

**T.C.  
YEDİTEPE UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**A RESEARCH ABOUT DETERMINING THE IMPORTANCE OF  
WORD OF MOUTH MARKETING FOR CHOOSING PRE-SCHOOL  
EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN TRAKYA**

**İlayda TAŞKIN AKKOYUN**

**İSTANBUL - 2023**

T.C.  
YEDİTEPE UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

A RESEARCH ABOUT DETERMINING THE IMPORTANCE OF WORD  
OF MOUTH MARKETING FOR CHOOSING PRE-SCHOOL  
EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN TRAKYA

A Thesis Submitted

By

İlayda TAŞKIN AKKOYUN

Master of Arts in  
Business Administration

Supervisor:

PROF. Dr. Dilek SAĞLIK ÖZÇAM

ISTANBUL,2023



## **DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY**

I declare that, I submitted this study as a master's thesis without resorting to a way and help under the scientific morals and traditions.

I would also inform you that, I have shown all the works I have benefited from in the bibliography, and I use these works by quoting each time I use them.

I confirm these with my honor.

I declare that I will bear all the moral and legal consequences if the Institute determines a contrary situation to this statement, I have made regarding my thesis regardless of a certain time.

**İlayda TAŞKIN AKKOYUN**

## ABSTRACT

Thanks to today's technology, consumers can easily obtain all kinds of information. In addition; the consumer who is directly exposed to many desired or undesired messages has difficulty in making a decision in the purchasing process. While consumers try to choose the best one for themselves among many alternatives, marketers who try to respond to variable needs and desires of consumers are also trying to develop new strategies. One of them is to use word-of-mouth marketing method in a positive way.

Since the choice of pre-school education institution has an important place in the service sector, word-of-mouth marketing should be applied properly.

The aim of this study is to determine the factors affecting word of mouth communication variables in the purchasing decision of pre-school education institutions.

For this study; it is aimed to collect data from people in Trakya district. Due to the pandemic in 2020, data were collected through an online survey. Target audience can be parents or family elders and relatives who are providing financial support have chosen or will choose a pre-school education institution soon for at least 1 child. After the data collection; 225 surveys were valid and accepted. These data were synthesized in the SPSS program. In order to determine the factors that play a role in the effectiveness of word-of-mouth marketing in the selection of a pre-school education institution; frequency, factor, independent T-test, Kruskal Wallis test, Mann Whitney U test and One-way ANOVA analysis were considered appropriate. As a result of the research; it has been determined that most of the consumers get advice when purchasing pre-school education services and the people they get advice from are the people in their immediate surroundings such as colleagues/friends and people who are experts about education. Besides; pre-school education employees and the internet are also effective sources of information. In terms of the role of word-of-mouth communication during the selection of pre-school education institution, it is seen that the expertise variable differed according to education groups. Perceived risk differed according to gender and income level. It was concluded that the recommendation (advice) didn't make difference according to any demographic features, while the idea seeking differs according

to gender and age groups. It was observed that opinion leadership didn't differ in any of the demographic groups.

In conclusion; it has been seen that demographic variables affect word-of-mouth communication in the purchasing process of pre-school education institution.

*Keywords: Word of Mouth Communication, Word of Mouth Marketing, Pre-school Education Institution, Advice, Marketing, Sales, Consumer Decision Process, Marketing Communication, Integrated Marketing, Consumer Buying Behavior*



## ÖZET

Günümüz teknolojisi sayesinde tüketiciler her türlü bilgiyi rahatlıkla elde edebilmektedir. Buna ek olarak; istenilen veya istenmeyen birçok mesaja da direkt olarak maruz kalan tüketici satın alma sürecinde karar vermekte güçlük çekmektedir. Tüketicilerin birçok alternatif içinden kendileri için en iyi olanı seçmeye çalışmalarına karşılık, tüketicilerin sürekli değişen ihtiyaç ve isteklerine cevap vermeye çalışan pazarlamacılar da yeni stratejiler geliştirmeye çalışmaktadır. Bunlardan birisi de ağızdan ağıza pazarlama metodunu pozitif yönden kullanabilmektir.

Okul öncesi eğitim kurumu seçimi, hizmet sektöründe önemli bir yere sahip olduğu için ağızdan ağıza pazarlama düzgün bir şekilde uygulanmalıdır. Bu çalışmadaki amaç; okul öncesi eğitim kurumu satın alma kararında demografik özelliklerin ağızdan ağıza iletişim değişkenleri üzerindeki etkisinin belirlenmesidir.

Bu çalışma için; Trakya bölgesinde yaşayan, çeşitli demografik özelliklere sahip kişilerden veri toplanması hedeflenmiştir. 2020 yılında yaşanan pandemi dolayısıyla veriler “SurveyMonkey” internet sitesi üzerinden, online anket aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Hedef kitle; en az 1 çocuk için okul öncesi eğitim kurumu seçimi yapmış veya yapacak olan ebeveyn, maddi destek sağlayan aile büyükleri veya akrabalarıdır.

Verilerin toplanmasından sonra; 225 anket geçerli olarak kabul edilmiştir. Bu veriler SPSS programında sentezlenmiştir. Okul öncesi eğitim kurumu satın alma karar sürecinde ağızdan ağıza pazarlamanın etkinliğinde rol oynayan faktörlerin demografik özelliklerden etkilenme durumunu belirlemek amacıyla; frekans, faktör, bağımsız T-testi, Kruskal Wallis Testi, Mann-Whitney U Testi ve Tek yönlü ANOVA analizinin kullanılması uygun görülmüştür. Araştırma sonucunda; tüketicilerin çoğunun okul öncesi eğitim hizmeti satın alırken tavsiye aldıkları ve tavsiye alınan bu kişilerin meslektaş/arkadaş gibi yakın çevrelerindeki bireyler veya eğitim konusunda uzman kişiler olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Ayrıca; okul öncesi eğitim kurumu çalışanları ve internet de etkili bilgi kaynakları olarak görülmektedir. Okul öncesi eğitim kurumu hizmeti satın alma sürecinde ağızdan ağıza iletişimin rolü açısından, uzmanlık değişkeni algısının eğitim durumuna göre farklılık gösterdiği görülmektedir. Algılanan risk bağımlı değişkeni cinsiyete ve gelire göre farklılık göstermektedir. Tavsiye boyutunun ise hiçbir demografik özellikten etkilenmeyerek farklılık göstermediği

görülürken; fikir arayışının cinsiyet ve yaş gruplarına göre farklılık gösterdiği sonucuna varılmıştır. Fikir liderliğinin, hiçbir grupta farklılık göstermediği görülmüştür. Sonuç olarak; demografik değişkenlerin bazı ağızdan ağıza iletişim değişkenlerini etkilediği ve okul öncesi eğitim kurumu satın alma sürecinde ağızdan ağıza iletişimin etkin olduğu görülmüştür.

*Anahtar Kelimeler: Ağızdan Ağıza İletişim, Ağızdan Ağıza Pazarlama, Okul Öncesi Eğitim Kurumu, Tavsiye, Pazarlama, Satış, Tüketici Karar Süreci, Pazarlama İletişimi, Bütünleşik Pazarlama İletişimi, Tüketici Satın Alma Davranışı*





For my daughter Mira...

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wanted to choose this thesis topic at the first step of my academic career, because I want to continue to search and explain word of mouth marketing and consumer behaviors.

I would like to thank my idol supervisor **Prof. Dr. Dilek Sağlık Özcam** who always supported me and generated my interest and love for consumer behavior in sales & marketing.

I am also grateful to the jury of my thesis defence who are **Doç. Dr. Ash Tolunay** and **Doç. Dr. Merve Koçoğlu Sazkaya** for their support.

I am thankful to **my father & mother and also my big family**, who stood by me all the time and in every situation.

Thank you to **my husband Hakan** who was always by my side and proud of me.

I am also grateful to my very close friend, **Dr. Ash Şensoy** who was always near to help me and **my close friends Gül and Görkem** who helped me to organize my daily life while I was writing my thesis.

I would like to thank more to **my dear daughter Mira** who reminded me that there are good things that can truly hope in this life with her every word and smile. Since I wrote this thesis while she was growing, I present all these efforts to my little one **Mira**.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                                                                    |             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <i>DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY</i>                                                                  | <i>ii</i>   |
| <i>ABSTRACT</i>                                                                                    | <i>iii</i>  |
| <i>ÖZET</i>                                                                                        | <i>v</i>    |
| <i>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</i>                                                                            | <i>viii</i> |
| <i>TABLE OF CONTENTS</i>                                                                           | <i>ix</i>   |
| <i>LIST OF FIGURES</i>                                                                             | <i>xi</i>   |
| <i>LIST OF TABLES</i>                                                                              | <i>xii</i>  |
| <i>ABBREVIATIONS</i>                                                                               | <i>xiv</i>  |
| <i>1.INTRODUCTION</i>                                                                              | <i>1</i>    |
| <i>2.LITERATURE REVIEW</i>                                                                         | <i>4</i>    |
| 2.1. Communication Concept and Process                                                             | 4           |
| 2.2. Marketing Communication Concept                                                               | 6           |
| 2.2.1. Purposes of Marketing Communication                                                         | 7           |
| 2.2.2. Characteristics of Marketing Communication                                                  | 7           |
| 2.2.3. Marketing Communication Strategy                                                            | 9           |
| 2.2.4. Marketing Communication Process                                                             | 10          |
| 2.3. Integrated Marketing Communications                                                           | 12          |
| 2.3.1. Definition of Integrated Marketing Communication                                            | 14          |
| 2.3.2. The Development of Integrated Marketing Communication                                       | 16          |
| 2.3.3. Benefits of Integrated Marketing Communication                                              | 17          |
| 2.3.4. Components of Integrated Marketing Communication                                            | 19          |
| 2.4. Word-of-Mouth Marketing                                                                       | 37          |
| 2.4.1. The Concept of Word-of-Mouth Communication                                                  | 37          |
| 2.4.2. Variables of Word-of Mouth-Communication                                                    | 51          |
| 2.4.3. The Concept of Word-of-Mouth Marketing                                                      | 53          |
| 2.5. Consumer Buying Behavior and Decision Process                                                 | 63          |
| 2.6. Definition, Purposes and Selection of Pre-School Education Institution                        | 65          |
| 2.7. About Pre-School Education Sector Purchasing Process According to Word-of-Mouth Communication | 66          |
| <i>3.CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH</i>                                                      | <i>70</i>   |
| 3.1. Research Model                                                                                | 70          |
| 3.2. Hypothesis of the Research                                                                    | 71          |
| <i>4. METHODOLOGY</i>                                                                              | <i>74</i>   |
| 4.1. Sample Selection and Measurement Instruments                                                  | 74          |
| 4.1.1. Sample and Data Collection                                                                  | 74          |
| 4.1.2. Survey Design                                                                               | 75          |

|                                                                       |            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 4.1.3. Scales                                                         | 75         |
| <b>5. RESULTS</b>                                                     | <b>81</b>  |
| 5.1. Data Analysis                                                    | 81         |
| 5.2. Frequency Analysis of the Research                               | 81         |
| 5.3. Validity and Reliability Analysis of the Variables               | 90         |
| 5.3.1. Factor analysis of variables according to the survey questions | 93         |
| 5.4. Hypothesis Testing and Variance Tests                            | 97         |
| 5.4.1. Testing H1 (According to the Gender)                           | 98         |
| 5.4.2. Testing H2 (According to the Age)                              | 101        |
| 5.4.3. Testing H3 (According to the Education Level)                  | 103        |
| 5.4.4. Testing H4 (According to the Income Level)                     | 106        |
| <b>6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION</b>                                   | <b>110</b> |
| <b>7. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FURTHER RESEARCHES AND IMPLICATIONS</b>     | <b>119</b> |
| <b>8. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH</b>                                 | <b>123</b> |
| <b>REFERENCES</b>                                                     | <b>124</b> |
| <b>APPENDICES</b>                                                     | <b>137</b> |
| Appendix 1: THESIS SURVEY                                             | 137        |
| Appendix 2: ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL                                 | 144        |

## LIST OF FIGURES

|                                                         |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Figure 1 General communication process model .....      | 5   |
| Figure 2 Message types of marketing communication ..... | 12  |
| Figure 3 AIDA model .....                               | 14  |
| Figure 4 The process of WOMM and E-WOMM .....           | 58  |
| Figure 5 Research Model .....                           | 71  |
| Figure 6 Survey question numbers of the research .....  | 76  |
| Figure 7 Results of the hypothesis testing .....        | 114 |

## LIST OF TABLES

|                                                                                                                                            |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Table 1 Classification of sales promotion tools.....                                                                                       | 27  |
| Table 2 Business tools in sponsorship .....                                                                                                | 34  |
| Table 3 Word-of-Mouth Communication variables' phrases .....                                                                               | 77  |
| Table 4 Test of normality of the research .....                                                                                            | 81  |
| Table 5 Distribution of the participants according to the number of children.....                                                          | 82  |
| Table 6 Distribution of the participants according to the gender .....                                                                     | 83  |
| Table 7 Distribution of the participants according to the age.....                                                                         | 83  |
| Table 8 Distribution of the participants according to education level.....                                                                 | 84  |
| Table 9 Distribution of the participants according to income level.....                                                                    | 84  |
| Table 10 Distribution of participants on whether they want to take advice before choosing a pre-school education institution .....         | 85  |
| Table 11 Distribution of whether the participants were given advice before choosing the pre-school education institution.....              | 86  |
| Table 12 Distribution of the resources that the participants get advice before choosing the pre-school education institution.....          | 87  |
| Table 13 Distribution of the participants' attitudes towards getting advice before choosing a pre-school education institution.....        | 88  |
| Table 14 Distribution of participants' views on people giving advice to each other before choosing a pre-school education institution..... | 89  |
| Table 15 Distribution of whether the participants gave advice about any institution providing pre-school education .....                   | 90  |
| Table 16 KMO and Barlett's test of the expertise .....                                                                                     | 91  |
| Table 17 KMO and Barlett's test of the idea seeking .....                                                                                  | 91  |
| Table 18 KMO and Barlett's test of the opinion leadership.....                                                                             | 92  |
| Table 19 KMO and Barlett's test of the perceived risk .....                                                                                | 92  |
| Table 20 KMO and Barlett's test of the advice .....                                                                                        | 92  |
| Table 21 Survey question numbers related to the factors .....                                                                              | 93  |
| Table 22 Factor analysis of survey questions about the expertise.....                                                                      | 93  |
| Table 23 Factor analysis of survey questions about the idea seeking .....                                                                  | 94  |
| Table 24 Factor analysis of survey questions about the opinion leadership.....                                                             | 94  |
| Table 25 Factor analysis of survey questions about the perceived risk.....                                                                 | 95  |
| Table 26 Factor analysis of survey questions about the advice .....                                                                        | 95  |
| Table 27 Normality tests of word-of-mouth communication factors .....                                                                      | 96  |
| Table 28 Table of applied tests to the factors and demographics.....                                                                       | 97  |
| Table 29 T-test of the expertise according to the gender.....                                                                              | 98  |
| Table 30 Mann-Whitney U test of the idea seeking according to the gender.....                                                              | 98  |
| Table 31 Mann-Whitney U test of the opinion leadership according to the gender....                                                         | 99  |
| Table 32 Mann-Whitney U test of the perceived risk according to the gender.....                                                            | 100 |
| Table 33 Mann-Whitney U test of the advice according to the gender .....                                                                   | 100 |
| Table 34 One-Way ANOVA of the expertise according to the age .....                                                                         | 101 |
| Table 35 Kruskal Wallis test of the idea seeking according to age .....                                                                    | 101 |
| Table 36 Kruskal Wallis test of the opinion leadership according to age .....                                                              | 102 |
| Table 37 Kruskal Wallis test of the perceived risk according to age .....                                                                  | 102 |

|                                                                                               |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Table 38 Kruskal Wallis test of the advice according to age.....                              | 103 |
| Table 39 One-Way ANOVA of the expertise according to the education level.....                 | 104 |
| Table 40 Kruskal Wallis test of the idea seeking according to the education level ..          | 104 |
| Table 41 Kruskal Wallis test of the opinion leadership according to the education level ..... | 105 |
| Table 42 Kruskal Wallis test of the perceived risk according to the education level           | 105 |
| Table 43 Kruskal Wallis test of the advice according to the education level.....              | 106 |
| Table 44 One-Way ANOVA findings of the expertise according to the income level                | 107 |
| Table 45 Kruskal Wallis test of the idea seeking according to the income level .....          | 107 |
| Table 46 Kruskal Wallis test of the opinion leadership according to the income level          | 108 |
| Table 47 Kruskal Wallis test of the perceived risk according to the income level....          | 108 |
| Table 48 Kruskal Wallis test of the advice according to the income level.....                 | 109 |
| Table 49 Status of tested hypotheses .....                                                    | 117 |



## ABBREVIATIONS

|               |                                    |
|---------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>SEO</b>    | Search Engine Optimization         |
| <b>WOM</b>    | Word of Mouth                      |
| <b>WOMC</b>   | Word of Mouth Communication        |
| <b>WOMM</b>   | Word of Mouth Marketing            |
| <b>E-WOMM</b> | Electronic Word of Mouth Marketing |
| <b>FMCG</b>   | Fast Moving Consumer Goods         |
| <b>AAİ</b>    | Ağızdan Ağıza İletişim             |
| <b>AAP</b>    | Ağızdan Ağıza Pazarlama            |



## 1.INTRODUCTION

With the proliferation of alternatives in the consumption sector, competition between brands has increased. At the same time, there has been an environment where consumers have to do more research to find the right one among these alternatives.

There are too many companies in the market that use marketing, sales, and public relations channels very well. Besides, there are preferred goods or service brands although they don't use advertising channels very often. They actually use a very frequently used distribution channel thanks to their existing consumers. This is where the concept of word-of-mouth communication and marketing comes into play, as it is known, advice.

In today's intense competitive environment, businesses that want to gain an advantage against their competitors have to choose the most effective communication channel(s) for the messages they will send to target consumers and use this communication channel(s) correctly. Today, many businesses realize the power of word-of-mouth communication created by neighbors, friends, family members and experts (Avcılar, 2010, s. 334-347).

There are various studies on the effect of WOMM in the literature. Perceived service quality and customer satisfaction are often highly influential on referral behavior (Öz & Uyar, 2014, s. 123-132).

The general aim of this research is to determine the role of WOMM on the decisions of people who have chosen a pre-school education institution or will do in the near future.

It is aimed to collect information within the scope of the research about the general profile of the people who have purchased or plan to purchase pre-school education service, the information sources consulted, giving and receiving advice habits, the bond between the source and the receiver, the degree of closeness, the receiver's and source's expertise degree, the perceived risk level of the receiver, source's opinion leadership and active search for ideas. It is also predicted that the role of WOMM in the selection of pre-school education institutions may differ according to socio-demographic characteristics.

Pre-school education services have some unique aspects like many other services. Although the primary consumer of this service seems to be children, "the decision maker"

of the educational institution is the parent of the children. These decision makers are mostly parents, but they can sometimes be a relative or close family friends who supports the family financially and morally. Decision makers are also the common consumer of this service. To explain; many people who affect the purchasing decision of some products do not participate the consumption process, but families or decision makers are heavily involved in service consumption in the selection of pre-school education institutions. The decision makers are more affected by the results of their choices than the children because the evaluation of issues such as service content, quality and satisfaction belong to them (Polat & Çelmeli, 2015, pp. 145-148). One of the most important duties of the families is choosing a qualified pre-school education institution for their children. Families' knowledge about pre-school education and the people they take advice from affect the choice of pre-school education institution and their expectations from it (Koç, 1996, p. 12). In a study on "preference factors" on parents who choose pre-school education institutions, it has been determined that there are significant differences in school preferences of consumers according to school, education, personal and family factors (Açıklan, 1989, pp. 85-91).

Another dimension of the issue is the gap in the Turkish literature about which factors consumers consider when choosing pre-school education institutions. In the marketing literature, there have been many studies about the consumer' purchasing process of many products such as; FMCG, mobile phone, textile and etc., but there is not enough research from a marketing point of view regarding pre-school education institution preferences (Polat & Kültür, 2007, pp. 109-126). Studies conducted to determine the factors affecting the choice of pre-school education institution have mostly been in the field of "educational discipline". Studies directly on the subject are limited. In a study conducted on parents who have made or will make the decision of a pre-school education institution in order to determine the factors affecting the choice of institution, it was observed that they took advice and directed their choices accordingly at a high rate (Koç, 1996, p. 12). It is understood that not only the factors related to the school itself, but also the individuals within and outside the family are more effective in choosing the institution. As with many other commercial products, peer-friend advice is more significant in the choice of educational services, on the other hand, it has been seen that the advertising and promotion activities of the institutions are not enough to affect consumers. In addition, even in the studies on the factors affecting the school preferences of the parents and the advertising strategies of private schools, it was

determined that the most frequently used information source by the parents was their environment, the families of other students studying at the school and the staff working in the institution. Therefore, it is seen that the educational understanding of the school and references are more effective in the school preference of the parents (Tokuç, 2007, p. 56). In a study on "preference factors" on parents' choice of pre-school education institutions, it has been determined that there are differences between the parents' education, age, income, and gender (Açıklın, 1989, pp. 85-91).

In many studies in the literature, WOMM has been handled with different aspects, and research has been carried out about the effect of WOMM generally on health services and technology products.

As a result of the literature review, it has been determined that there aren't many large-scale studies on this subject in our country. Also, there are not many books.

**In order to fill this deficiency;** it should be asked that how different variables of WOMM can affect the decision of choosing pre-school education institution of participants.

For this reason, the dimensions such as **expertise, idea seeking, opinion leadership, perceived risk and advice** which are important in determining the role of WOMM will be discussed **according to the demographic characteristics** of the participants in pre-school education sector.

In this research, it is foreseen that this study will contribute to the literature.

**The main research question of this research is,**

Which WOMC variables that the expertise, idea seeking, opinion leadership, perceived risk, and advice according to demographic characteristics can be effective in the decision process of pre-school education institution?

## 2.LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical framework part describes some important concepts of this research like communication, marketing communication, word of mouth communication and marketing.

### 2.1. Communication Concept and Process

From the past to present, there are many definitions of communication. There is an explanation for communication like it is a process of sending and receiving the messages between the group of people and organizations (Odabaşı & Cemalcılar, 1995, p. 15). On the other hand; we can explain this term more generally with these words; communication is a concept that provides transfer all the emotions, thoughts or information among the people with many ways and also communication can be explained with many expressions such as exchange of knowledge and experience (Türk Dil Kurumu Sözlüğü).

Humankind is faced by different types of communication throughout the lifetime continuously. This communication is not a fact only realized face to face. Reaching out the others is a fundamental need for humans because of having the social identity. However, humankind is a biological being, it shouldn't be forgotten that also it is also social presence (Vural, 2012, pp. 3-5). People living in the society communicate with each other within some reasons and goals. This cycle is defined as the "communication process". Communication includes some components such as, the exchange of information, emotion and understanding between a sender & receiver with some methods are used in this process. Additionally, it includes the messages are from the sender to the receiver transmitted and accepted; in this way the message can be operated. So; the process can take some answers from the receiver (Efeoğlu & Çetin, 2012, p. 186).

There are three remarkable elements can be summarized in all these definitions of communication:

- At least two sides for communication like the sender or source and the receiver are needed.
- There is aimed to set up a common opinion between the sender and receiver.

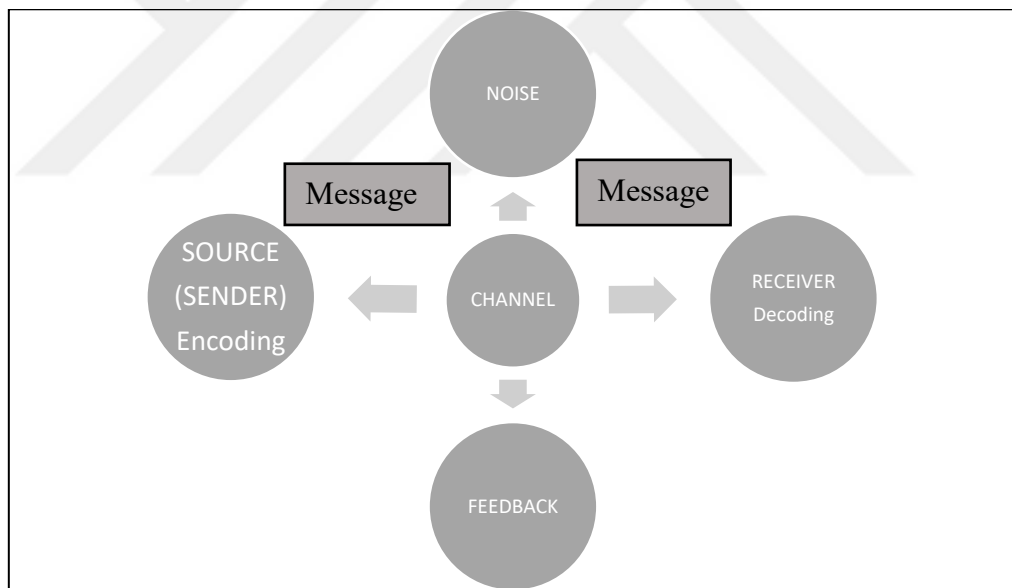
- All these activities should describe a process (Odabaşı, 1995, s. 15).

In the direction of communication, a person takes messages from the other people or environment continuously and also sends some to others. Because of this interaction, people can develop and renew themselves (Vural, 2012, p. 3)

Communication is very significant because of improving the comprehensibility between the people and organizations. Humans are social existence, for this reason they must live together with the others, and they need to keep in touch with the other people. This need is only eliminated by the connection process (Sarıışık & Özbay, 2012, p. 2).

**Figure 1**

*General communication process model*



As it is seen from the communication model, there are some common members like source, message, channel, receiver, feedback, and noise. All the items of this process affect each other. It should be taken into consideration that the sender is always active and on the other hand the receiver is passive (Odabaşı Y. , Pazarlama İletişimi, 1995, s. 15).

The communication that plays significant role to occur a relationship starts with the basic message transfer between the sender and receiver (Anık, 2009, s. 4). When the message

coming from the source is perceived by the receiver shows that the communication process is just started. The source is the starting point of message, and this can be an institution.

The message is symbolized aspect of emotions and opinions that are sent to receiver by the sender. This symbol is an artificial structure used for the interaction between the humans. The source (sender) should specify its ideas and thoughts previously and transmit understandably to the receiver (Odabaşı Y. , 1995, s. 16).

## **2.2. Marketing Communication Concept**

Marketing communication is a process managed by the experts who make the marketing process of the organization, product, or service easier tries to convince the consumers (Odabaşı & Oyman, 2002, pp. 55-56). Marketing communication is taking and explaining the messages from market by the channels because of changing available messages, creating new communication opportunities, and discovering wished reaction in target audience (Durmaz M. , 2012, s. 237). As a summary of these definitions, marketing communication is a group of applications and concepts that include all variables effect ideas and beliefs of customers about a product, brand, or service (Akyel, 2013, pp. 16-24). In addition to all these, technological innovations offer many possibilities and try to change, develop, and renew the marketing understanding for the institutions in terms of marketing. Creating database includes the data about current and potential customers become easier through developing information technologies and internet. With the help of these possibilities, many companies get the chance to reshape their communication processes and offers more consumer oriented (Korkut et al., 2005, s. 420).

The main purpose of many companies is providing awareness about their products or services and making them more registrable than their competitors in an existing market. This success will be achieved by some businesses use marketing communication most effectively (Cohen, 2000, s. 66).

### **2.2.1. Purposes of Marketing Communication**

In this new marketing times, businesses should assimilate the purposes of marketing communication really good. They should analyze all the new trends and be conscious about the customer's ideas, conception, and spillover effects of thoughts (Godin, 2007, s. 27).

There are two main concepts about purposes of marketing communication such as sales and communication-based approach. The sales-oriented approach is established for only selling something. According to this view, companies prepare, develop, and present all their communication channels in this direction. The main goal of this businesses has this insight is selling something. The opposite of it is communication-based approach and according to this view, existing consumers go through some stages, and they can achieve some sales and out of sales purposes easily via communication channels (Ünusan & Sezgin, 2005, s. 14).

In addition to these two sides of purposes, integrated marketing communication activities have definite aims. The aims of communication programs and marketing communication proceed in parallel. Generally, these goals can be explained such as creating brand equity, raising brand awareness, providing information, educating the market, and making more positive image for brand or the company (Ebren, 2006, p. 40)

### **2.2.2. Characteristics of Marketing Communication**

Marketing communication helps the companies about their communication models to reach the target market so, their customers can envisage the product or service more. Furthermore, it can show a path to a business about what its consumers want and need, watch this way, and direct its clients to buying behavior process (Lewis & Chambers, 2000, s. 444).

Several explanations about marketing communication concept discover some characteristics about it. These can be collected under these topics:

- Marketing communication is based on the general communication model and contains all communication elements in it.

- It is desired that the messages are transmitted by the marketing communication made impression in customers' brain as a knowledge. So; this can affect their buying decision and process.
- The people who direct the communication of marketing should analyze their clients' experience limits really good and the messages should enter in these limits clearly. Accordingly, managers of marketing communication process must assimilate the clients from a to z.
- Marketing communication is two-way transaction of knowledge and experience. There should be some research about consumer trends. By this way, consumer is a resource of the communication. Under favor of these knowledge, there can be found some new marketing communication opportunities.
- There is a harmony and consistent message association between the elements of marketing communication. This can be named like "integrated marketing communications" (Odabaşı & Oyman, 2002, s. 38-39).

Marketing communication has a quality always renews and reformulates the success of the companies, so it has more than one benefit to the companies.

There is some another characteristic about marketing communication for companies such as:

- It prejudices consumer perception in favor of the company,
- It increases the reliability rate of the company,
- It creates some changes of data priority,
- It plays a role on the increasing of the company's sales rate against the purchases of its competitors,
- It has significant place about branding process,
- It makes a rise on reliability rates of companies by the using of corporate branding (Dahlen et al., 2010, pp. 7-11).

### 2.2.3. Marketing Communication Strategy

Marketing strategy is a system realizes the plans of companies because of being more preferable against their competitors by making current and future analysis about market rivalry position (Dinçer, 2007, s. 17-18). Businesses use the marketing communication successfully can attract their target market are constantly bombarded with information to their own products and services (Altunbaş, 2008, p. 24).

In another study, specifying the marketing communication purposes, long term major activities and making some required resource allocations for reaching objectives are meant marketing communication strategy. In the same research, there are five basic steps of marketing communication strategy such as:

- Taking advantages of marketing communication opportunities,
- Making some analysis about the resources where the marketing communication comes from,
- Setting marketing communication targets
- Developing alternative marketing communication strategies and evaluating them,
- Arranging the privatized duties of marketing communication (Kocabaş et al., 2000, s. 18).

Strategy of marketing communication appears as a product, pricing, distribution, and promotion strategy (Garda, 2016, pp. 247-250). If the product has an effective package, it will take the consumers' attention and be preferred by everyone (Yalçinkaya, 2001, s. 59). Firms should consider quality, target market, brand image and their competitors in the market when they try to specify the price of their products or services. In addition to this, they should syncretize the market segmentation and consumers' expectations about the product or service in their segment because of the best pricing (Kotler et al., 1999, p. 406). Many enterprises' pricing strategies vary according to their target audience and also their decisions about prices are developed by the proper channel group's marketing skills of goods or services correspondingly (Kotler & Armstrong , 1997, s. 353).

Businesses should use different marketing strategies to let their clients purchase and try their goods or services and in addition to these customers should feel the value is presented to them. There can be some developments for different strategies by distribution channels and some discount opportunities can be implemented for pricing policy several

times. At this point, businesses have some serious duties (Garda, 2016, p. 248). Marketing of the product or services, post-marketing experiences should be under the control of businesses so, they can prejudice this process in favor of themselves and get brand loyal consumers.

#### **2.2.4. Marketing Communication Process**

Thoughts' differentiation process in mutual interaction and sending the information or message to the receiver are named as communication. Some information about communication model and process could help to the workers about the organization they are included and problems or opportunities they can be faced in the market (Odabaşı & Oyman, 2002, p. 16).

Consumers need to meet with different communication method and these circumstances shows that how marketing communication acts harmoniously. A message, multimedia planning and applications, information transmission and interpretation are happened in this process (Dahlen et al., 2010, p. 23). At the same time, communication is based on basis of information, emotion, and thoughts. This perception has four main materials like resource, message, target, and tools (Williams & Page, 2011, pp. 3-11). The communication resources can be several people and institutions such as producers, intermediaries, and politicians. These people or institutions are in the positions of the resource of marketing communication perform as a coding processor. The words, specifications, images, diagrams, and actions are constituted by coding process. All these items include the opinions to be conveyed (Odabaşı & Oyman, 2002, pp. 45-46). The message is opinions, emotions and words that are expressed by the resource. In addition to these elements, the objective is a person or group of people that receive the messages coming from the sender. The parts provide to transmit the messages are named as a communication channel (Williams & Page, 2011, pp. 3-11). Examples of these communication channels known as media are newspaper or magazine, radio or TV, banners, and direct mail advertisings. The target audience or person who known as the receiver realize the decoding process with the help of the past experiences and perception (Odabaşı & Oyman, 2002, p. 45).

Quality and efficiency of communication depend on the existence of some factors like feedback known as a reaction to the message taken by the receiver and also noise factor effects the perception of the message. Communication effects the potential consumer's information level, attitudes and purchasing behaviors (Karpat Aktuğlu, 2006, pp. 3-6)

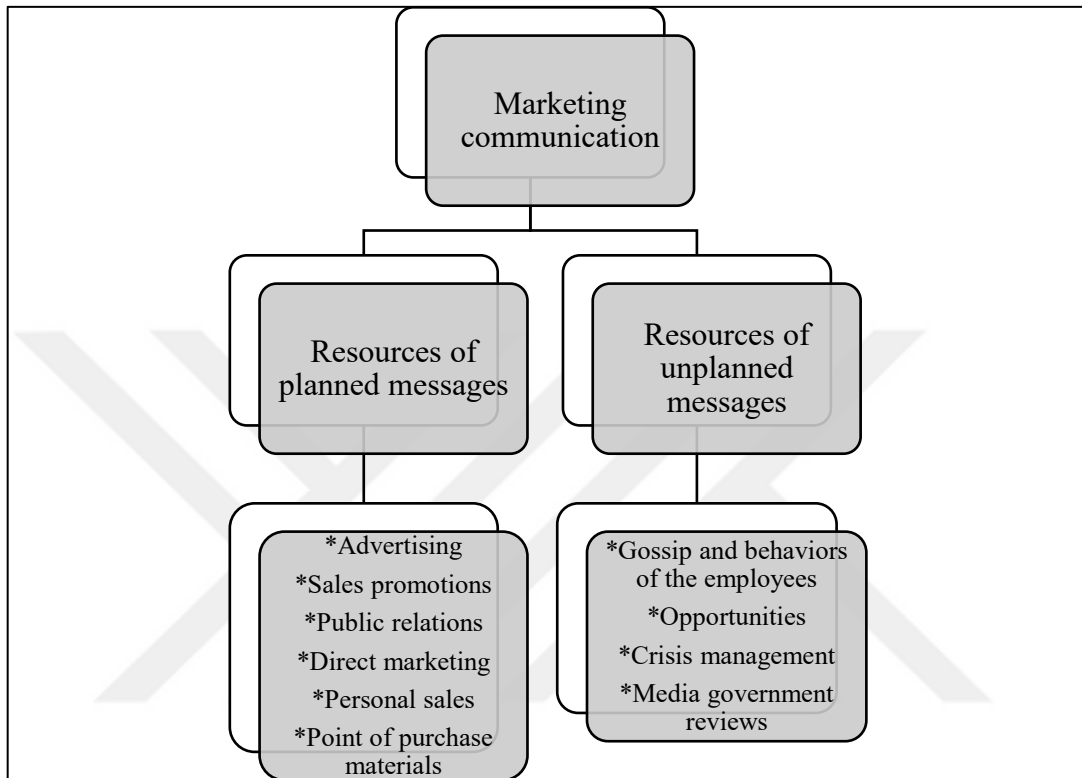
Marketing communication process does not work properly every time. If the resource's thought is the same as receiver's reached, it can be said that the communication is successful. However, there are some circumstances that communication problems can occur:

1. The source detects the problem in an incorrect format and for this reason encodes the wrong concept.
2. The source gets the problem but sends the message that does not give the desired meaning.
3. The receiver understands the message correctly but he/she either forgets or does not care the message (Odabaşı & Oyman, 2002, p. 46).

In marketing communication concept, the resource can be any organization creates, sends messages and at the same time it can manage the marketing actions (Odabaşı Y. , 1990, p. 347). Resource efficiency changes according to marketing communication environment. The communication researchers identify three generally acceptable qualities for sources such as credibility, attractiveness, and power (Ray, 1982, p. 306).

#### ***2.2.4.1. Message Types of Marketing Communication***

Consumers are intertwined with many messages by the companies directly or there are some intermediaries and sources supply the message transfer to reach people. The messages distributed via advertising, sales promotions, public relations, direct marketing, personal sales, packaging, sponsorship, point of purchase materials and etc. can be called "planned messages". "Unplanned messages" cover all other brand or business-related elements can deliver message to consumer. Some of the unplanned messages can be taken under control and arranged by the company. However, some of these messages can't be well in hand such as research of newspapers or announcements of some consumer organizations. Moreover, these messages may be more effective than planned marketing communication messages (Odabaşı & Oyman, 2002, pp. 55-56). Some of unplanned and planned messages are explained in Figure 2. (Burnett & Moriarty, 1998, s. 9).

**Figure 2***Message types of marketing communication*

### 2.3. Integrated Marketing Communications

In today's competitive world, businesses need to be able to keep up with the global economy because of maintaining their competitive advantage. Marketing strategies are essential tools provide differentiation for the companies in ever-growing competition environment. Integrated marketing communications has a significant role for the brand communication (Altunbaş, 2008, p. 24). Businesses send messages to reach their customers via some marketing strategies like advertising, sales promotions, public relations, or personal sales. Communicating long-term with the consumers and providing brand loyalty by creating brand image are the most important reasons of these messages. If the message says different things to each customer, there may be some conflicts in their mind. In addition to that confusion, there can be some turbidity for brand image. If a brand's advertising, price, and package says or recalls different things, this situation can be cause to message chaos. At the

end of this, brand image will be complicated (Odabaşı & Oyman, 2002, p. 61). Business connects well and describes their products, services or brands better gets competitive advantage (Ebren, 2006, p. 60).

Purposes of Integrated marketing communication create awareness about brand value and bringing the product to the first place by separating it from its competitors via using the compatible communications that answer consumers' needs. These could be under these circumstances:

- Defining the purchasing motives of target market,
- The reality of the product,
- Defining the perception of the product or service,
- Getting to know competitors,
- Offering extra benefit to the consumer,
- Change in perception,
- Consumer ports such as media type, message contents of competitors or recognition of the message contents sent by the consumers (Karpaz Aktuğlu, 2006, p. 6).

According to Yurdakul (2008); there are different points of view about the focus of integration. Some of them use integration only for communication mix elements, while others state that integration should include all marketing mix elements (s. 57).

Bylthe (2001) points out that marketing communication follows a six-stage process. These are respectively,

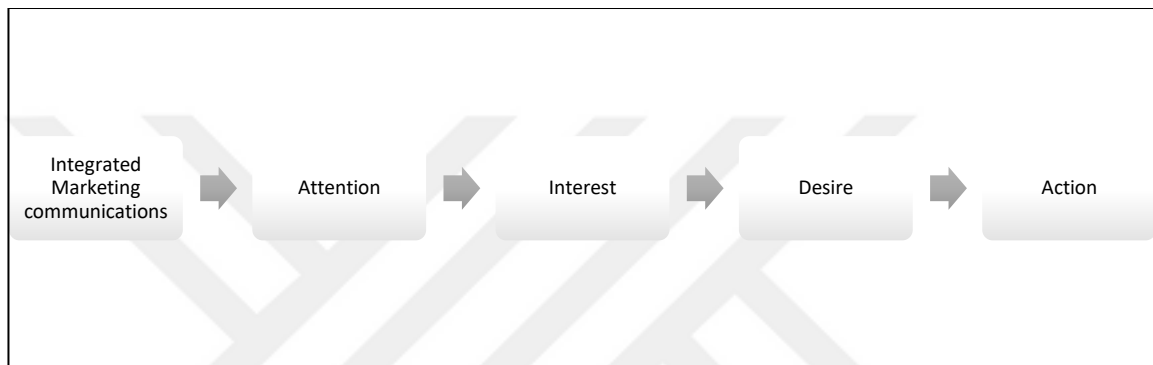
- Determining who should receive the message,
- Predicting by the salesman how the message sent will be met by the target audience,
- Making the choice of the message,
- Determining through which channels the target audience will receive the message,
- Determining which features of the product or service will be transmitted,
- Testing whether the message has achieved the targeted success by conducting market research (pp. 200-232).

After this approach of Bylthe, business start to use AIDA process. According to AIDA approach, marketers call customer's attention forever. AIDA is formed by its first letters as "A" is for attention, "I" is for interest, "D" is for desire and "A" is for action (Churchill &

Peter, 1998, pp. 18-30). The message sent should be clear and more attractive for bright understanding of the consumer. Otherwise, the receiver can't perceive this message. The more remarkable the message is, the greater the tendency of the customer to the product or service (Bylthe, 2001, pp. 200-232).

**Figure 3**

*AIDA model*



The most important characteristic is that tools and applications of IMC are combined with all elements of the concept of marketing within a plan. In this way, it is aimed to convey the messages with the appropriate channels to the target audience at the appropriate time and place. Communication work can be more effective and efficient thanks to the consistency between channels and messages (Yolaç & Demir , 2004, pp. 121-127).

### **2.3.1. Definition of Integrated Marketing Communication**

There is no existing definition explains IMC or described by the experts in common. Marketing communication or IMC with its current name basically points almost the same concept (Erzor, 2015, p. 7). There are various types of integrated marketing communication definitions accepted. Many academics working in various communication disciplines approach IMC from different angles (Odabaşı & Oyman, 2002, p. 43).

When IMC is evaluated in general, it can be specified as a process in which all communication activities of an enterprise are coordinated (Bozkurt, 2013, pp. 72-73). According to any other definition, IMC is a comprehensive plan evaluates the strategic roles of marketing phenomenon such as personal selling, advertising, promotional mix, direct

marketing, point of purchase, public relations of marketing and combines all these facts for realize communication effects at the top level. In other saying, it is defined as organizing the flow of information so that consumers see it as a flow of information from the resources they perceive. Therefore, the focus should be on existing or potential customer not on corporate sales or profit goals. Businesses also address IMC with the fact that it is necessary to establish a holistic communication with consumers by integrating messages and goal (Schultz et al. D. , 1993, pp. 55-58).

Many organizations use the personal selling, advertising, and public relations as a promotional method. The relationship between these procedures have been used and then sales development has been added to this group. Fifthly, direct marketing has been attached to these methods which were carried out in harmony. The use of these procedures in a coordinated manner with each of them led to integrated marketing communications (Mucuk, 2001, p. 171). In general terms, IMC is the main product of an enterprise uses business messages, image and identity, public relations issues, and direct selling campaign coordinately (Lindell, 1997, p. 6). IMC can be defined as a process provide message consistency, communication effectiveness and the development of customer relations with one-handed management of all marketing programs (Sever, 1998, p. 3).

Many discussions are still ongoing for this approach which is accepted in the marketing literature and there are some difficulties for the identifications in many areas. For this reason, if IMC is handled with a life curve approach, it can be said that it is still in its first step depending on its theoretical and conceptual development (Kitchen & Schultz, 1999, pp. 22-34). In addition to these discussions, explaining the features of IMC may be a direction or clarification for these discussions. These characteristics distinguish IMC from the other traditional approaches such as:

1. Integration of all communication tools with the marketing mix,
2. Proper use of technology in marketing,
3. Being focused on the consumers and customers,
4. Being measurable,
5. Having an interactive communication process (two-way and mutual interaction),
6. Planning and implementing on the basis of database system (taking advantage according to all market segments, purchase behaviors and etc.),

7. Planning from outside to inside, not from inside to outside (market and consumer-based for strategic decisions),
8. Zero-based planning (making plans and budget according to corporate goals and tools of the planning period) (Bozkurt, 2000, pp. 18-19).

As can be seen from the features of IMC, it consists of “planning”, not just transmitting the message (Percy, 2008, p. 27). Especially, when the databases containing consumers, market segments and their features have been used more effectively, the targets have become more easily accessible. A customer-oriented approach and interactive communication has dominated for the strategic decisions, tactics, and goals (Odabaşı & Oyman, 2002, pp. 64-65).

Integrated marketing communications takes traditional promotion methods' place. Because new studies were required by creating a synergy among all the components that make up the marketing mix in the light of economic, social, cultural, and technological developments and changes (Kitchen & Schultz, 1999, pp. 22-34). With a general overview, IMC creates a living structure by holding different promotion tools together and in conclusion promotion activities are getting more intense and effective (Ebren, 2006, p. 64).

### **2.3.2. The Development of Integrated Marketing Communication**

IMC has started to be seen as an integrated business process due to the increasing strategic role and importance of communication at both marketing and institution level. In other words, IMC should be handled as a strategic management process because it has expanded beyond the traditional marketing planning period (Schultz et al., 2004, p. 1417).

IMC development stages were defined in four stages based on a comparative study conducted in five countries:

1. Tactical coordination: Functional harmony of marketing communication disciplines becomes more significant and organization structures may need to be restructured. Consistency and continuity of internal communication, corporate identity and image should be provided in this stage.
2. Redefining the activity field of marketing communication: Companies try to communicate more attentive and careful with their clients. At this stage, firms'

employees, and their attitudes towards customers as the most significant point of contact is emphasized.

3. Utilization of information technologies: Information about the customers is collected and the database is created via information technologies. In this way, the brand loyalty can be built by following consumer buying behavior periodically. In brief, the database is used for effective communication plan and customer relation management gains importance at this stage.
4. Financial and strategic integration: Company tracks performance of marketing efforts for their target markets constantly. It considers every effort as an investment and goes to recovery period in its strategies by comparing inputs and outputs (Kitchen et al., 2004, s. 1421).

There are many research explaining the reasons for acceptance and use of IMC. One of the most well-known studies collected the causes under three headings. The first one is integrating marketing and communication efforts for target market segments in line with business objectives. This requires coordination between institutions and agencies. Integrated marketing communication tries to balance the competition between companies and agencies and also minimizes the potential damage of power struggles.

The second reason is consumer origin. In other words, consumer type has changed under the effect of environmental and economic conditions, also they have become more conscious and selective in time. Today's consumer is under intense message bombardment, and this makes them difficult to reach. To overcome this difficulty and create message and image integrity, communication message of firms should be logical between each other. The third and last reason for development is the view that handling marketing communication disciplines such as public relations and advertising may not have the desired effect separate from each other. That's exactly why communication disciplines should be accepted, planned, and managed as a whole (Lacobucci & Calder, 2003, p. 9).

### **2.3.3. Benefits of Integrated Marketing Communication**

All the discussed IMC definitions open the door to the benefits of IMC. Nevertheless, considering the benefits under a framework will make it easier to understand. The benefits

of IMC can be listed as creating synergy, message consistency and providing corporate integrity (Odabaşı & Oyman, 2002, pp. 70-71).

It means that individual and independent efforts mutually reinforce each other so that each functional area can have more impact than the independent work of these efforts (Duncan & Evrett, 1993, p. 32). In other words, if each of the marketing communication elements can work in integrity, the effect of this will be much more than the individual work of each one. IMC acts as a strategic element that helps ensure synergy and message consistency regardless of the communication tool (Eagle & Kitchen, 2000, p. 669). It can be said that both communication tools and coordinated work of agencies find out the synergy. The synergy created by this coordination reflects operational efficiency, savings in terms of costs and effectiveness in terms of messages (Low, 2000, pp. 31-35).

Establishing message consistency emerge as an important benefit, especially considering that consumers are exposed to thousands of commercial messages every day. In order not to create confusion in consumer's mind, it would be better to develop a consistent strategy for the brand rather than improving separate strategies for each element of marketing communication (Yeshin, 1998, p. 75). IMC coordinates companies' corporate messages, identities, images, and positions. In short, their public relation and direct mailing campaign says exactly the same thing. In addition to that, their advertisings create the same look and feel as on the websites (Kotler et al., 1999, p. 406).

IMC can be used as a strategic tool to convey the image of the organization and product/service benefit. Consumers lean towards companies where they feel comfortable and safe. Therefore, corporate integrity has a big role to create positive attitude from the consumer to the corporate identity reflected by the company. The integrity that will be developed within the institution will both facilitate the achievement of the goals and be consistent with the projected image (Yeshin, 1998, p. 76).

In addition to these, as stated in other sources, IMC has also other benefits such as:

1. Ensuring creative integrity,
2. Giving consistent messages,
3. Choosing unbiased marketing activities,
4. Active and efficient use of the media,
5. Choosing the right marketing methods

6. Increasing the business efficiency,
7. Obtaining cost-oriented profits,
8. Providing high quality and stable services,
9. Ensuring business transparency (Pickton & Broderick, 2005, p. 27).

To sum up; brand loyalty, customer satisfaction, customer value and gaining permanent and loyal consumers are aimed with IMC known as customer-oriented marketing (Akyel, 2013, pp. 16-27).

#### **2.3.4. Components of Integrated Marketing Communication**

Each of the marketing communication mix elements has its own characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages. At the same time, the importance of these elements varies according to the structural condition of the enterprise, its size, the sector in which it operates, and the types of goods or services are produced (Baykal, 2017, pp. 11-25). Some elements should be taken into consideration for the establishment of the IMC activity structure. The first one is the financial structure and resources of the business. Companies can make their budgets according to their financial powers. Financially strong businesses carry out intensive marketing communication activities. On the other hand; businesses with weak financial structure must settle with some activities to protect their existing marketing shares (Yükselen, 2013, p. 387) The structure of the current or target market is second one which is important in several aspects in the selection of the IMC mix elements; because IMC element will differ according to the target consumers spread over wide or narrow area and the numbers of target consumers (Çağlar & Kılıç, 2005, p. 150). The last one is the features of the marketed product. The most important factor regarding the properties of the product is whether it is an industrial or consumer goods. Apart from these issues; the competitive nature of the market, the marketing communication efforts of the competitors and the economic, social, technological, legal, demographic and ecological characteristics of the market are other factors that should be taken into consideration in determining the marketing communication mix (Altunışık et al., 2006, p. 225).

A successful business reveals the dominant aspects of it while using the IMC between marketing strategies. In addition, these businesses organize marketing communication mix in the most effective way. The mix of IMC contains some subtitles such as personal selling,

advertising, sales development, public relations, direct marketing, sponsorship, and internet marketing (Dahlen et al., 2010, pp. 7-11).

#### ***2.3.4.1. Personal selling***

Personal selling is the persuasive marketing communication activities are realized by paid sales representatives directly (Tek & Özgül, 2005, p. 753). In addition to that, it is a verbal and direct sales effort between the marketing officer and current or expected client (Cemalcılar, 1998, p. 247). It is a much more effective method compared to others because of communicating directly with potential customers. Other marketing communication activities are only supportive compared to personal selling (Tıǧlı, 2004, p. 16). The most concrete step between the business and the consumer is taken by the personal sales staff. Personal selling is the most efficient way in terms of creating interaction between these two sides and also providing feedback (Gürbüz & Erdoğan, 2007, p. 120).

These personal selling activities is more chargeable than the other activities, for this reason it aims to achieve more perceptible goals in terms of business. There are some important objectives of personal selling such as:

- To determine the potential customers,
- To persuade customers to sell the products and carry out the sales process,
- To provide required information about competitors and customers and deliver the right information to the business at the right time,
- To ensure the transmission of the appropriate, qualified, and satisfying service to customer,
- To realize the promotion of brand and product,
- To make better the image of business and brand,
- To make a report by collecting information about the current market,
- To support the post-sales services (Göksel & Baytekin, 2007, pp. 175-190).

#### ***Strengths, weaknesses and features of personal selling.***

The purposes of personal selling should be consistent and in harmony with the goals of marketing and other communication efforts. Among the personal aims of personal selling, although the realization of the current sales is more important than others, it shouldn't be

seen as the only goal. Generally, the features required for sales' purposes are also valid for aims of personal sales (Karabulut, 1990, pp. 98-99).

Before making a decision about the selling process, the strengths and weaknesses should be evaluated because; personal selling is an expensive application.

It is possible to list their strengths as it follows:

1. It is possible to determine the immediate response as it based on personal communication,
2. The salesperson can change the messages to meet the customer's needs individually,
3. The salesperson has the flexibility to analyze alternative solutions according to the needs of the customers,
4. It is possible to keep the attention and interests of the customers high,
5. There is some more possibility to affect and persuade the customers in personal selling than the other applications of sales.

Besides these strengths, there are also some weaknesses such as:

- 1) Relationships can be established with a small number of customers within a certain period of time,
- 2) The cost of establishing a relationship with each customer is so high,
- 3) It is not a short term, but a long and continuous situation. In particular, sales force management requires a planned implementation (Odabaşı & Oyman, 2002, pp. 170-171).

It can be seen from these weaknesses and strengths, the difference of personal selling is including a personal connection with the customer. The most obvious advantage in personal sales is that the salesperson sees the reaction of the consumer and applies different, more effective, and persuasive methods according to the situation. There are main features of personal selling such as:

- ◆ A direct and lively communication is established between the sales representative and the buyer,
- ◆ Friendly relationships can be developed on both sides,
- ◆ There is two- way communication in personal selling,

- ◆ A salesperson provides the production according to the customers' needs and wants by collecting all data in personal selling (Mucuk, 2001, p. 189).

Salespeople usually communicate verbally with the consumers. However, some tools can be used during the sales. These practices affect the image of the business in positive way. Generally used personal selling tools are graphics, videos, brochure, and catalogs (Zhumatayeva, 2006, p. 83).

#### **2.3.4.2. Advertising**

In today's world, advertising is an indispensable phenomenon like the other elements of IMC for both businesses and consumers. As a result of rapidly changing market conditions and increasing competition day by day, the success of many companies in the same sector is about how they use marketing communication elements professionally.

Therefore, businesses need to engage in effective advertising activities in order to maintain their continuity and reach desired targets in the market by fighting their competitors (Tayfur, 2010, pp. 6-20).

Literally, advertising is the act of adopting and promoting the people, institutions, goods, and services to the public (Deniz , 2008, p. 93). It is a concept has been defined in different ways from the past to present. Considering advertising in terms of communication; it is a way of convincing the public with mass media in a controlled manner by a certain responsible (Çayıroğlu, 2010, p. 93). On the other hand, advertising in terms of marketing can be defined as a marketing communication tool persuades consumers voluntarily about purchasing behavior and drawing their attention to the product, business, or brand (Köksal & Özdemir, 2013, pp. 323-337). From the manufacturer perspective, advertising is the preparation of the messages appealing to the eyes or ears of the consumer in order to inform them and create positive attitude about the product, brand, service or institutions by some conductive tools (Tayfur, 2010, p. 18). In terms of the consumer, it is expressed as conveying sufficient and correct information about the products and services produced to the consumer by using different communication tools (Yaman, 2009, p. 3). Based on the definitions made, the features belonging to the advertisement can be listed as follows:

- Advertising is an element in marketing communications,
- Advertising is done for a specific charge,

- Advertising is the set of messages flowing from the advertiser to the consumer,
- Advertising is a mass communication type,
- Advertising is made by a known person, institution, or organization,
- The consumer is tried to be informed and persuaded with advertising,
- There are some solutions to the serving goods, services, promises, rewards, and problems in advertising messages,
- Advertising and other marketing communication elements work in coordination in order to achieve the marketing targets determined in accordance with the marketing strategies (Elden et al., 2011, p. 68).

### ***Purposes of the Advertising***

Advertising is important in terms of informing the consumer about the goods and services, directing the consumers towards the same or similar types of products or services and ensuring the continuity of the customers' needs for them (Kocabaş & Elden, 2004, pp. 13-14). In today's world, advertising is a widely used type of marketing communication and it can be done for some another purposes in line with its ultimate goal of increasing the sales and profitability of goods and services. Other purposes as mentioned are as follows:

- Launching a new product or entering a new market segment,
- Providing large masses to use the product that was previously used by a small consumer group,
- Creating brand loyalty and recovering the brand image,
- Helping units selling the product by explaining the firms and product features,
- Increasing product usage time and quantity in order to maintain the level of demand,
- To reach target consumers that the sales unit cannot reach,
- To improve prejudices, wrong and negative impressions about the product,
- Increasing consumer knowledge about the product (Mucuk, 2006, pp. 74-209).

In addition, advertising activities are used to perform the following functions such as informative, convincing, reminder, psychological support function.

- Informative function: The most important purpose of advertising is to provide information about the advertised product that will create a demand in the consumer's decision-making mechanism or to ensure the continuation of this demand. At the

same time, providing information-flow about some changes and news about the product is also the primary function of the advertisement (Deniz, Markalaşma ve Reklam, 2008, p. 222).

- Convincing function: Through the globalization and free market economy, numerous alternatives for each need have emerged for consumers. Advertising activities should be carried out in a way that evokes the idea of being the best, most useful and most preferable among these alternatives (İslamoğlu, 1999, p. 497).
- Reminder function: It is especially used for products that reach the maturity period of the product life cycle which aims to remember the brand, keep it alive in the consumer's brain and make the consumer think about the product (Elden et al., 2011, p. 81).
- Psychological support function: Consumers may sometimes hesitate about their consumption preferences. In addition, they may enter into new searches from time to time (İslamoğlu, 1999, p. 497). At this point, advertising reaches potential customers before salespeople and supports the consumer's choice as the best for them, increases the customer loyalty to the product and reduces the search for alternatives (Tayfur, 2010, pp. 6-20).

### ***Advertising Tools***

Advertising tools are various communication types enable advertising messages to reach the target audience and provide the link between the business and the target audience (Tuncer et al., 1992, p. 200). The most important step of advertising application is selecting the advertising tools. If the selection is not made correctly, the message can reach those outside the target audience. In this case, all advertising work and expenses of the enterprise will be wasted.

In general, advertising tools can be listed as follows, telephone, radio, TV, newspaper, magazine, cinema, outdoor, mail, social media ads. and billboards (Çelik, 2011, p. 31).

#### ***2.3.4.3. Sales Promotion***

Continuously evolving and differentiating consumer needs, purchasing preferences and habits have a significant effect on the increasing importance of marketing activities. This situation forces businesses to improve their products and offer them to consumers in a more

attractive way (Albar Özbucak, 2014, pp. 99-101). Beyond offering quality products, introducing the product to the consumers, and gaining the appreciation of the customer and creating brand loyalty are more important works that should be done to protect the existence and sustainability of the enterprise.

Sales promotion is an activity that businesses have frequently implemented in recent years in order to achieve these main goals (Güreş & Çabuk, 2000, pp. 4-11). Sales promotion is included as all short-time activities with immediate results used to support or replaced unused communication effort (Yükselen, 2013, pp. 387-389).

Excluding personal selling, public relations, and advertising, discontinuous and nonroutine sales efforts are used to motivate consumers towards purchasing effort are defines as “sales development” (Avcı, 2012, p. 26). Sales development can also be expressed as sales encouragement, sales promotion, and sales marketing communication. Sales promotion is a practice designed to increase the number of customers and the productivity of intermediaries (Göksel & Baytekin, 2007, p. 185). Promotion strategies are generally used when sales are sluggish. Sales promotion has been defined as the factors such as coupons, samples, refunds, and sale discounts that encourage an immediate purchasing (Totten & Block, 1994, p. 1).

In the light of different definitions, sales promotion is defined as a set of elements that encourage the distribution channels and sales team to increase sales, as well as directing the consumer to buy more quickly in short term (Uçar, 2016, p. 3).

There are some characteristics of sales promotion. The first one is being a non-routine and extra activity for consumers. Businesses always try to increase their sales with a number of studies apart from their marketing communication activities. These studies are not only for the selling businesses, also for the service sector. The main feature of sales development is that it is an additional monetary or material incentive element other than the products and services themselves. Monetary incentives allow customers to save money by reducing the prices of products or services directly or indirectly. Material incentives meet the gift or gift earning expectations offered with the product (Öztürk, 1993, p. 13). Sales development activities are not only for the consumer. Businesses implement sales promotion to intermediaries, wholesalers, retailers and even their own salespeople (Göksel & Baytekin,

2007, pp. 175-190). Besides these superior features, there are some limited points of sales development activities such as:

- Sales promotions are short-term and temporary activities. If they are planned for long-term, they can't be helpful. Generally, they are used for less than 90 days.
- Sales promotion activities couldn't be used alone. It should be applied together with other studies.
- It is very difficult to repeat sales promotion practices exactly.
- The most creative talents in advertising agencies are not reserved for these jobs.
- Various sales promotion activities for a product can negatively affect the image of it (Odabaşı & Oyman, 2002, pp. 82-100).

### ***Purposes of Sales Promotion***

The purposes of sales promotion are determined in line with the goals of marketing and marketing communication studies. Sales development goals vary according to the target group. The purpose of developing sales for consumers is providing customers buy more products, potential customers try the product and make their product preferred over competitors. The purpose of sales promotion for distributors and dealers is providing rapid transit system for new products to the market or consumers and creating brand loyalty (Zhumatayeva, 2006, p. 87). To summarize briefly, the purposes of sales development can be listed as follows:

- a. To increase sales in the short term,
- b. Increasing the number of the customers and store traffic,
- c. Creating, increasing, and sustaining consumer brand loyalty,
- d. Emphasizing the innovation of the product,
- e. Providing the motivation of the elements in the internal and external environment of the business,
- f. Increasing the competition power of business,
- g. Increasing the effectiveness of other marketing communication activities,
- h. Motivating potential consumer to try products,
- i. Providing differentiation,
- j. Increasing market share (Ünüsan & Sezgin, 2007, p. 285).

Some tools are used for promotions and sales development purposes. Sales promotion tools can be divided into three groups such as:

- Sales promotion methods for consumers,
- Sales promotion methods for intermediaries,
- Sales promotion methods for the sales force (Yükselen, 2013, pp. 387-389).

**Table 1**

*Classification of sales promotion tools*

| Methods for consumers                                                                                                                                                                                   | Methods for intermediaries                                                                                                                                                          | Methods for the sales force                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sample product distribution</li> <li>• Coupons</li> <li>• Refunds</li> <li>• Contests and Ruffles</li> <li>• Continuity programs</li> <li>• Packing</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retailer or price cut coupon</li> <li>• Sample application demonstrations</li> <li>• Trade stamps</li> <li>• Gifts and contests</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sales competitions and meetings</li> <li>• Catalogs and Brochures</li> <li>• Sales manuals</li> <li>• Sponsorship</li> </ul> |

**Source:** (Odabaşı & Oyman, Pazarlama İletişimi Yönetimi, 2002)

Promotional activity fails unless it can get people's attention. Consumers exposed to printed press, radio or TV broadcast and electronic information have developed some ways to free themselves from these information excess. Most catalogs and advertisings are ignored by the consumers. Companies try to prevent this situation with implementing many awareness-raising strategies and they present them in a way that integrates with their promotional activities (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011, pp. 52-53).

#### **2.3.4.4. Public Relations**

Public relation is an informative communication tool carried out in order to create positive thoughts and image in current, potential customers' and other market members' brain about the business itself, its activities, products, and services (Gülmez & Dörtyol, 2009, p. 108).

According to a shorter definition, public relation is a management function helps to maintain mutual communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between the organization and its related circles (Seçim & Coşkun, 1992, p. 4). According to another definition, public relation is a managerial art includes the planned efforts of private or legal people to establish and develop strong ties with the masses, to direct them to positive actions, beliefs, and attitudes and thus to maintain mutually beneficial relationships. The concept of "the public" often covers a large or small part of the population. The concept of "public" in public relations should be considered as the specified target audience or relations with target audience because the concept of the public carries a wide range of dimensions (Asna, 1997, p. 214).

The contribution of public relations in realizing the organizational goals of the companies cannot be denied. Public relations have an important place in branding process. The most important goal of PR activities overlaps with the organizational aims of the firm can be express as follows; affecting the target audience's views and opinions positively about a particular organization and persuading them to act in desired direction for short and long terms (Seyhan, 2007, p. 91).

As can be seen from the definitions, the most important function of PR practices is providing information to the target audience in an effective and efficient manner with appropriate means and methods (Asna, 1997, p. 214).

The most important feature of PR activities is being the cheapest one among the other marketing communication applications. Generally, these activities are run by a department at the center of business. This decision-making department works in coordination with the other categories of the firm and joins the resolutions with some information about the marketing and the way the product or service is presented to the consumer (Özcan S. , 2008, p. 82).

There are four main activities carried out by the PR department as noted below:

- ▽ Relations with the press,
- ▽ Product overview,
- ▽ Internal communication,
- ▽ Lobbying activities,
- ▽ Consultancy (Özkale et al., 1995, pp. 122-123).

In today's competitive conditions where technological and social developments are experienced and thus production is no longer a problem, marketing PR is an important communication flour used to be preferred among the competitors in the same sector. The importance of the PR elements in IMC is increasing because of decreasing the interest of the consumer to the messages received through various channels, doubting the accuracy of these messages, and increasing costs of advertising for businesses. As a matter of fact, businesses have realized that marketing PR is so important and they have started to include this element more in IMC programs (Yilmaz, 2005, p. 84). The most important advantages of PR applications are being more affordable than other marketing communication activities, being more reliable than the advertisements and containing more information. Consumer loyalty will increase depending on the success of PR activities. Despite these advantages, there are also disadvantages such as; the way the messages given is perceived by the recipients is out of control, the message is one-off and limited and standards are difficult to maintain because messages are personal (Baykal, 2017, p. 20).

### ***Purposes of Public Relations***

The main purpose of PR activities is influencing all market actors positively about the product sold and trying to continue these effects on them. In general, the purposes of PR activities can be listed as follows:

- Providing consumers information about the products or services and their usage,
- Adopting customer wishes and complaints,
- Training customers and staff,
- Developing relationships with intermediaries,
- Showing continuity in the market and maintaining the image of providing beneficial service to the society,

- Correcting the fake news and rumors about the company (Balta, 2006, p. 207).

Another issue should be mentioned is the tools used in PR activities. Communicating with the target audience in the required format and content and creating the intended thoughts and behaviors in them are needed because of reaching the goals in any PR work (Tosun, 2003, p. 51). If the target audience of public relations are listed by considering them quite comprehensively as follows; current and potential consumers, opinion leaders, reference groups, media (press, television, radio), public officials, tradesfolk, employees, pressure groups, shareholders and investor, financial organizations, chambers of commerce, professional associations, local governments, educators, and manufacturers (Pickton & Broderick, 2004, pp. 495-496).

While businesses carry out their marketing PR activities, they can deliver their messages with the help of several tools. They can announce their names in the press and create a public opinion in their favor and the press also meets its need for news with these events. However, choosing the right media and developing good relationships with the media are needed for taking part in the media and conveying the advantageous messages to the public (Aydede, 2003, p. 124). The most important PR tools are newspapers, magazines, brochures, banners, press releases, exhibitions, fairs, and competitions. Reaching as a large market share as possible with the least cost and easily through these tools is the main goal (Okay & Okay, 2002, p. 54).

#### **2.3.4.5. *Direct Marketing***

There are many definitions have been made in literature for direct marketing. First of all, direct marketing is defined as the use of direct consumer channels to promote and deliver products to customers without using marketing intermediaries (Çakmak, 2011, p. 3). Direct marketing tries to gain customers or maintain communication with the existing customers without mediators. Thus, direct marketing is a distribution system that manages the interactive communication of products, information, and advertisements with customers (Jobber & Lancaster, 2009, p. 331). Direct marketing is more than just sending direct mail. This system includes a range of activities through database management, direct selling, telemarketing and mail, internet, and many other tools (Belch & Belch, 2003, p. 18).

Direct marketing is a marketing mechanism connects customers by fulfilling the needs and wants of them by establishing direct contact and in this mechanism, feedback is so easy because of being directly (Karaxha et al., 2016, p. 55).

With direct marketing activities, businesses can respond effectively to ever-changing and various customer demands, needs and preferences (Ecer & Canitez, 2005, p. 307). With the development of technology and especially the spread of the internet, direct marketing has become highly preferred as a method. Social media applications and blogs have enabled businesses to reach anywhere in the world. It should be emphasized that this preference is extremely valid especially in order to reach the young consumers like Y and Z generations. After these explanations, we can mention five main benefits of direct marketing. These benefits are:

- Convenience,
- Interactivity and speed,
- Measurability,
- Determination of precise goal and
- Low cost (Çevik, 2011, pp. 15-16).

The most important feature of direct marketing is being personal. Marketing activity is carried out against current or potential customer who is and whose characteristics are directly known. Most of the time, the positive or negative results of the marketing activity can be clearly identified. Apart from these issues, the features related to direct marketing can be listed as below;

- It allows the identification of each customer.
- It eliminates the need for customers to apply to retail outlets and has the opportunity to sell directly to the consumers.
- It takes the place of distributors and has the ability to transport products from manufacturer to the customers without the need for intermediaries.
- It can reach the current or potential customer via media (Aydın S. Z., 1997, pp. 11-12).

While the definitions and features of direct marketing give information about the weaknesses and strengths of it, the strengths of direct marketing can be listed as selectivity,

flexibility, lower costs, combination of advertising and sales, self-measurement, high profit margin, controlled distribution advantage and planned financial investments (Cömert, 1989, pp. 48-53). The most important advantages of direct marketing are being able to determine the target audience effectively, responding to this target audience with personalized messages and also establishing long-term relationship with them (Belch & Belch, 1998, p. 456). Against all these advantages, direct marketing also has some weaknesses. These aspects can be listed as follows:

- Consumer doesn't have the opportunity to see and try the product closely before purchasing it. Direct marketing must carefully adjust its return and warranty policies to ensure customer satisfaction and loyalty.
- Catalogs are very expensive due to mailing and printing costs.
- A computer system is needed to distribute the products and monitor the purchases and returns.
- Some non-goodwill direct marketers can negatively affect the image of the industry due to shipping defective products or disruptions in product distribution.
- The consumer can feel insecure about the usage of the credit cards (Timur & Özmen, 1996, p. 97).

### ***Purposes of Direct Marketing***

Direct marketing has various purposes related to customers, leads, brand equity and sales. These purposes are briefly as follows (Yükselen, 2003, p. 267);

- Protecting the customers owned by the business,
- Encouraging the potential customers to try the product or change brands,
- Selling with direct response advertising,
- Increasing the usage and usage amount of brand owned by the business.

The business applies direct marketing activities for their products or services uses some tools. The most important ones among direct marketing instruments are communication tools. With the developing technology, the number of communication tools has increased and become advantageous in terms of cost. Businesses have to choose suitable communication tools according to the quality of the goods or services they offer to the

consumer. The main tools for direct marketing that businesses can choose are as follows; direct mailing, telephone, catalogs, TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, email, internet, direct sales, trigger and ground ads, mobile marketing, and kiosk marketing (Özel, 2016, p. 46).

#### ***2.3.4.6. Sponsorship***

Sponsorship offers businesses the opportunity to meet with their target audience and create a warm atmosphere by supporting various events. It is very useful in creating brand awareness and a positive image in the public mind. The first thing that comes to mind about sponsorship is supporting sports or cultural events. However, sports and cultural events create only two of the sponsorship practices. The support may not be only financially. Therefore, first of all defining the concept of sponsorship and evaluating its scope will make it easier to understand the concept (Odabaşı & Oyman, 2002, pp. 343-344).

There are many definitions of sponsorship. It is possible to list the definitions. Sponsorship is a commercial investment for events or causes for corporate or marketing purposes without directly purchasing media channels. On the other hand, it is a mutually beneficial business arrangement between the supporter and supported to achieve certain goals (Akyürek, 1998, p. 7). Looking at the definitions, sponsorship is used to achieve corporate or marketing purposes. These purposes can vary from increasing the recognition of the organization to promoting new products and services. Secondly, some activities should be supported like sportive, cultural, environmental, or educational. Thirdly, there are two parts like supported and supporter and it is essential that both sides should get some benefits from this relationship. With this feature, it is considered separately from such regulations like donations, aids and etc. These supports can be the form of money or equipment. Finally, a sponsorship event is based on a managerial process that includes planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling (Okay A. , 1998, p. 24).

#### ***Purposes of Sponsorship***

Sponsorship is the advertising activities that consumers create about brand, service, or product through an emotional connection with an activity. Businesses must spend more than their normal advertising expenses for being achieved the purposes of this activity (Bylthe, 2001, p. 215). Although, it is a costly promotional activity for businesses, sponsorship is also considered as a tool that can be used by public relations. However,

sponsorship is considered as a new marketing communication method in line with new approaches in time (Tek, 1999, p. 801). Business tools are shown on Table 2 below:

**Table 2**

*Business tools in sponsorship*

| General company purposes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Marketing purposes                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Media purposes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Personal Purposes                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Public awareness</li> <li>○ Company image</li> <li>○ Public perceptions</li> <li>○ Social integration</li> <li>○ Financial relations</li> <li>○ Customer entertainment</li> <li>○ Government relations</li> <li>○ Competition between firms</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Brand positioning</li> <li>○ Reaching the target market</li> <li>○ Increasing the sales</li> <li>○ Sample product distribution</li> <li>○ Business relationships</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increasing visibility</li> <li>○ Increasing the publicity</li> <li>○ Increasing the effectiveness of advertising campaigns</li> <li>○ Avoiding message clutters</li> <li>○ Pinpoint target</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Management information</li> </ul> |

**Source:** (Argan, Spor Pazarlamasında Sponsorluk ve Futbol Branşında Sponsorluk Yapan Kuruluşlara İlişkin Bir Araştırma, 2001)

**2.3.4.7. Internet marketing**

Internet is revolutionizing the way of doing business of the firms and becoming more and more critical for being succeed. It is a powerful tool that businesses can gain a competitive advantage. It provides many opportunities for businesses to expand their sales and reduce the costs. Some of the important changes brought by the Internet can be seen in purchasing products and services, obtaining information and banking activities (Yannopoulos, 2011, p. 1).

The Internet is an electronic area has the characteristics of written and audio-visual media and facilitates two-way communication. Consumers and organizations can communicate directly with each other regardless of place and time (Berthon et al., 1998, p. 692). On the other hand, internet marketing is the usage of Internet and digital technologies related to Internet for achieving marketing goals and supporting modern marketing understanding (Chaffey et al., 2000, p. 6). One of the most common definitions of the internet marketing is the process of establishing and maintaining customer relationships through online activities to facilitate the exchange of ideas, products and services meeting the goals of both parties (Sharma & Sharma, 2016, pp. 51-61).

The worldwide use of the Internet for various purposes is related to a number of advantages offered by this environment. The advantages offered by the Internet environment can be briefly listed as follows:

- It allows interaction between the website and the site visitors,
- This virtual environment has no time and place,
- It is dynamic. Last minute changes, updating information are accomplished with little effort and cost,
- It provides support for multi-media applications. It allows the transfer of pictures, texts, sounds and moving images,
- It has the opportunity to customize the information and message to be sent (Breitenbach & Van Doren, 1998, pp. 558-575).

There is no face-to-face contact in internet marketing. It doesn't allow the customer to touch, smell, taste or try the products or services. However; the other disadvantages of internet marketing can be listed as follows:

- Consumers worry that the product does not reflect real information.
- Transparency brings convenience for consumer, but it creates price competition for the sellers.
- There may be some problems regarding identity and information privacy on the websites.
- People over a certain age are not competent in using technological devices.
- Maintenance costs due to the ever-evolving environment (Gangeshwer, 2013, p. 193).

With the rapid adaptation of technological tools and the internet to daily life, the internet has become a very important area for both customers and businesses. Internet marketing makes easier reaching the large masses and measuring the return on investment without the geographical borders. It improves the brand image of the businesses and the scope of its products and service. Businesses use some channels when developing an effective internet marketing strategy (Gedik, 2020, pp. 424-428). The beginnings of internet marketing are associated with the ad boom and the early versions of search engine optimization but nowadays; it is an umbrella term for email marketing, search engine optimization, social media marketing, pay-per-click, display ads and etc. The main channels of internet marketing are search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing, content marketing, e-mail marketing, mobile marketing, banner advertising and websites (Grubor & Jakša, 2018, pp. 267-268).

Websites are essential for promotion and also one of the core elements of online marketing. There are 7 elements (7C) form the basis of a website such as concept, content, community, customization, communication, connectivity, and commerce (Gedik, 2020, pp. 424-428).

SEO is the procedure for improving the visibility of a website in search engine results page (Rashid et al., 2018, pp. 1-7).

Social media marketing is media marketing tool that uses social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to interact with the customers. The marketing literature classifies social media marketing as low-cost method (Yao et al., 2019, p. 290). Social media is internet-based communication in which individuals can create their own content, view the other users' shares, and interact with their friends. Social media marketing offers various benefits for the brand owners such as advertising, product development and marketing research (Balaban & Mustatea, 2019, p. 40).

Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focuses on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience. Businesses use content marketing because of increasing the sales, providing cost savings, and creating customer loyalty. Creating quality content is part of all forms of marketing (Gedik, 2020, p. 426).

Email marketing is a type of direct marketing where businesses send their business messages to an individual or group using email. Email is one of the most widely used marketing

channels in the world. Email marketing allows businesses to reach millions of people worldwide, get responses in seconds, create personalized content, and analyze results in real time (Rehman et al., 2014, pp. 38-49).

Mobile marketing is a marketing, advertising or sales promotion activity targets consumers and is carried out through the mobile channel. In general, the purposes of mobile marketing campaigns are increasing revenues, customer loyalty, participation in certain events and building customer databases (Salo et al., 2008, p. 500).

The nature of the Internet has opened up a wide range of research areas based on clickstream data, and it is mostly focusing on consumers' browsing and purchasing behavior (Rutz & Bucklin, 2012, p. 257). Another widely used online marketing tool are banner ads appear at the top of many commercial websites allowing the users to click on the ad and go directly to the advertiser's home page or the related content offered (Saunders, 2002, p. 555). Banner advertising creates an interactive channel between businesses and consumers and can be used in information provision, advertising, customer relationship management (Isohella et al., 2017, pp. 85-95).

## **2.4. Word-of-Mouth Marketing**

Before explaining the concept of "word of mouth marketing" which is very important in terms of marketing communication, it would be more appropriate to explain word of mouth communication (Taşkın, 2011, p. 165). Word of mouth communication is actually an information sharing process (Hawkins et al., 1998, pp. 238-239).

### **2.4.1. The Concept of Word-of-Mouth Communication**

Although mass communication tools are significant in communicating with the consumers, communication between people also has a very important place. While mass media tools are effective in creating product or service awareness, personal communication is effective in persuading consumers (Bayus, 1985, p. 31). Marketing research shows that recommendations have an important place among the information sources that consumers care about. It has been concluded that the most important factor in the formation of

recommendation trends is personal resources. It is seen that recommendation behaviors are more effective for service purchases (Yağcı & Çabuk, 2014, p. 47). Arndt (1967), the earliest researcher investigated the impact of WOM on consumers characterized WOMC as verbal. In other words, he emphasized that it is the communication between the sender and the receiver without any commercial purpose related to any brand, product, or service (pp. 291-295). Traditional WOMC can be defined as an oral communication process in which people can meet their needs such as transferring information from the past to the present, sharing their experiences and creating circulation of advice. People often improvise this type of communication without realizing it and as a result, they gather the information they need from their environment (Cheung & Lee, 2012, p. 2). According to a different definition, WOMC is the sum of the customer experiences from brands, businesses, organizations, products, or services (Buttle, 1998, pp. 241-243). On the other hand, according to Karaca (2010) WOMC is not only the sentences come out of people's mouths, also it is the way they say, their gestures and mimics (p. 62).

WOMC is an important factor influencing customers' purchasing decision. Consumers rely on the information they obtain through WOMC when making a purchase decision. Especially in service areas, due to the intangibility, WOMC plays an important role in finding new customers and retaining existing ones (Bayus, 1985, p. 31). Because; individuals are exposed to a lot of information bombardment and it takes a long time to filter the right information (Silverman, 2001, p. 23). Obtaining information from the consumer affects the purchasing behavior in a significant way, because it is not from any sales employee or communication channels (Karaca, 2010, p. 55). Positive or negative WOMC can occur on this communication platform where the experiences are transferred. This occurs when the people share their positive or negative attitudes about the products or services they have experienced. People are free when they communicate by WOM, and they conclude their information transfer in a comfortable way. This positive or negative information sharing can be with the friends, colleagues from work, family, neighbors, or someone who is in search of any information (Cheung & Lee, 2012, p. 2). The positive WOMC created by loyal customers is also a source of free advertising for the businesses. Consumers give more importance to the recommendations of friends and family members than commercial advertisements for purchase decisions. Therefore, businesses should try to create positive WOM about the company's products and services by creating satisfied and loyal customers

(Ennew et al., 2000, pp. 75-83). The messages given in WOMC may not always be positive. Positive communications depend on the high level of satisfaction of the consumer who tries the product or service, and a negative communication depends on the dissatisfaction of the consumer who tries the product or services (Odabaşı & Barış, 2002, p. 273). Some studies about WOMC says that consumers give more importance to messages carrying negative information than positive ones (Mowen & Minor, 1998, p. 491).

#### ***2.4.1.1. Characteristics of Word-of-Mouth Communication***

In today's media environment, businesses are considering how they can be successful in marketing communications and how they can successfully demonstrate planned WOMC (Dahlen et al., 2010, p. 23). While WOMC can occur spontaneously, marketers can ensure that this communication occurs in their favor (Karaca, 2010, p. 60). In other words, WOMC can be done accidentally or consciously. In both cases, various stimulus caused the initiation of WOMC (Mangold et al., 1999, p. 73). WOMC occurs suddenly and then disappears (Buttle, 1998, p. 242).

WOM is a persuasive and very powerful communication method. There are some qualities that make this method effective. Expressing these qualities more clearly is necessary to understand the causes of the effect. These characteristics are reliability, experience transfer, being customer based, money and time saving (Karaca, 2010, p. 62).

##### ***Reliability***

WOMC is more confidential than the salesperson. When people are going to buy a product or service that is important for them, they may prefer to act with the advice of familiar person or go to a trusted salesperson with the recommendation of this familiar person before meeting the seller. Even the service or product is not good, it will be more reliable and qualified to the consumer. Because, this person's friend, family or etc. are reliable for him (Yavuzylmaz, 2008, p. 19). It is important to satisfy the customer, this is because a satisfied customer is the best salesperson (Karaca, 2010, p. 60).

##### ***Experience transfer***

When the consumers decide to buy a product or service, they think that they want to try the product or service and have a real experience with low risk. The direct and indirect are two ways for gaining this experience. Direct experience is the process of trying the

product virtually which may be more costly than indirect one in terms of time, money, risk of failure or disappointment. On the other side, indirect experience is talking or listening to other people about their experiences and helping others. People share their concerns and risks with this kind of activities (Gildin, 2003, p. 100).

It can be said that the experience in WOM accelerates the adoption process of the product. If the consumers experience the product how much faster, they will adopt a product or service as fast as it (Karaca, 2010, p. 40)

### ***Being Customer-based***

WOMC is the most customer-based form of all communication types. This communication process is carried out by customers and outside intervention is often ineffective (Karaca, 2010, pp. 12-62). There is no way or method to control WOMC. Customers take over the campaigns of businesses that given up the control. The important point in here is that an experienced customers convey their experiences to another customer and guides them. However, businesses have succeeded in being different will also enable their customers to talk positively about their products or services. In this way, WOM will be a positive strategy tool for businesses thanks to customers (Trout & Rivkin, 2011, p. 265).

### ***Money and Time Saving***

When the studies in literature are examined, it is seen that WOMC has an important place in the consumers' daily lives. Consumers share their purchasing experiences with each other and think that the information they obtain in this way is more reliable. On the other hand, today's consumers are constantly bombarded with information, and they go through many troublesome processes such as assimilation, differentiation, and use of this information (Silverman , 2001, p. 15). This situation leads an ordinary consumer to obtain information from someone who has experienced this product or service before in order to have information about a product or service that they do not know much about. In this way, the time to have the necessary information will be shortened and the consumer will reach the desired product in the optimum time.

In addition to all these, companies allocate large budgets for advertising activities, and these budgets can actually become ineffective as a result of WOMC between people. WOMC which has a very important advantage such as low cost can be more effective than the

promotions made by spending big money. It saves time and money for both customers and businesses (Karaca, 2010, p. 45).

#### ***2.4.1.2. Types of Word-of-Mouth Communication***

People are affected by the individuals they interact with. People convey the positive and negative points to the others in this communication process (Karaca, 2010, p. 55). While the positive aspect of WOMC gives positive results for brands or companies, the negative aspects may cause negative results for companies or even countries (Santos & Basso, 2012, p. 349). On the basis of brands, positive WOMC is generally initiated about the brands used at the time, while negative WOMC is about a brand, product or service has been experienced before or a brand that has never been tried (Bozkurt, 2013, p. 121).

#### ***Positive Word-of-Mouth Communication***

WOMC is a basic action that people have done, are still doing and will continue to do in the future before the advertisements. In fact, studies prove that people with high brand loyalty make more positive comments about the brand. Companies make great efforts to comprehend, measure and manage their quality. In this case, thanks to positive WOMC, consumer will be more likely to prefer these companies and brands (Mangold et al., 1999, p. 85).

In WOMC, businesses want consumers to have a positive perception about the products they offer to the market, and they make more effort especially for products will enter the market. They know that it will be very difficult to remove a negative image that may occur about a product. Businesses should work on gaining potential customers first and then follow some policies will enable them to spread positive ideas about the services and products offered to the customers. This is possible with customer satisfaction established with quality goods or services, long term, and warm relations (Arılı, 2012, p. 168). Positive WOM is generally used by the brand's users. Customers generally engage in positive WOM if they have formed a secure opinion about the brand, are familiar with the brand's advertisements and have an outstanding brand experience worth sharing (Sharp & Romaniuk, 2016, p. 145).

Finally, from the point of view of businesses, positive WOMC does not only reduce the market expenditures of businesses. In addition, if new customers are persuaded and attracted, it also increases the revenues of the business (Goodman, 2005, p. 46).

### ***Negative Word-of-Mouth Communication***

In WOM, customers can sell the product or services by what they say and think about them. The sale is not made by the reputation of the product or what is said about it. The product's success is nearly impossible unless the message that spreads to the masses is supported by positive reviews.

WOMC is a message presented about an organization's products, services, or itself. Generally, WOM is the transfer of the comments from one person to another about issues such as product or service performance, service quality and reliability. Businesses should organize their marketing strategies well so that they can bring their products or services to consumers. This kind of businesses value communication highly and aim to keep customer relations at the highest level. Because they know that the negative communication affects people more than positive things. A negative message can dissuade someone from buying a product and let someone to think purchasing another product (Findik, 2015, p. 176).

Many organizations mostly operating in the service sector anticipate that customers and consumers are dissatisfied from time to time. Some of the behaviors that consumers do when they are not satisfied with the goods or services are as follows:

- They express their dissatisfaction with the product or service directly to the seller.
- They covertly cut off contact with the brand and initiate negative WOM.
- They take legal action and express their complaints in groups that provide services related to consumer rights.

Negative WOM occurs covertly with these possible behaviors concerns manufacturers and retailers. Negative WOMC will reveal itself as soon as possible compared to complaint notifications (Charlet et al., 1995, p. 42). Users who have given up on purchasing the brand or switched to another brand create more negative WOMC (Sharp & Romaniuk, 2016, p. 145). Businesses have been working for many years to build brand strength. Negative WOM can seriously affect the customer preferences (Baker, 2011, p. 4). If your product or service is not correct, WOMC can end your company's lifeline (Philip, 2008, p. 265).

#### ***2.4.1.3. Members of Word-of-Mouth Communication Process***

WOMC process starts with the encoding of the message is wanted to convey to the receiver by an information source. The encoded message is sent to the receiver through various communication channels. The communication channels affect the interpreted way of the message. In this way, the message delivered to the receiver is decoded and interpreted. The receiver's comment is transmitted to the source via feedback. During this process, some environmental factors may negatively affect the transmission of the message to the other side of the communication (Mowen & Minor, 2001, pp. 148-149).

As in other types of communication, various elements are required for the transfer of the ideas from the receiver to the source in WOMC. Therefore, the elements in the general communication process are also necessary for the WOMC process. These elements are source (sender), message, communication channel, receiver (target), feedback (response) and noise. In order for communication to continue effectively, the source must encode and transmit the message in a way that the receiver can understand. The receiver also needs to perform the encoding action to convert the message into thought or ideas (Karaoğlu, 2010, p. 14).

#### ***Source (sender)***

In the WOMC process, the person in the source position may be a consumer, an opinion leader or market maven who has bought and experienced the product or service or someone who does not buy the product and services but has information about them from advertisement or salesperson. In the WOMC process, the person in the source position may be a consumer, an opinion leader or market maven who has bought and experienced the product or service or someone who does not buy the product and services but has information about them from advertisement or salesperson. WOM gives them to opportunity to share product news, their own ideas, and experiences with others. (Karaca, 2010, p. 58). Consumers enjoy all kinds of positive or negative talk about the product they buy, and this causes them to be a source of WOM. The source decides which message will be sent, on which channel, by which tools and to which receiver (Yavuzylmaz, 2008, p. 78). Different types of decisions result from different type communication. The information needs arising from the complexity of the decision-making process determine the ratio of the information necessities of the consumers. Of course, communication can't be effective alone in decision-

making process. That's why consumers look for channels where they can gather some information needed (Dahlen et al., 2010, p. 9). In a communication process, the source of the message has a very important place. Because whether the message is accepted or not by the receiver depends largely on the source (Solomon M. , 2002, pp. 229-230). Some names are given to the source such as opinion leaders, reference groups, market mavens and other sources.

### ***Opinion Leaders***

Opinion leaders tend to communicate more quickly than the people who don't have leadership qualities (Darden & Reynolds, "Predicting Opinion Leadership for Men's Apparel Fashions", 1972, pp. 324-328). They are the sources that offer both information and advice to others. In addition to sharing experiences and information about a product line, they advise others not to buy a product. Opinion leaders are also more assertive and innovative and have more self- confidence. They are also more opened than others in accepting messages from the mass media (Hoyer & MacInnis, Consumer Behavior, 2004, p. 393). As individuals, opinion leaders become experts on the product or service which they will provide information and advice. These people become opinion takers to learn about other products and services that they are not experts in. Opinion leaders are powerful and valid source of information. They don't consider any financial gain while providing information to the consumers, so they have a great influence on customers' decisions about the product or service (Morh, 2007, p. 395).

Opinion leaders can be anyone in the person's close circle such as friends or relatives. On the other hand, they can be also professionals such as doctors, pharmacists, dentists, or lawyers who advise their clients or patients. In addition, film or restaurant critics and writers in consumer publications are also opinion leaders (Hoyer & MacInnis, Consumer Behavior, 2004, p. 393).

### ***Reference Groups***

Reference groups is one of the factors affecting the purchasing decision of consumers based on WOMC (Kau & Loh, 2006, p. 101). Reference groups affect many issues such as the behaviors, thoughts, and attitudes of individuals directly or indirectly (Mucuk, 2006). In other words, they are the groups that the people observe, care, and take as a guide while determining their behavior in a particular situation (Odabaşı & Barış, 2003, p. 283).

Due to human nature, many people are the members of more than one group. In this case, reference groups which are in the source position take an important place in the WOMC process (Karaca, 2010, p. 60). Some of these groups are more influential than others on people's judgements, values, and behaviors. People are the members of certain groups since they were born but it takes effort to be a member of any other groups (Odabaşı & Barış, 2003, p. 230). WOMC is a tool that has a significant effect on the purchasing decision of customers who buy some service. The reference group has the most influence on the purchasing decision based on the communication has been potential and current customers (Arlı, 2012, p. 168). Since most individuals are the members of more than one group, they can take place in special groups such as reference groups as a source in the WOMC process. People around individuals, coworkers, family, relatives, and some people who have experienced any product or service have an important role in the purchase decision-making process of the buyer (Kau & Loh, 2006, p. 101).

### ***Market Mavens***

Market mavens are the people who have knowledge about many products and shopping places, initiate conversations about these topics and answer their questions to provide market information to consumers. Market mavens have information about the marketplace such as when and where to shop, where there are discounts, which products are good or bad (Hoyer & MacInnis, Consumer Behavior, 2004, p. 393). Market mavens are at a very important point for businesses (Odabaşı & Barış, 2003, p. 283). These people are knowledgeable about many different product groups. They enjoy shopping and sharing their experiences with others. Market mavens are very self-confident due to their knowledge level. At this level of knowledge, their abilities play a big role. They tend to try more products and brands than the opinion leaders. The effect of market mavens on people is because of the general knowledge and market experience. These people can be considered as the earliest adopters of new products or services (Odabaşı & Barış, 2003, p. 230).

### ***Other Sources***

Apart from opinion leaders, market mavens and reference groups, there are other individuals who provide information to the consumers in the WOMC process (Hawkins et al., 1998, pp. 238-239). These people in the source position can be consumers or shopping friends who buy and use goods or services, but also; they can be the users who enjoy from

internet surfing or people come to our house as guests. In a study, it is stated that children are one of the sources of information used in WOMC. However, the impact of children as a resource is greater on older adults than on younger ones. It can be seen in the same study that a product used in the house of a friend is an important source of information. In addition, it is reported that different people are in the source position for different product types in the WOMC process. For example, children are probably not a source for life insurance and young women are mostly the source for fashion products and movies (Bylthe, 2001, p. 232). The rapid development and intensive use of today's technology also affects the habits of using media channels of information resources. The transfer of experience and information about a brand, product or service over the Internet is carried out very quickly by various people. It should be accepted that these people are also in the source position. Recently, the existence of market ravens has started to be mentioned as another source of information that initiates discussion about product categories and brands in internet forums. These people very quickly transfer their disappointment, anger or satisfaction with a manufacturer, retailer, or brand to others (Mohr & Chiagouris, 2005, p. 53).

The source affects the communication process positively or negatively with the effect of a number of factors. They can increase or decrease the effectiveness of the source. These factors are attractiveness and reliability (Mowen & Minor, 2001, p. 149). It is stated that as the perceived attractiveness of the source increases, the persuasiveness of the message also increases. All these features can have different effects on people. While some people are affected by the external appearance, the social position of the resource may be more important for others. This feature may be due to physical appearance, personality, social status, or similarity of the resource with the recipient (Solomon M. , 2002, p. 230). The similarity between the receiver and the source is very important for the perception of the source's attractiveness. The similarity refers to the degree of compatibility of two people in terms of certain properties. These features are generally demographic variables. The similarity is expressed to facilitate the flow of information. Similar sources often have similar product needs (Yavuzylmaz, 2008, p. 78).

On the other hand, reliability is the belief that the source provides accurate and impartial information (Wells & Prensky, 1996, p. 459). Reliability of the source affects the code opening. As an information source increases the degree of expertise and honesty, the possibility of being perceived as a reliable source by the receiver increases (Mowen &

Minor, 2001, p. 149). Reliability depends on two factors for the source, the first one is expertise, and the other is the level of integrity. People gain expertise in any product category through knowledge, education, and experience. If the source is an opinion leader in the WOMC process, the level of perception of the source as an expert may be even higher. Because the profit that the source will gain from this interaction is not a commercial gain but psychological one. In other words, he enjoys sharing his knowledge and experience with other people and feels important. For this reason, the source will research the latest information about the product category he is interested in (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004, p. 203). As a result of the research, a positive relationship was found between expertise and the effect of WOM on the buyer's purchasing decision. In addition, honesty is as important as expertise. It refers to the degree to which the buyer perceives that the source provides information in an impartial and honest manner. In WOMC, the source may act more impartially and honestly, because it does not aim for financial gain (Mowen & Minor, 2001, p. 149).

### ***Message (Coding)***

Coding is the symbolic representation of ideas and thoughts. Coding is the process of transforming and interpreting the message in the mind. This process is influenced by the receiver's field of understanding. The receiver's area of understanding is surrounded by the experiences, attitudes, perceptions, and values of both the source and the receiver. The message will be interpreted more successfully if the receiver's understanding of the source can be higher and the number of decoding experiences can be increased (Fill, 1999, p. 13). For effective communication to occur, the source's encoding and the receiver's decoding must be coincided (Yüksel, 1994, pp. 21-62). In order for the sending message to be clearly understood and effective by the receiver, it must contain some features. These features can only be conveyed with a creative message. Creatively created messages have a direct impact on the target audience, product, and service. These features are adaptability, durability, modernity, realism, memorability, and simplicity (Bozkurt, 2000).

### ***Communication Channel***

The communication channel is used in the movement of the message from the source to the receiver and there are two types as personal or impersonal. Personal channels exist when face-to-face communication occurs, but impersonal communication channels appear

as mass communication channels. The message is delivered to large masses through mass media. The channels used in WOMC are personal communication channels. Two or more people communicate informally, either face-to-face or over the phone. In addition to these channels, WOMC can occur through other channels such as e-mail, chat rooms, forums, blogs, complaint sites, shopping sites, news sites and etc. (Karaca, 2010, p. 57).

### ***Receiver (Decoding)***

The receivers are who read, see, listen to the message, and open the code. In other words, the receiver is the person or people with whom the source wants to share the information or thoughts sent (Williams R. E., 1979, p. 280). In WOMC, the person in the receiver position could be anyone around us. When we mean this, we can consider the receiver as a person he trusts and knows. In the case of WOMC over the internet, the receiver may be close to the source such as virtual friends met via internet or unknown people. In this case, it isn't necessary for the receiver and the source to be in the same environment for WOMC (Wells & Prensky, 1996, p. 459). Communication is not only the transfer of meanings, but the sharing of common meanings created by the receiver and the source are the subject of communication (Yüksel, 1994, p. 62).

Some characteristics of the receiver may affect the WOMC process positively or negatively like the source. The receiver's personal characteristics, perceived risk level and social bond with the source, the receiver's level of expertise, psychological state at the time of communication affect the communication process (Karaca, 2010, p. 60).

### ***Personal Characteristics of the Receiver***

All personal characteristics of the receiver affect the accuracy of the message at the decoding stage. The demographic characteristics of the receiver, their socio-cultural affiliation and lifestyle are the main determinants affect the interpretation of the message. For example, in a study, it was stated that people with a lower education level and low income are more likely to be affected by external factors, so they are more open to messages from family or close friends (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004, p. 300). It is stated that people with high education and income levels are less affected by external factors and environment (Lam & Mizerski, 2005, p. 224). In addition, the receiver and the source are in the same age group may affect the interpretation of the message. For example, the suggestions of a friend in the

same age group may be more effective than the suggestions of their family for 15 years old person.

The people are married and have children are affected from married people with children rather than his single friends in choosing a school for their child's education (Karaca , 2010, p. 28).

### ***Opinion leaders.***

Opinion leaders tend to communicate more quickly than the people who don't have leadership qualities. They are the sources that offer both information and advice to others. In addition to sharing experiences and information about a product line, they advise others not to buy a product. Opinion leaders are also more assertive and innovative and have more self- confidence. They are also more opened than others in accepting messages from the mass media (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2004, s. 393). As individuals, opinion leaders become experts on the product or service which they will provide information and advice. These people become opinion takers to learn about other products and services that they are not experts in. Opinion leaders are powerful and valid source of information. They don't consider any financial gain while providing information to the consumers, so they have a great influence on customers' decisions about the product or service (Morh, 2007, p. 403).

### ***The Receiver's Level of Expertise***

Receivers' level of expertise refers to their knowledge of the subject. In many studies, it is stated that there is a negative relationship between the level of knowledge and experience of the receiver and the level of benefiting from an external source for information (Gilly et al., 1998, p. 85). If the buyers have a high level of product expertise, they are less likely to take action to seek information. It is stated that such findings are obtained because the receiver has a high level of product knowledge and feels little need to consult others before choosing a product. Conversely, people with low product knowledge and experience will mostly feel compelled to seek other's opinions because they have doubts in their product choices (Bansal & Voyer, 2000, p. 170).

They considered the receiver's expertise in three aspects in service purchasing decisions. Accordingly, as the level of expertise of the receivers increases, they actively use

WOMC at a lower level. As the level of expertise of the receiver increases, the level of perceived risk regarding the service decreases. In addition, the influence of the source in WOMC in the purchase decision of the receiver is less (Özcan N. , 2018, p. 60).

### ***Social Bond with the Source***

The relationships are established between the receiver and the source may be superficial and short-term or a solid one based on the past. In both cases, it is known that all WOMC movements occur within these social relations (Karaca , 2010, p. 32). In communications where the current bond strength is strong, the ideas of the receiver are highly influenced by the message sent by the source. As the bond strength decreases, this information flow may be limited. This connection may be the reason why people's opinions are needed before purchasing a product or service (Brown & Reingen, 1987, p. 350).

### ***Feedback(response)***

After the sent message is seen and heard by the receiver, it is called the reaction or feedback of the receiver. The source can predict whether the receiver gets the message, understands it correctly or the influence level of the message on receiver via feedback. For this reason, feedback should be as rapid and clear as possible. At this point, WOMC emerges as an effective communication tool because this process is achieved very quickly in WOMC. Because the receiver has the opportunity to ask the source about every point that is not understood about the message. In this way, the source can correct the deficiencies during the encoding of the message and the receiver can do during the opening of the message. Also, the communication channel used can be made more convenient with this way (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004, p. 300). In WOMC, the feedback point can occur verbally and nonverbally. During face-to-face communication, people can get help from their gestures and mimics and emojis or other images can be used in a communication on the internet (Karaca , 2010, p. 30).

### ***Noise***

There may be some negativities that occur in the communication process. These are physical or mental negativities like if you are talking on a mobile phone during WOMC, the sound near receiver, the light level, the noises coming from outside or mobile phone and the small clicks of the person sitting near you (Karaca , 2010, p. 30). In addition to these factors,

hearing, vision and speech disorders and some physio-neurological noise sources such as hunger and fatigue can negatively affect the WOMC process.

There may also be some situations that may cause noise in WOMC over the internet. One of them is the sounds come from spam messages (Fill, 1999, p. 13).

## **2.4.2. Variables of Word-of Mouth-Communication**

Word of mouth communication consists of five dimensions: expertise, idea seeking, opinion leadership, perceived risk level and recommendation. These are explained below.

### **2.4.2.1. Expertise**

Expertise is gained through experience, training and knowledge. Knowledge and training about the product and experience as a customer are the components that create expertise (Wells & Prensky, 1996, p. 459).

When the relationship between the expertise of the person giving advice and WOMC effect was investigated, researchers detected a positive results (Kılıçer, 2006, p. 25). Bansal and Voyer (2000) also say in their research that if the level of perceived expertise of the source increases, consumers tend to initiate the communication process about the product or service themselves (Bansal & Voyer, 2000, p. 26).

### **2.4.2.2. Idea Seeking**

Idea seekers can be explained as individuals who seek information or comments about topics they are curious about, services to purchase or products that interest them.

Opinion seekers don't focus on a specific service or product group, but simply use WOMC to get information about the product or service they need (Feick & Price, 1987, p. 87).

### **2.4.2.3. Opinion Leadership**

Opinion leaders are people who are not afraid of risks, self-confident and active in social life (Odabaşı & Gülfidan, 2002, p. 280). At the same time, people who have knowledge and interest about services or product groups are called opinion leaders. Therefore, identifying opinion leaders for marketing strategies is of great importance for

companies (Stern & Stephen, 1988, p. 48). Opinion leaders are knowledgeable and experienced about a particular service or product. They have more knowledge than others because they have more expertise (Goldsmith & Flynn, 1999, p. 52). Opinion leaders can be anyone in the person's close circle such as friends or relatives. On the other hand, they can be also professionals such as doctors, pharmacists, dentists, or lawyers who advise their clients or patients. In addition, film or restaurant critics and writers in consumer publications are also opinion leaders (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2004, s. 393).

#### **2.4.2.4. *Perceived Risk***

Professionals using social sciences for explaining human behavior work carefully about consumer behavior. The concept of perceived risk also has wide effects on consumers' purchasing decisions. Consumers hesitate about whether the product or service they buy fits with them and represents their energies. In addition, they are afraid of making the people around them especially their family members disappointed. Therefore, consumers tend to evaluate all risks in detail (Kaplan, 2009, pp. 66-67). The perceived risk can be interpreted as the objective expectation of losing. The greater the certainty about losing, the greater the perceived risk. It has been observed that as the level of risk perceived by consumers increases, they give more importance to the advice from their relatives.

If the perceived risk level of a consumer is high, they compare the product or service alternatives or they tend to seek advice from other people during the purchasing phase (Laroche et al., 2010, pp. 197-210).

The usefulness of information provided through WOMC is indisputable especially in reducing uncertainty and risk situations. In this case, it positively affects the risk level of WOMC (Arndt, 1967, p. 26).

#### **2.4.2.5. *Advice (Recommendation)***

Recommendation is when a person conveys his or her positive or negative opinions about a product or service to others (Bahar, 2015, p. 69).

If there is a strong commitment between the source and the consumer, the information and advice consumers receive during decision-making appears to be more effective (Bansal & Voyer, 2000, p. 170).

### **2.4.3. The Concept of Word-of-Mouth Marketing**

The concept of WOMM has become popular in world marketing strategies in a very short time and it has a concept feature that people and organizations in the marketing sector focus more and more every day.

There are many definitions of WOMM. WOMM is that customers influence each other about a product, service, or brand. Customers convey their experiences about products, services, or brands to other potential customers through communication. This communication is very valuable for customers and companies. It is important for customers in their decision-making processes and for companies in understanding which type of WOMM is more effective (İncirkuş, 2014, p. 1). According to another definition, WOMM refers to the informal sharing of experiences and information among consumers after purchasing a product or service. WOMM is an important marketing strategy offers more reliable information to the consumers (Chung & Darke, 2006, p. 269).

WOMM has a wide repercussion in our country has created minor translation confusion. These phases are “word of mouth”, “gossip marketing”, “whisper marketing” and “buzz marketing”. Transmitted messages carry many risks as WOM spreads like changing meaning or losing credibility. Therefore, “word of mouth marketing” is more often used (Bozkurt, 2013, p. 121).

WOMC forms the basis of WOMM concept. In other words, WOMC is the process of personal interaction between the sender and the receiver which can lead to the transfer of messages, the receiver’s behavior, or attitudes (Merton, 1968, p. 335). On the other hand, WOMM is the process of influencing consumer-to-consumer communication within the framework of professional marketing through conscious studies. That’s why companies should embark on a WOMM process where they provide some specific reasons to the consumers for keeping the conversation going about their brand, product, or service (İncirkuş, 2014, p. 4).

If we put WOMM into a concept, it is a talking process about a brand or product among the consumers and telling it to third parties. WOMM creates and provides reasons for customers some data to talk about the product or services everywhere (Yüksekbilgili, 2008).

Word of Mouth Marketing Association (WOMMA)'s definition of WOMC is "the process by which consumers provide information to other consumers.". Also, WOMM is defined as "providing people a reason to talk about products or services, facilitating the emergence of these conversations and designing a mutually beneficial, actively consumer-to-consumer and consumer-to-marketer communication process." (Uzunoğlu & Onat, 2009, p. 5).

The primary purpose of WOMM is to get people to talk to others about the product or service so that those products or services are more accessible (Alire, 2007, p. 545). In fact, the basis of the WOMM strategy is the element of trust. While the consumer has difficulty in choosing among many alternatives, it is very natural that the customer trusts recommendations of the people like friends, relatives, neighbor, co-workers, and associations in social environments. The other scientific fact is that if the WOMM strategy is applied effectively, satisfaction with the product or brand can be conveyed to very large audience in a short time and at a low cost. Since it is much cheaper and more effective than electronic communication, research on this subject is increasing day by day. WOMM one of the oldest marketing methods in the world has become a favorite marketing strategy of marketers (Yavuzylmaz, 2008, p. 78).

#### ***2.4.3.1. Characteristics of Word-of-Mouth Marketing***

Recently, WOMM has started to attract a lot of attention from practitioners. Many effective studies have been done on this and one of them argues that WOMM is one of the most effective marketing methods in the world. It is known that a consumer is already involved in the WOMC channel when this consumer is experienced about the product or services for the first time. Therefore, businesses should create messages that will affect consumers' purchasing decisions (Engel et al., 1969, pp. 15-19).

While WOMM is a type of practice that the professional marketing world has been familiar with for many years, it also emerges as the intersection point of various marketing communications. Because of this situation, it contains some uncertainties.

Another feature of WOMM is that it has positive and negative value for the brand (Romaniuk & Sharp , 2016, p. 159).

Bozkurt (2013) listed the distinctive WOMM features emerged from many definitions in the literature as follows:

- WOMM can contain conversations about the brand, product and service or company.
- Sharing ideas, thoughts or prejudices can be face-to-face, as well as in electronic environments such as mobile phones, chat rooms, e-mail, websites, send to friend links and social media applications.
- In addition to being spontaneous, it can also occur with the guidance of companies (p. 137).

#### ***2.4.3.2. The Importance of Word-of-Mouth Marketing***

WOMM is an honest exchange of ideas about a product or service between two or more consumers. This concept is the concept of marketing with the consumers, not marketing to consumer (Lin & Cheng-Hsi, 2006, p. 1210). WOMM is the type of marketing that has the most power to influence customer decisions among the marketing concepts. Companies develop broad sales methods, advertisements, and marketing strategies, but WOMM is in a more dominant position alongside all these efforts (Silverman , 2001, p. 23). This fast and inexpensive method is a unique opportunity for today's marketing industry. Because competition is increasing in marketing and also marketing and advertising budgets are growing in parallel (Lin & Cheng-Hsi, 2006, p. 1210).

Many marketers emphasize that WOMM develops uncontrollably outside of themselves. Based on this, they argue that advertisements and other marketing strategies may indirectly affect the purchasing decisions of potential customers although not directly (Silverman , 2001, p. 23). Kotler (2008) argued that advertisements and sellers can't be as effective as consumers' friends, relatives, old consumers, or independent expert on customers' purchasing decision (pp. 1-2). Godes and Mayzlin (2004) emphasized that WOMM has a more reliable effect than other communication sources. First of all, it is stated that WOMM has an important power in the stages of product adoption, selection and purchasing decision of the consumer (Godes & Mayzlin, 2004, pp. 545-560).

The fact that WOMM has such an important place as a marketing tool has drawn the attention of practitioners and academics. WOMC has reached strategic dimensions because it can be planned, measured, and implemented. Businesses try to get people to talk about their products or services and manage this process. This process is so important because of the digital age we live in. The use of existing channels on the internet for WOMM has further enhanced this marketing tool (Uzunoğlu & Onat, 2009, p. 5).

In service marketing academic studies, there is a pre-purchase trial constraint due to the service intangibility, so this makes WOMM important (İnan, 2012, pp. 191-192). WOMM is fast and the contained information has no limits. The resources can expand or collapse the information they have (Taşkın, 2011, p. 179). Companies consider their advertisements through WOMM more superior than regular advertising campaigns. In order to implement WOM advertising, companies try to find people who are talkative and curious, quick to adopt the product or service and have a wide environment. If these people adopt the companies' products or services, they will become free sellers (Kotler P. , 2008, p. 2).

According to Kılıçer (2006); the prominent reasons why WOMM is stronger than traditional communication types can be listed as follows:

- WOMM is strong, influential, and interesting in its market. Being impartial and independent also increases its reliability. A buyer of a product or service prefers to receive information from third parties rather than from a person who benefits from the business.
- Thanks to WOMM, customers can easily convey their experiences to others. Consumers want to minimize the risks associated with the product or service will be bought. WOMM is a very good strategy in this regard.
- WOMM is not affiliated with any person, institution, or organization. Because of this, WOMM is reliable.
- WOMM is consumer-oriented because, the consumer is a person will start the WOMC process.
- WOMM prevents consumers from wasting time.
- There is no cost in return for the information obtained through WOMM (p. 54).

### ***2.4.3.3. Electronic Word-of-Mouth Marketing***

The commercial activities have started to keep up with the social structure because, technology affects the culture. There has been an increase in marketing activities on the Internet and a new business function called marketing on the Internet has emerged (Kırçova, 2002, p. 31). The development of the Internet and its progress in related technologies for more than twenty years, some new research areas about the impact of internet marketing on the customers, businesses, brands, and markets are formed (Yadav & Pavlou, 2014, p. 4). In the late 1990s and early 2000s, with the spread of internet and online shopping worldwide, it took its place in the marketing literature as E-WOMM. E-WOMM is any positive or negative transmission about a product, service, or brand by potential, real or previous customers reaching a large number of people and institutions via the internet (Meltem & Aksoy, 2017, p. 81).

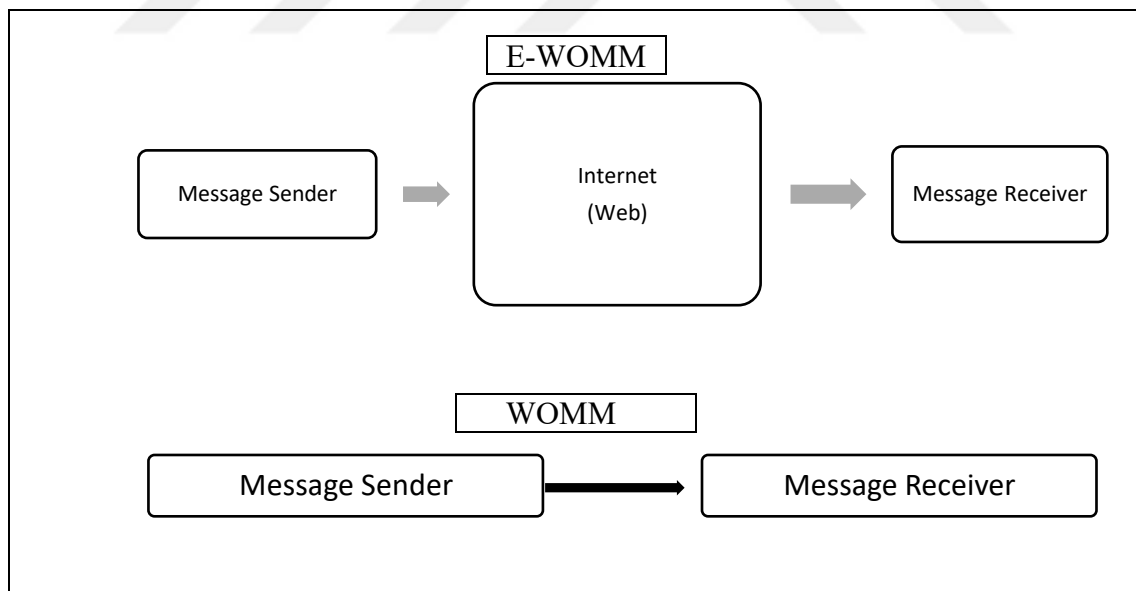
The impact of new technologies on consumers for E-WOMM is two-way. First of all, consumers can now reach more alternatives for their needs and obtain the information they want easily and quickly by using the internet. Today, consumers can access the information about simplest products and also the most complex ones they want from companies and other users. On the other hand, consumers can create their own social networks with people they don't know and share their thoughts on products and services through virtual communities formed on the internet. They convey their bad or good experiences, the defects in the products they purchased or their comments on the functions of the product to the other users or companies by writing their thoughts (Chrysanthos, 2003, pp. 1407-1424). Potential consumers visit the websites of the product or service they want to buy and read the comments of other customers who have experienced them, so that they have a broader knowledge of this product or service. The main issue for measuring the effectiveness of WOMM on the Internet is the direction of the messages. In other words, whether the messages are positive or negative will affect the purchasing decisions of potential customers. The power of E-WOM will increase if most of the messages are aligned (Doh & Hwang, 2009, p. 194). The information sharing has exceeded the country-wide and reached the international level where local consumers are located by increasing the usage of the internet and social networks in the internet environment. The variables of social media are more different from the traditional media always progress quickly and effectively (Sevinç S. , 2015, p. 23). When the internet was not dominant, consumers were sharing their

experiences about the product, service, brand, or company while they were chatting with their friends or families, so that WOMM was showing up. The rapid changes of technology and the increase of internet usage have directed consumers' chatting about brands and products to online environments (Özaslan & Uygur Meydan, 2014, pp. 71-72). E-WOMM is more effective than traditional WOMM with its speed, permanence, availability and most importantly measurability (Lee & Cheung, 2012, p. 218).

Although the message conveyed in WOMM and E-WOMM are consumers' evaluations of products or services, there are some differences between these two. It is explained in Figure 4 according to the components of the comparison. The most important difference in this comparison is that E-WOMM is realized with an internet-based tool and the receiver doesn't have direct feedback to the message sender in E-WOMM (Lopez & Sicilia, 2014, p. 30).

**Figure 1**

*The process of WOMM and E-WOMM*



In the past, the number of people could talk face to face was few, but nowadays WOMC is provided very easily because of the fast and cheap communication resources offered by the internet. People can easily reach unlimited people or information and share their experiences by the internet. E-WOMM is more effective than traditional WOMM

because of its speed, convenience, reaching multiple people and the absence of the face-to-face human pressure (Lee & Cheung, 2012, p. 225). With the internet and smart phones taking an important place in our lives, traditional WOMC has been replaced by E-WOMC. With the use of internet-based platforms, there is no need for a sincere relationship between message senders and receivers in E-WOMM as in traditional WOMM and also people can convey their thoughts to others who they don't know without revealing their identities (Özbük & Aksoy, 2017, p. 93). Consumers are more free and faster when sharing their experiences about goods or services on the internet. For this reason, information about their experiences is instantly available for other people (Gülmez, 2011, p. 31).

Schindler and Bickart (2005) state that there are ten sources of E-WOMM:

1. Posted reviews,
2. Mailboxes,
3. Discussion forums,
4. Electronic mailing lists,
5. Personal e-mail,
6. Chat rooms,
7. Instant messaging service,
8. Blogs,
9. Virtual Communities,
10. Newsgroups (p. 3).

#### **2.4.3.4. Viral Marketing**

One of the topics that has been emphasized lately is the concept of viral marketing (Argan & Argan, 2006). Viral marketing is a new form of marketing communication. This type of marketing usually starts with creating electronic content like a video or small website by the marketers. Viral marketing has been one of the most remarkable tools among the strategies that influencing and directing potential consumers who spend time on the internet. The purpose of viral marketing is to spread the messages about the product or service transferred from the consumer to consumer (Taşkın, 2011, p. 168).

Wilson (2018) mentioned about the principles of viral marketing in his work. When companies integrate these principles into their strategies, they will be able to implement the viral marketing strategies are necessary. These principles are,

- Distribution of the product or service,
- Providing the easiest way to send to other people,
- Easy to scale from small to large,
- Exploits common motivations and behaviors,
- Installation of existing communication networks,
- Takes advantage of other sources (Wilson, 2018).

Mark Zuckerberg was a college student founded Facebook was originally a social network designed only for Harvard students in 2004. This network became open to people outside the university later. Thus, viral marketing strategies had been successful (Bozkurt, 2013, p. 137). According to the results of much research conducted in 2021, Facebook was in 3rd place among the most visited sites and has reached 1.93 billion active members. Facebook is one of the social networks where the viral marketing is done actively (Ahlgren, 2022).

The importance of viral marketing is increasing day by day. Because the cost of promotional activities is quite high and the profitability of the business has difficulties to cover the marketing costs (Helm, 2010, p. 159). Businesses have the opportunity to deliver the message wanted to thousands or even millions of people in a short time under favor of viral marketing techniques (Gökmen, 2014, p. 82).

Viral messages have the opportunity to spread on various platforms on the internet. These are the websites, complaint sites, chat programs, news sites, music sharing sites, e-mail, blogs, and other social media tools. People use the internet regularly share and discuss the features of products or services with other users through the mentioned platforms (Cezair, 2018, pp. 66-67).

#### **2.4.3.5. Buzz Marketing**

Buzz marketing is sometimes confused with WOMM. WOMM aims to get a product or service to be spoken by the consumers, but buzz marketing makes consumers talk about a campaign or promotion by using a special channel (Taşkın, 2011, pp. 151-179). Buzz marketing is commonly referred as the gossip or rumor marketing. People try a brand's product or service in buzz marketing tend to convey their experiences to people around them in daily life (Kirby, 2005, p. 85). According to another definition, buzz marketing is a sophisticated communication process involving the transmission of information about the

product, brand, or service in the market to target audiences through daily communication via the senders. It is a form of WOMM that relies on spreading rumors about a brand or service in the process of communication between consumers whether online or offline (Ahuja et al., 2007, p. 151). Buzz marketing is an attempt to encourage consumers to engage in conversations, discussions or gossip about the product or service through various activities. (Rosenbloom, 2000, pp. 1083-1103). For example, a beverage brand might prepare a sensational event and create an atmosphere of enthusiasm for customer. So, the consumers can promote the brand and circulate the information about the product (Kıygı Çallı, 2017, p. 55). Rumor is a mass event that affects the attitudes and behaviors of the society. It is not based on official words and refers to messages circulate through informal communication channels. Rumors are information attract people's attention based on a possible belief, not the reliable information. The main feature of the rumor is the suspicion of its authenticity (Solmaz, 2004, p. 120).

The difference of the buzz marketing strategy from the other marketing methods is to differentiate the method of directing the product or service from the marketers to the consumer and to enable the consumer to watch the other consumers in the promotion techniques. Because of the consumer expectations' level is very high in advertisements related to the product or service, consumer can be disappointed. Therefore, most of the advertisements are ignored by the consumers. Family members, close friends, friend's approaches, thoughts and ideas about a product, service or brand are more effective. Consumers act in a group of logic with these people. The rumor spreads based on the common points of the individuals in these groups and is kept between them. People talk about this information and pass it to each other. In this way, buzz marketing has had an important place in marketing strategies.

The factor affecting the buzz marketing can listed as follows:

- Desire to being social.
- Individual
- Cluster
- Mass
- Common center
- Network

- Connection and
- Dissemination from straight points and centers (Carl, 2006, pp. 610-621).

Buzz marketing is an important element that will accelerate the sales of businesses in cases where the advertising costs are high. There are almost no expenses involved in this type of marketing strategy. This process often begins and continues with people acting like a natural brand advocate. Discussions are made, thoughts are transferred, opinions are presented, conflicts and conditions are evaluated. Therefore, its success is matched with naturality (Erturan, 2021).

The target audience of buzz marketing are mostly opinion leaders on social media networks. If the opinion leaders reach positive results about the brand, service or product offered, the rumors spreads to the consumers very quickly. The most significant characteristic of buzz marketing is its reliability. This marketing method is generally considered appropriate for new products or services. Therefore, this marketing method is very effective in products that are perceived as exciting and innovative (Kıyıcı Çallı, 2017, p. 194).

#### **2.4.3.6. *Stealth (Covert) Marketing***

Stealth marketing is a strategy that stands as an alternative solution to companies in the current period. This strategy consists of applications where the marketing communication does not look like marketing and the commercial source or message can be masked individually or both (Petty & Andrews, 2008, p. 7). Today's most well-known manufacturers are now buying and branding products instead of producing and advertising them, and so they are looking for new creative ways to build and strengthen their brand image. Thus, we can see these brands on television, billboards, newspapers, internet videos, behind bus and plane tickets, on buildings and buses, in movies and TV series, in cultural and social activities, in short, in many ways (Okay H. , 2016).

Covert marketing strategy has been defined in different ways by many researchers. In the essence of all definitions, it is mentioned that the company and the message are covered separately or both during the communication with the consumer and the message is delivered to the receiver. Thus, the receiver is prevented from avoiding the message. The fact that individuals have a relationship with the brand work on behalf of the brand and spread the WOMM message is called stealth marketing. It is sometimes criticized from an

ethical point of view. In this marketing approach, those who seem to be volunteers actually work with the brand, so the consumer's trust in the brand decreases (Kaya, 2015, p. 329). Unethical clandestine activities, especially targeting children and families from low-income groups, may cause consumers to encounter difficult situations (Okay H. , 2016). Nowadays, many online shopping sites such as Trendyol, hepsiburada.com and etc. are using some hashtags for collaborations with influencers because of ethical rules, so using the stealth marketing strategy is getting harder for brands day by day.

## **2.5. Consumer Buying Behavior and Decision Process**

Consumer behavior is a process by which individuals make a decision about when, how, where and from whom to purchase a product or service (Fan & Zeng, 2011, p. 26). All of the attitudes, intentions, decisions, and preferences that consumers display when purchasing a product or service in the market constitute consumer purchasing behavior (Sağlık Özçam, 2021, pp. 77-81). Technological, social, political, and economic relation developments forces people to make more careful decisions about consumption needs, health, education and etc. (Crozier & Ranyard, 1997, p. 5). People can be affected by many factors throughout their lives. These factors may be internal factors, and sometimes it may be external factors coming from the environment. Many effects occur during the purchasing process depending on these factors. Taking these effects into consideration, manufacturers determine the process until the product reaches the consumer (Çağlar & Kılıç, 2005, p. 150).

The Black Box Model is an important model to explain how the consumers are affected by environmental factors and how they react (Sağlık Özçam, 2021, p. 79). Consumer behavior studies examine how the individuals or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to meet their needs (Solomon M. R., 1996, pp. 229-230).

In the consumer's black box, the consumer's characteristics and decision-making process are examined. Consumer purchasing attitudes and preferences vary depending on the decision to be made in this black box. Consumer purchasing behavior is affected by characteristic features of the consumer like cultural, personal, social, and psychological factors (Lewin, 1943, p. 292).

In the consumer's black box, there is a path to decision process of consumers:

- Consumer realizes the consumer's needs.
- Consumer collects information.
- Consumer evaluates the alternatives obtained as a result of the research.
- Consumer purchases the product/service.
- Consumer's post-purchase behavior (Lewin, 1943, p. 310).

The traditional purchasing decision process has stages that are affected by internal and external factors. According to Khan's (2006) research, consumer purchasing behavior consists of five stages. Consumers go through these stages one by one, in special cases, by going through one or two stages together or by skipping all stages before purchasing the product or service. Recognizing a problem or desire is the first step in the consumer decision-making process. Consumers begin their search for information to solve this problem in the second stage. They evaluate the options and alternatives obtained from the information search in the third phase (p. 180). Consumers can be influenced, motivated, and encouraged by their environment or relatives during the purchasing decision process. These environments may include personal motives, social status, culture, family, friends, and other elements (Armstrong & Wright, 2008, pp. 120-135). After evaluating the alternatives, they decide to purchase the product. If the purchased product satisfies the consumers and meet their expectations, the consumers recommend the product to others or purchases it again in the future. Otherwise, they can react such as not buying or not recommend to others (Khan, 2006, p. 180). As it seen that consumer buying behavior may cause negative or positive WOMM.

The decision-making process generally puts people in psychological stress. This process is not only a technical issue but also costly. Therefore, it is the consumer's priority to achieve the goals as soon as possible and with the least effort. Consumers are involved in the decision-making process through two types of communication. These forms of communication are marketing communication and WOMC. Marketing communications refers to the flow of information about goods or services from businesses to customers. Oral WOMC is communication that occurs in the form of mutual exchange of information between people. WOMC can occur consciously or unconsciously (Kılıçer, 2006, p. 12).

Consumers who enjoy the pleasure of feeling like an expert by giving advice to others, they are very willing to talk about themselves, their family and their environment at any possible time, place, and situation (Keskin & Çepni, 2012, p. 100).

Customers generally use WOMM to support the purchasing behavior or provide pre-purchase information. For this reason, the source and message in the WOMM process must be reliable. Especially if the source is someone they know and whose words are trusted, it increases the impact of message power (Tolon & Çaylak, 2013, p. 30).

Consumers rely more on the information they obtain through WOMM when making decisions. Because the information source whose knowledge and experience are used doesn't have any commercial gain from this. In addition, consumers try to minimize the risk by taking advice from experts or the people around them when making a purchasing decision about a product or service they haven't used before and have no knowledge about. Customer satisfaction is very important in experiences in the service sector because services aren't tangible structures like products. If the customer is satisfied about the experiences of service, it creates a free WOMM, so the service businesses constitute the brand loyalty of their existing customers while also gaining new customers.

## **2.6. Definition, Purposes and Selection of Pre-School Education Institution**

In this section, brief information is given on the subjects such as the definition, purposes of pre-school education institutions and the role of parents in choosing these institutions.

The definition of pre-school education widely used in our country to express the education that can be given to 36-72 months old children before the compulsory education has been made by many experts (Bal, 2019, pp. 9-15). Pre-school education is defined as a level of education aims to raise children who are curious, inquisitive, and willing to learn (Genç & Senemoğlu, 2001, p. 1). In addition to this, pre-school education is a level of education that also aims to raise cultured individuals who are aware of their talents, have a developed power of expression, have managed to respect the rights of different people (Kandır, 2001). When these definitions of pre-school education are examined; supporting the development of the child, preparing the child for the next level of education, providing

social skills to the child and ensuring equality of opportunity among children are the subjects that are emphasized (Bal, 2019, p. 15).

The purposes of pre-school education of children in a period of 0 and 72 months old:

- Directing all the development of children in accordance with the society.
- Enabling the development of children's ability and creativity by increasing their perception power.
- Helping the children to express themselves (Sevinç, 2005, pp. 25-30).

In addition, there is an increase in the perception, ability and expression power of children who receive pre-school education first. For this reason, pre-school education is given special attention all over the world (Akgül , 2004, pp. 58-61).

The general purpose of pre-school education is to prepare the child for primary school by supporting their developmental areas. While the families can provide education to their children at a certain level, these institutions help the child discover new things by revealing their talents and developing their creativity. Therefore, families attach importance to pre-school education and are careful when choosing an institution (Başal, 2005, pp. 27-35).

## **2.7. About Pre-School Education Sector Purchasing Process According to Word-of-Mouth Communication**

Pre-school education services also have some unique aspects like many other services. Although the primary consumer of this service seems to be children, “the decision maker” of the educational institution is the parent of the children. These decision makers are mostly parents, but they can sometimes be a relative or close family friends who supports the family financially and morally. Decision makers are also the common consumer of this service. To explain; many people who affect the purchasing decision of some services do not participate the consumption process, but families or decision makers are heavily involved in service consumption in the selection of pre-school education institutions. The decision makers are more affected by the results of their choices than the children because the evaluation of issues such as service content, quality and satisfaction belong to them (Polat & Çelmeli, 2015, pp. 145-148). One of the most important duties of the families is

choosing a qualified pre-school education institution for their children. Families' knowledge about pre-school education and the people they take advice from affect the choice of pre-school education institution and their expectations from it (Koç, 1996, p. 12). In a study on "preference factors" on parents who choose pre-school education institutions, it has been determined that there are significant differences in school preferences of consumers according to school, education, personal and family factors (Açıklın, 1989, pp. 85-91).

Another dimension of the issue is the gap in the Turkish literature about which factors consumers consider when choosing pre-school education institutions. In the marketing literature, there have been many studies about the consumer's purchasing process of many products such as; FMCG, mobile phone, textile and etc., but there is not enough research from a marketing point of view regarding pre-school education institution preferences (Polat & Kültür, 2007, pp. 109-126). Studies conducted to determine the factors affecting the choice of pre-school education institution have mostly been in the field of "educational discipline". Studies directly on the subject are limited. In a study conducted on parents who have made or will make the decision of a pre-school education institution in order to determine the factors affecting the choice of institution, it was observed that they took advice and directed their choices accordingly at a high rate (Koç, 1996, p. 12). It is understood that not only the factors related to the school itself, but also the individuals within and outside the family are more effective in choosing the institution. As with many other commercial products, peer-friend advice is more significant in the choice of educational services, on the other hand, it has been seen that the advertising and promotion activities of the institutions are not enough to affect consumers. When we consider the consumer decision process; we mentioned the importance of the consumer's black box in the previous section. In the consumer's black box view, consumers often use WOMM in the steps of gathering information and evaluating alternatives after they aware of the need.

At these stages, consumers use different sources to collect information. They can benefit from:

- Commercial resources like advertisements made by manufacturers or sellers, marketing experts, sales representatives.
- Personal resources like co-workers, mother, father, sibling, friends and their environment.

- Social media and internet like online platforms, sites, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs and etc.)
- Personal experiences (Moqadamsalımı, 2019, pp. 42-50).

In addition; even in the studies on the factors affecting the school preferences of the parents and the advertising strategies of private schools, it was determined that the most frequently used information source by the parents was their environment, the families of other students studying at the school and the staff working in the institution. Therefore, it is seen that the educational understanding of the school and references are more effective in the school preference of the parents (Tokuç, 2007, pp. 56-58).

As a result of this research's literature review, it has been seen that WOMM differs according to each product or service type. In addition to this situation, WOMM differentiates the role in purchasing decisions depending on a number of variables. It will be very useful to understand the importance of this concept, especially in terms of the marketing strategies that service companies will develop.

Nowadays, companies design and manufacture products using the latest technologies to gain more sales share, but this method no longer affects the customers' product purchase and decision-making process.

Today, most of the purchases made by consumers aren't affected by corporate marketing but are affected by other sources that are not affiliated with the corporate. According to several studies, traditional marketing often only creates interest on consumers but has little impact on their final decisions. Nowadays, consumers only obtain some information from advertisements, and they shape their purchasing decisions not with this information but with the recommendations of close friends.

In many studies in the literature, WOMM has been handled with different aspects, and research has been carried out about the effect of WOMM generally on health services and technology products. As we can see that the pre-school education sector is not common in the literature. There aren't much literature records about the WOMM variables affect consumer purchasing behavior such as expertise, idea seeking, opinion leadership, perceived risk and advice which are important in determining the role of WOMM according to the socio-demographic characteristics in the pre-school education sector. In order to overcome

this deficiency, it is important to examine WOMM from different perspectives. In this research, it is expected to contribute to the literature with examining the role of WOMM in the purchasing decision of pre-school education institutions (Karaca, 2010, p. 57)

Utilitarian consumption is the approach in which the consumer evaluates the concept of cost-benefit, functionally and objectively, during the purchasing behavior. There is no pleasure during this consumption but rational elements such as performance and durability offered by the product or service to the consumer come to the fore (Sağlık Özçam, 2021, p. 81). Pre-school education institution service purchasing process falls into the **utilitarian consumption section** among purchasing behavior types. Therefore, while the participants were examined according to some demographic characteristics; the concepts of expertise, perceived risk, idea seeking, opinion leadership and recommendation which are the components of WOMM were used. It has been seen that it is important to find answers to the research questions and it is aimed to contribute to the literature.

### **3.CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH**

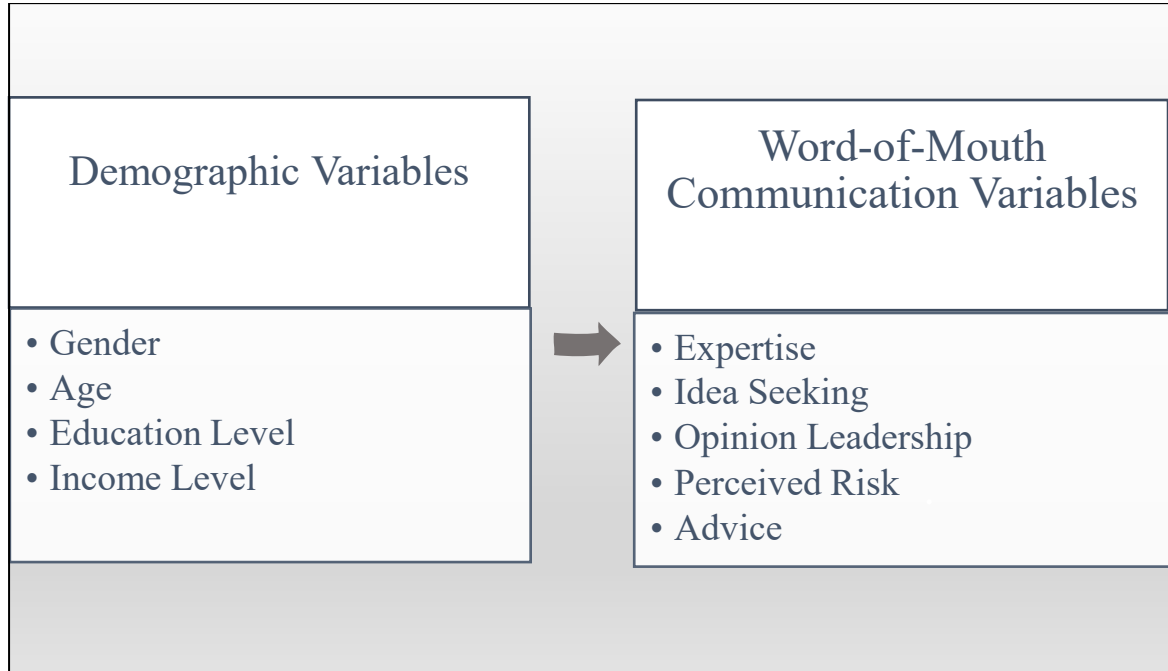
The research model in Figure 5 was created to find the factors affected by the demographics that determine WOMM in the selection of a pre-school education institution. Research hypotheses were developed focusing on the model shown below at the section 3.2.

#### **3.1. Research Model**

This study was conducted by the nature of quantitative research methods. In terms of WOMC variables (advice, expertise, opinion leadership, idea seeking, perceived risk) on the choice of pre-school education institution was examined and demographic characteristics of the survey participants. In the first part of the model, socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, age, educational status and income level were considered.

In the second part, within the scope of WOMC variables; people's opinions were examined according to the expertise, seeking advice, opinion leadership, perceived risk, and advice while they are taking some advice during the purchase decision of pre-school education institution service.

Based on these, the research model was created as in Figure 5:

**Figure 5***Research Model*

### 3.2. Hypothesis of the Research

According to the theoretical framework section and research model of this study, these hypotheses are formulated and tested.

**H1: The opinions of the participants in the research differ according to the gender.**

H1a: The opinions of the participants about the expertise differ according to the gender.

H1b: The opinions of the participants about the idea seeking differ according to the gender.

H1c: The opinions of the participants about opinion leadership differ according to the gender.

H1d: The opinions of the participants about the perceived risk differ according to the gender.

H1e: The opinions of the participants about the advice (recommendation) differ according to the gender.

**H2: The opinions of the participants in the research differ according to the age.**

H2a: The opinions of the participants about the expertise differ according to the age.

H2b: The opinions of the participants about the idea seeking differ according to the age.

H2c: The opinions of the participants about opinion leadership differ according to the age.

H2d: The opinions of the participants about the perceived risk differ according to the age.

H2e: The opinions of the participants about the advice (recommendation) differ according to the age.

**H3: The opinions of the participants in the research differ according to the education level.**

H3a: The opinions of the participants about the expertise differ according to the education level.

H3b: The opinions of the participants about the idea seeking differ according to the education level.

H3c: The opinions of the participants about opinion leadership differ according to the education level.

H3d: The opinions of the participants about the perceived risk differ according to the education level.

H3e: The opinions of the participants about the advice (recommendation) differ according to the education level.

**H4: The opinions of the participants in the research differ according to their income level.**

H4a: The opinions of the participants about the expertise differ according to their income level.

H4b: The opinions of the participants about the idea seeking differ according to their income level.

H4c: The opinions of the participants about opinion leadership differ according to their income level.

H4d: The opinions of the participants about the perceived risk differ according to their income level.

H4e: The opinions of the participants about the advice (recommendation) differ according to their income level.



## 4. METHODOLOGY

In this part of the study, we can see the subject, research model, survey design, hypotheses, the universe and sampling technique of the research, data collection details and some statistical analysis.

According to these data analysis, the findings can be explained at the last section of the research.

### 4.1. Sample Selection and Measurement Instruments

#### 4.1.1. Sample and Data Collection

This study focuses on the pre-school education institution sector, was conducted among the people who have made or will make decision about pre-school education institution of children. Decision makers of pre-school education service can be the families of the child, but also family elders or relatives who provide financial support in this decision. The age scale has been determined accordingly.

Sample data for this study were obtained from people living in Trakya.

Sampling method of this research is “snowball sampling”. It is a non-probability sampling method. In non-probability sampling methods, the units in the universe aren’t given an equal chance of being selected for sampling, considering the difference between the units in the universe. The researcher’s wishes and subjective value judgments are effective in determining the sample to be selected (Ural & Kılıç, 2021, p. 43).

In the snowball sampling method, the first person within the research universe that the researcher can reach are determined. In the light of the data obtained from this person, the next people are contacted and a sample that is thought to represent the universe is created. Thus, the aim is to increase the sample size, which initially consists of a single person, like a snowball (Ural & Kılıç, 2021, p. 46)

A total of 281 samples were collected, and it is anticipated that all of the data have chosen or will choose a pre-school education institution for at least 1 child. It was noticed

that 56 of them were filled incorrectly or randomly while transferring the data to the statistical computer program. 225 of these 281 collected surveys could be analyzed in a proper way. All the data were collected via online survey because of the pandemic situations. The online survey was created via "SurveyMonkey" and its link was forwarded to the participants. The survey has been stayed open from August 2021 to March 2022.

Research findings were analyzed via the statistical package program SPSS for this study's quantitative part.

#### **4.1.2. Survey Design**

In the research, a questionnaire used in another thesis was used for data collection. The reliability analyzes of the questionnaire were made by the other thesis's owner and the questionnaire was applied in this study with the permission for using it.

The used survey is for people who have or will make a decision about the pre-school education institution. A 5-point Likert scale was used in this study.

There are 50 survey questions in total, including demographic characteristics.

The survey was conducted online with "SurveyMonkey" because of the pandemic period. The number of children were asked to the respondents who undertake the choice of pre-school education institution in order to determine the right audience. The survey of the participants who answered "0" was terminated.

Apart from demographic features, it consists of 6 sections, including 45 questions.

#### **4.1.3. Scales**

In the first part of the questionnaire is about the behavior of giving and receiving advice; Podoshen's (Podoshen, 2008, p. 222) research was used in the scale on advice-taking habits, and Feick and Price's (Feick & Price, 1987, pp. 83-97) research was used in the scale on advice-giving habits. First part of this research wasn't used in the hypothesis, it is just for understanding the WOMC habits of the participants.

The statements of variables in Part 2 have been prepared with assistance from the following sources:

- **Expertise**-related statements were prepared from the psychometric properties section of the scale in the study of (Bansal & Voyer, 2000, p. 170).
- **Idea-seeking** related statements were created with the help of the studies of (Goldsmith & Flynn, 1999, pp. 41-52) and (Podoshen, 2008, pp. 211-222) studies. Idea seeking questions are asked for measuring the reliability to the person who got advice from.
- While creating the expressions in the **Opinion Leadership** section, the "Intellectual Leadership Scale" section of (Feick & Price, 1987, pp. 83-97) was used.
- While preparing the statements in the **Perceived Risk** section, the statements from the work of (Jacoby, 1974, s. 287-291) and (Bansal & Voyer, 2000, p. 170) were used.
- The work of (O'Cass & Grace, 2004, pp. 450-461) was used while creating the statements in the **advice (WOM)** section.

**Figure 6**

*Survey question numbers of the research*

|            |                    | DEMOGRAPHICS | (Gender, Age, Education Level, Income)                                          |
|------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|            |                    | PART 1       | Taking and Giving Advice Behaviors of the Participants (Question 6,7,8,9,10,11) |
| Dimensions | Expertise          | PART 2       | Expertise (Phrase 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11)                            |
|            | Idea Seeking       |              | Active Search for Ideas (Phrase 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19)                 |
|            | Opinion Leadership |              | Opinion Leadership (Phrase 20, 21, 22, 23, 24)                                  |
|            | Perceived Risk     |              | Perceived Risk Factor (Phrase 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32)                   |
|            | Advice             |              | Advice (WOMM) Effect (Phrase 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39)                        |
|            |                    |              |                                                                                 |

**Table 3***Word-of-Mouth communication variables' phrases*

| <b>DIMENSIONS</b> | <b>DIMENSION PHRASES</b>                                                                                         | <b>SOURCE</b>       |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>EXPERTISE</b>  | 1. I have complete confidence the person I refer to.                                                             | (Bansal&Voyer,2000) |
|                   | 2. The person I take advice from supports my views.                                                              |                     |
|                   | 3. I get help in daily life from the person I get advice from.                                                   |                     |
|                   | 4. The person I took advice from was well-informed about pre-school education institutions, services, and staff. |                     |
|                   | 5. The person I took advice from was sufficient to provide information about the pre-school education service.   |                     |
|                   | 6. The person I took advice from was an expert on pre-school education service.                                  |                     |
|                   | 7. The person I took advice from was educated about pre-school education service.                                |                     |
|                   | 8. The person I took advice was experienced in pre-school education service.                                     |                     |
|                   | 9. I had sufficient information about pre-school education institutions, services, and employees.                |                     |
|                   | 10. I was experienced about pre-school education institutions, services, and employees.                          |                     |
|                   | 11. I was an expert on pre-school education institutions, services, and employees.                               |                     |

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                     |                                              |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <b>IDEA<br/>SEEKING</b> | 12. When purchasing pre-school education services, I ask for other people's opinions.                                                                               | (Flynn&Goldsmith,<br>1996;<br>Podoshen,2008) |
|                         | 13. I don't need to talk to other people before I buy pre-school education services.                                                                                |                                              |
|                         | 14. Other people can influence my choice of pre-school institutions.                                                                                                |                                              |
|                         | 15. If I have little experience about the pre-school service, I usually ask my family, friends, and neighbors for their opinions on this service.                   |                                              |
|                         | 16. I rarely ask other people which pre-school service to purchase.                                                                                                 |                                              |
|                         | 17. When it comes to pre-school education services, I rely on the information from my family, friends, and neighbors rather than media sources (radio, Tv and etc.) |                                              |
|                         | 18. When I know what other people think about the pre-school education service, I feel more secure in purchasing this service.                                      |                                              |
|                         | 19. Other people's opinions aren't important while choosing a pre-school education institution.                                                                     |                                              |

|                               |                                                                                            |                            |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>OPINION<br/>LEADERSHIP</b> | 20. I enjoy telling my friends about new pre-school institutions and services they offer.  | (Lindan&<br>Lawrence,1987) |
|                               | 21. I enjoy helping people by providing information about various pre-school institutions. |                            |
|                               | 22. People consult me about pre-school institutions, services, and staff.                  |                            |

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |               |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
|                       | 23. When people ask me where the best pre-school education service is located, I can say where this institution is.                                                                               |               |
|                       | 24. My friends see me as a good source of information when it comes to new preschool institutions or the services they provide.                                                                   |               |
| <b>PERCEIVED RISK</b> | 25. Purchasing pre-school education services from an institution that I don't know about may result in financial losses.                                                                          | (Jacoby,1974) |
|                       | 26. I am worried that the pre-school education service that I will buy from an institution that I don't know about cannot provide the education that my child needs like educational performance. |               |
|                       | 27. I am worried that the pre-school education institution that I have no idea about may harm my child physically like behaviors of the employees and etc.                                        |               |
|                       | 28. I am worried that the pre-school education service, which I do not know about, will reduce my physical energy like difficult access to the institution and etc.                               |               |
|                       | 29. I am concerned that my purchase of pre-school education services which I have no knowledge, may harm myself mentally.                                                                         |               |
|                       | 30. I am concerned that my choice of pre-school education service will negatively affect the opinions of the social groups I am in.                                                               |               |

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                     |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
|               | <p>31. I am concerned about losing time in my pre-school education service selection process.</p> <p>32. Not having enough information about the choice of pre-school education institution can be risky for me (it makes me feel uncomfortable).</p> |                     |
| <b>ADVICE</b> | 33. Recommendations about pre-school education service affect me about my purchasing of pre-school education service.                                                                                                                                 | (O'cass&Grace,2004) |
|               | 34. Recommendations about the pre-school institution were influential in my decision on the pre-school service features I was looking for.                                                                                                            |                     |
|               | 35. Word of mouth communication (advice) significantly influences my views on pre-school education service.                                                                                                                                           |                     |
|               | 36. Word of mouth communication (advice) reveals the things I didn't know about pre-school education service.                                                                                                                                         |                     |
|               | 37. Word of mouth communication (advice) gives me different ideas about pre-school education service.                                                                                                                                                 |                     |
|               | 38. Word of mouth communication (advice) helps me to form a clear idea about pre-school education service.                                                                                                                                            |                     |
|               | 39. Word of mouth communication (advice) helps me to make a healthy assessment about preschool education service.                                                                                                                                     |                     |

## 5. RESULTS

### 5.1. Data Analysis

The data obtained by the sampling method were analyzed using the SPSS program. In this section, based on the concepts in the literature, the information obtained as a result of the survey is analyzed and interpreted. Frequency analysis was applied to the socio-demographic data obtained from the research results and other chapters also.

**Table 4**

*Test of normality of the research*

|                      | Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup> |     |      | Shapiro-Wilk |     |      |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|-----|------|--------------|-----|------|
|                      | Statistic                       | Df. | Sig. | Statistic    | Df. | Sig. |
| (Number of children) | ,395                            | 225 | ,000 | ,488         | 225 | ,000 |
| Gender               | ,530                            | 225 | ,000 | ,346         | 225 | ,000 |
| Age                  | ,350                            | 225 | ,000 | ,774         | 225 | ,000 |
| Education level      | ,454                            | 225 | ,000 | ,505         | 225 | ,000 |
| Income level         | ,255                            | 225 | ,000 | ,852         | 225 | ,000 |

If the group size is greater than 50, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test should be used to determine whether it is suitable for normal distribution (Yerlikaya & Güneş, 2016, pp. 68-76).

Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied to understand whether the data obtained from the scale showed normal distribution. The results of this test are given in the table. According to the table, the data distribution is not normal. Because sig. value is less than 0,50.

### 5.2. Frequency Analysis of the Research

Frequency distributions created using the SPSS program were tabulated and arranged.

Firstly, frequency analysis of the gender, age groups, education and income which are accepted as demographic criteria were made, then Part 1 has been made.

**Table 5**

*Distribution of the participants according to the number of children*

|              | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Valid Percent</b> | <b>Cumulative Percent</b> |
|--------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1            | 162              | 72,0           | 72,0                 | 72,0                      |
| 2            | 48               | 21,3           | 21,3                 | 93,3                      |
| 3            | 9                | 4,0            | 4,0                  | 97,3                      |
| 4            | 2                | ,9             | ,9                   | 98,2                      |
| 6            | 1                | ,4             | ,4                   | 98,7                      |
| 7            | 3                | 1,3            | 1,3                  | 100,0                     |
| <b>Total</b> | 225              | 100,0          | 100,0                |                           |

Table 5 shows the number of children of the people participating in the survey. These are the valid percentages of the participants who will play or have played a role about the selection of the pre-school education institution:

- ▽ 72% of the participants for 1 child,
- ▽ 21.3% of them for 2 children,
- ▽ 4% of them for 3 children,
- ▽ 1.3% of them for 7 children,
- ▽ 0.9% of them for 4 children,
- ▽ 0.6% of them for 6 children.

Most of the participants has decided or is in a position to decide on the selection of a pre-school education institution for one child.

**Table 6**

*Distribution of the participants according to the gender*

|              | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Valid Percent</b> | <b>Cumulative Percent %</b> |
|--------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Male         | 23               | 10,2           | 10,2                 | 10,2                        |
| Female       | 202              | 89,8           | 89,8                 | 100,0                       |
| <b>Total</b> | 225              | 100,0          | 100,0                |                             |

Table 6 shows the gender of the people participating in the survey. 10,2% participants are male and 89,8% of them are female. We can say that the female part of the population of the research are the decision makers for choosing the pre-school education institution.

**Table 7**

*Distribution of the participants according to the age*

|              | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Valid Percent</b> | <b>Cumulative Percent%</b> |
|--------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 20-30        | 40               | 17,8           | 17,8                 | 17,8                       |
| 31-40        | 145              | 64,4           | 64,4                 | 82,2                       |
| 41-50        | 29               | 12,9           | 12,9                 | 95,1                       |
| 51 and over  | 11               | 4,9            | 4,9                  | 100,0                      |
| <b>Total</b> | 225              | 100,0          | 100,0                |                            |

Table 7 shows the age of the people participating in the survey. The numbers show that 17,8 percentage of the participants at age between 20 and 30, 64,4 percentage of people are at age between 31 and 40, 12,9 percentage of people are at age between 41 and 50. The age between 51 and over is at the minimum percentage with 7,9. We can say that the Y generation is the decision makers of the pre-school education institution choosing process.

**Table 8***Distribution of the participants according to education level*

|                    | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Valid Percent</b> | <b>Cumulative Percent%</b> |
|--------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Pre-high school    | 11               | 4,9            | 4,9                  | 4,9                        |
| High school        | 20               | 8,9            | 8,9                  | 13,8                       |
| Bachelor and above | 194              | 86,2           | 86,2                 | 100,0                      |
| <b>Total</b>       | 225              | 100,0          | 100,0                |                            |

As we can see from Table 8, 86,2% of the participants graduated from bachelor or above degrees, 8,9% of them graduated from high school and 4,9% of them graduated from pre-high school. The distribution results show that the majority of the participants graduated from bachelor and above degrees.

**Table 9***Distribution of the participants according to income level*

|                  | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Valid Percent</b> | <b>Cumulative Percent%</b> |
|------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 2500 and below   | 11               | 4,9            | 4,9                  | 4,9                        |
| 2.501-6.500      | 81               | 36,0           | 36,0                 | 40,9                       |
| 6.501-15.500     | 103              | 45,8           | 45,8                 | 86,7                       |
| 15.501 and above | 30               | 13,3           | 13,3                 | 100,0                      |
| <b>Total</b>     | 225              | 100,0          | 100,0                |                            |

Table 9 shows the distribution of respondents according to their income levels on a monthly basis. The 45,8% of participants have income between 6.501 TL and 15.500 TL, 36% of them have between 2.501 TL and 6.500 TL, 13,3% have 15.500 TL and above, 4,9% have

2.500 TL and below. It is seen that people in the income range of 6.501 TL-15.500 TL mostly participated in the survey.

**Table 10**

*Distribution of participants on whether they want to take advice before choosing a pre-school education institution*

|                                                                        | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent% |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|---------------------|
| I would definitely take advice.                                        | 114       | 50,7    | 50,7          | 50,7                |
| I take advice when need more information.                              | 24        | 10,7    | 10,7          | 61,3                |
| I get advice when I'm undecided.                                       | 13        | 5,8     | 5,8           | 67,1                |
| If it is an important educational service for my child, I take advice. | 73        | 32,4    | 32,4          | 99,6                |
| I do not take advice.                                                  | 1         | ,4      | ,4            | 100,0               |
| <b>Total</b>                                                           | 225       | 100,0   | 100,0         |                     |

As can be seen from the Table 10, 50.7% of the participants definitely get advice before purchasing a pre-school service. 32.4% of parents take advice if it is important educational service for their children.

After that, 10.7% of the participants want to get advice when they need more information about the institutions. 5.8% take advice when they are undecided among the available pre-school services.

The rate of those who don't want to get advice is seen as only 0.4%. Looking at these results, most of the participants tended to take advice.

**Table 11**

*Distribution of whether the participants were given advice before choosing the pre-school education institution*

|                              | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Valid<br/>Percent</b> | <b>Cumulative<br/>Percent%</b> |
|------------------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| No, they didn't give advice. | 23               | 10,2           | 10,2                     | 10,2                           |
| Yes, they gave advice.       | 191              | 84,9           | 84,9                     | 95,1                           |
| I can't remember.            | 11               | 4,9            | 4,9                      | 100,0                          |
| <b>Total</b>                 | 225              | 100,0          | 100,0                    |                                |

In Table 11, 84.9% of the survey participants stated that they were given advice when choosing an institution that provides pre-school education.

On the contrary, 10.2% of the total participants stated that they didn't get any advice. The rate of participants who couldn't remember whether they received advice or not is 4.9%.

**Table 12**

*Distribution of the resources that the participants get advice before choosing the pre-school education institution*

|                                | Frequency  | Cumulative Percent% |
|--------------------------------|------------|---------------------|
| Family and Relatives           | 55         | 24,4                |
| Internet                       | 94         | 41,8                |
| Pre-school education employees | 95         | 42,2                |
| Friends and Colleagues         | 151        | 67,1                |
| Neighbors                      | 24         | 10,7                |
| Influencers(celebrities)       | 7          | 3,1                 |
| Educators                      | 117        | 52                  |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>543</b> | <b>100,0</b>        |

When 225 participants were asked about the people whose advice they most benefited from, they gave the answer of “friends or colleagues”. Educators come second with 117 people with a rate of 52%. 42.2% of the participants find the advice of pre-school education institution employees effective. In addition, 94 people stated that the recommendations on the internet, and 55 people stated that the recommendations of their families and relatives were effective. 10.7% of the participants found the advice of their neighbors valid and only 3.1% found the recommendations of internet celebrities valid. Friends or colleagues who are seen as an effective source in the purchasing decision process for research participants.

**Table 13**

*Distribution of the participants' attitudes towards getting advice before choosing a pre-school education institution*

|                                 | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Valid Percent</b> | <b>Cumulative Percent%</b> |
|---------------------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Researcher                      | 134              | 59,6           | 59,6                 | 59,6                       |
| Conscious                       | 71               | 31,6           | 31,6                 | 91,1                       |
| Indecisive                      | 18               | 8,0            | 8,0                  | 99,1                       |
| Free-riders<br>(lazy to search) | 2                | ,9             | ,9                   | 100,0                      |
| <b>Total</b>                    | 225              | 100,0          | 100,0                |                            |

As can be seen on the Table 13, 59.6% of the participants consider themselves as a researcher when they receive advice while choosing pre-school education services. 31.6% of the participants think that they are conscious.

The number of people who think they are undecided is 18. Only 0.9% of the participants see themselves as a free-rider.

**Table 14**

*Distribution of participants' views on people giving advice to each other before choosing a pre-school education institution*

|                                                         | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Cumulative<br/>Percent%</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Willingness to help                                     | 115              | 51,1                           |
| Willingness to avoid risks                              | 132              | 58,7                           |
| Saving time that could be spent on preliminary research | 61               | 27,1                           |
| Sharing and guiding good/bad experiences                | 201              | 89,3                           |
| Social responsibility                                   | 27               | 12,0                           |
| <b>Total</b>                                            | <b>536</b>       | <b>100,0</b>                   |

On the Table 14, it is seen that 201 people think that good or bad experiences can be shared, and advice is given for guidance. 132 people think that the risks that may be encountered can be reduced through advice. 51.1% of the participants are willing to help when giving advice. 61 people think that the advice is necessary in order to minimize the time to be spent while doing the preliminary research. Only 12% consider giving advice as a social responsibility.

**Table 15**

*Distribution of whether the participants gave advice about any institution providing pre-school education*

|                          | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent% |
|--------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|---------------------|
| No, I did not advise.    | 34        | 15,1    | 15,1          | 15,1                |
| Yes, I have recommended. | 177       | 78,7    | 78,7          | 93,8                |
| I can't remember.        | 14        | 6,2     | 6,2           | 100,0               |
| <b>Total</b>             | 225       | 100,0   | 100,0         |                     |

When the 78.7% rate in the table is considered, it is seen that the majority tend to give advice. While 15.1% say that they don't give advice, 6.2% of the participants don't remember whether they give advice or not. Considering these rates, the behavior of people giving advice has a very high rate, and it is seen that people have a habit of giving advice by communicating by WOMC.

### **5.3. Validity and Reliability Analysis of the Variables**

Before testing the hypotheses, KMO and Barlett's Test of the variables that the expertise, the idea seeking, the opinion leadership, the perceived risk and the advice was checked because of determining the sampling's adequacy. With the survey questions, the sampling number must be proven to be adequate. In order to determine if the sampling is adequate or not, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was preferred (Kaiser, 1970, pp. 401-415). If the KMO value is above 0.60, sample is sufficient. If the KMO value is less than 0.60, the application of factor analysis is not recommended (Karaca, 2010, p. 62).

According to Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test, the results are between 0 and 1. Considering the KMO value in the study:

- 0.90 is "excellent",
- 0.80 is "good",

- 0.70 is “medium degree”,
- 0.60 is “weak” and
- 0.50 is a “bad” value.

Values below 0.50 are not acceptable (Yerlikaya & Güneş, 2016, p. 76).

**Table 16**

*KMO and Barlett's test of the expertise*

|                                                  |                    |         |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. |                    | ,783    |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity                    | Approx. Chi-Square | 910,453 |
|                                                  | df                 | 55      |
|                                                  | Sig.               | ,000    |

As we can see on the table that KMO value is 0,783. It means that the distribution of the sample is quite good. Also, we can say that the distribution is normal and there is a significant result because; significance value is less than 0.005 with 0,000.

**Table 17**

*KMO and Barlett's test of the idea seeking*

|                                                  |                    |         |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. |                    | ,852    |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity                    | Approx. Chi-Square | 451,795 |
|                                                  | df                 | 28      |
|                                                  | Sig.               | ,000    |

As we can see on the table that Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value is 0,852. It means that the distribution of the sample is nearly excellent. Significance value is less than 0.005 so the distribution is normal.

**Table 18***KMO and Barlett's test of the opinion leadership*

|                                                  |                    |         |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. |                    | ,745    |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity                    | Approx. Chi-Square | 451,662 |
|                                                  | df                 | 10      |
|                                                  | Sig.               | ,000    |

This variables' sig. value is also 0,000 so the distribution is normal. When we looked at the KMO value is 0,745 and it means that the sample distribution is between medium and good. So; the values are acceptable for the research.

**Table 19***KMO and Barlett's test of the perceived risk*

|                                                  |                    |         |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. |                    | ,782    |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity                    | Approx. Chi-Square | 508,231 |
|                                                  | df                 | 28      |
|                                                  | Sig.               | ,000    |

Here, the reliability value shows a normal distribution with a value of 0.000 as in other variables. that KMO value is 0,782 and means that the distribution of the sample is quite good.

**Table 20***KMO and Barlett's test of the advice*

|                                                  |                    |         |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. |                    | ,844    |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity                    | Approx. Chi-Square | 840,575 |
|                                                  | df                 | 21      |
|                                                  | Sig.               | ,000    |

The last variable is advice. Advice's KMO value is 0,844 and it means that the sample representation is nearly excellent. And the distribution is normal.

### 5.3.1. Factor analysis of variables according to the survey questions

Here is the table of survey questions' numbers related to the relevant factor.

**Table 21**

*Survey question numbers related to the factors*

| <b>Factors</b>         | <b>Number of Survey Questions</b> |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| The Expertise          | 1,2,3,4,5,6, 7,8,9,10,11          |
| The Idea Seeking       | 12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19           |
| The Opinion Leadership | 20,21,22,23,24                    |
| The Perceived Risk     | 25,26,27,28,29,30,31,32           |
| The Advice             | 33,34,35,36,37,38,39              |

**Table 22**

*Factor analysis of survey questions about the expertise*

| <b>Variable</b>      | <b>Survey Questions about the Expertise</b> | <b>Factor Loadings</b> | <b>Variance</b> | <b>Cronbach Alpha</b> |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| <b>The Expertise</b> | <b>1</b>                                    | ,652                   | %64,232         | ,817                  |
|                      | <b>2</b>                                    | ,672                   |                 |                       |
|                      | <b>3</b>                                    | ,618                   |                 |                       |
|                      | <b>4</b>                                    | ,640                   |                 |                       |
|                      | <b>5</b>                                    | ,708                   |                 |                       |
|                      | <b>6</b>                                    | ,728                   |                 |                       |
|                      | <b>7</b>                                    | ,685                   |                 |                       |
|                      | <b>8</b>                                    | ,666                   |                 |                       |
|                      | <b>9</b>                                    | ,502                   |                 |                       |
|                      | <b>10</b>                                   | ,669                   |                 |                       |
|                      | <b>11</b>                                   | ,691                   |                 |                       |

As we can see that, the questions were asked to measure the expertise's effect on WOMM are reliable because; Cronbach alpha is 0,817 and it is even more than acceptable value to use the questions.

**Table 23**

*Factor analysis of survey questions about the idea seeking*

| Variable            | Survey Questions about the Idea Seeking | Factor Loadings | Variance | Cronbach Alpha |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|----------|----------------|
| <b>Idea Seeking</b> | <b>12</b>                               | ,723            | %55,662  | ,652           |
|                     | <b>13</b>                               | ,450            |          |                |
|                     | <b>14</b>                               | ,670            |          |                |
|                     | <b>15</b>                               | ,709            |          |                |
|                     | <b>16</b>                               | ,661            |          |                |
|                     | <b>17</b>                               | ,720            |          |                |
|                     | <b>18</b>                               | ,749            |          |                |
|                     | <b>19</b>                               | ,609            |          |                |

On this table, Cronbach alpha is 0,652. It is close to 0,70. So the consistency and reliability of the questions are good.

**Table 24**

*Factor analysis of survey questions about the opinion leadership*

| Variable                  | Survey Questions about the Opinion Leadership | Factor Loadings | Variance | Cronbach Alpha |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------|----------------|
| <b>Opinion Leadership</b> | <b>20</b>                                     | ,726            | % 58,898 | ,822           |
|                           | <b>21</b>                                     | ,782            |          |                |
|                           | <b>22</b>                                     | ,826            |          |                |
|                           | <b>23</b>                                     | ,693            |          |                |
|                           | <b>24</b>                                     | ,793            |          |                |

The survey questions about the opinion leadership are normal distributed and reliable can be seen on the Table 24.

**Table 25**

*Factor analysis of survey questions about the perceived risk*

| Variable              | Survey Questions about the Perceived Risk | Factor Loadings | Variance | Cronbach Alpha |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------|----------------|
| <b>Perceived Risk</b> | <b>25</b>                                 | ,703            | %57,137  | ,759           |
|                       | <b>26</b>                                 | ,808            |          |                |
|                       | <b>27</b>                                 | ,810            |          |                |
|                       | <b>28</b>                                 | ,646            |          |                |
|                       | <b>29</b>                                 | ,655            |          |                |
|                       | <b>30</b>                                 | ,835            |          |                |
|                       | <b>31</b>                                 | ,670            |          |                |
|                       | <b>32</b>                                 | ,735            |          |                |

0,759 value of Cronbach alpha is enough to accept the survey questions about perceived risk reliable.

**Table 26**

*Factor analysis of survey questions about the advice*

| Variable            | Survey Questions about the advice | Factor Loadings | Variance | Cronbach Alpha |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|----------|----------------|
| <b>Advice (WOM)</b> | <b>33</b>                         | ,684            | %59,244  | ,883           |
|                     | <b>34</b>                         | ,602            |          |                |
|                     | <b>35</b>                         | ,830            |          |                |
|                     | <b>36</b>                         | ,793            |          |                |
|                     | <b>37</b>                         | ,782            |          |                |
|                     | <b>38</b>                         | ,824            |          |                |
|                     | <b>39</b>                         | ,843            |          |                |

The last reliability analysis is about advice. 0,883 value is more than good for to be reliable for the test. So, the questions about advice are reliable and self-consistent.

**Table 27***Normality tests of the word-of-mouth communication factors*

|                               | Kolmogorov-Smirnov |     |      | Shapiro-Wilk |     |      |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|-----|------|--------------|-----|------|
|                               | Statistic          | Df. | Sig. | Statistic    | Df. | Sig. |
| <b>The Expertise</b>          | ,058               | 225 | ,062 | ,992         | 225 | ,229 |
| <b>The Idea Seeking</b>       | ,134               | 225 | ,000 | ,957         | 225 | ,000 |
| <b>The Opinion Leadership</b> | ,149               | 225 | ,000 | ,957         | 225 | ,000 |
| <b>The Perceived Risk</b>     | ,108               | 225 | ,000 | ,960         | 225 | ,000 |
| <b>The Advice</b>             | ,166               | 225 | ,000 | ,916         | 225 | ,000 |

Hypothesis tests can be used when evaluating normality. It is seen that Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests are included in statistical package programs that are frequently used in research. In Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, if the distribution is normal, the results are not expected to be significant. However, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method tends to reject normality when the sample gets larger. It is known that the Shapiro-Wilk method is statistically powerful only in small samples (Uysal & Kılıç, 2021, p. 223). The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is used when the sample size is larger than 30, and the Shapiro-Wilk test is used if the sample is smaller than 30. In cases where the p value in the study is less than 0.05, the factors don't show normal distribution. When it is greater than 0.05, the factors show normal distribution (Cevahir, 2020, p. 14).

Here I wanted to evaluate the results of both tests and the results were the same.

The expertise shows a normal distribution. Because; the sig. value is 0.062 and greater than 0.50. Other factors don't show normal distribution. Because; as can be seen from the table;  $p=0.000$  and less than 0.05.

#### 5.4. Hypothesis Testing and Variance Tests

At first, it was decided that which test would be applied to the factors and demographics. We can see the tests used on the table below. Here the variance tests were used for statical analysis to determine which factors make difference on WOMM based on demographics. In the following parts of the research; T-test for parametric variables (normal distribution) consisting of two subgroups and one-way ANOVA analysis was used for more than two subgroups. For non-parametric variables (abnormal distribution); Mann-Whitney U test was applied for the variables consisting of two subgroups, and Kruskal Wallis was applied for more than two subgroups. When testing hypotheses, the p value is usually checked in these tests. If the p value is less than 0.05, there is a difference between the factors in the hypothesis. But if the value is greater than 0.05; no difference can be found between the factors and the hypothesis cannot be confirmed. (Cevahir, 2020, p. 70).

For this research, we can see the table of applied tests on the Table 28.

**Table 28**

*Table of applied tests to the factors and demographics*

| <b>Factors</b>                | <b>Gender</b>       | <b>Age<br/>Education Level<br/>Income Level</b> |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Expertise</b>              | T-test              | One-way ANOVA                                   |
| <b>Idea Seeking</b>           | Mann-Whitney U test | Kruskal Wallis                                  |
| <b>Opinion<br/>Leadership</b> | Mann-Whitney U test | Kruskal Wallis                                  |
| <b>Perceived<br/>Risk</b>     | Mann-Whitney U test | Kruskal Wallis                                  |
| <b>Advice</b>                 | Mann-Whitney U test | Kruskal Wallis                                  |

#### 5.4.1. Testing H1 (According to the Gender)

***H1: The opinions of the participants in the research differ according to “the gender”.***

According to all the sub-hypotheses, we can say that the opinions of the participants about the selection of pre-school education about “the idea seeking and perceived risk” make differences according to gender. Detailed information was indicated at the subtitles.

##### 5.4.1.1. Testing H1a

***H1a: The opinions of the participants about the expertise differ according to “the gender.”***

**Table 29**

*T-test of the expertise according to the gender*

|        |        | Mean   | t      | p           | Finding          |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------------|------------------|
| Gender | Female | 1,6422 | -1,149 | <u>.951</u> | No<br>Difference |
|        | Male   | 1,4980 |        |             |                  |

In this hypothesis, it should be used T-test because these are parametric and 2 subgroups. As can be seen on the Table 29, p value is greater than 0,05. There is no difference between participants’ decisions about pre-school education institution according to their gender about the expertise. The H1a has been rejected.

##### 5.4.1.2. Testing H1b

***H1b: The opinions of the participants about the idea seeking differ according to the gender.***

**Table 30**

*Mann-Whitney U test of the idea seeking according to the gender*

|        |        | N   | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks | U       | Z      | p            | Finding    |
|--------|--------|-----|-----------|--------------|---------|--------|--------------|------------|
| Gender | Male   | 23  | 83,57     | 1922,00      | 1646,00 | -2,303 | <u>.021*</u> | Difference |
|        | Female | 202 | 116,35    | 23503,00     |         |        |              |            |

Idea seeking didn't show normal distribution as I mentioned in the table of normality and here 2 subgroups we have, so we should use Mann-Whitney U test for non-parametric variables. P value shows that there is difference between participants' decisions about pre-school education institution according to their gender about the idea seeking. In conclusion, H1b hypothesis has been accepted.

#### 5.4.1.3. Testing H1c

***H1c: The opinions of the participants about the opinion leadership differ according to the gender.***

**Table 31**

*Mann-Whitney U test of the opinion leadership according to the gender*

|               |               | N   | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks | U       | Z     | p                  | Finding              |
|---------------|---------------|-----|-----------|--------------|---------|-------|--------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Gender</b> | <b>Male</b>   | 23  | 117,02    | 2691,50      | 2230,50 | -,315 | <b><u>,752</u></b> | <b>No Difference</b> |
|               | <b>Female</b> | 202 | 112,54    | 22733,50     |         |       |                    |                      |

Mann-Whitney U test was applied on these variables. Because, the opinion leadership didn't distribute normally. P value is more than 0,05 so H1c was rejected. There is no difference about opinion leadership between the gender subgroups on the pre-school education institution decisions. H1c has been rejected.

#### 5.4.1.4. Testing H1d

***H1d: The opinions of the participants about the perceived risk differ according to the gender.***

**Table 32**

*Mann-Whitney U test of the perceived risk according to the gender*

|               |               | N   | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks | U      | Z      | p                   | Finding           |
|---------------|---------------|-----|-----------|--------------|--------|--------|---------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Gender</b> | <b>Male</b>   | 23  | 87,17     | 2005,00      | 1729,0 | -2,015 | <b><u>,044*</u></b> | <b>Difference</b> |
|               | <b>Female</b> | 202 | 115,94    | 23420,00     | 0      |        |                     |                   |

As we can see that, the decisions of the male and female participants showed differences about the perceived risk. H1d hypothesis has been accepted.

#### **5.4.1.5. Testing H1e**

***H1e: The opinions of the participants about the advice (recommendation) differ according to the gender.***

**Table 33**

*Mann-Whitney U test of the advice according to the gender*

|               |               | N   | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks | U    | Z      | p                  | Finding              |
|---------------|---------------|-----|-----------|--------------|------|--------|--------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Gender</b> | <b>Male</b>   | 23  | 92,11     | 2118,50      | 1842 | -1,644 | <b><u>,100</u></b> | <b>No Difference</b> |
|               | <b>Female</b> | 202 | 115,38    | 23306,50     | ,500 |        |                    |                      |

On the Table 33, we can see that there is no difference between gender groups because p value is more than 0,05. So, we have rejected H1e hypothesis.

#### 5.4.2. Testing H2 (According to the Age)

***H2: The opinions of the participants in the research differ according to the age.***

For hypothesis H2, the opinions of the participants only show difference about the idea seeking according to age. There are no significant differences among the other factors.

##### 5.4.2.1. Testing H2a

***H2a: The opinions of the participants about the expertise differ according to the age.***

**Table 34**

*One-Way ANOVA of the expertise according to the age*

|     |                | Sum of Squares | Mean Square | F    | p                  | Findings             |
|-----|----------------|----------------|-------------|------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Age | Between Groups | 13,415         | ,433        | ,843 | <b><u>,706</u></b> | <b>No Difference</b> |
|     | Within Groups  | 99,047         | ,513        |      |                    |                      |
|     | Total          | 112,462        |             |      |                    |                      |

On this hypothesis, we should use One-Way ANOVA statistic test. P value says that there is no difference among the age categories for expertise variable. H2a has been rejected.

##### 5.4.2.2. Testing H2b

***H2b: The opinions of the participants about the idea seeking differ according to the age.***

**Table 35**

*Kruskal Wallis test of the idea seeking according to age*

|              | N   | Mean Rank | Chi-Square | df | p                   | Findings          |
|--------------|-----|-----------|------------|----|---------------------|-------------------|
| 20-30        | 40  | 119,58    | 9,056      | 3  | <b><u>,029*</u></b> | <b>Difference</b> |
| 31-40        | 145 | 113,50    |            |    |                     |                   |
| 41-50        | 29  | 105,29    |            |    |                     |                   |
| 51 and above | 11  | 102,82    |            |    |                     |                   |
| Total        | 225 |           |            |    |                     |                   |

On the Table 35, p value is 0,029 and smaller than the value of 0,05, so there is a difference among the age groups for idea seeking. H2b hypothesis has been valid.

#### 5.4.2.3. Testing H2c

**H2c: The opinions of the participants about opinion leadership differ according to the age.**

**Table 36**

*Kruskal Wallis test of the opinion leadership according to age*

|                     | N   | Mean Rank | Chi-Square | df | p                  | Finding              |
|---------------------|-----|-----------|------------|----|--------------------|----------------------|
| <b>20-30</b>        | 40  | 120,95    | 1,111      | 3  | <b><u>,774</u></b> | <b>No Difference</b> |
| <b>31-40</b>        | 145 | 117,70    |            |    |                    |                      |
| <b>41-50</b>        | 29  | 79,74     |            |    |                    |                      |
| <b>51 and above</b> | 11  | 109,86    |            |    |                    |                      |
| <b>Total</b>        | 225 |           |            |    |                    |                      |

There is no difference between age groups about the opinion leadership, because the p value is more than 0,05. H2c has been rejected.

#### 5.4.2.4. Testing H2d

**H2d: The opinions of the participants about the perceived risk differ according to the age.**

**Table 37**

*Kruskal Wallis test of the perceived risk according to age*

|                     | N   | Mean Rank | Chi-Square | df | p                  | Finding              |
|---------------------|-----|-----------|------------|----|--------------------|----------------------|
| <b>20-30</b>        | 40  | 100,91    | 3,018      | 3  | <b><u>,389</u></b> | <b>No Difference</b> |
| <b>31-40</b>        | 145 | 114,31    |            |    |                    |                      |
| <b>41-50</b>        | 29  | 126,83    |            |    |                    |                      |
| <b>51 and above</b> | 11  | 103,18    |            |    |                    |                      |
| <b>Total</b>        | 225 |           |            |    |                    |                      |

The age groups mean rank is too close to each other and p value is more than 0,05. For this reason, there is no difference among the age groups about the perceived risk when the participants make the pre-school education institution decision. H2d has been rejected.

#### 5.4.2.5. Testing H2e

***H2e: The opinions of the participants about the advice (recommendation) differ according to the age.***

**Table 38**

*Kruskal Wallis test of the advice according to age*

|                     | N   | Mean Rank | Chi-Square | df | p                  | Finding              |
|---------------------|-----|-----------|------------|----|--------------------|----------------------|
| <b>20-30</b>        | 40  | 121,64    | 1,963      | 3  | <b><u>,580</u></b> | <b>No Difference</b> |
| <b>31-40</b>        | 145 | 113,01    |            |    |                    |                      |
| <b>41-50</b>        | 29  | 99,83     |            |    |                    |                      |
| <b>51 and above</b> | 11  | 116,14    |            |    |                    |                      |
| <b>Total</b>        | 225 |           |            |    |                    |                      |

The advice doesn't distribute normally, and age variable has more than 2 sub-groups, so we use Kruskal Wallis test. Test findings show that, there is no difference about advice between the age groups. H2e has been rejected.

#### 5.4.3. Testing H3 (According to the Education Level)

**H3: The opinions of the participants in the research differ according to the education level.**

According to the education level, we are trying to understand the behavior of the participants in this hypothesis. When we looked at the sub-hypotheses, there is only difference is about expertise according to the education levels. Detailed information is under this hypothesis.

#### 5.4.3.1. Testing H3a

*H3a: The opinions of the participants about the expertise differ according to the education level.*

**Table 39**

*One-Way ANOVA of the expertise according to the education level*

| Education Level | Sum of Squares | df         | Mean Square | F     | Sig.         | Finding           |
|-----------------|----------------|------------|-------------|-------|--------------|-------------------|
| Between Groups  | 6,168          | 31         | ,199        | 1,569 | <b>.036*</b> | <b>Difference</b> |
| Within Groups   | 24,472         | 194        | ,127        |       |              |                   |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>30,640</b>  | <b>225</b> |             |       |              |                   |

One-Way ANOVA test results of the expertise variable according to education level of participants had showed that there are some differences between the education level groups. H3a has been accepted.

#### 5.4.3.2. Testing H3b

*H3b: The opinions of the participants about the idea seeking differ according to the education level.*

**Table 40**

*Kruskal Wallis test of the idea seeking according to the education level*

|                    | N          | Mean Rank | Chi-Square | df | p           | Finding              |
|--------------------|------------|-----------|------------|----|-------------|----------------------|
| High School        | 20         | 109,93    | 1,567      | 2  | <b>.457</b> | <b>No Difference</b> |
| Bachelor and above | 194        | 111,97    |            |    |             |                      |
| Pre-high School    | 11         | 136,68    |            |    |             |                      |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>225</b> |           |            |    |             |                      |

There are no differences about idea seeking for pre-school education institution among the education level of participants. Because p value is 0,457 and more than 0,05. So; H3b has been rejected.

#### 5.4.3.3. Testing H3c

*H3c: The opinions of the participants about opinion leadership differ according to the education level.*

**Table 41**

*Kruskal Wallis test of the opinion leadership according to the education level*

|                    | N   | Mean Rank | Chi-Square | df | p           | Finding       |
|--------------------|-----|-----------|------------|----|-------------|---------------|
| High School        | 20  | 102,65    | 4,090      | 2  | <u>.129</u> | No Difference |
| Bachelor and above | 194 | 111,99    |            |    |             |               |
| Pre-high School    | 11  | 149,55    |            |    |             |               |
| Total              | 225 |           |            |    |             |               |

As we can see on the Table 41; there is no significant difference about affecting from opinion leadership variable between the education stages of participants. H3c has been rejected.

#### 5.4.3.4. Testing H3d

*H3d: The opinions of the participants about the perceived risk differ according to the education level.*

**Table 42**

*Kruskal Wallis test of the perceived risk according to the education level*

|                    | N   | Mean Rank | Chi-Square | df | p           | Finding       |
|--------------------|-----|-----------|------------|----|-------------|---------------|
| High School        | 20  | 125,68    | 4,154      | 2  | <u>.125</u> | No Difference |
| Bachelor and above | 194 | 109,80    |            |    |             |               |
| Pre-high School    | 11  | 146,41    |            |    |             |               |
| Total              | 225 |           |            |    |             |               |

The perceived risk while the participants try to find the best pre-school education institution doesn't show significant difference according to the education level of the people looking for the alternatives. H3d has been rejected.

#### 5.4.3.5. Testing H3e

***H3e: The opinions of the participants about the advice (recommendation) differ according to the education level.***

**Table 43**

*Kruskal Wallis test of the advice according to the education level*

|                    | N   | Mean Rank | Chi-Square | df | p           | Finding       |
|--------------------|-----|-----------|------------|----|-------------|---------------|
| High School        | 20  | 119,48    | 1,876      | 2  | <u>.391</u> | No Difference |
| Bachelor and above | 194 | 110,99    |            |    |             |               |
| Pre-high School    | 11  | 136,64    |            |    |             |               |
| Total              | 225 |           |            |    |             |               |

There is no difference among the opinions of participants even they graduated from high school, pre-high school or bachelor and above. Because the p-value is more than 0,05, so H3e has been declined.

#### 5.4.4. Testing H4 (According to the Income Level)

**H4: The opinions of the participants in the research differ according to their income level.**

Hypothesis H4 is about the income levels of the participant and their reactions to the factors such as the expertise, idea seeking, opinion leadership, perceived risk, and advice.

In this research, it can be said that for H4; there is only difference is perceived risk factor according to the income levels of the participants. As the income level decreases, the perceived risk level increases.

#### 5.4.4.1. Testing H4a

*H4a: The opinions of the participants about the expertise differ according to their income level.*

**Table 44**

*One-Way ANOVA findings of the expertise according to the income level*

|                       | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F     | Sig.        | Finding              |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------------|----------------------|
| <b>Between Groups</b> | 25,590         | 31  | ,825        | 1,507 | <b>.051</b> | <b>No Difference</b> |
| <b>Within Groups</b>  | 105,725        | 194 | ,548        |       |             |                      |
| <b>Total</b>          | 131,316        | 225 |             |       |             |                      |

According to this statistical test, we can see that there is no important difference between the opinions of participants have different income level about the expertise of consulted people. So; H4a has been rejected.

#### 5.4.4.2. Testing H4b

*H4b: The opinions of the participants about the idea seeking differ according to their income level.*

**Table 45**

*Kruskal Wallis test of the idea seeking according to the income level*

|                         | N   | Mean Rank | Chi-Square | df | p           | Finding              |
|-------------------------|-----|-----------|------------|----|-------------|----------------------|
| <b>2500 and below</b>   | 11  | 132,64    | 6,254      | 3  | <b>.100</b> | <b>No Difference</b> |
| <b>2.501-6.500</b>      | 81  | 109,84    |            |    |             |                      |
| <b>6.501-15.500</b>     | 103 | 120,10    |            |    |             |                      |
| <b>15.501 and above</b> | 30  | 89,95     |            |    |             |                      |
| <b>Total</b>            | 225 |           |            |    |             |                      |

According to the income level, all participants from every income level act the same about idea seeking, there is no difference between the groups. So; H4b has been declined.

#### 5.4.4.3. Testing H4c

*H4c: The opinions of the participants about opinion leadership differ according to their income level.*

**Table 46**

*Kruskal Wallis test of the opinion leadership according to the income level*

|                         | N   | Mean Rank | Chi-Square | df | p           | Finding              |
|-------------------------|-----|-----------|------------|----|-------------|----------------------|
| <b>2500 and below</b>   | 11  | 109,41    | 1,728      | 3  | <u>.631</u> | <b>No Difference</b> |
| <b>2.501-6.500</b>      | 81  | 116,66    |            |    |             |                      |
| <b>6.501-15.500</b>     | 103 | 114,53    |            |    |             |                      |
| <b>15.501 and above</b> | 30  | 99,18     |            |    |             |                      |
| <b>Total</b>            | 225 |           |            |    |             |                      |

The participants' income level is not effective on the opinion leadership of the consulted people, in short there is no difference between the income groups. H4c has been rejected.

#### 5.4.4.4. Testing H4d

*H4d: The opinions of the participants about the perceived risk differ according to their income level.*

**Table 47**

*Kruskal Wallis test of the perceived risk according to the income level*

|                         | N   | Mean Rank | Chi-Square | df | p            | Finding           |
|-------------------------|-----|-----------|------------|----|--------------|-------------------|
| <b>2500 and below</b>   | 11  | 155,27    | 11,302     | 3  | <u>.010*</u> | <b>Difference</b> |
| <b>2.501-6.500</b>      | 81  | 125,17    |            |    |              |                   |
| <b>6.501-15.500</b>     | 103 | 102,53    |            |    |              |                   |
| <b>15.501 and above</b> | 30  | 100,60    |            |    |              |                   |
| <b>Total</b>            | 225 |           |            |    |              |                   |

The perceived risk factor among the alternatives of pre-school education institution shows some differences between the income level groups. P-value is smaller than 0,05. If income level of participants is 2500 TL or below, they are feeling more risk while they are choosing the institution. H4d has been valid.

#### 5.4.4.5. Testing H4e

***H4e: The opinions of the participants about the advice (recommendation) differ according to their income level.***

**Table 48**

*Kruskal Wallis test of the advice according to the income level*

|                         | N   | Mean Rank | Chi-Square | df | p                  | Finding              |
|-------------------------|-----|-----------|------------|----|--------------------|----------------------|
| <b>2500 and below</b>   | 11  | 133,27    | 6,121      | 3  | <b><u>,106</u></b> | <b>No Difference</b> |
| <b>2.501-6.500</b>      | 81  | 119,42    |            |    |                    |                      |
| <b>6.501-15.500</b>     | 103 | 112,82    |            |    |                    |                      |
| <b>15.501 and above</b> | 30  | 88,87     |            |    |                    |                      |
| <b>Total</b>            | 225 |           |            |    |                    |                      |

The recommendation factor doesn't make significant difference between the income groups. So; H4e is rejected.

## 6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In a study by Silverman, it was emphasized that WOMM is one of the most effective methods that can be used to facilitate the decision and speed up the decision process of potential customers (Silverman , 2001, p. 23). WOMM which has managed to attract the attention of the marketing world in recent years done deliberately by companies. It is a strategy of enabling consumers or independent people to talk about products or services by conveying their knowledge, opinions, expertise, or experience outside the company environment (Brown & Reingen, 1987, p. 362).

It is very important for potential consumers to get information about the product or service from the people who don't have a commercial connection with the company or brand. Information transfers of people who have previously experienced a brand's products or services are more reliable according to potential customers' view than company advertisements, promotions, and campaigns. When the employees in the marketing department of the companies realized this situation, they started to turn to new strategies against the decision mechanism of potential consumers. In this manner, WOMM strategies in which WOMC namely advice takes place predominantly has become an important method for companies and brands. The reason why today's companies understand the importance of WOMC and WOMM is because they see the strengths of these concepts.

In the research, within the framework of the main audience, the effect of WOMC factors such as expertise, idea seeking, opinion leadership, perceived risk and receiving advice on WOMM was evaluated. In addition, the relationship between the demographic characteristics of the receiver (buyer of the service) and the level of exposure was also examined.

Consumers often need advice in the process of purchasing services. At this point, pre-school education service is a sector where the power of advice is intense. Promotion and advertising campaigns constitute a certain part of the expense budgets of pre-school education services because; when the competitive and economic conditions are examined, they have a goal of gaining customers and not losing existing customers. WOMC gives businesses' marketing activities action and realizes to make the advertisement of the business in a very short time. Businesses can use many resources while performing WOMM

activities. The sources used can be media tools as well as the people driving the advice (opinion leaders, market worms, reference groups or ordinary people). If these tools are directed effectively, the effectiveness and efficiency of WOMC can be increased (Karaca, 2010, pp. 12-62).

The reasons of the importance of WOMC are that it is found to be more reliable by potential consumers than other marketing methods, the transfer of experience is more, and it is found to be effective in terms of saving time and money. In terms of businesses, it can be preferred because it doesn't cost too much.

Various studies have been conducted in the literature on the effect of WOMM. The studies carried out are generally related to FMCG products and there aren't many studies related to the service sector. There are few studies on the effect of WOMM, especially on the pre-school education sector. In this study, analyzes were conducted to determine the role of WOMM variables according to demographic features (age, gender, income level and education level) in the selection of pre-school education institutions of participants from Trakya region.

First of all, literature research was conducted and WOMM concepts were explained in this part of the thesis.

In addition, the data collection method was determined as an online survey and the surveys were conducted online via "Survey monkey". While the questionnaire was sent to the relevant person, information was given about the questionnaire and the thesis. Most consumers need to get the opinions of other people before purchasing a service.

The advice they receive from their inner environment such as family, relatives, friends/colleagues, and derivatives are very effective. Before purchasing a service, consumers are willing to seek advice in order to minimize the perceived risk factor. Pre-school education is also a very important type of service for parents or people who decide on educational institutions. Consumers who make or will make this decision for their children or a relative they care for will need the information, experiences or opinions of experienced people related to this service purchased. For this reason, this study was conducted on this segment of the service sector.

The choice of pre-school education institution has a very important place for the guardians of the child who will choose the educational institution. Because pedagogues say that development of children is much more important in the 0-6 age range and also it is right for the child after the age of 3 to go to a pre-school education institution in terms of socialization.

In order to obtain the necessary variables depending on the model of the study, first of all, KMO and Barlett tests were performed, and when it was seen that there was no obstacle for factor analysis. Factor analysis was also applied to the Likert scale questions of the questionnaire. Statements were grouped under five variables such as expertise, idea seeking, opinion Leadership, perceived risk, and advice.

After reviewing previous studies, a questionnaire was developed and questionnaires were collected from 281 participants, but a sample of 225 was selected considering the validity of the participants' questionnaires. Then, Independent T-test, One-Way ANOVA analysis, Kruskal Wallis Test and Mann-Whitney U were applied to measure whether there is a significant difference between these variables and socio-demographic characteristics.

After statistical analysis of this thesis, which is related to "Determining the Role of Word-of-Mouth Marketing in Pre-school Education Institution Purchasing Decision", the following findings emerged.

The research findings start with frequency and descriptive analysis. The majority of the participants are people who have been involved in the selection of one (1) child's pre-school education institution.

It is seen that the female participants are more in the distribution of men and women participating in the research.

Participants are generally between the ages of 31-40. Approximately 90% of these people are graduates from bachelor or higher degrees of institutions. In addition, it is seen that people whose income level is 6.501-15.5000 TL participated in the research.

50.7% of the participants stated that they would definitely get advice before choosing a pre-school education service, and the majority of them stated that they received advice also; there were some studies that the advice is often given when it is not needed. Participants described themselves as conscious and researcher while receiving advice.

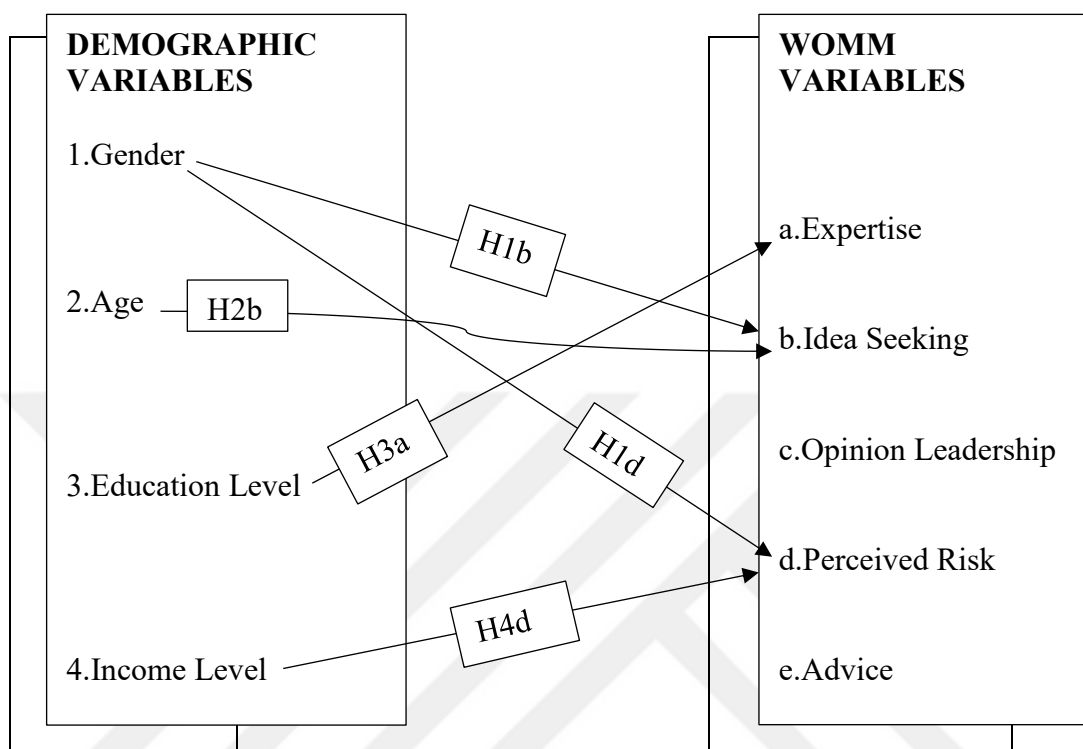
The majority of participants think that the cause of giving and taking advice in the decision-making process is the desire to avoid risks and being willingness to help in this process. In addition, many people want to share their good and bad experiences about the service.

Most of the participants stated that they received advice from friends or colleagues and educators at the decision process of purchasing pre-school education services. Besides, pre-school education employees and the internet are also effective sources of information.

Considering the characteristics of the resources; it has been observed that the opinions of knowledgeable and experienced individuals are more important due to the significance of children's education especially. Moreover, it is clearly seen how much we are influenced by the ideas of the people around us during our decision-making process.

In a study on healthcare, it has seen that people rely on the advice of educators, friends, and colleagues on highly sensitive issues like in health sector that cannot be put at risk (Akçin, 2016, pp. 79-82). In a study by Kılıçer (2006), 50% of the participants stated that they were affected by WOMC. The majority of respondents have requested for advice themselves. 70% stated that they received information from their friends through WOMC and also obtained the result that the expertise level of the source has a significant effect (p. 54). According to the results of another study on WOMM; it has been observed that the effect of "power of recommendation" is significant in the potential purchasing decisions of students after positive or negative recommendations from their environment. It has been determined that if the recommendation is positive, the effect of "recommendation request" and "degree of affinity" is important, but if the recommendation is negative, the effect of "brand used", "number of recommendations" and "trust" is significant (Yozgat & Deniz, 2011, pp. 43-63).

For this research, we can say that H1b, H1d, H2b, H3a and H4d hypothesis are accepted at the end of the statistical test. The results of the hypothesis testing are shown on the Figure 7 below:

**Figure 7***Results of the hypothesis testing*

Hypothesis testing and factor test analysis results are as follows:

- As a result of the analyzes made in the research, **the perceived risk and idea seeking** dimensions differ according to **the gender**. Gender is effective demographic factor used to measure the impact of WOMM on consumer purchasing behavior. Even though equality between men and women, equal rights and an equal working environment are advocated in today's society, it is seen that women mostly focus on family matters in purchasing activities but men focus on occupational subjects (Rothschild & Stiglitz, 1976, pp. 629-649). While the purchasing behavior of men differs greatly from the women, it has been observed that men and women have different preferences even when purchasing the same product.
- Since women are more emotionally minded beings, they are more involved in the purchasing process of sensitive products or services, which must be chosen carefully. Men who stand out with their more practical aspects don't think too much about the

purchasing decision. They focus on products that will solve their problem in the shortest time and can benefit from for a long time.

Female participants, who play a greater role in choosing a pre-school education institution, therefore do more research on ideas and think about risk possibilities more. Because this choice carries the possibility of physical or psychological risks coming back to them through their children.

At the purchasing decision stage, while men prefer solution-oriented products in a short time, women get help from experienced people around them to achieve the best results for them and their children (Özdemir & Tokol, 2008, pp. 57-80). In general, female individuals' tendency of seeking opinions from more people, doing research to eliminate alternatives, and talking more on a topic caused a difference in the variable of seeking ideas according to the gender groups. Women always have someone to talk to and share their experiences with. As a matter of fact, one of the most important consequences of these differences for marketing and sales is seen in the fact that female consumers ask for help and accept it (Barletta, 2003, pp. 75-78). Women are more willing to idea seeking than the men. In addition, the perceived risk dimension to vary according to gender, because of the physical, psychological, and social risk perceptions of women and men are different from each other. When female individuals seek advice from their environment or people who got the pre-school education service before, they think that they avoid financial and moral risks more than male individuals' thinking. Getting advice from more people means lowering risk for female participants. Due to the perceived risk variable, female individuals use WOMC more. At the end of that, under any circumstances, contacting people who have previously purchased it will save both time and money, and will also provide efficiency by minimizing the risk for anything you want to buy.

- The age distribution of consumers is very important for product or service marketers. The age characteristics should always be taken into consideration in the design, packaging and marketing stages of the product until it reaches the buyer (Durmaz et al., 2011, p. 118).

Consumers tend to purchase with different needs in every period of life. It is obvious that young consumers and older consumers have serious differences in product preferences (Tek, 1999, p. 801).

As a result of the research, it was seen that there was a significant difference between **the age groups** of the participants only in **the idea seeking**. It is seen that the participants in the 20-30 age range need more advice because of their lack of experience and evaluate alternatives more. It is thought that there is a significant difference between the age groups because they are more researcher in terms of their generation. Young and middle-aged consumers are more likely to seek out the opinions of people who have received the service they tend to purchase. Besides, for young and middle-aged consumers who use new technologies intensively, E-WOMM is also daily life routine like WOMM through some comments on internet platforms, blogs, social media and etc. At the same time, their ability to exert more physical and psychological effort than older age groups are also related to their idea-seeking orientation and their need to eliminate the alternatives. As the age group gets older, the rate of seeking advice decreases, so this can be related to older age groups' expertise level about choosing pre-school education institution.

- When we look at the results of the research by **education groups**, we see that the only significant difference is in the variable of **expertise**. One of the factors affecting the consumer purchasing decision is the level of education. When the education level changes, there is also a difference in the purchasing situation. As the level of education increases, the perception of quality changes and socially responsible and conscious consumers are formed (Sürücü, 1998, p. 19). As the level of education increases, people's attention to the other party's level of expertise increases. Since they are also more involved in the education sector, the expertise of the other party makes a big difference.

It seems that as the level of education decreases, less importance is given to the degree of expertise of the person whose advice is sought. It has been observed that people completed bachelor and above degrees pay more attention to the expertise of the person they receive advice from when choosing a pre-school education institution.

- According to the variance analysis, **the perceived risk** dimension differs between **income groups**. The different perception of financial, sociological, psychological, physical and performance risks in pre-school education services in income groups has caused this dimension to vary. The income level of consumers also directly or indirectly affects their purchasing power. Consumers with high incomes may spend

excessively in order to gain social status as well as meeting their basic needs. The person with low income doesn't want to spend any money except their basic needs. People with low income want to minimize the risk of time and money while spending (Cemalcılar, 1998, p. 247). While the consumer puts a product they need the most at the top of the priority list, they place the product with the least need at the bottom. Income status determines the order of necessity of needs. Limited income affects the distribution among products. People with limited income will have a higher risk perception when receiving advice, as they will prioritize this need for pre-school education and adjust their income accordingly. Participants with low levels of income were found to consider these risks more because they are likely to encounter some material or moral damages as a result of their choices. Participants with an income of 2500 TL or less perceived a higher level of risk while they are trying to search the pre-school education institution.

**Table 49**

*Status of tested hypotheses*

| <b>HYPOTHESES</b> |                                                                                                    |                 |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>H1a</b>        | The opinions of the participants about the expertise differ according to the gender.               | <b>REJECTED</b> |
| <b>H1b</b>        | The opinions of the participants about the idea seeking differ according to the gender.            | <b>ACCEPTED</b> |
| <b>H1c</b>        | The opinions of the participants about opinion leadership differ according to the gender.          | <b>REJECTED</b> |
| <b>H1d</b>        | The opinions of the participants about the perceived risk differ according to the gender.          | <b>ACCEPTED</b> |
| <b>H1e</b>        | The opinions of the participants about the advice (recommendation) differ according to the gender. | <b>REJECTED</b> |
| <b>H2a</b>        | The opinions of the participants about the expertise differ according to the age.                  | <b>REJECTED</b> |
| <b>H2b</b>        | The opinions of the participants about the idea seeking differ according to the age.               | <b>ACCEPTED</b> |
| <b>H2c</b>        | The opinions of the participants about opinion leadership differ according to the age.             | <b>REJECTED</b> |

|            |                                                                                                             |                 |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>H2d</b> | The opinions of the participants about the perceived risk differ according to the age.                      | <b>REJECTED</b> |
| <b>H2e</b> | The opinions of the participants about the advice (recommendation) differ according to the age.             | <b>REJECTED</b> |
| <b>H3a</b> | The opinions of the participants about the expertise differ according to the education level.               | <b>ACCEPTED</b> |
| <b>H3b</b> | The opinions of the participants about the idea seeking differ according to the education level.            | <b>REJECTED</b> |
| <b>H3c</b> | The opinions of the participants about opinion leadership differ according to the education level.          | <b>REJECTED</b> |
| <b>H3d</b> | The opinions of the participants about the perceived risk differ according to the education level.          | <b>REJECTED</b> |
| <b>H3e</b> | The opinions of the participants about the advice (recommendation) differ according to the education level. | <b>REJECTED</b> |
| <b>H4a</b> | The opinions of the participants about the expertise differ according to their income level.                | <b>REJECTED</b> |
| <b>H4b</b> | The opinions of the participants about the idea seeking differ according to their income level.             | <b>REJECTED</b> |
| <b>H4c</b> | The opinions of the participants about opinion leadership differ according to their income level.           | <b>REJECTED</b> |
| <b>H4d</b> | The opinions of the participants about the perceived risk differ according to their income level.           | <b>ACCEPTED</b> |
| <b>H4e</b> | The opinions of the participants about the advice (recommendation) differ according to their income level.  | <b>REJECTED</b> |

## **7. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FURTHER RESEARCHES AND IMPLICATIONS**

As a result of this research, it has been tried to show how some demographic characteristics are related to WOMM variables while the participants try to choose pre-school education institution.

While there are many sources of WOMM in the literature, most of this research has been done in FMCG products, technology or healthcare.

In our country, the choice of pre-school education institution has become more important in recent years due to the increasing number of educational institutions. Parents who are trying to choose a school are more open to getting ideas from the people around them, apart from visiting the schools and getting information. Because; the opinions of people who are experienced from these institutions seem more sincere and correct.

In the literature, there are studies like this one measured by demographic characteristics such as age, gender, educational status. In addition to these, as a result of this thesis research; it will be possible to add the connection of income level with WOMM variables to the literature. Also; there were no studies in Trakya region like this, so we can see the decision process of Trakya's people when they choose pre-school education institution.

In this research, the relationship between the socio-demographic variables such as gender, age, education, income and WOMM variables such as expertise, idea seeking, opinion leadership, perceived risk and advice were investigated.

As a result, it can be said that depending on the gender of the participants who have bought or will buy pre-school services, the idea seeking and perceived risk dimensions made difference. Female participants tend to seek more ideas. At the same time; material or moral risk perceptions are higher. Parents can think that the child is in the educational institution may be harmed physically or psychologically increases the risk perceptions. By taking these into consideration, pre-school education institutions can develop marketing strategies for female parent and try to provide more information to people who care about seeking ideas.

The age factor of the participants shows the biggest difference for idea seeking among the WOMM variables. Considering these, educational institutions can support female parents aged between 20 and 30 in their search for ideas and organize meetings or seminars with existing parents who have a child in the institutions for them, thus reducing the perception of risk and supporting their decision process.

The education level made some differences only in the dimension of expertise. Institutes should carry out PR activities at a higher level and increase the quality of their services accordingly, considering people with higher education levels and their likelihood of giving advice. Pre-school education institutions can ensure that people with a bachelor's degree or above are also affected by the advice by keeping their existing customers' education-related information fresh and informing them more, increasing their level of expertise regarding the pre-school education institution.

Also; participants who have lower level of education search for the people whom they can rely on their advice. Pre-school education institutions can help people who haven't been involved in education much more to follow the right path by providing more information flow.

The income status of the participants created a significant difference in the perceived risk dimension among the WOMM variables. It can be said that the perceived risk level increases as the income level decreases. Because; while they are choosing for their children, the financial situation of individuals makes them worry about material and moral risks about their children's life.

Considering the analyzes and comments made, some suggestions can be listed for future studies and businesses as follows:

- ▽ Institutions providing pre-school education services can organize campaigns for their current or potential customers' close circles, especially their colleagues/friends and educators. As seen in the research, individuals are most influenced by their immediate environment when taking advice.
- ▽ Institutions can encourage market experts or educators to provide voluntary information because the consumers often seek advice from their immediate

environment or experts in the decision process of pre-school education institution service.

- ▽ At the same time, institutions should provide that events such as conferences and meetings for existing or potential customers under the name of "expert opinion" should organize by educators and experts related to this service. Because; each client is a source of advice for the brand and company. Therefore, they can inform about their businesses and trainings by holding meetings.
- ▽ Each customer is willing to receive information from customers who have used this product or service before. Pre-school education institutions should identify potential consumers and provide information flow in the form of conversation between existing customers and potential customers from time to time. Creating independent WOM providers is a cost-free advertising resource for businesses.
- ▽ In particular, opinion leaders within the community need to be identified very successfully by businesses. In this way, it will be ensured that other independent information sources also advertise in favor of the brand.
- ▽ Expertise, perceived risk, advice (WOMM), opinion leadership and idea seeking highlighted in the research differed according to demographic characteristics. Businesses should make their WOMM strategies according to their potential customer portfolios based on these points. For example; strategies suitable for equalizing risk perception according to gender should be used because of the perceived risk levels of men and women will differ. On the other example, considering that an individual has low or middle income perceives more risk during the selection process of the pre-school education institution, some suitable PR application can be used on these groups.
- ▽ If companies know which type of purchasing decision consumers use when choosing a pre-school education institution, they can also organize marketing activities to influence this behavior.

In the literature, the effects of WOMM have generally been measured by studies in the technology and healthcare sector. Education is as important concept as health and technology. Especially, the choice of pre-school education institution is among the choices that are approached very sensitively, researched and taken advice because the institution where children will receive their first education is very important. Businesses providing pre-

school education services should improve themselves in this regard by taking this into account and improve their service quality by realizing the power of advice.

In order to emphasize that education is very important at every level, it can be considered that the effect of WOMM on the preferences of state or foundation higher education institutions in future studies can be considered and compared. Besides; this subject can be expanded with a study across Türkiye. Moreover; it can be investigated which type of consumer purchasing decision-making or which type of purchasing behavior can be affected by the WOMM variables in the consumer's school institution choices.



## 8.LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

In this research, 225 people were reached from various parts of Trakya. An online survey was conducted within the scope of the research. Face-to-face survey option could not be used because not every part of Trakya could be reached and also pandemic situation.

Since it would be very difficult to reach more mass in terms of time and cost, the research was limited number of people. Because of the difficulties of reaching the people who benefit from pre-school education services in equal amounts from every part of Trakya and applying this research on a large population, it may not be very healthy to associate all the research results with the main mass.

The other limitation is that male and female participants were not reached in equal numbers and there is a large gap between their numbers. The results mostly belong to female participants and don't reflect the views of male participants very much.

Despite all these limitations, the results of the research are intended to provide information that will guide people who will conduct research on this or similar issues in the future.

In addition; it is aimed to understand the behavior of potential customers and to guide their marketing strategies by giving important information to institutions providing pre-school education services.

## REFERENCES

- (n.d.). Retrieved from Türk Dil Kurumu Sözlüğü: <https://sozluk.gov.tr>
- Çakmak, A. Ç. (2011). *Doğrudan Satış ve Şebeke Yoluyla Pazarlama Sistemi*. İstanbul: Türkmen Kitabevi.
- Çayıroğlu, A. (2010). *Markalaşma ve Reklam*. İstanbul: Etap Yayınevi.
- Çağlar, İ., & Kılıç, S. (2005). *Pazarlama*. Ankara: Nobel Yayıncılık.
- Çelik, E. (2011). *"Bebek Ve Çocuk Giysileri Üreten Küçük Ve Orta Büyüklükteki Hazır Giyim İşletmelerinin Ürünü Pazara Sunarken Kullandıkları Tutundurma Faaliyetleri"*. Konya: Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Çevik, E. M. (2011). *"Gıda Ürünlerinde Kullanılan Tutundurma Yöntemleri ve Reklamın Etkisi"*. Namık Kemal Üniversitesi, Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü. Tekirdağ: Namık Kemal Üniversitesi.
- Öz, M., & Uyar, E. (2014, March). "Sağlık Hizmetleri Pazarlamasında Algılanan Hizmet Kalitesi ve Müşteri Memnuniyeti Üzerinde Ağızdan Ağıza Pazarlamanın Etkisini Belirlemeye Yönelik Bir Araştırma". *Karamanoğlu Mehmet Bey Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Ekonomik Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 123-132.
- Özaslan, Y., & Uygur Meydan, S. (2014). "Negatif Ağızdan Ağıza İletişim(Wom) ve Elektronik Ağızdan Ağıza İletişim (e-Wom): Yiyecek-İçecek İşletmelerine Yönelik Bir Araştırma". *Atatürk Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Dergisi*(28), 71-72.
- Özbük, M. Y., & Aksoy, Ş. (2017). "Elektronik Ağızdan Ağıza İletişimin Pazarlama Literatüründeki Önemi". *Akdeniz İ.İ.B.F Dergisi*(35), 93.
- Özcan, N. (2018). *Okul Öncesi Eğitim Kurumu Seçiminde Ağızdan Ağıza Pazarlamanın Rolünü Belirlemeye Yönelik Bir Araştırma*. Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi. Isparta: Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi.
- Özcan, S. (2008). *Kobi'lerde Markalaşma Sorununun Tespiti Ve Tutundurma Faaliyetlerinin Geliştirilmesi Üzerine Konya Tekstil-Hazır Giyim Sanayi Bölgesinde Bir Uygulama*. Selçuk Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü. Konya: Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Özdemir, E., & Tokol, T. (2008). Kadın Tüketicilere Yönelik Pazarlama Stratejileri. *ANADOLU ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER DERGİSİ*, 57-80.
- Özel, İ. (2016). *"Eğitim Yayıncılığı Sektöründe Tutundurma Faaliyetlerinin Değerlendirilmesi; Öğretmenler Üzerine Bir Araştırma"*. Kocaeli Üniversitesi, İşletme Anabilim Dalı. Kocaeli: Kocaeli Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Özkale et al., L. (1995). *Pazarlama Stratejileri ve Karar Alma Mekanizması*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık.
- Öztürk, S. A. (1993). *"Tüketicilere Yönelik Satış Tutundurma Faaliyetleri ve Planlama Süreci Tüketim Malları Üreten İşletmelerde bir Araştırma"*. Anadolu Üniversitesi. Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Açıkalın, D. (1989). "Özel ve Devlet Liselerinde Veli Beklentilerinin Örgütsel ve Yönetimsel Boyutları". *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*(4), 85-91.
- Ahlgren, M. (2022, Şubat). *35 + Facebook İstatistikleri ve 2022 İçin Gerçekler*. Şubat 2022 tarihinde Websiterating: <https://www.websiterating.com/tr/research/facebook-statistics/#chapter-1> adresinden alındı

- Ahuja , R. D., Michels, T. A., Walker , M. M., & Weissbuch, M. (2007). "Teen perceptions of disclosure in buzz marketing". *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 3(24), 151.
- Ahuja et al., R. D. (2007). "Teen perceptions of disclosure in buzz marketing". *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 3(24), 151.
- Akçin, C. (2016). *SAĞLIK HİZMETLERİNDE AĞIZDAN AĞIZA PAZARLAMAYA YÖNELİK BİR ALAN ARAŞTIRMASI*. İSTANBUL GELİŞİM ÜNİVERSİTESİ. İstanbul: SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ.
- Akgül , E. M. (2004, Ekim). Teaching Scientific Literacy through a Science Technology and Society Course: Prospective Elementary Science Teachers' Case. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, pp. 58-61.
- Akyürek, R. (1998). *Sponsorluk Planlaması*. Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi Açıköğretim Fakültesi Yayını.
- Akyel, C. (2013). *"Sigorta Sektöründe Bütünleşik Pazarlama İletişimi Uygulamaları ve Sigorta Satış Elemanlarının Uygulamalara Yönelik Görüşleri"*. Bilecik Şeyh Edebali Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü İşletme Anabilim Dalı. Bilecik: Bilecik Şeyh Edebali Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü İşletme Anabilim Dalı.
- Albar Özbucak, B. (2014). Tüketicilerin Özel Markalı Ürünleri Satın Almasına Tutundurma Stratejilerinin Etkisi: Giresun İlinde Bir Uygulama. *Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 24(1), 99-101.
- Alire, C. A. (2007). "Word-of-Mouth Marketing: Abandoning the Academic Library Ivory Tower". *New Library World*, 545-551.
- Altunışık , R., Özdemir , Ş., & Torlak, Ö. (2006). *Modern Pazarlama*. İstanbul: Değişim Yayınları.
- Altunışık et al. (2006). *Modern Pazarlama*. İstanbul: Değişim Yayınları.
- Altunbaş, H. (2008). "Pazarlama İletişimi Ve Etkinlik (Event) Pazarlaması 'Müzik Eğlence Etkinliğinin Marka İletişimine Etkisi'". *İletişim Fakültesi Dergisi*(34), 24.
- Anık, C. (2009). "Bilginin Toplumsal İşlevlerine İlişkin Yaklaşımları Tasnif Denemesi". *Gazi Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi İletişim Kuram ve Araştırma Dergisi*(28), 4.
- Argan, M. (2001). *Spor Pazarlamasında Sponsorluk ve Futbol Branşında Sponsorluk Yapan Kuruluşlara İlişkin Bir Araştırma*. Anadolu Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü. Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Argan, M., & Argan, M. T. (2006). Viraz Pazarlama ve İnternet Üzerinde Ağızdan Ağıza Reklam: Kuramsal Bir Çerçeve. *Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 231-249.
- Arlı, E. (2012). "Müşterilerin Kulaktan Kulağa İletişime Bağlı Satın Alma Kararları Üzerinde Referans Gruplarının Etkisi: Deniz Turizm İşletmeciliği Üzerine Bir Araştırma". *Uluslararası Yönetim, İktisat ve İşletme Dergisi*, 168.
- Armstrong, J. S., & Wright, M. (2008). The Ombudsman: Verification of Citations: Faulty Towers of Knowledge? *Interfaces*, 120-135.
- Arndt, J. (1967). "Word of Mouth Advertising: A Review of the Literature". *New York: Advertising Research Foundation*, 291-295.
- Arndt, J. (1967). "Word of Mouth Advertising: A Review of the Literature". *Advertising Research Foundation*, 26.
- Arpacı, T., Ayhan, D. Y., Tuncer, D., & Bölge, E. (1992). *Pazarlama*. Ankara: Gazi Kitabevi.
- Asna, A. (1997). *Halkla İlişkiler*. İstanbul: Sabah Yayınları.

- Avcı, B. (2012). *"İletişim Sektöründe Tutubdurma Çabalarının Önemi ve Kablo TV Üzerine Bir Uygulama"*. Ankara: Gazi Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Avcılar, M. Y. (2010). Kişisel Etki Kaynakları Ve Ağızdan Ağıza İletişim Ağı. *Atatürk Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Dergisi*, 333-347.
- Aydın, K. (2008, 05 21). Pazarlamada Yeni Kavramlar.
- Aydın, S. Z. (1997). *"Pazarlama tekniklerinden doğrudan pazarlama ve bankacılık sektöründe uygulanırılığı"*. Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü. Isparta: Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Aydede, C. (2003). *Halkla İlişkiler Kampanyaları*. İstanbul: MediaCat.
- Başal, H. A. (2005). *Okul Öncesi Eğitimin İlke ve Yöntemleri*. İstanbul: Morpa Kültür Yayınları.
- Bahar, B. (2015). Elektronik Ağızdan Ağıza İletişimin Tüketici Satın Alma Kararlarına Etkisi. *Finans Politik ve Ekonomik Yorumlar*, 69.
- Baker, C. (2011). *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*. Multilingual Matters.
- Bal, E. (2019). *Ebeveynlerin Okul Öncesi Eğitim Kurumları İle İlgili Görüşleri: Seçme Nedenleri ve Kurumdan Beklentileri*. Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi, Temel Eğitim AnaBilim Dalı. İstanbul: Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Balaban, D., & Mustatea, M. (2019). "Users' Perspective on the Credibility of Social Media Influencers in Romania and Germany". *Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations*, 31-46.
- Balta, N. F. (2006). *Endüstriyel Pazarlama*. Ankara: Nobel Yayın Dağıtım.
- Bansal, H. S., & Voyer, P. A. (2000). Word-of-Mouth Processes within a Services Purchase Decision Context. *Journal of Service Research*(3), 170.
- Barletta, M. (2003). *Marketing to Women: How to Understand, Reach, and Increase Your Share of the World's Largest Market Segment*. Chicago: Dearborn Trade Publishing.
- Baykal, Y. M. (2017). *"Tıbbi Cihaz Sektöründe Bütünleşik Pazarlama İletişimi Çabaları; Medtronic Medikal Firması Örneği"*. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Adnan Menderes Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Aydın.
- Bayus, B. L. (1985). "Word of Mouth: The Indirect Effects of Marketing Efforts". *Journal of Advertising Research*, p. 31.
- Belch, G. E., & Belch, M. A. (1998). *Advertising and Promotion*. USA: McGraw- Hill Companies.
- Berthon, P., Lane, N., Pitt, L., & Watson, R. T. (1998). "The World Wide Web as an Industrial Marketing Communication Tool Models for the Identification and Assesment of Opportunities". *Journal of Marketing Management*(14), 692.
- Bozkurt, İ. (2000). *Bütünleşik Pazarlama İletişimi*. İstanbul: MediaCat Yayınları.
- Bozkurt, İ. (2013). *Pazarlama İletişiminde Sihirli Dokunuşlar*. İstanbul: MediaCat.
- Breitenbach, C. S., & Van Doren, D. C. (1998). "Value-added Marketing in the Digital Domain: Enhancing the Utility of the Internet". *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 15(6), 558-575.
- Brown, J. J., & Reingen, P. H. (1987). "Social Ties and Word-of-Mouth Referral Behavior". *Journal of Consumer Research*, 350-362.

- Burnett, J., & Moriarty, S. (1998). *Introduction to Marketing Communications: An Integrated Approach*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc.
- Buttle, F. A. (1998). "Word of Mouth: Understanding and Managing Referral Marketing". *Journal of Strategic Marketing*(6), 241-243.
- Bylthe, J. (2001). *Essentials of Marketing*. Edinburg Gate, UK: Pearson Education Ltd.
- Cömert, Y. (1989). *Doğrudan Pazarlama ve Türkiye Uygulamaları: Yayıncılık Sektörü Örneği*. Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü. İzmir: Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Carl, W. J. (2006). "What's All the Buzz about?: Everyday Communication and the Relational Basis of Word-of-Mouth and Buzz Marketing Practices". *Management Communication Quarterly*, 610-621.
- Cemalcılar, İ. (1998). *Pazarlama*. İstanbul: Beta Yayınevi.
- Cevahir, E. (2020). *SPSS ile Nicel Veri Analizi Rehberi*. İstanbul: Kibele Yayınları.
- Cezair, B. (2018). *Sosyal Medyanın Ağızdan Ağıza Pazarlamaya Etkisi: Üniversite Öğrencileri Üzerinde Bir Araştırma*. Trakya Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü İşletme Anabilim Dalı. Edirne: Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Chaffey et al., D. (2000). *Internet Marketing: Strategy, Implementation and Practice*. USA: Prentice Hall.
- Chaffey, D., Ellis-Chadwick, F., Mayer, R., & Johnston, K. (2000). *Internet Marketing : Strategy, Implementation and Practice*. USA: Prentice Hall.
- Charlett, D., Garland, R., & Marr, N. (1995). "How Damaging is Negative Word of Mouth?". *Marketing Bulletin*, 42-50.
- Cheung, C., & Lee, M. (2012). "What Drives Consumers to Spread Electronic Word of Mouth in Online Consumer-opinion Platforms". *Decision Support Systems*, 2.
- Chrysanthos, D. (2003). "The Digitization of Word-of-Mouth: Promise and Challenges of Online Feedback Mechanisms". *Management Science*, 1407-1424.
- Chung, C. M., & Darke, P. R. (2006). "The Consumer as Advocate: Self-relevance, Culture and Word-of-mouth". *Marketing Letters*, 269-279.
- Churchill, G. A., & Peter, P. J. (1998). *Marketing: Creating Value for Customers* (Vol. 2). Irwin Mc Graw Hill.
- Cohen, W. A. (2000). *The Marketing Plan*. New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc.
- Crozier, R., & Ranyard, R. (1997). *Cognitive Process Models and Explanations of Decision Making by: Ranyard, Rob Crozier, W. Ray ve Svenson, Ola (Ed.)*. *Decision Making: Cognitive Models and Explanations*. London: Routledge.
- Dahlen, M., Lange, F., & Smith, T. (2010). *Marketing Communications: A Brand Narrative Approach*. New York: John Wiley and Sons Ltd.
- Dahlen, M., Lange, F., & Smith, T. (2010). *Marketing Communications: A Brand Narrative Approach*. New York: John Wiley and Sons Ltd.
- Darden, W. R., & Reynolds, F. D. (1972). "Predicting Opinion Leadership for Men's Apparel Fashions". *Journal of Marketing Research*, 324-328.
- Darden, W. R., & Reynolds, F. D. (1972). "Predicting Opinion Leadership for Men's Apparel Fashions". *Journal of Marketing Research*, 324-328.
- Deniz, E. (2008). *Markalaşma ve Reklam*. İstanbul: Kum Saati Yayınları.
- Deniz, E. (2008). *Markalaşma ve Reklam*. İstanbul: Kum Saati Yayınları.
- Dinçer, Ö. (2007). *Stratejik Yönetim ve İşletme Politikası*. İstanbul: Alfa Yayınları.

- Doh, S.-J., & Hwang, J.-S. (2009). "How Consumers Evaluate eWOM (Electronic Word-of-Mouth) Messages". *CYBERPSYCHOLOGY & BEHAVIOR*(12), 194.
- Duncan, T. R., & Everett, S. E. (1993, May-June). "Client Perceptions of Integrated Marketing Communications". 58.
- Duncan, T. R., & Evrett, S. E. (1993, May/June). "Client Perseptions of Integrated Marketing Communications". *Journal of Advertising Research*, 32.
- Durmaz et al. (2011). Kişisel faktörlerin tüketici satın alma davranışlarına etkisi üzerine bir araştırma. *Akademik Yaklaşımlar Dergisi*, 118.
- Durmaz, M. (2012). Pazarlama İletişimi Üzerine. *İstanbul Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 237. ULAKBİM Dergi Sistemleri (UDS): <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/212671> adresinden alındı
- Durmaz, Y., Oruç, R., & Kurtlar, M. (2011). Kişisel Faktörlerin Tüketici Satın Alma Davranışlarına Etkisi Üzerine Bir Araştırma. *AKADEMİK YAKLAŞIMLAR DERGİSİ*, 118.
- Eagle, L., & Kitchen, P. J. (2000). "IMC, Brand Communications and Corporate Cultures". *European Journal of Marketing*, 34(5/6), 669.
- Ebren, F. (2006). *Bütünleşik Pazarlama İletişiminin Algılanışı ve Uygulanması: Reklam Ajansları ve Firmalar Düzeyinde Araştırmalar*. Antalya: Akdeniz Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Ebren, F. (2006). *Bütünleşik Pazarlama İletişiminin Algılanışı ve Uygulanması: Reklam Ajansları ve Firmalar Düzeyinde Araştırmalar*. Antalya: Akdeniz Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Ebren, F. (2006). *Bütünleşik Pazarlama İletişiminin Algılanışı ve Uygulanması: Reklam Ajansları ve Firmalar Düzeyinde Araştırmalar*. Akdeniz Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü. Antalya: Akdeniz Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Ecer, F., & Canitez, M. (2005). *Uluslararası Pazarlama Teori ve Uygulamalar*. Ankara: Gazi Kitabevi.
- Efeoğlu, E., & Çetin, S. (2012). Örgütsel İletişimin Değerlendirilmesi: Belediyelere Dair Uygulamalı Bir Çalışma. *Çukurova Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 186.
- Elden, M., Ulukök, Ö., & Yeygel, S. (2011). *Şimdi Reklamlar*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.
- Engel, J. F., Kegerreis, R. J., & Blackwell, R. D. (1969). "Word-of-Mouth Communication by the Innovator". *Journal of Marketing*, 15-19.
- Ennew et al., C. T. (2000). "Managing Word of Mouth Communication: Empirical Evidence from India". *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 75-83.
- Erturan, E. (2021, Nisan 23). *Söylenti (Buzz) Pazarlaması ve Ağızdan Ağıza Pazarlama*. Retrieved Nisan 2022, from Dijital Serüven: <https://dijitalseruven.com/buzz-wom-pazarlama/>
- Erzor, B. (2015). *"Bütünleşik Pazarlama İletişimi Reklam Paradigması ve Göstergebilimsel Analizi"*. T.C İstanbul Üniversitesi, Halkla İlişkiler ve Tanıtım Anabilim Dalı. İstanbul: T.C İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü. Retrieved from Ulusal Tez Merkezi.
- Fındık, T. (2015). *Başarılı Satış Teknikleri ve Satış Öyküleri*. İstanbul: Omega Yayınları.
- Fan, H., & Zeng, L. (2011). *"Implementation of Green Marketing Strategy in China - A Study of the Green Food Industry"*. University of Gävle, Department of Business

- Administration and Economic Study. University of Gävle Department of Business Administration and Economic Study.
- Feick, L., & Price, L. L. (1987). The Market Maven: A Diffuser of Marketplace Information. *Journal of Marketing*, 83-97.
- Fill, C. (1999). *Marketing Communications: Contexts, Contents and Strategies* (Vol. 2). Prentice Hall Europe.
- Gökmen, T. (2014). *Sağlık Tüketicilerinin Satın Alma Kararları ve Ağızdan Ağıza Pazarlama*. Beykent Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü. İstanbul: Beykent Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Göksel, A. B., & Baytekin, P. (2007). *Temel Pazarlama Bilgileri*. İzmir: Ege Üniversitesi Basımevi.
- Gülmez, M. (2011). "İnternet Üzerinde Ağızdan Ağıza Pazarlama Uygulama Örnekleri". *İnternet Uygulamaları ve Yönetimi Dergisi*(2), 31.
- Gülmez, M., & Dört Yol, İ. T. (2009). Perakendecilik Sektöründe İş Gören (Çalışan) Tatminini Etkileyen Faktörler ve Bir Araştırma. *Manisa Celal Bayar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 7(2), 108.
- Gürbüz, A., & Erdoğan, E. (2007). Satış Çabalarının İşletme İçin Önemi. *Elektronik Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 6(22), 120.
- Güreş, G., & Çabuk, S. (2000). "Satış Tutundurma Yöntemlerinin Tüketici Satın Alma Davranışı Üzerindeki Etkisiyle İlgili Bir Araştırma". *Pazarlama Dünyası*(81), 4-11.
- Gangeshwer, D. K. (2013). E-Commerce Or Internet Marketing: A Business Review From Indian Context. *International Journal of u-and e-Service, Science and Technology*, 187-194.
- Garda, B. (2016). "Bütünleşik Pazarlama İletişimi: Konya İli Örneği". *Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Meslek Yüksekokulu Dergisi*, 19(41. Yıl Özel Sayısı), 247-250.
- Gedik, Y. (2020). "İnternet Pazarlama: Kuramsal Bir Çerçeve". *İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi Dergisi*, 424-428.
- Genç, Ş., & Senemoğlu, N. (2001). *İlköğretimde Etkili Öğretme ve Öğrenme Öğretmen El Kitabı, Modül 12*. Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Projeler Koordinasyon Başkanlığı.
- Gildin, S. Z. (2003). "Understanding the Power of Word-Of-Mouth". *Revista de Adminitracao Mackenzie*, 100.
- Gilly, M. C., Graham, J. L., Wolfenbarger, M. F., & Yale, L. J. (1998). "A Dyadic Study of Interpersonal Information Search". *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 85.
- Godes, D., & Mayzlin, D. (2004). "Using Online Conversations to Study Word-of-Mouth Communication". *Marketing Science*, 545-560.
- Godin, S. (2007). *Meatball Sundae; Your Marketing Out of Sync?* United Kingdom: Penguin Group.
- Goldsmith, R. E., & Flynn, L. R. (1999). Status Consumption in Consumer Behavior: Scale Development and Validation. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 41-52.
- Goodman, J. (2005). "Treat Your Customers As Prime Media Reps". *Business Week*(32), 46.
- Grubor, A., & Jakša, O. (2018). "Internet Marketing As A Business Necessity". *Interdisciplinary Description of Complex Systems*, 267-268.
- Hawkins, D., Mothersbaugh, D., & Kleiser, S. B. (1998). *Consumer Behavior: Building Marketing Strategy*. USA: McGraw Hill.

- Helm, S. (2010). "Viral Marketing-Establishing Customer Relationship by 'Word of Mouth'". *Electronic Markets*, 10(3), 159.
- Hoyer, W., & MacInnis, D. (2004). *Consumer Behavior*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Hoyer, W., & MacInnis, D. (2004). *Consumer Behavior*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Ünüsân, Ç., & Sezgin, M. (2005). *Turizmde Strateji Eksenli Pazarlama İletişimi*. Konya: İkia Yayıncılık.
- Ünüsân, Ç., & Sezgin, M. (2007). *Pazarlama İlkeleri*. İstanbul: Literatürk.
- İnan, E. A. (2012). "İnternet Çağında Ağızdan Ağıza Pazarlamanın Yeniden Yükselişi". *Atatürk Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Dergisi*, 26(2), 191-192.
- İncirkuş, L. (2014). "WOMM Influence on Purchase Decisions in Search, Experience and Credence Based Service Industries: A Message Oriented Approach". Fatih Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü. İstanbul: Fatih Üniversitesi.
- İslamoğlu, A. H. (1999). *Pazarlama Yönetimi( Stratejik ve Global Yaklaşım)*. İstanbul: Beta Basım Yayım.
- Isohella, L., Oikarinen, E.-L., Saarela, M., Muhos, M., & Nikunen, T. (2017). "Perceptions of Digital Marketing Tools in New Micro-Enterprises". *Management-Knowledge and Learning International Conference 2017*, 85-95.
- Jacoby, J. (1974). Components of Perceived Risk in Product Purchase: A Cross-Validation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. *Journal of Applied Psychology*(59), 287-291.
- Jalilvand, M. R., & Samiei, N. (tarih yok). "The Impact of Electronic Word of Mouth on A Tourism Destination Choice: Testing The Theory of Planned Behavior". *Internet Research*(22), 591-612.
- Jobber, D., & Lancaster, G. (2009). *Selling and Sales Management*. England: Pearson Education Limited.
- Köksal, Y., & Özdemir, Ş. (2013). Bir İletişim Aracı Olarak Sosyal Medya'nın Tutundurma Karması İçerisindeki Yeri Üzerine Bir İnceleme. *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*(18/1), 323-337.
- Kılıçer, T. (2006). "Tüketicilerin Satın Alma Kararlarında Ağızdan Ağıza İletişimin Etkisi: Anadolu Üniversitesi Öğretim Elemanları Üzerinde Bir Araştırma". Anadolu Üniversitesi. Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Kılıçer, T. (2006). *Tüketicilerin Satın Alma Kararlarında Ağızdan Ağıza İletişimin Etkisi: Anadolu Üniversitesi Öğretim Elemanları Üzerinde Bir Araştırma*. Anadolu Üniversitesi, İşletme. Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi.
- Kırçova, İ. (2002). *İnternette Pazarlama*. İstanbul: Beta Basım Yayın Dağıtım.
- Kıyıcı Çallı, M. (2017). "Pazarlamada Yeni bir Yaklaşım: Girişimsel Pazarlama". *Maliye Finans Yazıları(Özel Sayı)*, 55-194.
- Kaiser, H. F. (1970). A second generation little jiffy. *Psychometrica*, 4(35), 401-415.
- Kandır, D. (2001). *Çocuk Gelişiminde Okul Öncesi Eğitim Kurumlarının Yeri ve Önemi*. Retrieved 2022, from Milli Eğitim Dergisi: [https://dhgm.meb.gov.tr/yayimlar/dergiler/Milli\\_Egitim\\_Dergisi/151/kandir.htm](https://dhgm.meb.gov.tr/yayimlar/dergiler/Milli_Egitim_Dergisi/151/kandir.htm)
- Kaplan, S. (2009). *Fil Olun*. İstanbul: MediaCat Yayınları.
- Karabulut, M. (1990). *Satış Yönetimi ve Profesyonel Satışçılık*. İstanbul: Orion Kitabevi.
- Karaca, Y. (2010). *Tüketici Satın Alma Karar Sürecinde Ağızdan Ağıza Pazarlama*. Beta Yayınları.

- Karaoğlu, H. (2010). *Ağızdan Ağıza İletişimin Tüketici Satın Alma Kararları Üzerine Etkisi ve Borusan Telekom Çalışanları Üzerinde Bir Araştırma*. Kadir Has Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü. İstanbul: Kadir Has Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü İşletme Anabilim Dalı.
- Karaxha et al., M. (2016). "The Role of Direct Marketing in Relation with the Consumers in Kosovo". (I. I. Review, Ed.) *ILIRIA International Review*(6), 55.
- Karaxha, H., Tolaj, S., & Arjan, A. (2016). "The Role of Direct Marketing in Relation with the Consumers in Kosovo". *ILIRIA International Review*, 55.
- Karpat Aktuğlu, I. (2006). "Tüketicinin Bilgilendirilmesi Sürecinde Reklam Etiği". *Küresel İletişim Dergisi*(2), pp. 3-6.
- Kau, A.-K., & Loh, W.-Y. (2006). The Effects of Service Recovery on Consumer Abstract Satisfaction: A Comparison Between Complainants and Non-Complainants". *Journal of Service Marketing*, 2(20), 101.
- Kaya, İ. (2015). *Pazarlama Bi'tanedir*. İstanbul: Babıali Kültür - BKY.
- Keskin, D., & Çepni, B. (2012). Ağızdan Ağıza Pazarlama Kapsamında Demografik Ve Sosyal Faktörlerin Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Sinema Filmi Tercihleri Üzerindeki Etkilerinin Belirlenmesi. *Uluslararası Yönetim İktisat ve İşletme Dergisi*, 100.
- Khan, M. A. (2006). *Consumer Behaviour and Advertising Management*. New Delhi.
- Kirby, J. (2005). *Connected Marketing: The Viral, Buzz and Word of Mouth Revolution*. Routledge.
- Kitchen, P. J., & Schultz, D. E. (1999). "A Multi-Country Comparison of the Drive For IMC". *Journal of Advertising Research*, 22-34.
- Koç, G. (1996). *Anne-Babaların Okul Öncesi Eğitim Kurumu Seçimini Etkileyen Etmenler*. Gazi Üniversitesi, Gazi Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü. Ankara: Ulusal Tez Merkezi.
- Kocabaş, F., & Elden, M. (2004). *Reklamcılık Kavramlar, Kararları Kurumlar*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.
- Kocabaş, F., Elden, M., & Çelebi, İ. S. (2000). *Marketing P.R*. Ankara: Mediacat Yayınları.
- Korkut et al., Ö. İ. (2005). Bütünleşik Pazarlama İletişimi(BPİ): İçecek Sektöründe Uygulamalı Bir Araştırma. *Marmara Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 420.
- Korkut, Ö. İ., Akyol, A., & Altaş, D. (2005). Bütünleşik Pazarlama İletişimi(BPİ): İçecek Sektöründe Uygulamalı Bir Araştırma. *Marmara Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*(1), 420.
- Kotler et al. (1999). *Principles of Marketing*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc.
- Kotler, P. (1999). *Kotler on Marketing: How to Create, Win and Dominate Markets*. New York: The Free Press.
- Kotler, P. (2008). *A'dan Z'ye Pazarlama*. İstanbul: Mediacat Yayınları.
- Kotler, P. T., & Armstrong, G. (2011). *Principles of Marketing*. Pearson.
- Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (1997). *Marketing: An Introduction*. USA: Prentice Hall Inc.
- Lacobucci, D., & Calder, B. (2003). *Kellogg on Integrated Marketing*. USA: Johny Wiley&Sons Inc.
- Lam, D., & Mizerski, D. (2005, Eylül). The Effects of Locus of Control on Word-of-mouth Communication. *Journal of Marketing Communication*(11), 224.
- Laroche, M., Nepomuceno, M. V., & Richard, M. O. (2010). How Do Involvement and Product Knowledge Affect the Relationship Between Intangibility and Perceived

- Risk For Brands and Product Categories? *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 3(27), 197-210.
- Lee, M., & Cheung, C. (2012). "What Drives Consumer to Spread Electronic Word of Mouth in Online Consumer-Opinion Platforms". *Decision Support Systems*(53), 218-225.
- Lewin, K. (1943). Defining the 'field at a given time.'. *Psychological Review*, 50(3), 292-310.
- Lewis, R., & Chambers, R. (2000). *Marketing Leadership in Hospitality: Foundations and Practices*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Lin, T. M., & Cheng-Hsi, F. (2006). "The Effects of Percieved Risk On The Word-of-Mouth Communication Dyad". *Socal Behavior and Personality, An International Journal*, 1210.
- Lindell, P. G. (1997, May 26). "You Need Integrated Attitude to Develop IMC". *Marketing Mews*(31), p. 6.
- Lopez, M., & Sicilia, M. (2014). "Determinants of E-WOM Influence:The Role of Consumers Internet Experience". *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research*(9), 30.
- Low, G. S. (2000, Jan/Feb). "Correlates of Integrated Marketing Communications". *Journal of Advertising Research*, 31-35.
- Mangold, G. W., Miller , F., & Brockway, G. R. (1999). "Word-of-Mouth Communication in the Service Marketplace". *Journal of Service Marketing*(13), 73-89.
- Meltem, Y. Ö., & Aksoy, Ş. (2017). "Elektronik Ağızdan Ağıza İletişimin Pazarlama Literatüründeki Önemi". *Akdeniz İ.İ.B.F. Dergisi*, 81-100.
- Merton, R. K. (1968). *Social Theory and Social Structure*. Free Press.
- Mohr , I., & Chiagouris, L. (2005). "Get the World Out". *Marketing Management*, 53.
- Moqadamsalımı, T. (2019). *Elektronik Ağızdan Ağıza Pazarlamanın Tüketici Satın Alma Kararına Etkisi: Bir Uygulama*. Gazi Üniversitesi, İşletme. Ankara: Gazi Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Morh, I. (2007). "Buzz Marketing for Movies". *Business Horizons*, 395-403.
- Mowen, J. C., & Minor, M. (1998). *Consumer Behavior*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall International Inc.
- Mowen, J. C., & Minor, M. S. (2001). *Consumer Behavior: A Framework*. Prentice Hall.
- Mucuk, İ. (2001). *Pazarlama İlkeleri*. İstanbul: Türkmen Kitabevi.
- Mucuk, İ. (2006). *Pazarlama İlkeleri*. İstanbul: Türkmen Kitabevi.
- O'Cass, A., & Grace, D. (2004). Examining service experiences and post-consumption evaluations. *Journal of Service Marketing*, 450-461.
- Odabaşı , Y., & Oyman, M. (2002). *Pazarlama İletişimi Yönetimi*. Eskişehir: MediaCat.
- Odabaşı, Y. (1990). "Pazarlama İletişiminde Kaynağın Nitelikleri ve Türleri". *Kurgu*, 347.
- Odabaşı, Y. (1995). *Pazarlama İletişimi*. Eskişehir: İşletme Fakültesi Yayınları.
- Odabaşı, Y., & Barış, G. (2003). *Tüketici Davranışı*. İstanbul, 229-230: MediaCat Yayınları.
- Odabaşı, Y., & Cemalcılar, İ. (1995). *Pazarlama İletişimi*. Eskişehir: İşletme Fakültesi Yayınları.
- Odabaşı, Y., & Gülfidan, B. (2002). *Tüketici Davranışları*. MediaCat Yayıncılık.
- Okay, A. (1998). *Halkla İlişkiler Aracı Olarak Sponsorluk*. İstanbul: Epsilon Yayıncılık.
- Okay, A., & Okay, A. (2002). *Halkla İlişkiler ve Medya*. İstanbul: MediaCat.

- Okay, H. (2016, Mayıs 10). *Gizli Pazarlama (Stealth Marketing)*. Retrieved Nisan 2022, from NASIL BİR EKONOMİ MEDYA HABER BASIN A.Ş.:  
<https://www.dunya.com/kose-yazisi/gizli-pazarlama-stealth-marketing/28092>
- Percy, L. (2008). *Strategic Integrated Marketing Communication*. London: CPI Group.
- Petty, R. D., & Andrews, C. J. (2008). "Covert Marketing Unmasked: A Legal and Regulatory Guide for Practices That Mask Marketing Messages". *Journal of Public Policy&Marketing*, 1(27), 7.
- Philip, K. (2008). *A'dan Z'ye Pazarlama; Pazarlamayla İlgilenen Herkesin Bilmesi Gereken 80 Kavram*. MediaCat Kitapları.
- Pickton, D., & Broderick, A. (2004). *Integrated Marketing Communications*. Prentice Hall.
- Pickton, D., & Broderick, A. (2005). *Integrated Marketing Communication*. Harlow: Prentice Hall.
- Podoshen, J. S. (2008). The African American consumer revisited: brand loyalty, word-of-mouth and the effects of the black experience. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 211-222.
- Polat, C., & Çelmeli, Ö. (2015). "Okulöncesi Eğitim Kurumu Seçiminde Tüketici Tercih Etkenleri". *Kastamonu Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*(8), pp. 145-148.
- Polat, C., & Kültür, B. (2007). Tüketicilerin Perakende Mağaza Tercihini Etkileyen Faktörler: Niğde İli Örneği. *Gazi Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*(9), 109-126.
- Rashid et al., J. (2018). "Advertiser's Perception of Internet Marketing for Small and Medium Enterprises in Pakistan". (pp. 1-7). iCoMET.
- Rashid, J., Adnan, S. M., Nisar, M. W., Irtaza, A., Arafat, S. Y., & Iqbal, M. J. ('018). Advertiser's Perception of Internet Marketing for Small and Medium Enterprises in Pakistan. *2018 International Conference on Computing, Mathematics and Engineering Technologies* (s. 1-7). Pakistan: iCoMET 2018.
- Ray, M. L. (1982). *Advertising and Communication Management*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall Inc.
- Rehman, F. U., Nawaz, T., & Ilyas, M. (2014). "A Comparative Analysis of Mobile and Email Marketing Using AIDA Model.". *Journal of Basic and Applied Scientific Research*, 38-49.
- Romaniuk, J., & Sharp, B. (2016). *Markalar Nasıl Büyür?* The Kitap.
- Rosenbloom, R. S. (2000). "Leadership, Capabilities, and Technological Change: The Transformation of NCR in the Electronic Era". *Strategic Management Journals*(21), 1083-1103.
- Rothschild, M., & Stiglitz, J. (1976). Equilibrium in Competitive Insurance Markets: An Essay on the Economics of Imperfect Information. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 629-649.
- Rutz, O., & Bucklin, R. E. (2012). "Does Banner Advertising Affect Browsing for Brands? Clickstream Choice Model Says Yes, for Some". *Quantitative Marketing and Economics*, 231-257.
- Sürücü, A. (1998). *Yaşam Biçimi Ve Pazarlamada Kullanımı -Otomobil Sektöründe Bir Uygulama*. Eskişehir: Eskişehir Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Salo et al., J. (2008). Intentionally Developed Business Network for Mobile Marketing: A Case Study From Finland. *Journal of Business&Industrial Marketing*, 497-506.

- Santos, C. P., & Basso, K. (2012). "Price Unfairness: The Indirect Effect on Switching and Negative Word-of-Mouth". *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 349.
- Sarıışık, M., & Özbay, G. (2012). Elektronik Ağızdan Ağıza İletişim Ve Turizm Endüstrisindeki Uygulamalara İlişkin Bir Yazın İncelemesi. *Uluslararası Yönetim, İktisat ve İşletme Dergisi*, 8(16), 2.
- Saunders, K. M. (2002). "Confusion is the Key: A Trademark Law Analysis of Keyword Banner Advertising". *Fordham Law Review*, 543-577.
- Sağlık Özçam, D. (2021). *Sorularla Pazarlama*. İstanbul: Hiperyayın.
- Schiffman, L. G., & Kanuk, L. L. (2004). *Consumer Behavior*. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Schindler, R. M., & Bickart, B. A. (2005, January). "Published Word of Mouth: Referable, Consumer-Generated Information on the Internet". Retrieved January 2022
- Schultz, D. E., Kitchen, P. J., Kim, I., & Han, D. (2004). "Will agencies ever "get" (or understand) IMC?". *European Journal of Marketing*, 1417-1436.
- Schultz, D. E., Tannebaum, S., & Lauterborn, R. F. (1993). *Integrated Marketing Communications*. Chicago: NTC Pub Co.
- Seçim, H., & Coşkun, S. (1992). *Halkla İlişkiler*. Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi AÖF Yayını.
- Sever, N. S. (1998). *Bütünleşik Pazarlama İletişimi Yaklaşımı: Modeller, Eleştirileri ve Türkiye Özelinde Betimleyici Bir Araştırma Çalışması*. Eskişehir: Eskişehir Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Sevinç. (2005). *Erken Çocuklukta Gelişim ve Eğitimde Yeni Yaklaşımlar 1*. İstanbul: Morpa Kültür Yayınları.
- Sevinç, S. (2015). *Pazarlama İletişiminde Sosyal Medya*. İstanbul: Optimist Yayın Dağıtım.
- Seyhan, E. (2007). "Markalaşma Sürecinde Bütünleşik Pazarlama İletişiminin Yeri ve Önemi". Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Gazi Üniversitesi, Ankara.
- Sharma, N., & Sharma, R. (2016). Models of Internet Marketing. *International Journal Of Academic Research & Development JAR&D*, 51-61.
- Sharp, B., & Romaniuk, J. (2016). *Markalar Nasıl Büyür?-2*. The Kitap.
- Silverman, G. (2001). *The Secrets of Word-of-Mouth Marketing*. USA: American Management Association.
- Solmaz, B. (2004). Söylentilerin Kurumsal İletişim Açısından Değerlendirilmesi ve Bir Uygulama Örneği. *Selçuk İletişim Dergisi*, 3(3), 120-127.
- Solomon, M. (2002). *Consumer Behaviour A European Perspective*. USA: Prentice Hall.
- Solomon, M. R. (1996). *Consumer Behavior 3rd Edition*. New Jersey, USA: Prentice Hall.
- Stern, B. B., & Stephen, J. G. (1988). The Consumer as Financial Opinion Leader. *Journal Of Retail Banking*, 48.
- Tıgılı, M. (2004). *Bir Aktör Olarak Markalar*. İstanbul: Türkmen Kitabevi.
- Taşkın, Ç. (2011). *Güncel Pazarlama Yaklaşımları ; Yeşil Pazarlamadan Ağızdan Ağıza Pazarlamaya*. Bursa: Alfa Aktüel yayınları.
- Tayfur, G. (2010). *Reklamcılık*. Ankara: Nobel Yayınları.
- Tek, Ö. B. (1999). *Pazarlama İlkeleri*. İstanbul: Beta Yayıncılık.
- Tek, Ö. B., & Özgül, E. (2005). *Modern Pazarlama İlkeleri*. İzmir: Birleşik Matbaacılık.
- Timur, N., & Özmen, A. (1996). *Stratejik Küresel Pazarlama*. Eskişehir: Elif Yayınevi Yayınları.

- Tokuç, H. (2007). *Anne ve Babaların Okul Öncesi Eğitim Hakkındaki Görüş ve Beklentilerinin İncelenmesi*. Hacettepe Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü. Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Tolon, M., & Çaylak, P. (2013). Ağızdan Ağıza Pazarlama Ve Tüketicilerin Ağızdan Ağıza Pazarlamayı Kullanımları Üzerine Bir Araştırma. *Gazi Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 1-30.
- Tosun, N. B. (2003). *Pazarlama Halkla İlişkileri ve Reklâm: Bütünleşik Pazarlama İletişimi Yönlü Bir Yaklaşım*. İstanbul: Türkmen Kitabevi.
- Totten, J. C., & Block, M. P. (1994). *Analyzing Sales Promotion: Text & Cases : How to Profit from the New Power of Promotion Marketing*. Dartnell Corporation.
- Trout, J., & Rivkin, S. (2011). *Farklılaş Ya Da Öl; Ölümcül Rekabet Çağında Hayatta Kalma Sırları*. İstanbul: MediaCat Yayıncılık.
- Uçar, B. (2016). *"Satış Tutundurma Faaliyetlerinin Tüketicilerin Marka Seçimine Etkileri ve Bir Uygulama"*. İstanbul Ticaret Üniversitesi, İşletme Anabilim Dalı. İstanbul: İstanbul Ticaret Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Ural, A., & Kılıç, İ. (2021). *Bilimsel Araştırma Süreci ve SPSS ile Veri Analizi*. Ankara: Detay Yayıncılık.
- Uysal, İ., & Kılıç, A. F. (2021, Temmuz). Normal Distribution Dilemma. *Anadolu Journal Of Educational Sciences International*, 223.
- Uzunoglu, E., & Onat, F. (2009). "Çalışanların Ağızdan Ağıza Pazarlamadaki Saklı Gücü". *Pazarlama ve İletişim Kültürü Dergisi*, 5.
- Vural, İ. (2012). *İletişim*. Pegem Yayınevi.
- Vural, İ. (2012). *İletişim*. Ankara: Pegem Yayınevi.
- Wells, W. D., & Prensky, D. (1996). *Consumer Behavior*. New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Williams, K., & Page, R. (2011). Marketing to the Generations. *Journal of Behavioral Studies in Business*, 3-11.
- Williams, R. E. (1979, Ekim). "Genel İletişim Kavram ve Modelleri". *Kurgu Sayı:2*, 280-304.
- Wilson, R. (2018, Mayıs 5). *The Six Simple Principles of Viral Marketing*. Retrieved Şubat 2022, from PracticalEcommerce: <https://www.practicalecommerce.com/viral-principles>
- Yüksekbilgili, Z. (2008, 04 10). *Ağızdan Ağıza Pazarlama*. Retrieved from Pazarlama Canavarı: [www.pazarlamacanavari.com/?cat=17](http://www.pazarlamacanavari.com/?cat=17)
- Yüksel, H. A. (1994). *Bireylerarası İletişime Giriş*. Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi Yayınları.
- Yükselen, C. (2003). *Pazarlama- İlkeler& Yönetim& Örnek Olaylar*. Ankara: Detay Yayıncılık.
- Yükselen, C. (2013). *Pazarlama - İlkeler - Yönetim - Örnek Olaylar*. Ankara: Detay Yayıncılık.
- Yılmaz, E. (2005). *"Bütünleşik Pazarlama İletişiminde Pazarlama Halkla İlişkiler Ve Bir Uygulama Örneği"*. İstanbul Üniversitesi, İşletme Anabilim Dalı. İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Yadav, M. S., & Pavlou, P. A. (2014). "Marketing in Computer-Mediated Environments: Research Synthesis and New Directions". *Journal of Marketing*(20), 4.
- Yalçinkaya, T. (2001). "Sanayi ve Bilgi Toplumlarda Rekabet Ekonomisi". *Rekabet Bülteni Dergisi*(5), 59.
- Yaman, F. (2009). *"Reklamcılık Sektöründe Reklam Etiği Algılamasının Değerlendirilmesi"*. Afyon: Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.

- Yannopoulos, D. (2011). "Impact Of The Internet On Marketing Strategy Formulation". *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 1.
- Yao, B., Shanoyan, A., Peterson, H. H., Boyer, C., & Baker, L. (2019). "The Use of New-media Marketing in the Green Industry: Analysis of Social Media Use and Impact on Sales". *Agribusiness*, 281-297.
- Yavuzylmaz, O. (2008). *Ağızdan Ağıza Pazarlama ( Kocaeli’de Bulunan Dershanelerdeki Öğrenciler Üzerine Örnek Bir Araştırma )*. Kocaeli: Kocaeli Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Yağcı, M. İ., & Çabuk, S. (2014). *Pazarlama Teorileri*. İstanbul: MediaCat Yayıncılık.
- Yerlikaya, A., & Güneş, H. M. (2016, November). Development and Validation of the Achievement Test on Body Systems. *Participatory Educational Research (PER)*, 68-76.
- Yeshin, T. (1998). *Integrated Marketing Communications*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Yolaç, G., & Demir , N. (2004, Ocak). Bütünleşik Pazarlama İletişimi. 121-127. Retrieved from dergipark.org.tr: <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/944423>
- Yozgat, U., & Deniz, R. B. (2011). Ağızdan Ağıza Pazarlama (AAP) ” Olumlu Ve Olumsuz Tavsiyelerin Tüketicilerin Ürün Satın Alma Kararları Üzerindeki Etkisini Ölçmeye Yönelik Üniversite Gençleri Üzerinde Bir Araştırma. *Pazarlama ve Pazarlama Araştırmaları Dergisi*(7), 43-63.
- Yurdakul, B. (2008). "Yapılandırmacı Öğrenme Yaklaşımının Sosyal-Bilişsel Bağlamda Bilgiyi Oluşturmaya Katkısı". *Balıkesir Üniversitesi Sosyal bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*(20), s. 57.
- Zhumatayeva, M. (2006). *"Küçük ve orta ölçekli işletmelerde tutundurma faaliyetleri(Kazakistan örneği)"*. Ankara: Gazi Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Zhumatayeva, M. (2006). *"Küçük ve Orta Ölçekli İşletmelerde Tutundurma Faaliyetleri(Kazakistan Örneği)"*. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Gazi Üniversitesi, Sosyal bilimler Enstitüsü, Ankara.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: THESIS SURVEY

**CAUTION: IF** you choose “zero (0)”, your test will be ended.

**\*1. For how many children do you currently or recently make a decision about pre-school education?**

- ☐ 0
- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7 and above

**\*2. Your gender?**

- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Male

**\*3. Your age?**

- ☐ 20-30
- ☐ 31-40
- ☐ 41-50
- ☐ 51 and over

**\*4. Your education level?**

- ☐ Pre-High School
- ☐ High school
- ☐ Bachelor and above

**\*5. Your income level? (Monthly Household Income/TL)**

- ☐ 2500 and below
- ☐ 2.501-6.500

- ☐ 6.501-15.500
- ☐ 15500 and above



**\*6. Would you like to get advice from someone when you choose the pre-school education institution?**

- ☐ I would definitely take advice.
- ☐ I take advice when need more information.
- ☐ I get advice when I'm undecided.
- ☐ If it is an important educational service for my child, I take advice.
- ☐ I do not take advice.

**\*7. Did they give you advice while you are choosing the pre-school education institution?**

- ☐ No, they didn't give advice.
- ☐ Yes, they gave advice.
- ☐ I can't remember.

**\*8. Please mark the sources of information you use when choosing the pre-school education institution service. (Please tick maximum 3)**

- ☐ Family and Relatives
- ☐ Internet
- ☐ Pre-school education employees
- ☐ Friends and Colleagues
- ☐ Neighbors
- ☐ Influencers (celebrities)
- ☐ Educators

**\*9. How would you describe yourself when you get advice from others while choosing the pre-school education institution services?**

- ☐ Researcher
- ☐ Conscious
- ☐ Indecisive
- ☐ Free-rider (lazy to search)

**\*10. What do you think about the other people wants to do while they are giving advice? (please tick maximum 3)**

- ☐ Willingness to help
- ☐ Willingness to avoid risks
- ☐ Saving time that could be spent on preliminary research
- ☐ Sharing and guiding good/bad experiences
- ☐ Social responsibility

**\*11. I have voluntarily advised others about pre-school education institutions.**

- ☐ No, I did not advise.
- ☐ Yes, I have recommended.
- ☐ I can't remember.

| <p><b><u>Dear participants, please read each statement carefully in this section, and mark the option (X) that best reflects your level of agreement (opinions) with each statement according to thinking the person who influenced you the most during the decision-making process. Thanks.</u></b></p> | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral/ Uncertain | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------|--------------------|----------|-------------------|
| *1. I have complete confidence the person I refer to.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                |       |                    |          |                   |
| *2. The person I take advice from supports my views.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                |       |                    |          |                   |
| *3. I get help in daily life from the person I get advice from.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                |       |                    |          |                   |
| *4. The person I took advice from was well-informed about pre-school education institutions, services and staff.                                                                                                                                                                                         |                |       |                    |          |                   |
| *5. The person I took advice from was sufficient to provide information about the pre-school education service.                                                                                                                                                                                          |                |       |                    |          |                   |
| *6. The person I took advice from was an expert on pre-school education service.                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                |       |                    |          |                   |
| *7. The person I took advice from was educated about pre-school education service.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                |       |                    |          |                   |
| *8. The person I took advice was experienced in pre-school education service.                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                |       |                    |          |                   |
| *9. I had sufficient information about pre-school education institutions, services and employees.                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                |       |                    |          |                   |
| *10. I was experienced about pre-school education institutions, services and employees.                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                |       |                    |          |                   |
| *11. I was an expert on pre-school education institutions, services and employees.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                |       |                    |          |                   |
| *12. When purchasing pre-school education services, I ask for other people's opinions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                |       |                    |          |                   |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |  |  |  |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>*13. I don't need to talk to other people before I buy pre-school education services.</b>                                                                                                                         |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>*14. Other people can influence my choice of pre-school institutions.</b>                                                                                                                                         |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>*15. If I have little experience about the pre-school service, I usually ask my family, friends, and neighbors for their opinions on this service.</b>                                                            |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>*16. I rarely ask other people which pre-school service to purchase.</b>                                                                                                                                          |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>*17. When it comes to pre-school education services, I rely on the information I get from my family, friends and neighbors rather than the information I get from media sources (radio, TV, magazines, etc.).</b> |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>*18. When I know what other people think about the pre-school education service, I feel more secure in purchasing this service.</b>                                                                               |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>*19. Other people's opinions are not important to me when choosing a preschool education institution.</b>                                                                                                         |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>*20. I enjoy telling my friends about new pre-school institutions and the services they offer.</b>                                                                                                                |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>*21. I enjoy helping people by providing information about various pre-school institutions.</b>                                                                                                                   |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>*22. People consult me about pre-school institutions, services and staff.</b>                                                                                                                                     |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>*23. When people ask me where the best pre-school education service is located, I can say where this institution is.</b>                                                                                          |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>*24. My friends see me as a good source of information when it comes to new preschool institutions or the services they provide.</b>                                                                              |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>*25. Purchasing pre-school education services from an institution that I don't know about may result in financial losses.</b>                                                                                     |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>*26. I am worried that the pre-school education service that I will buy from an institution that I don't know about cannot provide the education that my child needs like educational performance.</b>            |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>*27. I am worried that the pre-school education institution that I have no idea about may harm my child physically like behaviors of the employees and etc.</b>                                                   |  |  |  |  |  |

|                                                                                                                                                                      |  |  |  |  |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| *28. I am worried that the pre-school education service, which I do not know about, will reduce my physical energy like difficult access to the institution and etc. |  |  |  |  |  |
| *29. I am concerned that my purchase of pre-school education services which I have no knowledge, may harm myself mentally.                                           |  |  |  |  |  |
| *30. I am concerned that my choice of pre-school education service will negatively affect the opinions of the social groups I am in.                                 |  |  |  |  |  |
| *31. I am concerned about losing time in my pre-school education service selection process.                                                                          |  |  |  |  |  |
| *32. Not having enough information about the choice of pre-school education institution can be risky for me (it makes me feel uncomfortable).                        |  |  |  |  |  |
| *33. Recommendations about pre-school education service affect me about my purchasing of pre-school education service.                                               |  |  |  |  |  |
| *34. Recommendations about the pre-school institution were influential in my decision on the pre-school service features I was looking for.                          |  |  |  |  |  |
| *35. Word of mouth communication (advice) significantly influences my views on pre-school education service.                                                         |  |  |  |  |  |
| *36. Word of mouth communication (advice) reveals the things I didn't know about pre-school education service.                                                       |  |  |  |  |  |
| *37. Word of mouth communication (advice) gives me different ideas about pre-school education service.                                                               |  |  |  |  |  |
| *38. Word of mouth communication (advice) helps me to form a clear idea about pre-school education service.                                                          |  |  |  |  |  |
| *39. Word of mouth communication (advice) helps me to make a healthy assessment about preschool education service.                                                   |  |  |  |  |  |

## Appendix 2: ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL



T.C.  
YEDİTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ  
Avrupa Çalışmaları Enstitüsü Müdürlüğü



04.12.2023

Sayı : E.61350595-050.06-316  
Konu : İlayda Taşkın Akkoyun'un Etik Kurul  
Onayı Hk.

### İLGİLİ MAKAMA

Üniversitemiz Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü İşletme Yüksek Lisans öğrencilerinden İlayda Taşkın Akkoyun'un Prof. Dr. Dilek Sağlık Özçam danışmanlığında gerçekleştireceği 'A Research About Determining the Importance of Word of Mouth Marketing For Choosing Pre-School Education Institution in Trakya' başlıklı araştırmasının Beşeri Bilimler Etik standartlarına uygunluğuna ilişkin Yeditepe Üniversitesi Beşeri ve Sosyal Bilimler Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etik Kurulu onayı ekte sunulmuştur.

Gerekli iznin verilmesi hususunu bilgilerinize arz ve rica ederim.

Prof. Dr. Fatma Yeşim EKİNCİ  
Rektör Yardımcısı

Ek: 28112023 Sosyal Bilimler Etik Kurul Kararları.pdf

Bu belge, güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır.

Belge Doğrulama Adresi : <http://belgedogrulama.yeditepe.edu.tr/bg.aspx?id=6AECE898-CB50-467A-906B-9360BB2F9FE8>

Yeditepe Üniversitesi 26 Ağustos Yerleşimi, İnönü Mahallesi Kayışdağı

Caddesi 34755

Ataşehir / İSTANBUL

Telefon No: (0216) 578 00 00 Faks No : (0216) 578 02 99

İnternet Adresi [www.yeditepe.edu.tr](http://www.yeditepe.edu.tr)

Kep Adresi : yeditepeuniversitesi@hs03.kep.tr

Bilgi İçin: Eylem BOZOK

Unvan: Enstitü Sekreteri

Telefon No:

