

THE CRITICAL ROLE OF ONLINE WORD OF MOUTH ON CONSUMERS' PURCHASE INTENTIONS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN İSTANBUL

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Abstract

Traditional word of mouth (WOM) activities have evolved into an entirely new form of communication that exploits modern technology. The growth of the Internet has amplified the effect that online WOM has on consumers. The massive digital platform includes social network sites, review sites, discussion groups, web logs and many others. Through these platforms, online WOM activities have attained a huge power on a consumer's search, evaluation and purchase processes. This research attempts to shed light on how Turkish online consumers perceive and process online WOM activities. The research specifically focuses on the link between the perceived credibility of online WOM and its subsequent impact on consumers' purchase intentions. A total of 400 consumers from İstanbul are surveyed for the study. Results reveal that online WOM activities have a higher impact on female consumers' purchase intentions and frequency of purchases. On a similar note, consumers' demographic characteristics prove to be of significance with regards to their purchase intentions.

Keywords: Electronic word of mouth; eWOM; online consumer reviews; Turkish consumers