

## **ATTITUDES TOWARD ONLINE SHOPPING FROM THE ASPECTS OF PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND SHOPPING MOTIVE THROUGH A DEVELOPING CONCEPT: PRIVATE SHOPPING**

**Miray BAYBARS**

Ege University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences  
Ege University, FEAS, Bornova, Izmir/Turkey  
miray.baybars@ege.edu.tr

**Elif USTUNDAGLI**

Ege University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences  
Ege University, FEAS, Bornova, Izmir/Turkey  
elif.ustundagli@ege.edu.tr

### **Abstract**

*Private shopping is one of the concepts that serve as a members-only online shopping platform with deep discounts and well-known brands. The aim of this paper is to determine whether consumers' need for uniqueness and innovativeness as a personal trait and price discount orientation affect consumer attitudes toward private shopping and their purchase decision or not. Research results revealed that need for uniqueness and innovativeness affect positive attitudes towards private shopping positively. However price discount orientation is a foremost factor that both effect attitude positively and also directly explain shopping behavior.*

**Key Words:** *Private Shopping, Innovativeness, Need for Uniqueness, Price Discount Orientation, Consumer Attitudes*

**JEL Classification:** M31, M39

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Online shopping provides consumers convenience and they could access information easily, buy products at lower prices with various selection opportunities, reach original services and have personal attention (Zhou, Dai ve Zhang, 2007:41). However, the factors affecting their attitude towards online shopping are still research bases. Thus, this paper aims to find out whether private shopping behavior and attitude has a relationship with personal characteristics of consumers' need for uniqueness and innovativeness, and the shopping motive of price discounts.

## **2. A New Online Shopping Concept: Private Shopping**

Private shopping is a growing figure as a subset of online shopping, which has been also named as “members-only shopping”. The concept is also named as “exclusive shopping” and it is really like a closed loop at which only member individuals can take the advantage of deep discounts and high-end brands. Membership is free but users have to be invited by another member or are waitlisted to be accredited members.

Markafoni, Limango and Trendyol are the first three private shopping platforms started operations in Turkey respectively. Taking these platforms as examples, the number and variety of private shopping platforms increased continuously reaching above 13 as of today.

## **3. Consumers’ Need for Uniqueness**

Consumers need for uniqueness can be evaluated as a motivation to be different from other people, and reflected by the need for possession of unique objects (Tian, Bearden and Hunter, 2001: 50). The uniqueness and scarcity of the product offered is widely used as an appeal by marketers to respond uniqueness seeking behavior (Lynn and Snyder, 2002: 399; Frank 1997: 163; Lynn and Harris 1997: 602; Thompson and Haytko 1997: 27) and it increases the attractiveness of the offer (Gierl and Huettl, 2010: 232). The private shopping sites are known for their sales of luxury apparel and high-end goods that can be also identified as somehow unique products and that are not found anywhere else, -like the European or American brands- so, are expected to satisfy the need for uniqueness.

## **4. Consumer Innovativeness**

Innovativeness can be defined as “consumption of newness” with more frequency and pace than other people and innovative people mostly seek novel information, products and consumption situations (Reohrich, 2004: 671; Hirschman, 1980: 284, 292). General innovativeness is an innate innovativeness that shows the degree of how an individual is receptive to new ideas and makes innovative decisions independently of the experiences related by other individuals (Alcañiz et al., 2008: 651). As private shopping platforms are relatively new in online shopping scene, consumers who are personally innovative and seek “newness” could also prefer these platforms for shopping.

## **5. Price Discount Orientation**

Marketers in unique product advertising (Lynn and Harris, 1997: 602) are using prestige pricing as a component of advertising appeal. This is contradicting with

what is applied in private shopping sites: unique products and lower prices. Although it was figured out that people are not willing to pay more for the uniqueness that they purchase (Franke and Schreier; 2008: 94), the discounts offered by private shopping sites may create extra interest for people, offering the novelty and the low prices at the same platform.

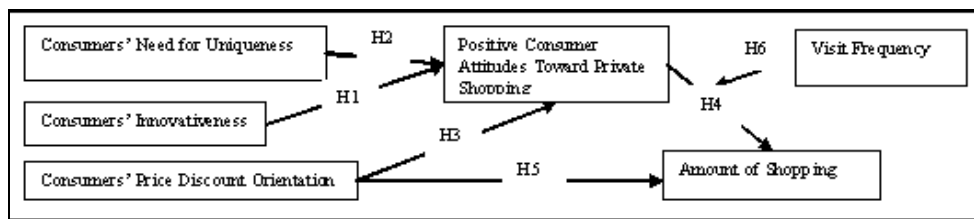
## 6. Research Methodology and Findings

### 6.1. Sample and Data Collection

The research is focused on the three first movers of private shopping concept in Turkey, namely: markafoni.com, limango.com.tr and trendyol.com. The fans of these shopping platforms are reached via Facebook.com; and sent online questionnaires between the dates of July 13<sup>th</sup> 2010- October 6<sup>th</sup> 2010. The questionnaire form was applied online by the researchers with convenience sampling method. The statements are developed depending on the research problem and literature (Tian, Bearden and Hunter, 2001; Teng, 2007; Goldsmith and Hofacker, 1991; Lynn and Snyder, 2002; Abdullah and Sivakumaran, 2005; Manning, Bearden and Madden, 1995). The questionnaire form consists of three parts, which aims to find about consumers' private shopping usage patterns and their general view about relevant private shopping platforms, the demographic profile and 5-point Likert type scale to measure customers' need for uniqueness, innovativeness and price discount orientation respectively.

### 6.2. Research Model and Hypothesis

Graph 1: Proposed Research Model



Since the items offered in these platforms are scarce and motivating the people to buy the products immediately (O'Donnell, 2009), and the consumers can enjoy "making a minority choice" (Tian and McKenzie, 2001:172) the private shopping clubs can be the answer for the people who are looking to satisfy their need for uniqueness, making them to visit the private shopping sites more frequently and hold favorable attitudes towards the concept. Moreover, as the consumers' innovativeness increases, the innovative consumers' visit frequency of private

shopping platforms and their amount of shopping is also expected to increase as well as their positive attitudes depending on the previous research results indicating the increased use of novel concepts for innovative individuals (Blake et al., 2003: 156).

Consumers' price discount orientation may affect their visit frequency of private shopping platforms in order to search information about lower prices. Consumers' price discount orientation may create positive attitudes towards private shopping sites, or may directly affect the shopping amount. Besides, consumers' positive attitudes may not necessarily turn into actual behavior. So it is also thought that consumers who hold positive attitudes towards private shopping platforms actually make purchases, if they visit the platforms frequently. Based on this discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Consumers' innovativeness *effects* positive private shopping attitude *positively*.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Consumers' need for uniqueness *effects* positive private shopping attitude *positively*.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Consumers' price discount orientation *effects* private shopping attitude *positively*.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Consumers' positive attitude toward private shopping platforms *effects* amount of shopping *positively*.

**H<sub>5</sub>:** There is a *positive relationship* between "price discount orientation" and shopping amount.

**H<sub>6</sub>:** Visit frequency *has a moderating effect* on the relationship between consumers' positive attitudes towards private shopping and amount of shopping.

### **6.3. Research Results**

#### **6.3.1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

74.1% of the respondents were women, representing the profile of individuals using private shopping clubs. The mean value for the age of the respondents is 27,864 with the minimum age of 18 and maximum age of 50. According to the age groups, the majority (61,7%) of the respondents belong to the group of 26-32, which supports the previous declaration of the markafoni (Altınsoy, 2009). 69% of the respondents were university graduates and 63% are single with no children. 43,35% have a monthly income between 750-3000 TL, whereas 30,38% belongs to the income interval of 3001-3750 TL. 84% of the respondents have undergraduate and graduate level education.

### 6.3.2. General Findings

Among the 316 respondents 242 of them were members of markafoni.com, whereas 207 and 168 of them declared membership for limango and trendyol respectively. 51.2% of markafoni members, 46.4% of limango members and 39.1% of trendyol members visit their private shopping clubs' web sites at least once a day demonstrating a serious tendency to use these clubs. The most popular product categories for each private shopping club are clothing, footwear and accessories including eyewear, watches, bags etc. Membership does not necessarily stand for actual purchases. 46.4% of markafoni members, 59.6% of limango members and 78.6% of trendyol members had never made any purchases from the clubs.

### 6.3.3. One Sample T-test

Respondents rely on many information sources prior to trying a new product or brand. They prefer to consult an experienced friend before trying a new brand ( $t_{(315)}=-12,201$   $p<,05$ ), searching information ( $t_{(315)}=7,051$   $p<,05$ ) and visit places where they can find information about new products and brands ( $t_{(315)}=3,849$   $p<,05$ ). They not only follow new products and services ( $t_{(315)}=7,738$   $p<,05$ ) and continually want to have new products experiences ( $t_{(315)}=6,847$   $p<,05$ ) but also take advantage of the first available opportunity to try new and different product alternatives ( $t_{(315)}=8,444$   $p<,05$ ). They declared that they have more information compared to other people about new products on the market ( $t_{(315)}=5,258$   $p<,05$ ) and they are first one who tries or purchases new products ( $t_{(315)}=3,267$   $p<,05$ ), as the evidence of being innovative (Reohrich, 2004: 671; Hirschman, 1980: 284; Donthu and Garcia, 1999: 52). As a matter of the fact, price discount orientation is another factor that makes the respondents to prefer private shopping platforms ( $t_{(315)}=15,315$   $p<,05$ ;  $t_{(315)}=20,006$   $p<,05$ ;  $t_{(315)}=19,808$   $p<,05$ ). Therefore it must be denoted that price discount is an important motive for shopping (Grewal et al. 1998: 336, 344) also on private shopping platforms. Uniqueness is especially depending on rarities ( $t_{(315)}=9,701$   $p<,05$ ) instead of scarcity ( $t_{(315)}=-0,304$   $p<,05$ ). But short lasting campaigns create willingness to shop on private shopping platforms ( $t_{(315)}=3,119$   $p<,05$ ). So it could be denoted that scarcity is not a base for uniqueness as opposed to literature (Lynn and Snyder, 2002: 399) but it is a motive for buying (O'Donnell, 2009). As respondents enjoy having things that others do not have ( $t_{(315)}=15,28$   $p<,05$ ), it shows that they want to be different from others (Frank 1997: 163; Lynn and Harris 1997: 602; Thompson and Haytko 1997: 27). This could be the main reason of why they prefer products that are rare

or extraordinary. So it is obvious that need for uniqueness is another important motive for respondents (Tian, Bearden and Hunter, 2001: 50). In accordance with the previous literature (Franke and Schreier; 2008: 94), respondents prefer private shopping platforms as they pay less for rare products. Keeping up with the fashion ( $t_{(315)}=7,618$   $p<,05$ ) and also renewal of the product range ( $t_{(315)}=27,58$   $p<,05$ ) is increasing variety (Donthu and Garcia, 1999: 53) and also attracting respondents for shopping from these platforms.

### 6.3.4. Factor and Reliability Analyses

Factor analysis results are given in Table 2.

**Table 2-Rotated Factor Analysis Results**

Factors		Cronbach Alpha	Number of Items
<b>Consumers' Innovativeness (CI)</b> KMO=0,862 Bartlett=1362,110 $p<,05$ Total Variance Explained=68,407%	<b>Consumers' innovativeness with regard to others (CIRO)</b>	0,849	5
	<b>Consumers' information search regarding to new (innovative) products (CIS)</b>	0,844	3
<b>Consumers' Price Discount Orientation (CPDO)</b> KMO=0,692 Bartlett=224,059 $p<,05$ Total Variance Explained=67,081%		0,754	3
<b>Consumers' Need for Uniqueness (CNFU)</b> KMO=0,827 Bartlett=822,392 $p<,05$ Total Variance Explained=46,353%		0,831	8
<b>Positive Attitudes Toward Private Shopping (PATPS)</b> KMO=0,867 Bartlett=989,204 $p<,05$ Total Variance Explained=57,572%	<b>Consumers' positive attitudes through good deals (CPAGD)</b>	0,806	4
	<b>Consumers' positive attitudes through well-known and trendy brands (CPAWTB)</b>	0,658	4

### 6.3.5. Hypothesis Testing

*CIRO* and *CIS* found to have significant and positive correlations with *CPAGD* ( $r=0,302$ ,  $p<,01$ ;  $r=0,192$ ,  $p<,01$ ) and *CPAWTB* ( $r=0,308$ ,  $p<,01$ ;  $r=0,361$ ,  $p<,01$ ). Thus it could be referred that consumers' innovativeness effects positive attitude positively. Therefore, **H<sub>1</sub> is supported**. Depending on the fact that, innovative people mostly seek novel information, products and consumption situations when compared to others (Reohrich, 2004: 671; Hirschman, 1980: 284), they hold favorable attitudes towards the novel concept of private shopping. While there is a relationship between *CPAWTB* and *amount of shopping* ( $r=0,121$ ,  $p<,05$ ); there is no relationship between *CPAGD* and *shopping amount* ( $r=0,03$ ,  $p>,05$ ). Thus, although consumers' innovativeness turns into positive attitudes towards private shopping sites, the shopping amount is affected only by *CPAWTB*. In other words, consumers do not prefer to shop from these platforms when they come up with a good deal. Thus, **H<sub>4</sub> is rejected**, since the analysis did not support the relationship of two of the attitude components together. There is a significant and positive correlation between the *CNFU* and *PATPS* ( $r=0,340$ ,

$p < 0,01$ ;  $r = 0,441$ ,  $p < 0,01$ ). Since the consumers are given the chance of purchasing a product, which is available just for the members, they can have the joy of making a minority choice, satisfy their need for uniqueness, and feel different from the rest of the society (Tian and McKenzie, 2001:172). Thus, the individuals who have needs for uniqueness hold favorable attitudes towards private shopping platforms. Thus, **H<sub>2</sub> is supported**. Price discount oriented individuals are found to have positive attitudes towards private shopping clubs depending on the good deals ( $r = 0,363$ ,  $p < 0,01$ ); and well-known and trendy brands ( $r = 0,528$ ,  $p < 0,01$ ). Since these people are looking for spending less on products, it is understandable that they hold positive attitudes towards private shopping platforms. Thus, **H<sub>3</sub> is supported**. Since CPDO has significant positive relationship with *shopping amount* ( $r = 0,174$ ,  $p < 0,01$ ) **H<sub>5</sub> is supported**; the analysis indicated that as the price discount orientation of individuals increase, their shopping amount from private shopping platforms are expected to increase as well supporting the literature (Grewal et al. 1998: 336).

**Table 2- Regression Analysis For Visit Frequency\***

Independent Variables	Model 1			Model 2		
	F(3,303) = 8,566 p=0,001 < 0,05 R2 = 0,078			F(5,301) = 5,244 p=0,001 < 0,05 R2 = 0,080		
	Beta	t	p	Beta	t	p
Constant	0,914	1,759	0,08	0,753	1,333	0,184
Consumers' positive attitudes through good deals	0,012	0,101	0,919	0,073	0,128	0,898
Consumers' positive attitudes through well-known and trendy brands	0,106	0,835	0,404	-0,167	-0,443	0,658
Visit Frequency	0,355	4,542	0,001	0,377	4,471	<b>0,001</b>
Consumers' positive attitudes through good deals * Visit Frequency				-0,009	-0,104	0,917
Consumers' positive attitudes through well-known and trendy brands * Visit Frequency				0,045	0,778	0,437

\**Shopping amount is dependent variable*

According to the regression analysis (Table 2), visit frequency does not moderate the relationship between consumers' positive attitudes towards private shopping and shopping amount, so **H<sub>6</sub> is rejected**. However as visit frequency directly affects the shopping amount, it is congruent to state that if private shopping sites could increase consumers' visit frequency, they will also have an opportunity to increase their sales.

As attitude does not explain the shopping behavior ( $F_{2,304} = 2,379$ ;  $p = 0,094 > 0,05$ ), personal characteristics and price discount orientation will have direct importance on shopping amount that is the indicator of shopping behavior. With regression analysis (Table 3), it is found that price discount orientation is the explanatory variable of shopping behavior. Because of this reason, price discounts should be the main focus of private shopping behavior.

**Table 3- Regression Analysis For Shopping Behavior**

Independent Variables	$F_{(4, 302)} = 3,112$ $p = 0,016 < 0,05$ $R^2 = 0,04$		
	Beta	t	p
Constant	3,205	25,393	<b>0,001</b>
Consumers' innovativeness with regard to others	-0,107	-0,682	0,496
Information search regarding to new (innovative) products	-0,235	-1,633	0,104
Consumers' price discount orientation	0,468	3,275	<b>0,001</b>
Consumers' need for uniqueness	0,063	0,373	0,710

*\*Shopping amount is dependent variable*

## 7. Discussions and Conclusions

Innovativeness as a personal trait is an important factor while creating a positive attitude toward private shopping, but by contrast with the literature (Goldsmith, 2001: 152), innovativeness does not affect the amount of shopping. Consumers will purchase more when they have positive attitudes toward well-known and trendy brands. But good deals are beside the question. Although online shoppers are nonsensitive about price and brand (Donthu and Garcia, 1999:52), “private shoppers” are found to be brand-sensitive but price-nonsensitive. Consumer need for uniqueness is effective to create positive attitude. Although study posed that “membership” does not support “feel of specialty”, it supports “uniqueness concept” and satisfy the joy of making a minority choice with feeling different from the rest of the society (Tian and McKenzie, 2001:172). Especially as consumers do not prefer to pay more for uniqueness (Franke and Schreier; 2008: 94), good deals and discounts help to create positive attitude and also increase shopping amount (Grewal et al. 1998: 336). Therefore it is obvious to say that price discounts seem more crucial for attracting consumers. The member individuals of private shopping platforms are found to be innovative with a significant need for uniqueness. Price discount has a remarkable effect on both consumers' positive attitude toward private shopping and shopping amount. Thus, it could be noted that price discount is the main factor that form the consumer purchases. Generally, it could be concluded that private shopping platforms are accepted quickly as compared to time it serves with attaining its objects. At the time of research, there were only three platforms engaging in private shopping in Turkey, which were markafoni.com, limango.com.tr and trendyol.com. During the research, the number of private shopping platforms almost tripled, so the recent platforms can be subjects of further researches on this topic. Besides, as the time passes, the individuals are expected to be more familiar with the concept of private shopping, and innovativeness criteria may be reexamined due to the obsolescence of the concept.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abdullah, Nur Halimah Chew and Bharadhwaj Sivakumaran (2005), "Unraveling Cross-cultural Differences: Effects of Observability, Self Monitoring and Desire for Unique Consumer Products on Tendency to Seek Variety", *Asia Pacific Advances in Consumer Research*. Vol.6, pp.127-135

Alcañiz, Enrique Bigné, Carla Ruiz-Mafé, Joaquín Aldás-Manzano, Silvia Sanz-Blas (2008), "Influence of Online Shopping Information Dependency and Innovativeness on Internet Shopping Adoption", *Online Information Review*, Vol. 32, No. 5, pp.648 – 667

Altınsoy, Tuğçe (2009). *Lüks Markalar %85 İndirimli*. [http://www.sabah.com.tr/Ekonomi/2010/04/29/luks\\_markalar\\_85\\_indirimli](http://www.sabah.com.tr/Ekonomi/2010/04/29/luks_markalar_85_indirimli), [Accessed, 30.04.2010].

Blake, Brian F., Kimberly A. Neuendorf and Colin M. Valdiserri (2003), "Innovativeness and Variety of Internet Shopping", *Internet Research: Electronic Networking Applications and Policy*, Vol. 13, No. 3, pp. 156-169.

Donthu, Naveen and Adriana Garcia (1999). "The Internet Shopper", *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 39, No. 3, pp. 52-58.

Frank, Thomas (1997), *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture and the Rise of Hip Consumerism*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Franke, Nikolaus and Martin Schreier (2008), "Product Uniqueness as a Driver of Customer Utility in Mass Customization", *Marketing Letters*, Vol.19, No.2, pp. 93-107.

Gierl, Heribert and Verena Huettl (2010), "Are scarce products always more attractive? The interaction of different types of scarcity signals with products' suitability for conspicuous consumption", *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, Vol.27, No.3, pp. 225–235.

Goldsmith, Ronald E. and Charles F. Hofacker (1991). "Measuring Consumer Innovativeness", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 19, No. 3, pp. 209–221.

Goldsmith, Ronald E. (2001), "Using the Domain Specific Innovativeness Scale to Identify Innovative Internet Consumers", *Internet Research: Electronic Networking Applications and Policy*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 149-158.

Grewal, Dhruw, Krishnan, R., Julie Baker, and Norm Borin (1998), "The Effect of Store Name, Brand Name and Price Discounts on Consumers' Evaluations and Purchase Intentions", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol.4, No.3, pp. 331-352

Hirschman, Elizabeth C. (1980), "Innovativeness, Novelty Seeking and Consumer Creativity", *The Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 283–295.

Lynn, Michael and Charles Richard Snyder (2002), "Uniqueness seeking" (in: C.R. Snyder and S.J. Lopez-Ed., *Handbook of Positive Psychology*, New York: Oxford University Press), pp. 395–410.

Lynn, Michael and Judy Harris (1997), "The Desire for Unique Consumer Products: A New Individual Differences Scale", *Psychology and Marketing*, Vol: 14, No:6, pp.601-616.

Manning, Kenneth C, William O Bearden, and Thomas J.Madden (1995), "Consumer Innovativeness and the Adoption Process", *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 329-345

O'Donnell, Jayne (2009), *Retailers Love Shopping Clubs, but Beware of Overspending*, *USA Today*, [http://www.usatoday.com/money/perfi/basics/2009-11-20-exclusiveclubs20\\_ST\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/money/perfi/basics/2009-11-20-exclusiveclubs20_ST_N.htm), [Accessed, 10.01. 2011]

Reohrich, Gilles (2004), "Consumer innovativeness: Concepts and measurements", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol: 57, (2004), pp. 671– 677.

Teng, Lefa (2007), "A Comparison of Two Types of Price Discounts in Shifting Consumers' Attitudes and Purchase Intentions", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 62, No. 1, pp.14–21.

Thompson, Craig J. and Diana L. Haytko (1997), "Speaking of Fashion: Consumers' Uses of Fashion Discourses and the Appropriation of Countervailing Cultural Meanings", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol.24, June, pp.15-42.

Tian, Kelly Tepper and Karyn McKenzie (2001), "The Long-Term Predictive Validity of the Consumers' Need for Uniqueness Scale", *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, Vol. 10, No.3, pp. 171-193.

Tian, Kelly Tepper, Bearden, William O. and Hunter, Gary L. (2001), "Consumers' Need for Uniqueness: Scale Development and Validation", *The Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 28, No.1, pp. 50-66

Zhou, Lina, Liwei Dai and Dongsong Zhang (2007), "Online Shopping Acceptance Model — A Critical Survey of Consumer Factors in Online Shopping", *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*, Vol. 8, No.1, pp. 41-62.