

Digital Customer Experiences of White Goods Industries

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Abstract: *This study aims to show the path to be followed to the white goods companies aiming to increase their online sales in order to provide their customers with a perfect digital customer experience. With the ever-increasing customer expectations, it explores how to achieve customer satisfaction and repurchase intention through online customer experience. Various sub constructs of customer experience were analyzed, and among these, ease of use and delivery process were found to be the most influential factors for repurchase intention and customer satisfaction. The results have significant implications both for the literature and in managerial context. This study is intended to be a road map for white goods companies that have just started their online sales.*

Keywords: Customer Experiences, Online Customer Experiences, Customer Satisfaction, Repurchase Intention

1. Introduction

E-commerce has three types of business models that are purchasing and transaction from business to business (B2B), business to customer (B2C), and customer to customer (C2C). Today, many companies of e-commerce adopt an omnichannel structure instead of traditional single-channel trade.

In white goods industries, the structure of the sales organization depends on the retailer system in Turkey. Companies of white goods industries have been begun to change sales operations with the emerging market in e-commerce. They focus on sales by e-retailers. E-retailer is involved in the direct brand website or multi-branded online shopping.

The customer journey directly affects customer satisfaction and purchase intention. Especially in white goods industries, the online purchase intention of customers is very

weak. Trust to e-retailer, e-word of mouth, deliver, option variety, and comparability, secure and functional are essential qualifications for digital customer experience.

The importance of this study is to determine the transformation of the management of traditional white goods companies. Many industries have been pioneered or adapted to digital transformation.

2. Literature Review

Defined by Carbone and Haeckel's (1994) customer experiences that a customer communicates with an organization and its operations, the customer interaction takes place. They describe CE as 'the take-away impression created by the encounter between people and goods, services, and companies'. Nowadays, to protect market share and competitiveness, each company must focus on "Rather than purchasing products or services process, the experience that the customer has had throughout the whole shopping is more important for the customer. Therefore, experiences become a critical component of the overall purchased product or service.

As described by Rose et al. (2011), online consumer activity also involves online shopping across a wide variety of product categories, online utilities such as finance, traveling and entertainment reservations, connections to news and details, and social networking for both company and pleasure (Rose et al. 2011). Because of increasing growth in online transactions, online consumer engagement, therefore, becomes an essential term for e-marketers responsible for the online B2C environment, and particularly in the sense of online purchases.

The consumer recognizes these data from a cognitive and affective perspective, which produces the e-retailer website perception forming. Cognitive and affective experience of the customer during a stay on the site; the customer also creates perception and takes place in their memory. The cognitive experiential state (CES) is specified as being "connected with thinking or conscious mental processes" and the affective experiential state (AES) "involves one's affective system through the generation of moods, feelings, and emotions" (Rose et al. 2012). This study includes antecedent variables within affective experimental states.

Looking from theoretical perspective, Rose et al. (2012) has shown that ease-of-use has a significant influence suggesting that the most critical aspect remains, given advancements in technology that allow consumers to feel empowered. The ease of use

of the site remains significant. Ease of use is the input in this model of the thesis. Complex navigation and overloading of knowledge affect the state of mind and the possibility of a repeat transaction. Sites that convey product or service information quickly in a way that suits the client's recruitment process can improve feelings of trust and calmness. "Ease of use" is described as the perception by the user that the use of the new technology will be effortless (Davis, 1989). The effortless nature of digital experiences increasingly become more crucial in a today's digital marketing environment (Ertemel, 2016; Ertemel, 2017) Perceived ease of use refers to "the degree to which a person feels that it will be effortless to use a particular method." The concept of "ease": "freedom from difficulty or great effort.

The most prominent study of electronic word of mouth is by Thureau et al. (2004), communication on web-based opinion forums can be initiated due to a willingness to assist other customers with their buying decisions, to save others from unpleasant experiences, or both.

Such contact may involve both positive and negative experiences of customers with a product or business. Jalilvanda et al.(2011) researched e-WOM challenges and opportunities. According to the result of study, marketers need to understand that buyers are increasingly online, and consumers are exposed to them in their electronic universe and are possibly informed by the many places dedicated to the sale or discussion of the product or service.

Several studies demonstrate the credibility of online retailers as a significant indicator that forms consumer interest in online shopping. Prior research has shown that the prestige of the retailer and the reputation of online retailers have a positive impact on perceived product quality, perceived risks, and online shoppers' buying intention. Based on antecedent studies, the credibility of online retailers indirectly strengthens purchasing intention through its positive impact on consumer trust in the retailer. So, retailer credibility uses as input in this theoretical model. Tugulea et al. (2017) measured online shopping credibility that would be using nine dimensions: ease of use, detailed information, real-world feel, booking and delivery, reference-authority, expertise, personal experiences, framing adverts, personalization.

E-Retailer should be reliable control, and impression over service delivery network, the result of this provide decreasing uncertainty and increase customer experience audit. The cost and benefit should be balanced (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

Collier and 's (2006) study proved that the timeliness of the order, the quality of the order, and the order condition have a significant effect on their overall customer experience. Under "delivery" and "product-in-hand," these three things are protected. "Product-in-hand" assesses the importance to a person of the product-related aspect. It shows the value according to the requirement of the features, condition, warranty of the product.

Stock et al. (2006) explore efficient return process management typically leads to faster issuance of customer credit. It decreases the number of refund problems, making consumers happier, and the sales (customer satisfaction show to have a positive effect on proficiency). According to Kumar and Anjaly (2017), such variations may not seem significant enough for a consumer to return the product in certain situations, but they positively influence their e-retailer experience. The exchange and return process has a critical role in gaining the trust of customers. This factor decreases perceived risk related to online purchases and influences the purchasing decision (Chiu et al. 2008).

3. The Conceptual Model

Figure 1. shows the research model of digital customer experiences. This model is based on the established input-response-output, as found within many academic articles that included online customer experience models (Rose et al. 2012; Bhattacharya et al. 2018; Kumar & Anjaly 2017). Based on the previous literature review and discussion, this research model includes six antecedents' variables. These are ease of use, electronic word of mouth, retailer credibility, delivery, product in hand, return, and exchange. Delivery, product in hand, return and exchange are related to post-purchase customer experience in online shopping.

The outcome variables of OCE, along with hypothesized interrelationships that are customer satisfaction and repurchase intention.

I would like to explain antecedent meanings according to reference studies. Ease of use is the definition of navigation, search, functionality on the website. The understanding of how easy a website is to use is directly related to a positive online experience (Chen & Dubinsky, 2003).

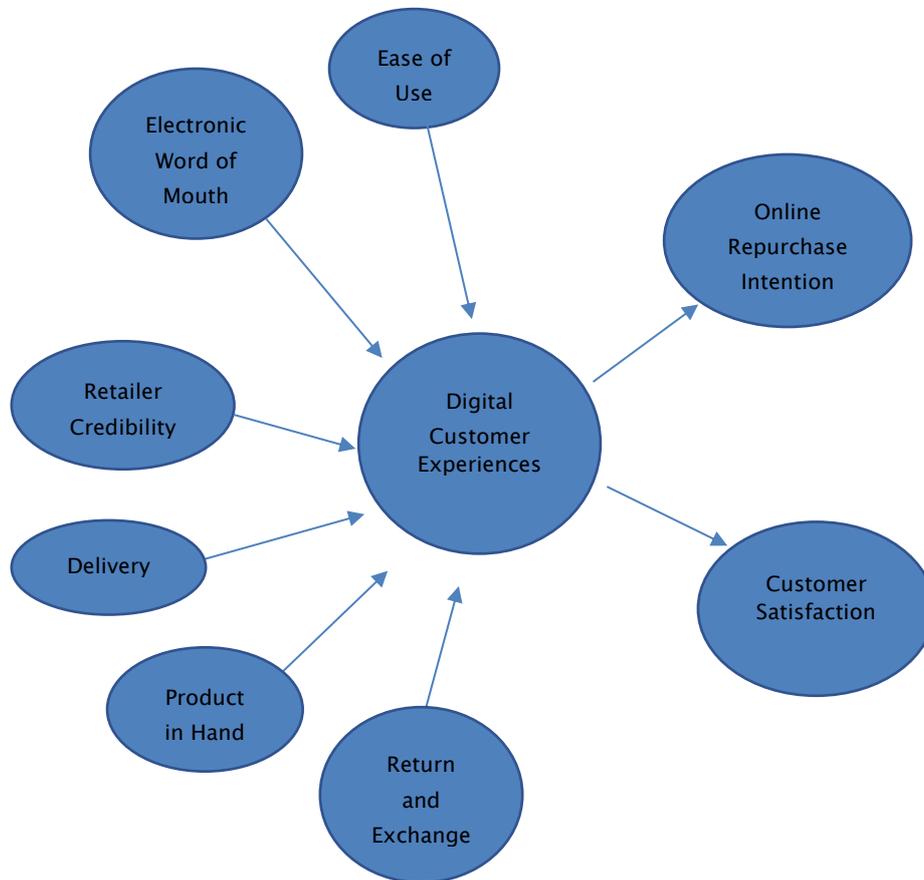


Figure 1. Conceptual model of online customer experience

Describe word of mouth enables consumers to share information and views which guide buyers to and from specific products, brands, and services. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) communication refers to any positive or negative comment regarding a product or organization made accessible to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet by potential, current or former customers (Jalilvanda, Esfahani, & Samiei, 2010). e-WOM influence to purchase intention according to the extant literature review.

Retailer credibility is related to brand or company trust. Especially in an emerging market like Turkey, India retailer credibility has a significant impact on customers. Kotler and Keller (2016) defined retailer credibility as “the extent to which customers believe a firm can design and deliver products and services that satisfy their needs and wants.” This antecedent, therefore, plays an essential role in forming the emotional feeling of

consumers towards the retailer, in promoting the revision of the website and in repurchasing the purpose of the retailer.

Delivery is the most significant phase of the distribution system, in which the company interacts with the customers face-to-face. Customers' online shopping experience is directly affecting by the delivery date, delivery period, rerouting options, and related communications (Kumar & Anjaly, 2017). Product-in-hand assesses the importance of product-related aspects.

It shows the value of the features, condition, warranty of the product according to expectation (Kumar & Anjaly, 2017). Return and exchange processes should be reliable, fast, and has predetermined instructions in order to provide a satisfying customer experience.

The conceptual model with supporting hypotheses summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of digital customer experiences model hypotheses

Number	Hypotheses
H1	The greater the ease of use of online shopping websites, the greater level of customer satisfaction.
H2	The greater the ease of use of online shopping websites, the greater level of repurchase intention.
H3	The greater electronic word of mouth of online shopping website or retailer, the greater level of customer satisfaction.
H4	The greater electronic word of mouth of online shopping website or retailer, the greater level of repurchase intention.
H5	The greater level of retailer credibility in brand, the greater level of customer satisfaction.
H6	The greater level of retailer credibility in brand, the greater level of repurchase intention.
H7	The greater level of delivery of online shopping website, the greater level of customer satisfaction.
H8	The greater level of delivery of online shopping website, the greater level of repurchase intention.
H9	The greater level of product in hand, the greater level of customer satisfaction.

Number	Hypotheses
H10	The greater level of product in hand, the greater level of repurchase intention.
H11	The greater level of product exchange and return process on website, the greater level of customer satisfaction.
H12	The greater level of product exchange and return process on website, the greater level of customer satisfaction.

4. Methodolgy

The data were collected using a web-based questionnaire. Five-point scales have been used in the questionnaire. The sampling frame consisted of online shoppers who purchased white goods, located in Turkey. This questionnaire was answered by people who had bought white goods through online shopping. Only respondents who had shopped online were included, because only those customers would have the expertise to answer survey questions. A total of 368 people participated in the web-based questionnaire. Convenience sampling has been used in data collection. Questionnaire has been shared on Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and e-mail. Table 2 shows the sample characteristic.

The literature review gave rise to several additional items relating to online customer experience, with a total of 38 items in six dimensions. 38 items and six dimensions depend on the last literature studies. Studies of (Rose et al. 2012; Bhattacharya et al. 2018 ; Kumar & Anjaly, 2017) included these 38 items. While determining the dimensions, the results of recent research firms related to the white goods sector were also benefited. These 38 items were used to create a questionnaire.

In order to determine the validity of the scales used in the study, factor analysis was applied with the varimax rotation method. In order to determine the reliability levels of the scales, Cronbach alpha coefficients were calculated. In order to determine the factors that are affecting customer satisfaction and repurchase intention levels, regression models in which customer satisfaction and repurchase intention scales were taken as dependent variables and other variables as independent variables were established and tested. Analyzes were made with SPSS 20.0 software with a 95% confidence level.

Table 2. Sample Characteristics

		n	%
Gender	Female	189	52,8
	Male	169	47,2
	Total	358	100,0
Marital Status	Married	164	45,8
	Single	194	54,2
	Total	358	100,0
Age	18-24	15	4,2
	25-35	242	67,6
	36-45	70	19,6
	46-55	8	2,2
	56-65	23	6,4
	Total	358	100,0
Education	Primary level	6	1,7
	Higher secondary level	16	4,5
	Bachelor's degree	181	50,6
	Post Graduate Degree	123	34,4
	Professional Degree	32	8,9
	Total	358	100,0
Frequency of online shopping	<once a month	84	23,5
	>once a month	134	37,4
	>once a week	117	32,7
	Everyday	23	6,4
	Total	358	100,0
Occupation	Student	14	3,9
	Self-employed	29	8,1
	Private sector employee	276	77,1
	Public sector employee	17	4,7
	Other	22	6,1
	Total	358	100,0

5. Results

Factor analysis was conducted to determine the validity levels of the scales used in the study. To determine the suitability of the data for factor analysis, the KMO coefficient was obtained and the significance level of Bartlett Test of Sphericity was examined. Since the KMO coefficients of the scales ranged from 0.701 to 0.826 and the Bartlett Test of Sphericity significance levels were <0.05 , the data were found to be suitable for factor analysis.

Table 3. Validity Test Analysis

	Item	Weight	KMO	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained
Ease Of Use	s2	0,821	0,773	2,711	54,210
	s1	0,779			
	s4	0,778			
	s5	0,741			
	s3	0,524			
Electronic Word of Month	s7	0,851	0,759	3,102	62,046
	s9	0,825			
	s6	0,809			
	s10	0,748			
	s8	0,695			
Retailer Credibility	s14	0,903	0,826	3,028	75,700
	s12	0,884			
	s13	0,848			
	s11	0,844			
Delivery	s19	0,890	0,737	2,856	64,891
	s20	0,796			
	s15	0,561			
	s16	0,766			
	s18	0,731			
	s17	0,711			
Product in Hand	s21	0,849	0,810	2,995	59,894
	s24	0,809			
	s22	0,774			
	s23	0,722			
	s25	0,706			
Return and Exchange	s30	0,833	0,782	3,650	60,829
	s31	0,811			
	s28	0,773			
	s29	0,771			
	s27	0,758			
	s26	0,729			
Customer Satisfaction	s32	0,880	0,701	2,194	73,135
	s33	0,869			
	s34	0,814			
Repurchase Intention	s35	0,888	0,739	2,467	61,687
	s37	0,834			
	s38	0,780			
	s36	0,612			

Reliability analysis was performed to determine the reliability level of the scales used in the study and Cronbach alpha coefficient was obtained. Evaluation criterion used in the evaluation of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient are following:

- If $0.00 \leq \alpha < 0.40$, the scale is not reliable.
- If $0.40 \leq \alpha < 0.60$, the scale is low reliable.
- If $0.60 \leq \alpha < 0.80$, the scale is very reliable.
- If $0.80 \leq \alpha < 1.00$, the scale is high reliable.

The Cronbach alpha coefficients obtained in the table below are given.

Table 4. Reliability Test – Cronbach Alpha Coefficients

	Cronbach Alfa
Ease of use	0,912
Electronic Word of Month	0,932
Retailer Credibility	0,887
Delivery	0,725
Product in Hand	0,899
Return and Exchange	0,756
Customer Satisfaction	0,923
Repurchase Intention	0,882

Hypothesis test results and correlation tests are explained in these parts. The below table shows that inputs and outputs relate to each other.

Table 5. Correlation

	Ease of use	Electronic Word of Month	Retailer Credibility	Delivery	Product in Hand	Return and Exchange	Customer Satisfaction	Repurchase Intention
Ease of use	1	,320**	,345**	,432**	,431**	,359**	,489**	,485**
Electronic Word of Month	,320**	1	,085	,176**	,088	,231**	,225**	,187**
Retailer Credibility	,345**	,085	1	,509**	,539**	,407**	,479**	,360**
Delivery	,432**	,176**	,509**	1	,605**	,545**	,623**	,533**
Product in Hand	,431**	,088	,539**	,605**	1	,502**	,686**	,450**
Return and Exchange	,359**	,231**	,407**	,545**	,502**	1	,525**	,376**
Customer Satisfaction	,489**	,225**	,479**	,623**	,686**	,525**	1	,603**
Repurchase Intention	,485**	,187**	,360**	,533**	,450**	,376**	,603**	1

In order to determine the affecting factors of the customer satisfaction level, the regression model in which the customer satisfaction level is taken as dependent and other variables are taken as independent variables were created and tested.

Table 6. Customer Satisfaction Regression Analysis (*p<0,05)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
Customer Satisfaction F=81,284 ; p=0,000 R2=0,581 Adj. R2=0,574	(Constant)	-0,067	0,203		-0,328	0,743		
	Easy of use	0,153	0,046	0,137	3,315	0,001	0,696	1,437
	Electronic Word of Month	0,066	0,032	0,076	2,060	0,040	0,866	1,155
	Retailer Credibility	0,045	0,039	0,050	1,157	0,248	0,645	1,550
	Delivery	0,234	0,052	0,218	4,512	0,000	0,512	1,952
	Product in Hand	0,412	0,049	0,403	8,371	0,000	0,514	1,944
	Return and Exchange	0,093	0,035	0,117	2,681	0,008	0,627	1,594

According to the regression model, independent variables significantly affect the level of customer satisfaction, and the rate of independent variables to explain the dependent variable is 58.1%. When the significance level of the variables in the model is examined, it is seen that Ease of use, Electronic Word of Month, Delivery, Product in Hand and Return and Exchange levels affected the customer satisfaction level significantly and positively.

In order to determine the affecting factors of the repurchase intention level, the regression model in which the customer satisfaction level is taken as dependent and other variables are taken as independent variables were created and tested.

According to the regression model, independent variables significantly affect the level of repurchase intention, and the rate of independent variables to explain the dependent variable is 37.5%. When the significance level of the variables in the model is examined, it is seen that Ease of use and Delivery levels affected the repurchase intention level significantly and positively.

Table 7. Repurchase Intention Regression Analysis (*p<0,05)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
Repurchase Intention F=35,148 ; p=0,000 R2=0,375 Adj. R2=0,365	(Constant)	0,064	0,295		0,218	0,828		
	Easy of use	0,361	0,067	0,273	5,390	0,000	0,696	1,437
	Electronic Word of Month	0,025	0,046	0,025	0,549	0,584	0,866	1,155
	Retailer Credibility	0,038	0,057	0,035	0,666	0,506	0,645	1,550
	Delivery	0,394	0,075	0,309	5,242	0,000	0,512	1,952
	Product in Hand	0,128	0,071	0,106	1,796	0,073	0,514	1,944
	Return and Exchange	0,035	0,050	0,037	0,691	0,490	0,627	1,594

6. Discussion of Findings for Research Questions

In this study, related elements in the white goods industry are chosen that are ease of use, electronic word of mouth, delivery, retailer credibility, product in hand, exchange and return. These inputs have been proven in previous studies to have a direct positive effect on digital customer experience. For this reason, the relationship between each factor and customer satisfaction and repurchase intention has been examined in the research questions. Research questions investigating the direct effect of these relationships.

The finding of the study is consistent with Chen and Dubinsky (2003); ease of use has the most significant impact on customer satisfaction and repurchase intention. A website has ease of use that should enable consumers to quickly access useful information, which will simplify the ordering process and, thus, make it easier for consumers to value the customer experience. Ease of use has a direct relationship with customer satisfaction and repurchase intention as it is found by Rose et al. (2012), which also supports the result of this thesis.

As identified earlier by Bhattacharya et al. (2018), electronic word of mouth was tested for the first time in an OCE context, was found to be statistically significant such as a result of in this study.

The model extends Kumar and Anjaly (2017) base model by incorporating new antecedents of OCE—retailer credibility, electronic word of mouth, ease of use—and their influences on the OCE components and OCE outcomes. Similar to the findings of scale development study conducted by Kumar and Anjaly (2017), delivery, return and exchange, product in hand have influences on the customer experiences.

The finding of this study is consistent with Collier and Bienstock (2006) in which it is studied two expectation about product in hand that are information accuracy and the accuracy of order, have a positive impact on customer satisfaction and repurchase intention.

The competitive nature of e-commerce has introduced a completely new return and exchange related dimension that played a crucial role in minimizing potential risk associated with online shopping. This also confirms with the trust factor identified by earlier studies (Chiu et al. 2008 ; Kumar and Anjaly 2017)

For companies in the white goods industry to increase customer satisfaction, they need to improve ease of use, electronic word of mouth, product in hand, delivery, exchange and return processes. Increasing the quality of the ease of use results in the straightforward search process on the website for the customers. As a result, customers are more likely to be satisfied. Customers are considering the previous user comments when purchasing the white goods. Especially when the white goods companies' sites are examined, it is seen that customer comments are minimal, and they are generally positive comments. This comment panels should be developed by the white goods company. The companies must deliver to the product before the promised due date. Especially in white goods online shopping, companies should obey the delivery date and the tracking systems should be developed. Due to the expensiveness of white goods, if products are defective, broken, or it does not satisfy the customer's expectation, exchange and return process should be confidential, easy, and trackable.

In order to increase repurchase intention in white goods companies, although all inputs are effective, positive customer experience, especially in ease of use and delivery processes, leads to high repurchasing. Since ease of use and delivery processes affect

both customer satisfaction and repurchase intention, companies should start their first improvement from here.

7. Conclusion

Digital transformation has begun rapidly in all sectors and has been continuing its development rapidly. The white goods sector in Turkey usually sells through traditional way with the widespread retailers. White goods companies give franchises to retailers, and these franchises have their own management. This causes different standards in each retailer, especially in customer experience metrics. Since the biggest obstacle for companies in the white goods industry is switching the traditional way to online sales, they have dropped behind with comparing to the other industries in online sales.

Especially because of the pandemic experienced in 2020, the white goods sector has realized that digital transformation is inevitable, and the shortcomings must be eliminated. During a pandemic, online sales of white goods, one of the basic needs, has been increased. It has not been a viable option to sell the goods with a traditional retailer system.

This study investigated the digital customer experience in Turkey; this study can be extended by using overseas-based data in order to compare the white good sectors' customer experiences for different countries.

Improvements in ease of use, electronic of mouth, delivery, product in hand, retailer credibility, product exchange and return factors, which will be emphasized in this study, will improve digital customer experience and increase customer satisfaction and repurchase intention. According to this analysis, it is observed that customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions are low since most of the customer experiences of the brands on their websites are not positive. It has been observed that the experiences of shopping on e-commerce sites are more satisfied than the brand website.

8. Conclusion

This study was focused on an online shopper who purchased white goods. Infrequent and frequent shopping were not examined separately. The performance of brand.com and e-commerce sites has not been evaluated separately, and the holistic experience

has been taken into consideration. The respondents were not classified according to the product type they bought.

It would also be interesting to study if purchases are considered by their price, which could be low-price and high-price. Some products need to be assembled into houses after purchasing. It could also be interesting to add this customer experience to the assembly process to the survey, particularly within the delivery process.

According to the results of the analysis, the ease use of white goods companies' websites is one of the most critical issues. White goods companies should work on the design of websites for online sales. Based on this subject, how should be the white goods website that provides the best customer experience can be studied in the future.

Another important issue is the delivery process. Most companies carry out delivery operations through outsourcing. Customers instantly want to see where their orders are. However, this process is not traceable due to integration problems between the two companies. On the average, customers think that the 10-day commitment on the websites is high. They would like to be delivered the purchased product as soon as possible. All these reasons require a new investigation for the delivery process.

With the increase of IoT products, it should be considered how the information collected from these products will contribute to the online sales digital customer experience. IoT products provide information about the customers' usage habits, frequency, and breakdown of the product. By combining this information, the offer of suitable products can be presented to the customer. It will be a revolutionary research subject that will affect the market and put more importance on the competition.

In the upcoming period, the brand strength is insufficient for the customers to choose a white goods company for online shopping; the experience created by brands will become more vital. For this reason, continuous work should be done in this field and changing the customer expectations should be following.

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