

**THE INFLUENCE OF VIRTUAL STORE ATMOSPHERE, ONLINE SHOPPING  
SATISFACTION AND PERCEIVED RISK IN ONLINE SHOPPING ON INTENTION TO  
CONTINUE ONLINE SHOPPING**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study was conducted in order to determine the effect of the virtual store atmosphere on consumers' perception towards online shopping and their intention to continue online shopping. The universe of the research is composed of consumers who reside in Istanbul and shopped at least once on the Internet in the last year. Survey application was made to the 422 people selected by convenience sampling method. The questionnaire forms consist of personal information questions and online shopping scales. Data analysis was done in SPSS 16 package program. In the analysis of the data, regression model was applied with descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage. As a result of the research, it was determined that there is a positive and meaningful relationship between the perception of virtual stores, satisfaction with online shopping, and intention to continue online shopping.

**Keywords:** Virtual Store, Store Atmosphere, Online Shopping Satisfaction, Perceived Risk

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Businesses operating in the retail sector are interacting with customers wherever they display their products. Today, businesses are interacting with customers not only in traditional stores, but also in virtual stores (Luong, 2007; Liu and Jang, 2009; Arslan, 2016; Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2016), thanks to the possibilities provided by internet technologies. The store atmosphere in the retail sector is seen as an important factor affecting consumers' purchasing decisions. For this reason, the shape of the stores in the direction of the demand of the target groups may affect the purchasing stance positively (Strauss, 2016). Nevertheless, it is important for businesses to make the best use of internet technologies to shape virtual stores in the direction of consumers' demands (Arslan, 2004, Tek and Demirci, 2006, Whiting and Nakos, 2008). Businesses, using virtual stores actively, making regular updates in line with customer demand and expectations, and following technological developments will affect consumers' purchasing intentions positively. The purpose of this research is to determine the effect of the virtual store atmosphere on consumer preferences.

**2. STORE ATMOSPHERE CONCEPT**

The store atmosphere represents all internal and external features of the store. The places that consumers use to buy goods or services are defined as stores, and the features that the store carries are the store atmosphere (Varinli, 2005). The store atmosphere can affect consumers' purchasing intentions positively or negatively. The store atmosphere is characterized by different tangible and abstract characteristics. These characteristics are as following (Liu and Jang, 2009):

Abstract factors; Light, music, smell, colors, etc.

Concrete Factors; Furniture, size, shop design, etc.

The store atmosphere has an important place in the marketing activities of the enterprises. However, the store atmosphere that each customer perceives can vary (Underhill, 2009). Customers' perception of the store atmosphere may also vary according to different preferences. Preparing the store atmosphere in accordance with the demands and expectations of the target group will affect the marketing activities positively (Arslan and Baycu, 2007).

### **3. VIRTUAL STORE ATMOSPHERE**

The virtual store is expressed as a place where consumers can reach whenever they want, and stores that provide flexibility to the consumer, which is not limited in time. Today, thanks to the development of internet and computer technologies, many consumers prefer to use virtual stores. Consumers who shop through a virtual store are able to visit and decide on many products and services in a short period of time (Kırcova, 2005, Strauss, 2016). It is defined as free environment where there is no time limitation for consumers and they can easily examine the products. Nevertheless, the purchasing decisions of consumers should be influenced positively and the store atmosphere should be encouraging consumers. It is stated that consumers' purchasing intentions will also rise in virtual stores with high visibility (Chong et al., 2016; Glazer et al., 2017). Virtual stores, unlike traditional stores, do not include salesperson and consumer interaction. While there is a direct interaction between sales people and consumers in traditional stores, there is no such interaction in virtual stores. This causes the virtual store atmosphere to be shaped only visually and audibly. In the virtual store atmosphere, it is possible to rank the factors that influence the purchasing perceptions of consumers as following (Childers et al., 2001; Atalar, 2012; Chaffey et al., 2016). Visualization, color, brightness, size of visuals, color, background music, music rhythm, signs, animation, store layout, product display techniques, pop-ups, graphics, home page design and etc.

### **4. THE IMPACT OF THE VIRTUAL STORE ATMOSPHERE ON CONSUMER PREFERENCES**

The rate of shopping through the virtual store is constantly increasing with the changes in the lifestyles of consumers. Consumers have a limited time and they do not want to waste time in shopping, they are directing them to virtual stores (Enginkaya, 2006, Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2016). Through virtual stores, consumers can compare the convenience of the products they want and they can find the product preference. Consumers who shop through a virtual store have the advantage of having the opportunity to make choices in a short period of time by many options. Nevertheless, the ever-increasing competitive environment is also mentioned in virtual retailing (Fiore and Jin, 2003, Glazer et al., 2017). Today, there are many virtual stores offering the same product to consumers. There are many factors that affect the preference of consumers in these virtual stores, among which the most important is the store atmosphere. Consumers' intentions to purchase may be affected positively or negatively, depending on the situation of perceiving the virtual store. In this context, it is important for marketers firstly to detect consumers' virtual store perceptions and develop strategies in this direction (Doolin et al., 2005, Adıgüzel, 2010, Strauss, 2016).

In the past, marketers have pointed out that consumers make purchasing decisions during purchasing actions, but nowadays marketers claim that the buying decision is shaped not during the moment but during and after the buying action (Dalal and Malik, 2015; Turban et al., 2016). This makes it important for consumers to examine all the situations they are affected before giving up their purchasing decisions. In virtual shopping environments, the main factor is the consumer, and the examination of the factors affecting the purchasing decision of the consumer has become one of the main topics of the marketers (Dalal and Malik, 2015). The virtual shop atmosphere is one of the most important criteria affecting consumer decisions because it cannot be directly interacted with the consumer in virtual shopping (Arslan and Baycu, 2006; West et al., 2015).

In virtual stores, consumers are not confronted with some of the problems they encounter in traditional stores, which makes virtual stores an advantageous position. In addition to the lack of store crowds and waiting queues, consumers are encouraged to opt for virtual stores (Turban et al., 2016; Chong et al., 2016), as well as special promotions for consumers, accessibility at every hour of the day, comfort and convenience in shopping. In addition to these, many factors such as the visual quality of the virtual store, the length of the information entered in the purchasing process are influential in consumers' decision making and procurement activities. When designing the virtual store atmosphere, businesses should keep their consumer comfort in the forefront and keep purchasing process as short as possible by ensuring easy access to the product and making purchases as positive as possible (Gerrikagoitia et al., 2015; Glazer et al., 2017).

There are many factors affecting consumers in virtual shop exchange, security is one of the most important (Kehoe, 2002, Lapin, 2006). Compared to shopping made from traditional stores, shopping made through a virtual store is considered as more risky. In particular, the possibility of stealing personal information and credit card information may affect consumers' intentions to shop through a virtual store. Purchase intention will also vary depending on the perceived risk perception of the purchase made by the consumer through the virtual store, and the rate of risk perceived. It is important for enterprises to share their security measures in detail with consumers (Diker ve Varol, 2013), by making their systems secure with advanced technologies in order to reduce the perceived risk. Determining the factors affecting the consumers' virtual store preferences and purchasing intentions and determining the marketing strategies in line with these factors are important for the profitability of the enterprises (Oskaybaş et al., 2015; Arslan, 2016). Consumers' virtual store interests, risk perceptions towards virtual stores and the impact on their purchasing intentions. For this reason, it is important to determine the factors that affect consumers' perceptions towards virtual stores and to produce strategies within this scope.

## 5. METHOD

### 5.1. Purpose of the Research

This study was conducted in order to determine the effect of the virtual store atmosphere on consumers' perception towards online shopping and their intention to continue online shopping.

### 5.2. Universe and Sampling

The universe of the research is made up of consumers who reside in the province of Istanbul and have shopped at least once on the internet in the last year. According to Yazicioglu and Erdoğan (2004), 384 people on the 5% sampling line are a reliable number for the infinite universe. Survey is applied to the 422 people by convenience sampling method. Survey forms were collected via e-mail.

### 5.3. Modeling and Hypotheses of Research

In the direction of the research, the research model was formed as following.

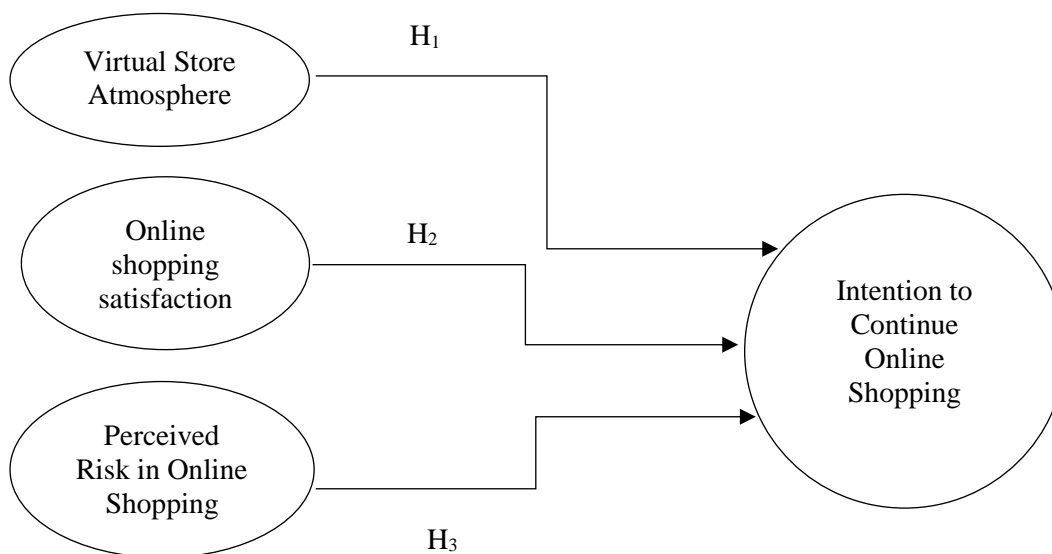


Figure 1. Model of the study

Hypotheses within the model of the research are as following:

H<sub>1</sub>: The virtual store atmosphere is influential on the intention to continue online shopping.

H<sub>2</sub>: Online shopping satisfaction is influential on the intention to continue online shopping.

H<sub>3</sub>: The perceived risk from online shopping is influential on the intention to continue online shopping.

## 5.4. Data Collection Tool

Survey form was used as data collection tool in the research. The questionnaire forms consist of personal information questions and online shopping scales. Expressions used to measure online store perception were taken from the scale developed by Wakefield and Baker (1998). The interest in online shopping and the online store satisfaction scale were created from the scales used in the study of Zaichkowsky (1985). The intention to continue shopping online has been adapted from the work of Wakefield and Baker (1998), and Fiore and Jin (2003). Expressions used to measure the risk that customers perceive from online shopping have been adapted from the scale developed by Pavlou (2003). Attitude scales related to online shopping were prepared by Adıgüzel (2010). The Turkish reliability and validity study of all scales was performed by Adıgüzel (2010). The number of questions pertaining to scales and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient are given at the table below.

Table 1. The Factor Load and Explained Variance

	Factor Load	Explained Variance	KMO	Number of questions	Cronbach's Alpha
<b>Virtual Store Perception</b>					
S1	0,725	70,2	0,82	5	0,741
S2	0,784				
S3	0,765				
S4	0,796				
S5	0,821				
<b>Online Shopping Satisfaction</b>					
S1	0,845	69,7	0,85	5	0,892
S2	0,756				
S3	0,812				
S4	0,814				
S5	0,736				
<b>Perceived Risk in Online Shopping</b>					
S1	0,741	68,3	0,88	6	0,852
S2	0,825				
S3	0,763				
S4	0,732				
S5	0,796				
S6	0,802				
<b>Continued Intention to Online Shopping</b>					
S1	0,841	75,1	0,79	3	0,780
S2	0,832				
S3	0,751				

Table 2. Number of Questions per Scale and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

	Number of questions	Cronbach's Alpha
Virtual Store Perception	5	0,741
Online Shopping Satisfaction	5	0,892
Perceived Risk in Online Shopping	6	0,852
Continued Intention to Online Shopping	3	0,780

## 5.5. Data Analysis

Data analysis was done in SPSS 16 package program. In the analysis of the data, regression model was applied with descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage.

## 5.6. Constraints of the Study

The research is restricted with the consumers living in İstanbul who have made online shopping at least once within a year.

## 6. FINDINGS

Table 3. Findings Related to Demographic Characteristics

	f	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	198	46,9
Male	224	53,1
Total	422	100,0
<b>Age</b>		
21 year and under	156	37,0
22-37 years	168	39,8
38 year and over	98	23,2
Total	422	100,0
<b>Education Status</b>		
Middle school	97	23,0
High school	121	28,7
University	204	48,3
Total	422	100,0
<b>Medeni Durum</b>		
Bekar	169	40,0
Evli	253	60,0
Toplam	422	100,0

When the findings related to demographic characteristics were examined, 53,1% of the participants were male, 39,8% were between 22-37 years, 48,3% were university graduates and 60% were married.

Table 4. Findings of Internet Usage and Shopping Status from the Internet

	f	%
<b>Unsing Internet</b>		
Less than a year	17	4,0
1-5 years	113	26,8
6-9 years	130	30,8
10 years and over	162	38,4
Total	422	100,0
<b>1-Year Online Shopping</b>		
1-2	193	45,7
3-6	136	32,2
7-9	37	8,8
10 and over	56	13,3
Total	422	100,0

When the findings of internet use and shopping on the internet were examined, 38.4% of the participants had used the internet for 10 years and over, 45.7% had done shopping once or twice over the internet in the last 1 year.

The regression results for the hypothesis “H<sub>1</sub>: The virtual store atmosphere is influential on the intention to continue online shopping.”; “H<sub>2</sub>: Online shopping satisfaction is influential on the intention to continue online shopping.”, H<sub>3</sub>: The perceived risk from online shopping is influential on the intention to continue online shopping.” is given at the table below.

Table 5. Regression Results

Intention to Continue Online Shopping	Non-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	p
	Beta	Standard error	Beta		
Constant	2,321	0,068			
Virtual Store Atmosphere	0,214	0,055	0,358	4,18	0,000
Online Shopping Satisfaction	0,314	0,041	0,292	5,426	0,000
Perceived Risk from Online Shopping	0,326	0,056	-0,368	5,854	0,000

R<sup>2</sup> : 0,712  
F value : 62,514; p:0,00<0,05

When the regression model results are examined, the model is statistically significant according to the results of F value (F value: 62,514, p: 0.00 <0,05). The virtual shop atmosphere, online shopping satisfaction and perceived risk from online shopping are statistically significant on the intention to continue online shopping (p <0.05). While the perception of the intention to continue has a positive effect on the perceptions of the virtual store atmosphere and online shopping satisfaction, the perceived risk is negatively influenced. When R2 value is examined (R2 = 0,712), it is seen that the perceptions of the virtual store atmosphere, online shopping satisfaction and perceived risk perceptions of online shopping reveal as 71.2%

## 7. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

With modern marketing understanding it has become important to respond to the consumer wants and demands. Businesses that develop marketing strategies in the direction of consumer demands will be more successful in the market and will be able to gain competitive advantage. The situation is not different in marketing understanding through internet. Virtual stores are places where businesses offer their products and it is important that these places meet the demands and wishes of consumers. Business webpages that know the target mass and know the demand and expectation of the target kit will also shape this direction and will increase the sales by providing customer satisfaction.

In this study, the atmosphere of the virtual stores where businesses presented their products were examined to see how again consumers perceptions of online shopping change. Due to the constraints of the research, the research can not be generalized. As a result of the research, it was determined that the virtual store atmosphere and online shopping satisfaction perceptions had a positive effect but the perceived risk affected the intention to continue negatively. Similarly, Kim et al. (2000) reported that the perceived satisfaction affects the intention to purchase positively. In the survey, it was determined that consumers' positive store perceptions influenced positively the intention to purchase again. Oskaybaş et al. (2014) stated that the confidence, satisfaction and quality of the online store were directly influential on the loyalty of the customers.

It has been determined that the perceived risk from online shopping affects negatively the intention to continue online shopping. Doolin et al. (2005) stated that individuals are hesitant to give their own personal information, and that as privacy concerns increase, the desire to shop online is diminishing. However, Kehoe (2002) stated that the perceived risk varies from person to person and that buying behavior changes as perceived risk changes. Joines et al. (2003) reported that the greatest obstacle towards online shopping is perceived risk. Lapin (2006) found that as the risk perceptions of consumers increased, the amount of money they spent on online shopping decreased, or that consumers did not spend any money.

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