

## Price Related Constructs' Effects on Daily Deal Buying Behavior in Turkey<sup>i</sup>

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**Abstract:** *Daily deal sites have become so popular in Turkey just as they have in many other countries. Heavy discounted offers for products or services attract most of the people to these new marketplaces. Glancing over the offers before starting to work became a habit for some of the people. However, some others do not have any interest to daily deals. So, it can be said that behavioral differences are unavoidable among customers. There are different forces that initiate the buying process. In this study, factors that affect buying behaviors of people from daily deal sites are investigated. The effect of buying behavior on satisfaction is also examined. Price related constructs (price consciousness, price mavenism, sale proneness and coupon proneness) and impulse buying tendencies of customers are taken as predictors of buying behavior from daily deal sites. Results suggest that price mavenism and coupon proneness are positively related with buying behaviors from online daily deal sites. On the other hand satisfaction come about to be a positive result of buying behavior. Even though the focus of this study is specific to a limited group, it is envisaged that the results will provide insights for both academics and e-tailers.*

**Keywords:** *Daily Deal Sites; Online Shopping; Turkey; Structural Equation Modeling.*

**JEL Classification:** *M31, M10*

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## Introduction

The rapid change in information and communication technologies today made consumers begin to spend much more time on the Internet. Hence, the number of the consumers' online shopping activities is increasing day by day. According to the Interbank Card Center (BKM) data, e-commerce in Turkey has grown 14% in 2013 compared to the same period in 2012 (BKM, 2013). On the other side, this Internet revolution has also forced organizations to adapt their marketing, sales, and distribution and promotion efforts to the online environment. For retailers, these platforms represent a new marketing channel to promote their products and services and to attract new customers (Krasnova et al., 2013).

In parallel with the developments in e-commerce, daily deal sites have become the latest Internet enthusiasm, providing discounted offers to customers for various items. Moreover, they have contributed to the transformation of online shopping. This new concept is growing as a subset of online shopping, which has been also named as "private shopping" or "exclusive shopping". It is really like a closed loop at which only members can take the advantage of deep discounts and high-end brands (Baybars and Ustundagli, 2011). Membership is free, but in some cases to become a member to one of the deal sites, a person needs to be invited by another member. Daily deal sites have some advantages, as well as some disadvantages, both for the service providers and the customer. While the service providers get new customers and increase their popularity, in the meantime they can give some damage to their relations with their old customers. On the other side, customers get massive discounts by this way and get to know more places. But, they are sometimes discriminated and mistreated in some places to which they go using the discount coupons (Dang, 2013).

Regardless of the problems that both side face, there are also a number of daily deal websites where users have to sign up to be able to buy products at high discounts in Turkey. In 2008 private shopping began to grow in Turkey. Markafoni was the first website which applied the daily deal model in this country. Trendyol and Limango were the followers in the Turkish online market. After those three firms, the number and variety of daily deal sites had increased continuously (Ekonomist, 2011). Unnado, Vipdukkân, Morhipo, Daybuyday, Markareyon and Perabulvarı were the most known private shopping sites after the first ones. In the beginning, the daily deal sites in Turkey were only accepting consumers that they had invited via an

invitation letter. But, after 2009 most of them had changed their operations and opened their system to all Turkish Internet users (Eticaretmag, 2013a).

Despite the rapid development of the private shopping industry, research in this area appears to be insufficient. Thus, this paper represents an attempt to find out factors affecting consumers' shopping behaviors and their satisfaction from daily deal sites.

### **Literature review**

The usage of coupons and the promotions in purchasing products, are widely studied by academics in the literature, but limited research exists about daily deal sites which is also a new form of price promotion (Kimes and Dholakia, 2011). Several concepts from the promotions literature are relevant to the study of daily deals. Among these, consumers' price consciousness, price mavenism, sale proneness, coupon proneness which are price related constructs and impulse buying tendency are examined in the context of this study.

#### *Price Consciousness*

Price consciousness is "*the degree to which the consumer focuses exclusively on paying low prices*" (Lichtenstein et al., 1993, p. 235). Brown et al. (2003) describe price conscious consumers as people who are more concerned with purchasing products and services at the lowest price or trying to get the best possible value for the money they spend. The Internet itself is a very convenient channel for price conscious consumers; as it diminishes the search costs by providing rapid and easy access to information about products and services (Girard et al., 2003). Daily deal sites also provide low price opportunities to customers. Price conscious consumers have a tendency to find cheaper items and reduce their search costs. So, they may be more willing to shop from daily deal sites. Therefore, in this study it is expected that price consciousness has a positive effect on buying behaviors of online consumers.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Price consciousness is positively associated with buying behavior from online daily deal sites.

#### *Price Mavenism*

Some of the consumers may have a desire to be perceived as a "price maven" in their social environment (Lichtenstein et al., 1993). By the definition provided by Yu

(2008, p. 67), price mavenism is explained as “*the degree to which an individual is a source for price information for many kinds of products and places to shop for the lowest prices*”. Price mavenism concept could be accepted as the narrow interpretation of the market mavenism concept (Moore et al., 2003) because, where market mavens are known as market experts, price mavens are only focused on price information in a market. Price mavens are mostly concerned with low price information in the market so that s/he could share this with others. So, in a similar vein with price consciousness, price maven consumers could be more willing to shop from daily deal sites that are mostly popular with low prices. It is expected in this study that price mavenism will have a positive effect on buying behaviors of online consumers.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Price mavenism is positively associated with buying behavior from online daily deal sites.

### *Impulse Buying Tendency*

According to consumer decision process, consumers pass through numerous stages when they decide to purchase a service or product. After recognizing the need, they begin to search for information, evaluate alternatives and at the end decide to purchase. But, impulse buyers are feeling an urge to buy immediately, so they either pass this stages without thinking or they find themselves at the purchase stage without searching for information and looking for alternatives. On the other hand, this way of behavior is more common in the online environment. Consumers are acting more impulsively while making online purchasing (Verhagen and Dolen, 2011).

From this point of view, one can assume that, when consumers see an offer in a daily deal site they could buy the item without thinking. In a study held by Sharma and Khattri (2013) they found that most of the online daily deals are taking place on impulse. The limited time period for a product in a daily deal site could make consumers more impulsive buyers (Liu et al., 2013). So, the shopping made from daily deal sites may be strongly related to impulse buying tendencies of consumers. This study is also expecting a high relationship between those two constructs.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Impulse buying tendency is positively associated with buying behavior from online daily deal sites.

### *Sale Proneness*

Being on sale could be sometimes the foremost important reason for a consumer in order to decide to buy a product. Yu (2008, p. 67) defined sale proneness as “*an increased propensity to respond to a purchase offer when the price is presented in a discounted form*”. Lichtenstein, Ridgway and Netemeyer (1993) stated in their study that people perceive sale prices more valuable than an equivalent price that is not presented in sale form. The buying intentions of consumers and being sale prone was found to be positively correlated in the literature (Alford and Biswas, 2002). In this study, it is also expected that sale proneness will have a positive effect on buying behaviors of online consumers.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Sale proneness is positively associated with buying behavior from online daily deal sites.

### *Coupon Proneness*

Coupons are important promotional tools in some product categories (Swaminathan and Bawa, 2005). They are also being used in daily deal sites in order to attract consumers. When they are offered a discount coupon after entering the website, they become prone to use this coupon. So, consumers who respond to coupon offers are called as “coupon prone” consumers (Lichtenstein et al., 1990). Coupon proneness is a very similar concept with sale proneness and suggests that the perception of the price cue may also be related to the form in which it is presented (Lichtenstein et al., 1993, p. 235). Coupon proneness is consistent with the negative role of price which means that higher prices result in lower purchases (Alford and Biswas, 2002). Lichtenstein et al. (1990) define coupon proneness as “*increased propensity to respond to a purchase offer because the coupon form of the offer positively affects purchase evaluations*”. This study claims that coupon proneness will also have a positive effect on buying behavior.

**H<sub>5</sub>:** Coupon proneness is positively associated with buying behavior from online daily deal sites.

### *Satisfaction*

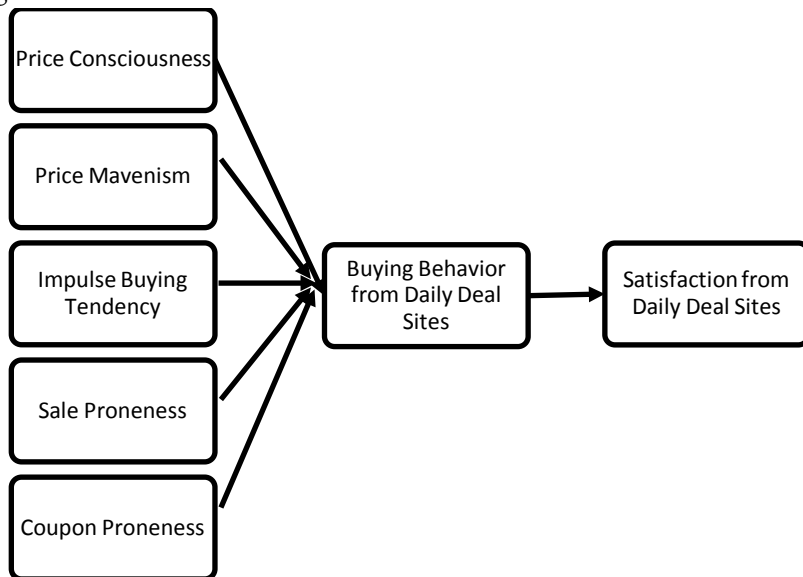
The satisfaction concept has an important position in marketing practice (Ho and Wu, 1999). Satisfaction from a retailer refers to consumers' overall evaluation of the organization, based on their experiences with the organization (Park and Kim, 2003,

p.18). When the consumers are dissatisfied after a purchase behavior, they generally do not want to try the same experience again from the same retailer or e-tailer. So, it can be said that satisfaction is a key component for designing an online retail store (Liu et al., 2008). In order to make customers repeat the purchase behavior e-tailers should try to satisfy them. So, it is expected in this study that buying behavior will have a positive effect on satisfaction.

**H<sub>6</sub>:** Buying behavior is positively associated with satisfaction from online daily deal sites.

Figure 1 shows all of the hypothesized relationships.

Figure 1: Research Model



## Research Methodology

### *Research Objectives*

This study attempts to analyze the effects of price related constructs (price consciousness, price mavenism, sale proneness and coupon proneness) and impulse buying tendencies of online consumers on their buying behaviors from daily deal

sites in Turkey. Besides, the effect of buying behavior on satisfaction is also investigated.

### *Sample*

In order to test the research model, an online survey was conducted. The survey was conducted from April 30 to May, 14, 2013. Respondents of the survey were online consumers in Turkey who have bought a service or a product from an online daily deal site in Turkey within the last three months. An e-mail was sent to the people who were thought to shop from online daily deal sites in order to announce the survey. They were also asked to forward the e-mail to whom they think that were also using daily deal sites for shopping. In the e-mail, a link to the address was provided with instructions to start the questionnaire. At the end, the online questionnaire was administered to a set of 245 respondents. Respondents were the existing customers of the Turkish online deal sites.

The demographic characteristics of the survey sample are summarized in Table 1. The sample comprised of 138 (56.3%) women and 107 men (43.7%). The respondents' ages ranged from 18 to over 58 years. Most of the respondents were between the age group of 26-33 (38.4%) and it was followed by the age group of 34-41 (25.3%). High School and lower grade respondents comprised only the 11.4%, university and over grade respondents comprised the 88.6% of the sample.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Age	n	%	Education	n	%	Gender	n	%
18-25	60	24.5	Have not completed High School	1	0.4	Female	138	56.3
26-33	94	38.4	High School	27	11.0	Male	107	43.7
34-41	62	25.3	University	138	56.3	Total	245	100.0
42-49	17	6.9	MS/Doctorate	79	32.2			
50- 57	9	3.7	Total	245	100.0			
58+	3	1.2						
Total	245	100.0						

The respondents were also asked to indicate which of the daily deal sites they used more in the last three months. Markafoni had by far the largest share of 24.5%, which was the most preferred site in this study. This outcome was a surprise since Markafoni is the pioneer of this industry in Turkey (Özmen, 2011). Trendyol (20.0%) was the second mostly preferred daily deal site.

### *Measures*

The price related constructs, which are price consciousnesses, price mavenism, sale proneness and coupon proneness, were measured using multiple items, five-point, Likert scales ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Similarly impulse buying tendency and satisfaction from online daily deal sites were measured by multiple items. Buying behavior from online daily deal sites were measured by asking the number of purchases made from an online daily deal site in the last three months. For all of the constructs initial scale items were adapted from previously validated measures. The items were adapted from the scales initially developed by Lichtenstein et al. (1993), Dholakia and Kimes (2011), Lichtenstein et al. (1990), and Liu et al. (2008).

Price consciousness was measured by three items; price mavenism and sale proneness were each measured by five items, which were all derived from Lichtenstein et al. (1993). Coupon proneness was measured by four items and was adapted from Dholakia and Kimes (2011) and Lichtenstein et al. (1990). Impulse buying tendency was measured by five items and was adapted from Dholakia and Kimes (2011). Lastly, satisfaction from daily deal sites has four items and which was derived from the study of Liu et al. (2008).

### **Results**

After collecting the data, validities and reliabilities of the scales were analyzed. The validity of the obtained data was tested using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). CFA is known as a more strict interpretation of dimensionality of the scales (Gerbing and Anderson, 1988). In the initial test, the measurement model needed some revisions. So, the model was consequently refined by eliminating one item that has the largest error variance (Broekhuizen, 2006). After eliminating this item, the test of the final measurement model showed a good fit between the data and the proposed measurement model. One of the goodness of fit index measures is the relative/normed chi-square ( $\chi^2/df$ ). Although there exists still some conflict regarding the acceptable ratio for this statistic, the cutoff point was taken as 3 (Hair et al., 2006). The ratio of the chi square value relative to degrees of freedom for the measurement model was calculated to be 1.663. Besides, comparative fit index (CFI), the goodness of fit index (GFI), the normed fit index (NFI), adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) were also taken in order to test the goodness of fit



of the measurement model. For CFI, NFI and GFI the recommended threshold for good fit is 0.90, and this was nearly met for most of the fit indexes (Hair et al., 2006; Kline, 2011; Raykov and Marcoulides, 2006). Also, RMSEA, in which a value less than 0.08 is considered a good fit, was also met (Browne and Cudeck, 1993). The results of CFA for the dataset are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Goodness of Fit Statistics for the Measurement Model

	X <sup>2</sup> /sd	GFI	CFI	NFI	AGFI	TLI	RMSEA
<b>Goodness of Fit Measures</b>	1.66	0.879	0.951	0.887	0.844	0,941	0.052
<b>Recommended Levels</b>	< 3.00	> 0.90	> 0.90	> 0.90	> 0.90	> 0.90	< 0.08

In addition to the goodness of fit measures, reliabilities of the constructs were also considered. In order to test the reliabilities of the measures, cronbach's alpha coefficient was used. According to Hair et al. (2006), Cronbach's alpha values should be above 0.70 in order to establish scale reliability. Cronbach's alpha scores assessing internal consistency of all research constructs were above 0.70, indicating good reliabilities of measures.

### *Structural Model*

After testing the validity and reliabilities of the items, the causal relationships between them were tested. This study used structural equation modeling in order to test the hypothesized relationships between the constructs. At first, the fit between the data of this study and the proposed model was analyzed. To assess the model fit,  $\chi^2/df$  statistic, goodness of fit index (GFI), comparative fit index (CFI), normed fit index (NFI) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) were used. All of the goodness of fit measures was between the recommended levels, so the model had a good fit.

Table 3: Model Fit for the Structural Model

	X <sup>2</sup> /sd	GFI	CFI	NFI	AGFI	TLI	RMSEA
<b>Goodness of Fit Measures</b>	1.58	0.883	0.956	0.891	0.851	0.948	0.049
<b>Recommended Levels</b>	< 3.00	> 0.90	> 0.90	> 0.90	> 0.90	> 0.90	< 0.08

Looking at the results for the model, three of the hypotheses were supported. The positive effect of price mavenism (H<sub>2</sub>) and coupon proneness on buying behavior (H<sub>5</sub>), and again the positive effect of buying behavior on satisfaction (H<sub>6</sub>) were all

supported. However, there was no support for H<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>3</sub> and H<sub>4</sub>. Table 4 summarizes the standardized path coefficients and t-values.

Table 4: Parameter Estimates for the Structural Model

	Parameter Estimates	t-values	Hypothesis
Price Consciousness→Buying Behavior	0.036	0.465	Not Supported
Price Mavenism→Buying Behavior	0.170	2.335*	Supported
Impulse Buying Tendency→Buying Behavior	0.060	0.817	Not Supported
Sale Proneness→Buying Behavior	-0.129	-1.260	Not Supported
Coupon Proneness→Buying Behavior	0.229	2.515*	Supported
Buying Behavior→Satisfaction	0.260	3.996*	Supported

\*p<0.05

As the results indicate, being a price maven and a coupon prone customer was found to be important for deciding to buy from online daily deal sites. Also, if a consumer bought from daily deal sites, this behavior was correlated with his/her satisfaction from those sites. But, price consciousness, sale proneness and impulse buying tendency were the constructs that were not related with buying behaviors from the online daily deal sites in Turkey.

### Conclusion

Internet became a popular way for shopping throughout the world. Turkey, in this sense, is still a developing country with its 21.8% online shopping rate (TUIK, 2012). This rate could be interpreted as only one of the five internet consumers uses it for shopping purposes currently. Besides, a new way of online shopping called “private shopping” brought some changes to online shopping. In this new way of shopping “daily deal sites” which are offering many kinds of discounted products to their members, have contributed to the transformation of online shopping experience in Turkey as well (Pelenk et al., 2011).

In this paper, the factors that predict a consumer’s online buying behavior from daily deal sites were attempted to be investigated. Those constructs were price consciousness, price mavenism, impulse buying tendency, sale proneness and coupon proneness. Besides the main objective, the effect of buying behavior on satisfaction

from online daily deal sites was also investigated. Primary data was collected from an online survey of national Internet users.

Results of the study showed that some of the price related factors have significant effects on buying behavior from daily deal sites, while some do not have any effect. The hypothesis which claimed that there is a positive correlation between price mavenism and buying behavior was found to be significant. The shopper's price maven trait is a positive predictor of their daily deal site usage, suggesting that a key motivator for daily deal purchase is being a good source of price information and making suggestions about price issues to friends. Respondents who see themselves as price maven are more prone to buying from daily deal sites. Those type of people mostly follow the discounts. On the other hand, daily deal sites claim to have the best prices. So, it could be said that the objectives of the consumers overlap with the purposes of the daily deal sites.

Coupons have been in use throughout the world for many years to get discounts while buying something. Especially in the US, businesses took notice of the coupons and made millions of consumers use coupons (Horne, 2013). However, this habit is not widespread among Turkish retailers. Nevertheless, in Turkey, with the great success of daily deal sites, most of the people began to use this channel. So, the popularity of discount coupons is on rise. In this study, coupon proneness is found to be a positive predictor of buying behavior. This increases the possibility that consumers use daily deal sites because of the promotions made for the services and products. Similar with this study, Dholakia and Kimes (2011) tried to examine the effects of the six psychological factors of daily deal site use in their study. They found market mavenism and coupon proneness as positive predictors of online daily deal site usage.

Finally, buying behavior has a positive effect on satisfaction from online daily deal sites. This means that when the number of purchases made from daily deal sites increases, the level of satisfaction increases. On the other hand, price consciousness, sale proneness and impulse buying tendency were not found to be predictors of buying behavior from daily deal sites. This suggests that daily deals do not appear to be attractive for price conscious and sale prone consumers to greater degrees. Interestingly, respondents who have tendency for buying impulse are not willing to buy from daily deal sites.

### *Implications*

Why do consumers choose to buy from daily deal sites? Is this because they are impulsive buyers or do they love to hunt for bargains? Does coupon matter for them? Do mostly price conscious buyers choose this way of shopping? The results of the present study give answers to these questions for Turkish online consumers.

There are some interesting findings of this study. At first glance, one can think that the logic behind daily deal sites is the low prices that they offer. This means that, online consumers use this way of shopping, because they think they are paying less compared to other online stores and even physical stores. But, price consciousness and sale proneness were not found to be related with buying behavior from daily deal sites. This could be interpreted as people who are searching for low prices are not always willing to buy from daily deal sites. Turkey is not in introductory stage for this way of shopping. The Turkish daily deal market could be claimed to be in the maturity stage, since in the first years, the market grew so fast and after 2014 this growth began to decline (Eticaretmag, 2013b; Atakan et. al., 2013). The big players mostly survive in the market, but even so there are still numerous daily deal sites and consumers are purchasing from those types of sites. They do not see daily deal sites as outlet stores offering low prices, which was the viewpoint at the beginning, because in some of the daily deal sites (especially in the leading sites such as markafoni.com) some luxury and high-priced brands are being sold. Prices of those products are same with these brands' official web stores. In this case, consumers may choose buying from the daily deal site due to ease of access to luxury brands with limited distribution rather than price advantages. Besides, the inventory levels of the suppliers that are providing the products to daily deal sites began to drop off (Yavuz, 2012). This could be also a reason behind the moderate price levels. At the beginning the inventory level was high and the number of daily deal sites was low. So, they were utilizing from the situation and were offering lower prices to online customers. But later, this advantage disappeared.

On the other hand, the most advantageous feature of online stores is their 7/24 accessibility. Consumers have the chance to buy what they want at the time their need emerges. This feature may increase the number of sudden purchases made from the internet which is directly related to impulse buying tendency. A recently conducted study by Liu et al. (2013) in China emphasized the importance of impulsiveness in online group shopping and recommended online retailers to pay attention to impulse purchases. Also, a study held by Martinez and Kim (2012) in

the US found a positive significant relationship between impulse buying behavior and intention to purchase from a private sales site. But, in our study which is conducted in Turkey, the story is not the same. Consumers having tendency for impulsive buying are not eager to buy from online daily deal sites. The e-tailers of daily deal sites should be aware of their customers, because they are not buying products/services without thinking. Therefore putting effort for attracting impulsive buyers does not seem a good idea for daily deal site retailers. Giving a limited time offer for the consumers in order to make them buy things quickly will not work. For this reason, they could extend the time period they offered to consumers for discounts.

Being price maven and using coupons are the supporting criteria for using daily deal sites. Consumers who are consulted for price information are more eager to buy from daily deal sites. The reason behind this may be because they want to give the impression to others that they follow daily offers. The perception of other people could be important for them. So, getting price information as early as possible is an important criterion for those type of consumers. Daily deal sites e-mail their subscribers every day. The e-tailers of daily deal sites may increase the frequencies of those alerts to consumers who are using their sites more often. Because the possibility of being a price maven for the people using daily deal sites more often could be high.

According to the results of this study, using coupons encourages online consumers to shop from daily deal sites more frequently. Consumers who are prone to use coupons also use daily deal sites more often as compared to others. Coupon usage is normally not so widespread in Turkey for physical stores, but in online shopping, especially for daily deal sites' coupons became popular. People are getting used to coupons. Some of them are sent by e-mail to consumers, some of them are active for one hour when they enter to the website. These coupons motivate online consumers for buying more products/services. E-tailers should consider this effect.

In addition, the research findings of this study do provide some insights for Turkish e-retailers of daily deal sites in designing managerial implications on how to improve their performance in order to increase the level of customer satisfaction. They should consider the effects of those two constructs. Because, they have an effect on buying behaviors of online consumers and buying behavior is directly related to customer satisfaction.

### *Limitations and Future Research*

Even though the research findings provide some new insights to researchers, as of prior studies this study has also some limitations. Firstly, even this study has a diverse sample that covers a wide range of demographic characteristics; the method for this is convenience sampling. The data were obtained from online consumers by e-mailing and asking them to submit to the questionnaire. So, the study could not present the entire Turkish online consumers. More diversified samples would provide more valuable results. Second, this study investigated the effects of price related factors and impulse buying tendency on buying behavior from daily deal sites. Some other constructs may have also any effect on buying behavior. In the future, those factors could be included and the effects may be retested.

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<sup>i</sup> This paper is an improved version of the study named “Factors Influencing Buying Behavior on Daily Deal Sites in Turkey” which was partly presented in ICESoS 2013 Conference.