

# Recent Trends and Prospects of Marketing Publications in Turkey

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## ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to examine methodological issues and recent developments in marketing publications. Content analysis method is used to evaluate marketing publications in terms of methodological frame namely research type, research modeling, hypotheses development, sampling, measurement and data analyses. This study aims to provide directions and recommendations for the future of marketing discipline. Turkish National Marketing Congresses' Proceedings between 2007 and 2012 are the basis for this study. Major problems are determined to be the lack of diversity in research methods, research modeling, hypotheses development, problems related to sampling process, the choice of data analyses techniques and interpretation of results.

**Keywords:** Research Methodology, Marketing Trends, Marketing Publications, Turkish National Marketing Congresses, Content Analysis.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to investigate recent trends in research subjects and methodology in marketing publications in Turkey and to discuss on prospects and further contributions. In this study, content analysis is used to evaluate 213 marketing papers published in proceedings of 13<sup>th</sup> [1], 14<sup>th</sup> [2], 15<sup>th</sup> [3], 16<sup>th</sup> [4] and 17<sup>th</sup> Turkish National Marketing Congresses [5] based on their methodological framework in an aim for understanding, determining and analyzing the development of the marketing discipline through discussing on ongoing problems and prospects.

The review and discussion of research methodology used in marketing publications has been going on for last years [6] [7] [8]. The results of reviews and evaluations led to different critical points during this time of period. Kurtulus and Dunder [6] evaluated 41 papers, Kurtulus and Kurtulus [8] evaluated 236 marketing publications by using similar methodological criteria, that is a basic research process in marketing area [9] such as content categories, research type, research modeling, research hypotheses, sampling, measurement, data collection and data analyses.

In this study, marketing publications in Turkey are evaluated in terms of research type, modeling, hypotheses, sampling, measurement, data collection and analyses to examine

methodological issues by underlying critical aspects in each step of a basic research process and how it's changed year by year.

## 2. CONTENT CATEGORIES

To investigate recent trends in research methodology in marketing publications, 213 papers published in National Marketing Congresses's Proceedings between 2008 and 2012 are examined. In former studies [10] [11] [12] content categories were broadly classified as consumer behavior, retailing, marketing management, tourism management, product and brand management, marketing strategies, international marketing, logistics management, marketing ethics, marketing communication, social marketing, services marketing, sales management and marketing research.

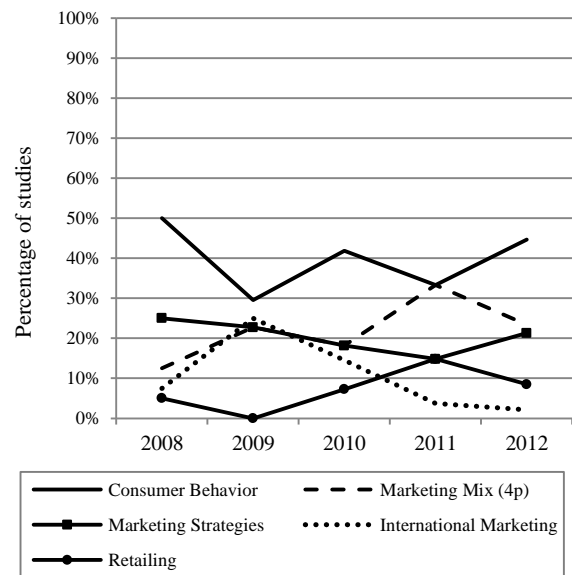


Figure 1: Trends in research topics by year

In this study, for the classification of 213 papers, content categories are combined and summarized into five areas according to their interrelations.

Figure 1 shows that consumer behavior is the most popular research topic in ongoing years (40.4% in total). Marketing mix

(4p) with 21.1% (including marketing communication, product and brand management, services marketing, logistics management and sales management) and marketing strategies with 20.7% (including categories such as marketing management, marketing research, social marketing and marketing ethics) are more studied by the academia in Turkey in total of five years.

International marketing and retailing categories which constitute 11.3% and 6.6% respectively had experienced a decline as in the number of studies performed in the last year. There are no certain directions of trends as seen in Figure 1.

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

For methods diversification, marketing papers are first coded according to their research type, whether the paper is theoretical or involves research. Besides research based studies are classified as quantitative research or qualitative research.

The trend in research methods is shown in Figure 2. There seems to be an excessive domination by research based papers (192 out of 213 publications, 90.1% in total) especially seen in the last two years.

Besides the main subject of marketing congresses changes according to recent trends, new concepts and technologies used in marketing; there is still need for further contributions to existing literature in theory.

One explanation is that ongoing situation may result from researchers who may be discouraged in theory generation in favor of increasingly marginal knowledge gains due to a narrower focus on methods appropriate for theory testing [13].

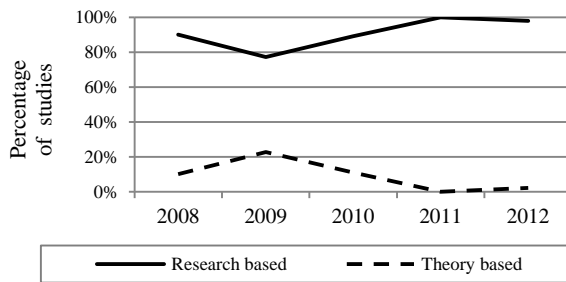


Figure 2: Trend in research methods

Research based papers which are based on quantitative or qualitative research is shown in Figure 3. There is obviously a higher reliance on quantitative research techniques (82.8% in total).

Also, in nearly none of the studies, researchers used both qualitative and quantitative techniques for a single research purpose in an adequate way.

Although the gap between research types seems to be decreasing compared to previous years [6] [8] and even last year [12], some researchers argue about the lack of diversity.

Davis et al. [13] performed an extensive content analysis of articles published in five leading marketing journals (Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Marketing, Journal of Marketing Research, and Marketing Science) between 1990 and 2009. Results reveal an obvious downward trend in methods diversity resulting from

increasing reliance on two methods, experiments and modeling. Also they found that 85% of empirical studies investigated heavily rely on a limited set of quantitative methods which are basically experiments, modeling and surveys.

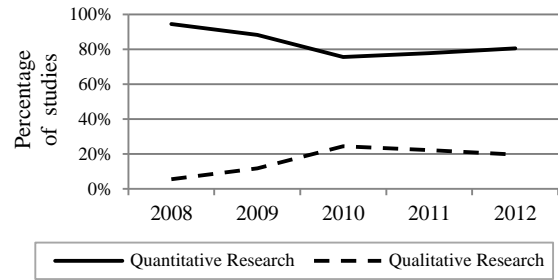


Figure 3: Trends in research types by year

### 4. RESEARCH MODELING AND HYPOTHESES

Research models usage in publications between 2007 and 2012 are presented in Figure 4. In total of 192 research based publications, 36.5% of those used descriptive-predictive model, 35.9% used causal model and only 27.6% used exploratory model. There seems to be a certain decrease in researches based on descriptive model after the year 2009 and increase in the number of studies investigating causal models.

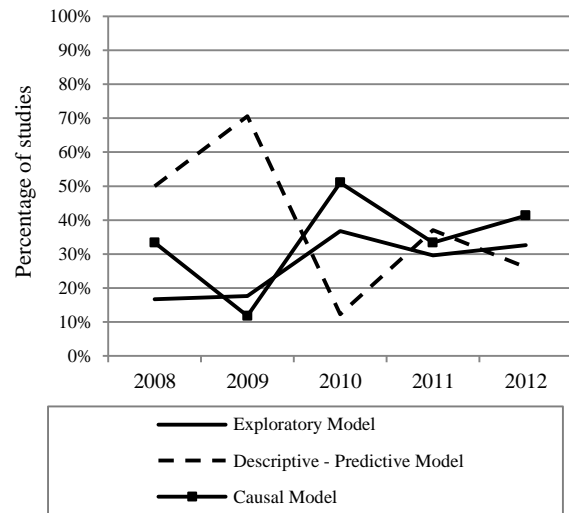
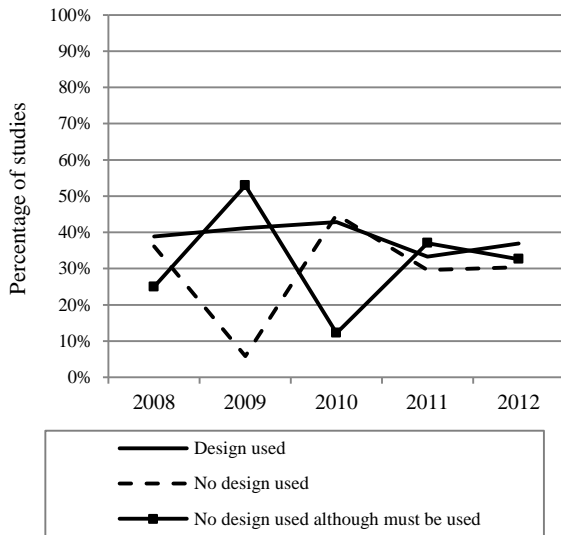


Figure 4: Trends in research models

Besides, whatever research model preferred in those publications, research design and model development seems to be a critical issue.

In total, 39.1% of marketing publications has appropriate research designs whether sufficient or not. Figure 5 shows that number of studies which have used research design seems to be stable in years.

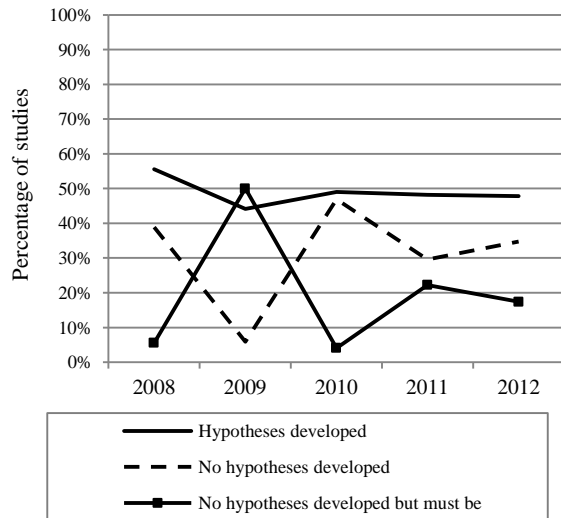
On the other hand, 30.7% of marketing publications did not use research designs almost the same as the ones with 30.2% which have no design usage indeed must be. Accordingly it is observed that in predictive and causal researches, there is lack of design usage especially in 2009 and 2010.



**Figure 5:** Trends in research design usage

In almost half of the studies (94 papers out of 192, nearly 49%) in total of five years, researchers have developed research hypotheses and tested these hypotheses. In 32.8% of the papers there are no hypotheses developed. Although researchers have preferred to use descriptive-predictive and causal models according to their specific research objectives, not in all studies hypotheses may be formulated.

In Figure 5, trends in hypotheses usage show that researchers that used a research design also developed hypotheses, which may be the same as in some studies suffer from both lack of design usage and lack of hypotheses development. From Figure 5 and Figure 6 there can be seen a resembling trend to a certain degree except the last two years.



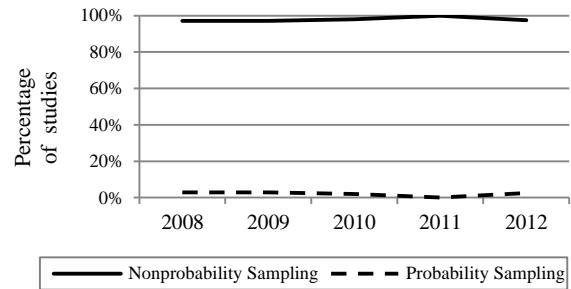
**Figure 6:** Trends in hypotheses usage

## 5. SAMPLING AND MEASUREMENT

Researchers must carefully manage sampling process along with each critical step such as population definition, sampling frame determination, sampling technique selection and sample

size determination throughout the whole data gathering process [14]. Because it is one of the indicators of the quality of inferences made by the researcher that stem from underlying findings [15]. For sampling process in research methodology, the publications are classified according to sampling method (probability vs. nonprobability techniques) and sample size.

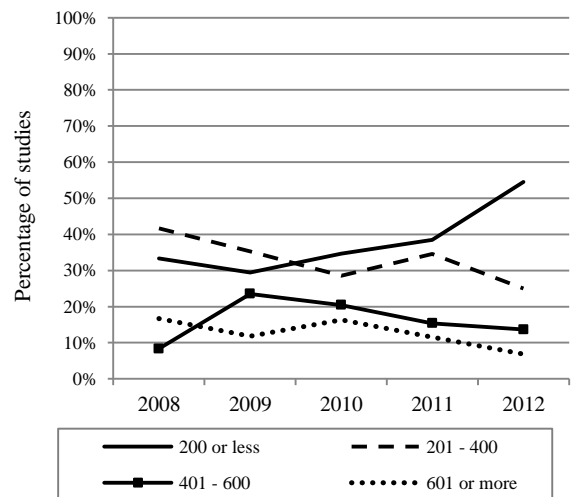
Because there is not a significant change in two broader classifications between years as seen in Figure 7, sampling methods are evaluated in terms of nonprobability sampling with 97.8% in total (including convenience, snowball and judgmental sampling used in total of 182 papers) and probability sampling with 2.2% (including simple random, systematic and cluster sampling) in this study.



**Figure 7:** Trend in sampling methods diversity

In each year, convenience sampling is the most widely used method in marketing publications (nearly 90% in total). Besides, census is used in seven studies instead of sampling. In the study of Kolbe and Burnett [16] which was a content analysis research, it was found that the majority of samples used are also classified as convenience samples. On the other hand, systematic sampling are found more frequently among other probability samples such as proportionate, simple random and stratified sampling in their study.

In most of the studies sample size is determined by researchers arbitrarily. Figure 8 shows trends in sample sizes with an obvious increase in sample sizes that are less than 200 respondents in years (38.6% in total of 189 papers). Also samples size of 201 - 400 (32.3%) and 401 - 600 respondents (16.4%) dominates others in which larger samples are used.

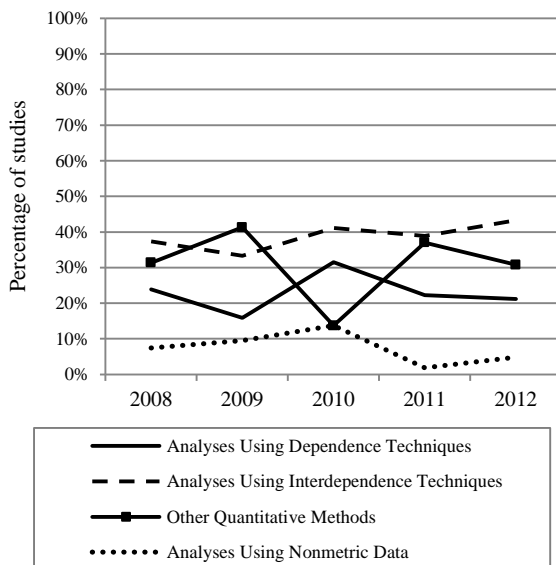


**Figure 8:** Trends in sample size

Measurement is also important in accurately representing the concept of interest and is instrumental in the selection of the appropriate method of analysis. There are two types of scales that are non-metric measurement scales and metric measurement scales. Nonmetric measurements can be made by nominal and ordinal scale whereas metric measurements can be made by interval and ratio scales [17]. Whereas nominal scales are simplest to use and the ratio scales are the most complex [18]. The choice of particular scaling techniques in a given situation should be based on theoretical and practical considerations of a researcher. As a general rule, the scaling technique used should be the one that yield the highest level of information available, considering multiple measures to be obtained [14]. According to our investigation, the most widely used scale is the Likert Scale. Semantic differential is the other alternative attitude scale that is used in most of the marketing papers.

## 6. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSES

According to research results, in terms of data collection, questionnaires are mostly used in quantitative researches whereas focus groups, in-depth interviews and case studies are mostly used in qualitative researches. Mail surveys and internet surveys are also frequently used as recent data collection instruments. The purpose of data analyses refers to obtaining feasible and meaningful information from the collected data [19]. The critical issue in data analyses is the determination of appropriate statistical procedure. Scale of measurement, the research design and the assumptions underlying the test statistic all determine the type of a statistical method to be used.



**Figure 9:** Trend in data analyses techniques

The trend for data analyses methods used in marketing publications can be seen in Figure 9. The results are based on total of 361 data analyses techniques. According to this interpretation, methods are classified into four categories which are analyses using dependence techniques (Structural equation modeling and path analyses, Regression, Discriminant, Conjoint analysis, Logistic regression and MANOVA), analyses using interdependence techniques (Factor and Cluster analysis, Multidimensional scaling), other quantitative methods (t-test,

ANOVA, Correlation, Analytic Hierarchy Process, Meta-analysis and Content analysis) and analyses using nonmetric data (Chi-Square, Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Kruskal-Wallis, Mann Whitney U and Wilcoxon tests).

As seen in Figure 9, multivariate analyses using interdependence techniques such as factor analysis contribute to 39.3% in total. Other quantitative methods (30.2%) and analyses using dependence techniques (23.0%) follow these analyses. Nonparametric analysis contributes to nearly 7.5% in total.

Structural equation modeling (SEM) is an advanced technique which is classified under analyses using dependence techniques. In this study, SEM equals to 6.6% with 24 in total of 361 data analyses techniques. Between 2008 and 2012, the trend for SEM is seen as follows; 4.5% (3 in 67), 6.3% (4 in 63), 12.3% (9 in 73), 7.4% (4 in 54), 3.8% (4 in 104). There is a certain downward trend beginning with the year 2010 which is the highest in this period with 12.3%, although it turns upward again in 2012 relatively.

There seems to be heavier reliance on quantitative data analyses techniques such as factor, regression, variance analyses and t-test with respect to nonparametric techniques. That result seems to be similar to other studies [13] in which the findings referred to ongoing trend for quantitative analyses varying in amount and diversity rather than qualitative techniques.

In Figure 9, there can be seen a somewhat regular trend for all techniques except the ones classified as "other quantitative methods". Especially in 2011 and 2012, there is an increased diversity among research techniques that related to content analysis method, such as bibliometrics, semiotics and discourse analysis, netnographics etc. in some degree. This can mean a positive trend related to increased diversity in qualitative techniques.

## 7. CONCLUSION

This study is done in an aim for providing a basis for further improvements in terms of marketing research methodology. It is important to note that the results are limited to the marketing publications investigated based on recent subjects and trends in marketing research in Turkey and further discuss on problems and prospects.

The findings demonstrate that there are substantial amount of problems related to sampling method selection and choices of data analyses techniques. As a general outcome, there seem to be a higher reliance on quantitative research techniques. Also, only in a few studies, researchers have preferred to use both qualitative and quantitative methods accordingly.

For broader purpose as breadth and depth of understanding research objectives and hypotheses, sometimes both qualitative and quantitative techniques could be used jointly. This refers to the term "mixed methods research" in which a researcher combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research methods such as using qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analyses or inference techniques [20].

The findings of this study are substantially similar with previous researches in research type diversity. Harrison [21] examined the uses of mixed research designs in 2072 articles published in the Journal of Business Research between 1990 and 2010 with content analysis method. According to research findings,

researchers recognize benefits of mixing qualitative and quantitative research, however usage rate seems insufficient.

Technological developments give direction to inevitable changes in marketing research. Traditional consumer research through structured and unstructured personal communication, mail and telephone surveys are undergoing transformation by increased mobility. Consumer research is shifting towards Internet surveys and mobile phone inquiries [22]. The findings of this research also demonstrate that the use of Internet surveys have begun to be used more frequently among current studies.

All periods had some popular patterns in data analysis. However, it is suggested that data analyses must be selected accordance with research purposes, research design, scales of measurement and the assumptions underlying the test statistics.

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