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EFFECTS OF CONTENT MARKETING ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND BRAND LOYALTY

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Abstract. It is considered that the content marketing strategies implemented by the companies affect the satisfaction of the consumers and their loyalty towards the brand positively or negatively. The aim of this study is to investigate whether the content marketing strategies of the companies have an effect on customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. Within the scope of the research, content marketing was examined from four sub-dimensions, while customer satisfaction and brand loyalty were examined as one-dimensional. As a result of the factor analysis, content marketing was represented in a two-dimensional structure, while customer satisfaction and brand loyalty were represented in a one-dimensional structure. As a result of the regression analysis, it was determined that the interaction and information dimensions, which are the sub-dimensions of content marketing, positively influence customer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

Keywords: *Consumer Behavior, Customer, Branding, Satisfaction and Loyalty*

Rezumat. Se consideră că strategiile de content marketing implementate de companii afectează pozitiv sau negativ satisfacția consumatorilor și loialitatea acestora față de brand. Scopul acestui studiu este de a investiga dacă strategiile de content marketing ale companiilor manifestă efect asupra satisfacției clienților și loialității mărcii. În cadrul cercetării, content marketingul a fost examinat din patru sub-dimensiuni, în timp ce satisfacția clienților și loialitatea față de marcă au fost examinate ca fiind unidimensionale. Ca urmare a analizei factoriale, marketingul de conținut a fost reprezentat într-o structură bidimensională, în timp ce satisfacția clienților și loialitatea mărcii au fost reprezentate într-o structură unidimensională. În urma analizei de regresie, s-a determinat că dimensiunile de interacțiune și informație, care sunt sub-dimensiuni ale content marketingului, influențează pozitiv satisfacția clienților și loialitatea mărcii.

Cuvinte cheie: *Comportamentul consumatorului, client, branding, satisfacție și loialitate.*

1. Introduction

Today, firms have started to give importance to customer-oriented strategies rather than product-oriented strategies [1]. Firms direct their resources toward identifying the structure of their existing and potential customers. Since firms do not have the resources to privilege all their customers, they focus on the customer group with the greatest value [2]. Considering that the biggest factor in customers' preference for businesses is the value offered by companies to customers, creating the best value for the customer is one of the most effective factors that ensure brand loyalty [3]. In this context, the aim of this study is to investigate the effect of content marketing on brand loyalty and customer satisfaction. It has been determined that there are domestic and foreign studies on content marketing, brand loyalty, and customer satisfaction in the literature. In this study, in the second section, literature information about content marketing, brand loyalty, and customer satisfaction is given. In the third section, information about the method and methodology of the research is given. In the fourth section, the results of the analyses including the findings of the research are given. In the last section, comments and discussions are made on the results and hypotheses of the research. This study will make a difference to the literature in terms of examining the effect of content marketing on brand loyalty and customer satisfaction in Turkish Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) operators.

2. Literature Review

Content marketing is a contemporary marketing strategy with many long-term benefits, such as building brand loyalty by engaging the target audience with valuable content without using promotional techniques. Unlike promoting products or services, content marketing is a branding method that creates and distributes relevant and valuable content to attract and engage the target audience. There are many definitions of content marketing in the literature [4]. It is defined that content marketing as the technique of creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to a clearly defined target group in order to develop a business's brand and thought leadership. The idea is that the material and information distributed increase brand awareness, promote customer loyalty and brand credibility, and provide target groups with valuable and interesting information about an area of interest [5].

Contrary to popular belief, content marketing is not a new discovery. Companies have been creating and distributing content for many years in order to establish new business environments, attract new customers, and retain existing customers. The main differences in content marketing from traditional advertising and marketing [6]; (1) Content marketing uses content to make sales, not sales itself, (2) It is not advertising, (3) It is not a push strategy. Content marketing is a pull strategy, not a kind of showering of messages to consumers. It is the production of interesting, entertaining, educational and helpful information when consumers need it [6]. According to scholars, the main reasons why businesses or marketing experts use content marketing are as follows: -Customers' desire to have more information about the product they want to buy, -Content marketing tools can analyze and measure customers' wishes and desires better than traditional marketing, -Low cost compared to traditional marketing activities, -In recent years, technology is cheap and accessible [7]. Thus, small companies can create valuable content about their products and deliver them to the target audience more easily. The success of content marketing in achieving its goal depends on the value of the content. Valuable content should be useful, educational, and inspiring for

customers [8]. So much so that while creating content for customers, it is imperative that it is a valuable, purposeful, and compelling story [7]. Indeed, those who want to reach customers, who are their target audience, create creative story content [9].

Brand loyalty is the strength of the relationship between positive attitudes towards a brand and protection behavior [10]. Brand loyalty is the intense commitment and determination to repurchase or patronize the same brand or set of brands over and over again in the future, despite potential marketing and other situational influences that may cause behavior change [11]. It is also stated that as brand loyalty increases, brand sales also increase [12]. Brand loyalty shows the degree of passion and commitment of customers to the brand. It is said that brand loyalty provides marketing advantages such as reducing marketing costs, providing more new customers and creating more commercial leverage. Brand loyalty leads to positive word-of-mouth communication and increases the number of customers who are more resistant to competitive strategies [13]. Unlike repeat purchase behavior, brand loyalty consists of two dimensions: behavioral loyalty and attitudinal loyalty. While behavioral loyalty refers to the behavior of repeatedly purchasing a single brand among many brands within the same product group, attitudinal loyalty refers to the degree of a strong commitment to the brand for repeat purchase due to the characteristics of the brand that the customer is satisfied with [14]. Until today, many studies have been conducted on customer satisfaction in fields such as psychology, marketing, accounting and management. For marketers, it has been one of the most studied areas [15]. As a definition, customer satisfaction can be considered as the reaction process related to the evaluation of the differences between the expectations of the customer before the purchase action and the product or service performance realized after the purchase [16]. When customer satisfaction is considered conceptually, the striking aspect is that it emerges after the act of purchase. When we look at another feature, it requires a tactical focus for good service delivery. The most important feature is that it emerges with the existing customer and the finalization of existing offerings [17]. Customer satisfaction is the main output of marketing. Therefore, it is important for businesses. Businesses need to be able to satisfy their customers in order to make a profit. For this reason, customer satisfaction is very important for companies. In addition, customer satisfaction emerges as a result of purchasing behavior. This shows how much the customer likes or dislikes the product [18].

The research model established as a result of the literature review was constructed as 3 basic variables and 4 sub-dimensions, namely content marketing, brand loyalty and customer satisfaction.

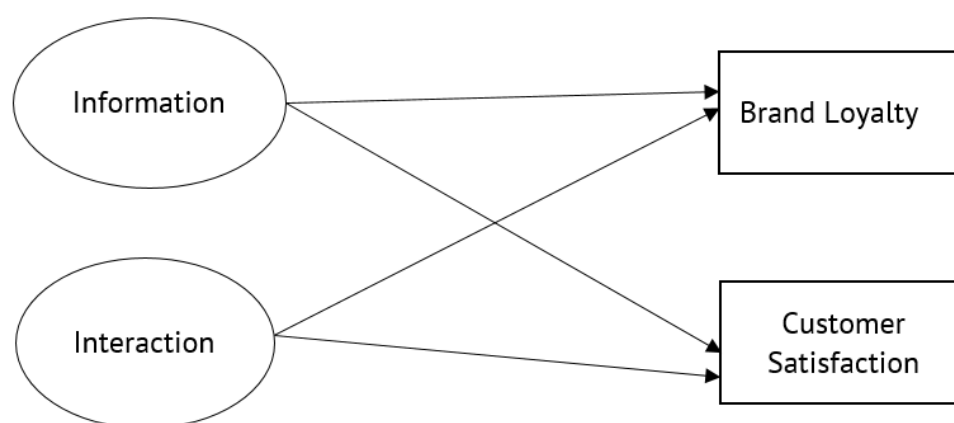


Figure 1. The Research Model of the Study.

As a result of the factor analysis conducted as a result of the scope of the research, the model was constructed as three variables and two sub-dimensions since two dimensions were perceived from four dimensions for content marketing.

The research hypotheses were established by considering the model in Figure 1. Firstly, the relationship between content marketing and brand loyalty is constructed. It is hypothesized that companies attract the attention of users by preparing informative content about their products and services and that individuals using the products and services will positively affect brand loyalty and customer satisfaction. It is also predicted that companies' preparation of promotions and campaigns that include content showing that products and services are interactive and reliable will positively affect users' loyalty to the brand and customer satisfaction. Based on the above text, the following hypotheses were constructed; H_{1a}: Interaction, which is a sub-dimension of content marketing, has a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

H_{1b}: Information, which is a sub-dimension of content marketing, has a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

H_{2a}: Interaction, which is a sub-dimension of content marketing, has a positive effect on brand loyalty.

H_{2b}: Information, which is the sub-dimension of content marketing, has a positive effect on brand loyalty.

3. Materials and Methods

In this research, quantitative method was preferred for both the conceptual structure and the data to be obtained. Under this heading, information about the population and sample of the research, data collection technique and process, scales used, research model, hypotheses and research limitations will be shared.

The population of this research consists of all individuals using GSM operators in Turkey. Since the research population is very large and difficult to reach, it was decided to take a sample that can represent the population. In terms of cost and time, it has been decided that the sampling method that will reach the required target group is convenience sampling. Since the number of people using GSM operators in the research is not known exactly, the sampling formulas used in the literature in cases where the number of the universe is not known will be used. Sekaran's "Research Methods for Business: A Skill-Building Approach", the sample size determination formula developed by Sekaran was utilized. According to this formulation, for a population size of over 1,000,000 people, the lower limit of the sample size is determined as 384 with 95% confidence interval and 5% margin of error [19]. However, in order to increase the generalizability of the research results, it is considered an acceptable criterion to reach at least five times the number of items in the data collection tool [20]. Under these results, since the scale used in the research contains 36 items, the participation of 180 people is sufficient for statistically valid results.

Online survey method was used to collect data in the study. The questionnaire form prepared in four parts is based on the studies in the literature. In the first part of the questionnaire form, there are 8 questions to determine the demographic characteristics of the individuals participating in the research. In the second part, there are five statements to measure the brand loyalty of the participants. In the third part, there are 14 statements to measure the attitudes of the participants towards content marketing. In the last part of the questionnaire form, there are 9 statements to measure the customer satisfaction of the

participants. In order to measure the statements related to content marketing, brand loyalty and customer satisfaction, five-point Likert-type evaluation criteria (1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neither Disagree nor Agree, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree) were preferred as used in the original scales in the literature. After the questionnaire form was created, it was submitted to the approval of Düzce University Ethics Committee and approval for compliance with scientific research and publication ethics was provided. Afterwards, the questionnaire form for the application was organized as an online survey via the Google form site. The entire survey application was carried out between 6 April and 17 May.

The study has some limitations in terms of scope, content, and methodological aspects. While there are many factors affecting brand loyalty and customer satisfaction in terms of scope and content, only content marketing has been evaluated.

4. Results

At the stage of testing the hypotheses, there are two different types of tests: parametric and nonparametric tests. At the stage of deciding which test to use here, it is important whether the data are normally distributed or not. If the data are normally distributed, parametric tests are used and if not, non-parametric tests are used. At the stage of deciding whether the data are normally distributed or not, there are various assumptions. For instance, the fact that the skewness and kurtosis values are between +2 and -2 it is indicate that [21] the data are normally distributed. In the light of this information, our data fulfill the normal distribution condition. The tests we used are parametric tests. In this section, frequency analysis will be used to examine the demographic characteristics of the individuals participating in the research, and factor analysis and regression analysis will be analyzed for the variables that make up the research model.

Frequency analysis was performed to examine the demographic characteristics of the individuals participating in the research.

Table 1

Frequency Analysis Table for Demographic Characteristics

Gender	N	%	Occupation	N	%
Male	176	42.1	Officer	118	28.2
Female	242	57.9	Private Sector	137	32.8
Marital Status			Housewife	13	3.1
Married	138	33.0	Student	117	28.0
Single	280	67.0	Unemployed	33	7.9
Age			Income		
18-25	118	28.2	8510 ₺ -	144	34.4
26-33	200	47.8	8511 ₺ - 14999 ₺	153	36.6
34-41	47	11.2	15000 ₺ +	121	28.9
42-49	21	5.0	Duration of use		
50+	32	7.7	0-5 years	129	30.9
Education			5-10 years	132	31.6
Primary School	22	5.3	10-15 years	87	20.8
High School	29	6.9	15 + years	70	16.7
Associate Degree	19	4.5	GSM Operator		
Undergraduate	167	40.0	Turkcell	147	35.2
Postgraduate	181	43.3	Türk Telekom	149	35.6
			Vodafone	122	29.2

The frequency test includes information on the gender, age, education level, income level, occupational group, marital status, the number of years of using the line and the number of years of using the operator used by the individuals participating in the research.

According to the table above, it is observed that the respondents are mostly female (57.9%) and single (67%). It is observed that the majority of the individuals participating in the research are in the age range of 26-33 (47.8%) and have bachelor's and higher education level (83.3%). When the occupations of the participants are considered, it is identified that they are mostly private sector employees (32.8%). Considering the income level of the participants, it was determined that most individuals with an income between 8511 ₺-14999 ₺ participated. When we look at the number of years the participants have been using the operator they use, it is observed that there are mostly users between 0-10 years. When we look at which operator the participants use, it was determined that they mostly use Türk Telekom and Turkcell.

The reason for conducting factor analysis in the research is to determine how many dimensions the variables in the study are gathered under. Here, factor analyses of content marketing, customer satisfaction and brand loyalty are presented.

Table 2

Factor Analysis Findings of Variables

Factors	Items	KMO	Barlett's Test	Variance Explained	Eigenvalue
Brand Loyalty	5	0.85	0.000	75.66	3.78
Interaction (Content Marketing)	4	0.84	0.000	46.80	3.27
Information (Content Marketing)	3			37.07	2.59
Customer Satisfaction	8	0.94	0.000	82.20	6.57

It is determined that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value and Barlett test results are suitable for performing factor analysis in the factor analysis performed for the brand loyalty variable. Rotation technique varimax rotation technique was used in factor analysis. As a result of the analysis, a unidimensional structure emerged. The total variance explained by the unidimensional structure is 75.66%. In the first factor analysis for content marketing, the expressions related to the entertainment and trust dimensions, which were collected under a single dimension and had low factor loadings, were removed. As a result of the subsequent factor analysis, it was determined that KMO and Barlett test results were appropriate to perform factor analysis. As a result of this information, a two-dimensional structure emerged in the factor analysis. The total variance explained by the two-dimensional structure is 83.87. In the factor analysis conducted for customer satisfaction, one expression that constitutes a different dimension was removed and the results of KMO and Barlett test were found to be suitable for factor analysis in the factor analysis performed on the remaining 8-expression one-dimensional structure. The total variance explained of the resulting unidimensional structure is 82.20.

Descriptive statistics and reliability coefficients of the variables are given in the Table 3.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics					
Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	α
Customer Satisfaction	3.47	1.00	-0.70	-0.00	0.96
Interaction (Content Marketing)	2.67	1.14	0.18	-1.01	0.93
Information (Content Marketing)	3.46	0.97	-0.87	0.46	0.90
Brand Loyalty	3.30	1.01	-0.40	-0.52	0.91

Customer satisfaction and brand loyalty were observed to be moderately significant by the participants. It was observed that the information dimension of content marketing was perceived at a higher level than the interaction dimension. Skewness and kurtosis values of the variables show that the data are normally distributed. When the reliability coefficients of the variables were analyzed, it was found that the Cronbach alpha values were quite high.

Simple regression analysis findings are presented to examine the interactions between the variables in the study and to test the hypotheses. It is stated at the very beginning of the findings section that the normal distribution condition is one of the necessary conditions for performing regression analysis [22].

Table 4

Regression Analysis Results of the Effect of Interaction on Customer Satisfaction

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	P
Constant	2.67	0.11		22.66	0.00
Interaction	0.297	0.04	0.33	7.32	0.00

Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction, R: 0.33; R²: 0.114; F: 53.71; P: 0.00

There is a significant relationship between interaction, which is the sub-dimension of content marketing, and customer satisfaction (R: 0.33; R²: 0.11; P: 0.00). When the result regarding the significance of the regression coefficients is examined, it is determined that interaction positively affects customer satisfaction. ' H_{1b}: "Interaction, which is a sub-dimension of content marketing, has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction." hypothesis is accepted.

Table 6

Regression Analysis Results of the Effect of Information on Customer Satisfaction

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	P
Constant	1.91	0.16		11.63	0.00
Information	0.45	0.04	0.43	9.86	0.00

Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction, R: 0.43; R²: 0.19; F: 97.34; P: 0.000

It is found that there is a significant relationship between information, which is a sub-dimension of content marketing, and customer satisfaction (R: 0.43; R²: 0.19; P: 0.00). When the result regarding the significance of the regression coefficients is analyzed, it is determined that information positively affects customer satisfaction. ' H_{1b}: "Information, which is a sub-dimension of content marketing, has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction" hypothesis is accepted.

When Table 7 is reviewed, it is determined that there is a significant relationship between interaction, which is the sub-dimension of content marketing, and brand loyalty (R: 0.35; R²: 0.12; P: 0.00).

Table 7

Regression Analysis Results of the Effect of Interaction on Brand Loyalty

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	P
Constant	2.44	0.11		20.56	0.00
Interaction	0.319	0.04	0.35	7.79	0.00

Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty, R: 0.35; R²: 0.12; F: 60.71; P: 0.00

When the result regarding the significance of the regression coefficients is examined, it is determined that interactivity positively affects brand loyalty. ' H_{2b}: "Interaction, which is a sub-dimension of content marketing, has a significant positive effect on brand loyalty" hypothesis is accepted.

Table 8

Regression Analysis Results of the Effect of Information on Brand Loyalty

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	P
Constant	1.84	0.170		10.84	0.00
Information	0.42	0.047	0.401	8.93	0.00

Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty, R: 0.40; R²: 0.16; F: 79.78; P: 0.00

As seen in Table 8, it is determined that there is a significant relationship between information, which is the sub-dimension of content marketing, and brand loyalty (R: 0.40; R²: 0.16; P: 0.00). When the result regarding the significance of the regression coefficients is analyzed, it is determined that information positively affects brand loyalty. ' H_{2b}: "Information, which is a sub-dimension of content marketing, has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty" hypothesis is accepted.

5. Discussion

This study, which was conducted on individuals using GSM operators operating in Turkey, aims to investigate the brand loyalty and satisfaction of the content marketing campaigns carried out by GSM operators on the GSM operators. In line with the determined purpose, firstly, factor analysis and reliability analysis were performed to check the structure and reliability of the variables. As a result of the factor analysis, it was determined that although content marketing has a 4-dimensional structure, it was represented in a 2-dimensional structure in the study. It was observed that the individuals participating in the survey perceived the scale as unidimensional. Customer satisfaction and brand loyalty were found to be unidimensional as in the original scale. When the reliability analysis results were analyzed, it was found that the reliability level of content marketing, customer satisfaction and brand loyalty variables was quite high.

After verifying the structures and reliability of the dependent and independent variables, analyses were carried out to test the hypotheses put forward. As a result of the regression analysis conducted to test the hypothesis, it was determined that interaction and information, which are the sub-dimensions of content marketing, positively affect customer satisfaction. Considering the previous studies, it is concluded that content marketing positively affects customer satisfaction [23]. Again, in one study, it was concluded that content marketing positively affects customer satisfaction. When the regression analyses conducted to investigate the effect of content marketing on brand loyalty are examined, it is found that interaction and information dimensions have a positive effect on brand loyalty

[24]. Considering the previous studies, it is also concluded that there is a strong relationship between content marketing and brand loyalty [25]. In this respect, unlike traditional marketing communications where messages are designed for the benefit of brands, content marketing emphasizes providing value to consumers. In a deeper sense, its main priority is to create consumer trust and value [26]. Through content marketing, businesses try to increase brand awareness, brand reliability, and brand loyalty by sharing interesting and value-creating content [5].

6. Conclusions

Businesses using the traditional promotion method constantly bombard us with information, and often these masses of information contain information that is neither relevant nor valuable (It is also possible to call these masses of information spam). In today's world, where each individual is imposed on thousands of marketing messages every day, it is this validity and value quality that makes Content Marketing so important. A good content marketing strategy makes people stop and read, think, and develop different behaviors.

In this line, brands need to provide benefits over the costs that customers incur to obtain products and services through customer loyalty. Determining the priority ranking of the impact of the content elements prepared with text, audio, photographs, videos, graphics and infographics on factors such as quality reputation, monetary value, and prestige for the brand and developing strategies for priority value elements will provide a competitive advantage to the business. In addition, brands should develop innovative methods instead of applying traditional marketing methods to achieve superior competition and try to achieve competitive advantage with customer-oriented strategies against rival brands.

In this study, the sample group was only applied to GSM companies operating in Turkey. In order to reach different and accurate results, it would be more useful to conduct research with a sample group of more people. Again, in order to make the study more different, it would be useful to try it in different sectors to reveal different results. For another important issue, carrying out the study qualitatively can make a difference in terms of results.

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