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CONSUMERS' COMPLAINING BEHAVIOR IN TERMS OF ASSERTIVENESS AND DISCONTENT; A FIELD STUDY FROM ESKISEHIR, TURKEY

NURCAN TURAN, NURI CALIK

Abstract:

This survey intends to find out the consumers' post-purchase behavior in terms of complaining, assertiveness, discontent and alienation. In May, 2014, a survey is applied to 537 respondents selected via stratified sampling from Eskişehir, a city of Turkey with 700.000 inhabitants where 500 of the responses are found eligible... The respondents are required to answer 35 questions of which five are related to demographic characteristics of these respondents. The rest 30 are statements which are designed to reflect the behavior of these people. The study consists of five parts. The first part is an introduction where the scope and the purpose of the study are concisely stated. The second part relates to the theoretical background of the subject matter and the prior researches carried out so far. The third part deals with research methodology, basic premises and hypotheses attached to these premises. Research model and analyses take place in this section. Theoretical framework is built and a variable name is assigned to each of the question asked or proposition forwarded to the respondents of this survey. 30 statements or propositions given to the respondents are placed on a five-point Likert scale. The remaining five questions about demographic traits as age, gender, occupation, educational level and monthly income are placed either on a nominal or ratio scale with respect to the nature of the trait. Four research hypotheses are formulated in this section. The fourth part mainly deals with the results of the hypothesis tests and a factor analysis is applied to the data on hand. Here exploratory factor analysis reduces 30 variables to six basic components as: " Consumer discontent, ad disapproval, consumer alienation, consumer assertiveness and redress, propensity to complain, claim for apology or refund" Cronbach's Alpha for scale reliability is quite high ($\alpha = 0.788$) and so is the sample adequacy ratio ($KMO = 0.883$) In addition non-parametric bivariate analysis in terms of Chi-Square is applied to test the hypotheses formulated in this respect. The fifth part is the conclusion where findings of this survey are listed.

Keywords:

Consumer discontent, ad disapproval, alienation, assertiveness, complaint, claims for refund.

JEL Classification: M31

Authors:

NURCAN TURAN, Anadolu University, Turkey, Email: nturan@anadolu.edu.tr

NURI CALIK, Turgut Ozal University, Turkey, Email: ncalik@turgutozal.edu.tr

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1. Introduction

Developments in which has advanced about business management and global competition make it difficult to survive in the world day by day. Increased number of business, leading to increased competition and customer choice and so product diversity is increasingly difficult to satisfy the customer. After purchasing behavior of consumers in this process will develop strategies for this behavior is becoming increasingly more important in the businesses. Especially, the customer-oriented marketing and relationship marketing concept are very important in the marketing world. Consumer as theory, goes to evaluate the purchase decision that gave way after purchase and faced with the following situation (Odabaşı, 1996: 184).

- Consumers are satisfied
- Consumers are partially satisfied
- Consumers are not satisfied

If there is a negative difference between consumer expectations and the product performance is not satisfied with the product purchased by the customer and is subject dissatisfaction (Kotler, Armstrong, 2008: 149). In this case, customer will have the negative attitude towards product and business and will arise complaint behavior. Displeased and dissatisfaction don't just appear when customer expectations have to meet the performance of the product or service. Relationship which is established with customers can lead to dissatisfaction (Bariş, 2006: 23). In such a case, the customer support after sales, customer a series created to resolve complaints or burden in terms of business material to another expression can lead to the reduction of economic transaction or elimination (Turgut, 2015: 904). In this study, consumer complaints, imposition, after buying behavior in terms of dissatisfaction and alienation it has tried to put forward. The results of this study is to contribute to the understanding of the behavior of customers who are not satisfied after the purchase, it is thought to contribute to improving the performance of businesses and thus profits on customer satisfaction and customer retention.

2. Literature Review

Complaint behavior is defined as a series of acts which result from customer have dissatisfaction about a product post purchase (Lam and Tang, 2003: 71). On the other hand complaint is feedback which is sending by customer (Bell, Mengüç and Stefani, 2004: 113). Crie (2003: 61) defined consumer complaint behavior as a process that "constitutes a subset of all possible responses to perceived dissatisfaction around a purchase episode, during consumption or during possession of the goods or services". Singh (1990) identified consumer complaint behavior as the consumer dissatisfaction response style. Complaints affected by a number of variables such as situational factors,

customer personality, products and services and caused by dissatisfaction with the level of complaints, competition in the market situation, and consumer's attitude towards complaints, the attitude of the company related to complaints, demographic characteristics and the level of knowledge. Therefore, it is a complex process (Singh and Widing, 1991; Master, 2002: 108). The person who buys the goods and services of a company, to satisfy the expectations refers to the initial complaint (Lapra and Tsirikrisis, 2006: 352). Customer complaints are an important part of customer relations and in providing excellent customer satisfaction, has an important role of customer complaints. Excellent customer service complaints from customers taking their business does not mean that the provision. The essential reason for complaints often take customers' complaints are the lack of behavior (Heppell, 2006). Instead of complaining customers are not satisfied with the investigations as to leave the company shows that 96% have tried other ways. (Barış, 2006: 54, 55). Therefore, firms are assessment not satisfied customer complaints which should not 4% as it is much more aware. Firms should not have a problem about complained customer but also they should think a chance and can take care. The company is allowed itself to increase and improve customer satisfaction by complained customer. If the business have right strategies, it has customers loyalty, protect against the negative effects of the image that customers provide to transmit positive messages about themselves and blocking word of mouth communication, increasing customer perceived quality and achieves such deals to increase their business revenue (Peace, 2006, 15,16; Larivet and Brouard 2010: 540). Customer complaints management is defined as the study of the solution together with the reasons the availability of the factors causing dissatisfaction in the customer obtaining the opportunity to question and constitutes one of the most important managerial tool to ensure customer satisfaction (Barlow, Moller, 1998).

Singh (1990), Bearden and Mason (1984), Day (1984) and Richins (1982) in their work as researchers have revealed that the relationship between attitude towards complaints and responses to complaints. Richins (1982), that they have more complaints by consumers who tend to have a more positive attitude towards complaints and more complaints have revealed that they found. Lerman (2006), with the consumer's kindness has revealed that the relationship between the behaviors complained. Customers who complained about having to complain earlier experience, who have a more positive attitude to complain, are more self-confident and assertive person (Singh, 1990: 62). Individuals can describe their feelings as to express respect for the feelings and rights of others, assertiveness, customers in this regard are effective in showing the behavior complained.

Scientific studies has revealed that on the behavior of consumer complaints are very important recent days (Maute&William, 1993; Blodgett et al, 1993; Barlow&Moller, 1996; Eccles & Durand, 1998; Tax et al, 1998; Blodgett&Anderson, 2000; Nyer, 2000; Liu & McClure, 2001; Maxam&Netemeyer 2002; Kim, C., Kim, S., Im, & Shin, 2003; Lam&Tang, 2003; Heung & Lam, 2003; Ndubisi & Tam, 2004; Otto et al, 2005; Blodgett, Hill ve Bakir,

2006; Lerman, 2006, Ndubisi & Tam, 2007; Homburg&Andreas, 2007; Blodgett ve Li, 2007; Bolkan ve Daly, 2008; Fox, 2008; Haverila&Naumann, 2009; Hansen, Wilke ve Zaichkowsky, 2009; Ashley ve Varki, 2009; Hakimah et.al. 2010; Larivet&Brouard, 2010; Tolon&Zengin, 2011; Perkins; 2012; Iyiola&Ibidunni; 2013; Komunda, 2013).

Consumer alienation itself in the market, we try to demonstrate the behavior of consumers after the purchase constitutes another dimension of our research. Philosophy, sociology, psychology, law, politics, economics such as social sciences have been discussed extensively about alienation and have been continued to be a problem in protecting and timeliness including uncertainties. The first time the concept of alienation Hegel in philosophy, and political concepts were included by Rousseau. The first concrete clutch size has been winning Marx (Akyildiz, 1998: 163). The concept of alienation Marx earned the economic field, is a step that must go through the human and labor products from the severed workers, labor, to the product of the labor of output, society and himself alienated (Kiyani, 2011: 86).

Alienation is a social phenomenon which is growing. The concept of alienation has a lot of definitions other diciplines in social sciences but generally it means that the individual self, which can be expressed in no stranger himself to feel towards society and nature (Allison, 1978, 595; Bearden, Mason, 1983, 6). John (1976) has revealed alienation is a concept related to people's innternal and extenal harmony to the world and people's internal world and is emerging as a result of thinking about their own selves. Several authors in the literature have focused on different aspects of the concept.

According to Lambert (1980) alienation is that powerlessness, meaninglessness and cultural alienation and Allison (1978) revealed that formlessness, powerlessness, social isolation and self-alienation; Burbach (1972) put forwarded that powerlessness, meaninglessness and self-alienation; Middleton (1963) powerlessness, meaninglessness , formlessness, cultural alienation, social alienation and work alienation, according to Dean (1961) alienation is mean that weakness, formlessness and social isolation and Seaman (1959) has addressed the concept of social isolation and self-alienation sizes which are powerlessness, meaninglessness, formlessness. Seaman (1959) has found itself a large place which is alienation, socio-psychological point of view and from the point of approaching in terms of bringing clarity to the confusion in the literature (Kiyani, 2011: 90, 91).

3. Research Model and Hypotheses

In May, 2014, a survey is applied to 537espondents selected via stratified sampling from Eskişehir, a city of Turkey with 700.000 inhabitants where 500 of the responses are found eligible... The respondents are required to answer 35 questions of which five are related

to demographic characteristics of these respondents. The rest 30 are statements which are designed to reflect the behavior of these people.

3.1 Variables Grouped into Components and with Parameters Assigned

The variables used in the analyses and their explanations are as follows:

Table 1. Variables and Their Explanations

Variable	Explanation	Mean	SD
A – CONSUMER DISCONTENT			
ADSDNTRH	Many people believe that advertisements do not always tell the truth.	2.60	1.15
NOTTRCUS	Chain-stores are very big today; so they cannot treat their customers personally.	2.83	1.13
SELFCONC	The only person who cares about consumer is the consumer himself.	2.76	1.17
NOLSTCMP	Companies are unwilling to listen to, or do little about consumer complaints.	3.09	1.20
SLSMNOTB	In many occasions even the salesmen don't really believe in what they say to their customers.	2.73	1.19
MONEYNOS	Business's prime objective is to make money instead of satisfying its customers.	3,41	1,27
B - AD DISAPPROVAL			
SPENDEXT	Advertising tempts people to spend their money extravagantly.	2.34	1.24
COMMKUNH	Commercials make a person unhappy with himself; since he cannot afford everything he sees there.	2.65	1.20
STOPPADS	If all advertising were stopped, the consumer would be better off.	2.49	1.19

NOSPECIA	Advertised "specials" aren't usually available in the stores; so the shopper gets disappointment.	2.90	1.29
NOSHOWAD	Advertised "specials" aren't usually in the store when the shopper goes there.	2.52	1.19
ADTELLSN	Advertising tells the shopper about anything he already knows.	2.56	1.25
C – CONSUMER ALIENATION			
BRNAPURC	It is embarrassing to bring a purchase back to the store either for change or refund.	2.52	1.14
WONDRWHY	After making a purchase , I often find myself wondering "why"	2.61	1.18
BESTBUYK	It is difficult to know what store offers the best buy.	2.81	1.13
SAMEBRND	Most brands are the same with just different names and labels.	2.39	1.15
MONEYNOS	Business's prime objective is to make money instead of satisfying its customers.	3,41	1,27
STRSDNCR	Stores do not care why people buy their products as long as they make a profit	3.30	1.10
RETCOMPL	I return and complain about a product even it is inexpensive.	3.84	1.07
D – CONSUMER ASSERTIVENESS AND REDRESS			
EXTBADSR	I would not hesitate to inform the store management, if I am confronted with an extremely bad service in a store.	4.09	1.00
TERMCOND	If a salesperson comes to my door and tries to sell something which I don't need, I immediately terminate the conversation.	4.07	1.01
NOCALLNO	I can easily hang up the phone if someone calls me and tries to sell something I don't need.	3.73	1,05
COPEWAGG	I know how to cope with aggressive salespeople.	3.70	1.08
E – PROPENSITY TO COMPLAIN			

NOTIFYMN	I would attempt to notify a store manager if I thought service in a store was particularly bad.	2.99	1.21
COMPDISS	If I am dissatisfied with a product, I will complain.	3,13	1.21
NEVERFEE	I never find it embarrassing to return or exchange products I am dissatisfied with.	3.33	1.07
RETUNSPR	I am probably more likely to return an unsatisfactory product than most people I know.	2.87	1.17
F – CLAIM FOR APOLOGY OR REFUND			
NOATTENT	If I could not get attention in a shop, I mention that you would like to receive an apology	2.97	1.15
ASKFORAP	If I were not treated properly in a store I ask for an apology for what happened.	3.91	1.01
ASKFORRF	If a product does not satisfy me after purchase I ask directly for a refund.	3.32	1.07
PART 6 CONSUMER DEMOGRAPHICS			
AGE	Age	2.11	0.91
GENDER	Gender	(X)	(X)
OCCUPATN	Occupation	(X)	(X)
EDUCATIO	Educational level	2.31	0.72
INCOMELV	Income level	2.87	1.07

(X) Placed on nominal scale

The parts above (except consumer demographics) represent the components of the factor analysis where highest factor loading is assigned to the first variable of each part.

3.2 Distribution of Consumer Demographics

As far as the consumer demographics are concerned, the following pie charts show how they are distributed as to the respondents:

3.4 Hypotheses

Several research hypotheses are developed to be tested as follows:

H1: There is a significant inverse (negative relationship between consumer alienation and consumer assertiveness and redress.

H2: Consumer discontent is negatively related to propensity to complain.

H3: There is a significant direct (positive relationship between consumer propensity to complain and consumer claim for apology or refund.

H4: Consumers differ significantly by their demographic characteristics and their attitudes towards different complaining behavior.

4. Analyses and Results

Hypotheses Tests Results

Bi-variate analysis of test results proved the following results:

4.1 The Relationship Between Consumer Alienation and Consumer Assertiveness and Redress.

H1 is accepted almost at all levels (six out of nine) of these two components.

Table 2. Relationship Between Consumer Alienation and Consumer Assertiveness and Redress

	CONSUMER ALIENATION		
	It is embarrassing to bring a purchase back to the store either for change or refund.	After making a purchase , I often find myself wondering "why"	It is difficult to know what store offers the best buy.

	Agree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Disagree %
CONSUMER ASSERTIVENESS AND REDRESS						
I would not hesitate to inform the store management, if I am confronted with an extremely bad service in a store.	21.4 72.0 (X)	71.4 7.2 (X)	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	32.6 83.1	11.3 14.5
If a salesperson comes to my door and tries to sell something which I don't need, I immediately terminate the conversation.	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	30.3 68.0 (X)	18.8 20.7 (X)
I can easily hang up the phone if someone calls me and tries to sell something I don't need.	14.6 83.5	25.0 14.4	19.8 85.4	37.6 18.7	18.9 87.4	37.5 20.7

(X) Accepted at $\alpha < 0.05$

4.2 The Relationship Between Consumer Alienation and Consumer Assertiveness and Redress

H2 is denied at all levels of these two components.

Table 3. Relationship Between Consumer Discontent and Propensity to Complain,

	PROPENSITY TO COMPLAIN					
	I would attempt to notify a store manager if I thought service in a store was particularly bad		If I am dissatisfied with a product, I will complain.		I never find it embarrassing to return or exchange products I am dissatisfied with.	
	Agree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Disagree %
CONSUMER DISCONTENT						
Many people believe that advertisements do not always tell the truth.	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained
Chain-stores are very big today; so they cannot treat their customers personally.	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained
The only person who cares about consumer is the consumer himself.	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained

4.2 The Relationship Between Consumer Propensity to Complain and Consumer Claim for Apology or Refund.

H3 is accepted at almost all levels (6 out of 9) of the contingency table below. Only two levels proved the opposite (negative relationship) and only one level is rejected.

Table 4. Relationship Between Consumer Propensity to Complain and Consumer Claim for Apology or Refund.

	CLAIM FOR APOLOGY OR REFUND					
	If I could not get attention in a shop, I mention that you would like to receive an apology.		If I were not treated properly in a store I ask for an apology for what happened.		If a product does not satisfy me after purchase I ask directly for a refund.	
	Agree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Disagree %
PROPENSITY TO COMPLAIN						
I would attempt to notify a store manager if I thought service in a store was particularly bad.	35.2 35.3	38.8 46.4	70.6 16.7 (XX)	24.2 72.2 (XX)	25.5 47.8	20.9 43.4
If I am dissatisfied with a product, I will complain.	47.7 33.9	48.9 46.4	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	30.8 47.8	14.3 34.8
I never find it embarrassing to return or exchange products I am dissatisfied with.	30.9 42.9	61.5 39.3	69.1 22.2 (XX) (X)	23.1 55.5 (XX) (X)	34.6 47.8	30.8 34.8

(X) Accepted at $\alpha < 0.05$

(XX): Inversely correlated.

4.5 The Demographic Characteristics of the Consumers in Conformity With Their Complaining Behavior..

Table 6. Demographic Characteristics of the Consumers in Conformity With Their Complaining Behavior.

Different Approaches in Consumer Complaining Behavior	Consumer Demographics				
	Age	Gender	Occupation	Education Level	Income Level
A – CONSUMER DISCONTENT					
Many people believe that advertisements do not always tell the truth.	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained
Chain-stores are very big today; so they cannot treat their customers personally.	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained
The only person who cares about consumer is the consumer himself.	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained
B - AD DISAPPROVAL					
Advertising tempts people to spend their money extravagantly.	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Self-employed 40.0% (X)	Not Sustained	\$3200 58.8%
Commercials make a person unhappy with himself; since he cannot afford everything he sees there.	26-40 37.2%	Not Sustained	Self-employed 43.2%	College-University 36.4%	\$3200 58.8%
If all advertising were stopped, the consumer would be better off.	26-40 30.7%	Not Sustained	Self-employed	College-University	\$3200 64.7%

		d	41.1%	y 31.8%	
C – CONSUMER ALIENATION					
It is embarrassing to bring a purchase back to the store either for change or refund.	26-40 27.7% (X)	Not Sustained	Self-employed 42.1%	College-University 29.8%	\$3200 50.0%
After making a purchase , I often find myself wondering "why"	26-40 29.0% (X)	Not Sustained	Self-employed 44.2%	College-University 32.4%	\$1601-3200 39.6%
It is difficult to know what store offers the best buy.	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Self-employed 48.3%	College-University 36.9%	\$3200 70.5%
D – CONSUMER ASSERTIVENESS AND REDRESS					
I would not hesitate to inform the store management, if I am confronted with an extremely bad service in a store.	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Elementary 90.5% (X)	\$801-1600 88.1%
If a salesperson comes to my door and tries to sell something which I don't need, I immediately terminate the conversation.	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	\$801-1600 88.7%
I can easily hang up the phone if someone calls me and tries to sell something I don't need.	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	\$801-1600 73.2% (X)
E – PROPENSITY TO COMPLAIN					
I would attempt to notify a store manager if I thought service in a store was particularly bad.	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Self-employed 70.1%	Not Sustained	\$0-400 70.6%
If I am dissatisfied with a product, I will complain.	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Self-employed	Not Sustained	\$0-400 70.6%

		d	63.1%		(X)
I never find it embarrassing to return or exchange products I am dissatisfied with.	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Self-employed 64.2% (X)	Not Sustained	\$1601-3200 58.5%
F – CLAIM FOR APOLOGY OR REFUND					
If I could not get attention in a shop, I mention that you would like to receive an apology	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained
If I were not treated properly in a store I ask for an apology for what happened.	18-25 78.0% (X)	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	\$0-400 85.4%
If a product does not satisfy me after purchase I ask directly for a refund.	Not Sustained	Not Sustained	Retired 55.8% (X)	Not Sustained	\$0-400 62.5%

Conclusion

In this study positive traits of complaining behavior (consumer assertiveness, propensity to complain, claim for apology or refund, consumer assertiveness and redress) is tallied with negative ones (consumer discontent, ad disapproval and consumer alienation) so as to get some solid results. The relationship between consumer alienation and consumer assertiveness and redress proved to be negative in four of the nine cases where only two cases produced positive relationships.

On the other hand two opposing factors such as “propensity to complain” and “consumer discontent” when related to each other produced no solid results and their assumed negative relationship is denied at all levels of proposed contingency.

The proposed positive relationship between two “supporting” factors as “consumer propensity to complain” and “consumers’ claim for apology for refund” is sustained as expected in six of the nine cases.

From “consumer demographics” point of view, there is no significant difference between them as far as “consumer discontent” factor is considered. All variables listed under this factor proved the same. On the other hand the profiles of the consumers opposing

advertisements are unanimously “young adults 26-40 years of age”; “self-employed people professionals and managers”; “college or university graduates” and “highest income group, +\$3200/month”. The same is true for the “consumer alienation” factor, where exactly the same demographic profiles take part, with one addition in income group with a monthly income of \$1601-3200. The group of consumers, who are assertive and look for redress are “elementary school graduates” and middle income group (\$801-1600/month). “Propensity to complain” behavior is mostly adopted by “professionals, managers and self-employed people” and lowest income group. Finally, “claim for apology or refund” is widely practiced by youngsters 18-25 year of age, retired people and lowest income group.

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