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Hayrettin İVGİN

Konur Sokak 66/7 Bakanlıklar- ANKARA

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SALES EFFECT OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ACCOMMODATION ENTERPRISES IN CORE CAPPADOCIA

ÇEKİRDEK KAPADOKYA KÜÇÜK VE ORTA ÖLÇEKLİ KONAKLAMA İŞLETMELERİNDE DİJİTAL PAZARLAMANIN SATIŞ ETKİSİ

ВЛИЯНИЕ ПРОДАЖИ ЦИФРОВОГО МАРКЕТИНГА НА МАЛЫХ И СРЕДНИХ ПРЕДПРИЯТИЯХ С ПРОДАЖИ В КАППАДОКИИ

Yakup ERDOĞAN\*  
Ebru GÜNEREN\*\*

**ABSTRACT**

Along with the developing technology, the increase in the use of mobile devices and the change in people's lifestyles have also changed the usage habits of the product or service. For this reason, a rapid transition from traditional marketing methods to digital marketing is observed in many sectors. This transition is also experienced in tourism enterprises. While traditional marketing poses a challenge for small and medium businesses (SMEs) around the world due to its cost, digital marketing provides many platforms for small and medium businesses to raise awareness of the product they offer to consumers due to its relatively low cost. In this context, digital marketing tools such as e-mail, mobile marketing, social media marketing, search engine optimization, pay-per-click and online advertising activities have started to be used in the tourism sector. The subject of the study is the effects on sales of the use of digital marketing tools by tourism SMEs in the Core Cappadocia region. The data obtained for the purpose of determining the uses and impacts were obtained as a result of the questionnaire applied to the owners or managers in 48 accommodation enterprises, which have been defined as SME in the Core Cappadocia region. The collected data were analysed with SPSS 21 package program. It has been determined that there is a positive significant relationship between the usage of digital marketing tools and their effects on sales, and there is no significant change in the annual turnover of the enterprises after the use of digital marketing tools. In addition, it has been determined that the use of digital marketing tools does not differ significantly according to the availability of a marketing department.

**Keywords:** Digital Marketing, Sales Effect, Accommodation Enterprises, Tourism SMEs, Core Cappadocia

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\* ORCID: [0000-0003-1172-5448](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1172-5448), Res. Asst. Kastamonu University Department of Tourism Guidance, [yerdogan@kastamonu.edu.tr](mailto:yerdogan@kastamonu.edu.tr)

\*\* ORCID: [0000-0003-2669-4402](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2669-4402), Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nevşehir HBV University Department of Tourism Management, [ebruguner@gmail.com](mailto:ebruguner@gmail.com)

### ÖZ

Gelişen teknoloji ile beraber mobil cihazların kullanımının artması ve buna bağlı olarak insanların yaşam şekillerinin değişmesi, ürün veya hizmetin kullanım alışkanlıklarını da değiştirmiştir. Bu sebeple birçok sektörde geleneksel pazarlama yöntemlerinden, dijital pazarlamaya hızlı bir geçiş gözlenmektedir. Turizm işletmelerinde de bu geçiş yaşanmaktadır. Geleneksel pazarlama, maliyeti nedeniyle dünyadaki küçük ve orta ölçekli işletmeler (KOBİ'ler) için bir zorluk oluştururken, dijital pazarlama, küçük ve orta ölçekli işletmelere, nispeten düşük maliyetleri nedeniyle tüketicilere sundukları ürün hakkında farkındalık yaratmak için birçok platform sağlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, e-posta, mobil pazarlama, sosyal medya pazarlaması, arama motoru optimizasyonu, tıklama başına ödeme ve çevrimiçi reklam faaliyetleri gibi dijital pazarlama araçları turizm sektöründe kullanılmaya başlanmıştır. Çalışmanın konusunu, Çekirdek Kapadokya Bölgesi'ndeki turizm KOBİ'lerinin, konaklama işletmeleri özelinde, dijital pazarlama araçlarının kullanımının satışlar üzerindeki etkileri oluşturmaktadır. Kullanımların ve etkilerin belirlenmesi amacıyla elde edilen veriler, Çekirdek Kapadokya Bölgesi'nde KOBİ tanımına giren 48 konaklama işletmesindeki işletme sahibi ya da yöneticilere uygulanan anket sonucunda elde edilmiştir. Toplanan veriler, SPSS 21 paket programı ile analizlere tabi tutulmuş olup; dijital pazarlama araçlarının kullanım dereceleri ile satışlar üzerindeki etkileri arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu ve dijital pazarlama araçlarının kullanımı sonrası işletmelerin yıllık cirolarında anlamlı bir değişim yaşanmadığı saptanmıştır. Dijital pazarlama araçlarının kullanımının, pazarlama bölümü bulunma durumuna göre anlamlı bir şekilde farklılık göstermediği tespit edilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Dijital Pazarlama, Satış Etkisi, Konaklama İşletmeleri, Turizm KOBİ'leri, Çekirdek Kapadokya

### АННОТАЦИЯ

Наряду с развивающимися технологиями, рост использования мобильных устройств и изменение образа жизни людей изменили привычки использования продукта или услуги. По этой причине во многих секторах наблюдается стремительный переход от традиционных методов маркетинга к цифровому маркетингу. Этот переход также наблюдается в туристических предприятиях. В то время как традиционный маркетинг представляет собой проблему для малых и средних предприятий (МСП) во всем мире из-за своей стоимости, цифровой маркетинг предоставляет множество платформ для малых и средних предприятий, чтобы повысить осведомленность о продукте, который они предлагают потребителям, из-за его относительно низкой стоимости. В этом контексте инструменты цифрового маркетинга, такие как электронная почта, мобильный маркетинг, маркетинг в социальных сетях, поисковая оптимизация, оплата за клик и онлайн-реклама, начали использоваться в секторе туризма. Предметом исследования является влияние использования цифровых маркетинговых инструментов по продажам туристических МСП в Центральном регионе Каппадокии, с точки зрения размещения предприятий. Полученные данные для определения использования и воздействия, были выявлены в результате анкетирования владельцев бизнеса или менеджеров 48 предприятий по размещению жилья, попадающих под определение МСП в Центральном регионе Каппадокии. Было определено, что существует значительная взаимосвязь между степенью использования инструментов цифрового маркетинга и их влиянием на продажи, и нет значительных изменений в годовом обороте предприятий после использования инструментов цифрового маркетинга. Было установлено, что использование инструментов цифрового

маркетинга существенно не отличается в зависимости от наличия отдела маркетинга.  
**Ключевые слова:** Цифровой маркетинг, Влияние на продажи, Гостиничный бизнес, МСП в сфере туризма, Core Cappadocia.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The increase in the use of mobile devices with the developing technology and the changes in the way people live accordingly have also changed the usage habits of the product or service (Garcia-Montes, Caballero-Munoz & Pérez-Álvarez 2006). For this reason, a rapid transition from traditional marketing methods to digital marketing is observed in many sectors (Trusov, Bucklin, & Pauwels, 2009). This transition has also been experienced in tourism enterprises. While traditional marketing is a challenge for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) around the world, digital marketing has provided many platforms for small and medium-sized enterprises to raise awareness about the product they offer to consumers due to their relatively low cost (Taiminen & Karjaluoto, 2015). Thus, digital marketing tools such as e-mail, mobile marketing, social media marketing, search engine optimization, pay per click and online advertising activities have been used in the tourism industry (Jorge, Teixeira, Correia, Gonçalves, Martins & Bessa, 2018).

Internet World Stats (2020) states that there are more than 4.5 billion internet users worldwide as of March, 2020. With the strengthening of technological and digital infrastructures, the speed and impact of the Internet has increased. Routine communication established by traditional ways has been replaced by online platforms (Rampur, 2010). With the improvements in broadband internet connection speed and smart devices, enterprises have adopted the effectiveness of the internet. This situation has created efficiency and value on the potential target worldwide, to strengthen and promote the brand. Chaffey & Smith (2013) state that the internet is used in digital and social media to support all marketing activities while promoting the brand and the work. According to Buhalis & Jun (2011), the adoption of information communication technologies and the indispensability of the internet have caused a change in a set of values known as e-tourism in the tourism industry.

It is possible to say that digital marketing activities in the tourism sector are mostly used by the online travel agencies (Yoga, Korry & Yulianti, 2019). Digital marketplaces are often understood as multilateral marketplaces designed to provide an interface to create a network and collaborative outcomes among participants such as manufacturers, users (customers) and other third-party service providers (Qizhi Dai, 2002; Genzorová, Čorejová, & Stalmašeková, 2018). Consumers are expected to act and decide to buy more when evaluating travel products in digital marketplaces based on how satisfied they are with the product, rather than how good the product is (Clemons & Gao, 2008).

The rapid development of information and communication technologies, and especially the internet, has naturally created changes in practices and communication strategies involving governments and stakeholders in the tourism industry in recent years (Buhalis, 2003; Buhalis & Law, 2008; Petrović & Milićević, 2018). This has defined the internet as a powerful and effective marketing tool in tourism (Gorlevskaya, 2016). In this context, accommodation enterprises in the Core

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Cappadocia Region are expected to use digital marketing tools such as e-mail, mobile marketing, social media marketing, search engine optimization, pay per click and online advertising activities for sales growth.

The use of digital marketing by marketers to increase its competitive advantage, reach target markets faster, be in constant and lively communication with existing customers, and carry out all other marketing activities in digital media with the lowest costs is a necessity (Krishnan, 2019; Chaffey, 2013; Khan and Mahapatra, 2009; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2005). Despite this requirement, it may be noted that there is no study on the effect of digital marketing on the sales of small and medium-sized accommodation businesses, especially in the national literature. In this context, the purpose of the study has been determined to reveal the extent to which digital marketing practices affect the sales growth of small and medium-sized accommodation businesses and how important this effect is.

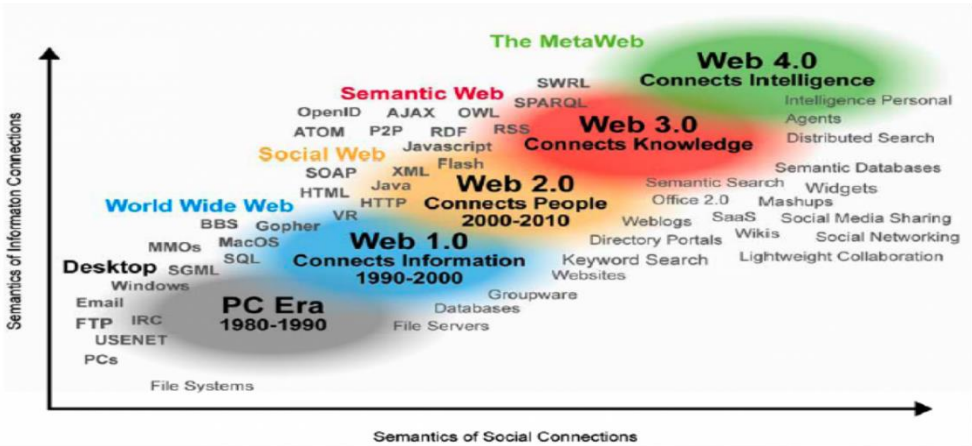
In line with the above explanations, the literature on the place of digital marketing in the tourism industry, digital marketing tools, digital marketing and sales concepts are given below.

### **1.1. Digital Marketing**

Digital marketing is a type of marketing that is widely used in channels through digital channels to promote products or services and reach existing or potential consumers (Key, 2017). While digital marketing shows its presence in channels that do not require internet, it goes beyond internet marketing with this feature (Kulova & Mihaylov, 2018). Digital marketing includes mobile phones (Short Message Service - SMS and Multimedia Message Service - MMS), search engine marketing, social media marketing, display advertising and many other types of digital media (Suryawardani & Wiranatha, 2017). Digital marketing has a very wide meaning that carries out all of its activities in digital environments. It is also defined by helping marketing activities with the use of technology and developing information that is compatible with the needs of customers (Chaffey, 2013).

Early approaches to digital marketing define it as a reflection of traditional marketing, its tools and strategies on the Internet (Constantinides, 2014). At the same time, the characteristics of the digital world and its suitability for marketing have led to the development of sales channels, languages and formats (Chaffey, 2019). In addition, digital marketing has become a new trend that brings together mass marketing and personalization, in other words adapting to the customer, in order to achieve marketing goals (Wind & Rangaswamy, 2001; Behera, Gunasekaran, Gupta, Kamboj & Bala, 2020). In this aspect, it replaces traditional marketing methods (Piñeiro-Otero & Martínez-Rolán, 2016).

The development of technological devices and the internet has led to the emergence of marketing thought through the internet (Gedik, 2020). These developments have also led to the emergence of digital marketing concept by removing global borders more measurable, user centered, accessible and in which producers and consumers are in constant interaction (Graphic 1).



Graphic 1: Development of the Internet and the World Wide Web (Radar Networks & Nova Spivack, 2007)

Digital marketing is also referred to as "online marketing", "internet marketing" or "web marketing" in the literature. Although the term digital marketing has gained popularity over time, it appears that the terms online marketing in the United States and web marketing in Italy are more commonly used. After 2013, the use of digital marketing stands out as the most common term in England and worldwide (Kaur & Sandhu, 2017).

If we look at some of these definitions, Chaffey (2013) defined digital marketing as the use of technologies to assist marketing activities to collect and develop data that will meet customer needs. Digital marketing is a form of marketing that uses electronic devices such as game consoles, smartphones, personal computers and cell phones and involves stakeholders to be part of the process (Nathan Research Inc, 2019).

## 1.2. Digital Marketing Tools

To introduce products and services in an innovative way, using database-focused distribution channels to deliver them to consumers in a timely and cost-effective manner is known as digital marketing in theory and practice (Wsi, 2013). Digital marketing differs from traditional marketing in that it is measurable, low cost and interactive. In order for digital marketing to be able to identify the target audience and to make the market retargetable, it must develop some tools and have some features (Camilleri, 2018). Digital marketing tools are discussed below in summary (Yasmin, Tasneem & Fatema, 2015).

- Search Engine Optimization - (SEO), covers the arrangements and improvements made to increase the visibility of the enterprises or website that sells online products or services to the target audience in search engine searches.
- Search Engine Marketing - (SEM) refers to all activities related to advertising for a fee on search engines to attract target customers to the website.



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- Social Media Marketing - (SMM) uses all social media channels as a tool to promote products or services, which belongs to enterprise. Some social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram can be given as examples of channels used by enterprises for marketing purposes.
- Pay Per Click - (PPC) uses online advertising for a fee to rank high in current search engines. More clearly, it is aimed to provide online users to click on the ad and then redirect to the website.
- Affiliate Marketing - (AM) can be defined as a form of agreement that allows third party websites or blogs to generate significant revenue by placing their ads on the website and through commission.
- E-mail and Mobile marketing is a form of communication that allows brands to reach a larger audience by sending mass e-mails or SMS messages such as product promotion, information and celebration to their target customers.
- Web Analytics is a form of strategy that helps an enterprise access competitors' data as well as the customer's data, and can make clear decisions on how to change strategies implemented by helping to analyze it (Brown, 2019).

Digital marketing tools have the ability to adapt by imitating many marketing communication methods and traditional media channels. In this way, it is possible to expand the marketing mix elements. With advancing technology, the increase in the use of mobile devices and the change in people's lifestyles has also changed the usage habits of the product or service (Koçak Alan, Tümer Kabadayı & Erişke, 2018). While technology is marketing itself with its continuous development, enterprises that use technology in marketing their products also allocate in their budgets for digital marketing tools (Ryan, 2016).

### **1.3. Digital Marketing and Sales**

The shopping and consumption demands have changed with change of human needs. Midha (2012) stated that consumption psychology, which is constantly changing in line with consumer demands, also changes the consumption level and consumption structure. For this reason, enterprises in the sector must keep up with the times, meet constant consumer demands and provide customers with products or services on time (Pencarelli, 2020). It is an expected result that enterprises that cannot adapt to the changes that need to be made, depending on the increase in consumer demands, lose their current competitive advantages (Ungerma, Dedkova & Gurinova, 2018). The rapidly rising digital economy requires important regulations in order for traditional marketing activities to adapt to today's digital age, full of innovative opportunities and challenges (Midha, 2012).

In fact, digitization in sales represents a fundamental change in the traditional marketing activities of enterprises (Caliskan, Ozen & Ozturkoglu, 2020). The reasons underlying the social change as a result of technological developments and the changes in purchasing behaviours accordingly make it difficult to be strong in the competitive environment (Vidili, 2020). Sales decisions need to be taken strategically in order to sustainably increase sales digitally and position them as an independent competitive advantage. Accordingly, the importance of customer-

centered sales strategies applied by enterprises under these difficult conditions is emerging (Zhu & Gao, 2019).

Generally known, e-commerce has become a form of digital marketing that has been rapidly adopted by many enterprises. This upward trend has had a huge impact on traditional retailers who do not sell online. This integration should be completed in a healthy way in order to transition from traditional sales methods to digital marketing (Dong, 2018). Digitally sustainable sales can create an independent competitive advantage for the enterprises. Strategic sales decisions in order to position the market should be taken in consideration of operational sales processes and environmental conditions. Chaffey & Smith (2012) stated that benefits such as sales, service, communication, savings, brand creation and spreading on digital platforms, known as the 5S (Sell, Serve, Speak, Save, Sizzle) of Internet marketing, are very important elements for any enterprise interested in digital marketing.

Generally, it is thought that it will provide great advantages for enterprises to use the latest technology as quickly and radically as possible so that they do not fall behind in the competition and serve today's customers in the best way. Accordingly, Rotich & Mukhongo (2015) stated that an enterprise can use digital marketing to increase sales even if it is completely online, partially online or completely offline.

#### **1.4. Tourism SMEs**

When the relevant literature is examined, it is seen that some classifications and definitions are made about the concept of SME (Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise). Within the scope of these definitions, criteria such as the number of employees, budget volume and sales volume are used (Çelikkol, Çelikkol & Koç, 2008.) Enterprises with less than 250 employees and annual sales volume below 50 million Euros are expressed as medium-sized enterprises (Şahin, 2011). According to Sarıgül (2012), hotel enterprises with SME status are defined as enterprises that are of great importance economically in terms of creating new job opportunities, contributing to the competitive environment and seeing innovative developments.

Classification of accommodation enterprises that are a part of tourism SMEs is made according to different criteria. The classification of accommodation enterprises can also be made according to the number of rooms. In this context, those with up to 50 rooms are stated as small, those with 51 to 100 rooms as medium-sized, and over 100 rooms as large accommodation enterprises (Ingram, Jamieson, Lynch, & Bent, 2000).

Regarding the studies given above, developments in information and communication technologies in the tourism sector as in every sector were closely followed. Accordingly the use of digital marketing tools and effect on sales in the marketing activities of the accommodation enterprises operating in the Core Cappadocia Region was examined in this study.

### 2. METHOD

In this study, previous academic studies on the subject were examined with a literature review (Alves, Sousa & Machado, 2020; Carvalho & Carvalho, 2020; Satez, 2016; Priyanka, 2016; Tont et al., 2015; Yasmin et al., 2015; Smith, 2014; Şanlıöz et al., 2013; Julian, 2012; Merisavo, 2005). Since the research aims to reveal the frequency of use of digital marketing tools by the enterprises, their effects on sales and the demographic characteristics of the enterprises, a field study was conducted by taking into account the research questions determined on small and medium-sized accommodation enterprises in the Core Cappadocia Region. The questionnaire as a data collection tool was used to collect primary data in the field study. Detailed information about the method of the research, the population and sample, hypothesis, data collection tools and analysis are presented in this section under headings.

#### 2.1. Research Hypotheses

Satez's (2016) study, has been made on how smartphones an important role it plays in the growth of digital marketing in Bangladesh. Priyanka (2016) has evaluated social media in terms of digital branding and discussed how brand loyalty is related to retaining the current consumer. Rupin's (2015) study was conducted on how brands on social media change the way they behave towards customers and how these customers catch the momentum in their relations with brands. The study of Yasmin, Tasneem and Fatema (2015) has also examined the effects of digital marketing on the sales of businesses and the differences between traditional marketing and digital marketing. Smith's (2014) study was conducted to determine the consumer perceptions of a brand in social media marketing. The study of Şanlıöz, Dilek and Koçak (2013) has aimed to determine the effects of mobile marketing applications, which is one of the sub-units of digital marketing in the tourism sector, on marketing performance. In the study of Julian (2012), it was investigated how to use social media to increase consumer loyalty to the brand. Finally, Merisavo's (2005) study has examined how marketers can use digital channels to improve and strengthen customer relationships.

In order to determine the relationship between digital marketing tools and the sales growth of small and medium-sized accommodation enterprises, the hypotheses developed by examining the mentioned relevant studies are given below.

H<sub>1</sub> There is a significant relationship between the degree of usage of digital marketing tools and their effects on sales.

H<sub>2</sub> There is a significant change in the annual turnover of enterprises after usage of digital marketing tools.

H<sub>3</sub> The usage of digital marketing tools differs significantly depending on the availability of a marketing department.

## 2.2. Population and Sample

According to the facility statistics data of Nevşehir Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism dated 13.06.2019 and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism dated 08.05.2020, there are a total of 421 accommodation enterprises in Nevşehir. 98 of these enterprises are accommodation enterprises with a tourism operation certificate and 323 of them do not have a tourism operation certificate. The sampling method was used because of the time and cost constraints of the research and it is not possible to make full counts on the research population.

In the study, one of the non-random sampling methods, the judgmental sampling method, also known as the purposive sampling method, was preferred as the sampling method (Robson, 2002). Those with up to 50 rooms have been accepted to be small-scale and enterprises with 51 to 100 rooms are to be medium-sized accommodation enterprises (Ingram et al., 2000). Within the scope of the purpose of the research, 48 accommodation enterprises with tourism management certificate and suitable for small and medium-sized accommodation business class in Core Cappadocia using the judgmental sampling method (Bernard, 2000) constitute the sample of this research.

## 2.3. Data Collection Tool

In this study, as the primary data collection tool, semi-structured questionnaire form and 5-point Likert type questions, which were formed from the survey questions in Omondi's (2017) and Yasmin, Tasneem & Fatema's (2015) studies to determine the sales effect of digital marketing, were used. In the second part of the questionnaire, questions were asked to determine the degree of use of six different digital marketing tools in enterprises. The digital marketing tools considered within the scope of the research are e-mail, mobile marketing, social media marketing, search engine optimization, pay per click and online advertising activities.

In the third part of the questionnaire form, the level of influence of digital marketing tools on sales is discussed. Participants have been asked to indicate to what extent digital marketing tools affect their sales for each of the digital marketing tools, including e-mail, mobile marketing, social media marketing, search engine optimization, pay per click and online advertising activities. The data were collected by making an appointment with the owners, general managers or marketing managers, if any, of the accommodation enterprises.

## 2.4. Data Analysis

Firstly, in the analysis of the data the responses of 48 SMEs to seven questions, which are important in terms of reaching the purpose of the research and testing the hypotheses, were taken into consideration. By using descriptive statistics, the characteristics of participating enterprises have been revealed. The data collected for the purpose of statistical analysis were analyzed with the SPSS 21 package program. Nonparametric tests were applied because the data did not show a normal distribution and the sample size was 48.

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In order to test the first two hypotheses of the study, Spearman Rank Correlation analysis and Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks test were performed. The third hypothesis of the study was tested with Mann Whitney-U. In the study, factor analysis was not applied to determine the validity of the questions used to determine the sales effect of digital marketing. It was stated by Şencan (2005) that the sample size should be 5-10 times the number of questions in the scale in validity and reliability tests. Since the data set did not conform to normal distribution, the Mann-Whitney U test (Büyüköztürk, 2016) was used to test whether the scores obtained from two independent samples differ significantly from each other from non-parametric hypothesis tests. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test is used to test the significance of the difference between scores associated with each other (Büyüköztürk, 2016).

### 3. FINDINGS

In this study, Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests, which are widely used as normality tests (Mishra, Pandey, Singh, Gupta, Sahu & Keshri, 2019), were applied and the results are given in Table 1.

**Table 1: Digital Marketing Tools and Sales Normality Test**

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig. (p)	Statistic	df	Sig. (p)
<b>Sales</b>	,192	48	,000	,895	48	,000
<b>Tools</b>	,160	48	,003	,931	48	,007

As seen in Table 1, when the normality test was examined, it was observed that the variables did not show a normal distribution ( $p < .05$ ). At the same time, it was accepted that the data consisting of questions about the use of digital marketing tools used to determine the effect of digital marketing on sales and their effects on sales did not show a normal distribution due to the  $n < 50$  sample size, and the analyses were carried out with non-parametric tests.

In order to reveal some of the characteristics of the enterprises participating in the study that are important for the purpose of the study, the managers in the enterprises were asked questions about the number of employees, their annual turnover before and after digital marketing, enterprise types, operating periods, legal structures and the existence of a marketing department. Results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Enterprises**

Type of Enterprise	Frequency	Percentage %	Operating Time	Frequency	Percentage %
Sole Proprietorship	6	12.5	Between 1 – 5 year	20	41.7
Incorporated	10	20.8	More than 5 year	28	58.3
Limited	32	66.7	<b>Marketing Department</b>		
<b>Number of Employees</b>			Yes	19	39.6
Less than 5	3	6.3	No	29	60.4
Between 5 - 20	31	64.6	<b>Sufficient Capacity</b>		
Between 21 - 50	14	29.1	Yes	27	56.3
<b>N=48</b>			No	21	43.8

When Table 2 is examined, 32 (66.7%) of the 48 accommodation enterprises in the Core Cappadocia Region, in accordance with the Turkish Commercial Law classification, are operated as limited companies. 10 accommodation enterprises (20.8%) operate as incorporated and 6 accommodation enterprises (12.5%) as sole proprietorships. When the findings on the number of employees are examined, 31 of the small and medium-sized accommodation enterprises (64.6%) are between 5 and 20, 14 (29.1%) are between 21 and 50 and 3 (6.3%) enterprises employ less than 5 employees.

28 enterprises (58.3%), which make up more than half of the enterprises participating in the research, have been operating in Core Cappadocia for more than 5 years. 29 of the enterprises (60.4%) stated that they do not have a marketing department. 27 Enterprises (56.3%) participating in the research answered positively to the question whether they have sufficient capacity or resources to serve more than their existing customers after digital marketing.

The frequency, percentage values, mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) and standard deviation (S.D.) values of the answers to the questions asked to determine the use of digital marketing tools are presented in Table 3.

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**Table 3: Findings on the Use of Digital Marketing Tools**

Usage of Digital Marketing Tools	Category					$\bar{X}$	S.D.
	No Extent (1)	Little Extent	Moderate Extent	Great Extent	Very Great Extent (5)		
E-Mail Marketing	16 % 33,3	16 % 33,3	13 % 27,1	2 % 4,2	1 % 2,1	2,0833	,98571
Mobil Marketing	18 % 37,5	14 % 29,2	7 % 14,6	6 % 12,5	3 % 6,3	2,2083	1,25407
Social Media Marketing	1 % 2,1	5 % 10,4	10 % 20,8	10 % 20,8	22 % 45,8	3,9792	1,13905
Search Engine Optimization	34 % 70,8	4 % 8,3	4 % 8,3	5 % 10,4	1 % 2,1	1,6458	1,13905
Pay Per Click	27 % 56,3	11 % 22,9	6 % 12,5	4 % 8,3	-	1,7292	,98369
Online Advertising	24 % 50	14 % 29,2	5 % 10,4	3 % 6,3	2 % 4,2	1,8542	1,11068

When the mean given in Table 3 are examined, it can be said that social media marketing is the most widely used digital marketing tool ( $\bar{X} = 3,979$ ). On the other hand, it has been determined that search engine optimization is the least used digital marketing tool by enterprises ( $\bar{X} = 1.6458$ ). As a matter of fact, according to Table 3, it can be said that no digital marketing tool other than social media marketing is used extensively by enterprises.

In order to get executive opinions on the effects of digital marketing on sales, “To what extent have digital marketing tools affected your sales?” was asked. The frequency, percentage values, mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) and standard deviation (S.D.) values of the given answers are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Effect of Digital Marketing Tools on Sales

	Category					$\bar{X}$	S.D.
	No Extent (1)	Little Extent	Moderate Extent	Great Extent	Very Great Extent (5)		
E-Mail Marketing	24 % 50	20 % 41,7	1 % 2,1	3 % 6,3	-	1,6458	,81187
Mobil Marketing	22 % 45,8	19 % 39,6	4 % 8,3	2 % 4,2	1 % 2,1	1,7708	,92804
Social Media Marketing	1 % 2,1	20 % 41,7	14 % 29,2	10 % 20,8	3 % 6,3	2,8750	,98121
Search Engine Optimization	36 % 75	5 % 10,4	4 % 8,3	2 % 4,2	1 % 2,1	1,4792	,96733
Pay Per Click	28 % 58,3	13 % 27,1	7 % 14,6	-	-	1,5625	,74108
Online Advertising	27 % 56,3	14 % 29,2	5 % 10,4	2 % 4,2	-	1,6250	,84110

When the mean given in Table 4 is analyzed, it is seen that social media marketing has a moderate effect on sales ( $\bar{X} = 2,8750$ ). While mobile marketing appears to have little effect on sales ( $\bar{X} = 1.7708$ ), it can be said that search engine optimization has almost no effect ( $\bar{X} = 1.4792$ ). When the frequency and percentage values in Table 4 regarding the effect of digital marketing tools on sales are examined, it is seen that the number of enterprises responding that the use of the search engine optimization tool has no effect on sales is 36 (75%). In addition, 24 (50%) of the participants stated that e-mail marketing had no effect, while 20 (41.7%) stated that it had a little effect.

Among the hypotheses of the study, "There is a significant relationship between the degree of usage of digital marketing tools and their effects on sales." In order to test the hypothesis, it was aimed to examine the relationship between the degree of use of digital marketing tools and their sales growth, and Spearman Rank correlation analysis was used in this direction. In this context, Spearman Rank correlation test results, which was conducted to determine the relationship between the use of digital marketing tools and the views on the effect of digital marketing on sales, are presented in Table 5.



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**Table 5:** Spearman Correlation Test Results between Digital Marketing Tools and Sales

	Digital Marketing Tools	Sales	
	<b>Spearman's rho</b>	E-Mail Marketing	r
Sig. (2-tailed)			,000
N			48
Mobil Marketing		r	,754
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000
		N	48
Social Media Marketing		r	,873
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000
		N	48
Search Engine Optimization		r	,657
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000
		N	48
Pay Per Click		r	,673
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000
		N	48
Online Advertising	r	,633	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	48	

Considering that the Spearman correlation coefficient (r) in Table 5 is positive and close to +1, it is determined that there is a positive, medium and high level, significant relationship between the usage of digital marketing tools and the effects of digital marketing tools on sales ( $p < .01$ ). While the value approaching  $\pm 1$  indicates the strength of the relationship between the variables, the sign shows the direction. The same direction of change is expressed by + value, while the relationship change in a different direction is shown by - value (Can, 2018).

Based on the Spearman Rank correlation test results, the first hypothesis of the research is "There is a significant relationship between the degree of usage of digital marketing tools and their effects on sales." ( $H_1$ ) was accepted. It has been found that there is a positive, medium and high level relationship. The correlation findings between various elements of digital marketing and increased sales in the study of Yasmin, Tasneem and Fatema (2015) in the literature are in line with this result. In addition, the results obtained are similar to the studies on social media marketing in the literature (Koçak Alan, Tümer Kabadayı & Erişke, 2018; Türker & Özaltın Türker, 2017; Bordonaba-Juste, Lucia-Palacios, & Polo-Redondo, 2012).

After the use of digital marketing tools, Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test was performed to determine the change in the annual turnover of enterprises and the relevant results are given in Table 6.

**Table 6:** Change in Annual Turnover of Enterprises after Use of Digital Marketing Tools

Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Results					
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min.	Max.
Annual Turnover Before Digital Marketing	48	2,0000	,98930	1,00	4,00
Annual Turnover After Digital Marketing	48	<b>2,1042</b>	,95069	1,00	4,00
<b>Ranks</b>					
			N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Annual Turnover After Digital Marketing -	Negative Ranks		1 <sup>a</sup>	6,50	6,50
Annual Turnover Before Digital Marketing	Positive Ranks		6 <sup>b</sup>	3,58	21,50
	Ties		41 <sup>c</sup>		
	Total		48		
a. Annual Turnover After Digital Marketing < Annual Turnover Before Digital Marketing					
<b>b. Annual Turnover After Digital Marketing &gt; Annual Turnover Before Digital Marketing</b>					
c. Annual Turnover After Digital Marketing = Annual Turnover Before Digital Marketing					
<b>Test Statistics<sup>a</sup></b>					
				Annual Turnover After Digital Marketing - Annual Turnover Before Digital Marketing	
	Z				-1,318 <sup>b</sup>
	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)				,187

According to the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test results in Table 6, there is no significant difference in the annual turnover of enterprises before and after digital marketing ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, ( $H_2$ ) hypothesis "There is a significant change in the annual turnover of enterprises after the use of digital marketing tools." has been rejected in contrast to the fact that there was a change in sales before and after the use of digital marketing tools by the enterprises mentioned in Omondi's (2017) study. Since the exact information about the annual turnover of the enterprises could not be obtained, the determination of the turnovers was tried to be measured at certain intervals and therefore it is thought that the difference was not significant.

Whether the relationship between the use of digital marketing tools belonging to the accommodation enterprises participating in the study and the effect of digital marketing on sales and the presence or absence of a marketing department

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in the enterprises would show a difference was analyzed with the independent sample Mann Whitney-U Test. The results obtained are presented in Table 7 below.

**Table 7:** Mann Whitney-U Test Results Marketing Department Presence and Usage of Digital Marketing Tools

Digital Marketing Tools	Marketing Department	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
<b>E-Mail Marketing</b>	Yes	19	31,68	602,00
	No	29	19,79	574,00
<b>Mobile Marketing</b>	Yes	19	22,84	434,00
	No	29	25,59	742,00
<b>Social Media Marketing</b>	Yes	19	27,34	519,50
	No	29	22,64	656,50
<b>Search Engine Optimization</b>	Yes	19	29,55	561,50
	No	29	21,19	614,50
<b>Pay Per Click</b>	Yes	19	28,74	546,00
	No	29	21,72	630,00
<b>Online Advertising</b>	Yes	19	27,61	524,50
	No	29	22,47	651,50

Test Statics<sup>a</sup>

	E-Mail Marketing	Mobile Marketing	Social Media Marketing	Search Engine Optimization	Pay Per Click	Online Advertising
<b>Mann-Whitney U</b>	139,000	244,000	221,500	179,500	195,000	216,500
<b>Wilcoxon W</b>	574,000	434,000	656,500	614,500	630,000	651,500
<b>Z</b>	-3,023	-,693	-1,210	-2,525	-1,888	-1,350
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,063	,488	,226	,092	,059	,177

a. Grouping Variable: Marketing Department

When Table 7 is examined, the use of digital marketing tools does not differ significantly according to the presence of a marketing department, since the significance values in the table are  $p > 0.05$ . In this context, the third hypothesis of the study, "The use of digital marketing tools differs significantly according to the presence of a marketing department." hypothesis ( $H_3$ ) has been rejected. Considering the group medians, it is seen that among digital marketing tools, the use of all other tools except mobile marketing is higher in accommodation enterprises with a marketing department. This finding, contrary to what Merisavo's (2005) study stated has been rejected. Among the reasons for rejection of the hypothesis, it is thought that the personnel employed in the marketing department of the enterprises, the lack of digital media knowledge and the lack of qualified personnel to carry out digital marketing activities.

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Today, digital transformation has started to show its effect in the field of tourism, from hotel management to agency, as in all sectors. Traditionally applied marketing activities are rapidly being replaced by new practices and habits. This study aims to determine the sales effect of the mentioned change. In the research designed for this purpose, some important results were obtained on the demographic characteristics of small and medium-sized accommodation enterprises operating in the Core Cappadocia Region, their use of digital marketing tools, and the effects of digital marketing tools on the sales growth of enterprises.

Findings on social media marketing have shown that it is an important digital marketing tool that is widely used in the sales of small and medium-sized accommodation enterprises and has a significant positive effect on sales. According to the Social Media Industry report, 86% of marketers consider social media channels to be an important component of their marketing initiatives (Stelzner, 2013).

It has been concluded that search engine optimization (SEO), which is more costly than other digital marketing tools, is not used by approximately 71% of the enterprises participating in the research. Also the SMEs operating in the region and that 75% of these enterprises have no effect on their sales. When the use of digital marketing tools of the enterprises participating in the study was examined according to the presence of a marketing department, no difference was found. Email marketing has been found to be used extensively by small and medium-sized accommodation enterprises, but has little effect on sales.

The study findings concluded that mobile marketing is of little use by small and medium-sized accommodation enterprises, about half of them consider it has no effect on their sales, and they do not get more sales as expected. Pay per click, one of the digital marketing tools, is seen by participating enterprises as a tool that has little impact on sales. With the research findings, it was stated that online marketing is not used by half of the small and medium-sized accommodation enterprises participating in the research.

Within the framework of the research findings and results, some suggestions were made that are thought to increase their sales volumes as a result of the use and adoption of digital marketing tools by Core Cappadocia small and medium-sized accommodation enterprises. Sherman (2007) indicates search engine marketing as an important strategic tool for destination and tourism enterprises, to attract the attention of consumers on the internet, to compete with their competitors and to reach potential customers directly. For this reason, it is thought that accommodation SMEs operating in Cappadocia and participating in the research should make plans for search engine marketing in the short and medium term and budget allocation will provide a competitive advantage for them.

It is thought that it will be beneficial to provide digital media literacy training on the basis of the sector and develop appropriate policies for digital marketing, as well as financial support to enterprises, by public institutions such as KOSGEB (Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization of Turkey)

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that support SMEs. In addition, qualified employees who can ensure the effective use of digital marketing tools in the sector should be trained. It is thought that the results obtained in this study will change positively with the real knowledge of digital marketing and its effective use.

For future academic studies, it is recommended to conduct research in regions where small and medium-sized accommodation businesses are concentrated outside the Core Cappadocia Region and to find solutions to common problems identified by comparing the findings of these studies on digital marketing. In addition, important implications for the sector can be obtained with case studies that address businesses that use digital marketing tools effectively. At the same time, it is thought that studies involving large-scale businesses and the comparative analysis of the effectiveness of digital marketing tools according to enterprise scale will provide useful contributions to this field.

Challenging competitive conditions, instead of promoting activities with the high costs of traditional marketing methods, small and medium-sized accommodation enterprises with limited budgets for marketing activities, while using digital marketing tools with lower costs is considered that will provide revenue increase and competitive advantage.

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