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# Chapter

## The Importance and Role of Digital Marketing in the Preference of Touristic Products in Turkey

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### SUMMARY

*The rapid development of technology all over the world, the widespread use of the Internet in all areas has enabled consumers to benefit from digital marketing in their product purchasing activities. Tourism companies use digital platforms and channels for promotional purposes in touristic product marketing to reach potential tourists. Young people who are familiar with the technology make their hotel reservation or car rental preferences for the time period they need through digital platforms. They always take into account the so-called electronic advice (e-WOM) messages before selecting the destination. Tourists can easily examine the virtual images of the hotel they will stay in, the location of the room, the image of the restaurant they will eat in, and the health units such as the spa they will use. The increasing number of innovations in technology has revealed the 4th Industrial Revolution, which means new production systems, in other words, the concept of Industry 4.0. This means high technology. along with digitalization, studies for the use of 3D printers, artificial intelligence, nano-technology, robots are being carried out quickly. As in all sectors, efforts to use Industry 4.0 in the field of tourism have gained momentum. In this chapter, the importance of digital marketing will be emphasized by giving examples of the desire of tourists in Turkey to benefit from digital marketing in the preference of touristic products.*

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## **Learning Objectives**

After completing this chapter, the student will be able to:

- The importance of digitalization in the world and in Turkey is conveyed.
- How the tourism sector benefits from digitalization is explained.
- Industry 4.0 and Tourism 4.0 concepts are included
- For the coming years, how the spread of digital use will have consequences in the world and in Turkey is transmitted
- Tourism marketing issues are included.

## **Introduction**

Along with the technological achievements, the development of the industry started a new era which is called Digital Age or even Digital Revolution. Along with the industry, a change and revolution that affects all sectors and especially the service sector is in question. New business models, changing systems, changing working methods and communication techniques and their instant realization in a very fast way is giving rise to sociologically and economically important events. The industrial revolution emerged in Europe since the 1800s has been changed and developed three times as a result of the developing technology and innovations over time. The fourth time; It has evolved again with the name Industry 4.0. The industrial revolutions took place in the past have affected the tourism industry as they have profoundly changed all industries and caused it to progress in both positive and negative ways. Tourism industry, which is one of the industries most affected by technologies, has become an area where new generation technologies find an area of application with an accelerated momentum. In this context, the word 'smart' used for 'Industry 4.0' in the tourism literature has taken its place as 'smart tourism' in the tourism industry.

It is of paramount importance for today's tourism industry of Turkey to have an idea about what the new generation technologies which Industry 4.0 constitute a basis for are and how they found a field of application in the tourism industry and to catch Industry 4.0 technologies. For Turkish tourism having a wide range of tourism resources and making use of these resources in low productivity, the adoption of Industry 4.0 technologies and their application by the tourism industry will enable a tourism revolution in our country capable of solving problems. It is possible to say that the elements required to adapt to the era and establish a smart tourism system in order to solve the problems faced by the tourism industry in Turkey, to provide competitive advantage and not to lose its current competitive advantage are technologies such as technology, big data, algorithms, artificial intelligence and humanoid robots. In the study it is emphasized the importance of digital marketing by giving examples concerning the desire of tourists of benefiting from digital marketing in their preferences of touristic products in Turkey. It is mentioned what kind of results could create the widespread adoption of digital technologies and industry 4.0 in the upcoming years in Turkey and in the World.

## **The Concept of Digitalization**

The globalization started in the 1990s, brought changes in the structure of societies, life styles, and production and consumption habits. The basis for these changes was laid with the French Revolution in the 18th century. The changes in the industrial areas have created differences in the production, consumption and economic structures of the countries. It is known that the digital revolution started in the world with the production of the first computer ENIAC in 1949 (Isman, 2001).



**Figure 1.**

*Source:* Adobe Stock.

With the combination of the Internet and machines, this process has further accelerated. Towards the end of the 20th century, as the growth in information and technology gained a noticeable acceleration, the importance of digitalization has increased even more, and a serious transformation and development process has emerged in the method and structure of production. Although the effects of this change continue in our age, the effects of knowledge, technology and mechanization on the lives of individuals and the industry gradually increase and make itself felt with an overall transformation. Transformations which started to manifest themselves with the industrial revolution started with the transition of the industry from manpower to machinery. The ultimate point of the industrial revolution today is defined as Industry 4.0. With the emergence of Industry 4.0 in the field of tourism, the concept of Tourism 4.0 has started to be widely used in the sector (Topsakal et al., 2018).

The period we live in takes place in the fourth industrial revolution triggered by the development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Industry 4.0; can be defined as the intelligent automation of technology-based and cyber-physical systems. The term Industry 4.0 was first used in 2011 at the Hannover fair (Rojko, 2017).

With the introduction of new generation technologies such as analogous, robotics, nanotechnology, artificial intelligence and cognitive technologies, quantum computing, wearable technologies and the Internet into the lives of people and businesses; Industry 4.0 has emerged (Cotteler & Sniderman, 2017).

As the tourism industry is an industry affected by new technologies, it is rapidly started to be adapted to new technologies. Computer; It has guided the transition to computerized reservation systems in the tourism industry, Internet; has made a new beginning in the promotion and marketing of the tourism industry. SNS technology; the tourism industry has started to use social media through social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Youtube. As of ICT; It has started to affect and change the tourism industry significantly. Advanced smart phone applications; instantly offers tourists facilities such as navigation,

destination guide, currency rate calculation, hotel or flight reservation. Today Phones; have been supported with thousands of mobile applications offering a wide range of services in searching information, social networks, navigation, etc. (Wang et al., 2012). The relevant literature also; (Kramer et al., 2007) found that the choices of tourists can be easily changed through smart phones.

(Saari et al., 2008) in their studies; state that tourists mostly use their mobile phones for photographic and audio / video recording. Smart phones make for tourists easier not only to share their experiences during and after their trips, but also to access more information and to buy tourism products. Smartphone apps have emerged as a new tool to help tourists create experiences. Bu still it can be said that the biggest technological development developed for accommodation in this area is Airbnb. Considering all these developments, in the coming years; It can be said that it is inevitable to enter the age of Tourism 4.0 with adaptation to technologies such as cloud IT, mobile applications, robots, artificial intelligence, autonomous vehicles and 3D printing. The new generation technologies also demonstrate the skills that personnel should have in the future in the tourism industry (Dominguez et al., 2015).

### **The Concept of Touristic Products**

The touristic product constitutes the entire goods and services that tourists buy and experience until they leave their place of residence and return to the same place (Usta, 2001).

A touristic product is a combination of services that the tourist uses during his/her travel accommodation, food and beverage, transportation, entertainment and many other. In order to fully understand the concept of touristic product, it is necessary to touch on the concept of product in general and to draw attention to the special position of the touristic product in this general concept. The number of features that distinguish the touristic product from other products, which can be defined as goods and services that can meet the needs of tourists, or a blend of goods and services or a package consisting of multiple goods and services, is quite high. This situation is also an indication of how multidimensional this concept is. There is a similar situation in terms of the factors constituting touristic product. Understanding exactly what the touristic product is depends on knowing the factors make it up. For this reason, after the perspectives of different authors are revealed, the effect of each group on the formation of the product should be examined in terms of accommodation, transportation, travel, eating and drinking, entertainment and other tourism sectors.

The product reveals in two ways in tourism. The first of these is the tourism product created by all the natural, historical and touristic resources of a country or region. The second is all of the services that allow consumers to relocate and take a vacation, that is, touristic services that composing a package tour (Hacioglu, 2008).

As can be seen from the definitions made, the touristic product, which has an extremely complex structure, has many features different from other goods and services. It is possible to list these properties as follows (Usal & Oral, 2001). The touristic product can be a single good or service (hotel room, airplane seat, etc., it is mostly a mixture of goods and services that meet consecutive and interrelated needs (accommodation and catering services in the same facility,

etc.) or a more comprehensive mix of all. (a package tour program that includes plane seat, transfers, accommodation, food, sightseeing, entertainment activities) (Olalı & Timur, 1988).

### The Importance of Digital Marketing

Internet, social media, mobile applications and other digital communication technologies are becoming part of the daily lives of billions of people around the world. According to the most up-to-date statistics issued in January 2020, it is stated that 4.54 billion people, covering 59% of the global population, are active internet users. Again, in 2019, 2.95 billion people worldwide are considered active social media users. The use of social media is becoming an integral part of the lives of many people around the world. In addition, this figure is estimated to increase to 3.43 billion by 2023 (Statista, 2020a).



Thanks to the internet, which has become effective in every field in social life, traditional applications in marketing methods have now been replaced by modern and more functional platforms. In this period of change, traditional marketing has gone through a serious modernization phases and has now evolved into digital marketing with the reflex of reaching the consumer faster in the context of offering products or services. Digital marketing emerges as a term that essentially collects all marketing stages used in online and offline platforms, especially the internet, and marketing methods developed accordingly.

**Figure 2.**

*Source:* Adobe Stock.

Digital technologies provide new adaptable processes and institutions in marketing communication. While organizations develop basic abilities to create such a value jointly for their customers and themselves, processes create value through new customer experiences and interactions between customers in new digital environments (Ko, 2019) Digital marketing emerges as an effective actor that offers new ways to reach customers, inform them, interact with them, and offer them products and services. Considering the point it has reached today, it is has been made more functional developing every moment. Examining the rapid evolution of digital technology, social media, and mobile marketing, and the technological innovations inspired by this evolution (Guercini et al., 2018), emphasized that marketing is now so to speak is in need of digitalization stating that in terms of digital marketing, the marketing of certain products and services is now completely dependent on digital technologies. On the other hand, (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016) stated that for the digital marketing process is qualified as an

adaptable, functional and technologically efficient process in which companies work together to create, communicate, present and maintain common value for all shareholders together with their customers and partners.

When digital marketing methods are considered, the first method we came across is Search Engine Optimization (SEO). This term, which is transferred to our language as Search Engine Optimization, is basically based on the creation of a permanent advertising model on the basis of reaching more new customers by managing the traffic on the internet pages. It is an advertising model which was developed on basic keywords meeting the products or services to be purchased by the customer (Aswani et al., 2018). In this advertising model, the principle of directing the consumer to the desired site or to the content of that site is considered as the main purpose. Another method performed in the same parallel is Search Engine Marketing (SEM). In this method, which is translated into our language as Search Engine Marketing, it is summarized as the process of publishing ads in search engines for a fee by detecting the keywords in the search engine based on the product or service intended to be marketed to the consumer or in other words to the target audience (Ramirez et al., 2013)

Affiliate marketing, which is considered as one of the most popular methods of digital marketing, continues to reach larger target audiences every day. This method is also called affiliate partnership. The sales activity of the websites acting as an intermediary to deliver the products or services belonging to the brands to the target clients is the basic functioning of this method. Websites that make a certain amount of profit per product or service do not charge any fee of advertisement. These sites, which act as intermediaries between customers and brands, gain a serious supply reflex as they do not generate advertising costs from the side of the seller (Gupta et al., 2018).

The concepts of social participation, social spread and social interaction are the keys to the digital marketing evolution. Firms aim to increase the participation of their customers by communicating with customers, providing information about products and services and consequently selling these products and services to customers (Martin-Consuegra et al., 2018). Digital marketing through social and mobile media has become a part of the daily lives of millions of people, and common social media activities have expanded and generally enabled the creation of customer relationships (Fujita et al., 2017; Woodside & Mir, 2019). Especially when the last decade is studied, the existing social media has turned into a situation that now integrates communication tools with new advertising techniques such as mobile connection, blogging, photo and video sharing that appeal to various interests of users (Han et al., 2016; Kim, 2018).

Social media has evolved from limited technology originally developed for a few users to a tool that has become an integral part of daily life for millions of consumers worldwide (Zhang & Dholakia, 2018). After social media, digital technology-oriented marketing communications such as artificial intelligence services, multi-channel networks, augmented reality and virtual reality have now seriously shaped the communication channel of digital marketing (Brodie & Juric, 2017; Kim & Yang, 2018; Taylor et al., 2018). On the other hand, it is also stated that digital marketing, especially as an online channel, enables companies to achieve their marketing goals at a relatively low cost in social media marketing (Alalwan et al., 2017). This

advertising channel, which is new for future research, assumes the identity of a platform that contains quite a lot of data increasing day by day.

Influencer marketing, which emerges depending on these developments, is gaining importance day by day. This form of marketing can be defined as the advertisement of products used or recommended to be used by people who are actively involved in social media channels having a certain amount of followers. Brands making reference to famous people for their products in classical marketing methods want to adapt this system to the digital world and create a brand new marketing model. Social media users who stand out in the virtual world and reach a substantial amount of audiences can use this method for brands to reach target audiences. The importance given to these phenomena by all online customers and potential customers who interact with them has a positive effect on their product or service purchases (Arora et al., 2019). Therefore, it can be stated that the term influencer marketing is an updated, fast and highly functional channel of digital marketing.

It is possible to see that the e-mail system is also effective at the point of advertising as another marketing technique. Using the e-mail system to reach target audiences is preferred, as it is significantly lower than advertising costs on other platforms. E-mail marketing is based on the delivery of information about the manufacturer's activities, discounts, campaigns, products or services to the target audience. In addition to these notifications sent to e-mail addresses received from customers, communication is tried to be kept alive with the feedback received from them (Brock et al., 2016; Hudak, et al., 2017).

As another digital marketing channel, mobile marketing draws attention. Today, with the widespread use of smartphones, tablets and laptops, the target customer group is directed through these mobile devices. Especially; It is aimed to manage customer trend with discounts and campaigns that develop depending on the product or service with factors such as sms, mms which are called text messages, mobile applications and web pages. With the prepared advertising content, it is aimed to reach the product actively and effectively with the mobile communication tools they use. (Billore & Sath, 2015; Grewal et al., 2016; Lamberton & Stephen, 2016; Bakopoulos et al., 2017).

Another online digital marketing technique is website marketing. It is based on to reflect the product or service that customers want to buy online in the best way. Providing the product or service in the most accurate and most realistic way based on reliability is accepted as a basis. Having live support and mobile application supported communication channels in order to gain the tendency of customers to visit the site and buy the product or service is also considered to be a very effective method. The design of the site, the fact that the information is up-to-date and real, the effective use of the live support service, and the presence of basic arguments such as secure payment are considered as the main factors that increase the customer's corporate perception towards the business (Hwang et al., 2018).

The biggest advantage of all these digital marketing techniques can be summarized as enabling all actors of the marketing process to interact among themselves. Interaction between the business and the employees of the business, the exchange of information between customers and the transfer of data between the companies and other businesses develop in a very

distinctive efficiency with digital marketing. As a result of the analysis of all these data, businesses or customers can make very healthy decisions about the product or service. In today's digital age, choosing these advantages is becoming an obligation rather than an option. These advantages cannot be achieved in societies and businesses in these societies that are in a vicious circle with the traditional marketing method lagging behind digitalization, and they are almost excluded in the digital economy. As a result, serious social and economic problems such as cessation of production, serious financial crises, financial downsizing, employment problem, external dependency and most importantly, brain drain emerge. It is possible to summarize that digital marketing is a very important area for businesses in terms of recognizing and analyzing the target customer group, solving the action activities of other businesses and creating a competitive environment accordingly (Sousa & Rocha, 2019).

Following these developments in digital marketing, it is necessary to address consumer behaviors. Online shopping contributes directly to digital commerce, due to technological innovations and the constant adoption and active use of mobile devices. It is stated in recent studies that the increasing use of digital marketing and social media, with its increasing market share for e-commerce-based organizations, rapidly positively affects and will continue to affect consumer attitudes towards online shopping (Appel et al. 2019; Alam et al., 2019).

### **The Importance of Digital Marketing in Touristic Product Selection in the World and in Turkey**

The first activity point of digital marketing within the framework of touristic products or services is undoubtedly being shaped on travel plans. At the stage when target client groups making travel plans decide to purchase touristic products, the first platform they are affected by is undoubtedly social media. It is perceived as a known fact that social media has a serious potential in today's world to inspire and influence travel plans. When looking at the world data in terms of purchasing touristic products, it is possible to see that the use of social media is very important.

In this context, it is necessary to evaluate the social media platform in three stages. These three stages are: a- use of social media before the touristic product purchase plan, b- use of social media by those who buy products or services during the holiday period and c- use of social media after the holiday by those who buy products or services. At every stage, the target customer groups or customers thoroughly research and trust social media platforms (Başer, 2020). The shares and evaluations of social media users' close circle or friends with whom they interact on this platform are followed with interest in terms of individuals; These sites are examined and if they are liked, the site is reached and people prepare their travel plans. Then, they guide other users with the shares they make during the product, travel or service they receive and share their feedback after the travel or vacation.

The first study revealing the underlying reason why businesses prefer social media at the point of purchasing touristic products or services belongs to (Laboy & Torchio, 2007) Based on this study, the purposes of social media use of tourism businesses are explained as follows (Atadil, 2011):

- a. Reputation Monitoring and Management
- b. Making Brand Strengthening
- c. Customer Engagement, Customer Service and Customer Profile Acquisition

The most striking touristic product factors, location-place, hotel, holiday activities, entertaining attractions and restaurants, vary in searches, saves and likes of social media users. It is revealed that 27% of the likes or searches made on social media are about getting information on holiday destinations, 23% are about hotel features, 22% are on holiday activities, 21% are about fun and entertaining activities and 17 are restaurants (Carter, 2020).

Recent studies show that people prefer social media pages for their planned travels at the rate of approximately 55%. Facebook is seen as the most effective platform where people are inspired and their reflexes in buying touristic products. Facebook comes first with a rate of 29%, Instagram is in the second place with a rate of 20% and Twitter is in the last place with a rate of 6%. Being aware of this situation, 50% of the touristic product marketers use online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter effectively. Recognizing the importance of social media for travel planning, Facebook launched the City Guide feature, which displays personalized travel suggestions according to the places visited by users and their friends and local attractions in its mobile application in 2017. With the introduction of this feature, it has been revealed that approximately 52% of the users have a serious direction in purchasing touristic products from this application. It is also revealed that the rate of those who think that the reliability of this application comes from its ad content is at the level of 52%. Facebook users visit individual city guides to see specific places visited by their friends, such as hotels, restaurants, tourist attractions and other businesses. It offers a demo list of the most popular places and structures, touristic places and the service or product to be purchased through the same application. The areas affected by those who buy touristic products on social media are expressed as follows, according to the percentage (Carter, 2020):

- 76% of them are affected by the photos shared by users who purchased the product or after the service,
- 56% of special holiday photos posted on Facebook,
- 46% of the comments of hotel users,
- 40% of the comments on fun and attractions,
- 40% of them by the comments of those who get restaurant service.

Influencer marketing, which developed depending on social media, has become a very important marketing method today. In this marketing technique, which is shaped by people or groups having a lot of followers on social media, the effect that influencers have on their followers is very important. The visual, video and posts they share within a certain period of time in the product or service advertisements offered by this phenomenon people or groups that gain the appreciation of the followers bear the main guiding characteristics (Mert, 2018). This marketing technique has gained a significant share in the tourism industry. Social media users, who have become a phenomenon in social media, prepare advertisements and present them to their followers in the posts they make about the touristic product or service they travel, stay,

vacation, briefly they buy, and sometimes they also mediate various campaigns and discounts made in businesses.

Another platform most used by the target customer group in the touristic buying process is search engines. Especially Google and the Google Trips databases developed in its content are the first destinations of the target customer groups. In this and other similar search engines, the most effective competition level of marketers is shaped over keywords. Tourist product marketing sites, whose competition level is determined according to certain advertising costs based on preferred keywords, carry out their marketing activities with the guidance of these search engines. In 2019, the most preferred keywords in leading these search engines to marketers in tourist product marketing are hotel, hotel addresses, hotel directions, flight tickets, flight ticket prices, flight programs, airport information, things to do at the destination, hotel reviews, hotel prices and comparison of the availability of the hotel, flight reservation and hotel reservation.

Search engines and associated website marketing serve as one of the most important areas where online target marketing can be performed. The importance of search engines is also confirmed in recent researches. In addition, when looking at the various aspects of an information search process, an online travel planning process and various factors affecting the use of search engines, three important stages emerge (Fesenmaier et al., 2010):

- a. Pre-search conditions governing the search process: It is suggested that it is important in terms of the types of information obtained by the target customer groups and the basis of the search strategy used in terms of Internet tools used to search for this information.
- b. The actual search process, which includes search strategies and frameworks used to evaluate search results: It defines the basic strategies the target customer group uses to browse the internet for relevant information so that various travel decisions (ie destination, accommodation, tourist attractions, route, etc.) can be made. Therefore, these strategies reflect the frameworks in which the information accessed is evaluated.
- c. Evaluation of the general search process that reached the peak in the formation of attitudes towards search engines: By focusing on the overall evaluation of the use of search engines in the travel planning process, it lays the groundwork for the future use of search engines for travel planning.

In searches made by target customer groups who want to buy touristic products or services connected to search engines are reported as 29.4% of hotels, 29.0% of destinations, 22.6% of transportation, 9.4% of routes, 7% of travel destinations and 0.7% of shopping are reported (Statista, 2019a). In the research on the satisfaction of customers who buy touristic products or services through the USA-based website and search engines, it is stated that the satisfaction rate of customers who buy products or services in 2019 is at the level of 79% (Statista, 2020c). In 2018, the annual total advertising expenditures of companies engaged in marketing online touristic products or services connected to search engines worldwide reached 10.7 million dollars (Statista, 2018).

Digital video marketing also becomes an effective marketing channel in the tourism industry. The digital contact of the target customer groups to the product or the service they will receive is an effective factor in their decisions. Various videos suitable for the service they will receive or the content of the product, and especially realistic 360-degree video content, have a significant impact on the target audience. It is stated that these content videos create an effective competitive environment on the company's website and social media platforms. In addition, digital video advertising is also effectively preferred in social media platforms such as Youtube, Facebook and Instagram. In a study containing the continents of the USA, Europe, Asia and Africa, it is stated that in 2018, 1.36 billion USD was spent on digital video advertising and this amount increased by 240 million dollars compared to the previous year. In addition, it is emphasized that tourism businesses spend up to 16 percent of their total digital advertising budget on video ads in 2018 (Statista, 2019b).

As another marketing channel, we come across smart phone applications based on touristic products or services. Based on the most up-to-date data, the number of smartphone users worldwide in 2019 was reported to be 3.2 billion. It is predicted that this rate will rise to 3.5 billion by the end of 2020 and to 3.8 billion by 2021 (Statista, 2020b). It is seen that the age of using smartphones is decreasing gradually. The tourism industry also aims to reach the target customer groups by following these developments closely and investing in many mobile applications. In a qualitative study investigating the underlying reasons for the behavior of downloading and using mobile applications on smartphones from the tourism industry perspective, the participants asked Which of the following best describes your reasons for downloading a travel application to your smartphone? In response to this question, 64% of the participants replied as, flight plan or accommodation; 52% of them flight reservation and accommodation; To control the condition of 38% of them herpes; 32% of them to benefit from a discount; 31% of them receive updated notifications; 30% to get the boarding pass; 25% to make hotel reservations; 24% of them replied as institutional loyalty because of the satisfaction with the service they received before; 8% of them stated that they prefer to download the application to buy products or services and 7% prefer these mobile applications because they are favorite applications (Statista, 2019c).

Another online digital marketing technique with the largest unmissable share in the tourism industry is sales partnership or affiliate partnership. This technique is called OTA (Online Travel Agency). Basically, it is aimed to reach the target customer groups by taking a certain amount of commission from the marketed product or service. Corporate and digital platforms where the products or services of all businesses are offered through a common database, operate on a certain commission partnership with the business. The target audience or customers who want to buy touristic products or services can easily access the product or service of any business on these platforms, and even compare quality, satisfaction and pricing information with other businesses. Large companies that offer services especially at an international level include Booking Holdings, Expedia Travel, TripAdvisor and Trivago. Among them, Booking ranks first, with revenue of \$ 14.53 billion in 2018 (Statista, 2019d).

In these online marketing channels, customers are directly subject to the direction of the business. In cases such as occupancy, discount or change, the business is fully in charge. ,For

issues such as payment and return the online agency comes into play. From the amount received from the customer within the period when the service or product purchase is completed, the online agent takes the commission of its share and transmits the remaining fee to the relevant company as a service fee. This essentially ensures that both the online agent and the customer's payment traffic linked to the product or service are safer and more transparent. In this respect, the customer's reliability reflex shows positive progress and he/she more prefers online travel agencies (Pamukcu & Tanrisever, 2018).

In the tourism industry, mms and sms message methods, which are becoming less popular in digital marketing channels and are losing their popularity day by day, and are used in connection with mobile marketing techniques, are becoming out of use every day. In the past, the fact that smart phone users have faced fraudulent activities with mms and sms infrastructure rapidly decreases the reputation of these channels. People now see online platforms as more realistic, concrete and reliable. As a matter of fact, in the study of Kilic et al., (2017), the fact that approximately 27% of the participants answered the question regarding received ad messages on the phone about mobile marketing as I delete the advertisement without reading supports this view.

When Turkey is examined in terms of the sales and purchase of digital marketing at the point of buying tourist products or services; First of all, it is necessary to consider the use of smartphones and internet. For 2019, the number of smartphone users in Turkey, is about 54

million and is expected to reach 56.24 million level for 2020 (in Statistik, 2020d). It is also stated that 80% of the online searches made by the buyers of touristic products or services before their purchasing behavior are made via smart phones. Again, in the most up-to-date national data for 2019, it is stated that the rate of shoppers online is 34.1%. The second most preferred category of this online shopping group was touristic products or services with 31.7% (TÜİK, 2019). This data also shows that Turkey has a large share in digital marketing.

When looking at the most preferred products or services in online marketing channels at national level; it is seen that Hotel reservations, flight tickets, tour, bus tickets, car rental, activity situations in the holiday location and various touristic activities are coming first. Day by day rapidly growing online marketing channels in Turkey, boost tourism. Especially, the process of adapting the young generation to digital platforms faster contributes to this boost (Kayikci & Bozkurt, 2018).

Especially of the foreign tourists coming to Turkey from the EU countries, the rate of those performed flight ticket transactions is 55% and rate of those performed accommodation transactions services from digital platforms is 67% (Ozturk, G., & Zeylan, T., 2019). Considering the total share of digital marketing in national tourism activities, a level of 15% is encountered. Smart phones are the basis of all these online activities. In 2017, one out of every four holiday reservations was made via mobile devices and it is stated that this rate will increase to 50% of the total digital marketing in 2020 (Ozturk, G., & Zeylan, T., 2019).

In mobile application and mobile marketing that develops accordingly; businesses taking place in the tourism industry in Turkey is not making serious strides. In general, mobile applications are developed in terms of product or service provision, mostly for the internal operations and

personnel. In the study conducted by Ozturk & Zeylan (2019) of the 6 tourism enterprises entering the list made for the Fortune 500 Turkey 2018 while only two of them developed applications for customers aiming to purchase services or products based on customer satisfaction the four others developed application only on behalf of running the in-house operations completely. According to the research conducted by Pamukçu & Tanrisever, (2018) for the use of digital marketing as the most actively used marketing method in the tourism industry; It has been determined that there is social media and 75% of businesses use Facebook, 65% Instagram and 35% Twitter as a marketing channel. 75% of businesses use Facebook, 65% Instagram and 35% twitter effectively as a marketing channel. Again, in the research conducted by Ercan (2020) on 79 hotel businesses in and around Antalya, social media platforms used by businesses as digital marketing channels were determined. According to this research, it was determined that 91.1% of hotel businesses have Facebook, 81% Instagram, 68.4% Twitter and 55.7% YouTube access infrastructure. Still, with the same study, it was revealed that 39% of hotel businesses also market products or services through online travel agencies such as TripAdvisor.

Based on 2017 data, In the declaration presented by Temurci and Onal in the Tourism Council Meeting III. (2017) it was reported that including Turkey's tourist products or services through social media interaction including Turkey's tourist products or services through social media interaction to be about 6.53518 million ad reach. With this rate among the countries which the most interacted in 2017 Turkey is in fourth place.

In the study conducted by Cetinkaya & Sahbaz (2019) on the matter of purchasing touristic products or services with the use of social media, it was revealed that there is a positive relationship between social media use and holiday purchasing preferences. It was stated that social media is the main determinant of the purchase intention of the participants who actively use social media and plan their vacation.

Social media involves a serious interaction process in terms of both the target customer groups and the business. Especially, based on the comments made by social media users, businesses hold a significant amount of feedback data (Aktan & Kocyigit, 2016). If these comments are thoroughly analyzed, possible negative risks in the marketing of touristic products or services can be avoided. At this point, in the qualitative research conducted by Sezer & Kizilirmak (2016), it was revealed that social media is a serious data source for the tourism industry and it was emphasized that the comments made by the target audience using social media are a serious source of information for businesses. Therefore, businesses should actively use social media and seriously analyze possible risk scenarios based on the comments made.

Kozak & Cingi (2019), who conducted a qualitative research on the effects of online platforms on accommodation businesses, discussed the business orientation of customers who purchase products or services through which online service providers. In the light of the data obtained from the source people, it was concluded that 50% of the participants preferred the Google search engine, 20% preferred Booking, 20% Trivago, and 10% preferred Hotels.

Calımlı (2019), who investigated the effect of information technologies on tourism, collected data from the field in terms of both customers and business managers in the quantitative

research conducted in and around Konya. According to this study, it has been revealed that the participant customers generally approach basic issues such as time and cost comparison in the process of deciding on the internet-based digital marketing infrastructure positively, and that business managers are affected by digital marketing in terms of advertising expenses and competition situations of their businesses.

Nowadays, it is obvious that the target audience who wants to buy touristic products or services in a rapidly digitalizing environment needs many methods such as analyzing at least a visual content and analyzing comments and evaluations based on this visual. For this reason, the method of reaching the target audience with advertising content through e-mail marketing is rapidly losing its importance. On the other hand, it is stated that e-mail advertising content is also effective in businesses with prominent corporate identity and brand power (Gullu & Karasakal, 2016). In the study of Uygur et al., (2018), it is stated that e-mail ads are automatically extracted as spam or unnecessary by most users. In this context, it is necessary to state that conscious users, who take into account the risk of being an electronic threat in the links included in the content of the advertisements received through e-mails, do not open any non-corporate e-mail content and are considered unnecessary.

Accommodation, restaurant and transportation businesses, which are handled within the framework of touristic products and services, especially museums, rapidly attach importance to digital marketing with 3D video content based on augmented reality (Ilhan & Celtek 2016). Especially viral video advertising offered through social networking sites is becoming popular day by day (Cokal & Buyukkuru, 2018). In addition, with the quarantine practices experienced in the Covid-19 process, viral video content and digital museum concepts based on augmented reality are rapidly gaining importance. Again, regarding this quarantine process, (Atay, 2020) drawing attention to the tourist guides, which are offered as an important touristic service and are in a large risk group, states that the digital guidance process and infrastructure should be improved rapidly.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, when we look at the digital product or service marketing channels in the tourism industry based on both national and global data generally It would be correct to conclude that;

- a. Social media and OTA (online travel agency) rank first among the most preferred digital marketing channels,
- b. In the second place are search engines, content videos and smart phone applications,
- c. Marketing channels such as mms, sms and e-mail have lost their importance,
- d. In choosing a product or service, users bring facts such as number of likes, popularity, user reviews and reality as a reflex of preference,
- e. Social media is a more functional determinant in digital marketing in terms of cost inputs, customer loyalty and time frame for businesses,
- f. Particularly issues such as digital museum, digital guidance and video content based on augmented reality have become very important, especially in the context of the least affected by the quarantine practices experienced recently.

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