The Effect of Digital Marketing Communication Tools in the Creation Brand Awareness By Housing Companies

Konut Firmalarının Marka Farkındalığı Yaratmak Amacıyla Kullandıkları Dijital Pazarlama İletişimi Araçlarının Etki Seviyelerinin Değerlendirilmesi

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ABSTRACT

Creating brand awareness is the first and most important stage of marketing communication. Many types of marketing communication tools have been used to do this in business processes. Digital marketing tools are actually a deconstruction of traditional marketing tools and have become more important by providing interactivity to both consumers and producers in the marketing process. These tools incorporate consumers into the marketing process as an active, rather than passive, player. For housing companies, systematic and strategic use of digital marketing tools is an important resource in gaining competitive advantage, yet there is limited research on this topic in the literature. In this context, this study made use of the Delphi Method to investigate the impact of digital marketing tools on brand awareness generation among housing companies. Normative inferences were made through interviews with panel participants working in large-scale housing companies, and a theoretical framework was drawn up for usage trends among digital marketing tools. The Delphi results indicated that, in housing companies, marketing tools that create "paid digital content" (corporate web site, search engine pages, e-mail communication, etc.) currently have a greater impact than those which create "proactive content" (social media, etc.). However, another significant finding on which there was consensus among the panel participants is that in the creation of brand awareness, digital marketing tools such as Facebook or Twitter which create the latter content will become more important in the future.

ÖZET

Marka farkındalığı yaratmak, pazarlama iletişiminin ilk ve önemli adımıdır. Marka farkındalığı yaratmak amacıyla farklı pazarlama iletişimi araçları kullanılmaktadır. Bunların en yenisi "dijital pazarlama iletişimi araçları"dır. Dijital pazarlama iletişimi araçları, marka farkındalığı yaratma sürecinde tüketicilerin pasif izleyiciler değil, aktif katılımcılar olarak pazarlama sürecine dâhil olabilmesini, üreticilerle tüketicilerin karşılıklı etkileşim içerisinde bulunabilmesini sağladığı için geleneksel pazarlama iletişimi araçlarından ayrışmakta ve giderek daha fazla önem kazanmaktadır. Konut piyasasında da marka farkındalığı yaratmak amacı ile dijital pazarlama iletişimi araçlarının kullanımının yaygınlaşmaya başladığı, konut firmalarının piyasada rekabet avantajı elde etmek için dijital pazarlama iletişimi araçlarının sistematik ve stratejik kullanımına önem verdikleri, ancak bu konuda yapılmış bilimsel çalışmaların henüz yok denecek kadar az olduğu görülmektedir. Bu bağlamda bu çalışma, konut firmalarının dijital pazarlama iletişimi araçlarını kullanma eğilimlerini araştırmayı ve marka farkındalığı yaratmada dijital pazarlama iletişimi araçlarının etki seviyelerini değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma yöntemi olarak "Delphi Analiz Tekniği" seçilmiş, büyük ölçekli konut firmalarında çalışan uzmanlar ile görüşmeler yapılmış, araştırma sonucunda konut firmalarının dijital pazarlama iletişimi araçlarını kullanma eğilimlerine yönelik kuramsal bir çerçeve çizilmiştir. Konut firmalarının uzlaşı içerisinde olduğu araştırma bulgularından bir tanesi, marka farkındalığı yaratmada ödenmiş dijital içerik yaratan pazarlama iletişimi araçlarının (kurumsal web siteleri, arama motorları ve e-mail iletişimi, vb.) etki seviyesinin proaktif içerik yaratan pazarlama iletişimi araçlarından (sosyal medya, vb.) daha yüksek olduğudur. Bir diğer önemli bulgu ise, Facebook ve Twitter gibi proaktif içerik yaratan dijital pazarlama iletişimi araçlarının gelecekte önem kazanacağıdır.

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Introduction

The development and widespread use of internet technologies have transformed the way society communicates both in their daily and professional life. One of the most important indicators of this transformation is emergence of new communication tools.

New communication tools emerging with the development of internet technologies are called **"digital communication tools"**. When we talk about digital communication tools, what comes to mind are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and similar social networks that are used online and virtual platforms like web sites, microblogs and search engines. With the advent of new communication tools, already available communication tools are now becoming to be called as **"traditional communication tools"**. Traditional communication tools are printed (journals, newspapers etc.), visual (television, cinema etc.) and audio (radio) communication tools.

Another transformation experienced with the development of new communication tools is the change of the way communication tools are being used. The most significant attribute of the change in the way communication tools are being used is the transition of users, who access the content of communication tools, from being a passive player to becoming an active one. The ones who use digital communication tools are no longer satisfied with just reading or watching the content presented to them, but rather they like to share the content with others and interfere with the content by submitting their opinions and criticism if they feel necessary. In other words the users in digital platforms do not just consume the content presented to them, on the contrary they are active participants who have the opportunity to generate information and share the information generated.[1]

Furthermore, digital communication tools provide a communication environment that can be accessed by anyone regardless of social identities. In real life, platforms that people come together and have discussions vary according to their income level, educational background and professional life. However features like gender, race and religion lose its significance in digital environments and people can build relationships without any social segregation.[2]

Along with this, Öztürk (2013) believes that it is possible to access information more quickly and easily using digital communication tools. Medium like forums, email groups enable users to exchange information over the Internet, which lowers the cost and time of communication. Besides, any user with an email address can use these services for free all around the world.

All these developments enabled the use of digital communication tools for marketing purposes. The reason for this is that in contrast with traditional communication tools, digital communication tools have become global and popular marketing channels via which companies can communicate with their target group directly, quickly and continuously.[3] Digital marketing tools are actually decomposing of traditional marketing tools and becoming more important since they allow consumers and producers to be interactive in the marketing process.[4] Digital communication tools are being used for marketing purposes in many sectors from textile to food, handicrafts to performing arts, from press to automotive. In this respect, digital communication tools are referred to as *"digital marketing communication tools"* by marketing experts.

Housing companies started using digital marketing tools efficiently in the process of *"creating brand awareness"*, which is considered as the first and one of the most important steps of marketing. It is known that most of the large scale housing companies have Facebook, Twitter, Instagram accounts and web sites regarding their companies and houses they build and that they use e-mail, SMS, MMS and similar digital marketing tools to communicate with their consumers and it is seen that via these channels, they share information about new projects for which construction works have just started, about projects launched or planned to be launched for sale and that they respond to any criticism and remarks.

However even though there are a lot of publications about digital marketing tools, scientific studies about their use in housing market is very limited. In this context, the main aim of this study is to investigate the trend in using digital marketing tools and the impact level of digital marketing tools to generate brand awareness in housing companies. As selected research method of study "Delphi Analysis Method" has been used. Normative inferences are made though the interviews with panel participants working in large scale housing companies and a theoretical framework was drawn for use tendency of digital marketing tools.

In this article, first the issue of creating brand awareness, defined as the first step of marketing communication, is discussed and then the issue of market-

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[1] Varnalı, 2013.   [2] Öztürk, 2013.

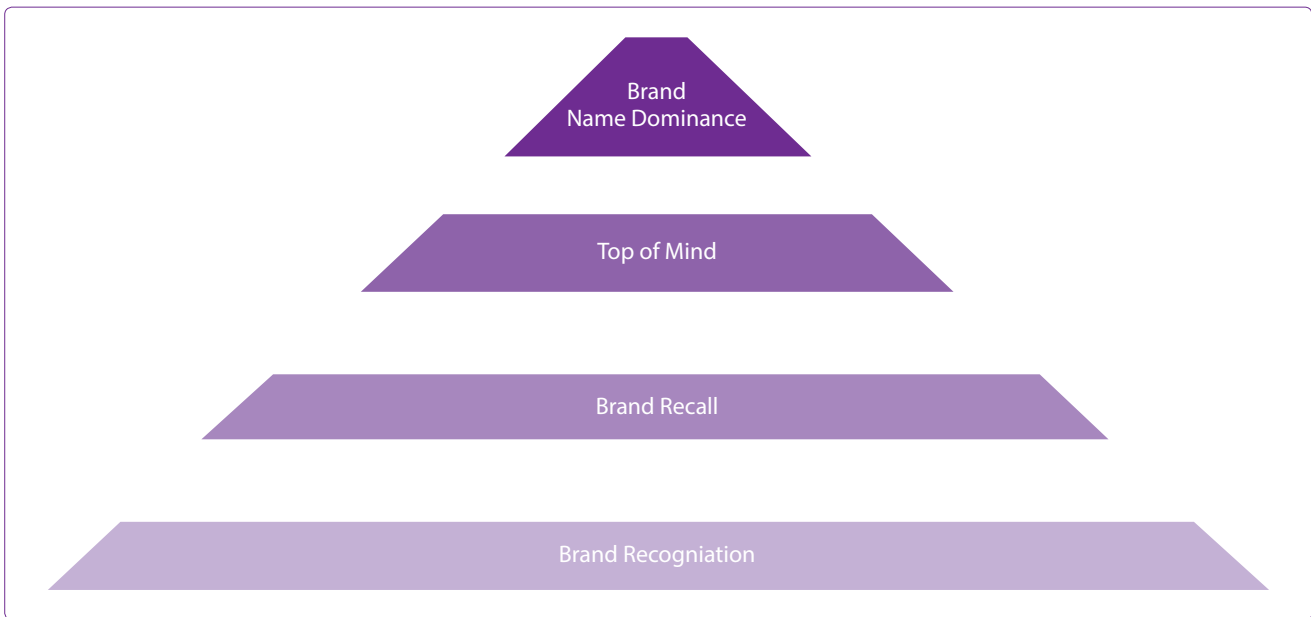[3] Öztürk, 2013.   [4] Winer, 2009.

Figure 1. Pyramid of Brand Awareness, (Aaker, 1996, s.300).

ing communication and creating brand awareness in housing companies is explained. In the next section, digital marketing communication tools are reviewed in detail. And finally in the methodology section, the Delphi Method, which is determined as the research method for this study is explained and the process of implementing Delphi surveys is discussed and level and degree of impact of digital marketing communication tools used by housing companies for the purpose of creating brand awareness are evaluated.

The First Step of Marketing Communication: Brand Awareness

Creating brand awareness enables recognition of a brand in the market. Recognition of a brand by a consumer means that the consumer can separate that brand from other similar brands in the market, can perceive the symbolic content that such brand represents and the social position that the brand promises. Accordingly brand awareness can be defined as the impact of a brand in the minds of consumers.[5]

Rossiter and Percy (1987) defined brand awareness as an element that constitutes the basic step of occurrence of communication between the companies and consumers, which needs to take place before all other steps in that process. In this sense, brand awareness is the main element that has impact on the behavior of the consumer and that shapes the brand preference of the consumer. If there is no brand awareness, there is

no purchasing decision.[6] If we consider that for a consumer, there are numerous options in the market that meets a similar need, the target of brand awareness is to have the very first communication with the consumer and to ensure that the brand always remains on the agenda of the consumer after the first contact.

Brand awareness does not mean to merely know the name of the brand or to have seen it before, it rather means that consumer can associate the name, logo and similar connotations in his mind.[7]

According to Aaker (2007), there are different levels of brand awareness; brand awareness can have a very wide range from the emotion of vaguely knowing a brand to believing that the brand is the only product in a specific category. Aaker (1996) proposed an awareness pyramid to determine the level of brand awareness.[8] There are 4 different levels in this pyramid (Figure 1).

The first level in the awareness pyramid is "brand recognition". The initial target of the companies is to ensure that their brand is recognized by the target group they have determined. The concept of brand recognition is that a consumer is aware of existence of a specific brand and can distinguish that brand from the other brands in the same product category, which are produced to fulfill the same function.[9]

Second level of the awareness pyramid is "brand

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[5] Aaker, 1996, s.7.

[6] Baldauf, Cravens, Binder, 2003, s.223.
[7] Yıldırım, 2010.

[8] Aaker, 1996.
[9] Kaşlı, 2011.

recall". Brand recall means that when the product category such brand belongs to is mentioned, that brand is one of the first brands that the consumer recalls.[10]

Third level of awareness pyramid is called as "top of mind". The purpose here is to ensure that when there is a need, among all other brands, only one brand that can fulfill that function is recalled by the consumer. To be the first brand that the consumer recalls in a specific product category means the awareness level is quiet high. Accordingly, it is very important for companies to position their brands as the preferred one.

The highest level of the awareness pyramid is referred to as "brand name dominance". When a consumer groups is asked to name the brands in a specific product category, and all people in the group give the name of the same single brand, this is called brand name dominance.[11]

In this respect, it is possible to say that brand awareness levels define the relationship of the consumer with the brand. In other words, brand awareness level points out how much the symbolic meaning that the brand represents and the social position that it promises is recognized and internalized by consumers. How well or accurately the symbolic meanings represented by the brand and social status it promises is recognized and internalized by consumers, that much the possibility of that brand being preferred by consumers increase.

Like many sectors in the market, housing sector also believes that creating brand awareness is the first and most important step of marketing communication. Recently housing companies started to take interest in digital marketing tools in order to create brand awareness. Because digital marketing communication tools incorporate consumers in the process of creating brand awareness as active players, not as passive ones and enable consumers and producers to interact with one another.

Marketing Communication and Brand Awareness in Housing Companies

Depending on the perception of consumption that started changing as of the late twentieth century, a distinction in form and content of marketing strategies is seen in the housing market. Especially as production of large scale housing projects referred as gated communities have become prevalent, it is seen that in housing sector, a marketing perspective more efficient than ever before has developed and use of different marketing communication techniques have started.

In large scale housing projects, it is possible to speak of a marketing concept[12] where required market research is made, where potential consumer groups are determined in advance and where means to manipulate potential consumer groups are designed at the very start.[13] Accordingly large scale housing projects can be defined as products where production and consumption process is envisaged simultaneously. This means that marketing experts will be involved in the process right from the start and will play an active role in developing the *"community concepts"* for diversifying consumption habits.

Creating the housing concept is one of the most important phases of gated community production process. Creating the concept means determining design decisions according to varying consumption habits and diversifying life styles, and developing marketing strategies. In other words, this process is the phase where design decision for the gated community is reached, target group is determined and where the method of marketing is planned. When marketing gated communities, it is seen that the quality or function of the housing settlements is not mentioned that much, instead social identity that the consumers who shall buy these houses are emphasized. In fact, most of the gated communities are marketed with the promise of *"a new lifestyle", "a new identity", "and a new social status"*.[14]

In this respect, it is possible to say that marketing promises made for large scale housing projects is one of the most significant signs that consumption goods have become symbols that circulate in the market and that these symbols are used by consumer in order to achieve a social identity.[15]

Binay (2010) has mentioned that in our world, consumption goods are launched in the market by attributing symbolic meanings to them and that the consumers who purchase these also purchase the signifiers that form their social identity.[16] In the market, symbolic meanings attributed to consumption goods are represented with **"brands"**. So based on changing

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[12] Çizmeci, Önel, 2008.

[13] In this process where market researches are carried out and potential consumer masses are determined, different techniques and methods are being used. As a matter of fact, from time to time some methods are used where consumers are also involved in the process and share their opinion.

[14] Çizmeci and Ercan, 2010, Çizmeci and Yöreş 2014.

[15] With the meta-indicator he

developed, Baudrillard (2009) emphasized that consumption should not be considered only as a material benefit that expresses the value of its use, but should be mainly considered as "consumption of symbols and indicators". So, consumption goods purchased today are not just objects that meet the needs of consumers, but they are objects that serve to help the individual create his/her identity.

[16] Binay, 2010.

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[10] Aaker, 1996.   [11] Aaker, 1996.

consumption logic, brands may be defined as "symbolic meaning transporter" in the market.

Competition gets hot as there are many housing companies that meet similar needs in the market and as the number of large scale housing projects designed by each company and their "variety" increases and this complicates the decision making process of consumers who have to make a choice from large number of housings. At this point, companies create their own brands and promise a social identity to the consumers by emphasizing the symbolic meanings attributed to products in order to ensure that the products of companies/brands in housing market are distinguished from other products in the market that meet similar needs and this way they try to play an active role in the decision making process of the consumer.

Symbolic meanings that housing brands represent and social identities promised to the consumer are announced to consumers using different *"marketing communication"*[17] tools. Marketing communication manipulates consumption and at the same time enable that meanings attributed to consumer goods by brands, are at the back of consumers' minds. In other words, the purpose of marketing communication is not only to promote the inherent qualities of products offered but also to ensure that these products make sense for potential consumers.[18,19]

Housing companies have been using traditional marketing tools for marketing communication for many years and these are printed (newspaper, journal etc.), audio (radio) and visual (television) communication tools. Newspapers and journals are the communication tools where you can see gated community advertisement the most frequently. It is possible to see mass housing advertisements especially in weekend supplements of newspapers with high circulation and in all journals targeting high and high-middle income segment, primarily the decoration journals. Advertisements published in newspapers and journals start with the project phase and continue throughout construction phase until sales of houses are completed. In recent years, television has become one of the marketing

communication tools being used by housing companies. Commercial films about various housing brands are being published on TV and new projects are being promoted in programs about construction sector. Also many housing companies have become sponsors of popular TV programs (series, contests etc.).

Conspicuously, it is possible to say that digital marketing communication tools have become more popular in housing sector in recent years. Housing companies are using digital marketing communication tools generally for creating brand awareness. Brand awareness is one of the basic elements of marketing communication. As we have mentioned in the previous section, without creating brand awareness, it is not possible to communicate with consumers.

Another digital marketing communication tool used by housing companies is web sites. During sale process of almost all housing projects, a web site is used that is active and that is updated regularly, covering information and visuals about houses and communities (location, layout plan, floor plan, social reinforcement areas, designers etc.), where you can even monitor the construction phase – photos and videos from work site are placed at specific times and intervals. Some housing companies try to reach consumers using digital communication tools like SMS, MMS, e-mail and give information about new projects started, projects that are or will be launched. On the other hand, in the recent years we see that housing companies started using digital media tools called social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc.). Housing companies do not only share information about their company and projects on these media, but also they get the chance to see opinions, criticism and comments of potential consumers and respond to consumers over these media whenever necessary. Over time, digital marketing tools are becoming diversified and interest of housing companies in these tools are increasing.

Digital Marketing Communication Tools

Digital marketing changed the structure of marketing by creating platforms that allow users to generate and share content. Digital marketing, add a new dimension to the communication established between a more restricted user group in the traditional marketing process. Pages that open, sites created on virtual environment are no longer platforms that address a specific group; rather they have become channels that address a wider user group. In other words digital marketing enabled reaching organizations and individuals with different qualities at different locations around the world in a faster way.

[17] Marketing communication in general is a "communication process composed of conscious, programmed and coordinated activities for the purpose of convincing customer, which is carried out under supervision of producers and marketing experts in order to facilitate sale of a product or a service of a company" (Odabaşı and Oyman, 2005: 82).

[18] Williamson, 2001.

[19] Bengtsson and Fırat (2006) explain brand literacy as the process whereby consumers solve the strategies of companies followed to make contact with consumers and explains that the reason why a consumer selects a brand instead of another one is associated with the consumers' social position and individual identity.

Digital marketing can be defined as sharing the content created according to customer groups, using layers in the digital media in order to reach consumers, on global networks at the right times in order to create brand/product awareness. Two essential features of digital marketing are being (1) interactive and (2) digital.[20]

Being interactive can be interpreted as giving information to potential consumers and responding to incoming questions and communicating with the consumer by involving them in the process. In this respect, interaction of consumer and company/brand is two-way. In terms of being digital, qualities of the new environment where marketing takes place matters. Values in digital media are contextual, in other words, this changes according to qualities of the user, content and the way the tool is used.[21]

Just like other sectors, managers in housing companies use digital marketing to create brand awareness. Efficient execution of digital marketing has a positive impact on word of mouth marketing and ensuring loyalty of customers. Digitalization in the field of marketing has brought some innovations for housing companies. These innovations can be listed as adopting to use of new digital media, tracking, controlling of data generated over digital media and developing and implementing digital marketing strategies based on these. Adding digital marketing innovations to the organization know-how of housing companies, internalizing these and developing strategies regarding digital marketing will help companies to have competitive advantage and will contribute to sustainable success of companies. Due to persistence and speed of global networks, it is much harder to hide errors. This challenge requires housing companies to be extraverted, transparent and simple in digital media.

Communication tools used in digital marketing process are digital environments that are launched over the internet in order to market product/services that trigger communication and interaction between people and organizations and that enable content related with these media to be created. Communication tools used in digital marketing are called "digital marketing communication tools" and content produced for digital marketing communication tools are called *"digital content"*. Definition of digital content is made by Koiso-Kantilla (2004) as follows:[22]

"Digital content are bit based information transfer objects distributed through electronic channels."

Digital content cover text, photo, visuals, video created for tools in digital media (web sites, social networking sites, SMS, etc.). The basic feature of digital content is that they can be re-generated (copied), changed and reproduced. Digital contents can be updated quickly, distributed quickly, can change form and can be transformed.[23]

Digital marketing tools composed of digital contents are classified under two titles by Varnalı (2013): (1) marketing communication tools that create paid digital content and (2) marketing communication tools that create proactive digital content.

Marketing Communication Tools That Create Paid Digital Content

Marketing communication tools that create paid digital content are defined as communication channels where content is shared in a controlled way and generally for a certain fee. In case of marketing communication tools that create paid digital content, just like traditional marketing communication tools (television, radio, newspaper, journal etc.), a specific area on digital environment is rented for a certain period for a certain fee and relevant content regarding the product/service being marketed is placed on that area.[24] Corporate web sites, SMS, EMS, MMS, IVR, *banners,* sponsorships, micro-web sites, search engine advertisement, in app advertisement can be given as examples of marketing communication tools that create paid digital content.

Corporate web sites are official showcases of companies on digital environment.[25] Corporate web sites can be defined as the media where the most reliable digital content is available, which shall allow corporate identity for the brand to be seen. Web site content is, generally, the corporate identity of the company, product and services, communication information, history, company vision and mission.

SMS, EMS and MMS, IVR[26] are the digital marketing communication tools under mobile communication in-

[20] Winer, 2009.
[21] Eaton and Bawden 1991; Freiden vd., 1998; Rowley 2002.
[22] Koiso-Kantilla, 2004.

[23] Koiso-Kantilla, 2004.
[24] Varnalı, 2013.
[25] Varnalı, 2013.
[26] "SMS (Short Message Service) is a short message service composed of maximum 160 characters and restricted with text format. EMS (Enhanced Message Service) is the developed format of SMS where pre-defined graphics and special formats can be included in the text. MMS (Multimedia Message Service) is the short message that uses mobile Internet structure where photo, graphics, tune or video can be added. IVR (Interactive Voice Response) is an automatic voice call system that directs the user with a pre-recorded script and which can interact according to the actions of the consumer"(Varnalı, 2013).

frastructure. SMS, EMS and MMS are short message services with different qualities composed of texts, visuals or voice records.[27] IVR is a type of automatic voice call system.

Banner type marketing content is the links placed on a web site in return of a fee or barter type deal, which direct the user to another web site, interactive animations and videos when clicked.[28]

Sponsorships are the display of a brand name of a company in *banner* format on another digital environment that the company is the sponsor of. *Search engine* advertisements and in *application* advertisements are displaying of brand related content in banner format by renting the ad space in the search engine (Google, Yahoo, Yandex, etc.) or application like sponsorships.

Marketing Communication Tools That Create Proactive Digital Content

Creating proactive digital content has become possible by means offered with web 2.0. After launching Web 2.0, digital marketing concept emerged that enables two-way instead of one-way and simultaneous information sharing.[29]

In case of digital marketing tools that create proactive content, interaction between companies and consumers is relatively high and these tools create environments where users can post their uncensored comment, criticism and suggestions about specific issues. For this reason, it is necessary to continuously manage and inspect proactive contents. Continuous management and inspection is crucial in terms of both checking the inappropriate comments and responding to the questions of users.

Digital marketing communication tools that create proactive content are paid keywords (SEO, Search Engine Optimization) and social media networks like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

Paid keywords or we can say search engine optimization (SEO) can be defined as paying a specific fee to enable a word or words related with the company and the brand to get a high-ranking placement. For example, when the consumer searches for a housing company on search engines, it is seen that name of a competitor housing company is listed higher on search pages. This is considered as one of the prominent marketing strategies used to manipulate the consumer.

Facebook is a social networking site that enables companies to communicate with consumers and share information, photos, videos about their brands. Users

can like the Facebook page of the company and make comments on the content displayed and can share these pages with their friends.

Twitter is the micro-blog service where it is possible to send 140 character messages called tweets and to read messages of other people. Twitter is a simple tracking mechanism in the Internet world that is getting more complicated every day. For this reason, it has become one of the marketing communication tools that help companies to reach their target groups in order to create brand awareness.

Instagram is a platform based mainly on sharing photos and videos. Housing companies can share photos and visuals about their projects with the consumers using this platform. Followers can post their comments under photos and share these photos with their followers.

In terms of creating brand awareness it is important for companies to real-time track the content on social networking tools like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. and digital media like Google+ where information flow is very fast and interactive. On one hand, rapid spreading of proactive contents has high level of impact on creating brand awareness, and on the other hand, it may arise negative consequences as it causes creation of uncontrolled content. For this reason it needs to be managed well and controlled continuously.[30] Monitoring, controlling and managing of proactive digital content by specialized corporate organizations are very important for the corporate identity of the company.

Methodology

This study is carried out to explore tendency of housing companies in using digital marketing communication tools. In other words this study aims to draw a theoretical framework for housing companies' tendency to use digital marketing tools. The research method used is the "Delphi Analysis Technique" and a Delphi survey is applied to people that work at large-scale housing companies. As the result of Delphi surveys, level and degree of impact of digital marketing tools used by housing companies to create brand awareness are determined. The objective of the research is to determine digital marketing communication approach of housing companies, to evaluate opinion of managers regarding digital marketing communication tools and to draw a theoretical framework for tendency of housing companies of using and managing digital marketing tools.

[27] Varnalı, 2013.   [28] Varnalı, 2013.   [29] Altındal, 2013.   [30] Varnalı, 2013.

Level and Degree of Impact of Digital Marketing Tools used by Housing Companies in Order to Create Brand Awareness: Application of Delphi Technique

Delphi technique considered as a tool to reach consensus is based on the principle of compiling and systematizing opinion of experts about an issue.[31] The purpose here in using Delphi technique is to enable individuals and groups who have different perspectives of a problem to reach a consensus without coming together. Linston and Turoff (1975) have defined the Delphi technique as a method of creating a structure where a group of individuals can communicate efficiently to overcome a complex problem. The aim is to use both different perspectives and the creativity of participants using Delphi technique.

Three basic elements should be taken into consideration when applying the Delphi technique: participation confidentiality, statistical analysis of group reaction and controlled feedback.[32] Participation confidentiality is associated with the principle of opinions taking precedence of individuals or evaluating an idea regardless of the individual. Following statistical analysis of group reactions, sharing the result with members of the group and carrying out consecutive surveys about questions for which no agreement could have been reached among group members yields efficient results in terms of reaching a consensus among experts.

Determining the Group Members (Panel Participants)

Members of a group are selected among people who shall reflect their expert opinions and who can give a deep perspective in terms of the topic of the research based on their experiences and qualities. It is possible to work with expert groups of different sizes using Delphi technique. Ideal group size suggested by Dalkey (1972) is 10–20 people and accordingly number of members of the group to be included under this study is determined as 10.

In this study, group members are composed of marketing and corporate communications specialist and senior managers who work in large scale housing companies. When we look at the age range of members, we see that half of them fall within the age range of 26 to 39, three within the age range of 40 to 59 and 1 member being younger than 25 and one being older than 60. Eight members work as "mid-level" manag-

ers in the company. When we consider their area of expertise, we see that six members marked the "administration" and remaining four marked the "public relations", "architecture" field and "other" fields. Education level of all participants is university and higher and their years of employment in the field changes from 5 to 10 years by 80%.

Sending the First Delphi Survey to Group Members

Delphi survey has been carried out in October and November of 2014 with one on one interview. First the objective of the Delphi survey has been explained to the participant. The objective of the survey is to determine the level of impact of digital communication marketing tools in creating brand awareness for housing companies. In this study, 11 digital marketing communication tool being used by housing companies for creating brand awareness are determined as the result of the study (corporate web sites, e-mail communication, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Youtube, SMS/MMS-Mobile Communication, Mobile Applications, Search Engine Advertisements, Paid Keywords, IVR-Interactive Voice record) Leeflang etc. (2014).[33] As the result of the study carried out by Leeflang etc. (2014), the digital marketing communication tools that are being used the most by companies are determined.

Group members stated their opinion about the impact of each digital marketing tool by making their choice from 1 to 7 on scale. On the scale "1: Strongly disagree", "7: Strongly Agree". Also group members are requested to state their reasons for agree/disagree and their comments about the issue.

Implementing, Analyzing and Completing Second Delphi Survey

After the first Delphi survey, group members are presented the results of analysis, comments and remarks about each question in the first survey. Group members are asked to read comments and remarks before answering questions for the second time and to evaluate statistics about each article and review their responses in the first survey. Also if they changed their mind and if they want to give a different answer than the ones they gave in the first Delphi survey, they are requested to write these in parenthesis under the "New" column.

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[31] Sackman, 1975.   [32] Dalkey, 1972.

[33] Leeflang vd. (2014) aimed to invesigate challenges faced by companies in digital world and develop suggestions for solving these. Surveys are carried out with 777 marketing experts living in different geographical regions. Defining digital marketing communication tools and determining up-to-date and prospective projections are the most important results of the research.

For the analysis of the second Delphi survey, statistics achieved as the result of the first Delphi survey are used. Statistics calculated are listed as level of impact, degree of impact, median, Q1 (first quarter), Q3 (third quarter) and R (range). Detailed explanation of these statistics is as follows:[34]

- **Median (Md):** The point where 50% of the answers are listed at the left of and where 50% of the answers are listed at the right of.
- **First quarter (Q1):** The point where 25% of the answers are listed at the left of and where 75% of the answers are listed at the right of.
- **Third quarter (Q3):** The point where 25% of the answers are listed at the right of and where 75% of the answers are listed at the left of.
- **Range (R):** The difference between the third quarter and the first quarter (R=Q3-QI). If this difference is low, it means that there is a consensus and if it is high, it means there is no consensus.
- **Level of impact:** Represents the position of studied parameters according to average.
- **Degree of impact:** It shows the average score.

Along with quantitative statistical analysis, qualitative comments and opinions about each item are complied in a separate form. It is examined whether the range between quarters decrease or not and if there was a decrease, it was decided that there is a shift towards consensus. According to Zeliff and Heldenbrand, items with a range between quarters being less than 1.2 are accepted as items on which a consensus is reached.[35] Within the scope of this study, in 2nd round Delphi analysis there was a change in 3 digital marketing communication tools in total; these are Search Engines, Instagram and Interactive Voice Record. Level of impact of search engines in terms of creating brand awareness are the same in First and Second Delphi surveys (level of impact=2). There was a 0,2 increase in level of impact in the second Delphi survey. Level of impact of Instagram regarding creating brand awareness has regressed from 8th level to 9th level in the second Delphi survey and there was a 0,4 decrease in the degree of impact. None the less, decrease in range shows that consensus among group members has improved. Accordingly group members stated in the second Delphi survey that Twitter is more efficient than Instagram in creating brand awareness. Level of impact of interactive voice record (IVR) in terms of creating brand awareness is the same in the First and Second

Delphi survey and is listed at the last position (level of impact=11). In terms of degree of impact, there was a 0,2 decrease in the second Delphi survey.

Results of first and second Delphi analysis is given in Table 1. Accordingly, brand awareness oriented digital marketing communication tool whose level and degree of impact is the highest are the corporate web sites (μ=7; level of impact=1). Impact of corporate web sites in terms of creating brand awareness is the only issue that all group members reached a definite consensus on (Range (R)=0). Experts working in housing companies agree that digital content of web sites should be composed of information and news about projects, news about sector and company, corporate identity of the company, field of activity, user tracking and interaction (forms like customer request form, contact us form, after sale services form). Opinion of some group members about the impact of corporate web sites on creating brand awareness is given below.

"...the higher quality of the web site means higher number of customers that the web site affects and a better brand image. Also design and content of the web site is quiet important. So a web site should be extremely professional, open to innovations and compatible with latest technology because in marketing of housings, web sites are the medium that gives highest return in sales..."

"...a web site is a corporate image, vision, strategy and attitude for a housing company and it stands out in terms of the brand image rather than sales."

Corporate web sites symbolize the image of housing brands and they are channels that aim to appeal to the entire target group and focus more on awareness rather than sales.

As the result of second Delphi survey, it is determined as the result of consensus of group members that, following corporate web sites, search engine adds (μ=6,7; impact level=2) are the most efficient second digital marketing communication tool in creating brand awareness (Range (R)=1 <1,2). Search engine adds are considered as the communication tool that Internet users access information in the fastest and easiest way possible. Display of visuals, links, and texts regarding housing companies or housing projects on specific fields in the search engines is a digital marketing activity that has high level of impact in creating brand awareness.

SMS/MMS Mobile communication (μ=6; level of impact=3) and E-mail communication (μ=6; level of impact=3) are the digital marketing communication tools used by housing companies, which have the same

[34] Dalkey, 1972.   [35] Zeliff ve Heldenbrand, 1993.

Table 1. Analysis of First and Second Delphi Survey

		Corparate Web Sites	E-mail Communi-cation	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	2. Round	LinkedIn	Youtube	SMS/MMS Mobile Communication	A
Level of Impact		1	3	4	9	8		10	7	3	
Level of Impact (2. Round)		1	3	4	8		9	10	7	3	
Degree of Impact (Mean)		7,0	6,0	5,7	3,7	4,0	3,6	3,2	4,5	6,0	
Median (Md.)		7,0	7,0	6,0	3,5	4,5	4	3,0	5,5	6,5	
Std. Deviation		,00	1,4	,94	1,63	2,16	1,77	1,68	2,06	1,41	
Variance		,0	2,0	,9	2,67	4,66	3,13	2,84	4,27	2,0	
Minimum		7,0	3,0	4,0	1,0	1,0	1	1,0	1,0	3,0	
Maximum		7,0	7,0	7,0	6,0	7,0	6	6,0	7,0	7,0	
Percentile	25	7,0	5,0	5,0	2,75	1,75	1,75	1,75	2,75	5,5	
	50	7,0	7,0	6,0	3,5	4,5	4	3,0	5,5	6,5	
	75	7,0	7,0	6,25	5,25	6,0	5	5,0	6,0	7,0	
Q3-Q1 (Range)		0	2	1,25	2,5	4,25	3,25	3,25	3,25	1,5	
	N=10										

Note: Median (Md): The point where 50% of the answers are listed at the left of and where 50% of the answers are listed at the right of. First quarter (Q1): The point where 25% o of. Third quarter (Q3): The point where 25% of the answers are listed at the right of and where 75% of the answers are listed at the left of. Range (R): The difference between the studied parameters according to average. Degree of impact: It shows the average score.

level of impact. Promoting projects to consumers via SMS campaigns and email is one of the most frequent digital marketing strategies that housing companies use and it is a form of digital communication that allows reaching the consumer directly. Rapid developments in communication infrastructure have changed mobile device using habits of people. Mobile users are exposed to adds within the scope of information packages that they receive with their own consent. In mobile campaigns, it is possible to run SMS/MMS based add campaigns targeting specific number of users with specific criteria.

Facebook, one of the social media mediums is in the fourth position among eleven digital marketing communication tools whose level of impact has been analyzed (μ=5,7; level of impact=4) . Range of Facebook is (R)=1,25 and it is another marketing communication tool that group members have reached a consensus on regarding creating brand awareness. In terms of creating brand awareness, Facebook is ahead of other social media mediums due to the high number of followers. One of the group members who participated in the survey has explained the impact of Facebook page regarding creating brand awareness as follows:

"… Facebook is being used efficiently as an advertisement tool and for the corporate image and the scope of information shared mutually is wide. In social media there is a concern of getting "like" from everyone. Marketing of housing is different than market-

ing of any other fast consumption or retail production goods and decision to buy a house is rarely reached over social media..."

Opinion of four of the group members about Facebook can be summarized as follows: *"...an important tool for brand awareness, but not efficient for sale of houses …".* Facebook is regarded as an important digital marketing communication tool in terms of "recognition of a brand", which is the first level of brand awareness however it is not seen as a sales oriented medium. It is a media where posts are published in specific intervals, texts and news about projects are published and where interaction with consumer is always high thanks to actions like question-response and comment

Mobile applications (μ=5,6; level of impact=5) and paid keyword (μ=5; level of impact=6) is a digital marketing communication tool that is considered in the fifth and sixth position in terms of its impact in brand awareness being created by housing companies. Mobile applications are software to be used in mobile tools, which provides convenience and information to users in various areas. Applications targeting stock exchange and currency markets, weather applications, games, GPS and location based services, banking, order tracking, ticket purchasing and reservation can be given as examples of mobile applications. An important marketing communication activity for housing companies in order to create brand awareness is adding text

Mobile Application	Search Engine	2. Round	Paid Keywords	Interactive Voice Response (IVR)	2 Round
5	2		6	11	
5		2	6		11
5,6	6,5	6,7	5,0	2,6	2,4
6,0	7,0	7	5,5	1,5	1,5
1,83	,97	0,48	2,21	2,06	1,77
3,37	,94	0,23	4,88	4,26	3,13
1,0	4,0	6	1,0	1,0	1,0
7,0	7,0	7	7,0	6,0	6,0
5,0	6,0	6	3,5	1,5	1,0
6,0	7,0	7	5,5	4,0	1,5
7,0	7,0	7	7,0	4,5	4,0
2	1	1	3,5	3,5	3,0

f the answers are listed at the left of and where 75% of the answers are listed at the right third quarter and the first quarter (R=Q3-QI). Level of impact: Represents the position of

or visual based messages in mobile applications that are very likely to be used by target customer profile. Marketing activities regarding "paid keywords" means making arrangements to ensure that company is listed in higher ranking according to word searched in search engines (SEO), listing the name of the housing company in front rows in case specific keywords are searched and they have significant impact for brand awareness.

Social media mediums other than Facebook (Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube) are digital marketing tools that are listed in last position in terms of their level of impact. Instagram (μ=3,6; level of impact=9) is a digital medium that has no word limit and that prioritizes the visual content. Common view of group members is that Instagram shall become more important for housing companies in the future. Youtube (μ=4,5; level of impact=7) is a good tool for sharing commercial films, promotion videos, interviews, animations regarding the company and projects, videos regarding indoor design. Participants believe that broadcasting of Youtube version of housing company commercials following specifically the TV series is due to the TV series interest of customer abroad. Twitter (μ=3,7; level of impact=8) is being used less frequently in digital marketing activities due to limited number of characters and it is considered relatively less important, however it is efficient in creating interaction as faster reply is received for questions-answers. The opinion of an expert on social media is as follows:

"Social media is freedom, sincerity, entertainment and low costs."

"Medium like *Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube are social environments where people can express themselves freely. Everyone has the chance to talk freely about anything they like. Also it is filled with frames of life so brand awareness activities carried out through social mediums seem more sincere. Just a touch of real life…*

Social media is considered as a digital media with a high potential for marketing activities. IVR (interactive voice record) is the digital marketing tool with the lowest level of impact in terms of creating brand awareness (μ=2,6; level of impact=11). IVR is mostly used in sectors like banking, telecommunication etc. where information technologies are used intensely. However since in the housing market, it is harder to explain something to a consumer without the support of visuals and technical drawings, which means marketing is difficult. For this reason IVR is one of the least used digital marketing communication tool in the housing company.

Conclusion

In recent years, use of digital marketing communication tools is becoming more prevalent. It is seen that housing companies puts emphasis on systematic and strategic use of digital marketing communication tools in order to gain competitive advatntage in the market and that they mainly use digital marketing communication tools to create brand awareness.

Within the scope of this study, "Delphi Analysis Technique" is used, interviews are made with experts working in large scale housing companies and as the result of these interviews, level and degree of impact of digital marketing communication tools in creating brand awareness is evaluated based on parameters that experts reached a consensus on.

Accordingly;

• One of the findings of the research that experts working in housing companies have consensus on is that in creating brand awareness, level of impact of marketing communication tools that create paid digital content (corporate web sites, search engine adds and email communication etc.) is higher than the marketing communication tools that create proactive content (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.). One of the main reasons for this is that marketing communication tools that create paid digital content are compared with tools that create proactive digital content, content control and supervision is rather under the initiative of the company.

• As the result of Delphi surveys, three digital marketing communication tools that housing companies reached a consensus on as regards to their impact on creating brand awareness was determined: corporate web sites, paid keywords and Facebook.

• The sole point of agreement by all group members was that corporate web sites are very efficient for housing companies in terms of creating brand awareness. So that, all group members, without any exception, gave high scores to the level of impact of web sites in creating brand awareness. Based on the responses of participants, it is understood that especially in the last five years, housing companies follow a corporate web site renovation trend and that there is a significant increase (90%) in the rate of cooperation with digital media agencies for renovation of web sites.

• Another important finding is that digital marketing communication tools that create proactive content, like Facebook and Twitter shall become more important in the future. This result is consistent with the results of digital marketing research carried out by Leeflang vd. (2014) with 777 marketing experts. One of the main reasons for this is the possibility of generating proactive content in cheap and fast way. Another reason is that the interaction between companies and consumers is relatively high in terms of digital marketing tools that create proactive content. It is necessary to continuously manage and inspect proactive contents since consumers are free to write their opinions and comments. Therefore, consultancy companies emerged which are identified as social media agencies that give support for digital marketing communication tools that create proactive content.

• Among digital marketing communication tools that create proactive content, Facebook is considered to be more effective than other social media mediums in creating brand awareness as the user traffic is high.

• Digital marketing communication tools are being used by housing companies mainly for creating brand awareness, corporate identity and ensuring positive image awareness rather than for sales purposes.

• Digital marketing communication tools enable consumers to play an active role instead of a passive one in the marketing process for creating brand awareness and it is actually decomposing of traditional marketing tools and become more important since they allow consumers and producers to be interactive in the marketing process. However it does not seem possible to say that traditional marketing communication tools are no longer effective.

Finally, since it is one of the first studies carried out regarding digital marketing activities of housing companies, we believe that it will an important source both for literature and for professionals in their future researches and practices.

Acknowledgement

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