

IMPACT OF DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF VISITORS ON THEIR PREFERENCE IN UTILISATION FROM FUNCTIONS OF TRADITIONAL COUNTY FAIRS

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The number of traditional fairs in Turkey has been gradually decreasing due to social, economic and technological developments. According to our ongoing project, samples of traditional fairs currently have been protecting their existence in 63 settlements located in 54 districts of 21 provinces in Turkey. Within the national-scale research project which investigates traditional fairs in Turkey, this paper attempts to explain factors determining motivation of visitors. With this purpose, 13 traditional fairs distributed over four geographical regions of Turkey have determined as sample area. It was aimed to conduct 200 surveys to visitors and 50 surveys to service providers (tradesmen) for each fair by considering gender and age groups limits. In total, 2582 and 611 surveys were conducted to visitors and tradesmen, respectively. It was aimed to evaluate relationships between the most utilised functions in traditional fairs (entertainment, shopping, picnic and etc.) and socio-economical characteristics of visitors (age, gender, education, income). For this purpose, non-parametric Chi-square Independency test were used to examine whether an independency or a relationship is exist between two variables. This test is based on hypothesis of significance between observed and expected frequencies. According to Pearson Chi-square values obtained from analyses, the factors affecting participation of visitors are found significant at 0.05 significance level according to gender, age groups, education and income variables. The relationship between some characteristics of visitors (age, gender, education, and income) and preferred sections is also found significant.

Keywords: Traditional fairs, Visitors, Preference of fair's customers, Turkey.

Introduction

Fairs are established in specific season, on specific dates and at specific location for a single or couple of days as good or livestock markets within large areas and considered as a prominent sample among traditional shopping forms. Fairs mostly meet daily, seasonal even annual home needs and several agricultural equipment need of rural people whose have not regular shopping opportunity. Fairs organisations usually have entertainment function which are almost identified with fair organisations.

In Turkey, available examples of fairs are found in district centres (and very few number in villages), they have been still maintaining to draw attention in the environments where they are organised.

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However, due to the socio-economic and technological developments and changing in entertainment concept, the number of fairs is fairly diminishing by transforming to entertainment or trade fairs and festivals. Formerly, the closed economy structure attributed significant functions to the fairs in marketing products.

When taken into consideration that not long ago, people were waiting for fairs for meeting their needs; the role of fairs in economical and social life would be better understood. For instance, burning oil was required for lighting in periods where there was no electricity; and salt was needed for pickling to protect food items. Such substances were not easily found; therefore fairs were expected by necessity (Çalışkan, 2008:235). Although, retail trading activities have displayed huge development and become widespread; fairs which are located in relatively isolated places of rural areas, still form the biggest attractiveness for rural people. Fairs can be seen as entertaining and unrivalled ritual of extensive shopping over the rural environments where simple daily life is prevailed. Figure 1 shows examples of the various functions of the traditional fairs in Turkey.



Figure 1. Examples of the various functions of the traditional fairs in Turkey

Today, 71 fair organisations are carried out in 63 settlements of Turkey in a single year (Figure 2). Fair examples display distribution over four geographical regions (Marmara, Black Sea, Aegean and Mediterranean). These fairs are located within borders of 21 provinces, Çanakkale (15 of them), Balıkesir (15 of them) and Bolu (21 of them) provinces become prominent with highest number of fair examples that they have. The interaction area of a fair is not restricted with the host settlement. For example, many visitors of neighbouring districts and their villages can participate to a fair as much as the village people of the district which the fair organisation is exist. Therefore, fairs have a substantial place among regional even national trade system based on existence of travelling tradesmen and large consumer group from various geographical locations.



Figure 2. Current distribution of traditional fairs in Turkey.

As is known, people choice's through goods and services for meeting their needs is generally defined as consumption, and there are many factors (economical, physical, cultural, psychological, sociological and etc.) affecting this choice. Therefore consumption is a complex subject and should be dealt as multifaceted (Cosar, 2012:96). It is required to understand needs and mobilizing motives of consumers in order to explain behaviours of consumers. There is a need for driving force to mobilize consumer for carrying through consumer behaviour. This is called motivation. There is one or more motivation factor under of any behaviour. Mainly, needs lie under of motivation. Motives lead action/movement. Motives determine what to do, when and how and in what way. In other words, for determining action style of a person, several factors such as environment, culture, values, education, age of an individual are effective (Koç, 2003: 229). For instance, men and women have different enjoyment and preferences in accordance with their physiological characteristics. In addition to this, different roles have been loaded to men and women by the impact of social structure and culture. Roles of men and women have been changing at the present time and continuing to change; however, men and women exhibit different behaviours as consumers (Ünal, 2008: 85). On the other hand, consumer markets split into different sections in terms of age groups. Consumers partaking in specific age group exhibit similar behaviours with their age groups and unlike behaviours as to different age groups. Consumers are classified as children, young, adult and elders (Ünal, 2008: 85).

In addition to the good and product shopping, fair visitors benefit several functions of the fairs that reflecting social, cultural and traditional aspects of the fair. Motivational factors are closely related to the profile characteristics of the visitors. These factors directs visitors to benefit from a specific product and service branches of the fair. This study aims to determine the relationship between visitor's socio-economical, demographical characteristics and their preferences on benefiting from function, product and services of fairs. Interests of visitors as a consumer are sometimes similar, but in sometime highly differ based on gender or age. Therefore, the motivational factors affecting interest and preferences of visitors were measured on the basis of gender, age, education and monthly income levels of the visitors.

Method

Data were collected through surveys conducted on the fieldwork at 13 different provinces in 2013 and 2014 (Tablo 1). Every fieldwork took averagely 3 days. Surveys were applied by using face to face interview method during the days when fair was performed. Age is one of the main determinants for the

studies investigating consumption patterns. In this case, all the age groups in the research population should be equally represented in the universe (Altunişık vd, 2005). Therefore, equality of the women and men sample groups was considered when conducting the survey. Also, equality of different age groups was also considered. For this purpose, half of the 200 surveys for each location were applied to women and the other half were applied to men; and also 5 separate age quota were designated.

Overall	3193			
Total	611	2582		
Seferihisar/İzmir	46	208		
İspir/Erzurum	30	119		
Simav/Kütahya	52	210		
Karadede/Bafra-Samsun	35	211		
Gönen/Balıkesir	50	209		
Yenice/Çanakkale	50	212		
Zile/Tokat	51	210		
Boyabat/Sinop	52	211		
İznik/Bursa	52	208		
İnhisar/Bilecik	38	155		
Eğirdir/Isparta	52	210		
Gerede/Bolu	52	209		
Pehlivanköy/Kırklareli	51	210		
	tradesmen	visitors		
	conducted	conducted		
Fair / Province	Number of	Number of		

Table 1. Sample fairs which survey were conducted and number of participants.

In this study, it was aimed to evaluate the relationship between socio-economical characteristics of visitors (gender, age, education, monthly income) and functions of the fairs (entertainment, shopping, picnic, etc.) which visitors of traditional fairs benefit most. To achieve this, non-parametric Chi-Square Independency test was applied by using SPSS 18 packaged software.

Chi-Square test is used to identify independency or relationship between two or more categorical variables. This test is based upon whether a statistically significant difference between observed frequencies (G_{ii}) and theoretical frequencies (T_{ii}) in cross tables in $(r \times c)$ type. Hypotheses are:

 H_0 : The difference between variables is not statistically significant (there is no relationship between variables).

 H_1 : The difference between variables is statistically significant (there is a relationship between variables). Chi-Square test statistics is calculated as:

$$\chi^{2}_{hes} = \sum \frac{(G_{ij} - T_{ij})^{2}}{T_{ij}}$$

This calculated value, then is compared with Chi-Square table value by (r-1)(c-1) degree of freedom. After this comparison, if $\chi^2_{hes} > \chi^2_{tablo}$; H_0 hypothesis is rejected and the relationship between variables is decided to be statistically significant.

Results

Visitor's answers given to the various questions have been summarised by frequency tables by taking into account certain variables (Table 2).

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Men	1320	51,1
Gender	Women	1262	48,9
	Total	2582	100
	18-29	519	20,1
	30-39	505	19,6
	40-49	516	20
Age	50-59	518	20,1
	60+	524	20,3
	Total	2582	100
	Uneducated	167	6,5
	Primary school	1514	58,6
	High school	513	19,9
Education	University/College	380	14,7
	Other	8	0,3
	Total	2582	100
Monthly Income	Less than 1000 TL	874	33,8
	1000-1999 TL	1175	45,5
	2000-2999 TL	337	13,1
	3000-3999 TL	86	3,3
	4000-5999 TL	78	3
	More than 6000 +TL	32	1,2
	Total	2582	100

Table 2. Frequency distribution of categories of different variables.

Table 3. Results of Chi-square test. (*)There is a statistically significant difference according to 0,05significance level (p < 0,05)

Which factors affect your participation to the fair?	n	s.d.	χ^2_{value}	p_{value}
Gender	2582	9	409,006	0,000*
Age	2582	36	139,161	0,000*
Education	2582	27	87,683	0,000*
Income	2582	45	112,642	0,000*

Which parts of the fair you benefit most from?	п	s.d.	χ^2_{value}	p_{value}	
Gender	2582	12	459,644	0,000*	
Age	2582	48	220,77	0,000*	
Education	2582	48	67,51	0,000*	
Income	2582	45	124,726	0,000*	

It was determined that factors affecting participation of the fair's audience/visitors change according to their gender (p=0,000) (Table 3). For example, 76,6% of the visitors are women and 23,4 of them are men who stated purpose of participation as "Seeing friends, relatives, acquaintances". Women constituted most of the visitors (73,7%) who came to the fair for "Spending time with my family, entertainment" (Figure 3a). The relationship between gender of visitors and parts of fairs that they benefit was found statistically significant (p=0,000) (Table 3). Men constituted 68,3% of the visitors who came for livestock market, while rate of women coming for livestock market is 31,7%. On the other hand, sportive activities were preferred at the rate of 92,3% by men and 7,7% by women. Visitors coming for exhibitions are mostly women. 62,5% of the visitors benefit from the traditional exhibition 70% of the visitors benefit from institutions and organisations exhibition sections are women (Figure 4a).

It was determined that factors affecting participation of the fair's audience/visitors change according to their age (p=0,000) (Table 3). 24,4% of the visitors are 60 years and over and 15,9% of them are in 18-29 age group who thinking that fairs have traditional meaning. 18-29 age group constituted 29,5% of the visitors coming for concerts, while only 3,2% of them are 60 years and over. 9,4% (18-29), 14,5% (40-49) and 27,4% (60 years and over) of the visitors stated that they came to fair to be informed about things happened in their district (Figure 3b). The relationship between age of visitors and parts of fairs that they benefit was found statistically significant (p=0,000) (Table 3). The most preferred section is non-food shopping in all age groups. 18-29 age group has the highest rate in this section. Sportive activities and institutions and organisations exhibitions become the least preferred section according to all age groups(Figure 4b).

It was determined that factors affecting participation of the fair's audience/visitors change according to their education status (p=0,000) (Table 3). 27,3% of uneducated, 27,8% of primary school graduate, 23,3% of high school graduate and 24,5% of university/college graduates stated that the most important factor leading their participation to the fair is shopping. Also, it was determined that 20,6% of uneducated are participating to the fairs for spending time with their friends, while 17,7% of primary school graduate and 15,5% of high school graduates stated that fairs have traditional meaning for them. It was determined that 18,7% of university/college graduates participated to the fairs for spending time together with their family(Figure 3c). The relationship between education status of visitors and parts of fairs that they benefit was found statistically significant (p=0,000) (Table 3).

The most preferred section is non-food shopping in all education categories. 31,5% of uneducated, 29,9% of primary school graduate, 27,4% of high school graduate and 28,4% of university/college graduates stated that they benefit from non-food shopping section of the fair at most. Also it was determined that 18% of uneducated, 16,3% of high school graduates and 16,3% of university/college graduates benefit from food and beverage sections of the fair. 19,6 of primary school graduates preferred to benefit food shopping sections of the fair(Figure 4c).

It was determined that factors affecting participation of the fair's audience/visitors change according to monthly income of the visitors (p=0,000) (Table 3). The lowest income group (less than 1000 TL) come to the fairs for shopping at most (29,9%) and for sportive activities at least (0,2%). The relationship between income of visitors and parts of fairs that they benefit was found statistically significant (p=0,000) (Table 3). The most preferred section is non-food shopping in all income groups. The visitors partaking in second lowest income group (1000-1900TL) displayed highest percentage (46,3%) in benefiting from non-food sopping sections of the fair (Figure 3d).



Figure 3. Rates (%) of factors affecting participation of different groups. (Factors are: A-Shopping, B-Traditional meaning of the fair, C-Spending time with my family, entertainment, D-Spending time with my friends, entertainment, E-Seeing friends/relatives/acquaintances, F-Watching live cultural activities, G-Watching concerts, H-Picnic/barbeque, I-Be informed about things happened in our district, J-Sportive activities)

The relationship between visitors indicating that fairs play an important role in meeting the shopping needs of the local people and their incomes was found statistically significant (p=0,012). Visitors from all income groups share this idea. Visitors stating that they are totally agree are distributed to the income groups as follows: 47% of them from 1000-1900 TL income group, 32,7% of them are in lowest income group, 13,8% of them are in 2000-2900 TL, 3,8% of them are in 3000-3900TL and 2,7 of them are in 4000-6000TL income groups (Figure 4d).





Figure 4. Utilisation from sections of the fairs, rates (%) according to different groups. (Sections are: A-Non-food shopping, B-Food shopping, C-Livestock market, D-Amusement park etc., E-Sportive organisations, F-Cultural and artistic shows, G-Traditional product exhibition, H-Exhibition of cultural and art products, I-Several equipments and devices, J-Exhibition of several institutions, K-Food and beverage, L-Coffee shops, M-Other)

Some questions from tradesmen's survey were also used for evaluating visitor's interest towards good and services of fair according to their gender and age. These are (1) Which sector do you operate in? and (2) Who are your customers (more)? Answers of these questions were compared.

Results show that there is a significant relationship between customer type and sectors that customers benefit (p=0,000). Food and beverage (19,7%), Food & Fruit/Vegetable (25,7%), Glassware & kitchen supplies (38,3%) and Textile-Clothing -Haberdashery (28%) sections are preferred by Middle-aged women at most. Children prefer Amusement park with the highest rate (35,2%), while middle aged men preferred Livestock market (37,8% and Agricultural equipments and devices (41,2%) section at most. Souvenir & Cosmetics section were visited mostly by young girls (28,9%) while middle-aged men and women are equally interested with the Traditional handcraft section of the fair (Table 4).

Categories	food and beverage	food and fruit/vegetable	glassware and kitchen supplies	textile-clothing - haberdashery	amusement park etc.	livestock market	souvenir and cosmetics	agricultural equipments and devices	traditional handcraft	Other	TOTAL
Young girls	15,0	7,8	12,3	21,0	16,7	12,2	28,9	11,8	4,3	7,5	16,3
Young boys	16,0	6,3	2,5	14,4	24,1	15,9	18,9	11,8	8,7	10,4	13,4
Middle-aged women	19,7	25,7	38,3	28,0	11,1	3,7	20,0	2,9	26,1	16,4	23,1
Middle-aged men	18,8	24,3	17,3	14,4	7,4	37,8	7,8	41,2	26,1	35,8	19,1
Elder women	9,4	15,5	19,8	10,8	1,9	1,2	5,6	2,9	13,0	9,0	10,3
Elder men	9,7	15,0	8,6	5,4	3,7	28,0	2,2	26,5	17,4	17,9	9,9
Children	11,3	5,3	1,2	5,9	35,2	1,2	16,7	2,9	4,3	3,0	7,9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 4. Frequency distribution of tradesmen's survey

Which factors affect your participation to the fair?	Frequency (%)		
Shopping	26,7		
Traditional meaning of the fair	17,1		
Spending time with my family, entertainment	15,4		
Spending time with my friends, entertainment	15,4		
Seeing friends, relatives, acquaintances	10		
Watching live cultural activities	5,8		
Watching concerts	4,5		
Picnic/barbeque	2,9		
Be informed about things happened in our district	2		
Sportive activities	0,2		
Total	100		
Which parts of the fair you benefit most from?	Frequency (%)		
Non-food shopping	29,2		
Food shopping	18,2		
Food and beverage	16,5		
Amusement park etc.	10,5		
Coffee shops	10,5		
Livestock market	5,6		
Cultural and artistic shows	4,9		
Traditional product exhibition	1,4		
Exhibition of cultural and art products	1,1		
Several equipments and devices	0,9		
Other	0,5		
Exhibition of several institutions	0,4		
Sportive organisations	0,2		
Total	100		

Table 5. Overall frequency distribution of selected questions of visitor's survey.

Conclusion

This study reveals that there are marked differences between visitors in terms of benefiting from fairs according to their gender, age, education and income characteristics. Similarly, motivational factors leading participation of visitors display a large discrepancy according to visitor's socio-economic and demographic characteristics. Analyses indicate that primary school graduates and lowest/lower income group are the largest group to benefit from traditional fairs.

Overall, shopping has the highest rate for visiting fairs (26,7%) and the traditional meaning of the fairs is ranked at the second (17,1%) (Table 5). Spending time with the family/ entertainment and Spending time with the friends/ entertainment options share third rank with the same rate (15,4%). Traditional meaning is often an important motivating factor for middle-aged or elderly visitors. Since fairs were established in their environment in the past, people in this group are remembering fair as a memory. It is possible to find common liking, activities and entertainment styles of the past in the fairs of

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today almost in a similar way. Therefore, people of these groups still follow fairs closely. Fairs provide an opportunity for showing intangible cultural heritage, local traditions, ethnic history and cultural landscape of a place like local festivals (Kladou, 2011:41).

The most utilised sections of the fairs become "goods and services" (29,2%) and food shopping section (18,2%) is ranked at the second (Table 5). Amusement parks rank as third section . In fact, functional characteristics of fairs which are regarded as old style by people living in big cities, gave inspiration to the shopping malls. Today, people do not consume only goods and services in shopping malls, but also benefit from several possibilities such as cinema, food and entertainment (George, 2000:70).

Women are primarily responsible for the household food and nutrition and do the majority of food shopping and daily work of the family (Underhill, 2012: 136-157). Obtained results support this argument. Middle-aged women were detected as top consumer group for Food & Fruit/Vegetable (25,7%), Glassware & kitchen supplies (38,3%) and Textile-Clothing -Haberdashery (28%) sections. Fairs are still an alternative for young girl and women of rural areas for obtaining clothing (especially underwear) and the establishment of fair are expected throughout the year.

Ranking of the groups that benefit from the entertainment functions of the fair revealed significant results. Children rank first in this section (35,2%) as expected. Young boys (24,1%) and young girls (16,7%) follow children group (Table 4). The difference between young girls and boys should be linked to social and cultural values as well as provided entertainment style.

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