activities being conducted in the electronic field was carried out in 1995. Within the scope of the reporting, the framework of the commercial activities conducted in the electronic environment has been revealed and the name of the report is known

as the "frame of electronic commerce". In order to be involved in the process within the scope of the relevant research community, certain ministers have been in the community with various duties. One of the factors that prepares the ground for the development of commercial activities conducted in the electronic environment is the fact that USA attaches special importance to the relevant issue (Yılmaz, 2008: 9-10).

Considering the development cycle of commercial activities conducted in the electronic environment, two main indicators are encountered. These markers are (Korkmaz, 2002: 52);

- Sectors for mass media (television, Internet, etc.) starting to be seen as a synthesis of each other,
- It is considered to be the domination of liberal trends in world markets and globalization.

At this point, the rate of use of Internet technologies is increasing day by day, and accordingly, problems of Internet-based trust and strengthening the basis for effective communication in this field have occurred. Many security-based studies are carried out with a focus on the elimination of related problems. The activities and studies that are being carried out in order to eliminate related problems allow the commercial activities that are being carried out in the electronic field to gain momentum and increase day by day. Due to some moves in the technological field, the written system encountered in traditional trade has been replaced by e-mails in the electronic environment, various commercial websites and EDI systematics that allow data exchange in electronic environment (Bozkurt, 2000: 64).

In the ranking of the countries that show the greatest effort and determination to work in the commercial activities conducted in the electronic environment, USA does not leave its position to be the first and the leader. Necessary sensitivity has been shown in this area under the leadership of the USA, and many comprehensive studies have been carried out. In this way, important contributions to the trade carried out by the USA in the electronic environment were provided. In the USA, which is considered to be the country where the Internet usage rate reaches the highest rates, this situation can be shown as one of the reasons for the development of commercial activities in electronic environment. Support for commercial activities conducted electronically by the USA is attempted, and at the same time, important studies are carried out to encourage these activities (Yılmaz, 2008: 10).

In line with all these principles, organizations for activities carried out in the electronic environment such as "Electronic Commerce Committee", "Corporate Integration Networks" and finally "Electronic Message Association" were established under the leadership of private

sector organizations operating within the scope of the USA and has been activated (Yılmaz, 2008: 10).

Parallel to the recent development of the Internet in our country, the orientation of institutions operating in the corporate field to carry out their activities in the Internet environment dates back to 1999. In August 1997, under the leadership of the Supreme Council of Science and Technology, it was decided to create a research and study community in order to create the networks needed to implement the commercial activities to be carried out electronically. "Undersecretariat of Foreign Trade" was assigned as the public institution responsible for coordinating the works to be carried out, and "TUBITAK" was assigned to undertake the secretariat duty for related works. In order to encourage the use of the Internet, awards and support began to be provided for various advertisements on the Internet. In addition, in order to establish the necessary systematic and infrastructure in order to carry out commercial activities in the electronic environment within the scope of our country, the establishment of the "Electronic Trade Coordination Board" has been ensured. The type of commercial activities that are carried out in electronic environment in our country is accepted as 'B2C', that is, from the business to the consumer. Despite this, 'B2B' is the type that makes the greatest contribution to the volume of trade in terms of commercial activities carried out in electronic media, that is, e-commerce activities carried out from the business to the business (Özgan, 2010: 100-101).

As it can be seen, the commercial activities conducted in electronic environment have tended to increase due to the increase in the use of the Internet, and the United States is the state that makes the biggest contribution to the shaping of this form of trade. In our country, the use of the Internet is just beginning to gain new popularity, and it coincides with the latest period in trade-oriented activities carried out in electronic environment. However, in the future, shopping and commercial activities will become even more dependent on the electronic environment and as a result of the convenience provided by electronic means. It would not be a wrong prediction to comment that it will gradually be abstracted from traditional methods.

Before the Internet was widely used in the world, e-commerce processes conducted over closed networks gained the feature of open network with technological and digitalization-oriented developments and the spread of the Internet worldwide.

1.2.1. Differences Between E-Commerce and Traditional Commerce

It is observed that there are most differences between electronic commerce and traditional commerce in communication and approval processes. Although there are many alternative options in the communication process of data in traditional commerce, none of these

methods can match the speed and practicality of transactions such as e-mail and other data communication processes in e-commerce. In the table, the differences between companies in classical commerce and e-commerce environment are shown by comparing customer, customer information, address and time headings (Pense, 2008: 11).

Table 1.2 General Features of Traditional Commerce and E-Commerce. Adapted from Pense (2008: 11)

	Traditional Commerce	E-Commerce
Address	Company	Web site
Customer	Customer potential around the business	Worldwide
Informing	Information through the store	Access to all products and alternative products, visual and written information
Time	Special time allocation and working hours restriction for each customer	Easy transportation, less time commitment, 24/7 working hours

E-commerce (e-commerce done over closed networks) and e-commerce done via the Internet (e-commerce done over open networks) are compared. As can be seen from the table, e-commerce over the Internet includes traditional e-commerce and appeals to a much larger segment of people (Çak, 2002: 22).

E-commerce has various advantages over classical commerce. Thanks to the Internet, the information and documents required for the continuation of commercial transactions reach the parties in a short time with the least margin of error and without the cost of stationery. E-commerce creates equal opportunities for entrepreneurs by eliminating barriers to market penetration. Thanks to Internet, since buyers and sellers do not need to meet up, there is no need for intermediary institutions, and web pages replace intermediaries. Companies carry out various activities at lower costs and competition among producers increases (Sarısakal and Aydın, 2003).

Table 1.3 Comparison of Traditional E-Commerce and E-Commerce via the Internet. Adapted from Cordis (1997)

Traditional E-Commerce	E-Commerce via the Internet
Only Business-to-Business	Business-to-Business
	Business-to-Consumer
	Business-to-Government
	Consumer-to-Government
Closed Groups	Open market, Global scale
Limited number of participants	Unlimited number of participants
Closed private networks	Open networks
Known, trusted parties	Known and unknown parties
Reliability of networks	Requiring security and approval

1.3. Elements of Electronic Commerce

In general, the elements of e-commerce can be listed as follows (Kıroğlu, 2012: 5):

- A product or service that may be tradable.
- The place where the product or service will be available for sale. (It appears as a web page in e-commerce.)
- The marketing activity necessary to attract consumers to the website.
- The establishment of a system as a means of payment (Since cash cannot be accepted electronically, the system usually used is credit card payment. For this, it is necessary to provide the credit card number. To ensure the security of this number, many payment methods are being created, such as secure web pages, a payment system which this information is secretly circulated between the seller and the bank, and electronic credit cards.)
- Establishment of a delivery system in e-commerce. (It is usually provided with an independent logistics company. The ordered or purchased product is delivered to the buyer by courier companies.)
- Accepting returned products, fulfilling warranty conditions and creating an insurance system on request are systems that do not differ from the classical understanding of trade.

- Customer support system. (Pages containing frequently asked questions about the product, providing information flow via e-mail or electronic forms are also a part of this system.)

1.4. Tools of Electronic Commerce

A number of tools are needed to conduct trade electronically. By means of these tools, commercial activities can be carried out electronically. In this respect, these tools are of great importance for development and realization of e-commerce.

In electronic environment, the tools that are used to simplify the commercial activities that take place between the consumers and the seller are called "electronic commerce tools". The tool that is most used for commercial activities conducted in an electronic environment is considered to be the Internet. The reason for this is that everyone can easily access it, find a lot of uses, and at the same time, some information that is written and visually owned can be easily transmitted. In addition, taking advantage of the Internet environment and conducting the process over the Internet also allows consumers and sellers who are the subject of electronic commerce to minimize the financial burdens they face (Erçetin, 2015: 5).

The tools of commerce carried out in the electronic environment are given below.

- Telephone,
- Television,
- Internet,
- Intranet,
- Extranet,
- Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)

Within the scope of these headings, these tools are mentioned and attempts are made to give a little more clarity and concreteness to the subject.

1.4.1. Telephone

Telephones, which are activated under the leadership of the system called network, are considered as one of the first tools used in commercial activities conducted in electronic environment. One of the reasons why it finds a lot of use in the world is that it can be used easily, and precisely for this reason, it is accepted as a device and tool that is widely used and preferred by corporate formations. As a result of the realization of technological moves such as mobile phone and Internet, it has to abandon its leadership role at the beginning (Sucuoğlu, 2008: 5).

1.4.2. Television

Television, which has a very common usage area, does not have a versatile structure. From the point of view of commercial activities conducted in an electronic environment, the fact that the television component allows one-way activities and does not allow multi-way activities to be carried out is the most significant limitation. However, even in this situation, which can be considered as negative, television appears as an important means of promotion and sales, and allows people to tend to purchase from where they sit. After the transition from television technology to the cable television process, the commercial activities carried out in the electronic environment started to show an upward trend (Ünal, 2006: 35).

1.4.3. Internet

The Internet undertakes the task of providing the greatest contribution to the development of commercial activities in the electronic field. This technology is accepted as a technology that spreads around the world and is known as the very large-scale network systematics that occurs as a result of the combination of network systematics of computers (Sarihan, 1995: 10).

In commercial activities conducted in the electronic environment, consumers can easily compare anything they want to purchase over the Internet, and they can also have the opportunity to get more information about the product or service they want to buy. Due to these advantages, the Internet has especially recently emerged as a channel that has been used effectively under the leadership of consumers. The consumers are quickly able to get all the information they need about the relevant service or goods when they have any needs, and then they can perform all the stages of purchasing via the Internet. In addition, the research to be carried out for the product or service requested by a customer can be carried out in a shorter period of time through Internet technology, and thus the requested products and services can be examined in detail by the consumers. All of these positive aspects are the key to a positive process for the consumers (Kircova, 2005: 66).

In the light of this information, it is useful to state that the biggest supporter of commercial activities carried out in electronic environment is Internet technology. It would be appropriate to share the view that the tool that generate the basis of the development of electronic commerce is Internet.

1.4.4. Intranet

This concept often comes across as a concept that is often confused with the concept of the Internet. The intranet is considered to be a specific network systematics. There is only one

difference, and this is due to the fact that the relevant systematic is included in the institutional formation. There is no need to establish any connection to the Internet in order to activate this systematic. Mostly, it is the case that this network system is used under the leadership of institutional formations. The main purpose of intranet technology is to realize the communication to be carried out in the corporate environment as quickly as possible. The situations that corporate structures with this system aim at are as follows (Erçetin, 2015: 6);

- Access to a socially effective position for individuals engaged in activities within the scope of the institution,
- To prevent any disruption in the relations between the individuals operating within the scope of the institution,
- Establishing a certain unity and solidarity among individuals operating within the scope of the institution,
- It is the control of whether the activities carried out as desired by remotely connecting to the institution through the relevant network system.

Through the intranet technology used in the corporate arena, certain texts and documents can be delivered to the employees with the help of the network and some databases can be recorded (Erçetin, 2015: 6).

It should be noted that intranet technology is of great institutional importance. This technology allows the desired execution of work that is being carried out under the roof of a particular institution. In this case, it enables the achievement of institutionally determined targets and the achievement of efficiency and competitive advantage. In short, it is necessary to mark down that intranet technology is one of the basic systems of an enterprise formation.

1.4.5. Extranet

Extranet is also created within the institutional structure as a network system for commercial activities carried out in electronic environment. In this network system, access is provided through Internet technology, and it is considered as a system established to ensure the sharing of certain information or data with partners located outside the institution. It allows the institutional formation to connect with some private individuals and other institutional channels that do not operate within its scope. It would be appropriate to mention some of the institutional benefits of this network systematic. These benefits are; minimizing possible mistakes, minimizing costs, realizing the sharing of available data, establishing unity and solidarity, allowing information to be delivered quickly, bringing efficiency, flexible conditions (Uzunçelebi, 2015: 128).

It is possible to make an interpretation that the extranet is a more extensive version of the intranet. In this context, this network system, which allows institutions to share and communicate with each other, is of great value for institutions in terms of commercial activities carried out electronically.

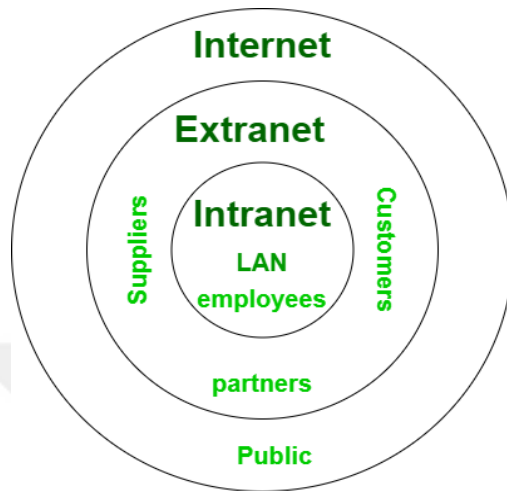


Figure 1.1 Intranet, Extranet and Internet Differences

Source:

https://www.google.com/search?q=intranet+extranet+Internet&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwje_szymaOCAxUb7LsIH5F8Ce8Q2cCegQIABAA&oeq (Access Date: 10.10.2023)

1.4.6. Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)

It is known as a system that ensures support for the exchange of any data or information among institutions during commercial activities carried out in electronic environment in the light of a number of previously established standards regardless of people. There is a requirement that any document or data to be delivered through this system should be designed in accordance with a certain order in order to be understood under the leadership of the opposite institution (Akçaoğlu, 2011: 29).

The main objectives of using systems called electronic data exchange are shared as follows (Akçaoğlu, 2011: 29-30);

- Organizing the processes for order taking in a way that takes minimum time,
- Ensuring the most optimal control of stocks,
- Saving paper and minimizing paper usage with documentation,
- Ensuring that institutions benefit effectively from the existing workforce,
- The increase in the trust of institutions to each other can be shown among the main purposes of benefiting from electronic data interchange.

At the last stage, it is clearly seen that human influence has disappeared through electronic data interchange and processes are carried out entirely in the focus of electronic systems. In this way, activities that can be carried out by human hands in a long time can be carried out in a short time.

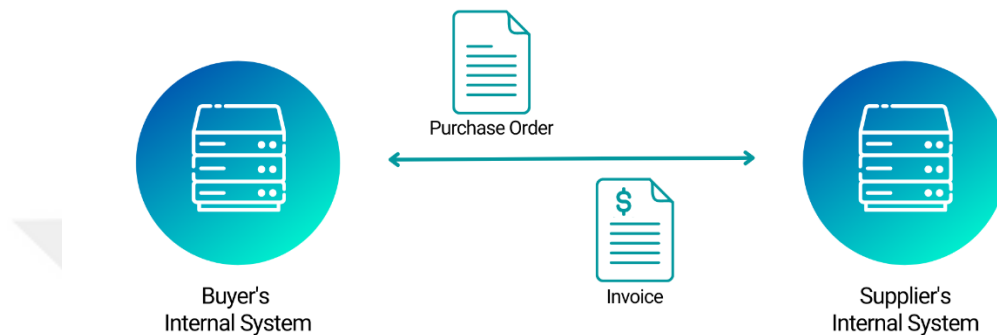


Figure 1.2 Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)

Source:

https://www.google.com/search?q=EDI&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwi33snomKOCAXWrU6QEHC2SDH0Q2cCe_gQIABAA&oq=EDI&gs_lcp (Access Date: 15.10.2023)

1.5. Security in Electronic Commerce

Security is one of the most important problems encountered in terms of commercial activities carried out in an electronic environment. Individuals have a significant timidity, especially at the initial stage, when they carry out commercial activities in an electronic environment. Because, in today's conditions, some fraud and fraud cases in the online environment can prevent people from carrying out commercial and monetary activities in these channels. However, high reliability systems have been created for commercial activities that are carried out in an electronic environment, and these systems have been activated to try to prevent unfortunate events that occur. These studies are carried out with great dynamism today, and this problem has been largely resolved. In this context, the security criteria that are currently being used in electronic commerce are mentioned below. These are;

- SET (Secure Electronic Transaction),
- SSL (Secure Socket Layer),

- Digital Certificate,
- Digital Signature.

Within the scope of this section, these safety criteria will be mentioned. All of these criteria are considered to be the criteria that ensure security in electronic commerce, and the relevant criteria provide a portfolio that is open for development through new features that are added to its structure day by day.

1.5.1. SET (Secure Electronic Transaction)

The SET security protocol, which means secure electronic transaction, is a part of the institutions named GTE, Mastercard, Netscape, Visa, Microsoft, IBM, Verisign, Terisa Systems and SAIC in order to securely perform various transactions regarding payment with various cards issued by banks for users. It is accepted as a security protocol that has been revealed through the consortium they formed. Regarding this protocol, in order to ensure a certain data access and transmission between institutions, the SET protocol must be acquired and institutionally integrated into the system under the leadership of all the participants involved in the process (Onur, 2010: 45).

1.5.2. SSL (Secure Socket Layer)

It is accepted as a dominant opinion that it is useful to mention the SSL, that is, the "Secure Socket Layer" protocol, which is of great importance right after the SET, "Secure Electronic Transaction" protocol (Nezhad, 2016: 31).

An SSL certificate is a digital certificate that authenticates a website and enables an encrypted connection. SSL certificates serve to protect the information individuals enter into the website. If the data transmitted between the parties in the context of the relevant security protocol are accessed by other persons, the parties of the commercial activity or business are immediately informed about this situation. In the context of this protocol, thanks to the transmission of data on the basis of confidentiality, the data is made unreadable by subjecting it to a certain encryption and security is ensured in this way (Anbar, 2004: 2).

1.5.3. Digital Certificate

In addition to the security protocols used in commercial activities conducted in an electronic environment, it is also necessary to mention the digital certificates used to ensure security.

The digital certificate is a complex system that uses a high-level encryption system to allow authentication to securely perform Internet-based online transactions. It contains the

digital signature confirming the contents of the certificate along with information about the key and the owner's identity. Digital certificates determine whether the person who sent the data, credit card number, mutual correspondence, corporate data, or any other material is the person they claim to be. While doing this, it marks the person's hard disk and prepares a digital certificate with encryption technology. Digital certificates are extremely secure because they use encryption, which is a powerful technology (<https://www.yazilimturkiye.com/windows-ile-dijital-sertifika-dogrulama-rehberi/> Access Date: 15.10.2023)

As it can be seen, digital certificates are one of the systems that undertake the task of providing security in commercial activities carried out in electronic environment. These certificates allow business to be run more securely and openly.

1.5.4. Digital Signature

One of the ways used to ensure security in commercial activities carried out in the electronic environment is the digital signature.

Digitally created signatures are used to reach the relevant person without any change of a sent message and to determine who the sender is. This signature, which is digitally created under the leadership of the sender, is added to the encrypted basic message and transmitted to the individual to whom the message is sent (Şimşek, 2012: 47).

This information makes it possible to interpret that the digitally created signatures act as a tool that provides assurance that a particular message is clearly transmitted to the other party.

1.6. Electronic Commerce and Payment Methods

One of the biggest problems in commercial activities carried out in electronic environment is the problem of trust. The point where the trust problem is experienced the most is seen in the part of the commercial activities conducted in the electronic environment related to payment. In order to complete the payment section in electronic commerce safely and comfortably;

- Credit Card,
- Money Transfer and Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT),
- POS Device,
- VPOS,
- Electronic Money are used as payment instrument.

As can be seen above, after the development of Internet sales, payment methods have changed and money exchange has gained a different dimension. Within the scope of this section, information about the relevant payment instruments will be shared, and the use cases of the related instruments in the last period will be tried to be reflected in the tables.

1.6.1. Credit Card

Nowadays, ‘credit cards’ appear as one of the payment instruments that are widely used in all aspects of commercial life.

The history of these means of payment dates back to the 1960s. First of all, credit cards, which found use in these years, have come to the present day by experiencing great developments in the context of developments (technological etc.) and have found a usage area that can be considered quite large (Yılmaz, 2014: 32).

Although credit cards, which find the most usage area for the trade carried out in the electronic environment, are accepted as a payment tool, it is a fact that must be accepted that the relevant tools have serious security gaps. It is accepted as a known fact that the personal information and card information of users who want to make a certain purchase by using these payment tools can be monopolized by malicious persons. In such a case, it can be used without the consent of the credit card holder and the card holder may be charged.

Table 1.4 Total Number of Credit Cards (Million Pieces) in Türkiye

Years	Total Number of Credit Cards (Million Pieces)
2011	51
2012	54
2013	57
2014	57
2015	58
2016	59
2017	62
2018	66
2019	70
2020	76

Source: Bankalararası Kart Merkezi A.Ş., ‘2019 Faaliyet Raporları’, 27.02.2020

https://bkm.com.tr/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/BKM_2019_Faaliyet_Raporu.pdf, (Access Date: 17.10.2023)

Table 1.5 Total Number of Credit Cards (Million Pieces) in Türkiye

Years	Total Number of Credit Cards (Million Number)
2021	84
2022	99
2023 (first eight months)	111

Source: <https://bkm.com.tr/kart-sayilari/> (Access Date: 17.10.2023)

1.6.2. Money Transfer and EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer)

Two of the most widely used payment instruments today are "money transfer" and "electronic fund transfer", that is, "EFT". These systems used via the Internet provide great convenience to their users and allow transactions that can be performed in a long time to be completed in a short period of time.

The monetary transfer process that is carried out between the accounts within the scope of a certain bank is called "money transfer". The monetary transfer process between accounts in different banks is called "electronic funds transfer (EFT)". If any of the payment options called EFT or money transfer are preferred during the execution of a certain payment, a screen appears in front of the users showing the numbers of the accounts together with the relevant bank. After receiving the relevant approval by the customer, the process for eft or money transfer, which is among the transactions used for payment, is completed (Sugözü and Demir, 2011: 135).

Table 1.6 E-Commerce EFT Volume by Years in Türkiye

Years	EFT Volume by Payment Methods (Billion TL)
2019	29,5
2020	80,4
2021	143,6
2022	287

Source: <https://www.eticaret.gov.tr/istatistikler> (Access Date: 17.10.2023)

1.6.3. POS Device

POS is an abbreviated form of point of sale. It is known by everyone that these devices are actively used especially in payments made by credit card. These devices are accepted as a device in which the shopping consumer group makes their payments via bank or credit cards (Gazioğulları, 2014: 38).

1.6.4. VPOS (Virtual POS)

Another of the payment instruments used in commercial activities that are conducted electronically is VPOS. It is an abbreviated form of virtual point of sale. The VPOS payment tool, which is considered a derivative of the POS device, is used during the payment process in the commercial activities conducted via the Internet in the electronic environment. Purchasing and selling activities, which are carried out with institutions under the leadership of the consumer group, can be realized online over the Internet (Gazioğulları, 2014: 38).

Table 1.7 E-Commerce Transactions with Cards Volume by Years in Türkiye

Years	Card Transactions by Payment Methods (Billion TL)
2019	97,5
2020	138,4
2021	227,3
2022	486,7

Source: <https://www.eticaret.gov.tr/istatistikler> (Access Date: 18.10.2023)

When e-commerce statistics for 2022 are examined, it is seen that the majority of people shopping online prefer card transactions as a payment method.

1.6.5. Electronic Money

Considering the commercial activities conducted in the electronic environment, "electronic money" comes up as one of the payment instruments used in these activities.

Electronic money (digital money, digital currency or electronic currency) is a digital component that serves for valuability, acceptability, trade, accumulation, and lending, such as traditional paper money or coins, but still has some differences. Possible financial risks that may occur during various transactions carried out through this payment instrument can be minimized. In this system, institutions have the important advantage of being able to collect their receivables in a simple way by providing the necessary simplification in terms of making

just-in-time payments. In addition, this payment tool also has disadvantages. One of the big problems is the inability to provide energy for various reasons, in short, the electricity going out, etc. In such cases, this system is disabled and the shopping process cannot be completed in the required time frame (Korkmaz, 2002: 60).

1.6.6. Cash on Delivery

It is a form of payment based on payment by cash or card upon delivery of the product after the completion of the shopping transaction electronically. Consumers generally consider this method safer (Erden, 2014: 61). In this method, the product can be checked and thus it can be ensured whether the correct product is delivered or not. By allowing consumers to pay upon receiving the product, the cash on delivery method both encourages electronic commerce and increases sales by integrating customers' traditional payment approaches into electronic commerce. This method is one of the alternative payment methods used by consumers in Türkiye.

Table 1.8 E-Commerce Volume by Years in Türkiye

Years	Volume (Billion TL)
2019	8,9
2020	7,4
2021	10,6
2022	27

Source: <https://www.eticaret.gov.tr/istatistikler> (Access Date: 18.10.2023)

In this section, where the payment instruments for commercial activities conducted in the electronic environment are explained, it is clearly seen how the payment options have developed in the axis of the consumer group and companies.

1.7. Electronic Commerce by Parties

1.7.1. Business to Consumer E-Commerce (B2C)

Business to consumer can be described as activities of business serving to consumers with goods or services. Persons visit an establishment's website before purchasing the product (Kumar and Raheja, 2012: 448).

According to Van Den Bossche et al. (2017: 16), B2C e-commerce includes all online transactions between businesses and consumers using desktops, laptops, tablets, smartphones, point-of-sale and smart wearable devices through online stores, physical stores (online in store), e-mail, QR (Quick Response) codes and catalogs.

With the "Virtual Store" applications that came out in consequence of the rapid growth in web technology, companies on the Internet started to sell many products from computers to cars, from books to pizzas directly to consumers. The services of companies such as Dell, Amazon.com, eBay fall into this model (Kıroğlu, 2012: 9).

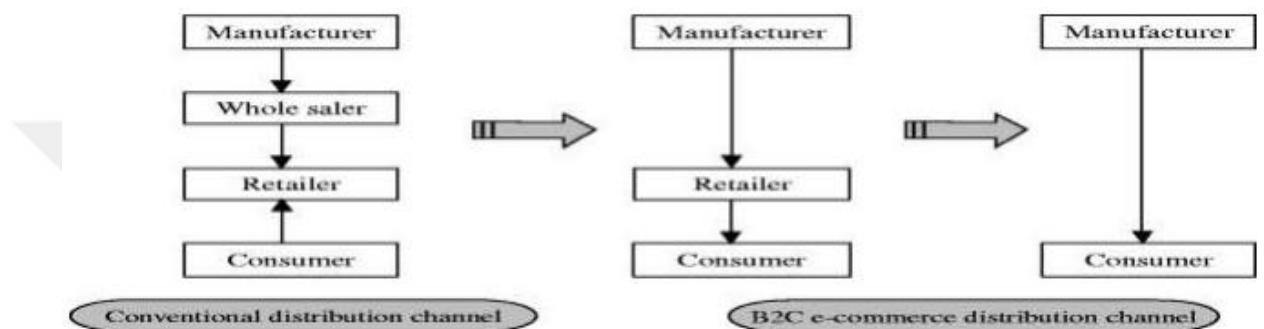


Figure 1.3 B2C Activities. Adapted from Kumar and Raheja (2012: 448)

1.7.2. Business to Business E-Commerce (B2B)

Business-to-business can be defined as commerce transactions among businesses, such between a producer and a wholesaler, or between a wholesaler and a retail dealer as. This model helps companies to conduct inventory more affectingly, organize customer demands swiftly, release products much quicker and reduce cost of paper (Kumar and Raheja, 2012: 447). The purpose of the B2B model is to ensure the sale, use and sharing of products, services and information among enterprises with the integration of automated systems into the units with which business is done jointly (manufacturer, supplier companies, dealers, stores, departments, etc.).

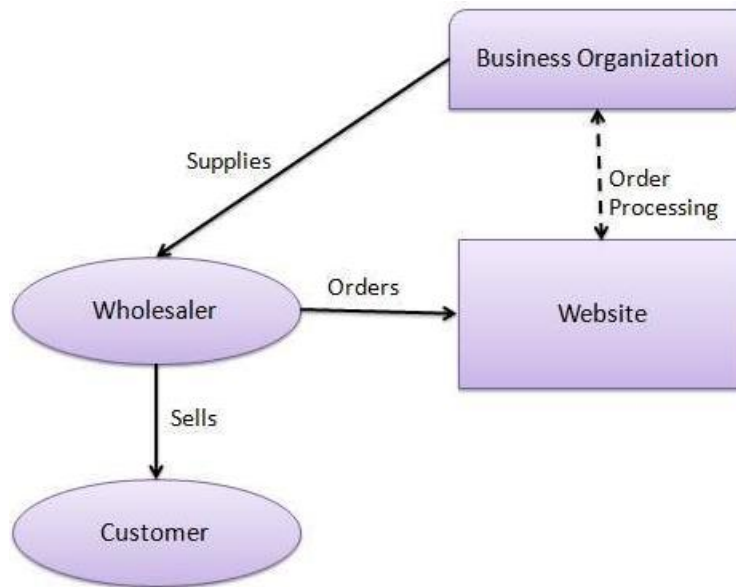


Figure 1.4 B2B Model

Source:

https://www.google.com/search?q=B2B+e+commerce&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwj0yeq1u6CAxXDs6QKHT21DBQQ2cCegQIABAA&oq=B2B+e+commerce&gs_lcp (Access Date: 18.10.2023)

1.7.3. Business to Government E-Commerce (B2G)

B2G is transactions between business and government over an electronic network. Business to government e-commerce contains the use of the Internet for public procurement, licensing procedures, public formalities and filing of tax returns (Baranika, 2020: 139). For instance, the government opens an online tender and businesses pursue this tender online and they sell goods or services to the government (Kıroğlu, 2012: 10).

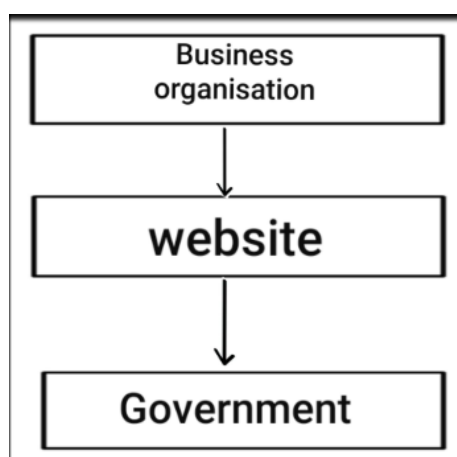


Figure 1.5 B2G Model

Source: https://www.google.com/search?q=B2G+e+commerce&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwjtit2HvK-CAxUNnf0HHddJDeoQ2cCegQIABAA&oq=B2G+e+commerce&gs_lcp (Access Date: 18.10.2023)

1.7.4. Government to Business E-Commerce (G2B)

Government to business involves a variety of services interchanged between the government and businesses, containing information of a company regarding taxes, licenses, registers, laws, policy (Zautashvili, 2017: 18). The main purpose of G2B implementation is for the government to use electronic means to meet the service needs of businesses (Joseph, 2009: 193).



Figure 1.6 G2B E-Commerce.

Source:

<https://www.google.com/search?q=government+to+business+e+commerce&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwjDxqvKwaCDAXW62AIHHe0iDIMQ2-cCegQIABAA&oq> (Access Date: 19.10.2023)

1.7.5. Consumer to Government E-Commerce (C2G)

Applications of driver's license and passport, social security contributions and tax payments such applications can be given as an example (Kıroğlu, 2012: 10).



Figure 1.7 C2G Model

Source:

https://www.google.com/search?q=C2G+e+commerce&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwiK5pDrvKCAxW9nv0HHbs6BvsQ2cCegQIABAA&oq=C2G+e+commerce&gs_lcp (Access Date: 19.10.2023)

1.7.6. Consumer to Consumer E-Commerce (C2C)

C2C refers to the sale of goods or services by one customer to another customer. Thanks to C2C e-commerce, consumers can access the products they need more easily and quickly by comparing prices (Yrjola et al., 2017: 302). Online auctions, third-party listings, web forums and chat rooms are among the platforms where C2C e-commerce can take place (Jones and Leonard, 2016: 26).

Gittigidiyor.com, eBay.com etc. sites can be given as examples of this. It is a model in which users make transactions among themselves. Applications such as Letgo are also examples (<https://egirisim.com/2013/08/04/e-ticaret-modelleri-b2b-b2c-c2c-b2g/> Access Date: 20.10.2023)

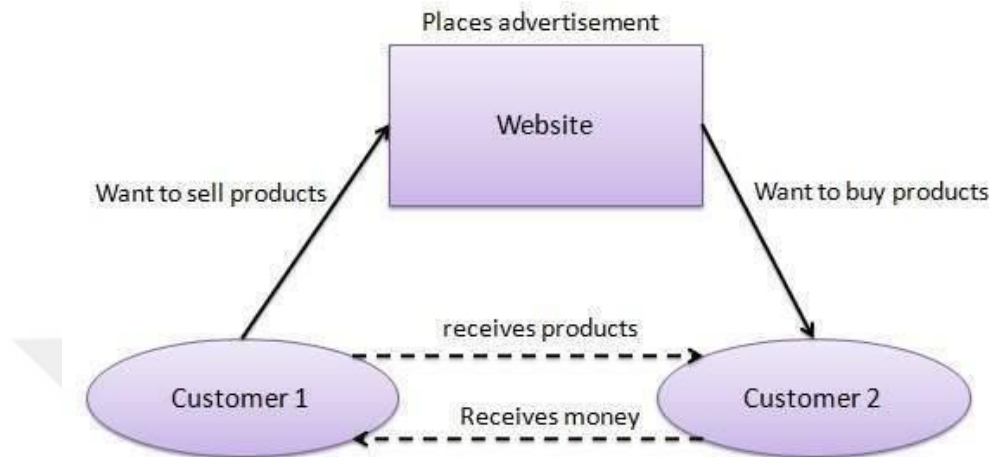


Figure 1.8 C2C Model

Source: https://www.google.com/search?q=C2C+e+commerce&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwjK2Iaav6-CAxUzvn0HHZLxBMcQ2cCegQIABAA&oeq=C2C+e+commerce&gs_lcp (Access Date: 20.10.2023)

1.7.7. Consumer to Business E-Commerce (C2B)

Consumer-to-business, like B2C, involves interaction between business and customers, but their roles are reversed. It is the customer who creates value for the business and receives payment for it (Khosla and Kumar, 2017: 91). C2B refers to the transaction between customers and manufacturers, and the biggest character is that customers can customize personalized production (Zhao and Feng, 2017: 1).

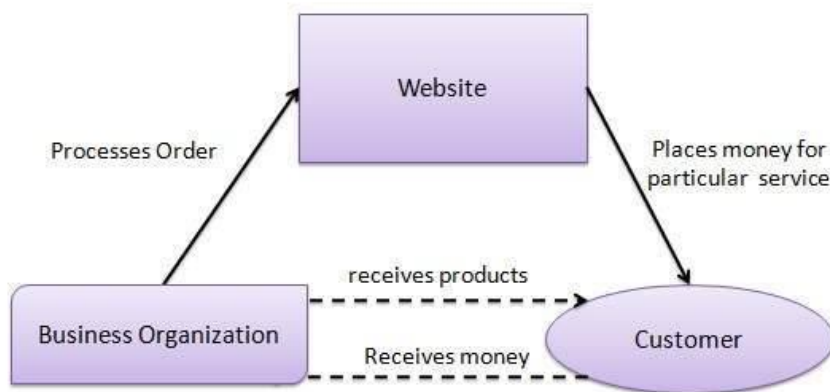


Figure 1.9 C2B Model

Source:

https://www.google.com/search?q=C2B+e+commerce&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwim2vPaw6CAxUnsScCHThODWcQ2cCegQIABAA&oeq=C2B+e+commerce&gs_lcp (Access Date: 20.10.2023)

A few examples of e-commerce sites according to the parties explained above are shown in the table below.

Table 1.9 E-Commerce Sites by Fields of Activity. Adapted from Sezgin (2013: 6)

Segment		Web Site	Type
Yellow Pages / Classifieds		Sahibinden	C2C
		Arabam	C2C
Open Market		GittiGidiyor	B2C
		n11.com	B2C
		Yenicarsim	B2C
		Arabulvar	B2C
Shopping in Multiple Categories		Hepsiburada	B2C
		Hizlial	B2C
		Erevon	B2C
		Simdial	B2C
		Elmasepeti	B2C
		Buldumbuldum	B2C
Private Shopping	Fashion & Beauty	Markafoni	B2C
		Trendyol	B2C
		Morhipo	B2C
		Limango	B2C
		Vip	B2C
		1V1Y	B2C
	Digital & Electronic	Teknosa	B2C
		Gold	B2C
		Vatan	B2C
	Life	6.Cadde	B2C
		Evmanya	B2C
		Ebebek	B2C
	Automotive	Otostart	B2C

	Hobby & Sports	idefix	B2C
		Sporcum	B2C
	Supermarket	Migros (Virtual Market)	B2C
Other	Food	Yemeksepeti	B2C
		Uniyemek	B2C
		Lokum.com	B2C
	Flowers & Fruits & Souvenirs	Ciceksepeti	B2C
		Bonnyfood	B2C
	Opportunity Sites	Grupanya	B2C
		Bonubon	B2C
		Sehir Fırsatı	B2C
		Yakala.co	B2C
	Organization Tickets	Biletix	B2C
		Mybilet	B2C
	Travel and Reservation	Ekobilet	B2C
		Tatilsepeti	B2C
		Tatil.com	B2C
		Sonfiyat.com	B2C

1.8. Advantages of Electronic Commerce

Commercial activities carried out in electronic environment mark the last period. Today, the realization of commerce in the electronic environment is making a great progress and paves the way for great advantages for both consumers and organizations. The advantages of the commercial activities conducted in the electronic environment are mentioned below (Elibol and Kesici, 2004: 303-331);

- Thanks to the moving of commercial activities to the electronic environment, the activities are carried out within the framework of the lowest error and maximum time savings. In addition, the activities are carried out without any waste of paper.
- The fact that the processes (development, trial, etc.) experienced during the production of products and services are more dynamic ensures that the needs of the consumers are understood easily and without loss of time. Compared to the consumer, it allows institutions to develop harmony in line with a more dynamic and accelerated action.

- Considering the commercial activities conducted in electronic environment, there are substantial reductions in various costs in the process from the ordering of the goods and services produced by institutions to the delivery to the customers.

- Corporate organizations can offer a larger product portfolio to their customer audiences through commercial activities carried out in electronic environment, and at the same time, the customer audience can carry out order and delivery operations from home at the touch of a button without the need to move from their place.

- While it is very difficult to determine the tendencies of the customers in face-to-face sales activities, this difficulty can be easily overcome in the electronic environment.

- Since there is no restriction in terms of time and place in any way, activities can be carried out at any time of the day through this channel.

- It makes possible to carry out foreign sales, that is, exports, in a simple line and without difficulty.

- It allows the comparison of goods and services offered by institutions under the leadership of customer base.

1.8.1. Advantages of E-Commerce for Companies

It is widely accepted that e-commerce technology provides many potential advantages for businesses. The main benefits of e-commerce for businesses can be listed as follows (Khan, 2016: 4; Rahayu and Day, 2017: 26; Kaur, 2011: 336-338):

- Supply chain management to deliver the right product to customers at the right time, at the right price and place

- Reducing stocks
- Selling without intermediaries
- Forming new markets
- Customized products
- Enhancing customer loyalty
- Improving customer and supplier relationships
- Speeding up the sales process
- Improve company image
- Increasing business income
- Reduce shipping costs
- Reduce purchasing and supply costs

1.8.2. Advantages of E-Commerce for Consumers

E-commerce enables customers with many options to compare or choose the cheaper and better selection among products or services. Customers can see what others are purchasing, read reviews about a product, and add their own reviews. E-commerce increases competition between businesses so that businesses provide significant discounts to customers (Gedik, 2021: 186). Other benefits of e-commerce for customers are as follows (Khan, 2016: 3-4; Vadwala and Vadwala, 2017: 118-119):

- Lower transaction costs for exchanging products and services
- Being able to make transactions 24/7 without the need for physical interaction with the business
- Customer can easily access information on different websites with just one click
- All purchases and sales can be made from wherever the customer chooses
- If the service of a business is not satisfactory, the customer can easily change the business at any time.

As it can be seen, the commercial activities conducted in electronic environment also bring many advantageous situations. Thanks to moving of commercial activities to the electronic environment, time can be saved and it is also possible to get rid of many costs that have to be incurred in classical trade. In addition, it would be an appropriate approach to state that it has advantages that are important separately in both corporate and customer-based processes.

1.9. Disadvantages of Electronic Commerce

Commercial activities conducted in electronic environment have some advantages as well as some disadvantages. In this respect, the disadvantages of electronic commerce are mentioned within the scope of this title. Disadvantages of electronic commerce are (Yalçın and Baş, 2012: 4);

- Security problems is one of the most important problems encountered in commercial activities that are carried out in an electronic environment.
- The prejudices about the transactions carried out via the Internet under the leadership of the customer base can be shown among the disadvantages of the commercial activities conducted in electronic environment.
- In these commercial transactions, the fact that the products and services to be purchased by the customers cannot be seen at the first glance and physically is also an important disadvantage.

- Commercial activities conducted in electronic environment cause qualified employees to face unemployment.
- While commercial activities conducted in electronic environment allow individuals to save time and money, they can also cause suspension of the tradesman-customer relationship.
- There are deficiencies and problems with the necessary infrastructure and equipment (Erbaşlar and Dokur, 2012: 135; Akar and Kayahan, 2010: 20-21).

It is shown that the commercial activities carried out in electronic environment have significant disadvantages. In the future, it is of great importance to focus on carrying out studies and research on how to eliminate these disadvantages.

1.10. Electronic Commerce in the World

It is witnessed that the Internet and related digital services are becoming more widespread day by day around the world. Increasing digitalization and especially innovations in information technologies now enable many activities to take place in digital environments. Nowadays, various online shopping platforms created by different innovative approaches and the increasing prevalence of digital technologies have begun to replace traditional shopping habits. Consumers have the opportunity to purchase the product they are looking for by comparing and choosing among the alternatives within seconds. This situation forces both national and multinational businesses to operate in a more competitive environment.

The government of the United States of America has appointed an Electronic Commerce Working Group to work on electronic commerce. The group, which met for the first time in 1995, published the report called the framework of electronic commerce. In addition, some ministers have been appointed to participate in the study. The United States of America's decision to pave the way for electronic commerce by giving importance to the issue has significantly affected the future of electronic commerce. The United States of America is the most comprehensive working country in electronic commerce. The Internet, born in the USA, is very widely used in the country. The main factor behind the USA's economy being the largest in the world and its growth beyond expectations is the widespread use of information and communication technologies in every field. The largest number of computers, Internet, and high-level Internet connections are in the United States (Clinton, 2000: 43).

Table 1.10 The Largest E-Commerce Companies Globally

Companies	Founded in
Amazon (U.S)	1994
Alibaba (China)	1999
JD.com (China)	1998
e-Bay (U.S)	1995
Rakuten (Japan)	1997
Pinduoduo (China)	2015
Shopify (Canada)	2004
Coupang (South Korea)	2010
ASOS (UK)	2000
Zalando (Germany)	2008
Meituan (China)	2010
Suning.com (China)	1990

Source: <https://www.markinblog.com/largest-ecommerce-companies/> Access Date: 22.10.2023)

Table 1.11 The Largest E-Commerce Companies by Revenue (2021)

Amazon	\$469.82 billion
JD.com	\$149.32 billion
Alibaba	\$109.48 billion
Meituan	\$27.77 billion
Suning.com	\$21.09 billion
e-Bay	\$10.27 billion
Rakuten	\$9.13 billion
Pinduoduo	\$9.12 billion
Shopify	\$4.98 billion
Coupang	\$4.05 billion

Source: <https://www.markinblog.com/largest-ecommerce-companies/> Access Date: 22.10.2023)

Table 1.12 E-Commerce Worldwide Total Revenue

2014	1,33 Trillion Dollars
2015	1,54 Trillion Dollars
2016	1,84 Trillion Dollars
2017	2,38 Trillion Dollars

2018	2,98 Trillion Dollars
2019	3,53 Trillion Dollars
2020	6,98 Trillion Dollars

Source: <http://www.halitkaya.net/turkiyede-ki-e-ticaretin-guncel-durumu/> (Access Date: 23.10.2023)

E-commerce sales worldwide were 3.53 trillion dollars in 2019. E-commerce, which continues to grow exponentially every year, has more than doubled in 2020 compared to 2019 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic disease that has affected the entire world. During Covid-19 pandemic process, the average number of products purchased per order increased by 60%. 44% of consumers have tried new brands. 43% of online shoppers said they were more positive about online shopping. 40% of consumers stated that they are more comfortable with digital technology and e-commerce than before the quarantine. Online gift shops have increased their gross product value by approximately 490% compared to previous years (www.worlddef.net Access Date: 23.10.2023).

1.11. Internet Usage Rates in Türkiye

The Internet, which METU and TÜBİTAK started 25 years ago and to which our country is connected, has gone beyond being just a "project" and has come into nearly every field in our social and economic life and it has become one of the basic infrastructures of development and growth. It has now become one of our basic needs, almost like bread and water (Demirdöğmez et al., 2018: 2219).

Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK) has completed the Household Information Technologies Usage Survey for 2022 and published it on its website. This report by TÜİK provides data on many subjects such as Internet usage rates and e-commerce in Türkiye. According to TÜİK Household Information Technologies Usage Survey data, it was observed that 94.1% of households have access to the Internet from home in 2022. This rate was 92.0% last year. The regions with the highest proportion of households with Internet access according to the Statistical Regional Units Classification are; Istanbul with 98.7%, Western Anatolia (Ankara, Konya, Karaman) with 98.3% and Aegean (İzmir, Aydın, Denizli, Muğla, Manisa, Afyonkarahisar, Kütahya, Uşak) with 94.4%.

The Internet usage rate among individuals in the 16-74 age group was 82.6% in 2021 and 85.0% in 2022. It was observed that the Internet usage rate of men was 89.1% in 2022 and that of women was 80.9%.

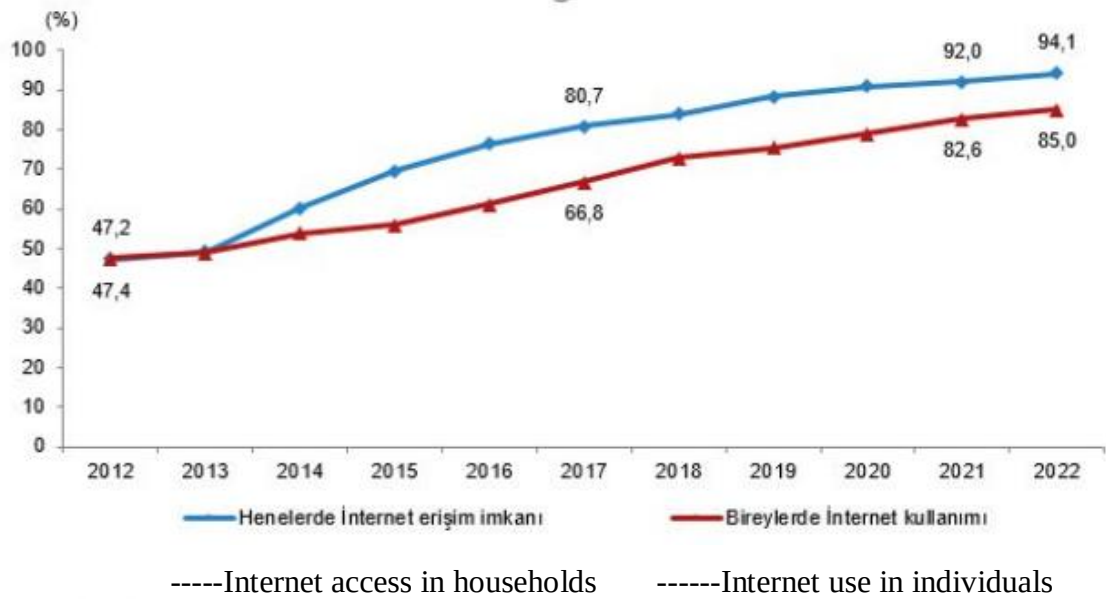


Figure 1.10 Internet Access Availability in Households and Internet Use by Individuals, 2012-2022.

Source: [https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Hanehalki-Bilisim-Teknolojileri-\(BT\)-Kullanim-Arastirmasi-2022-45587](https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Hanehalki-Bilisim-Teknolojileri-(BT)-Kullanim-Arastirmasi-2022-45587) (Access Date: 23.10.2023)

1.12. Electronic Commerce in Türkiye

As a consequence of the work of TÜBİTAK and METU, the Internet began to exist and be used in Türkiye. Work on this subject began in 1991 and the first Internet connection in Türkiye was made on April 12, 1993. Internet was first used in METU. Between 1994 and 1996, this university was followed by Bilkent, Boğaziçi, İstanbul and Ege Universities. Afterwards, private websites such as Mynet and Ekşi Sözlük started to operate. In 1997, the Supreme Council of Science and Technology held a meeting for the development of electronic commerce. With this meeting, e-commerce activities started. In 1998, the Electronic Commerce Coordination Board was founded under the Undersecretariat of Foreign Trade (Demirdöğmez et al., 2018: 2222).

With this process, many online shopping sites started their activities. E-commerce companies that started operating in Türkiye and their starting dates are shown in Table.

Table 1.13 Starting Years of E-Commerce Companies in Türkiye

Companies	Starting years
Migros Virtual Market	1997
Hepsiburada	1998
Sahibinden	1998
Gittigidiyor	2001

Yemek Sepeti	2001
Ets Tur	2003
Trendyol	2010
N11	2013
Letgo	2016

Source: <http://www.halitkaya.net/turkiyede-ki-e-ticaretin-guncel-durumu/> (Access Date: 24.10.2023)

The e-commerce volume, which was 136 billion TL in 2019, increased to 226.2 billion TL in 2020. The effect of the pandemic was great in this. With the implementation of the curfews, people started to supply their basic and some other needs through e-commerce. In 2021, the e-commerce volume, which was around 381.5 billion TL, experienced an increase of 109% and rose to 800.7 billion TL. When e-commerce statistics for recent years are examined, it is seen that 2022 will be the year with the most growth in e-commerce. In the relevant report, while the ratio of e-commerce to general trade was around 17.7% in 2021, it increased by 5% to 18.6% in 2022.

This process has led to the operational growth of companies that invest based on e-commerce, and to accelerate this process for companies that have not yet started investments in this direction.

Table 1.14 E-Commerce Volume by Years in Türkiye

Years	Volume (Billion TL)
2019	136
2020	226,2
2021	381,5
2022	800,7

Source: <https://www.eticaret.gov.tr/istatistikler> (Access Date: 24.10.2023)

When the distribution of e-commerce volume in 2022 is examined by sectors, it is seen that the industry in which e-commerce volume increased the most is the White Goods and Small Home Appliances sector. While the e-commerce volume in the White Goods and Small Home Appliances sector was 96.7 billion TL, it was 54 billion TL in the Clothing, Shoes and Accessories sector, 45.9 billion TL in the electronics sector and 45.1 billion TL in airlines.

In 2022, these sectors were followed by food, travel, supermarket, storage, accommodation and catering sectors.

Table 1.15 Distribution of E-commerce Volume by Sectors in 2022

Sectors	Volume (Billion TL)
White Goods and Small Home Appliances	96,7
Clothing, Shoes and Accessories	54
Electronics	45,9
Airlines	45,1

Source: <https://www.eticaret.gov.tr/istatistikler> (Access Date: 24.10.2023)

When e-commerce statistics for 2022 are examined, a huge increase is seen in the accommodation sector with an increase of 222%. While the accommodation sector is followed by the airlines sector with a growth of 156%, there is a growth of 132% in the travel, storage and transportation sectors.

Table 1.16 Change of E-Commerce Volume by Sectors Compared to the Previous Year

Sectors	Percentage %
Accommodation	222
Airlines	156
Travel, storage and transportation	132

Source: <https://www.eticaret.gov.tr/istatistikler> (Access Date: 25.10.2023)

While 36% of the purchases made through e-commerce sites and marketplaces were made in Istanbul, 9% were made by people living in Ankara and 6% in Izmir. These cities where the most shopping was done were followed by Bursa and Antalya with 4%, Kocaeli with 2.5%, and Adana, Konya, Mersin and Gaziantep with 2%.

Table 1.17 The Provinces Where E-Commerce is Most Intensive

3 Provinces Where E-Commerce is Most Intensive	Rate
İstanbul	36%
Ankara	9%
İzmir	6%

Source: <https://www.eticaret.gov.tr/istatistikler> (Access Date: 25.10.2023)

As a result of all these studies, with the development of technology, there has been a rapid and large increase in both the number of Internet users and the e-commerce transaction volume.

1.12.1. Factors Affecting the Development of E-Commerce

Developments in information and communication technologies that enable e-commerce and globalization greatly affect the development of e-commerce worldwide. However, factors such as population size, demographic factors, access to the Internet, rate of Internet usage, mobile device use, social media use, development level and prevalence of financial access (payment systems) and prevalence of logistics services have a huge impact on the development and spread of e-commerce.

1.12.1.1. Population and Demography

The frequent use of the Internet and mobile devices by the relatively young population makes e-commerce advanced.

Considering the last few years when e-commerce dominated, it has been seen that there is a direct relationship with the young population density. Ultimately, the young population is the main factor that facilitates the adaptation of society to technological developments and creates potential in this direction. According to the Digital 2021 Report, The Türkiye has a population of 84.69 million as of January 2021, and the median age of the population is 31.7.



Figure 1.11 Population Demographics and Other Key Indicators

Source: <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-turkey> (Access Date: 25.10.2023)

When the population size and age distribution are compared to other countries, it is seen that Türkiye has a younger and larger population than US and European average. In light of all these data, it is highly likely that the level of e-commerce will increase as the young population becomes a consumer. (İnce et al., 2021).

1.12.1.2. Internet Penetration

The ability of e-commerce to reach the desired potential undoubtedly depends on the availability of Internet access.

The Digital 2021 Report shows that as of January 2021, 77.7% of the population (65.80 million) has access to the Internet, an increase of 3.7 million people (6%) compared to the previous year.



Figure 1.12 Essential Headlines For Mobile, Internet, and Social Media Use

Source: <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-turkey> (Access Date: 25.10.2023)

Gibbs et al. (2003: 13) pointed out technological developments, rise in the number of personal computers, investments in Internet access infrastructure and decrease in Internet access fees as factors that increase the number of Internet users and stated that these factors affect the e-commerce transaction volume in a country.

According to the report, the number of mobile connections has increased by 2 million (2.7%) compared to last year and represents 90.80% of the population.

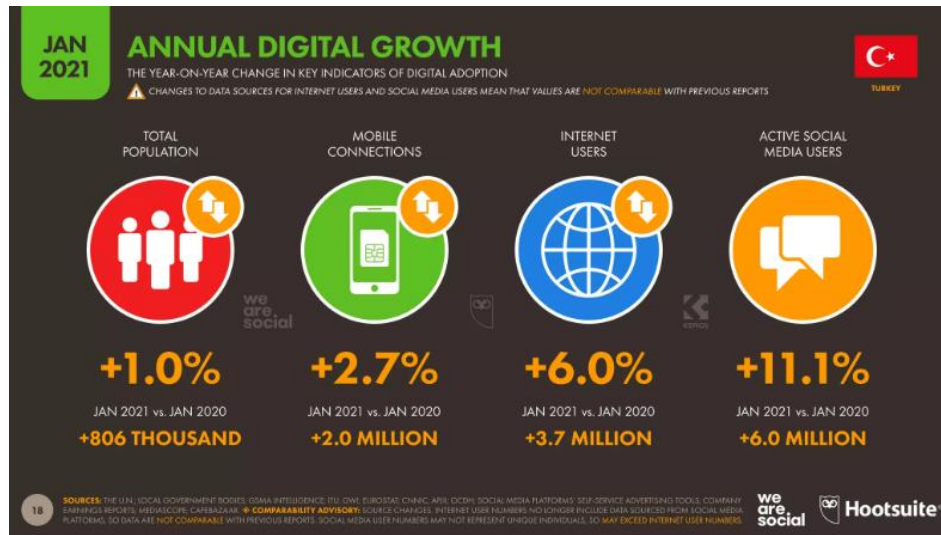


Figure 1.13 The Year-on-Year Change in Key Indicators of Digital Adoption

Source: <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-turkey> (Access Date: 26.10.2023)

It can be correct to say that improvements in Internet penetration and the number of mobile connections will positively affect e-commerce.

1.12.1.3. Ownership of Internet Access Devices

When the table is examined, the usage rates of the devices are seen and the use of smartphones is widespread. The prevalence of devices that enable Internet access in Türkiye, as of 2021, 97.2% of Internet users between the ages of 16-64 have a smartphone; 71.2% have a laptop or desktop computer; 44.4% have a tablet.

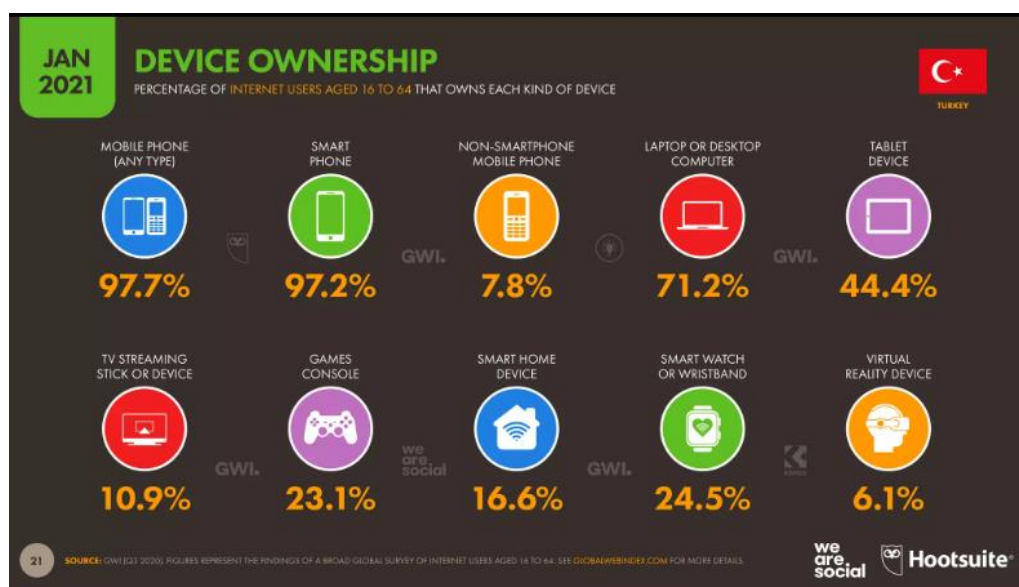


Figure 1.14 Percentage of Internet Users

Source: <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-turkey> (Access Date: 26.10.2023)

The most important reasons for the development of e-commerce are smartphones and social media platforms, and their users are constantly increasing day by day. Smartphones have become a tool for communicating at any time of the day, reading books and newspapers, monitoring social media, e-mail, accessing the Internet, and also shopping (Minaz and Bozkurt, 2017: 269).

1.12.1.4. Use of Social Media

In today's globalizing world, social media use is widely common. Through this channel, products can be promoted easily between individuals and countries. Thus, one of the factors that affect development of e-commerce is intensity of social media usage. In 2021, social media usage increased by 11.1%, reaching 60 million, and this figure constitutes 70.8% of the population.

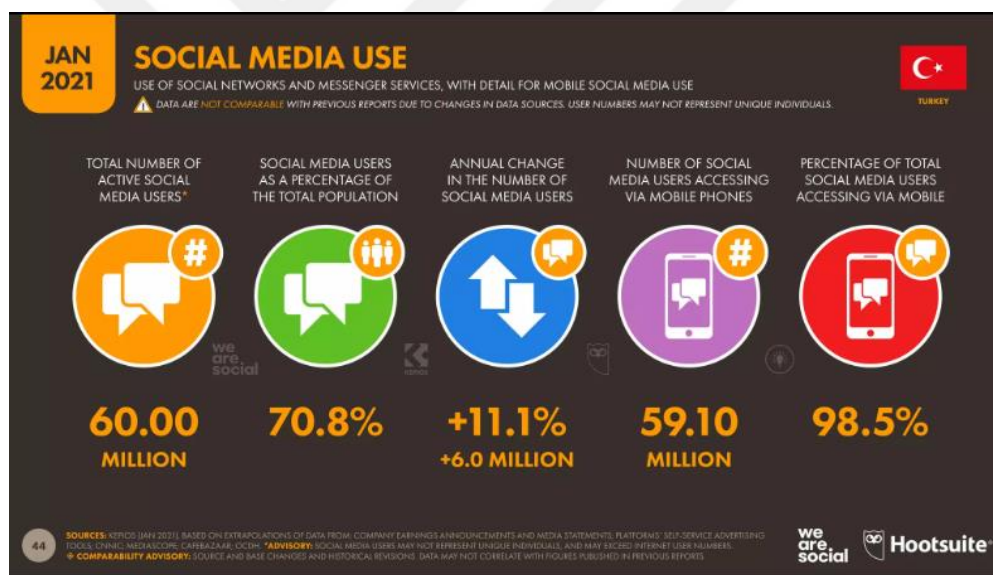


Figure 1.15 Social Media Use

Source: <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-turkey> (Access Date: 27.10.2023)

Customers take into account users' comments on social sites such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. to evaluate products and services before making a purchase (Yang et al., 2016: 63). Social media is increasingly popular because it is more economical than other marketing tools and has the advantage of being able to apply direct personalized marketing strategies (Yaralı and Kırık, 2017: 526).

1.12.1.5. Financial Access (Payment Systems)

Another factor affecting e-commerce is the parameters regarding financial access. In this context, the development and prevalence of payment systems come to the fore.

According to the Electronic Commerce Information System (ETBİS) 2023 data, which is announced regularly every year by the Ministry of Commerce of the Republic of Türkiye, when the first 6 months are examined, it is seen that card transactions have a volume of 62.7% and a rate of 32% is followed by the EFT method (<https://www.ticimax.com/blog/2023-yili-e-ticaret-verileri-ve-istatistikleri> Access Date: 25.10.2023).

In this context, the development and reliability of online payment methods is of great importance.

1.12.1.6. Logistics Network Development Level

The development and widespread of the logistics network are also considered among the factors affecting the e-commerce potential. Owing to expand of e-commerce around the world and the rising expectations of consumers regarding product delivery, companies make an effort for differentiating themselves and take a competitive advantage, particularly in the field of logistics. In terms of developed markets, as same-day delivery of products or services has become a standard expectation, service quality has begun to directly affect consumer preferences.

1.12.2. Obstacles to the Development of E-Commerce

There are factors that are effective in development of e-commerce as well as hindering factors.

In addition to infrastructure problems, the biggest problem is security and legal acceptance of the transactions. The problems to be addressed in this study are listed as follows.

1.12.2.1. Security Problems

It is known that the transactions made in e-commerce activities are different from the transactions made in traditional commerce. In traditional commerce, during the sales process, the buyer and seller share the same environment, the products or services are examined, the amount for the goods or service is paid and the goods or service is purchased. Therefore, in traditional trade, transactions can be carried out without much need for mutual trust. However, trust is an important factor in electronic commerce. Since e-commerce activities take place via the Internet, the buyer must trust the seller because in order to complete the e-commerce transaction, the buyer's personal information must be transferred to the other party (Fidan, 2014:

194). Changing data and network resources as a result of unauthorized entry to network resources, damaging, stealing, disposing of data and network resources, and transferring information to unauthorized persons are some of the security problems of e-commerce (Yesil, 2010: 90).

E-commerce is exposed to some dangers on the Internet. Companies that want to increase their customer potential should portray a more reliable company image to their customers. In order to successfully complete the information transfer process in e-commerce activities, it is essential to develop the necessary infrastructures, ensure the security of these infrastructures and take the necessary precautions (Kayahan, 2016: 29).

1.12.2.2. Legal Problems

With the development of the electronic commerce market and the changes in commercial relations in this market, it has been seen that new legal regulations are required in this field. It has been observed that legal regulations, which are valid worldwide and used in traditional trade, cannot solve the problems and are inadequate in some cases. International e-commerce activities are one of the situations where these laws are inadequate. Although transactions are made by creating contracts in e-commerce transactions, there may be cases where the contracts created are misleading or incomplete (Yesil, 2010: 91).

One of the common problems regarding legal issues is that each country has various laws for e-commerce. Since transactions may be subject to legal obstacles, double standards may be encountered. The freedom to sell products and services during international transactions is limited (Özekenci, 2017: 35).

Some of the legal problems faced by e-commerce can be listed as follows (Şen, 2017: 70);

- Privacy rights of the parties in e-commerce transactions,
- Compatibility problems of digital signature, electronic documents,
- Regulations regarding the delivery processes of products,

1.12.2.3. Taxation Issues

In line with traditional trade, taxes such as customs duties and income taxes have been legalized in accordance with this trade. Due to the marketability of goods such as information resources and digital products along with physical goods through electronic commerce, problems may arise in taxing these activities. It is observed that the legal regulations of

countries are inadequate in some cases due to the intertwining of all markets in trade with electronic commerce (Mülküt, 2017: 31).

Every commercial transaction involves various taxes depending on the taxation system of the country. There are situations where taxation can create significant obstacles to businesses' trade transactions. These obstacles can be listed as follows (Kircova and Ozturk, 2000: 41-42);

- Uncertainties experienced during the application of taxes,
- There are different tax systems created for companies and customers according to the laws of the countries,
- The increasing number of companies conducting online business and the lack of information about the locations of these companies,

1.12.2.4. Payment Problems

Another important issue in electronic commerce transactions is payment. The biggest factor that causes customers to avoid sharing important information such as personal and financial information is the lack of trust on the Internet. Customers need to share a lot of personal information in order to carry out electronic commerce transactions and complete their shopping transactions. To illustrate, when shopping online, customers must enter their credit card information on the payment page to complete their purchases (Rachna and Singh, 2013: 27-28).

1.12.2.5. Infrastructure Problems

Communication infrastructures such as phone lines, fiber cables, satellites and information technology such as computers, software are the tools that form the e-commerce infrastructure. The biggest factor that makes it difficult to solve infrastructure-related problems in electronic commerce activities is the cost of infrastructure. It is seen that developing countries face e-commerce infrastructure problems.

Infrastructure problems can be listed as follows (Canpolat, 2001: 25-26);

- Insufficiency of telecommunication infrastructure, lack of public access,
- Electronic commerce requires the active use of communication and communications networks. For this reason, Internet congestion occurs and various problems arise.

1.13. Projects Related to E-Commerce in Türkiye

Many initiatives that take an international approach to the process of determining information policy primarily recommend that countries develop their national infrastructures

and strengthen their information centers (Toplu et al., 2006: 141). Türkiye 's efforts to be included in the new social transformations expressed by the concept of information society began in the 1990s. During this period, in addition to various reports and research, studies on the coordination of certain elements of the information society were at the forefront. A few studies are as follows (Karadeniz and Yılmaz, 2016: 62);

- Information Technology and Economic Modernization Report (1993)
- Informatics Working Group Report (1995)
- Electronic Commerce Coordination Group (1998-2002)
- Türkiye National Information Infrastructure Master Plan (1999)
- E-Türkiye Initiative (2001)
- E-Transformation Türkiye Project (2002)
- Information Society Strategy (2006-2010)
- Information Society Strategy and Action Plan (2015-2018)

It is possible to illustrate some of the projects implemented by some organizations regarding electronic commerce in Türkiye in the table.

Table 1.18 Implemented by Some Organizations on Electronic Commerce Projects. Adapted from Şamil (2014: 101-105)

Institutions	Projects
TBMM	Information and Information Technology Commission
COMPETITION AUTHORITY	Regulations Regarding Unfair Competition
KOSGEB	Kobi.Net and Electronic Commerce Training
TURKISH STANDARDS INSTITUTE	Monitoring International Standards and Determining National Standards in Electronic Commerce
THE BANKS ASSOCIATION OF TURKIYE	Providing Electronic Commerce Data from Banking Institutions

SECOND PART

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TOURISM AND INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AND APPLICATIONS OF ELECTRONIC COMMERCE

2.1. The Role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Tourism Sector

Since the last quarter of the 21st century, great progress has been observed in the use of information and communication technologies in both business and social life. This progress has emerged as a consequence of the decrease in communication and computer costs and the ability to meet the expectations and needs of consumers (Gordon, 2000: 64).

Developments in the economic structure brought about by globalization have increased the importance of customer-centered service-oriented sectors in which information and service are at the forefront in the new economy. The tourism sector is among these and it is one of the customer-centered service sectors, both on the demand and supply side (Bağdat, 2007: 43).

Information and communication technologies provide tourism businesses with opportunity to store information as well as other advantages. Especially in tourism, service is intangible and for this reason it cannot be promoted as easily as products of other sectors. While products in other sectors can be tried and seen beforehand, services in the tourism sector cannot be tried and stored before purchasing. In order to try and test the product, the service must first be purchased. The Internet eliminates this deficiency and provides tourism businesses with the advantage of promoting and marketing themselves. Recently, tourism businesses that promote via the Internet can reach many consumers in a short time. Tourism businesses that create their own websites can thus inform consumers in detail about their businesses and offer consumers the opportunity to compare themselves with other businesses. Businesses that offer reservation opportunities through their own websites can be a solution to the problems of meticulous consumers who care about saving time (Şahin and Akdoğdu, 2004: 346).

Knowledge accumulation and use have a substantial place in tourism sector. In tourism sector, information is used, transmitted and evaluated as often as possible. For instance, road information, travel vehicle information, payment information and accommodation information, etc. are necessary information for consumers who want to go on holiday. For this purpose, information is produced by companies providing services in tourism sector and presented to consumers (Sheldon, 1997: 2).

Information and communication technologies transform the way tourism businesses continue their activities, their communication methods, and the way consumers purchase tourist

services or products. Today, the Internet is one of the most essential elements used by tourism businesses in their activities (Bağdat, 2007: 50).

With the use of new technologies, the way tourism businesses conduct their business and the functioning of the whole system have been changing (O'Connor, 1999: 42; Werthner and Klein, 1999: 6; Connell and Reynolds, 1999: 502). The global competitive environment pushes service enterprises to use information technologies more intensively like other businesses. Competition tools (quality, speed, cost, etc.) are gradually increasing and differentiating. Recent developments in information technologies offer new opportunities in the fields of marketing, management and promotion for enterprises and touristic destinations in tourism sector and provide competitive advantage. Accommodation enterprises, airline companies, touristic destinations, travel agencies have started to benefit from information technologies widely.

The acceleration of the growth of information communication technologies has led to great changes in the structure and operations of travel and tourism industries. These changes help tourism businesses and destinations to enhance their place in international market. They can enlarge their distribution channel and value chain largely by adopting new and innovative business models and electronic commerce (Buhalis and Deimezi, 2004: 104).

Accordingly, the increase in the use of the Internet has led e-commerce to bring a new dimension to the tourism sector. In tourism sector, which has a labor-intensive structure, two constantly changing elements can be mentioned: people and technology. Tourist behavior fifty years ago is not the same as today's tourist behavior. However, the tourism sector has been able to adapt to these changes in human behavior. On the other hand, computer-based technologies, information systems, databases, communication lines, new opportunities created by management and operating software programs, and electronic communication opportunities facilitate activities in the tourism industry, which is a global industry. Traditionally, tourism suppliers in Türkiye have used print-based media, brochures, flyers and promotion for many years. However, this method of promotion and marketing, which is extremely costly, also makes it impossible to communicate the changes that will take place close to the date of the reservation to the consumer.

Naturally, great development in information technologies and the Internet indisputably pushes the tourism sector to develop. The number of web users in tourism businesses is increasing and becoming prevalent each passing day. The number of regional and local tourism businesses that want to take their place in the Internet world with their own websites in order

to reach more audiences and benefit from other advantages of the Internet is increasing day by day (Hançer and Ataman, 2006: 193).

In short, the rapid improvement of tourism supply and demand has made information technologies very substantial for tourism sector. Consequently, information technologies have a very significant place in tourism marketing, distribution, promotion and coordination (Polatoğlu, 1994).

As it can be understood from here, information exchange between the service provider and the consumer is very important at every stage. So as to raise the quality of the service provided, fast and accurate flow of information is required. For this reason, information and communication technologies have become a universal feature of tourism sector.

2.2. Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Travel Agencies and Tour Operators

Travel agency business, which has been contributing to the touristic processes of traveling individuals through support and mediation missions for centuries, has also been affected by social and technological developments (Huang et al., 2009: 734). The appearance of information technologies and electronic commerce applications along with the Internet and the prevalent use of the Internet lead to great changes in the structure, marketing, reservation and sales processes of the travel industry. Tourism intermediaries have a very important role within the complex structure of tourism industry. The use of information technologies in tourism industry leads to the participation of new actors in tourism intermediaries (Yılmaz and Öncüler, 2003: 331).

While in traditional system sales were made face to face through agency branches, today online sales are increasing rapidly. The Internet has become a new way for the tourism distribution system to present and market the product to customers (Agag and El-Masry, 2016: 98). Information technologies have always been at the forefront for travel businesses. This was also true before the use of the Internet in travel businesses. For example, although Internet technology started to be used in travel businesses in the 1990s, the first examples of the use of information technologies in travel businesses date back to the 1970s (Raymond, 2001).

With the advancement of technology, travel agencies have begun to use information technologies more intensively and effectively. Travel agencies, which are the most common intermediary businesses in tourism industry, have different sizes and structures, from multinational and large agencies serving in different fields to small and independent ones (Sheldon, 1997: 4). Travel agencies operating today can reach more customers without

limitation of time and place by performing some services such as reservation transactions, tour sales and ticket sales electronically. For tour operators, they increase their provision levels as the output spent on commissions and intermediary institutions decreases (Ansen and Fırat, 2009: 122).

Travel agency business is in a radical change within itself, and the definitions, practices and management approaches in this field are also changing in line with global trends (Yolal, 2003: 16). The effects of information technologies on travel agencies are felt in the production, marketing, distribution and management of tourism products in public and private sectors. While information technologies increase managerial effectiveness and efficiency in travel businesses, they enable business management to adapt to the new business environment and benefit from new opportunities (Buhalis, 1998: 415).

Online travel agencies are businesses that make travel-related reservations such as hotel, airline and car rental online on a web-based basis by using websites over the Internet (Bhat, 2016). Online travel agencies began to appear in 1995 with the spread of the Internet (Chircu and Kauffman, 2000: 1). Online travel agencies are companies that act as intermediaries between hotels and customers by making reservations for many different hotels and, as a result, providing economic benefits (Christodoulidou et al., 2010: 1059).

The more information travel agencies can access electronically, the more timely and efficient services they can provide to their customers. Information technology applications in travel agencies increase effectiveness, efficiency and market access opportunities (Sheldon, 1997: 5).

The use of information technologies by travel agencies has come out in three stages of technological development. The first phase was the introduction of computerized reservation systems (CRS) in the 1970s, and the second phase was the introduction of global distribution systems (GDS) into the tourism industry in the 1980s. The third and final stage was the widespread use of the Internet in tourism industry in the 1990s. The changes that started with the development of computerized reservation systems (CRS) and global distribution systems (GDS) have brought to the agenda new issues such as competitive advantage arising from the change in competitive conditions. There is an increase in the number of customers using computerized reservation systems (CRS) on the demand side of tourism. Computerized reservation systems permit customers to easily access and compare information about destinations, travel packages, trips, accommodation and entertainment services, prices and accessibility of these services. These systems provide customers with last-minute reservations and flexibility, providing instant booking confirmation and fast documentation (Buhalis, 2003:

79). Electronic commerce especially affects the way travel agencies distribute their products in the relevant market. The Internet, which served only as a travel information provider in the first years, has spread rapidly throughout the tourism industry in recent years and has turned into promotion and sales (Bayekeyeva, 2009: 41).

Thanks to the use of global distribution systems in tourism industry, tourist service providers can distribute and manage reservations on a global scale and reconcile tourism supply with consumer needs. While globalization provides the emergence of great synergies by supporting the use of global distribution systems, the use of global distribution systems also supports the globalization of the tourism industry. Global distribution systems have the advantages such as high quality and profitability to all parties in the tourism market (Buhalis, 1998: 414). Rapid developments in electronic distribution channels have changed the reservation process and made it easier and more effective. A transition has been observed from reservations made by phone, letter and fax to reservations made through GDS (Global Distribution System). Electronic distribution channels are used by accommodation establishments as well as other businesses in the tourism industry, such as airlines, car rental companies, tour operators, etc. (Kaya, 2008: 51).

Figure shows how electronic distribution channels are connected to each other in tourism businesses.

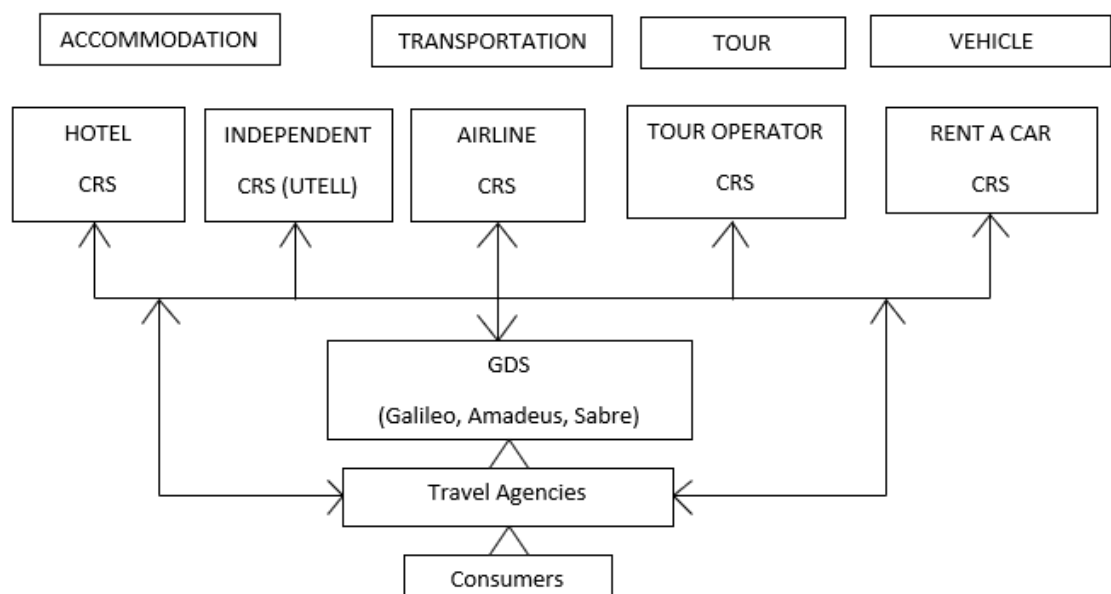


Figure 2.1 Electronic Distribution Channels in Tourism. Adapted by Rimmington and Kozak (1997: 63)

In the early 1980s, tour operators noticed that they needed to make an investment in information technologies and start using more effective distribution methods. Tour operators have undergone a technology-based transformation to increase their efficiency, improve their management systems, reduce telephone operators' labor costs and provide better service to both consumers and agencies. Developed video text systems have enabled tour operators to communicate directly with agencies, starting from England, Germany and France (Buhalis, 2003: 243). In UK, Thomson was the first tour operator to create a dedicated data display system. Thomson started using the videotex system in 1982 and set up the largest private videotex system. In 1986, it became the first travel agency to carry out all reservation transactions with travel agencies through interactive videotext, thus eliminating making reservations by phone (Poon, 1999: 193).

In order for travel agencies to achieve continuous development and be in the markets in which they operate, it is necessary to create a communication system that will offer constant communication with their customers, partners, employees and can adapt to innovations. At this point, information technologies become a critical success factor for travel agencies.

2.3. Use of Information Technologies in Accommodation Industries

Accommodation enterprises constitute the most important sub-branch of the tourism sector. The main function that distinguishes hotel enterprises from other businesses in a significant way is accommodation (Kozak, 2002: 2). Adapting to new technological developments in accommodation enterprises and benefiting from these technologies in the administrative and infrastructure context means that businesses follow the right path in their sales and marketing activities (Nicolau, 2013: 73).

Accommodation enterprises discovered the Internet in the late 1990s. All accommodation enterprises in the world, especially in developed countries, created their own web pages and started to benefit from the Internet in areas such as promotion, sales, market targeting, market segmentation, marketing research, pricing and product development. After the 2000s, these developments showed an increase (Kozak, 2006: 273).

The concept of electronic commerce in accommodation establishments has actually been realized simultaneously with the use of e-commerce in tourism agencies. Central reservation systems, which were used intensively even in the early days of the Internet, became an essential tool in promoting hotels to more users with the spread of the Internet. In a short period of time, the product ordering or purchasing function has become safe and widespread rather than the promotional feature, and hotel businesses have started to use this feature of the

Internet. In this context, hotel businesses can work individually in reservation and sales processes, as well as making promotions within the frame on the pages of the agencies, thus their sales potential increases (Bayekeyeva, 2009: 44).

Chen (2006) remarked to the achievement of particular online tourism businesses, such as Expedia, Travelocity, and Orbitz, along with an accelerating prevalence of online shopping for tourism goods and services. Many systems have been established to promote and sell tourism services by using the Internet. Worldres, Hotelsonline, All-hotels, Last-minute, Expedia, Travelweb, Hotelbank are a few of the similar reservation systems that work on the Internet. With the help of these systems, hotels reach the consumers at low costs by taking advantage of all the opportunities offered by the Internet. Hotels can also provide information to their customers by using photos and video images on the promotion of rooms and facilities, special activities, types of services, business policies, prices and availability rates, and allow them to make reservations via the Internet. As soon as the guests make their reservation, the reservation confirmation is sent to them via computer, thus the operating costs of the hotels reduce. (Tavmergen, 1998: 40).

Accommodation businesses have also kept up with the developments in digitalization by creating their own websites thanks to developing Internet technologies. In fact, expenditures made on accommodation businesses have a large proportion of all expenditures made in the digital environment, because accommodation establishments that can sell their products and services in the digital environment with their websites can carry out sales transactions in all time periods, regardless of country or region (Kim et al., 2007: 594). Having a website on the Internet provides many benefits in terms of marketing activities of accommodation enterprises. Low-cost marketing and sales, effective and fast reservations, direct and interactive access to consumers without time and place restrictions, minimizing distribution costs and making customer-specific marketing and sales applications are some of the benefits of the Internet (Connolly et al., 1998: 46).

The development of online travel sales has resulted in the opening of web pages on the Internet by Central Reservation Systems. Examples of these systems are Trust International Hotel Reservation Services, Steigenberger Reservation Services, The Leading Hotels of the World and Utell. The consumer can access accommodation and other touristic services through the web pages of the Central Reservation Systems (Emeksiz, 2000: 39).

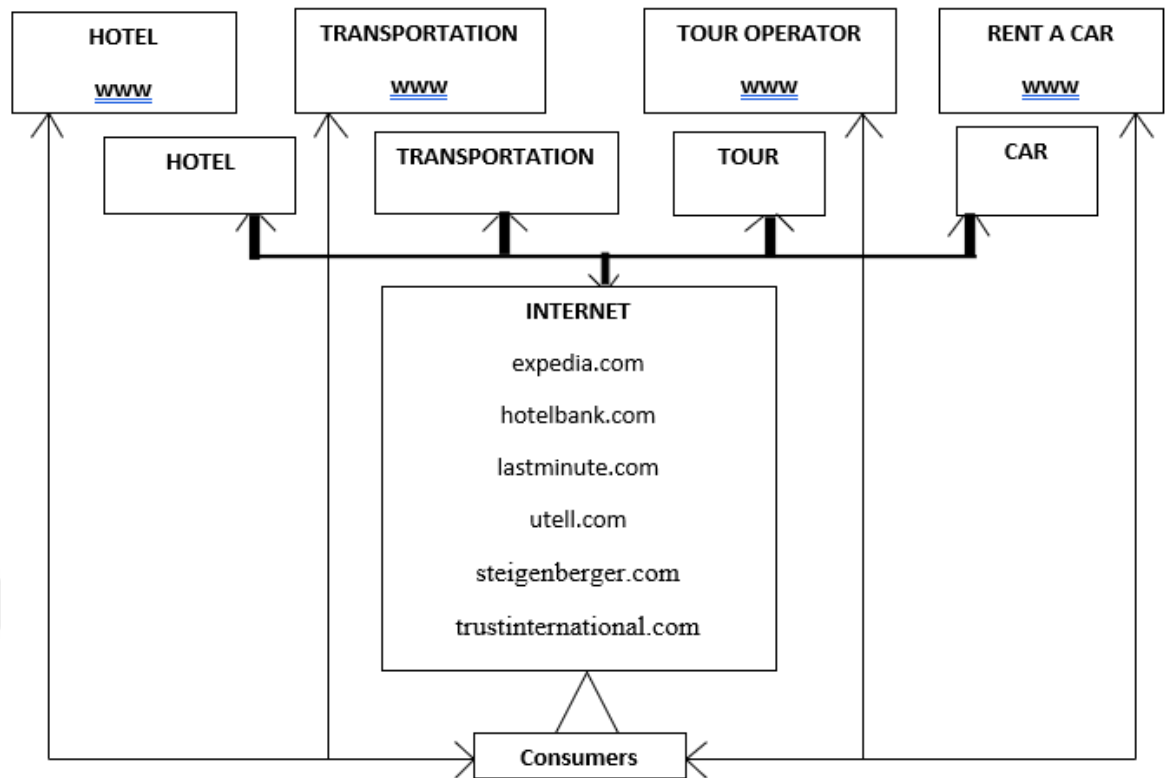


Figure 2.2 Internet and Tourism Distribution Systems. Adapted from Emeksiz (2000: 37)

As can be seen from the figure, if the hotel has its own web page, the consumer will be able to access the accommodation service directly. If the hotel is a member of the systems described above, the consumer will be able to access the accommodation service through these systems. Although the service provided to customers is free of charge, the hotels that are members of these systems pay a fee per reservation and also pay a price within the web pages allocated by the system for advertising and promotion purposes. The hotel can become a member of one of these systems or create its own web page. There is a cost of setting up and developing a web page on the Internet. For this reason, it is observed that hoteliers who have more of a brand image prefer to create their own web page (Emeksiz, 2000: 39).

2.4. Information System Applications in Tourism Sector

The tourism sector is a multi-billion-dollar business and online enables travelers to obtain wall time information on the diversified services that assist them to organize, pay and make a reservation their following excursions in few clicks in accordance with their availability of time and location (Buhalis and Jun, 2011; Garcia-Crespo et al., 2009: 308; Isfandyari-Moghaddam, 2012: 323; Mekkamol et al., 2013: 110; Moreno et al., 2013: 640).

There are three main sectors in tourism sector: accommodation, travel and transportation. Whereas accommodation includes overnight stay, food, beverage and entertainment, travel includes tour organization, reservation, meeting, fair and ticket sales. Finally, transportation embodies land rail, sea and air transportation. In this regard, it would not be wrong to say that the tourism sector is intertwined with many areas that can create added value (Güleş and Çetinkaya, 2002: 398). The tourism sector is a sector that follows technological developments closely and can implement them immediately. While office automation was initially carried out using typewriters and calculators, then the sector began to fully use information technologies with the use of global reservation systems in travel sector, taking reservations over the Internet and finally smart room applications that reduce electricity and water costs (Tutar et al., 2007: 199).

The tourism industry has altered with the emergence and use of more reasonable and accessible information and communication technologies (Cranmer et al., 2020: 2; Fodor and Werthner, 2004: 15; Garcia et al., 2011: 7683; Maswera et al., 2009: 12; Tribe and Mkono, 2017: 105). With the emergence of advanced Internet applications compatible with tourism, the way consumers and tourism service providers work has changed (Guo, 2011: 850; Stiakakis and Georgiadis, 2011: 151; Szopinski and Staniewski, 2016: 3; Tribe and Mkono, 2017: 106). Important developments in the field of information and technology affect all sectors in a country's economy, as well as tourism in the service sector. Businesses that use information and technology in this sector, which it is also called flueless industry, can provide a competitive advantage.

In parallel with the rapid development of information systems, there has been a great change in hotel management and reservation understanding with the opportunities provided by Internet-based reservation services. With the increasing need for online reservations, the number of businesses specializing in this field has also increased. This increase and diversity forces hotel managers who are considering purchasing a central reservation service to conduct detailed research. The use of information technologies in tourism sector has come out as three stages of technological development. Information systems developed with central reservation systems (CRS) in the 1970s, global distribution systems (GDS) in the 1980s, and the Internet in the 1990s (Kurgun, 2003: 49).

Computerized reservation systems offer electronic distribution to sales partners and sales offices and manage the stocks of tourism businesses. Computerized reservation systems enable the promotion, control and sale of tourist products on a global basis. Compared to other distribution channels, computerized reservation systems allow for more flexible pricing and

capacity arrangements. While airlines pioneered this technology, hotels chains and tour operators followed it. (Buhalis, 1998). American Airlines and United Airlines began establishing terminals in travel agency offices in 1967. In 1976, the new regulation in America caused a great increase in the number of affiliated travel agencies. In 1984, the American Civil Aeronautics Board published the first regulation regarding the central reservation system (Werthner and Klein, 1999: 187-188).

Birkan (1998), Pemberton et al. (2001) and Zhou (2004) stated that the rapid introduction of computers into the travel industry in the 1950s with the Central Reservation Systems, which was a convenient and fast system, continued with the Global Distribution Systems, which allow transactions in travel agencies to be carried out at minimum cost and with definitive reservations with the computer technology that exists today (Hançer and Ataman, 2006: 193). Centralized reservation systems and global distribution systems contain information such travel, accommodation, entertainment services, tourist attractions, holiday packages as. These services also allow for a great degree of flexibility. These systems can make last-minute reservations for customers and confirm these reservations quickly. Information systems also help understand customer demands through market research (Buhalis, 1998).

The concept of global distribution system refers to one or more central reservation systems for product distribution and inclusion in systems in different countries of the world (Kurgun, 2003: 48). On the other hand, distribution channels in tourism sector benefit greatly from communication and information technologies. Success in marketing can only be achieved by delivering the right products to the right place and through the right intermediaries. Distribution becomes easier through communication and information technologies. In this way, cost advantage is achieved and mutual communication can be established between buyers of the touristic product and the target markets. Today, on a global scale, the production and distribution processes of touristic products and services are reviewed and rearranged to raise efficiency and effectiveness (Buhalis, 1998).

2.5. E-Commerce in Tourism Sector

All system of information and communication technology and the Internet has been exponential expand in tourism sector (Buhalis and Law, 2008: 610; Werthner and Klein, 1999: 12). Nowadays, travelers and tourism professionals use the Internet to carry out and simplify e-tourism activities (Büyüközkan and Ergün, 2011: 6588; Stiakakis and Georgiadis, 2011: 152). Travelers and consumers frequently use Internet for decision-making period in tourism expenditure (Cao and Schniederjans, 2006: 600; David-Negre et al., 2018: 140; Steinbauer and

Werthner, 2007: 70; Zhu et al., 2019: 3). The last stage of the use of information technologies in the field of tourism is e-commerce. Today, potential tourists who are planning to conduct a tourist activity, the first address they contact before implementing these ideas is usually electronic tourism enterprises operating on the Internet.

Tourism has a leading market share in B2C trade (Werthner and Ricci, 2004: 102). The number of online sales is on the rise constantly with a great number of successful online reservation platforms in the range areas of tourism such accommodation, package deals, transportation, or regional offers as (Gratzner et al., 2004: 457).

Potential tourists can reach a wide range of information about the tourism activity they plan by doing the necessary research from these tourism information banks in the virtual environment. Previously, websites that were used only for information research purposes have become such that today they can also be terminated with the instant purchase of the service after the decision has been made on the product to be purchased.

Websites, which offer more advantageous promotional opportunities compared to classical commercial systems in the physical world, are not a rival to classical commerce, but a complement to these systems. The existence of a touristic enterprises operating in the physical world and a website operating in the virtual world supports this view. Thus, the online tourism market has developed and grown rapidly in recent years.

In addition to the positive aspects of electronic commerce, the problems related to the emergence of personal information negatively affect the development of electronic commerce. Fear of hackers' attacks during transactions, not being able to see the product, the fact that companies are not known, and the risk of loss of the product are other factors that reduce the interest in electronic commerce. People avoid shopping in the electronic environment based on the risk of an attack against their personal information and the risk of breaking their secret passwords and performing certain transactions on their credit cards. For this reason, most of the customers who go shopping with the help of the Internet give up on completing their transactions.

The fact that the electronic communication network is increasing day by day provides convenience to tourists in many tourism-related issues. Some of these conveniences are (Turdaliyev, 2009: 68):

- Making reservations,
- Buying plane tickets from automatic ticket vending machines,
- Providing all kinds of information about travel (about touristic product, exchange rates etc.)

The global and interactive development of the Internet and the corresponding change in consumer behavior have changed the traditional intermediaries of tourism and travel products. Travel agencies with foreign connections, tour operators and travel agencies operating in the domestic market take on the role of a traditional tourism tool. They use computerized booking systems, global distribution systems, travel networks and teletext. With the development of electronic commerce, B2B and B2C applications have started in the field of tourism. Tourist service providers (airlines, car rental companies and hotel chains) have developed e-commerce applications by seeing new opportunities and allowing users to access their booking systems directly (Buhalis and Licata, 2002: 209).

2.6. Advantages and Disadvantages of E-Commerce in Tourism Sector

Commercial Internet use and e-commerce in tourism sector applications are extremely common and e-commerce is developing rapidly in this sector. It is possible to produce, advertise, purchase, pay and deliver the travel service used in tourism only via the Internet. Other features that make the Internet more effective among other tools in terms of the tourism sector are the Internet's ability to transmit sound, image and a written text at the same time and faster. In other respects, the cost of these transactions made via the Internet is widely lower than that of other tools. In addition to the efficiency, productivity and customer satisfaction provided by the Internet, the fact that it allows to make reservations and similar transactions from anywhere, the speed and convenience provided by the web, flexibility, and the opportunity to reach the best and loyal customers can be counted among the other positive features of the Internet. In addition, the easy identification of the consumer profile and demographic characteristics and the immediate feedback from the consumer are among the reasons why destination promoters, hotel managers and travel agencies prefer the Internet in their marketing and research activities (Tekeli, 2001: 155).

With the advantage of the electronic environment, the use of paper is largely diminished. Since transactions made in the electronic environment are much cheaper than normal transactions, both the seller and the buyer can save significantly. For example, Southwest Airlines saved \$80 million on reservations and \$20 million on ticketing, thanks to the web, in 2000 (Glover et al., 2002: 9). With e-commerce and the Internet, it is possible for tourism enterprises to provide substantially cost reductions in marketing, sales and ticketing costs. Effective use of human resources is also among the benefits of e-commerce. E-commerce wastes a lot of time with manual transactions. It allows for a much more efficient use of the

workforce. In e-commerce, tourism product sellers can learn the needs of their customers in detail and quickly, and can offer them personal services at economical prices (Pirnar, 2005: 42).

To summarize the benefits of e-commerce in tourism sector, the following items can be listed (Poon, 2002: 164-167);

- Speed
- Personality
- Ease of measuring results
- The effectiveness of human resources
- Suitability and flexibility
- Low cost
- Ease of market/marketing research and data collection
- Direct communication
- Increasing the service quality of tourism enterprises
- Being cheap labor

The number of Internet users has grown largely, but most of the users are unwilling to give details about their personal information online because they do not rely on e-commerce security (Suh and Han, 2003: 136; Yoon, 2002: 48). Reliability plays an important role in transactions and a lack of trust in online businesses is a main factor why most consumers prefer not to shop online (Wu and Chang, 2006: 1254).

The reasons why the tourism sector parties avoid e-commerce are summarized in the table below (Buhalis, 2003: 127). It is possible to specify these reasons by separating them into two different groups as the user/customer and the environment used, namely the reasons originating from the Internet. For example, reasons such as the insecurity created by purchasing on the Internet with a credit card, and minimization of the concrete features of product and service in the virtual environment are the reasons for avoiding the use of e-commerce for the customer. Among the reasons arising from the Internet, there are reasons such as not updating the data, too little or too much information (Pirnar, 2005: 43).

Table 2.1 Reasons for Tourism Industry Parties to Avoid E-Commerce. Adapted from Buhalis (2003)

User / Customer Reasons	Internet Reasons
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• Insecurity in using credit cards • Not being able to see/touch the product • Distrust of unknown hotels/agencies and names or logos. • Preferring to talk to a real person instead of automation • Insecurity about giving personal information	• Information and data entry takes a long time • Too much information on the Internet • Slow Internet connection • Transactions with the Internet are complicated/take time
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Among the disadvantages of e-tourism, although it has increased rapidly in recent years, the number of people with access to the Internet is still limited. Moreover, SPAM, that is, unethical mailing of messages and electronic documents to unrelated parties, is a point that disturbs the peace of customers and Internet users. Concern about security and credit card use and increasing cost of the Internet in some countries are among the negative developments that attract attention (Soh, 1997: 218). In order to carry out electronic commerce, an advanced communication network, computers and information technologies connected to it are needed. Because of rapidly increasing Internet applications, various infrastructure problems arise for electronic commerce. Likewise, as a consequence of the rapid improvement of electronic commerce and Internet transactions, legal regulations have not developed at the same pace, and uncertainties and legal gaps have come out in some areas.

2.7. The Concept of E-Commerce in Tourism Businesses

It is observed that the use and development of electronic commerce with the use of the Internet is used more intensively in tourism sector compared to other sectors. Tourism, which has an important share in global trade, is one of the sectors where electronic commerce applications are most common.

Various changes in the trade structure also manifest themselves in many different sectoral areas. The tourism sector has an important place among the sectors that leave the traditional structure and follow a modern and open-to-development method. As a consequence of the fact that the products marketed in tourism activities are intangible and a labor-intensive sector, it has been rapidly affected by the developments in the technological field and adapted to the change.

E-commerce in tourism sector can be defined as receiving touristic and travel services through computer networks. Reliability, accuracy, interaction, responsiveness, usefulness, efficiency and timeliness are among the basic expectations for consumers in electronic commerce online transactions in tourism sector.

When tourism sector is evaluated in terms of the country's economy, it also has functions such as being effective in closing the foreign exchange deficits in the country, discovering the histories of societies in cultural terms and learning by different communities, as well as discovering and recognizing different lifestyles. In the light of technological developments experienced, some innovations have emerged and the tourism sector has also been affected by these developments.

E-tourism is defined as the realization of all business functions in the tourism sector in electronic form. E-tourism brings together three areas of activity: accommodation services, travel agencies and tour operators. E-tourism changes the functioning of the tourism sector and ensures that it has a more dynamic structure compared to other sectors (Tutar et al., 2007: 200).

The e-commerce transactions in tourism sector, which is appropriate to be abbreviated as e-tourism, include three main disciplines as business world, information technologies and tourism, as seen in the figure (Buhalis, 2003: 77).

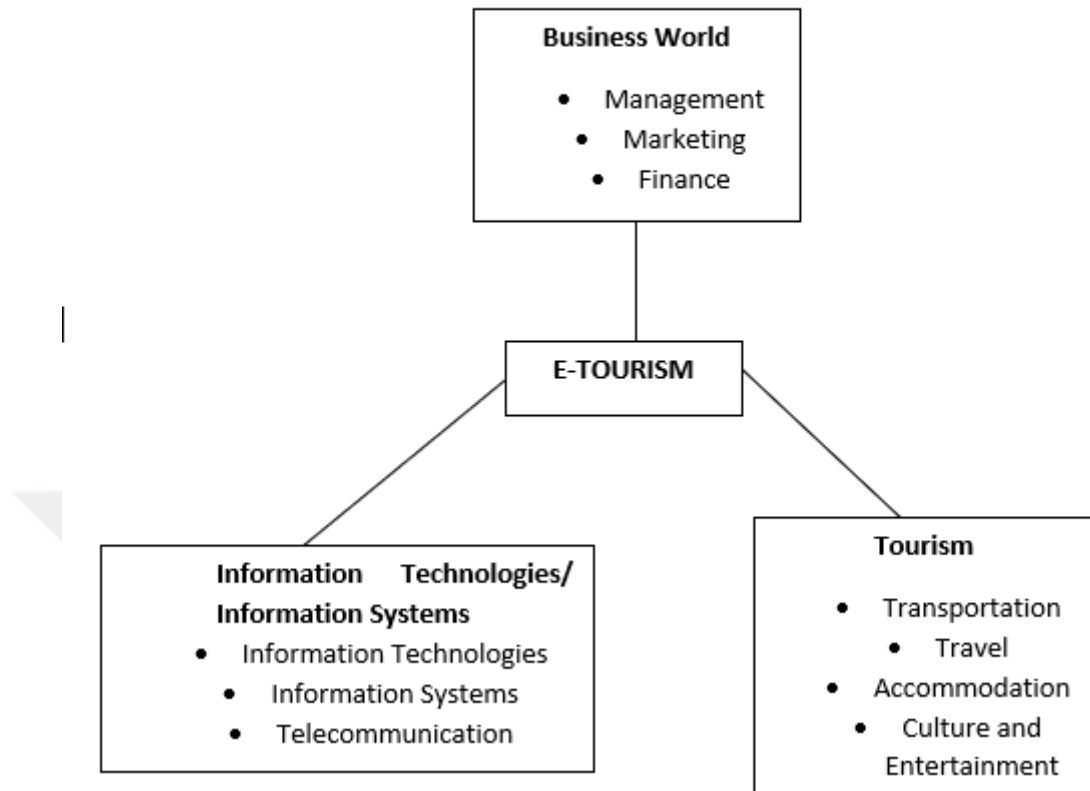


Figure 2.3 Concept and Fields of E-Tourism. Adapted from Pınar (2005: 35)

These three main disciplines come together in e-tourism. Namely, accommodation services, travel agencies, tour operators and entertainment in tourism carry out e-commerce applications by performing business functions such as business, management and marketing and by using different information systems and communication technologies. For instance, when a transportation company or accommodation enterprises in tourism sector uses communication technology to fulfill its marketing / finance functions, it also performs e-tourism activity. The business world, information systems and the tourism sector carry out electronic tourism interactively with one another and by providing communication and feedback (Pınar, 2005: 37).

2.7.1. Advantages of E-Commerce for Tourism Businesses

There are many advantages that electronic commerce provides to tourism businesses. These advantages are summarized as follows (Shama, 2001: 14).

- Thanks to the website created using the Internet and telecommunication technologies, customers can purchase services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- Tourism activities carried out in virtual world have completed the shortcomings of classical tourism activities carried out in physical world, allowing small-scale regional businesses to do business on an international scale as well.
- Tourism enterprises engaged in e-commerce do not have any additional expenses such as advertising, rent, electricity, water, personnel. This has provided businesses with a low-cost advantage.
- Enterprises use advanced technology when making sales and reservations. This situation has raised the prestige of the enterprise in the eyes of competitors and guests.
- Thanks to e-commerce, the relations of tourist enterprises with their customers have improved.
- Thanks to the statistical programs added to the website, statistical information about the number of visitors to the website and their purchasing behavior has become easy to collect.
- Thanks to the promotional opportunities offered by e-commerce (such as audio and animated visual promotion), it has become easier to present touristic enterprises to potential customers.

2.7.2. Advantages of E-Commerce for Potential Tourists

In addition to the advantages of electronic commerce to tourism businesses, there are many advantages it provides to potential tourists. These advantages are (Çavuşoğlu, 2010: 120);

- It allowed the guests to plan their own travel and accommodation.
- It provided access to information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Potential tourists have the chance to compare prices and information by getting detailed information from the websites of businesses operating on a world scale, instead of getting information only from regional businesses.
- The guests have the opportunity to get all kinds of information about the businesses and the products sold by them through a computer connected to the Internet system without leaving their homes.

2.7.3. Reasons that negatively affect success in E-Commerce in Tourism Businesses

Although e-commerce has many advantages in tourism businesses, when it is not used appropriately and correct determinations are not made, it negatively affects the success of tourism in this direction. Mistakes that negatively affect success can be listed as follows;

- Not being aware of current changes in the world or failure to make necessary arrangements (Gülmez, 2002: 20)
- Inability to respond immediately to messages sent by e-mail and to hold the response process
- Non-determination or incorrect determinations of target market, target customer group and customer characteristics
- Information given to customers is out of date, forgetting or neglecting to update the website
- Faulty technology, non-ergonomic use: sites that are slow or stuck, sites constantly under repair, incomprehensible and intractable ordering procedures
- The reservation process is complicated and therefore errors increase in rate (Kuşluyan and Eren, 2002: 34)
- In electronic commerce, especially in international tourism, forgetting that other countries have different cultures and ignoring cultural differences in language, image and color selection (Gülmez, 2002: 20)
- Not using joint programs with long-term cooperated tourism businesses and not making new technology transfers (Şahin and Demir, 2001: 17)
- Failure to develop software that can effectively present information to customers due to the abundance of information available on the Internet (Bardakçı, 2004: 58)

2.8. E-Commerce Applications in the Tourism Sector

Electronic commerce applications, which are largely used in tourism sector as in other sectors. It is divided into four:

- Business-to-Business (B2B),
- Business-to-Consumer (B2C),
- Consumer-to-Business (C2B) and
- Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C).

This information on the applications is summarized in the table below.

Table 2.2 Electronic Commerce Applications in the Tourism Sector. Adapted from Çavuşoğlu (2010: 118)

E-Commerce Applications	Tourism Businesses	Consumers

Tourism Businesses	B2B Hotels, tour operators, travel agencies, and other tourism related businesses with each other e-commerce relationship.	B2C E-commerce relationship between consumers, hotels, tour operators, and travel agencies.
Consumers	C2B E-commerce, which is formed as a result of sharing offers and suggestions of guests with tourism enterprises.	C2C E-commerce, which is the result of guests sharing their opinions about touristic businesses with each other and selling this information.

2.8.1. Business to Consumer (B2C) Applications

B2C, that is, electronic commerce application where there is a flow from business to consumer, is widely used in tourism sector. Travel agencies, tour operators, accommodation and transportation businesses that use this application carry out many activities such as ticket sales, reservations, promotion and marketing with the help of websites with rich content they design (Karacan and Çiftçioğlu, 2018: 250). B2C sites operating under names such as on-line travel agency, on-line tour operator and on-line ticket sales agency usually are promoting and marketing hotels, motels, holiday villages and hostels from websites with visual richness and animated video displays, ticket sales of air, land and sea transport companies. B2C websites should be kept as plain, simple and uncomplicated as possible to enable potential customers to shop since complex transactions scare away customers (Taşer, 2002: 64). For the consumer, B2C application offers advantages such as being able to provide information more easily, affordable prices, discount opportunities and online reservations (Sarısakal, 2003: 84-85).

The Table below shows the advantages of B2C e-commerce sites for enterprises and consumers.

Table 2.3 Advantages of E-Commerce of Enterprises and Consumers. Adapted by Kuşadası Chamber of Commerce (2012: 14)

Advantages for Enterprises	Advantages for Consumers
• Diversity of products • Diversity of payment • Reasonable price • Last minute opportunities • Flexibility • Reliability • Visual richness • Rich content • 24/7 service opportunity • Budget management • Standardization • Cash management • Expense savings • Time savings	• Online booking capability • To be able to provide all kinds of information about tourism • Diversity of products • Diversity of payment • Reasonable price • Last minute opportunities • An opportunity to pay early • Discount opportunity • Quality • Flexibility • Reliability • Visual richness • Rich content • 24/7 service opportunity

2.8.1.1. Advantages of B2C Applications

The advantages of B2C applications can be listed as follows (Kıroğlu, 2012: 46):

- The ability to receive orders 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- The ability to contact consumer directly, without intermediaries.
- The opportunity to closely monitor consumer requests with the feedback system on the website.
- The chance to not be content with the local region, but also to expand to markets in other cities and abroad, and to gain competitive power.
- Opportunity for small companies to benefit from the export opportunities of large companies.
- The possibility of minimizing the personnel, time and vehicle costs required for marketing activities and thus providing effective savings and efficiency advantages.

- Elimination of obligations such as time and place in shopping from the consumer's point of view.

2.8.1.2. The Difficulties of B2C Applications

The difficulties of B2C applications can be listed as follows (Kıroğlu, 2012: 46-47):

- The traffic of the site does not save money, it only saves shoppers. For this, the site should be supported with speed of operation, ease of navigation, shopping safety, shortening of payment stages, e-mail campaigns.
- In order for the consumer to choose again and again, all the services provided must be satisfying, because many other sites on the Internet are just a click away.
- For this, all services that make the consumer's job easier, such as interactive applications, automatic editing according to the user, recommendations made according to their habits, telephone support are required.
- An order received on the Internet with a specified delivery date must be delivered on the promised date. Achieving this is not as easy as it seems, so entire supply system needs to be arranged accordingly.

2.8.2. Business to Business (B2B) Applications

It includes electronic transactions between one firm and another firm. Enterprises that engage in such an e-commerce business are generally less associated with consumers. Here, both the seller and the buyer are the Internet user company. Business-to-business e-commerce is an electronic commerce application that covers all commercial transactions between enterprises, suppliers, dealers, competitors and business partners (Kıroğlu, 2012: 9).

The B2B electronic commerce model in tourism sector is an electronic marketplace application that brings together all enterprises operating in tourism sector and all suppliers that provide goods or services to the tourism sector. The B2B e-commerce model is an e-commerce application that helps enterprises operating in tourism sector to develop global collaborations, learn new business models, find business partners and meet new suppliers (Çavuşoğlu, 2010: 120). The advantages of B2B e-commerce to tourism enterprises can be summarized as follows; (Dunn, 2002: 28; Çavuşoğlu, 2010: 120):

- It reduces the fixed costs of the enterprises and increases the productivity.
- It increases research and development activities.
- It increases quality of service.
- It provides the opportunity to work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- On account of its ability to cooperate globally, it ensures that tourism enterprises suffer from regional economic crises at the lowest level.
- It enables tourism enterprises to reach potential tourists more easily and in a shorter time.
- It enables a sustainable global competitive advantage.
- It reduces communication costs.
- It reduces storage costs.

2.8.3. Consumer to Business (C2B) Applications

It is an electronic commerce application where individuals offer the price, they want to supply the products that businesses want to sell through their websites, and as a result, this offer is accepted and the product is sold. It contributes to businesses during periods when the industry is generally stagnant, such as at the end of the season. The C2B commerce model is used by hospitality businesses as well as airline companies. A business that wants to send some of its employees on vacation during the slow season can start the process by making an offer to travel agencies through electronic resources. Examples include practices such as completing the transaction if the offer is evaluated by the travel agency and a positive response is received (Çavuşoğlu, 2010: 121).

2.8.4. Consumer to Consumer (C2C) Applications

Consumer-to-consumer (C2C) electronic commerce refers to meeting the need of one consumer from another consumer (Varinli and Öz, 2006: 71). The application of C2C e-commerce model in tourism sector is in the form of customers sharing their positive or negative opinions about the e-commerce service they purchase. This application is used by touristic enterprises to measure customer attitudes (feedback), evaluate customer complaints and develop new policies against potential customers. Marketing research, which takes a long time and is quite expensive, has become very easy and cheap with the C2C e-commerce application. For this reason, it has become inevitable for e-commerce businesses to put sections such as "customer feedback form" and "visitor book" on their websites. The advantages of C2C electronic commerce to enterprises can be summarized as follows (Çavuşoğlu, 2010: 122):

- It enables consumers to establish a direct relationship between themselves.
- It creates a new way of doing business to sell goods and services to individuals.

2.9. SWOT Analysis of Electronic Tourism in Türkiye

Türkiye, which has the potential to become a base in tourism sector, needs to evaluate the international conjuncture and its own potential and take advantage of the opportunities at the maximum level by eliminating its shortcomings. For this reason, the use of the Internet for commercial purposes and e-commerce applications in tourism sector should be prevalent and the use of e-commerce should be improved quickly in tourism sector. This evaluation can be done using the SWOT technique.

Table 2.4 Swot Analysis of E-Tourism. Adapted from Kiroğlu (2012: 60-61)

Strengths	Weaknesses
Speed	Problems with the emergence of personal problems
Ease of measuring results	Uncertain plans
The effectiveness of human resources	Can't see the product
Suitability and flexibility	Information and data entry takes a long time
Low cost	Too much information on the Internet
Ease of market/marketing research and data collection	Poor Internet connection
Direct communication	Not having a credit card
Increasing the service quality of tourism enterprises	Preferring to talk to a real person instead of automation
Being cheap labor	
Opportunities	Threats
Expansion of the e-tourism market	Insecurity in using credit cards
Widespread use of mass media-Internet	Insecurity about giving personal information
Increasing level of education	
The emergence of new job opportunities	
Low cost and promotion	
Reducing dependency on intermediaries	

2.10. Studies Addressing E-commerce in the Context of Tourism

E-tourism changes the functioning of the tourism sector and enables it to have a more dynamic structure compared to other sectors. Similar to other business areas such as e-

commerce, e-business, e-government, "electronic" systems have begun to be used in the tourism sector (Andersen and Henriksen, 2006: 10).

E-tourism companies employ Internet to be able to do much better serve to their customers. However, accessibility of tourist information for customers is not sufficient for forceful distribution. Well-conceived mechanism must permit to customers to fulfill their purchasing transaction (Kim et al, 2007: 593). If a tourism establishment represent itself better than others, it is possible to attract tourists who are unsure about where to journey (Moharrer et al, 2006: 304). Since it is not possible for tourists to taste the products/services or get the money back if the excursion does not meet their expectations, truthful, credible, timely and relevant information are required to help them make a proper selection (O'Connor, 1999).

It would be appropriate to examine e-commerce in the tourism sector by considering the studies carried out in this field. It is summarized in the Table 2.5.

Table 2.5 An Overview of the Literature on E-commerce in the Tourism Sector

Researchers	Aim	Number of samples	Method
Tutar et al. (2007)	To determine the importance of e-tourism and its application methods in hotel businesses	A total of 17 hotel establishments with 3, 4 and 5 stars in Nevşehir	Quantitative
Karataş and Babür (2013)	To contribute to knowledge in the relevant field by examining the effects of the developing world equipped with information technologies on the tourism sector	Document analysis	Qualitative
Pırnar (2005)	To refer to e-commerce applications in tourism sector and focusing on communication methods and activities carried out with information technologies	Document analysis	Qualitative

Çavuşoğlu (2010)	To search the use of e-commerce in tourism sector	149 tourism establishment in Gökçeada and Bozcaada	Descriptive research
Karacan and Çiftçioğlu (2018)	To investigate what kind of advantages electronic commerce provides for tourism businesses and how it can be used more efficiently	Document analysis	Qualitative
Jonathan and Tarigan (2016)	To understand the potential of using e-tourism and its effects on tourism sector	The tourists who travel a lot in Indonesia	Empirical analysis
Salwani et al. (2009)	To investigate the effect of e-commerce usage on business performance in tourism sector	165 Malaysian firms involved in tourism sector	Structured questionnaire
Lu et al. (2007)	To examine the current status of China's tourism and travel e-commerce	4,980 tourism and travel websites in China	Quantitative
Chang et al. (2015)	To evaluate e-commerce applications in the tourism industry	181 Tanzanian tourism firms	Quantitative

*This table was created by the researcher.

Tutar et al. (2007: 205) searched the level of utilization of e-tourism by accommodation establishments within the tourism sector. They stated that costs decreased and efficiency increased with the use of information and technology in accommodation establishments. Karataş and Babür (2013: 23) stated that there are always changes in the demands and expectations of consumers compared to the past, and with the widespread use of information and technology, consumers started to make flight, transfer and hotel reservations over the Internet without the need for intermediaries. Pınar (2005: 51), on the other hand, revealed that

e-commerce, one of the technological developments, will be used more and more widely in the marketing of tourism businesses and that it is an inevitable fact that this rapidly changing and developing technology will closely concern the travel industry. She also mentioned that e-commerce will save costs and time for both tourism businesses and customers.

Çavuşoğlu (2010: 137) indicated in his research that tourism businesses used to do their promotion and marketing through tour operators and travel agencies, which are intermediary organizations, but with the support of e-commerce and information technologies, businesses have changed to doing their own promotion and marketing themselves. In this context, he pointed out that the information and prices on businesses' websites should be kept up to date and payment facilities should be provided. According to Karacan and Çiftçioğlu (2018: 251), it is expected that the volume of electronic commerce will increase rapidly in the coming years as a consequence of the rapid development of technology and the increasing penetration of mobile devices such as tablet phones into our lives, and it is thought that the effect of traditional methods will decrease and all activities carried out in tourism sector, as in all sectors, will continue to be effective in the electronic environment. For this reason, they argue that transportation companies, travel agencies, tour operators and accommodation businesses, which are the components of the tourism sector, need to keep up with the new order by following technological developments in order to survive in the intense competitive environment. In addition, they think that on websites created to reach more people in the globalizing world, comprehensive sites with multi-language options, a simple interface, and fast transactions will increase the transaction volume. Chang et al. (2015: 61) and Salwani et al. (2009: 181) argue that the use of e-commerce has positive effects on the performance of businesses, their competitive position and the increase in the number of customers. Lu et al. (2007: 20) emphasized that comprehensible and well-designed websites by tourism businesses make it easier for customers to access information and products.

THIRD PART

METHODOLOGY

3.1. The Purpose and Importance of the Research

Electronic commerce, which is used in many sectors, has also affected the tourism sector and made it possible for it to adapt to today's competitive environment. The objective of this study is to determine development of electronic commerce in tourism sector, which is carried out in the virtual environment with the combination of information technologies and Internet technologies, and its position in this sector. As a consequence of the literature research, it was mentioned that technology is used effectively by tourism businesses, as in every field, to adapt to the global competitive environment, what kind of advantages electronic commerce provides, and the e-commerce applications used in tourism sector. Interviews were conducted within the scope of businesses operating in this sector.

3.2. The Scope and Methodology of the Research

The research method was determined as a qualitative research method in line with the course of the study. In the research, questions were prepared to investigate the effects of e-commerce on tourism sector and face-to-face interviews were held with the managers of the tourism sector to conduct qualitative research.

Qualitative research is the use of qualitative data collection techniques such as observation, interview and document analysis to convey events and perceptions in a real and holistic way in a natural environment (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016: 41). While quantitative research deals with the existence of a relationship between variables and how strong this relationship is, qualitative research tries to understand and convey why and how the relationship between these variables is established. In other words, quantitative research makes measurement and qualitative research makes interpretation. Thus, the results obtained in quantitative research consist of numerical data and statistical analysis, while in qualitative research the results appear in the form of individuals' expressions and comments, which do not contain numbers (Maxfield and Babbie, 2005). The qualitative research method enables flexibility to the researcher in designing and implementing research. Improving new methods and approaches according to the situation at each stage of the research and changing the structure of the research constitute the basis of qualitative research. Another feature of qualitative research is that they are exploratory. Exploratory research is very practical and beneficial in revealing under-studied topics (Neuman, 2012: 228). For this reason, face-to-face

interviews were held so as to obtain more in-depth information from participants and to include the experiences of each participant in the research efficiently.

The reasons why qualitative research method was preferred instead of quantitative in this research are as follows;

- It was thought that there would be more detailed research with the interview technique within the extent of qualitative research, compared to quantitative research on the development of e-commerce in tourism sector.
- It was found to be suitable for qualitative research within the framework of the research topic and scope.
- Qualitative research method was preferred due to the nature of the research, without limiting the in-depth opinions obtained, and because the subject of the research was aimed at the participants.

3.3. Data Collection Tool

In the research, data were gathered by interview method. Interviewing, in its simplest form, is the process of asking and answering questions between the interviewer and the participant (Yükselen, 2013). Interview is one of the most common methods used in qualitative research (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2018). According to Punch (2005), interviewing is a data collection technique used in qualitative research. An interview is a conversation whose objective is to collect information (Berg and Lune, 2015).

Interview processes continue in the form of the interviewer asking questions prepared in the context of research topic to participant and adding new questions to the interview based on the answers given to these questions (Yükselen, 2013). The objective of the interview is to enter into the inner world of the participant and find out his point of view about the relevant topic or situation (Patton, 1987).

Interviewing is one of the most frequently used methods in qualitative research, and it can be described as a social method that takes into consideration asking pre-prepared questions to participants within a certain system and receiving their answers (Rubin and Rubin, 1995). Interviewing can also be summarized as asking questions to get the feelings and thoughts of the interviewed individuals (Sönmez and Alacapınar, 2016).

While interview types are subject to many different classifications, the most commonly used interview classification in studies is divided into three. These are structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews (Karasar, 2005). In research, the interviews were prepared with the semi-structured in-depth interview technique in order to

cover the research more consistently and comprehensively. This interview technique is designed to obtain in-depth information in line with the themes contained in the determined questions. As the data collection tool of the research, interviews were held with managers serving in the sales department in the tourism industry.

3.4. Research Sample

Sample can be defined as a group of units or elements selected from the research population by any method suitable for the purpose and capable of representing the population (Ural and Kılıç, 2006: 35). One of the main characteristics of a sample in qualitative research is that it is studied with a smaller number of people, situations, events or small sample groups than quantitative research (Creswell, 2014).

Since development of e-commerce in tourism sector is discussed in research, the sample of the research consists of sales managers working in resort hotels in Antalya. Purposeful sampling method was used in the study because it was thought that the appropriate answer to the determined research problem would be found. A purposeful sample covers the identification of the most appropriate people or institutions for the purpose of the research and the inclusion of only the selected group in the data collection process (Padem et al., 2012). In this context, a total of 9 sales managers from resort hotels in Antalya were interviewed.

All participants in the interviews participated in this research voluntarily. Voluntariness of the interviewed participant is essential (Yükselen, 2013). In this process, 9 participants were included in the sample of the research because the answers received during the interviews had a certain uniformity and repetition. Therefore, the interviews were completed with 9 participants. If the answers provided by the participants in the sampling in a qualitative research consist of answers with a certain repetition or similarity, the sample of the research is sufficient. This situation is conceptualized as “saturation” (Creswell, 2017).

3.5. Preparation of the Question Form Used in the Research

There are stages of the negotiations that must be carried out with care and meticulousness. These stages are preparation of the interview form, subjecting the interview form to pilot research, arranging interview appointments, preparing for the interview and conducting interviews with the participants (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2018). In this regard, a draft interview form was first prepared to carry out the interviews. While creating these draft interview forms, a total of three expert opinions who were experienced in the tourism sector and worked as faculty members at the university were consulted. When preparing the interview form, attention has been paid to making the questions simple and understandable. Necessary

corrections were made to the interview form in line with the expert opinions received because in structured and semi-structured interviews, questions are prepared before the interview (Yükselen, 2013). For the last three questions mentioned in the table below in the interview questions (Atay et al., 2019) taken from their study. Pilot interviews were held for test purposes in order to understand the adequacy of the draft form and to make the necessary arrangements. Pilot applications should be made through the draft of the interview form before proceeding to the actual application. Because pre-test or pilot applications will provide a great advantage in eliminating the defects in the interview form questions (Willis, 2015). After the pilot interviews, the interview form has been finalized.

The nine main questions in the interview form were prepared in an open-ended structure and asked to the interview participants in order to make the interview more free and flexible. Although open-ended questions are generally prepared while preparing the interview form, more detailed additional questions can be asked according to the answers given during the interview, but even though the questions are open-ended, they should continue to be asked in a systematic order and within the framework of the research topic (Böke, 2009).

The interview form questions used in the research are divided into two main groups. While the first group consists of information about the demographic information of the participants and the second group contains the main questions.

The data of the research was obtained between 30.11.2023 and 10.12.2023. Before the interviews were held, an appointment was requested from the business managers and meetings were held with the managers between the specified dates. Each participant was interviewed for approximately 30 to 40 minutes, and the data was obtained between 1.5 and 2 pages. The final version of the interview form is shown in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Interview Questions

1.	In which areas has e-commerce had the most impact on the tourism sector?
2.	How do you think businesses in the tourism sector improve guest experience by using e-commerce platforms?
3.	Do you have any predictions about the future role of e-commerce in the tourism sector?
4.	Do you analyze how guests use e-commerce platforms to purchase touristic products or services? How do you evaluate the results of your analyses?

5.	How do businesses in the tourism sector benefit from the opportunities offered by e-commerce and how do these opportunities affect the growth potential of businesses?
6.	What is the impact of e-commerce on the income of tourism businesses? How did it contribute to increasing its sales?
7.	What does technology mean for the tourism industry and its sub-sectors? Can you evaluate?
8.	What are the advantages of e-commerce for the tourism sector?
9.	Can you evaluate the current status of e-commerce in your business?

3.6. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Researches

The study has several limitations. The first limitation is related to the methodology used in this study. Due to its non-numerical character, it was decided to use the qualitative analysis method. A number of difficulties were encountered during the interview. Some of employees in the businesses where interviews are held did not want to answer some questions due to their busy work schedule, or some employees who answered the questions acted carelessly in order to end the interview as soon as possible. We have also encountered managers who believe in the principle of confidentiality, do not want to share any information even for scientific research, and are skeptical about the issue. At the same time, the fact that the research was conducted only in the city of Antalya, depending on the physical capabilities of the researcher, is another limitation.

This study was conducted in predetermined hotels and all the information and results obtained were taken from these hotels. We argue that the implications are also valid for other hospitality businesses in the same field of activity, but their generalization and analysis are strongly recommended to be seriously considered together with other e-commerce experts.

In the research, interviews were held with nine hotel sales managers. For further research, it is recommended to increase the number of participants among managers.

3.7. Validity and Reliability of the Research

The credibility of the results is considered one of the most important criteria of scientific research. In this respect, validity and reliability are the two most commonly used criteria in research. In quantitative studies, the researcher is expected to carefully test the validity and reliability of the data collection tools and research design used and report the results to the readers. In qualitative research, validity and reliability are taken differently than in quantitative studies (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013).

Some studies (Maxwell, 1992: 285; Creswell, 2003; Wiersma and Jurs 2005) underline the difficulty of conducting research using qualitative methods from an objective perspective and presenting it to the public in an impartial manner, and emphasize the necessity of the adaptation process in terms of reliability and validity in research. Since it is difficult to reach a generalization in qualitative research methods, it is not possible to apply the reliability and validity criteria or measurements used in quantitative methods to qualitative methods. The main reason for this situation is that qualitative and quantitative paradigms have different discourses on this subject. While all procedures are applied to persuade third parties in a quantitative study, detailed descriptions are given to prove that the result is logical and to convince the reader in qualitative research (Firestone, 1993: 18).

Validity in qualitative research means that the researcher monitors the phenomenon as objectively as possible, or reveals a social event in all its reality (Yıldırım, 2010: 81). Reliability is defined as the measurement tool obtaining similar results in different measurements, obtaining similar findings when the research is repeated, or the results obtained from repeated application of a measurement being the same, that is, being consistent within itself (Gönc Şavran, 2009: 149).

The issue of reliability and validity in qualitative research has been addressed by various researchers with different approaches. The different criteria developed by the research carried out in this context have led to subsequent studies (Krefting, 1991: 216; Maxwell, 1992: 290; Firestone, 1993: 18; Miles and Huberman 1994; Merriam, 1995: 53; Padgett, 1998; Creswell, 1998; Healy and Perry 2000: 122; Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 152). Instead of validity and reliability expressions used in quantitative research, it would be more accurate to tell about expressions such as credibility, accuracy of the results and the competence of the researcher in qualitative research (Krefting, 1991: 214). The reliability and validity model, developed by Guba (1981: 88) and which forms the basis of this research, include the subheadings of "credibility", "transferability", "dependability" and "confirmability".

Table 3.2 Reliability and Validity Model in Qualitative Research. Adapted from Guba (1981: 80)

<i>Aspect</i>	<i>Scientific Term</i>	<i>Naturalistic Term</i>
Truth Value	Internal Validity	Credibility
Applicability	External Validity Generalizability	Transferability
Consistency	Reliability	Dependability
Neutrality	Objectivity	Confirmability

3.8. Method of Analysis

Qualitative data analysis gained by using the interview technique has been discussed at different stages in many sources. Miles and Huberman (1994) listed these stages as data reduction, data concretization (visualization), and reaching conclusions and verification, while Dey (1993) made a ranking in the form of description, classification, and association. Miller et al. (2014) stated that the analysis process starts with the execution of the interview, and this process is classified into five stages: conducting the interview, creating abstracts, creating a thematic scheme, creating an advanced scheme, and drawing conclusions.

In the study, the data gained through the interview technique, one of the qualitative research techniques, was analyzed with the descriptive analysis method, which is also used in the analysis of qualitative research techniques. The data gained in descriptive analysis, the results of which are reached by segmenting and summarizing the data, are summarized and described in detail under the previously determined headings (Coşkun et al., 2015: 324).

The aim of this analysis is to present the findings in an organized and analyzed manner. For this purpose, data obtained are at first explained systematically and obviously. These depicted data are then explained and interpreted, cause-effect relationships are examined, and some conclusions are obtained. In this context, descriptive analysis consists of 4 stages (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008: 224-225).

1. **Creating a Framework for Descriptive Analysis:** A framework for data analysis is created from research questions, conceptual framework and dimensions included in the interview/observation. In addition, it is determined under which headings the data will be organized and transferred.
2. **Processing of Data According to Thematic Framework:** At this stage, the data gained according to the previously created framework is read and edited. In addition, at this stage, direct quotations are selected to be used when writing the results later.
3. **Identification of the Findings:** The edited data are defined and supported with direct citations where necessary.
4. **Interpretation of the Findings:** The explanation, association and interpretation of the identified findings are made at this stage.

After a long-term interaction with the participants and after reaching enough participants in the research area, it was checked whether the data obtained was credible or not. Since the findings obtained as a result of the interviews began to repeat, in other words, the data reached

the saturation point, it was decided to evaluate the data and the analysis of the data began. After the data obtained from the interviews were compiled, the data analysis process began.

Although some points in the interview data may seem insignificant and irrelevant, sometimes when examined in detail and given equal value to each statement, it will be seen that the points that seem insignificant sometimes contain very critical information (Basu, 2015: 75). At this point, the importance of the transcription stage is revealed. The data is digitally backed up to prevent loss against possible errors. The obtained data was deciphered and prepared for the analysis process.

Everything expressed by the participant during the interview should be written down completely. The transcription stage has an important role in being able to analyze all the details of the interview. The only disadvantage of the transcription stage is that transcribing the recordings may take a long time, depending on the content of the interview (Myers, 2013).

3.9. Findings of the Research

This section will focus on the findings of the study in question. Findings for the study, demographic information of resort hotel sales managers working in Antalya and questions regarding the research were addressed. Participants will be asked 9 questions and their opinions and evaluations will be collected. The names of the participants have been coded due to the importance given to the confidentiality of their opinions in the research. Since the interview was conducted with a total of 9 participants, the participants are numbered from 1 to 9 as "1st Participant, 2nd Participant, 3rd Participant..." and they were listed in a way that only the researcher had information about.

3.9.1. Demographic Information About Participants

Demographic information about sales managers is included under this heading. Demographic information includes gender, age, educational status, and experiment (based on years) in the industry. In this context, information about the 9 participants included in the study is shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Demographic Information of Participants

Participants	Gender	Age	Educational Status	Experiment
1st Participant	Male	42	Postgraduate	22
2nd Participant	Male	30	Undergraduate	8

3rd Participant	Male	29	Undergraduate	10
4th Participant	Male	34	Postgraduate	12
5th Participant	Female	31	Postgraduate	15
6th Participant	Male	37	Undergraduate	19
7th Participant	Male	35	Undergraduate	19
8th Participant	Male	37	Postgraduate	13
9th Participant	Female	35	Undergraduate	12

According to this information, when the table is examined, it is seen that 7 of the participants were men, 2 of them were women and their ages ranged from 29 to 42 years. In educational situations, it is determined that 5 participants have a bachelor's degree level, while 4 of them have a master's degree. In this context, it turns out that the majority of managers have a bachelor's degree and a middle-aged participant profile (Yavuz and Mesci, 2020: 1388). In addition, Quaddus and Achjari (2005: 132) related the intensity of the use of e-commerce to the number of levels of expertise, level of risk, and availability. They also stated that the intensity of e-commerce usage is higher in companies where the number of employees with higher education or university degrees is higher.

3.9.2. Findings on What Technology Means for the Tourism Industry and Its Sub-Sectors

Under this heading, the participants were asked, “What does technology mean for the tourism industry and its sub-sectors? Can you evaluate?”. The information about the participants' opinions is shown in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4. Opinions on What Technology Means for the Tourism Industry and Its Sub-Sectors

Participants	Opinions of Participants
1st Participant	Technology is indispensable for the tourism industry and is a process that must always be adapted. For instance, while reservations were made via fax in the beginning, they have now turned to a completely online system. Businesses that adapted to this quickly succeeded and were ahead of their other competitors.
2nd Participant	Since we are in the age of technology, every business uses technology to make our work easier in every aspect of life.
3rd Participant	Since we are in the age of technology, when we look at the history of businesses, we see that they provide great convenience. It is unclear to

	what point technology will bring businesses over time, but it is certain that we need to follow it.
4th Participant	Today, the greatest power to compete is information and technology, so technology has become indispensable.
5th Participant	We have to use technology to be global, and now we have to do new jobs as a difference from competitors. Today's technology offers us more than enough of this.
6th Participant	A serious change is taking place in tourism thanks to technology. People who used to buy their holidays and flight tickets from an agency can now make these transactions and even comparisons with a click, whenever they want, on their phone.
7th Participant	It is used in every stage of hotel management and agency, its use is increasing day by day and it is now one of our indispensable items.
8th Participant	Technology is indispensable and the most important issue for the tourism industry and its sub-sectors. The development of businesses and their sales through distribution channels depend on their technology infrastructure.
9th Participant	Technology provides great advantages in terms of increasing market share and expanding the market connection network. In addition, it also provides significant labor savings within the internal structure.

When the interviews of the participants in Table 3.4 are examined, it is concluded that technology is of great importance for the tourism industry to expand the market share, and provide great opportunities in competition and globalization. Technology determines the competitiveness and strategies of tourism businesses. In addition, as technological changes are accepted very quickly around the world, tourism businesses have made revisions in strategic management, marketing, operations and other areas. Technological developments affect all channels in terms of competition in the tourism sector and strengthen its formation and existence (Buhalis, 2019: 267). The Internet, which provides significant advantages for businesses and customers, has become widespread rapidly and has been adopted by businesses. This situation has made technology the main source of sustainable competitive advantage and strategic leverage in tourism and travel industry (Buhalis and Main, 1998: 198).

They also emphasized that businesses should always adapt to technology, as people can make and compare their reservations with a click, even from long distances, whenever they

want. With the inclusion of technology in our lives, the change in the tourism sector and the increase in supply and demand situations have also come to the fore. Tourists in the demand dimension show some differences in terms of their needs and approaches compared to pre-technology tourist types. Tourists in our age have adopted the comfort, flexibility and opportunities brought by technology (Şeyhanlıoğlu and Kırır, 2021: 235).

3.9.3. Findings on the Advantages of E-Commerce for the Tourism Sector

Under this heading, the participants were asked, “What are the advantages of e-commerce for the tourism sector?”. The information about participants' opinions is shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 Opinions on the Advantages of E-Commerce for the Tourism Sector

Participants	Opinions of Participants
1st Participant	It is possible to reach the guests directly and be able to reflect the real situation of the business to the guests.
2nd Participant	Reaching to all parts of the world, direct sales, marketing and promotion, high profitability, customer relationship management, flexible pricing policies are the main advantages provided by e-commerce.
3rd Participant	We can consider more effective marketing areas and direct access to the consumers as the biggest advantage.
4th Participant	Thanks to e-commerce, guests have started to make their shopping easier, which will allow them to travel and transport without an intermediary institution.
5th Participant	E-commerce provides easy and fast access to the target audience, cost and time saving, direct communication, and ease of data collection in market research in a digitalized world,
6th Participant	It enables to reach the consumer directly. In further, since there is no intermediary institution involved in the sales, the commission paid to the intermediary companies remains within the company, so it results in an increase in the profit margin.
7th Participant	E-commerce offers less labor and less marketing costs.
8th Participant	It has been possible to reach more guests in a shorter time and benefit from time and labor with the prevalence of e-commerce.

9th Participant	Electronic commerce is becoming increasingly widespread and very effective in tourism sector, as in almost all sectors. It changes traditional marketing and sales methods and provides different ease of use for sellers and customers. Especially in hotel industry, the role of e-commerce in reaching direct consumer channels through connections such as Intranet is undeniable. It is one of the biggest supporters of sales and marketing in reaching effective buyers in a shorter time.
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When the opinions of the participants are examined in Table 3.5, answers were received from 9 participants as "directly reaching guests, marketing and promotion of the hotel, saving labor and time, and reducing marketing costs" in the tourism sector. Globalization has had a significant impact on e-commerce usage. With the adoption and use of e-commerce by global companies, they are able to expand their presence in the market across borders by making it easier and cheaper (Chang et al., 2015: 54). E-commerce has been largely accepted as a new market medium, and businesses around the world aim to implement e-commerce to success their business targets in terms of effectiveness and efficiency (Dewan and Kraemer, 2020: 550). The adoption and use of e-commerce by businesses is due to its ability to reduce operating costs and increase productivity (Elly and Boter, 2016). With the desire of business managers in the tourism sector to promote the products and services that they provide to many tourists, they communicate with them faster and at a lower cost (El-Ebiary et al., 2020: 197).

In addition to these opinions, 4th and 6th participants stated that the profit margin of the businesses is affected positively since there is no intermediary institution. It can be understood from here that in reservations made via e-commerce, guests can make their own accommodation and flight reservations without an intermediary institution. Moreover, it is possible to say that it provides the opportunity to make profits within the company by eliminating the need to pay commission fees paid to intermediaries.

3.9.4. Findings on In Which Areas E-Commerce Had the Most Impact on the Tourism Sector

Under this heading, the participants were asked, "In which areas has e-commerce had the most impact on the tourism sector?". The information about participants' opinions is shown in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6 Opinions on In Which Areas E-Commerce Had the Most Impact on the Tourism Sector

Participants	Opinions of Participants
1st Participant	In the past, it was only limited to room sales, but now, apart from this, sales such as transfers, sales of other services within the hotel like massages, and special organization sales such as à la carte are also made.
2nd Participant	It is possible to say that it is effective in areas such as accommodation and travel, local trips and activities, eating and drinking, etc.
3rd Participant	Previously, processes were managed only by agencies and their marketing strategies or risk balance. However, many tourism facilities now manage these processes through social media, digital marketing channels and direct sales areas. This area offers a freer opportunity.
4th Participant	Especially accommodation and transportation were positively affected. People's shopping habits changed during and after the pandemic. They started to make hotel reservations and flight ticket reservations through websites instead of travel agencies.
5th Participant	It has been effective in transportation, accommodation and culture/entertainment fields.
6th Participant	It has mostly had an impact on room sales, as well as on the sales of extra services offered within the hotel.
7th Participant	Business to Customer (B2C) has become more effective. Hotels started to purchase channel management and reservation module software.
8th Participant	It has been effective in many areas such as tour sales, room sales, transfer sales, ticket sales and payment management.
9th Participant	E-commerce has had an impact on both room sales and indoor services such as spa, fitness classes, extra services offered in areas with personalized service perception.

Considering the opinions of the participants, e-commerce is mostly used in direct room sales, accommodation and travel, transportation, tour purchases, entertainment/activity organization and the ability of guests to purchase in-hotel extra services (such as massages, à la carte, personal trainer etc.) in advance before arriving at the hotel. As it has been seen before, travel and tourism draw attention as one of the fastest growing industry in electronic commerce. Shortly, e-commerce in tourism sector is related to advertising on web pages related to transportation ticket sales, hotel reservations and sales, car rental and travel. The Internet is

already changing the way tourists buy and access holiday products. At the same time, the number of customers who use the Internet to obtain information about prices, hotel, destination features and to make comparisons is increasing quickly (Klancnik and Peressolova, 2003).

The 3rd participant stated that in the past, agencies dominated the processes, but today, thanks to e-commerce, hotels are also involved and active in this process by using social media, digital marketing and direct sales. It is possible to produce, advertise, purchase, pay and deliver travel services used in tourism only via the Internet. Other features that make the Internet more effective among other tools in terms of the tourism sector are that the Internet can transmit voice, image and written text simultaneously and faster (Pirnar, 2005: 41). The 4th participant stated that people's shopping habits changed after the pandemic and that tourism was also affected by these changes in terms of making accommodation and travel reservations through websites. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, social restrictions have been imposed worldwide. In the context of these restrictions, businesses temporarily stopped their activities (Aktaş et al., 2021: 43). The bans and restrictions implemented due to Covid-19 have caused a rapid change and transformation in consumer habits. E-commerce, which has become increasingly important in consumers' lives in recent years, has caused changes not only in consumers' purchasing habits but also in their purchasing motivations (TÜSİAD, 2022; Pantelimon et al., 2020: 30).

The 7th participant pointed out that e-commerce makes business to consumer trade in tourism more effective and that businesses tend to purchase software related to channel and reservation management. Business to consumer electronic commerce, also known as electronic retailing, is the most common electronic commerce application in tourism sector. So as to enable potential customers to make purchases, B2C websites should be as simple and uncomplicated as possible since complex transactions scare away the customer (Taşer, 2002: 64).

3.9.5. Findings on How Businesses in the Tourism Sector Benefit from the Opportunities Offered by E-Commerce and How These Opportunities Affect the Growth Potential of Businesses

Under this heading, the participants were asked, "How do businesses in the tourism sector benefit from the opportunities offered by e-commerce and how do these opportunities affect the growth potential of businesses?". The information about participants' opinions is shown in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7 Opinions on How Businesses in the Tourism Sector Benefit from the Opportunities Offered by E-Commerce and How These Opportunities Affect the Growth Potential of Businesses

Participants	Opinions of Participants
1st Participant	With the growth of e-commerce in hotel establishments, hoteliers able to increase direct individual sales with more profitable, the guests reach the accurate information and the hotel directly. In this way, the dependence on the operator decreases and the hotel itself can increase its sales.
2nd Participant	It directly affects the growth potential of businesses. Nowadays, technology and usage rates are increasing all over the world. Visionary businesses that invest in technology will be profitable in the future.
3rd Participant	Digital marketing network, which is considered as a benefit of e-commerce today, can enable people with different interests to see your products and support them with visual content. The fact that you are doing this more widely, more effortlessly and more measurably than an employee can do by getting on a plane is definitely one of the biggest opportunities and this provides a great opportunity to explore new markets.
4th Participant	Thanks to e-commerce, we can reach more people. We can determine a target audience according to the dynamics of our hotels and generate direct income by converting this into sales.
5th Participant	In this way, it becomes easier to reach guests from all over the world and the opportunity for businesses to market themselves globally expands.
6th Participant	The chance of being directly integrated into the digitalization that is developing every day is increasing. Since it has a positive impact on the profitability of enterprises, it also positively affects their growth potential.
7th Participant	Hoteliers reach out to guests with direct sales opportunities thanks to their own websites and ensure that they receive the desired conversion by creating a dynamic campaign.
8th Participant	Hoteliers increase their income and awareness by carrying out their sales and marketing activities through e-commerce.
9th Participant	It is very important to keep up with technology in the developing and changing world. In this context, e-commerce affects reaching real consumers and promoting the hotel in overseas countries. Therefore, the upward curve in the sales chart directly affects the growth potential.

When the opinions of the participants are examined, with the development of technology and increasing use of e-commerce, tourism establishments are able to reach their guests directly in overseas countries, determine the target market and expand their marketing areas. The use of the Internet for commercial purposes and e-commerce applications are extremely common in the tourism sector, and e-commerce is developing rapidly in this sector. In e-commerce, tourism product sellers can learn the needs of their customers in detail and swiftly. Thus, they offer them special services at affordable price.

Websites furnished with accurate information about the promoted tourist activities enable great opportunities for businesses in tourism marketing. Tourism establishments can promote and sell through regionally active reservation systems as well as internationally operating systems (Çavuşoğlu, 2010: 114). In other words, tourism establishments that want to achieve the goal of increasing their sales through e-commerce should first present the correct information to the target audience in the online environment (on their own websites) where they market their goods and services.

The 3rd participant emphasized that digital marketing allows people with different interests to see the products and support them with visual content. Virtual reality programs can show consumers and tourists what they can do, what they can eat, drink and buy in the holiday center they choose, where they stay. These programs, produced with three-dimensional, visual, audio and touch technology, are extremely effective (Kıroğlu, 2012: 66).

3.9.6. Findings on the Impact of E-Commerce on the Income of Tourism Businesses and How It Contributed to Increasing Its Sales

Under this heading, the participants were asked, "What is the impact of e-commerce on the income of tourism businesses and how did it contribute to increasing its sales?". The information about participants' opinions is shown in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8 Opinions on the Impact of E-Commerce on the Income of Tourism Businesses and How It Contributed to Increasing Its Sales

Participants	Opinions of Participants
1st Participant	E-commerce revenues were below 5% of the total turnover between 2010 and 2015, and hotels had not yet understood what e-commerce was. After 2015, hotels that wanted to implement e-commerce more comprehensively and accurately tried to reach their guests directly with

	Google ads and social media ads, and they were successful. Thus, with the opening of new areas of expertise and new staff in hotel establishments, hotels supported these processes with new staff such as e-commerce managers, their assistants, social media content producers and graphic designers. In this way, hotels that are aware of social media dynamics and prepare content in this direction are ahead of others. With this contribution, sales increased at a faster pace. Today, compared to the 2010s, hotels have e-commerce sales at a rate of 20%, 30% and even 40% of their turnover. It is now even possible to see hotels that do not work with any tour operator.
2nd Participant	Taking advantage of direct sales potential definitely increases the profitability rates of businesses. It is possible to reach high turnover and loyal guests with additional sales opportunities and correct customer communication management.
3rd Participant	It is obvious that, unlike in the past, it is a great positive contribution to the rooms that are expected to be sold at the last minute, and even to city hotels, to be able to use the remaining room without an agency connection. While the rate of bringing someone who buys a package tour to your facility on the same day is close to zero, with the widespread use of e-commerce channels in hotel selection, people can organize their holidays by making instant decisions and purchases, which gives facilities a great advantage in marketing their rooms that are vacant at the last minute.
4th Participant	In order to bring guests to our facilities, we have to make many special agreements with many tour operators, and we are somewhat dependent on them and try to adapt to the conditions they want. By increasing our e-commerce volume, we can reduce this dependency and generate direct income by allowing guests to shop directly from us.
5th Participant	Hotels have budget and revenue targets for their online sales channels. Sales rates increase with the effect of easy competitive analysis and correct strategic planning.
6th Participant	It has a positive impact because it is a great alternative to B2B sales and reduces risk.

7th Participant	Since resorts are dependent on the operator, their income is low compared to the general income rate. However, reaching guests by removing intermediaries through e-commerce has a positive effect on income.
8th Participant	It has a great impact on turning every guest with Internet access in the world into potential. It also reaches the guest directly by removing the intermediary.
9th Participant	The biggest impact on revenues is providing direct access to guests by eliminating intermediaries.

The majority of participants indicated that they are able to reach target consumers directly without any intermediaries, and thus their business revenues increase significantly. Technology has revolutionized the entire distribution channel by strengthening direct communication and transactions between managers and consumers (deconstructing intermediation) and at the same time enabling the emergence of a large number of new intermediaries (re-intermediation) (Buhalis and Licata, 2002: 212). Tourism businesses that reach guests directly have expressed that by abandoning the B2B trade model, the risks within the business have decreased and it has a positive impact on business profits in financial terms. Ticket, holiday package and hotel sales are also included in the e-commerce transactions of tour operators and travel agencies. (Klancnik and Peressolova, 2003).

In addition to these statements, the 1st participant pointed out that hotels that tend to use Google ads and social media promotions to reach guests directly are successful. He also stated that hotel businesses that create social media teams and employ this team will be much ahead of others. Social media emerges as an extremely important tool, especially for tourism businesses, in using information efficiently. In other words, in the competitive environment created by globalization, the use of the Internet and interactive tools called social media in terms of marketing is becoming widespread all over the world (Eröz and Doğdubay, 2012: 140). While tourism businesses strive to survive in an environment open to world competition, they need to find markets and customers through new generation, Internet-based, participation and interaction-based social media tools, as well as traditional media. Day by day, both tourism activities and tourism customers are becoming more global. This situation seems to have caused cost pressure on businesses. For this reason, it is inevitable for tourism establishments to try to reach more individuals through faster, less costly, participatory, interactive social media tools that allow interaction (Yavuz and Haseki, 2012: 123).

The 3rd participant underlines that businesses can make last-minute sales of empty rooms on the same day without an agent through ecommerce. While accommodation and transportation businesses take advantage of the opportunities offered by the Internet to overcome free capacity problem (last minute pricing applications), customers who use the Internet for their reservations also benefit from the advantage of low prices (Buhalis, 1997: 73).

3.9.7. Findings on Businesses in the Tourism Sector Improve Guest Experience by Using E-Commerce Platforms

Under this heading, the participants were asked, “How do you think businesses in the tourism sector improve guest experience by using e-commerce platforms?”. The information about participants' opinions is shown in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9 Opinions on Businesses in the Tourism Sector Improve Guest Experience by Using E-Commerce Platforms

Participants	Opinions of Participants
1st Participant	When a guest makes a reservation on any e-commerce platform or website, information such as the guest's mobile phone and e-mail address is accessed. At this point, communication with the guest actually begins. A number of questions may be asked to the guest, depending on the room type chosen by the guest. For example; hard pillow or soft pillow, is it close or far from the elevator, is it smoking or non-smoking (in many hotels, all rooms are non-smoking now), lower floors or upper floors, whether the guest needs a transfer, whether there will be a birthday or anniversary during his/her stay at the hotel. With many questions like these, communication and relationships with guests are strengthened and the hotel can sell more products and services to its guests coming from e-commerce.
2nd Participant	E-commerce allows tourism businesses to use strategies such as easy booking processes, customized incentives, personalized services, mobile notifications, online support and up-to-date content to enhance the guest experience. These methods increase customer satisfaction, encouraging loyalty and repeat bookings.

3rd Participant	We can also say that guests improve businesses. Nowadays, a positive or negative event within the facility can suddenly spread all over the world, so the importance of communication with the guest increases every day.
4th Participant	Especially during and after the pandemic, e-commerce grew in many sectors and some people's habits changed. Instead of visiting travel agencies, people now start to decide to buy after examining hotel websites and comparing prices on many sites. We enable guests to make reservations comfortably and securely by creating appropriate infrastructures in our facilities,
5th Participant	Online channels (Booking.com, Expedia, etc.) serving millions of guests worldwide quickly obtain information about guests' experiences. The guest relations and CRM departments of the businesses check these notifications and take quicker action, whether positive or negative.
6th Participant	Since one-on-one communication is established with the guest in reservations made via e-commerce, it has a positive contribution in making the guest feel more special.
7th Participant	Guest reviews can be viewed and responded to on every platform such as Trustyou, ReviewPro etc. Most importantly, by turning this into a report, strengths and shortcomings can be identified.
8th Participant	E-commerce is of great importance at every stage of the reservation cycle. E-commerce provides benefits in every area, from pre-reservation, reservation process, check-in process and guest departure.
9th Participant	The consumer determines the road map of every company. It is very important that you analyze the guest's experiences. For this reason, research and development projects have emerged. On these platforms, consumers' first-hand experiences can now be obtained, as well as information on the price-service quality ratio.

As can be understood from the opinions stated above, most participants state that it is possible to directly access guest information (phone, e-mail) for reservations made through the hotels' e-commerce platform. In this way, relationships with guests can be developed and they can be made to feel special by asking them if they have any special requests (room equipment features, birthday/anniversary celebrations, etc.) in order to ensure their satisfaction before arriving at the hotel. Knowing customer segments and characteristics and meeting special

requests are closely related to e-commerce success in the tourism sector (Pirnar, 2005: 68). The 3rd participant emphasized the importance of communication with the guest and supported the views made by underlining the possibility that any event occurring within the facility could suddenly spread to the whole world.

5th, 7th, and 9th participants mentioned that the feedback of guests' positive or negative experiences can be detected through e-commerce platforms and action can be taken immediately by related departments such guest relations or customer relationship management as. With the spread of Internet access, higher technology is needed to benefit from e-crm, which is a real-time and fast program that businesses interact with so as to meet guest needs (Şimşek and Kerimoğlu, 2017: 1). In addition, easy determination of consumer profile and demographic characteristics and providing instant feedback from the consumer are among the reasons why destination promoters, hotel managers and travel agencies prefer Internet in their marketing and research activities (Tekeli, 2001: 155).

3.9.8. Findings on the Current Status of E-Commerce in the Business

Under this heading, the participants were asked, “Can you evaluate the current status of e-commerce in your business?”. The information about participants' opinions is shown in Table 3.10.

Table 3.10 Opinions on the Current Status of E-Commerce in the Business

Participants	Opinions of Participants
1st Participant	The company where I currently work has an e-commerce manager and assistant, Google specialist, social media specialist, graphic designer and call center departments. At this point, with a 100% integrated marketing approach, each person implements the work which they are responsible for in consultation with others, and in this way, our aim is to reach more guests directly.
2nd Participant	We follow all trends and plan strategies in order to support and increase the sales coming through online platforms in our facility. We set goals for ourselves. We are trying to expand our e-commerce volume by analyzing trends that will benefit our company and the industry in achieving these goals and plans.
3rd Participant	Currently, 10% of the total sales in our facility come through e-commerce channels. While this rate did not even reach 1% three years ago, the fact

	that we have reached this level today is an indication that we have received the reward of the investments we have made every year in this regard. Our goal was to reach 10% in the first 3-year period, we achieved this.
4th Participant	Especially with the pandemic, we started to pay more attention to e-commerce. Instead of physical marketing, we started to use most of our marketing budget on digital channels. Thus, as revenues increased, we established systems and payment infrastructures suitable for this structure. We provided all the necessary technical and team equipment.
5th Participant	Our company mission is to provide quality and reliable service to our guests by prioritizing service quality and guest satisfaction. We provide services by taking these items into consideration in online channels.
6th Participant	In order to increase revenues from e-commerce, we are trying to improve our infrastructure by investing more in our facility's website.
7th Participant	In today's globalizing world, we set target budgets and make investments in order to increase our e-commerce volume.
8th Participant	E-commerce, which is especially important in city hotels, is gradually increasing its share in resort hotels. We continue research and investments to increase the share of e-commerce in this constantly developing field.
9th Participant	E-commerce is among our primary targets. In fact, we want more than 50% of the total sales to be made through this channel, because by reaching the buyer directly, you will instantly have the room sale loaded into your account as hot money.

When the participants were asked about the current position of e-commerce in their businesses, While the 1st participant stated that there are existing departments (call center, Google specialist, social media specialist, e-commerce manager and assistant, graphic designer) within the business that will support e-commerce, the 3rd participant indicated that they reached the volume they planned by getting a return on their investments in e-commerce every year. According to the opinions of the remaining participants, it is mentioned that the current e-commerce position of their businesses can be directly related to the investments made, strategies developed and trends followed. In this case, it is necessary for businesses to create dynamic structure that can adapt to rapid changes so that their chances of survival can increase by becoming leaders in their markets (Kaya, 2009: 26; Atar, 2019: 104).

3.9.9. Findings on How Guests Use E-Commerce Platforms to Purchase Touristic Products or Services

Under this heading, the participants were asked, “Do you analyze how guests use e-commerce platforms to purchase touristic products or services? How do you evaluate the results of your analyses?”. The information about participants' opinions is shown in Table 3.11.

Table 3.11 Opinions on How Guests Use E-Commerce Platforms to Purchase Touristic Products or Services

Participants	Opinions of Participants
1st Participant	We analyze this by tracking the instant movements of the guest on our website, and we follow it on e-commerce platforms, especially from agencies in the OTA group, from their own analysis pages and panels. For example, if the number of our guests from Germany decreases, we apply a special price or a package for Germany. If guests leave our website early, we change the structure of our site. To illustrate, we could make a reservation in 3 steps on our website, we turned it into a 2-step confirmation phase by tracking the departure rates of the guests.
2nd Participant	We regularly monitor our guests' purchasing habits and methods, especially through our website. Different results come from the analysis depending on the guest's age, nationality and gender.
3rd Participant	The review scores of the facility can change the purchase chart very quickly. No matter what people buy, they first look at their comments.
4th Participant	We analyze many parameters such as age, country, gender, length of stay on the site and prepare an action plan accordingly.
5th Participant	Online channels offer guests the opportunity to easily and quickly compare and choose between a variety of products. By taking these into consideration, we improve our service quality and work to influence the target audience.
6th Participant	Many review sites can influence guests to purchase touristic products or services.
7th Participant	Major review platforms play a big role in guests' hotel selection such Holidaycheck, Tripadvisor, Zoover, Tophotels as.
8th Participant	We constantly follow trends and develop sales and marketing strategies according to changing guest behavior.

9th Participant	For reservations made through every online platform, information such as the guest's gender, age and nationality can be accessed and reported. We carry out our analyzes by taking these parameters into consideration.
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According to the opinions of most participants, they stated that tourism establishments analyze some parameters (age, gender, nationality etc.) that affect tourists' purchase of touristic products or services. One of the important issues for tourism businesses is to provide competitive advantage. Businesses now have a wide data collection network thanks to artificial intelligence. In this way, businesses that have information about individuals' consumer behavior and travel preferences increase their profit shares by providing greater advantages compared to businesses that use traditional data collection methods (Kazak et al., 2020: 3).

3rd, 6th, and 7th participants mentioned that tourists' purchases of products or services are shaped by the opinions of other tourists on online channels. Review sites, such Tripadvisor and Yelp as provided an opportunity consumers to express online word-of-mouth (e-WOM) affecting dignity, branding and business performance of tourism establishments (Inversini and Buhalis, 2009: 385).

3.9.10. Findings on Any Predictions about the Future Role of E-Commerce in the Tourism Sector

Under this heading, the participants were asked, “Do you have any predictions about the future role of e-commerce in the tourism sector?”. The information about participants' opinions is shown in Table 3.12.

Table 3.12 Opinions on Any Predictions about the Future Role of E-Commerce in the Tourism Sector

Participants	Opinions of Participants
1st Participant	E-commerce will continue to increase. Hotels will be positively affected in the coming years by getting rid of agencies and earning more income by reaching guests directly, because hotel websites now offer much more advanced 360-degree room viewing and virtual tours.
2nd Participant	Digital marketing, direct sales activities, personalized sales etc. will increase exponentially.
3rd Participant	We think that it will continue to develop in this sector and will become more important in the future.

4th Participant	In the foreseeable future, there will be no physical office of any travel agency or airline company and all transactions will be done online. We are trying to adapt accordingly.
5th Participant	In the rapidly developing and changing technology age, companies in the tourism sector have budget and income targets for online sales channels. It is estimated that reservations made through online channels will be over 50% in the future.
6th Participant	It is thought that the development of e-commerce in the sector will increase exponentially in the future.
7th Participant	Investment should be made in digital, especially in brand reputation management and brand awareness.
8th Participant	With the advancement of artificial intelligence, e-commerce will become much more important in the coming years. Compared to previous years, many businesses are making preparations accordingly and increasing their investments in this field.
9th Participant	Country borders are changing around the world, and so are generations and their demands. The flexibility of tourism will not be able to resist this change. Therefore, the opportunity to find and develop platforms that will fit every mold will only be possible through e-commerce. E-commerce will be a pioneer in this context.

When the table is examined, participants stated that sales via e-commerce will gradually increase and e-commerce will become more important in the future. They pointed out that this will occur with the increasing use of digital marketing and artificial intelligence in technology. In recent years, the increase in use of technological systems and artificial intelligence in the tourism sector has been seen in all areas of the sector. It is increasing its power day by day, mainly in the fields of accommodation, travel and food and beverage (Fusté-Forné, 2021: 2).

1st participant also pointed out that the tourism establishments can gain revenue with the virtual reality by eliminating agencies. As museum, hotel and restaurant visits made with three-dimensional or virtual reality on the web reach a level of promotion that can be experienced, digital advertising agencies will be able to replace with the travel agencies and the marketing expenses of tourism businesses will increase further in their income statements (Mil and Dirican, 2018: 4). According to Ni Made et al. (2020: 1000), the development of technological systems has increased rapidly, especially after industry 4.0, and people have

adapted to this situation because the dominance of products such as augmented reality and virtual reality in tourism sector highlights the view that technology will be more effective in the coming years.

3.10. Theoretical Implications of the Research

This study provides an idea that e-commerce is a global phenomenon with an inevitable and unstoppable character, both technological and social. In this study, it has been tried to reveal the development of e-commerce in hotel establishments and the market share it has, which is increasingly preferred with the increasing use of information and technology in the globalizing world. As a result of the interviews, it has been revealed that with the adoption of e-commerce by hotels, profitability rates will increase by reaching consumers directly, regardless of region or country, costs such as marketing and promotion will decrease, intermediaries will disappear, and the use of artificial intelligence will increase within the sector in the near future. In this context, theorists and academics may find it useful to focus on exploring the effects of e-commerce on online purchase of tourist products or services.

3.11. Practical Implications of the Research

Thanks to e-commerce platforms, booking and purchasing tourist services online can increase the income potential of businesses. E-commerce has practical effects on providing access to international markets for tourism businesses and selling touristic products to different geographies. Hoteliers can evaluate the practical effects of e-commerce on customer satisfaction and loyalty for tourism businesses in terms of digital customer relationship management. Analysis and improvement opportunities on customer behavior of data obtained through e-commerce platforms can help tourism businesses gain competitive advantage.

In this context, it should be clear that hoteliers need to learn how to take advantage of the full functionality of online platforms. Controlling and managing this process is an extremely important goal for hoteliers who want to expand their market share.

CONCLUSION

Nowadays, the importance of technological developments has changed the balances in the economy. There are rapid transformations in the country's economy and these transformations are also seen in the service industry. In this context, technology has become the most important factor of production, competition and management in our age.

When we look at the applications of the technological age in the world, it is seen that there is a need for these applications in every aspect of life. Businesses also have to keep up with this diversity and direct their technological systems according to this new situation. This orientation is very important for customers, who are considered the real capital of the technology age in accommodation businesses because in order to surpass their competitors' speed and influence in the market, businesses have to change their technological systems in all aspects. Accommodation businesses are not the only users of information technologies and Internet technologies, but also customers, who are one of the parties to electronic commerce. As the use of technology and the Internet becomes prevalent, consumers as well as producers benefit from this service. For this reason, the use of e-commerce in accommodation establishments, as in the entire sector, is one of the conditions of the new economy. Therefore, the goal of accommodation businesses, like all businesses, should be to compete with domestic and international rivals, to maintain competition, to make maximum profit and to grow.

Businesses (accommodation businesses, travel agencies and tour operators) that carry out promotion, service marketing and management activities by using different application systems and communication technologies are fully implementing e-commerce. Many of the accommodation establishments have created websites to provide better and easier service to their customers by using the developing technology in their activities and they use the conveniences provided by the Internet by providing services through the system. Information technologies used in tourism sector and activities within scope of e-commerce provide great convenience to businesses in many areas such as time and cost savings, interactive interaction, individuality and ease of measurement of results, reservation and feedback.

This study was conducted to determine the development of e-commerce and its market share in 5-star accommodation establishments operating in Antalya. It is possible to summarize the results obtained in the study as follows:

According to the research results, 7 of the 9 sales managers are men and the remaining 2 are women. It was observed that the managers participating in the research were between the ages of 29 and 42, 7 of the participants were 30 years old and over, 1 participant was 40 years

old and over, and only 1 participant was 29 years old. This result shows that the number of sales managers at young ages, that is, 20 years old and over, is low, while there are more managers over 30 years old and 40 years old. When the educational status of the managers is examined, it is seen that 5 have undergraduate degrees and 4 have postgraduate degrees. Based on this, it is understood that there is a certain level of graduation requirement in order to become managers in accommodation businesses.

As a result of the answers obtained from the participants, technology allows tourism businesses to globalize, compete, and expand market share. Technology, which is used effectively in many sectors today, has reshaped the communication styles of businesses. As in every sector, e-commerce is of great importance in the tourism sector. Due to the important role played by information in bringing together, organizing and presenting tourist products to consumers, e-commerce has become the main source and a strategic weapon in providing sustainable competitive advantage.

To benefit from the growing potential of the e-commerce, many hotel businesses have create their own websites and use the Internet for a variety of purposes. Tourism businesses have the opportunity to represent themselves and market their products and services from their own web pages and reach their consumers directly without being limited to their physical location. In this way, a wider audience can be reached and the attention of potential visitors can be attracted.

Direct bookings can reduce hotel businesses' advertising and marketing costs. It may be difficult for hotels to control their costs due to agency commissions but sales without intermediaries can occur without high commission payments. This view is also supported by Çavuşoğlu's (2010) study. In his research, he indicated that tourism businesses used to do their promotion and marketing through tour operators and travel agencies, which are intermediary organizations, but the businesses can do their own promotion and marketing themselves with the support of e-commerce. In addition, it can reduce hotels' operational costs such as labor and time. This result obtained from participant opinions are similar to the studies of the results by Pîrnar (2005) and Tutar et al (2007). In addition, the opportunity for interactive interaction, personalization, ease of measurement of results and possibility of feedback, effective use of human resources, suitability and flexibility to needs, convenience in market or marketing research and data collection, increase in the service quality of tourism enterprises, and increase in the sales of tourism products are among the benefits of e-commerce. With these advantages, it is possible to say that the use of e-commerce positively affects the performance of hotel businesses. This result is consistent with the result made by Chang et al. (2015).

Direct bookings give hoteliers the opportunity to collect and analyze better customer data. This enables personalization of marketing strategies and services. These applications provide data-driven approaches to understand customer preferences and provide them with customized offers. In this context, online booking and marketing strategies allow hotels to target a global customer base. Electronic commerce provides hotel businesses with advantages in dynamic pricing and revenue management. These applications analyze demand and supply data by allowing hotels to optimize occupancy rates and increase revenue.

In direct reservations, costs will remain low and profitability will increase. If hotels increase direct sales, it will be possible to increase profitability. It is a distinct advantage that the hotel can manage its interaction with the guest and make reservations by contacting the guest without an intermediary. In this way, hotel businesses can create a more sustainable business model by reducing their dependence on intermediaries such as travel agencies. It was also stated by the participants that no physical travel agency or airline company will provide service as advanced technology supports online reservations. This finding is similar to El-Ebiary's (2022) study. He also stated in his study that online reservations will be replaced by these units in the future and will become more dominant.

Direct sales not only increase the profitability, it also provides control of the communication with the guests by the hotel. Hotel businesses can provide easy access to customers and offer them personalized experiences through interactive websites. Thanks to online booking processes and personalized communication, hotel businesses can increase customer satisfaction and it helps businesses establish a direct relationship with guests. It also allows hotel businesses to provide customer experience-oriented services. E-commerce platforms offer hotel businesses the opportunity to collect customer feedback. This feedback permit businesses to evaluate service quality and make necessary improvements. In this way, hotel businesses can use CRM systems for customer relationship management. These apps can encourage repeat bookings and strengthen customer loyalty by communicating more effectively with customers. These results are supported by Sobihah et al. (2014) study. Customers' direct relationship with the hotel business can also increase brand awareness.

Due to the fact that e-commerce is the gateway to the global market, businesses have the opportunity to market their products and services anywhere in the world. This will contribute to increasing the customer base of the company by gaining a share of the global market and increasing the profitability of the businesses. The use of e-commerce tools in tourism contributes to increasing the profitability and efficiency of the enterprise by reducing the promotional and intermediary costs of the enterprises. Businesses get the opportunity to

market their services and products 24/7 through their own websites at a more affordable price directly to their customers without using an intermediary. In addition, since the customer follows the tourism enterprise website online for sales made via e-commerce, it allows them to make purchases, reservations and refunds by being informed instantly of updates, discounts and campaigns made by the enterprise or by contacting the enterprise online.

Today, potential tourists can reach detailed information about the tourist product they will purchase through electronic tourism sites operating in a virtual environment. Thanks to this feature, tourism activities carried out on the basis of electronic commerce have become one of the most important sources of information that potential tourists refer to. By accessing detailed information about tourist products, consumers can find the opportunity to compare many services and products and have access to customer reviews about the business. In this way, consumers are able to obtain information about campaigns, destination promotions, places they intend to visit and their culture through e-commerce. Those who adapt to the regulations brought by these technological developments and changes find themselves ahead of others. The fact that customers can directly access information about the product or service to be purchased with a short tour in the virtual world draws attention to the fact that the importance of e-commerce will gradually increase in the future. Considering the low cost of e-tourism and the high potential of the Internet, it can be predicted that travel agency will not remain as we know it today and the system will be fully integrated with the Internet within a few years.

When the attitudes and thoughts of the participants participating in the study about e-commerce are examined, it is observed that the e-commerce model of the era and the future is e-commerce. Today, when technology has become a part of our lives and its use has become almost inevitable, businesses need to follow the developments closely and adapt to technological developments faster. It is an inevitable fact that e-commerce, one of the technological developments, will be used more and more widely in the marketing of tourism businesses and that this rapidly changing and developing technology will closely concern the accommodation sector. Hotels have to use this new form of marketing to survive and resist competition. Therefore, it is extremely important for hotel businesses to develop electronic commerce strategies and invest in this area. It would be appropriate to say that hotel businesses that cannot turn using e-commerce, which is a new economic product, into an opportunity, will find it very difficult to get a place in the future. For this reason, they should provide a competitive advantage against their competitors by following the developments in information technologies and Internet technologies by using these technologies in their business.

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APPENDIX

AP.1 – Interview Questions

1. In which areas has e-commerce had the most impact on the tourism sector?
2. How do you think businesses in the tourism sector improve guest experience by using e-commerce platforms?
3. Do you have any predictions about the future role of e-commerce in the tourism sector?
4. Do you analyze how guests use e-commerce platforms to purchase touristic products or services? How do you evaluate the results of your analyses?
5. How do businesses in the tourism sector benefit from the opportunities offered by e-commerce and how do these opportunities affect the growth potential of businesses?
6. What is the impact of e-commerce on the income of tourism businesses? How did it contribute to increasing its sales?
7. What does technology mean for the tourism industry and its sub-sectors? Can you evaluate?
8. What are the advantages of e-commerce for the tourism sector?
9. Can you evaluate the current status of e-commerce in your business?

AP.2 – Interview Form**Gender:** Female: [] Male: []**Age:****Educational Status:** High School: [] Undergraduate: [] Master: []**Experiment in the Sector (years):**

	QUESTIONS	
1.	In which areas has e-commerce had the most impact on the tourism sector?	
2.	How do you think businesses in the tourism sector improve guest experience by using e-commerce platforms?	
3.	Do you have any predictions about the future role of e-commerce in the tourism sector?	
4.	Do you analyze how guests use e-commerce platforms to purchase touristic products or services? How do you evaluate the results of your analyses?	
5.	How do businesses in the tourism sector benefit from the opportunities offered by e-commerce and how do these opportunities affect the growth potential of businesses?	
6.	What is the impact of e-commerce on the income of tourism businesses? How did it contribute to increasing its sales?	
7.	What does technology mean for the tourism industry and its sub-sectors? Can you evaluate?	

8.	What are the advantages of e-commerce for the tourism sector?	
9.	Can you evaluate the current status of e-commerce in your business?	



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High School	Tez-Tur Tourism Vocational High School (2010-2014)
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Title of the Master's Thesis	The Development of E-Commerce in Tourism Sector and Market Share: A Case Study In Antalya Province Resort Hotels
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2023	Selectum Luxury Resort (Belek, Antalya)
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