

# New Communication Approaches in the Digitalized World



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## PREFACE

Terminologically, ‘the digitalized world’ refers to an electronic environment which visually mimics physical spaces where people can interact with digital actors and objects. The digitalized world is a kind of digital reality, i.e., a way of using technology to create environments designed expressly for human communication. The realities of the digitalized world can be designed precisely for human interaction, for very specific reasons, to create experiences not otherwise possible. Then it can be said that the digitalized world can do, and deliver, everything that is impossible in the real world.

This book’s main scope is to get a deep insight into the digitalized world and communication association, or synergy. Digitalization is the center of all kinds of communication. Here, the thirty two chapters are presented to capture a different view of the digitalized world and its relationship with communication.

The aim of this collection is to provide a readable, non-technical publication which provides a comprehensive presentation of communication issues, trends, and data.

The Editors

# DIGITAL ADDICTION

FATMA GEÇİKLİ

## Introduction

Digital devices, such as social media, the internet, and smartphones, are interactive and fast, with no borders, making geographical distances no obstacle, accelerating and corroborating communication. In addition, they are considered as a medium used by individuals for socializing. They are popular, due to making communication and coordination easier, interrelating people with their environment, helping them to socialize and spread the effects easily. While they do not create problems under controlled usage, they lead to various problems when they become an addiction.

Digital addiction, considered to be among the most important current addictions, has become a big danger, and is especially a problem for teenagers, in addition to children, the middle-aged, and adults. According to the results of surveys related to this issue, digitally-addicted individuals, whose number is ever increasing, have become the fastest spreading addict group in the world. Youngsters and adults feel themselves incomplete during the hours they aren't using their phones, looking at their mail, or sharing something on social media.

Psychology Professor Larry Rosen from California University (2009, cited in Taylan and Işık 2015), indicated in his research that every individual in his 100-person sample group, independent of age, looked at their smartphone every 15 minutes, or more frequently, and if this was not allowed, they felt themselves in trouble, and worried that they couldn't be reached, or thought that they had lost the opportunity to hear from acquaintances.

Lee and Chae (2007) evaluate digital addiction in the following context:

“If you take a photograph of a meal, and share it on the internet every day, want to share everything you do via social media, and believe that you have the opportunity to learn more about people you scarcely know, thanks to social media, then you are digitally addicted. Furthermore, if holidays, gifts, or surprises, shared on social media, lead to feelings of jealousy without

your being aware of it, then it means that your digital addiction has reached serious levels.”

Laura and Richard (2004) aimed to investigate the internet addiction levels of adolescents and adults, within the context of different demographic variables. In line with the research, they determined that not only adolescents, but also adults, felt themselves incomplete when they didn't share on social media.

Kuss and Griffiths, known for their surveys related to social media addiction in 2012, suggested that individuals use social media intensively because they want to make use of the professional and academic opportunities offered by social networking applications. They also claimed that another reason for individuals to use social media excessively might be that, as well as social networking, relationships started face-to-face could continue despite distance, or the fast pace of life. In contrast to these reasons, it was indicated in the research that individuals using social media as 'addicts' instead of 'users', come across with negative results, such as lessening of involvement in groups which already exist, worsening of academic performance, and relationship problems (Kruss & Griffiths 2012).

Facebook, because it was the first social media means, and has the most users in the world, has been investigated intensively in research carried out to define social media addiction. The research has attempted to define social media-addicted individuals. In one piece of research, it was put forward that narcissistic individuals (having too great love for the self) might have a tendency towards being Facebook-addicted (Buffardi & Campbell 2008, Mehdizadeh 2010).

Digital addiction makes the cyber world a current issue which causes the user to lose track of time, instead of living a biological life determined according to a 24-hour basis. Digital devices users may share on Twitter at midnight, send SMS even when in the toilet, or control their smartphones squinty-eyed, while chatting to another friend. Digital addiction is shown in literature as the internet, social media, smartphones, digital games, and television addiction.

It is a known reality that using digital media devices in unreasonable ratios, and outside safe usage conditions, leads to lots of problems, mainly physical ones, especially in childhood and youth, and causes lack of communication and socializing. Restricting the use of digital media devices, and making reasonable use a discipline of life, are considered to be within a safe usage context. Safe use entails keeping children and youngsters away from the problems caused by dangerous users, preventing abuse, and informing and raising awareness in children and youngsters about the need to maintain the right of privacy.

It is seen that digital devices, tools, and applications, with various types, scopes, and efficacies are produced and used day-by-day. Uncontrolled use of digital devices leads to digital addiction. Within this context, the concepts of digital media, digital media devices, addiction, the concept of digital addiction, and, within the concepts of digital, internet, social media, smart phone, digital game, and television addiction, will be dwelt on.

### **Digital media and digital media devices**

Digital media involves texts, videos, photographs, advertisements, newspapers, magazines, books, recorded music, computer games, programs, films, images, websites, etc., which are transferable and transmittable via various communication forms. Since all this multitasking has become a part of our lives, using digital media is taking all the free time of children and youngsters, and has gone further for evaluating their free time. However, some researchers indicate that the use of digital media has taken the place of family and school, and is accepted by today's societies to be the means of basic socializing. As a result, digital media has started to assume a more complicated architecture, with a nest-integrated context which should be given importance in the context of its negative and positive effects. Though digital media use brings with it many positive advances, it causes equally negative experiences, and these affect children and teens the most. In this sense, the context of digital media broadens day-by-day, in line with developments both in the means of social media, and the transformation of them in general and specific senses. In this process, the contents of media devices and their usage, user habits and consumption, also show a change, in an age called the 'transformation age of digital media'.

Using digital media frequently may lead to changes in the psychological mood of individuals, and they may feel anxious more frequently, due to the labile affect. For example, digital natives in particular, may experience short-time relief thanks to digital media, although this condition gives way, contrarily, to anxiousness.

The negativity caused by the uncontrolled use of digital media can be outlined as follows:

1. The information and documents obtained through digital media may not be always true, and thus, users may access misinformation, or may be misdirected.
2. Overuse of digital media, and spending long hours using digital media, may cause users to have difficulty keeping away from it.
3. Frequent use of digital media may cause individuals to become sociopaths, and, especially in the case of digital natives using these

- media more than digital immigrants, become people who cannot express themselves correctly.
4. Overuse and spending long hours on digital media may lead users to see other users as a means of oppression.
  5. Since digital media involves ever-changing stimuli, frequent digital media users may experience impulse control disorders, such as controlling behaviour, avoiding establishing social relations, poor anger management, negative behaviours, and feeling guilty (Young & Rogers 1998).
  6. Overuse and spending long hours on digital media may cause users to lose control of time.

### **The concept of addiction**

Addiction can be defined as an unavoidable desire for an object, person, or entity, and/or being under the domination of another will. It is a condition of people to feel an unavoidable desire to repeat and continue a certain obsession, even though it is affecting their psychological and physical health or sociological lives.

Three main elements of addiction are:

1. Existence of an unavoidable desire or wish to obtain the substance, whatever the situation or condition is;
2. As days pass, there is a necessity to increase the dose used, due to the inadequacy of the dose taken;
3. There is an increasing need for the substance the person uses psychologically and physiologically, or the effects it creates increase.

As a result of a review of literature about addiction types, it can be seen that addiction is generally studied under two main headings; substance addiction, and behavioural addiction. Addiction to tea, coffee, smoking, narcotics, and alcohol, are generally handled under the title of substance addiction. Behavioural addiction, on the other hand, is defined where a certain behaviour is displayed in an abnormal and continuous manner, in which a person cannot achieve a balance in physical, psychological, or social environment and relations, or get organized, and may struggle to adjust to social surroundings. In order to observe whether a person is addicted to a substance or behaviour, some criteria, as DSM-IV (1994), acclaimed worldwide, should be taken as reference.

Griffiths (1999) suggested the diagnosis criteria for behavioural addiction as follows:

1. Salience appears in cases in which an action the person wants to realize becomes the only action that matters. The individual's thoughts, emotions, and behaviours, are dominated by the action in such a case, for example, the wish to deal with technological devices by the people using these devices frequently, even when there is no need.
2. Mood modification. Emotional state change is related to personal experiences declared by the individual as a result of involvement in an activity, and which can be seen as a coping strategy.
3. Tolerance is the time passed for increasing the quantity of a certain activity in order to create effects similar to previous ones. For example, an individual using a smartphone frequently, may feel the necessity to lengthen the time spent on technological devices in order to reach the level of satisfaction experienced formerly over a shorter time.
4. Withdrawal symptoms are undesirable effects or bad feelings emerging when a desired behaviour can't be maintained, or when a substance desired can't be obtained, or is stopped abruptly. For example, shivering, moodiness, and irritability, which sets in when a computer gamer is prevented from playing.
5. A conflicting state involves conflicts related to work life, social life, and hobbies, which occur between addicted people and the individuals in their social environment.
6. Relapse is the recurrence of a certain activity as a result of experience, and addiction reaching a peak after long years of avoidance or control.

Griffiths (1997) established ten articles in his research intended for diagnosing internet and computer addiction:

1. If you notice that you spend hours on the computer, although your intention is to spend a few minutes;
2. If you feel yourself obligated to tell lies to your spouse, private friends, and workmates about the time you spend on the computer and the internet;
3. If you think that you experience psychological problems resulting from spending long hours at the computer or on the internet;
4. If you are always making plans, thinking about the time you are going to spend on the internet, and you cannot help doing this;
5. If it takes a long time to reach the information you want, and if you always have an excuse to put an end to your work;
6. If you conceal your real name and character in the cyber world, if it excites you to be a wholly different person, and if you would

- rather speak in a cyber world than speak face-to-face with people, and feel more comfortable this way;
7. If you feel an unavoidable desire to look at your personal accounts and control your e-mail every minute;
  8. If you break your eating and drinking habits, do not fulfil your duties and responsibilities; or cannot keep your word, for the sake of staying on the computer or the internet for long hours;
  9. If you feel guilty on the one hand, and get pleasure out of the situation on the other, because you dabble in the computer and internet for such long hours;
  10. If you are in a hurry to reach your computer when you should keep away from it.

### **The concept of digital addiction**

Digital addiction can be defined as suffering from the negative effects of an interaction as a result of being in a perpetual interaction with technology (Arısoy 2009). Being familiar with digital media also affects the level of addiction. Those who are familiar, or not, with these means are divided into two groups; 'digital natives', and 'digital immigrants'. According to Prensky (2001), digital natives are the generation born after 1980. This generation can also be described as the internet generation, cyber children, the new generation, grasshopper-minded, and so on. On the other hand, digital immigrants consist of the generation born before 1980. This generation, besides being unfamiliar with cyber reality, appears to be the generation trying to adapt itself to technology, later.

The factors affecting digital addiction are digital acculturation, digital socialization, digital communication, digital citizenship, digital family, and digital accession.

Digital acculturation refers to the use of digital media by people in every aspect of their lives, getting benefit from the new technological values and products, and to the process of synchronizing knowledge and skills to this new cultural structure (Gülınar & Balcı 2011).

Digital socialization can be defined as the process of adjusting to the digital period leading to the emergence of new cultural values, and starting to be socialized through the use of digital media.

Within the concept of communication, digital communication is the transfer of information or meaning to another person, or other people, via new communication means, such as faxes, televisions, satellites, fiber optic cables, computers, mobile phones, beepers, etc. (Sütçü 2012).

Digital citizenship refers to those who can adopt behaviour norms regarding the use of technological or digital media. In addition, digital citizenship involves displaying ethical and appropriate conduct, and having a necessary level of knowledge on the subject. Therefore, the use of digital technologies in many parts of the world makes it necessary to evaluate all global citizens as digital citizens, having equal rights and freedoms.

The digital family can be described as a family having knowledge of digital acculturation, socialization, communication, citizenship, and accession, and directing their children correctly in this context.

Digital accession is defined as accessing digital technology from everywhere, at high speed and with quality. Digital communication and content sharing technologies, such as computer technologies, formation of digital content, processing, reproduction, reading and translation tools, the internet, Web 1.0, Web 2.0 and the semantic web (Web 3.0) have a determining role in the digital accession process (Semiz 2015).

## **Types of digital addiction**

Digital addiction is classified as internet, social media, smartphone, digital gaming, and television, addiction.

### *Internet Addiction*

Internet addiction is a technological addiction type having the indicators of being unable to place a restriction on the use of the internet, continuing to use it despite social and academic harm, and feeling anxious when access is restricted. Young (1999) also uses other terms such as ‘excessive internet usage’, ‘inappropriate internet usage’, and ‘pathological internet usage’, to refer to internet addiction. Internet addiction, considered to be a different aspect of digital addiction, may result from spending long hours on the internet, and may also be the result of wishing to spend long hours. The studies on the subject suggest that people having an internet addiction spend longer hours on the internet than other people, and have a desire to increase this time day-by-day.

Young (2004) states the indicators of internet addiction as:

- The unavailability of the desire to use the internet excessively;
- Increasing tolerance of the time spent on the internet and spending more time day-by-day;
- Finding time not spent on the internet meaningless;
- The appearance of excessive irritability, stress, and restless moods;
- Worsening of business, social, academic, and family life.

Beard and Wolf (2001) found the criteria that Young (1999) developed for the definition of internet addiction inadequate, and stated that the following five states should be observed for the diagnosis of internet addiction:

1. Preoccupation with the internet;
2. Increasing the time spent to get satisfaction;
3. Failure in controlling the time spent;
4. Feeling unrest, anger or moodiness in the attempts to control the time spent;
5. Spending more time than allocated while supposedly avoiding use of the internet.

According to the related literature, people experiencing internet addiction are interested in the computer for about 40-80 hours a week, and access the computer for up to 20 hours in one sitting, without a break. This immobility leads to the emergence of physical problems. Moods, anxiety, psychosis, obsessive-compulsive disorders, depression, and psychological problems begin to appear. In addition, sleep disorders, excessive fatigue, deterioration in family and friend relationships, and worsening of academic or business performances, can also be experienced by people having internet addiction.

### *Social Media Addiction*

Social media, in its simplest terms, can be defined as social networking sites based on activities like content sharing and personal interpretations, which give internet users the opportunity to communicate with each other online. According to another definition, social media is a common term used for the online means and websites which create mutual interaction, giving users the opportunity to share information, interest, and knowledge.

“Social media addiction is a psychological disorder leading to problems like preoccupation, mood regulation, iteration and conflict, in every aspect of a person’s private, business/academic and social life, developing with cognitive, emotional and behavioral processes” (Tutgun & Ünal 2015).

Social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Periscope, LinkedIn, and Pinterest, are seen as popular and important, both in Turkey and around the world, and thousands of new people become members of these sites all the time. Related research reports the general characteristics of millions of members with social media addiction throughout the world, as failures at face-to-face communication, who spend less time with family, friends, acquaintances, and/or their immediate vicinity, have communication problems, and experience mood disorders, such as dissatisfaction, unrest, restlessness, and stress.

### *Smartphone Addiction*

Smartphone addiction can be defined as a type of digital addiction which shows itself in young people not wishing to be without a smartphone, having phones with them at all times, never putting their phones down, and/or using them at any moment. Smartphones, the use of which has become a passion for the youth, are, of course, an indispensable means of communication. However, they should also be seen as a problem which needs to be solved, especially for students, since they always want to look or glance at their phones, or direct attention to them. The use of smartphones by students in this way affects their patterns of behaviour and training activities negatively, and causes a decrease in their academic performance.

### *Digital Game Addiction*

Digital game addiction is specified in psychiatry literature as an impulse control disorder showing symptoms such as ‘inability to control the amount of time spent playing’, ‘loss of attention towards other activities’, ‘going on playing despite negative effects’, and ‘feeling psychological withdrawal when not playing’. In other words, it is a state which results in individuals’ playing for long hours without giving up, associating the game with the real world, neglecting duties due to playing games, and preferring playing to other activities.

Having such a broad impact area, digital game addiction may lead to the appearance of problems such as attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), depression, obesity, emotional loneliness, increase in states of anxiety, social adaptation and social isolation problems, and atrophy in communication skills (Şahin & Tuğrul 2012).

### *Television Addiction*

Television addiction is the type in which television takes a place in one’s life beyond what is necessary, and beyond its functions of entertaining and learning while having fun, when it makes people internalize the messages transmitted in serials and films via television, or evaluate them as if true, causes people to experience psychological problems when not having the opportunity to watch, and to have physical and psychological disorders due to long hours of watching (Koolstra et al. 1997).

## **Conclusion**

Digital technologies were perceived as promising and revolutionary ideas. In the beginning, they were thought to facilitate many activities, without creating any negative effects and results. The world has been sharing

unprecedented, clear, and equal, information. The users have taken over the content management. Digital identities have replaced real identities in this process. However, when not used under control, this pleasure has brought disadvantages together with advantages. Owing to using digital media with impunity, people have come face-to-face with fear of missing out, disinformation or information redundancy, cyber relation addiction, computer and internet addiction; in short, digital addiction. Although these means seem to support learning, entertaining, and personal development, they have raised the need for families to protect their children from the effects of pornography, violence, and cyber bullying. Therefore, the problems that digital technologies contain in themselves are awaiting immediate solutions.

Digital addiction is an important responsibility to be dwelt on. In order to take precautions in this matter, research with broad participation and full scale measurements by psychologists, sociologists, psychiatrists, and other specialists should be carried out. Parents should be trained on the subject, precautions should be taken for children when they are young, and controlled use of digital tools should be ensured. Every section of society should be made aware about the use and the applications of digital tools. School managers and teachers must be informed, and their awareness about the matter should be raised.

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# CREATING EXPERIENCE IN THE DIGITAL WORLD: A CONCEPTUAL STUDY ON GAMIFICATION AS A MEDIUM TO REACH THE NEW GENERATION CONSUMER

SINEM YEYGEL ÇAKIR AND IŞIL AKTUĞLU

## Introduction

The basis of much innovation, change, and conversion, in the world was established by means of the Industrial Revolution, which affected social and economic structures. Industrial revolutions, causing socio-economic and cultural changes in the world, have been experienced in particular periods for a long time. Nevertheless, the new period in which we now live is recognized as Industry 4.0, and has been experienced much more quickly, and been more effective, than previous ones. Its effects on market expectations have been felt in a much deeper way. The competition between enterprises to reach consumers and fulfil their expectations and requirements, in order to keep in step with accelerating life, has been increasing, especially with the effect of technology. The global effects of competition necessitate the development of new business models and marketing strategies which can keep step with the digital era.

Products which are suitable for the digital world are released into markets, and the harmonization process of consumers to such products is restructured. Besides this, the buying decision processes of generations have been affected due to changes in consumer groups from the point of view of demography. New marketing strategies have been considered for consumption habits which are differentiated with the new generation, after 2000. Experiential marketing applications, being developed in order to comply with the products of digital world, have recently been quite effective in reaching new generation consumers.

## **New generation consumers in changing conceptions of marketing**

In the period from traditional marketing conception up until now, many opinions and theories have been discussed to direct marketing applications towards understanding consumers and fulfilling their expectations. By virtue of the development of internet technology in the 2000s, we entered into a period affecting consumer behaviours radically. Within this period, not only marketing actions and implementations, but also consumer segments, changed significantly. In addition, the world population underwent distinct changes. While the numbers of baby-boomers were decreasing, the 'X' generation came close to retirement from business life, and the 'Y' generation started to take their place. Changes in the population, and especially the 'Z' generation and following, stand for determinants of consumer behaviour in the future. In this regard, the new digital era and the new generation of consumers have taken their place as the focal point of marketing world.

Millions of people around the world use internet-based technologies in their daily lives, and convert these technologies into new experience fields. Therefore these technologies reconstruct the behaviours of consumers. Rapid transformation of information accelerates the development of new trends, and directs change. The most exciting point of the new digital era is that consumers can interact directly with each other, and with the producers of the products which they use. Hence, the meaning of consumer society is redefined in a radical way. Consumers not only interact with each other about products, but also share their opinions (Solomon 2007).

The most outstanding factor of developments in the marketing world, from the point of consumer behaviour, is the necessity to enable applications providing interaction to become functional, because new generation consumers, who have full knowledge of digital technologies based on changes in demographic data around the world, have come in sight. In this regard, the buying decision processes of new generation consumer groups in the digital world, and understanding the patterns of consumption in this process, have gained importance.

### **The decision process of new generation consumers**

Today, the field of consumer behaviour examines not only the conditions during purchasing, but also situations before and after the buying stage experiences in relation to this situation, and various further factors. In the past, scientists who were interested in consumption, focused only on the

buying bases. At that time, consumer behaviour was examined in a narrow-scoped way, or rather, buyer behaviour was examined (Koç 2012). In changing marketing conceptions, consumer behaviours have become more complex, due to new technologies and the increased sub-consumer groups having different consumption behaviour. It is necessary to act with a systematic approach, by foreseeing changes in the market. Therefore, all enterprises prepare new strategies in order to provide a competitive advantage and develop brand performance. As is known, consumers do not make rational decisions when buying, but they do make emotional selections with various motivations. So, maybe the most significant factor at this stage is understanding the new generation consumer, and the nature of the decision process.

In traditional marketing, if consumers are open to it, the marketing strategies search suitable fields for contact points. These suitable fields or contact points are dealt with by means of a funnel metaphor in marketing literature. So, consumers have some potential brands in their mind (the large section of the funnel), and these brands decrease, and regular instructions are realized in the mind (the funnel) so as to evoke consumers, and get goods purchased by virtue of marketing applications. However, today, the funnel concept is unsuccessful in capturing the key buying factors, due to the increased number of digital channels, and product variety, together with the many contact points which depend on consumers who are well-informed and have strong instincts. At the present time, a less linear and more complex approach than the traditional funnel is required, in order to enable the marketing staff to manage this environment. This new approach has been named the “consumer decision journey” (Court et al. 2009).

According to the consumer decision journey approach, the decision-making process is a more cyclical route. There are four main stages, representing the potential battlefields on which marketing staff can win or lose: initial consideration; active evaluation (the process of researching potential purchases); closure (when consumers buy brands); and post-purchase (when consumers experience them). In the first stage of the decision journey, in other words, in the first evaluation, the consumer considers primarily the brand set, based on brand perceptions and exposure to final contact points. Then, the consumer performs an active evaluation by adding or removing brands while assessing what he/she wants. In the third stage, called closure, the consumer makes a decision by selecting a brand at the time of buying. After buying the product or service, the consumer creates an expectation *as per* the experience, to use on the next decision journey. However, the consumer tends towards the primary brand list, due to a lot of brands, and related message diversity, in the market. The funnel

metaphor, for example, helps to understand the process by providing a way to perceive the power of a brand in different stages compared with competitors, or by emphasizing the obstacles hardening the acceptance of the brand, or allowing focus on different aspects of marketing (Court et al. 2009).

The decision process of the consumer takes up the incentive to develop new techniques in marketing strategies. Moreover, consumer pressures, which require better product performance in the process, including feedback at post-purchase evaluation, constantly cause enterprises to gain qualified and sufficient experience. In this regard, enterprises are expected to develop four skills: automation, proactive personalization, contextual interaction, and journey innovation. In addition, competitive advantages can be obtained by creating values attracting the consumer, and further activating the decision process of the consumer (Edelman et al. 2015). Furthermore, significant changes have occurred recently in the information gathering and decision process of consumers, and accordingly, their reactions against the marketing communication activities of enterprises. Consumers are affected by sensory/emotional stimulus, rather than cognitive and rational stimulus based on cognitive learning (Vogt & Fesenmair 1998, cited by Koç 2012). As a result, consumers react more strongly against aesthetic-hedonistic-emotional necessities, rather than pragmatist-functional necessities, and against visual, rather than verbal, communication (Bilim 2010, cited by Koç 2012).

Being aware of changes in product preferences and buying behaviours of consumers, marketing managers have perceived the significance of market segmentation by determining the factors causing this change. In the new conception, the daily habits and long-term lifestyles of consumers are effective, as well as demographic data such as consumers' age, gender, and income, etc.

### **Lifestyles and new generation consumer groups**

Brand awareness and brand loyalty are prioritized, and communication types to direct the consumer are preferred in traditional marketing perceptions. However, consumer groups in the post-2000s, which we can define as the new generation, differ from previous generations. Being in the right place at the right time, and the utilization of new marketing strategies by providing required information, have gained importance in maintaining the power of brand in the buying decisions of consumers. As mentioned before, marketing applications, including many emotional messages and

visual items, enable us to reach the new generation consumer. Lifestyle is also quite efficient in determining consumption preferences.

A person's desired lifestyle affects his/her needs and attitudes, and attitudes affect behaviour. When making a purchasing decision, a person does not always consciously consider how this decision is suitable for his/her lifestyle. Therefore, the reflection of lifestyle in purchasing decisions is mostly covert, or indirect. By the way, the relationship between lifestyle and the purchasing behaviour of the person should be carefully discussed (İslamoğlu & Altunışık 2008). Lifestyles have wide usage, such as market segmentation, new product launch, brand positioning, and brand communication decisions.

Lifestyle is an important factor in the matter of a person's spending of time and money. Lifestyles are affected by previous experiences, demographic features, beliefs and attitudes, and personality. Individuals who have the same income and education level, and are raised in the same culture, may have different lifestyles. For this reason, lifestyle helps to determine group characteristics, because the attitudes, beliefs, lifestyles, life views, needs, and wishes, of individuals in the same lifestyle group are similar (Erciş et al. 2007).

Observing changes in the world is important in terms of foreseeing trends that will dominate the market and affect consumer preferences. Consumer trends show significant differences between regions and countries. However, these trends, which affect marketing strategies, with the rapid movement of technology which started with globalization, have gained generalizable characteristics all over the world. Brands which analyse trends as determining factors of consumer lifestyles, easily adopt themselves to the change process. Thus, companies can develop innovative production processes, and proactive competition strategies, by looking at their sectors from the outside. For example, it is seen that some American marketing directors reserve a great part of their applications for lifestyles of health and sustainability (LOHAS). Individuals who prefer products that are environmentally-friendly and aim at the principle of sustainability, and who can spend money to increase their personal potential and development, are included in this group. This consumer group represents a large market, which includes products such as organic food, energy-saving electrical appliances, hybrid cars, alternative medicine, yoga videos, and eco-tourism. According to the research, this group, which constitutes 1/3 of the population of the USA, spends about \$230 million on consumption of these products, and companies shape their marketing actions in line with these figures (Solomon 2007, Başar 2018).

According to the Post-demographic Consumerism Report of the TrendWatching research agency, which analyses trends in consumer behaviour, the process of building their own identities, and their interactions with individuals with other identities, completely change the behaviors of consumers. As before, it is no longer possible to segment consumers based on categories such as women/men, young/old, educated/uneducated and then to determine the target group accordingly. Today, it is necessary to take into account gained and personalized identities, such as environmentalist, activist, feminist, conservative, and civil society volunteer, but without ignoring the traditional categories, while doing marketing. In this process, it is stated in the report that the points of view of consumers about adulthood have changed, and age limits have become blurred. In addition, changing social behaviours, increasing economic pressures, and unlimited options in the world have caused millions of people to think about traditional adulthood indicators and to abstain from these in such cases (Yalçın <http://www.readypens.com/2018-global-tuketici-egilimleri/>).

New generation consumers expect brands to bring them life skills, facilitate everyday work, and help them achieve their life goals. Euromonitor International, a research institution that is prominent in the research of new consumer trends, presents important data on the consumer research carried out on a global scale every year, and understanding the consumption patterns of the new generation. In this research, conducted regularly since 2011, changes in consumer behavior have been observed. In the research, global consumer trends are presented within the scope of some criteria, such as personality, shopping preferences, technology usage, environment, eating-drinking habits, and media usage decisions. There are ten consumer groups, according to the report, which was prepared as an answer to the question, “Which consumer trends will reign around the world in 2018?” According to this report, these groups are: clean lifers; barrowers; callout culture; ‘it’s in the DNA -I’m so special’; adaptive entrepreneurs; ‘view in my roomers’; sleuth shoppers; i-designers; co-living; and the survivors. In addition, it is stated in the report that awareness of global issues has increased, and consumers have begun to take more social responsibility. It is specified that these young consumers, who are connected to new generation consumer groups listed above, choose clean life, aim at decreasing the damage to themselves, others, and the environment, and plan to be aware of, and improve, it. In the last decade, not only technological developments, but also financial crises and political issues in the world, as well as many other factors, have restructured consumer behaviour. New generation consumer groups have characteristics focused on realizing themselves, such as being ‘in life’, pursuing strong beliefs, and ideals,

directing their desires and actions for a better world, and postponing traditional life cycles, such as marriage and having children, due to the fact that they do not demand nine-to-five work (Angus 2018). As specified above, individuals of all ages in new generation consumer groups want less, but their needs are increasing. New generation consumers care less about materialistic concepts in many areas, such as clothing, home appliances, cars, and real estate, and the minimalist life has become popular. These groups desire genuineness, authenticity, and originality, bringing personalization to the fore, and thus encouraging creativity. In this respect, a new marketing approach has begun to develop, in which consumers start to become involved in the design and production processes of the products, and where brand-customer experience points, and hedonistic needs, become important.

### **Experiential marketing: The effect of experience on consumer-brand interaction**

Experiences arise in response to stimuli, and they are usually based on direct observation and/or participation in events, whether they are real or virtual (Tsaur et al. 2006). When brands combine their products or services as a fiction, to include and influence their customers individually, experience exists. At this point, properties are efficient, goods are concrete, services are abstract, and experiences are unforgettable (Pine & Gilmore 1998). Experience can also be defined as an emotional experience that can lead to emotional and personal change, or as emotional events that have a strong impact on the person. Experience is a factor that affects the way of feeling, acquiring knowledge, or exercising the skills of seeing, and experiential marketing is much less interested in cognitive processes, focusing instead on the consumer-brand relationship (Same & Larimo 2012). Experiential marketing is about understanding the essence of a product, and creating concrete, physical, and interactive, experiences that strengthen the marketing offer (Williams 2006).

Experiences are personal by nature, and interact in the mental structure of the person in emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual, aspects. Experience is the interaction between the situation and the mental process of the person in it, and has a personal qualification (Pine & Gilmore 1998). Marketing experience should be within the personal interest area of the customer, be new, offer a surprise, be informative, and attract the customer's attention (Same & Larimo 2012).

In experiential marketing, an innovative and creative approach from stimulant to response is accepted, contrary to the stimulus-response

approach of traditional marketing (Same & Larimo 2012, Grundey 2008). While the competition advantage of a brand, through a traditional marketing approach, comes from product innovation, pricing strategy, and a strong marketing channel, the competition advantage of experiential marketing is unforgettable experiences. Imitation and substitution of competition advantages obtained from experiences are more difficult (Tsaur et al. 2006). Experiential marketing is based on determining and meeting customer needs and demands profitably, and it is a type of marketing that makes brand personalities real, enables people to participate in brands, products, and services in sensorial ways, and interacts with them (Same & Larimo 2012). The power of customer participation causes experiential marketing to yield results faster than traditional marketing methods, therefore customers may tend toward positive purchase decisions, faster (Williams 2006). In this new paradigm, companies continuously try to add experiential benefits to traditional offers, and promise to provide joyful, unique, and unforgettable customer experiences, instead of superior product/service features as a basis (Shobeiri et al. 2013). In experiential marketing, brands tend towards approaches which involve experience for customers by quitting the 'features-and-benefits' approach of traditional marketing. The basic reasons for this tendency are availability of information communication technologies everywhere, superiority of the brand, availability of communication, and fun as a whole. At the present time, branding results in communication and a 'fun' form of everything; facilitation of communication, and proliferation of experiences based on fun (Schmitt 1999). The brand-target audience interactions which were created by gamification strategy can be also evaluated within this scope.

### **Aspects of experiential marketing**

Experiential marketing provides attractive, interactive and entertaining brand experiences. Subjective internal consumer responses (emotions, senses, and cognitions) include brand experience and behavioral responses aroused by brand-related stimuli, which are part of the brand's identity, communication, and environments (Same & Larimo 2012), and contribute positively to the perceived quality of products/services, brand identity, and brand loyalty (Shobeiri et al. 2013). Experience permits customers to participate in the consumption of products or services which actualize interaction with the brand, physically or mentally, emotionally, socially, and psychologically (Grundey 2008). According to Pine & Gilmore (1998), one level is customer participation (in the experience process, customers play a key role in active participation - the audience in the experience process of

customers, i.e., the passive attendants, do not affect the experience), the other level is the level of connection or environmental relationship, which brings customers together with activity or performance. The level of connection is comprised of absorption and all immersion sub-levels.

Experiential marketing is based on the consumer's direct personal participation, or her/his observation (Same & Larimo 2012) and the 21<sup>st</sup> century consumer also expects to be entertained, encouraged, and questioned, emotionally and in a creative way, while asking for educational and valuable experience in the process of consumption (Leighton 2007).

In the decision process of purchasing, although consumers are still seeking functional features, advantages, product quality, and a positive brand image, they are mostly affected by the products, communication, and marketing campaigns which affect their senses, influence them deeply and prompt their minds (Tsaur et al. 2006). Within this framework, Schmitt (1999) claims that experiential marketing has four characteristic elements. The first of these characteristic elements is experiential marketing's focus on consumer experience (sensual, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, relational), the second element is the focus on consumption as a whole experience (the conformity of the product with a consumption situation, how packaging, advertising, etc., will affect the consumption process), the third is customers' being both rational and emotional beings (consumption experience is formed with fantasies, emotions, and entertainment), and the fourth is the methods and tools used in experiential marketing, which are eclectic (the combination of qualitative, quantitative and verbal methods).

The experiential view in the consumer decision process describes where less concrete, hedonistic, variables may be significant behavior determinants (Leighton 2007). Experiential marketing gives more objective meaning to the experience, and it confirms that the experience can definitely be an important and unforgettable thing for the consumer (Grundey 2008). The typology of consumer values in experiential marketing can be classified as extrinsic vs. intrinsic value, self-oriented vs. other-oriented value, and active vs. reactive value (Österler et al. 2018). Pine & Gilmore (1998) also classify the concept of experience into four categories; entertainment, educational, aesthetic, and escapist.

The answer to the question of what the most effective and specific experience a brand can offer its target audience is, is crucial, and needs to be answered strategically. Experiences such as goods and services must meet customers' needs, and they must also be offerable. As the goods and services appear, the consequence of the processes of research, design, and development, have continuance, and the experiences, which are also developed by finding a source from the processes of discovery, coding, and

presentation, also have continuance. In this context, the five key principles which need to be considered in experience design, are: theming the experience; harmonizing impressions with positive cues; eliminating negative cues; mixing in memorabilia; and engaging all five senses (Pine & Gilmore 1998). In addition to the experience design principles that Petkus Jr. (2004) Pine and Gilmore revealed, the principle of soliciting feedback has been added in at the last stage, where the result of the experiential marketing process is measured with the feedback obtained from the audience included in the process. Audience surveys, and evaluation of feedback in the experience process, are within this scope.

Besides the consequence of interaction between the brand, the experience provider, and the customer, the value of experience consists of jointly formed experiences which may be described as relationships with all companies' networks, employees, brands, specialists, or opinion leaders (Österle et al. 2018). The application tools of experiential marketing are communication, visual and verbal identity, product presence, co-branding, environment, and electronic media and people (Schmitt 1999). Within this framework, the brand lands, brand museums, and customer experience centers are described by Österler et al. (2018) as the summit of branding, and as experiential marketing tools, defined within the main concept of brand worlds. Brand worlds are directly based on high interactive consumer-brand encounters, and experiential marketing techniques, and they offer much more powerful brand experiences than normal advertising.

New technologies such as interactive games, internet chat rooms, multiple player-games, gesture-based simulators, and virtual reality, which may be evaluated as experiential marketing tools, promote brand new experience types. As far as new technologies disseminate information, they also offer real interactive experiences (Pine & Gilmore 1998). In order to provide a good experience, marketing is continuously required to use application tools consistently, in other words integratedly, in time, at the highest performance level, by paying attention to the details of each tool (Schmitt 1999).

### **Gamification as a way to provide experience**

The concept of gaming in providing customer experiences is a new paradigm used in marketing. With gamification strategy, a game involving internal and external motives, such as fun, fantasy, and escape from reality, curiosity, achievement, and recognition, is included in the marketing process. As McLean et al. (2018) have revealed, while customers are using online media, they cannot be satisfied without the hedonic aspects of fun. It