



The effects of customer focused selling on destination choice and decision of purchasing: An empirical study on British tourists travelling to Turkey

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between customer-focused selling (CFS) approaches, customers' destination choice (DC) and decision of purchasing (DP). The secondary purpose is to examine the moderating effect of destination choice on the relationship between CFS and DP. The results indicate that all of the factors have a significant and positive relationship with each other. While the moderating effect of DC significantly influenced the relationship between the building trust and credibility, investigating the purchasing factors, offering solutions dimensions of CFS and DP. The moderating effect was insignificant with regard to the relationship between gaining agreements and building long-term relationships dimensions of CFS and DP.

Keywords: Customer-focused selling, Destination choice, Decision of purchasing, British tourists, Turkey

1. Introduction

The competition between tourism destinations and consumer behavior in the purchasing stage has changed dramatically in the recent years. The increasing competition in the tourism sector requires managers of tourism destinations to develop effective marketing plans and strategies (Baloglu & Mangalolu, 2001). These in turn require certain foundational strategies in place to ensure its success. The choice of tourism destination for consumers is both complex and costly in their making decision process. The reason for this is that the tourism destination term refers not

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only broadly to an area where tourism is a relatively important activity but it also contains culture, image, people, facilities, foods etc. of a place which may significantly influence on tourism actors such as tourist, travel agency or operator, local authority, government and others.

Despite the increased amount of researchers interested in tourism destination subject, only a few researchers have focused on the importance of sales techniques in relation to the tourism destination and its elements outlined above (Demir & Kozak, 2011). The essence of sales techniques in tourism is firstly to arouse interest of the prospective clients and discover consumers' needs or problems (Saffery, Morgan & Tulga, 2007). It will then steer the consumer towards purchasing by using instruments such as country, city, hotel brands and image. The combined sales efforts of the tour operators and hotels have proven to be a successful collaboration, the results of which will add up to a significant impact for tourism destination. Destination suppliers must be careful with prices, seasonal and cyclical factors in order to maintain the competitiveness of hotels when they practice sales techniques to be applied. In this respect, there are several competitor destinations (one of them is Turkey) that are making major efforts to improve the quality/price relationship of hotels (Garin-Muñoz, 2007). The reason for this is that consumers are sensitive about factors such as the quality of hotels, restaurants and food in destinations (Lim et al., 2010).

In this respect, holiday travel packaging is an important tool for destination marketing (Rewtrakunphaiboon & Oppewal, 2008). However, how the destination is presented to consumer and which tools are used for the sales of a destination that influences consumers' purchasing decisions. Consequently, the main aim of this study is to conceptualize and empirically test the role of customer-focused selling on the customer's choice of destination and purchasing decision.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Customer-focused selling

Selling holiday packages constitutes one of the most important parts of marketing management in tourism industry. Previous studies have demonstrated that selling the tourism product involves management of salesperson and activities that make up the organisations sales effort (Morgan & Pritchard, 2005; Sohrabi et al., 2012; Vogt, 2011). Sales techniques in tourism industry are more complex and may need more qualifications than apparently similar occupations in different industries. This is because seasonal/regional fluctuations and economic/social issues, seller-consumer relations, consistently marketing and selling facilities can be challenging. Effective sales techniques can make the crucial difference between competitors in the matter of selling package holidays as. Sales of tourism products are more difficult to handle if there is unknown holiday

package involved. This is further complicated as quality is not only based on tourists' experience, but is also related to salesperson's knowledge, experience and efforts.

Customer expectations in tourism industry are influenced by many factors such as prior exposure to product or service (including past experience), price of goods and services, corporate promotional activities (Knutson et al., 2003), recommendation from friends, relatives and others (Demir & Kozak, 2011), and cultural orientations (Becker & Murrmann, 1999). Sales activities, such as face to face selling at tourism business (e.g. tour operator, travel agency, and the others) consider customer-centricity in every part of the sales stages, from informing holiday package to management of post-sale activities. Customers and salesperson needs each other in sales process, but customers need them in different ways than they used to. On the other hand, salesperson uses different techniques in customer-focused strategy to have positive impact on customers.

Customer-focused selling (CFS) is one of the selling techniques that emphasize a genuine dialogue between the salesperson and the customer (DelVecchio et al., 2002; Pettijohn, Pettijohn & Taylor, 2007) and it is not merely an adaptation of existing selling method or techniques of holiday package to focus more on the customer. Rather, the CFS approach is complex and requires more competence from salesperson in that s/he understands the problems of customers and seeks solutions for the organisation (Sheth & Sharma, 2008). The main goal of CFS is to have a proactive plan for how the organisation wishes to acquire, retain, and grow its customers (Carroll, 2008).

Some researchers concluded that a strong vision, communication and values of salesperson could create differentiation and trust among people who intend to purchase a holiday package (Gillis et al., 1998; Morgan & Pritchard, 2005; Pike, 2009). Peoples' needs, desire and expectation are important (Jacob & Ulaga, 2008; Stephens & Adams, 1997) and have a crucial role for the salesperson and business marketers (Demir, 2012). In CFS approach, DelVecchio et al., (2002) have revealed that the salesperson should use "*a benefit approach, ask confirmation or clarification questions, directly address the buyer's objections, and finally, clear the path to closing the sale*". CFS is derived from shared experiences and learning (Pettijohn, Pettijohn & Taylor, 2007). CFS may allow salesperson, destination management and tourism business to better understand the ever-changing needs and desire of customers. It is important to marketers as it allows them to position their tourism products to meet the needs, expectations and changes, and the organization becomes a trusted and true partner in providing solutions for their customers in the tourism marketplace.

The increase of competition in tourism industry clearly calls for new selling techniques, efforts and sales management approaches. Over, the last two or three decades, to successfully sell destinations or hotels' products, tour operators and travel agencies have shifted from traditional selling approaches to CFS approach. In this approach, businesses and their salesperson should know how to build trust and credibility, and adapt social styles to customers (Cicala, Smith & Bush, 2012; Haan & Berkey, 2006) as customers are the centre of the CFS process and their motivation has critical role on buying process. In the selling of holiday package, it is very important to understand customer's perceptions of the credibility of information given by salesperson in evaluation of alternatives. At this stage, trust of salesperson and information may also influence customer behavior and holiday buying intention (Demir & Kozak, 2011). Gaining credibility in the area of trust is essential in order to be seen as a reliable salesperson (Ingram et al., 2007). Communication and persuasion skills of the salesperson should be competently utilised and the attention of the salesperson should be directed not only to customers but also to spouse and children to improve their trust in the elements of holiday package. Some research suggests that trust has a crucial role in information search and evaluation of alternatives (Tuu, Olsen & Linh, 2011), and post-purchasing as a loyalty, to a destination (Kozak, 2002). Aspects of trust and credibility that are relevant to the destination include quality perception and value of price paid, opportunities of forms of paying the bill e.g. and like other factors to build customers' positive emotions to the tour operators and travel agencies.

Customers in different countries buy holiday for different reasons, and if marketers and salesperson correctly identify and predict their behaviors, they can interact with each other in a way customers prefer. Tourism business begin to realize that in many cases sales success depends as much on recognizing of customer priorities and solving their problems as it does on being a professional in selling. If the CFS efforts of business are clearly perceived by customers, this approach helps both business and customer's relation in sales process, and indicates sales orientation-customer orientation fit. Gillis et al., (1998) explain that the degree to which salesperson practise the marketing approach by trying to help their customers make purchase decisions that will satisfy customer needs and expectations and by understanding customers' emotions and discover their wants and expectations will not only contribute to positive relationships, but will also motivate them to buy the holiday package.

One of the advantages for the business' potential customers properly and to attract them using the appropriate marketing techniques is long-term relationships (Lopez, Redondo & Olivan, 2006) which is providing for new and better ways to increase sales volume. While the importance

of building long-term relationships and its conditions, processes and results have received some attention in consumer marketing contexts, other aspects of long-term buyer-seller relationships have been ignored (Ellis & Beatty, 1995). In the tourism market, to successfully build long-term relationships results in increasing business' profitability and guaranteeing future viability. There are functional or economic effects of these long-term relationships. These are the customer-valued convenience, recommendation and selection of destination and hotel, time and money savings and the salesperson's product knowledge. Trust is an important factor in developing long-term relationships with customers (Butler & Williams, 2011; Haan & Berkey, 2006; Mossberg, 2007). Trust is a function of experiences and interactions and is an important component of interpersonal relationships, which is a reciprocal process among not only managers and employees, but also customers and salesperson (Demir, 2011). Consequently, long-term relationships require different conditions than any short term selling and depend on many other factors such as demographic traits of sellers and socio-cultural variables.

Sohrabi et al. (2012) explain that salesperson must understand how customers perceive the quality of tourism products or services and their importance and performance when compared with other competitors. According to Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985), determinants of service quality is related to its dimensions that include reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding and customer knowledge and tangibles. In order to reduce customers' costs in purchasing a holiday package, evaluating and selecting destination and hotel has become one of the most crucial issues in relationship between salesperson and customers for gaining agreement.

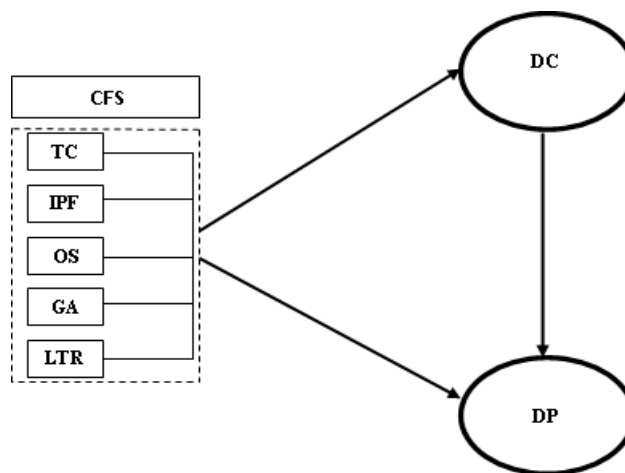
2.2. Hypotheses

From the literature discussion, three main hypotheses and one moderating hypothesis developed may be formulated. The first hypothesis is related to the relation of CFS and destination attractions; the second is related to CFS and decision of purchasing factor and the third hypothesis is related to destination choice and decision of purchasing. The moderating hypothesis is related to the moderating effect of destination choice on the relationship between CFS and the decision of purchasing.

The hotel image is important in influencing the customers' perception of the holiday package, this is effectively the brand's market profile, and it is a strong variable that positively or negatively influences marketing activities (Kadampully & Suhartanto, 2000). Hotel's image is important in improving the hotel's sales effort by providing a positive perception to customer in marketing

and sales process. Hotel image is related to its brand, chain, service quality of perception and employees.

Figure 1. Conceptual model



Destination image, on the other hand is in a wider context, it is the sum of ideas and perception that historical and cultural resources, geography and climate, people, infrastructure and facilities, safety and hygiene, diversity of goods and services, cost in one's own mind or is given by salesperson (Demir & Kozak, 2011; Jeong & Holland, 2012; Pike, 2008; Sánchez-Rivero & Pulido-Fernández, 2012). Destination image is a vital component in sales technique as a supporting factor and is considered by potential tourists in evaluating alternatives of destination. Furthermore, image has an impact on customers' intentions and buying behaviour (Kadampully & Suhartanto, 2000). On the other hand, hotels as one of the facilities and pull factors (Demir & Kozak, 2011) are a vital component of destination which improve destination image. The perceptions of hotel attributes such as cleanliness, price, location, security, personal service, physical attractiveness, opportunities for relaxation, standard of services, appealing image, and reputation, as the degree to which customers find various services and facilities crucial important in promoting their expectations and satisfaction with hotel stays (Dominici & Guzzo, 2010; Wuest, Tas & Emenheiser, 1996). Hotel and destination image can help the CFS practices to identify the important elements affecting customers' decision-making and buying behavior.

From the above, it can be argued that there are correlations between CFS, hotel and destination factors and hypothesis are explained as below:

$H_{1a - 1c}$: Customer-focused sales approaches have a significant and positively influence on the destination choice.

$H_{2a - 2c}$: Customer-focused sales approaches have a significant and positively influence on the decision of purchasing.

H₃: The destination choice (attributes) has a significant and positively influence on the decision of purchasing

H_{4a - 4c}: The destination choice (attributes) has a significant moderating influence on the relationship between CFS and the decision of purchasing

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample and data collection

The data used for the current study were collected in 2011 from tourists who had bought a package holiday to different destinations such as Antalya, Fethiye and Bodrum in Turkey. The sample-included people in Manchester have just bought at least a weekly tour from three different tour operator/travel agency. One tour operator/travel agent helped by agreeing to let customers complete the survey in their office. Two others allowed the researchers to complete the questionnaire with the customers but outside of the office. Before beginning the survey, a pilot test of 48 people was conducted to ensure the reliability of the scales for this study. Three of questions were modified while two variables were completely excluded from the survey based on feedback. The data were gathered between July and September 2011 *by the researchers* in face-to-face interviews with 532 people of whom 519 questionnaires were usable for this study. The main reason for the respondents from only one country is to determine the effects of salesperson on the increasing of the British tourists' travels to Turkey in recent years.

3.2. Instrument development

The questionnaire used for this study consists of three parts, and were developed from prior research and published scales. The first part, CFS, was measured using eighteen-item scale, which was developed from different studies such as DelVecchio and colleagues (2002), Stephens and Adams (1997), Bensaou (1999), Cannon and Perreault (1999). The first part of scale examined five dimensions of CFS: building trust and credibility (BTC), investigating the purchasing factors (IPF), offering solutions (OS), gaining agreement (GA) and building long-term relationships (LTR). BTC consist of behavioral intentions of salesperson and customer to each other. The first dimension of CFS was measured by three items based on a seven-point Likert type scale (ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree) including the information about holiday package, the most appropriate holiday package and trust salesperson. The IPF included four items as salesperson's selling efforts and customer's priorities, emotions and expectations (i.e. "Salesperson understand what kind holiday I want", "They notice my priorities in buying holiday", "I think my emotions and expectations are important for salesperson", and

“Salesperson's effort to sell a holiday package that I want”). The OS was the third dimension of CFS which was measured using three items based on a seven-point scale including holiday term, solving buying problem and guarantee solutions about holiday package. The GA was related to two items including payment of package tour and holiday dates/duration between salesperson and customers in this selling process. The last dimension of CFS was LTR between sellers and buyers and was measured using six items on a seven-point scale as the first-five dimensions. Customer perceptions of the firm and its salesperson (e.g. high quality tourism product, cost-effective of holiday package, the selection of different destination, firm responsible) are important factor for the building long-term relationships. Cronbach alpha for this scale was 0.86. Destination choice (DC) was the second part of this questionnaire which was measured using seventeen items developed from Demir and Kozak (2011), Dominici and Guzzo (2010), Kandampully and Suhartanto (2000), Keller (1993), Konecknik and Gartner, (2007), Pike (2009) in four dimensions called as people (Pe), city attractions (CA), historical, cultural and natural values (HCN) and cost of living at destination (CLD). There were four items in the first dimension that would be answered by participants concerning with people such as friendly people, hospitality, qualification and trusty country. City attractions was the second dimension of the destination including “good nightlife, entertainment and festivals”, “good opportunities for recreation activities”, “lovely towns and cities”, “modern accommodation facilities”, “high quality of infrastructure” and “easy access to hotel”. Hotel brand was perceived as a member international chain or most popular and modern business in a country that positively affected customers’ purchasing behavior at the decision-making stage. The variable of “easy access to hotel” was also related to the proximity to the city centre, airport, port, beach or shopping mall. HCN values were measured using three items on a seven-point scale including the interesting historical (H), cultural (C) and natural (N) attractions at destination. Cost of living at destination was the last dimension which was measured using four items including living conditions such as “price of tourist package”, “cost of transportation”, “cost of accommodation” and “cost of food and beverage”. Cronbach alpha for this scale was 0.89.

The purchasing holiday package is important stage in decision-making process. In this process, customers may be affected by salesperson to purchase holiday package or decide themselves. Thus, the decision of purchasing (DP) was measured using two items developed from Back (2005) and Demir and Kozak (2011) including “self decision (DP1)” and “directed by salesperson to purchase (DP2)”. All items based on a seven-point Likert type scale (ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree). Cronbach alpha for this scale was 0.87.

3.3. Data analysis

Through employing several statistical programs such as SPSS 17.0 and LISREL 8.80, data analysis includes various statistical tools such as factor analysis, correlation analysis and structural equation modelling (SEM). In context of SEM, data were analyzed by LISREL 8.80, the relationship among three-factor groups for research hypotheses. The conceptual and research model analysis were implemented by using SEM which consists of the two-step procedure. Before the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to test the validity of the proposed model and hypotheses in context of SEM, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed to determine for three factors of variables.

4. Results

After examining the EFA (i.e., reliability and validity analysis, discriminant validity, factor groups, loads, total variance explained in factor analysis) CFA was conducted to test the hypothesis. The first analysis within CFA is the correlation matrix, which contains Pearson correlation, means and standard deviations of the variables. As shown in table 1, OS factor has higher statistical values (M=5.89; SD=1.26) than others and most of factors have positive correlation each other. The findings of correlation analysis are consistent with the results of previous researches (given in the literature) and support the theoretical framework that CFS approaches are important in destination choice and decision-making process. Table 1 show that all dimensions of CFS are positively and significantly correlated with DC and DP.

Table 1. Correlation estimates, construct means, and standardized deviations

Constructs	M	SD	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1-BTC	5.44	.83	.86	1						
2-IPF	5.35	.86	.86	.27**	1					
3-OS	5.89	.81	.92	.09	.23**	1				
4-GA	4.18	.94	.81	.11*	.14*	.32**	1			
5-LTR	4.32	.89	.84	.16*	.07	.28**	.21**	1		
6-DC	5.71	.67	.89	.46**	.42**	.51**	.38**	.49**	1	
7-DP	5.67	.69	.87	.63**	.57**	.65**	.43**	.54**	.71**	1

** p<.01 and * p<.05

Table 2. Properties of the measurement model.

Scale items	M	SD	t-value	Standardized factor loadings
<i>Building trust and credibility (BTC) $\alpha=.86$; AVE=.68; CCR=.81</i>				
I trust salespeople in selling process	5.62	.81	18.26***	.91
I believe that salespeople sell the most appropriate holiday package for me	5.34	.85	16.43***	.84
I am very pleased with salespeople give information about holiday package	5.36	.84	16.08***	.80
<i>Investigating the purchasing factors (IPF) $\alpha=.86$; AVE=.71; CCR=.82</i>				
Salespeople understand what kind holiday I want.	5.38	.79	18.32***	.93
They notice my priorities in buying holiday	5.26	.88	17.22***	.88
I think my emotions and expectations are important for sales people.	5.42	.89	16.54***	.84
Salespeople effort to sell a holiday package that I want very much	5.35	.73	15.35***	.79
<i>Offering solutions (OS) $\alpha=.92$; AVE=.69; CCR=.88</i>				
They offer me different holiday term, which is appropriate for me	5.96	.76	18.61***	.95
They try to solve all problems before buying holiday package	5.84	.83	18.04***	.91
They guarantee solutions if I have a problem in a holiday	5.87	.78	16.16***	.82
<i>Gaining agreement (GA) $\alpha=.81$; AVE=.61; CCR=.78</i>				
They provide convenience me about payment of package tour	4.13	.87	15.72***	.82
They help me in decision-making process about holiday dates/duration	4.23	.81	14.59***	.78
<i>Building long-term relationships (LTR) $\alpha=.84$; AVE=.70; CCR=.79</i>				
Customer is important as a people for this firm	4.36	.77	17.85***	.91
This firm offers high quality tourism product as usual	4.28	.79	17.13***	.88
This firm offers cost-effective of holiday package	4.32	.85	16.38***	.84
This firm offers the selection of different destination	4.39	.86	15.92***	.82
If I had to purchase a holiday package again, I would still choose to use this firm	4.26	.82	14.24***	.77
This firm knows all responsible for customers	4.31	.83	14.06***	.76
<i>Destination attractions (DA) $\alpha=.89$; AVE=.74; CCR=.83</i>				
People at the destination	5.78	.71	18.41***	.92
City attractions	5.75	.69	18.27***	.90
HCN values	5.64	.75	17.85***	.89
Cost of living at the destination	5.77	.83	15.69***	.83
<i>Decision of purchasing (DP) $\alpha=.87$; AVE=.64; CCR=.82</i>				
Directed by salespeople (affected to buy this holiday package)	5.70	.74	17.02***	.89
Self decision (I am impressed with destination attractions)	5.64	.81	16.44***	.85

Based on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

*** $p < .001$ AVE=average variance extracted CCR= composite construct reliability

Correlation analysis show that the CFA was undertaken to assess the models fit, which was comprised of customer-focused selling, destination attractions and decision of purchasing. The internal consistency of factor groups (Cronbach's alpha: .81-.92) and composite construct reliability (CCR: .78-.88) were above and acceptable (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 1998; Nunnally, 1978; Sekaran, 2000) and the average variance extracted in all construct were exceeded the level of .50 threshold (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) as ranging from .61 to .74 and Pearson correlation levels ranging from .07 to .71. Following the convergent validity of the measures were provided with the factor loadings exceeded .70 and at the .001 significant level, the measures of fit indexes were undertaken.

Table 3. Structural parameter estimates

	Constructs	Standardized coefficient	t-Value	Hypotheses testing
H _{1a}	BTC → DC	.47	5.83	Supported***
H _{1b}	IPF → DC	.39	4.04	Supported***
H _{1c}	OS → DC	.52	7.38	Supported***
H _{1d}	GA → DC	.35	3.79	Supported***
H _{1e}	LTR → DC	.43	5.21	Supported***
H _{2a}	BTC → DP	.50	6.69	Supported***
H _{2b}	IPF → DP	.52	7.15	Supported***
H _{2c}	OS → DP	.63	8.44	Supported***
H _{2d}	GA → DP	.39	4.08	Supported***
H _{2e}	LTR → DP	.48	5.46	Supported***
H ₃	DC → DP	.68	9.26	Supported***
	χ ²	707.43		
	df	386		
	χ ² /df	1.83		
	GFI	.91		
	AGFI	.90		
	NFI	.95		
	NNFI	.96		
	CFI	.94		
	IFI	.96		
	RMSEA	.039		
	SRMR	.034		
***p < .001				
GFI = goodness-of-fit index; AGFI = adjusted goodness-of-fit index; NFI = normed fit index; NNFI = non-normed fit index; CFI = comparative fit index; IFI = incremental fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = standardized root mean residual.				

The statistical result of confirmatory measurement models was determined and reached acceptable level such as, Chi-square (χ^2), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Goodness of-Fit Index (GFI), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Normed Fit Index (NFI) (Bentler, 1990; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2004). We used the χ^2 , RMSEA, SRMR, GFI, CFI, and NFI

to assess model fit and the value of the normed-chi-square (i.e. value of chi-square/degrees of freedom) was below 2, GFI, NFI and CFI scores were above .90 which was recommended by Bentler & Bonett (1980), Byrne (1998) and Jöreskog & Sörbom (2004). This model provided the following fit statistics: chi-square measure was 707.43 with 386 df ($\chi^2/df=1.83$; $p<.001$), while the RMSEA=.039, GFI=.91, CFI=.94, NFI=.95. These result demonstrated that all fit indices were within the recommended range, exceeded the level of .90.

Table 4. Results of mediation models of destination choice

	Constructs	Standardized coefficient	t-Value	Hypotheses testing
H _{4a}	BTC → DP	.41	4.45	Supported***
H _{4b}	IPF → DP	.44	4.73	Supported***
H _{4c}	OS → DP	.66	9.12	Supported***
H _{4d}	GA → DP	.13	1.47	Rejected
H _{4e}	LTR → DP	.11	1.24	Rejected
	χ^2	681.26		***p <.001
	df	347		
	χ^2/df	1.96		
	GFI	.90		
	AGFI	.90		
	NFI	.91		
	NNFI	.94		
	CFI	.93		
	IFI	.94		
	RMSEA	.046		
	SRMR	.041		

The researchers examined how CFS approaches affects DC. Hypothesis 1 was supported and accepted. The dimension of CFS had positive and significant effect on DA. Hypothesis 2 (i.e., CFS has a positive and significant effect on DP) was also supported as Hypothesis 3 (i.e. DA has a positive and significant effect on DP) as shown in table 3. Hypothesis 4 was related to the moderating effects of DA the relation between CFS and DP. The sub-hypotheses, as BTC, IPF and OS, of Hypothesis 4 were supported. As a result, BTC ($\beta=.41$; $t=4.45$; $p<.001$), IPF ($\beta=.44$; $t=4.73$; $p<.001$) and OS ($\beta=.66$; $t=9.12$; $p<.001$) dimensions of CFS had a positive and significant effect on DP, whereas GA ($\beta=.13$; $t=1.47$; $p>.001$) and LTR ($\beta=.11$; $t=1.24$; $p>.001$) of dimensions of CFS did not. The GA and LTR of Hypothesis 4 were rejected.

5. Discussion

5.1. Conclusion

The customer focused selling from the tourist perspective on choosing destination and purchasing decision has been evaluated in this study. However, most studies focused on destination choice and purchasing decision, only a few studies concerned customer focused selling approaches related to the tourist purchasing decision. Destination choice is important as purchasing decision for people that intend to buy a holiday package and is impacted by salesperson's customer focused behaviour. Therefore, a theoretical framework of CFS consisting of building trust and credibility, investigating the purchasing factors, offering solutions, gaining agreement and building long-term relationships dimensions is proposed. The theoretical presentation of CFS and other factors such as destination selection and purchasing decision have been related each other based on findings of previous studies from marketing and sales in tourism.

The structural equation modelling was used to analyze the relationship among three factors in this study. The findings indicated that the salesperson's customer-focused selling approach such as skills and behaviors was significantly and positively related to destination choice and decision of purchasing. The findings are parallel to previous research of Pettijohn, Pettijohn and Taylor (2007) as the salesperson's approaches are positively related to desirable sales outcomes. Building of trust and credibility in CFS has positive impact on customer's destination choice and the purchasing decision. In this study, three questions related to trust and credibility measurement in destination choice and purchasing decision have been identified and discussed in literature. These are trust in giving information about holiday package by salesperson, trust in the selling process and trust in their effort to sell the most appropriate holiday package. Trust is an integral component and the core of effective sales relationship (Cicala, Smith & Bush, 2012; Haan & Berkey, 2006). Thus, trust and credibility are hard won but easily lost for customer relation and this situation has vital role on both salesperson and customer's behavior. Anything that reduces salesperson's trust in the sales relationship can negatively influence that relationship (Haan & Berkey, 2006). The combination of trust and credibility is the foundation of an effective sales presentation in tourism market, and can affect directly on the customer's purchasing intentions. In order to increase customer's purchasing intentions, building trust and credibility should be introduced to enable the salespersons' customer-focused selling approaches. It was expected from similar previous studies that the destination attractions would moderate the relationship

between the building trust and credibility and the decision of purchasing. The findings of this research have provided support for the relationship as previously explained.

The second finding is that investigating the purchasing factors has a significant positive effect on both destination choice and decision of purchasing, as well as studies in other fields (Gillis et al., 1998; Martinez & Polo, 1999). In holiday package purchasing process, customers are influenced by the salesperson's approach as well as destination attractions. Investigating the purchasing factors such as understanding what kind holiday customer wants, noticing their priorities in buying holiday package, giving value to customers and understanding their emotions and expectations, can contribute to the relationship between salesperson and customer and have a positive and direct impact on customer behaviour. This finding confirms that, if salesperson understands customer emotions, desire and expectations effectively, they will create positive CFS process and significantly improve relationship between each other. The research also focused on to determine the moderating effect of destination attractions on the relation between investigating the purchasing factors and the decision of purchasing as the building trust and credibility. The researchers reached the conclusion that destination attractions had positive moderating effects on the customer's purchasing decision, which supports the researchers' expectation in this relationship. The result of findings indicated that investigating the purchasing factors is an important step in CFS approaches.

We know that the job of a salesperson is to uncover the desire and special needs of the customer that has questions, problem or concerns. In CFS approach, the salesperson provides appropriate explanations for customer questions. In this context, another finding is that the offering solutions to customer's problems have a significant positive effect on their destination choice and decision of purchasing for this destination in holiday package. With regard to the effects of the offering solutions in CFS, the results indicated that there was strong relation between this factor and depended variables. The fact is that the offering solutions can create high value images in customer's perception that satisfaction by solving their problem becomes the key to future purchases. Moreover, some studies in the literature has shown that customers' problems are solved by salesperson have a positive effect on relationship solving problem and decision of purchasing factors (Carroll, 2008; Sheth & Sharma, 2008) as well as destination choice. On the other hand, the moderating effect of destination attractions on the relationship between solving problem and decision of purchasing were positive and significant. Thus, offering customers different holiday terms, which is appropriate for them, trying to solve all problems before buying holiday package and guarantee solutions if they have a problem in a holiday are the key variables

in OS, which have direct effect on customers' destination choice and their purchasing decision for holiday package.

Customers are aware of the standard in the quality of goods and services in tourism industry i.e. the cleanliness and diversity at hotel, technology and comfort on airplane, people and facilities in destinations. Thus, it is difficult to sell a holiday package customers given inadequate information and feedback, since their satisfaction is also difficult to manage. In other words, they become accustomed to receive good treatment and demand. In this study, the independent fourth factor was the gaining agreement in CFS on relation with dependent variables. The results indicated that gaining agreement is also critical factor, which have a significant positive effect on destination choice and decision of purchasing on direct relationship each other. Gaining agreement is the last stage of a good persuasive selling process (Demir & Kozak, 2011). That is why, the first three factor of CFS, namely, building trust and credibility; investigating the purchasing factors and offering solutions should be managed to ensure agreement as direct result of a successful selling process. The moderating effect of destination attractions on the relation between gaining agreement and the purchasing decision was analyzed with SEM. The findings indicated that the moderating of destination attractions was insignificant and had no effect on the relationship between gaining agreement and the decision of purchasing.

The building of a long-term relationship is one of the most important issues in CFS approaches for sales team in competitive tourism marketing environment. Building relationship with customers requires some factors that contribute to improving sales performance of a firm. The dimension and level (such as the length, depth and breadth) of salesperson and firm-customer relationships can also contribute to explaining the differences in customer behavior (Cannon & Perreault, 1999; Lopez, Redondo & Olivan, 2006). Managing long-term relationships with customers requires skills well beyond personal selling and negotiation skills (Homburg, Workman & Jansen, 2000). The salesperson should learn how to effectively manage a customer's holiday plan and then notice their needs, priorities and goals building long-term relationships. The findings indicated that there was a positive and significant relationship between the building long-term relationships for both destination choice and the decision of purchasing while moderating of destinations attraction was insignificant and had no effect on the relationship between building long-term relationships and the decision of purchasing. These findings were partially supported by previous studies reached in literature (explained above). The building long-term relationships are to not only have customers satisfied but also identify the tourism firm's potential customers properly to gain competitive advantage in tourism market. The building long-term relationship

between the customer and salesperson, the trust is the most important key factor as a strong principle in CFS.

Destination choice is predicted to be influenced by both intention to visit and situational variables (Woodside & Lysonski, 1989), and convenience and that, given a choice (Mckercher, 1998) between similar destinations it can affect the purchasing decision. Destination attractions such as people, cities, historical-cultural-natural attractions and cost of living at the destination, has a crucial role on customer's purchasing decision and are perceived as travel motivations by the customers (Demir & Kozak, 2011). The findings indicated that there was a positive, significant and strong relationship between the destination choice and the decision of purchasing. Destination attributes have a positive and significant correlation with the decision of purchasing, and the perceived attributes of the destination play a crucial role on both salesperson's selling efforts and customer's purchasing intention. As a result, decision of purchasing of holiday packaging is affected by salesperson and their customer-focused approaches as well as destination attractions.

6. Limitations and future research

Some limitations of this research should be noted. The first of these limitations is related to tourists that are restricted to British travellers to Turkey. The respondents selected as research issues therefore cannot be judged to be representative of all tourists. With regard to the research scale used to measure customer-focused selling approaches was the second restriction as five dimensions adapted that had previously been applied to other industry. Thus, the results should be interpreted with caution. This study also did not consider demographic variables of respondents that may influence on purchasing behavior. According to these situations, it may not generalize the results to all tourists or other people in countries. On the other hand, the results of the study might be affected by bias and concerns of respondents, because the questionnaires were filled in UK and for many of them is to be the first visit to Turkey. In order to reduce concerns about the issue of generalizability, the future researches need to be undertaken that would include tourists from other country, to other destinations and demographic variables of respondents. While acknowledging these limitations, this study has indicated that salesperson can affect the customers' decision of purchasing. The results of study may provide a basis for tourism firms, salesperson, customers for future conceptual and empirical research in tourism industry. Future research should continue to examine the customer-focused selling approaches to compare for the different cultures to travel the same destination. Therefore, the second stage of this study will be

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repeated in the future with visitors from other cultures to maintain the timeliness and the relevance of the work.

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