

THE EFFECTS OF E-COMMERCE APPLICATION ON TRAVEL AGENCIES AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

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Abstract: E-commerce, which has been a very prominent issue with the help of current developments in information and communication technologies and worldwide prevalence of the internet, has been intensively used considering the benefits for both customers and businesses. Tourism businesses, which demand to be successful in such rapidly changing competitive business environments, attempt to develop e-commerce applications in order that they can compete with their competitors and make use of new opportunities. It is emphasized that despite the various benefits of e-commerce, it might also bring the end of some sectors, which have not developed essential arrangements and infrastructures for this virtual environment. It is estimated that the need for package tours, tour operators and travel agencies will decrease in the future depending on the growing interest in the independent travel, the number of searches that people make on the internet search engines and tendency to act in accordance with the travel programs. The primary aim of this study is to figure out how much travel agencies in Eskişehir use the e-commerce, the positive and negative effects of e-commerce on travel agencies and how e-commerce is perceived by agency administrators and employees. Besides, this study aims at determining the relationship among the perceptions of these employees and their performance. Within the scope of this research, 61 travel agencies operating in Eskişehir were selected and a survey consisting of close-ended questions applied to these business administrators and employees. The results revealed that almost all travel businesses have a web site, and the most important reason why they use the internet is easy accessibility and getting new customers. Employees think that use of e-commerce will not have any negative effect on the future of their businesses. According to results of correlation analysis, there was significant relationship found between employees' perceptions about the effects of e-commerce use on businesses and their performance in which they are employed.

Key words: E-commerce, travel agencies, employee performance

1. INTRODUCTION

The great opportunities human have come on the scene by information Technologies and the developments of computer World. Information and communication Technologies have become inseparable part of human by means of mobile phones, identity information, commercial accounting operations, e-commerce, banking operations and Daily routines. In terms of tourism, the dimensions of the sector have been extending day by day, become widespread and globalize. Parallel all these developments the last stage of information Technologies provide new opportunities and advantages by means of management, marketing, advertising and introducing to the enterprises working on tourism sector. The enterprises working on tourism sector has started to take the benefit of information

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Technologies intensively. The intensive internet usage and e-commerce has brought a new dimension to the sector (Bayekeyeva, 2009).

The fast development and becoming widespread of technology and internet caused lots of changes and developments on global commerce. These changes also bring arguments about the advantages and disadvantages of internet. With these arguments the limitations of services and outcomes have become the part of the arguments (Sarışık & Akova, 2006).

Common internet usage in tourism sector which has a great role in global commerce affects the travel agencies which provide the connection between customers and enterprises directly. Especially on the recent years the developments on e-commerce have make people think of the future of travel agencies and their staff. The thoughts about the e-commerce practices of the staff of A group travel agencies in Eskisehir and how e-commerce effect their performances has been studied on this workout.

2. E-COMMERCE AND EMPLOYEES PERFORMANCE

2.1. E-Commerce Concept

It is possible to define electronic commerce (e-commerce) as the production advertising, selling and delivering of services and productions on electronic environment and telecommunication network (Turban and King, 2003:3).

By globalizing and technological developments the boundaries between countries have removed, the importance of e-commerce has been increased day by day by means of economy. Even if e-commerce is a new system in economy it is not totally distinguished from traditional commerce and the same and partly similar ways has been used. (Ekici and Yıldırım, 2010:69). To make e-commerce on internet a supply chain and a distribution channel has to be arranged and managed. It is a must to transport the goods and services to the right place at the right time with e-commerce. (Banger, 2000:46). The characteristics of e-commerce are arranged like this (Taşlıyan, 2006:50):

- The services served in e-commerce determine the future of the enterprise.
- E-commerce is the greatest door opens to the World for an enterprise.
- E-commerce is global and needs to be pulled away from regionalism.
- 7 days 24 hours working base puts away the time problem that limits the communication and marketing.
- The trustworthiness of e-commerce would increase by developing technology by time.
- Personal commerce relationship can be done by collecting personal information by the help of e-commerce database.
- E-commerce addresses consumers having a different culture and this culture is becoming wide by growing up the internet.
- Due to the fact that the customer and the dealer make trade by not seeing each other some additional measures has to be taken for mutual trust.

The most e-commerce using countries are in Europe, North America, and Far East – Pacific as in World wide. Parallel to the developments in Worldwide there are some important developments on e-commerce also in Turkey. By 1996 internet has started to be used not only in the universities but also by others make to increase internet users. By this

development the enterprises in our country has started to use e-commerce in enterprise to enterprise and to customers (WTO).

The most e-commerce used areas are: digital electronics, life, automotive, hobby-sports, supermarkets, food, flower, fruit, souvenirs, opportunity sites, organization tickets, travel – booking, fashion, beauty, multi category shopping, etc. (Taşlıyan, 2006:66).

2.2. E-commerce on tourism

The globalization and technologic applications' contribution is great on serving new and flexible duties and increasing competitive power of tourism enterprises. The great need of getting and emitting information for the potential customers in tourism makes these enterprises one of the most important sectors to use e-commerce tools. Tourism enterprises uses e-commerce tools while communicating, introducing, marketing, advertising and managing(Avcıkurt and Koroğlu, 2004:280).

It is very common to use e-commerce in tourism and it is developing day by day. Producing travel services, advertising, introducing, public relations, buying selling procedures, payment and delivery are all possible by e-commerce in tourism (Altaş, 2010:12).

The advantages of e-commerce in tourism are as; (Akbulut, 2007:9-14):

- The profit increases due to the agencies are disabled.
- The enterprises have the opportunity to increase their service quality by e-commerce.
- The decrease of transaction costs and transportation costs is an advantage for customers.
- The prestige of the enterprises using e-commerce increases against competitors.
- The communication between enterprises and customers increases.
- The enterprises using e-commerce can serve 7/24.
- Enterprises can use human resources more convenient and flexible.

But as it has a lot of advantages it also has disadvantages like in all areas using technological developments. The enterprises that cannot accommodate go into liquidation.

The disadvantages of e-commerce in tourism are as; (Pınar, 2005:18):

- Worry in credit usage,
- Security problems due to e-commerce data base problems,
- To send messages and a mails which are not ethic to everybody,
- Parallel to technological developments, the legal arrangements are slowly produced so legal gaps occur.
- The personal information is used in internet.
- Worry about Hackers during operations.
- Non-detected shopping enterprise.

2.3. E-Commerce applications of Travel Agencies and tour Operators

Tourism an important part of global trade is one of the most widely e-commerce used sectors. On recent years some important developments rise on internet and e-commerce applications on the travel agencies providing the connection between customers and enterprises (Sarıışık ve Akova,2006:1).

E-trade effects the way of marketing and delivering of the travel agencies own services directly. The e-trade applications was first for only getting information but in recent years it became a work potential power by developing (William, 1999:67-73).

On the other hand some researchers emphasize that, the wide internet usage and directing customers to shop from internet may threat the future of agencies. It is predicted that the role of the agencies in tourism will decrease and this might cause they would be closed or unite with greater agencies (Reinders ve Baker, 2004).

The successful travel agencies using e-trade applications are causing the decrease of traditional delivery channels. Lots of researchers think that information provider agencies would be closed in very near future(Marino, 1999; Maselli, 2002). In addition to that the agencies that have e-trade data bases and use internet effectively would reach broad mass and by this way their profit and market share would increase (Kotler vd., 1999).

2.4. Performance and Employees Performance

Performance is a concept that states how a person or a group who does that work hits the target quantitatively and qualitatively. Personal or group performance is a measure that how much the target is hit and reached the standards. The primary goal for the enterprises is the personal performance of the employees. As much as the personal performance is better the enterprises performance gets better(Benligiray, 2004:141).

Performance is used as a synonym of productiveness but it is not enough. Productiveness is the level of realization of the product in time and in the cost boundary to hit the target of the enterprise but performance includes activity, quality, the quality of work life aim addition, so productivity can be thought as a measure in performance concept (Kaplan, 2007: 57-58).

3. RESEARCH

3.1. Target of the research

The aim of this research is to exhibit the e-trade use level of the travel agencies working in Eskisehir and the opportunity and threat e-trade perception of the employees and to investigate if this perception affects their performance.

3.2. The method of the research

The universe of this research is the 61 travel agencies located in Eskisehir. The sample has gone all and for the health of the health of the answers 167 answers were taken between April 04, 2015 – April 25, 2015 and 163 was chosen for assessment.

To reach the aim of the research different surveys that has been done by different surveyors at different times at the different universes. At this aim, some questions were taken from the survey produced by Yıldırım (2014) to measure the attendance levels of the employees of business management about e-trade and from the survey which is done by Bayekeyeva (2009) and a new survey is produced by the researcher. A 4 item server performance scale has been used which is developed by Kirkman and Rosen (1999).

3.3. The validity and reliability of the research

To provide the reliability of the data Cronbach alpha reliability factor is used.. reliability criteria ($0,60 < \alpha < 0,80$) is too much reliable ($0,80 \leq \alpha < 1,00$) is very reliable. The measure of the attendance levels of the employees of business management about e-trade is $\alpha=0,71$, the employees performance reliability criteria is calculated as $\alpha=0,88$. This scale shows us that the research is too much reliable (Yaşar, 2014).

4. RESEARCH EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS

The research evidence is as followed below at first the demographic specialties and the statistical evidences.

4.1. The evidences of the demographic specialties of the participants

As it can be seen at the table below the demographic specialties of the example mass can exemplify the group in the total sample.

Tab. 1. The statistic evidence of the demographic specialties of the applicants

Sex	f	%	Tourism	f	%
Male	96	58,9	No	55	33,7
Female	67	41,1	Yes	108	66,3
Total	163	100,0	Total	163	100,0
Education			Age	f	%
Prep school	-	-	Lower than 20	12	7,4
High school	44	27,0	Between 21 –		
Associate degree	31	19,0	Between 30 –	43	26,4
University	79	48,4	Between 40 –	22	13,5
Post graduate	9	5,6	50 and more	2	1,2
Total	163	100,0	Total	163	100,00
Experience	f	%	Title	f	%
Less than 1 year	56	34,4	Management	24	14,7
1-5 year	79	48,5	Departmental	33	20,2
6-10 year	20	12,3	Employee	98	60,1
11-15 year	4	2,4	Trainee	7	4,3
16 years and	4	2,4	Other	1	0,7
Total	163	100	Total	163	100

In table 1 the evidences are placed that shows the demographic specialties that 163 travel agencies applied and answered the survey are used. The %58,9'u of the applicants are male, %41,1 of them are female. The age separation of the applicants are % 7,4 is less than 20 years old, %51,5 of them are between 21-29 , %26,4 of them are between 30-39 , %13,6 of them are between 40 -49 and %1 of them are more than 50 years old. The education level of the applicants are %27 high school degree, %19,0 of them are associate degree, %48,4 of them are university degree, %5,6 of them are post graduate degree. There is no primary school degree in the applicants. In addition to that %33,7 of the applicants have

never get tourism education %66,3 of them get the education. The titles of the applicants %14,7 work as management, 20,2 of them work as department managers, 60,1 work as employee, 4,3 work as trainer and %1 is the enterprise owner. Also, the experience level of the applicants, %34,4 work less than 1 year, %48,5 between 1-5 years , % 12,3 between 6-10 years , %1,9 between 11-15 years and more than 16 years.

4.2. Evidence about the General assessment of the enterprise

Tab. 2. The general information about the enterprise

	variable	f	%
Does your enterprise have an internet site?	Yes	163	100,0
	No	-	-
How was your page produced?	An expert working in the enterprise.	28	17,2
	Consultant from another firm.	55	33,7
	It is produced totally by experts.	80	49,1
How often does your site updated?	Daily	73	44,8
	Weekly	58	35,6
	Monthly	27	16,6
	Yearly	5	3,0
Does your enterprise e-commerce?	Yes	95	58,2
	No	68	41,8
Total		163	100

All the enterprises that the surveys done have internet sites. The internet sites were produced by %17,2 by an expert working at the same enterprise, %33,7 by a counselor from outside, %49,1 by an expert from outsource. The update period of these sites 44,8 daily, %35,6 weekly, %18,4 monthly and %3,9 yearly. The enterprises in the research %58,2 make e-trade %41,8 of them have done never.

4.3. The evidences about the employees' e-trade perception

The importance range of the opinions on the advantages of e-trade usage at the enterprises can be seen at table 3. Applicants Show that the importance of e-trade to the enterprise are it provides low cost (4, 38) and life is easier and faster (4,33) Other benefits are it provides more holiday choices and effects shopping and marketing positively. The minimal attendance is on the decrease of risks. The correlation test due to applicants performance level , low cost opportunity (r:,188**, p<,05), life is easier and faster (r:,206**, p<,05), effects shopping and marketing positively. (r:,151**, p<,05),has meaningful evidences.

Tab. 3. The advantages that e-trade provides to the enterprise

		med	std. Dev.ma	Performance
1	Serving on internet provides agencies low cost opportunity.	4.38	1.19	,188**
2	Life will be easier and faster by e-trade.	4.33	0.92	,206**
3	Service on internet provides more holiday choice opportunities.	4.17	0.76	,104
4	Service on internet provides selling and trade positively.	4.11	1.04	,151**
5	Service on internet provides the increase of service quality of the agencies.	4.01	0.58	,079 ,406**
6	By the help of internet personal service can be done to the customers.	3.94	0.17	,123
7	Internet is a special area for the agencies by means of their brand image.	3.88	0.88	,095
8	Service on internet provides customer communication quality.	3.75	0.71	,009
9	Service on internet provides customer reliability much more easily.	2.65	0.24	,119 ,406**
10	Service on internet provides the decrease of risks.	2.42	1.23	,062
Note: Assessment has been done by 5Likertmeasure.				

Tab. 4. Harms of e-trade for the enterprises

		med	std.	Per
1	Agencies lose their customers because of the technological unreliableness of e-trade applications.	4.43	0.67	, ⁻ 305 *
2	Customer perturbation occurs because of not having one to one	4.41	0.85	,111
3	Too much updates may cause problems.	4.12	1.03	,087
4	If too much advertisement is not done there will not be enough demand.	4.07	0.91	,006
5	Travel sales from internet may cause the end of the travel	2.10	1.56	, ⁻
Note: Assessment has been done by 5 Likert measure.				

Opinions of the applicants about the harms of e-trade for the enterprises can be seen on table 4 due to the importance. Agencies lose their customers because of the technological unreliableness of e-trade applications. (4,43) Customer perturbation occurs because of not having one to one relationship with the customers (4,41) Travel sales from internet may cause the end of the travel agencies is the lowest opinion. The correlation test which has been done due to the performance level of the applicants shows that customer lose because of the technological unreliableness (r ,-305**, p <,05) and Travel sales from internet may

cause the end of the travel agencies risk is ($r: -106^{**}$, $p < .05$), which means meaningful negative relationship.

CONCLUSION

In this research how the e-trade applications used in the travel agencies located in Eskisehir is being perceived by the employees and the relationship between this perception and the employee's performance is examined. The result due to this research can be summarized as below;

The most important piece of the modern trade e-trade is not been used by nearly half of the agencies in Eskisehir is established. The agencies that all have internet pages have to place their internet pages that they can e-trade to continue their long term business. Agencies should make ready their internet pages to the experts or firms and they have to update these pages more frequently.

It is an advantage that the agency employees agree on that the internet provides easy Access to the enterprises, serves support to market targets, increase the competition power, fast communication with the customers. The positive manner of the employees to internet, is a useful element for the agencies to work on e-trade applications.

When the opinions of the employees about e-trade is asked 'proper cost opportunity is provided by serving on internet' is found the most important specialty of e-trade by the average of ($x=4,38$) and following this, 'life will be easier and faster by e-trade by the average of ($x=4,33$) The least important specialty is 'serving on internet will lower the risk that has been perceived by customers by the average of ($x=2,42$) This result shows that the employees of the travel agencies think that e trade will provide low cost, speed and competence but on the other hand, they worry about the unreliability of the applications working on internet will not cover the customer expectations. This result is parallel to the research result of Semiz (2009).

When it is asked to the applicants for their opinions about the harms of e-trade the most harmful specialty of e trade is chosen as by the average of ($x=4,43$) "Agencies lose their customers because of the technological unreliability of e-trade applications' and by the average of ($x=4,41$) "Customer perturbation occurs because of not having one to one relationship with the customers.' The least average specialty is by the average of ($x=2,42$) "Travel sales from internet may cause the end of the travel agencies.' This result shows us that the agencies employees believe that the customers shop on internet do not trust the technology at all and also the agencies that move all their work on internet will probably lose their customers. The employees believe that customers would like to come to the agency by their own and also want to communicate by real people. On the other hand, agency employees do not find e-trade as a threat that makes their enterprises end. The reason of that is the agencies believe in the musts of this age and keep up with changes and also it can be the trust problem of their customers feel during travel shopping on internet and if there is any problem, the fear of not to find the solution on internet.

Meaningful diversity is been found when the relationship between the opinions of employees and their performances. The employee's performance who believes in e-trade will provide lower cost for the agencies, fast and easy business, positive effect on shopping and marketing may increase is emerged. Especially the business which is been done on the internet fast and low cost may increase the employees performances. Besides, the performances of the employees effects negatively by the risks of technology unreliability of the customers and no need to agencies due to booking on the internet by this no need to

the agencies and also affect their performances. It is also an argument in the literature that there will be no need to the agencies in future because of the direct booking opportunity on the internet. But it is thought by the employees that a kind of risk will not be seen in short term because some hesitations on e-trade are not been removed yet.

The most important narrowness of this research is it is done only in Eskisehir area but not generalize the assessment for all of the agencies. The latter researches should be done at different areas and it will be useful if the sample should be increased.

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