

## Profiling Y Generation GSM Users in Turkey According to Consumer Confusion, Perceived Risk and WOM

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### Abstract

*The research is conducted to find out the components of consumer confusion perceived risk, switching intention and word of mouth in the Turkish GSM sector for Y generation. In addition, the research aims to explore the mediating effect of word of mouth on the perceived risk, consumer confusion and switching intention in the GSM sector by dividing the samples into three subgroups. Along with this objectives, the research aims to understand the main differences of these subgroups by means of demographic, GSM attitude, confusion, risk perception and switching intention. A questionnaire is administered to 664 GSM users in Istanbul. Then the data tested with factor and cluster analysis. Three clusters were defined as "contented", "switchers" and "young & high". Besides, GSM Tariff confusion found to be a specific factor in the Turkish GSM sector for Y generations.*

**Keywords:** Consumer confusion, perceived risk, switching intention, Y generations, GSM sector

### 1. Introduction

Consumer confusion has been reported as a problem in many markets, such as watches (Mitchell and Papavassiliou, 1997a), telecommunications (e.g., Leek and Chansawatkit, 2006; Turnbull et al., 2000), laundry detergent (Alarabi and Grönblad, 2010), own-label brands (e.g., Balabanis and Craven, 1997; Murphy, 1997), personal computers (Leek and Kun, 2006), food labeling, diet and food (Marshall et al., 1994; Ippolito and Mathios, 1994), on recycling symbols and environmentally-friendly claims (Kulik, 1993; Mendleson and Polonsky, 1995) and on fashion (Cheary 1997). Telecommunication has also been examined in the marketing literature as one of the sectors, which causes consumer confusion (e.g., Leek and Chansawatkit, 2006; Turnbull et al., 2000). High number of tariffs introduced by the service providers, number portability, loyalty programs and complicated service variations confuse the consumer.

For the sectors that have high consumer confusion, both consumers and companies face significant problems. The possible problems of consumers are: (a) decision difficulties (Walsh and Mitchell, 2005b), (b) decreased satisfaction (Foxman et al. 1992; Mitchell and Papavassiliou 1999), (c) cognitive dissonance (Mitchell and Papavassiliou, 1999), (d) shopping fatigue (Mitchell and Papavassiliou, 1997a), (e) negative word of mouth (Turnbull et al. 2000), (f) mistaken purchases, product misuse, product misunderstanding or misattribution of various products (Walsh and Mitchell, 2005a) (g) emotions such as frustration, irritation, anxiety or anger (Mitchell et al., 2005 and Mitchell and Kearney, 2002). On the other side, possible problems of companies are (a) decreased brand loyalty (Foxman et al. 1992; Mitchell and Papavassiliou 1997b), (b) distrust (Walsh and Mitchell 2010). Furthermore, dissatisfaction, delayed and postponed decision making (Huffman and Kahn 1998; Mitchell and Papavassiliou 1999) due to consumer confusion may reduce the company's sales in the long run.

Depending on the level of confusion, consumers use particular strategies to cope with the confusion; (1) the clarification of the buying goals, (2) the search for additional information, (3) the downsizing of the set of alternatives (4) the sharing delegation of the purchase decision (Mitchell et. al., 2005), (5) doing nothing, or (6) postponing or abandoning the purchase (Mitchell and Papavassiliou, 1999).

As consumer copes with confusion through additional sources of information, word of mouth (WOM) is accepted as an important source as it is perceived to be more reliable, credible and less biased by consumers (Edgett and Parkinson, 1993; Murray, 1991). Edgett and Parkinson (1993) found that consumers tend to seek out family and friends advice more

often when purchasing a service because of the lack of tangible evidence to help them to evaluate the purchasing decision in order to decrease the risk associated to purchase decision.

Perceived risk is also very important for consumer confusion and strategies to cope with it, as consumers' perceptions of risk are central to their evaluations and purchasing behaviors (Dowling and Stealin, 1994; Mitchell, 1999). It was found that individuals tend to become more involved in a purchase if their perceived risk of making a wrong decision or experiencing unfavorable purchase consequences is high (Foxman et al., 1990). The purchase task becomes more important as perceived risk increases (Bloch and Richins 1983). As a consumer's perception of product importance increases, so does involvement and the information search activities associated with the product purchase (Clarke and Belk 1979; Jacoby et. al., 1978). Higher personal involvement is posited to lead to a more thorough evaluation of the alternatives and analysis of differences between brands (Balabanis and Cravens, 1997; Beatty and Smith, 1987 and Duncan and Olshavsky, 1982). Therefore it can be said that, as perceived risk increases consumer experiences less likelihood of confusion due to ambiguity or similarity and higher likelihood of overload confusion.

Telecommunications sector, more specifically GSM sector has been growing and due to the market dynamics of the sector, (overchoice, excessive marketing communications, and similar tariff /promotions) consumer experience confusion (e.g., Leek and Chansawatkit, 2006; Turnbull et al., 2000). Young population more specifically Generation Y (Gen Y) is the one of the important target markets for the sector as Gen Y is the future of the economic force with spending and population. By 2025, they will make up 75% of World's workforce (Edelman Eighty-Ninety-five Report, 2012). They have high influence on today's consumer behavior by affecting the decisions of their peers and parents. 74% of gen Y says that they influence the purchase decision of other generations (Edelman Eighty-Ninety-five Report, 2012). They use mobile phones intensively since they are the most technologic and mobile generation. 60% of Gen Y says that they compulsively check their phones for emails, texts and social media. 90% expressed that checking their phones is an important part of their daily routine. Two out of three spend equal or more time online with friends than in person (Cisco Connected World Technology report, 2012). WOM is considered to effect the purchase decisions of Gen Y since Gen Y give high importance especially to their peers' experience, which often guides their product and brand choices (Williams and Page, 2010).

The main objective of the study is to find out the components of consumer confusion, perceived risk, switching intention and word of mouth in the Turkish GSM sector for Gen Y. In addition, the study aims to identify Gen Y subgroups existing among Turkish GSM users by using perceived risk, consumer confusion and WOM as basis for cluster analysis to propose strategies for GSM companies to reach these market segments more effectively. The study was conducted in Turkey as after the launch of MNP, on November 9, 2008, when the competition and consumer confusion in the market increased (Turkiye Newspaper, 2013). Turkey is an attractive market for GSM operators. Turkish GSM sector's share is \$ 15 billion as of 2011 (Ozgenturk, 2012). Besides, the Turkish GSM market has an oligopolistic structure. There are currently three mobile operators; Turkcell, Vodafone- Turkey and Avea with a total of 67.6 million GSM lines as of December 31, 2012. The mobile line penetration rate in Turkey was at 88.6% in 2011 and rose to 89% in 2012. While the rate in Europe has reached 130%, this figure indicates that the Turkish market has growth potential in the medium-term due to his young and dynamic population (Turkcell Annual Report, 2012).

Moreover, Gen Y is about 25% of the population (Dunya Newspaper, 2012), which makes this generation as an important target market in Turkey especially for GSM sector as an important percentage of the Gen Y use smart phones and cell phones. Finally, the research aims to understand the main differences of these subgroups by means of demographic, GSM attitude, confusion, risk perception and switching intention.

The result of the study will be helpful to the GSM operators to gain a better understanding of Gen Y's confusion, risk and WOM perception. The first part provides a literature review about consumer confusion, WOM and perceived risk. Then the following part, methodology will be explained. Afterwards, research findings of the study analyzed by factor analysis and cluster analysis. And finally, discussion and conclusion part will be provided.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Consumer confusion*

Consumer confusion mainly disturbs the mental process of consumers and prevents them from choosing the optimal choice. There are different definitions of consumer confusion in literature. Among these definitions Mitchell et. al. (2004) have a comprehensive definition which focuses on both pre and post purchase phase in defining consumer confusion. In the lights of all definitions, it can be said that consumer confusion is a disturbing mental state associated with stimulus similarity, information overload and cognitive unclarity. Definitions of consumer confusion by different authors through

time are provided in Appendix 1.

Three main sources cause consumer confusion: stimulus similarity, stimulus overload, stimulus ambiguity (Mitchell et. al. 2004; Mitchell and Papavassiliou, 1999).

Similarity confusion is a lack of understanding and potential alteration of a consumer's choice or an incorrect brand evaluation caused by the perceived physical similarity of products or services (Mitchell et.al. 2004). Similarity has been reported mainly in relation to low-involvement products (Kapferer, 1995; Miaoulis and D'Amato, 1978), product complexity is not necessarily an issue for stimulus similarity confusion. Similarity confusion can be caused by stimuli that are similar to stimuli the consumer learned in the past. Similarity confusion is mentioned in different studies: advertisements (e.g., Poiesz and Verhallen, 1989; Keller, 1991; Kent and Allen, 1994), interpersonal communications, the store environment or products, which are very similar (e.g., Loken et. al., 1986; Foxman et. al, 1992; Kapferer, 1995; Kohli and Thakor, 1997; Jacoby and Morrin, 1998; Brengman et. al., 2001), especially in terms of the issue of trademark infringement (Balabanis and Cravens, 1997; Foxman et. al., 1992; Miaoulis and D'Amato, 1978) color, style, packaging or lettering can be given (Matzler et. al., 2011).

According to Mitchell et. al. (2004), overload confusion is a lack of understanding caused by the consumer being confronted with an overload information rich environment that cannot be processed in the time available to fully understand, and be confident in the purchase environment.

Information and choice overload are closely linked. A large variety in choice typically leads to more information about attributes of the product or service, which can cause feelings of dissatisfaction when the information cannot easily be processed (Huffman and Kahn, 1998). Similarly, new products with many complex features may overwhelm consumers, persuading them to buy a product with many unnecessary features, which also leaves them unsatisfied with their choice (Thompson et al., 2005).

Clearly, information overload is not only caused by a proliferation of brands, but also by an increase in the amount of 'decision-relevant' information on the product in the environment surrounding the purchase of a given number of goods (Mitchell et. al; 2005).

Ambiguity confusion is a lack of understanding during which consumers are forced to re-evaluate and revise current beliefs or assumptions about products or the purchasing environment (Mitchell et. al., 2004).

Some authors refer to consumer confusion without associating it with similarity and overload (e.g., Mitchell and Papavassiliou 1999; Turnbull et. al., 2000; Olsen et. al. 2003), while others stress different aspects, such as; stimulus and product complexity (e.g., Berlyne 1960; Boxer and Lloyd 1994; Cahill 1995), ambiguous information or false product claims (e.g., Reece and Ducoffe 1987; Golodner 1993; Kangun and Polonsky 1995; Cohen 1999; Chrysochoidis 2000), non-transparent pricing (e.g., Berry and Yadav 1996) or poor product manuals (e.g., Glasse 1992), all of which present consumers with multiple interpretations of product quality and cause problems of understanding on part of the consumer (e.g., Eagly 1974; Hoch and Ha 1986) and are related to the concept of cognitive unclarity (Cox 1967). According to Cox (1967), consumers perceive unclarity when they feel uncomfortable from information ambiguity and incongruity.

## 2.2 WOM

Consumers are likely to initiate product-related conversations and to request information from friends and relatives if they see risk in the purchase (Cunningham, 1966). Previous research has established that personal sources play a significantly influential role not only in affecting consumers' product choices and purchase decisions (Price and Feick 1984; Whyte 1954), and influencing the new product diffusion processes (e.g., Arndt 1967; Brooks 1957; Engel et. al., 1969; Feldman and Spencer 1965; Goldenberg et. al., 2001), but also in shaping consumers' pre-usage attitudes (Herr et. al., 1991) and post-usage evaluations of a product or service (Bone 1995) including post-purchase complaining option (Day, 1984; Singh, 1990), consumer satisfaction, repurchase intentions (Davidow, 2003) and customers' lifetime value (Hogan et. al., 2004). In this perspective, as WOM is often based on experience (Smith and Swinyard, 1983; Murray, 1991; Edgett and Parkinson, 1993; Muthukrishnan, 1995), it is perceived to be independent, trustworthy, reliable, credible and less biased. For these reasons, social networks usually accept WOM more willingly (Liu, 2006; Banerjee, 1993; Brown and Reingen, 1987; Murray, 1991). Definitions of WOM by different authors through time are provided in Appendix 2.

WOM is accepted as an important source of information used by people who seek information. Besides, all definitions accept WOM as a face-to-face activity. However, East et. al. (2008b) expand the definition of WOM by including written information. In addition, Haywood (1989) considers WOM as formal conversation while other authors agree that WOM is an informal conversation. Lastly, there is a shift in WOM definitions to electronic WOM after the Internet become more integrated into life activities as Dellarocas (2003) and Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) stated it in their

definitions. After the electronic age, there is no need for face-to-face, direct and oral WOM as it defined before.

Arndt (1967) found that people who perceive higher risk tended to more actively seek WOM information than those who perceived risk to be lower. Similarly, Murray (1991) reported that WOM was the most important means of attaining risk-reducing information and creates even a greater impact on consumers, largely due to clarification and feedback opportunities.

### 2.3 Perceived risk

According to Cox (1967), perceived risk is a function of (1) the amount at stake in a purchase and (2) the consumer's subjective feelings of certainty about the favorableness of purchase consequences. Perceived risk typically includes multiple dimensions, such as financial, performance, social, psychological, safety and time/convenience loss (Gabbott and Hogg, 1998 and Murray, 1991). Perceived risk is a product-category variable, meaning that the purchase of different products is typically associated with different degrees of perceived risk. Further, it is an individual characteristic, in that the purchase of the same product can be associated with different levels of perceived risk by different consumers.

Perceived risk is an important criteria especially prior the purchase decision. As perceived risk of the purchase increases, people will demand more information as a risk reduction strategy. Afterwards, which may cause a decrease in ambiguity or similar confusion on the other hand cause an increase in overload confusion.

## 3. Methodology

In the research, non-probability sampling method with snowball and convenience sampling techniques from friends, neighbors, colleagues and acquaintances are used for convenience reasons.

The data collected in Istanbul from April 9, 2013 to 15 May 2013. To increase the response rate the questionnaires were distributed mainly face-to-face and were collected back immediately after the respondents filled them out. The questionnaire form was distributed to 750 people who were born between 1979 and 1994 presenting Gen Y (Kim and Hahn, 2012) and 724 of them were collected back with the response rate of 96%. After the invalid questionnaires were taken out, 664 valid questionnaires were remained with 88 % effective response rate.

Scales of the study were found in literature research on consumer confusion (Turnbull, 2000; Kasper et. al., 2010; Leek and Chansawatkit, 2006), word of mouth (East et. al., 2008a; Bhattacharjee and Sanford, 2006), perceived risk (Laroche et. al., 2004) and switching intention (Kim et. al., 2006).

## 4. Research Findings

Factor analyses for WOM, switching intention, consumer confusion and perceived risk are executed independently. Variables, which have, factor load below 0, 50 were eliminated in the analysis. Some members of the sample did not use any WOM. Due to this reason, factor analysis of WOM was performed separately to the subgroup that accepted WOM about GSM operator lines.

In total, twelve factors are derived from factor analysis of independent variables and one factor derived from factor analysis of dependent variable. The related tables are presented below:

**Table 1:** Factor analysis report of WOM

Variable Number	Factor Name	Factor Loading	% Variance Explained	Cronbach's Alpha Value	Item Number
<b>Factor 1 : WOM Timing</b>					
48	choose the GSM operator before I received the information?*	0,924	18.653	0,834	2
49	choose the GSM operator after I received the information?	0,917			
<b>Factor 2 : WOM characteristics</b>					
50	The information provided from people was informative.	0,813	52.308	0,914	7
51	The information provided from people was helpful.	0,831			
52	The information provided from people was valuable.	0,841			
53	The information provided from people was persuasive	0,772			
54	The information provided from people was truthful	0,843			
55	The information provided from people was accurate	0,797			
56	The information provided from people was credible	0,776			

\*Item was reverse-coded

**Table 2:** Factor analysis report of switching intention

Variable Number	Factor Name	Factor Loading	% Variance Explained	Cronbach's Alpha Value	Item Number
<b>Factor 1 : Switching intention</b>					
74	I am considering switching from my current GSM operator	0,969	94,791	0,972	3
75	The likelihood of me switching to another GSM operator is high	0,979			
76	I am determined to switch another GSM operator	0,973			

**Table 3:** Factor analysis report of consumer confusion

Variable Number	Factor Name	Factor Loading	% Variance Explained	Cronbach's Alpha Value	Item Number
<b>Factor 1 : GSM Tariff confusion</b>					
16	I find it difficult to make a choice because tariffs is so diverse.	0,901	24,967	0,933	6
17	The more I learn about tariffs the more difficult becomes my choice	0,878			
18	There are so many tariffs to choose from, that I often feel confused	0,865			
20	All the information I get about tariffs confuses me	0,835			
14	The switch from a GSM operator to another has become complex due to the high number of combinations of tariffs	0,802			
8	Tariffs provided by GSM operators are very confusing	0,785			
<b>Factor 2 :GSM Customer services</b>					
30	online customer services	0,864	17,219	0,861	3
31	call-center	0,863			
32	face-to-face customer service	0,823			
<b>Factor 3 :Information sources</b>					
25	Consumer Forums	0,745	8,524	0,802	5
26	Advertisements	0,783			
27	GSM operator websites	0,696			
28	visit various GSM operator stores	0,617			
29	read GSM operators' leaflets	0,673			
<b>Factor 4 :Information sources other</b>					
23	Family	0,962	5,545	0,927	2
24	Friends	0,959			
<b>Factor 5 :Overload confusion</b>					
19	I feel overwhelmed by the amount of information about tariffs	0,703	7,163	0,759	3
21	It is impossible to make the right choice due to the amount of information on tariffs	0,761			
22	It is impossible to selecte a GSM operator due to the high number of combinations of mobile phone services and tariffs on the market	0,818			
<b>Factor 6 :Unclearity confusion</b>					
7	The GSM market is very complex, I am not sure what is going on	0,823	5,461	0,684	2
9	Services provided by GSM operators are very confusing	0,759			
<b>Factor 7 :Similarity confusion</b>					
10	GSM operators are using the same technology	0,852	4,621	0,682	2
11	GSM operators are providing similar services	0,865			

**Table 4:** Factor analysis report of perceived risk

Variable Number	Factor Name	Factor Loading	% Variance Explained	Cronbach's Alpha Value	Item Number
<b>Factor 1 :Financial and Time risk</b>					
60	If I switch from one GSM operator to another for myself within the next twelve months, I would be concerned that the financial investment I would make would not be wise.	0,628	41.685	0,837	6
61	Switching from a GSM operator to another involve important financial losses	0,648			
62	If I switch from one GSM operator to another within the next twelve months, I would be concerned that I would not get my money's worth	0,669			
63	Switching from a GSM operator to another could lead to an inefficient use of my time	0,801			
64	Switching from a GSM operator to another could involve important time losses	0,776			
65	Switching to a GSM operator could create time pressures on me that I don't need.	0,652			
<b>Factor 2 :Social and Psychological risk</b>					
69	If I switch from a GSM operator to another, I think I would be held in higher esteem by my friends	0,848	15.050	0,844	5
70	If I switch from a GSM operator to another, I think I would be held in higher esteem by my family.	0,826			
71	The thought of switching from a GSM operator to another gives me a feeling of unwanted anxiety	0,659			
72	The thought of switching from a GSM operator to another gives me a feeling of unnecessary tension	0,647			
73	The thought of switching from a GSM operator to another gives me a feeling of psychological uncomfortable	0,668			
<b>Factor 3 :Performance risk</b>					
66	If I were to switch from a GSM operator to another within the next twelve months, I would become concerned that it will not provide the level of benefit that I would be expecting.	0,901	10.307	0,938	3
67	As I consider the switch from a GSM operator to another soon, I worry about whether it will really "perform" as well as it is supposed to.	0,912			
68	The thought of switching from a GSM operator to another causes me to be concerned for how really reliable that services will be	0,899			

In literature, WOM is an important source of information to decrease perceived risk and consumer confusion (Arndt, 1966; Turnbull et. al., 2000). Considering this, respondents who got WOM and who did not was taken as the basis for cluster analysis. Cluster analysis is executed for the respondents who received WOM about the GSM operators (N:273). As can be seen on the following Table 5, 2 clusters were found meaningful.

**Table 5:** Final clusters

	Final Cluster Centers	
	1	2
WOM timing	2,91	3,05
WOM characteristics	2,41	3,85

As seen on the previous table, first cluster includes respondents who gave low grade to characteristics and timing of WOM and the second cluster includes respondents who gave high grade to the same factors.

**Table 6:** Number of cases in each cluster

Number of Cases in each Cluster	
Cluster 1	75,000
Cluster 2	198,000
Valid	273,000
Missing	,000

In order to compare the WOM effect on the respondents, descriptive and frequency analysis was executed for three groups; the first groups consists of respondents who did not get WOM about GSM operators, the following two groups are from the cluster analysis. And finally, names will be assigned according to their main characteristics of each three groups.

**Table 7:** Demographic profiles of groups

	N:391		N:75		N:198	
	"CONTENTED"		"SWITCHERS"		"YOUNG & HIGH"	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age</b>						
20-24	150	38%	25	33%	81	41%
25-29	133	34%	31	41%	62	31%
30-34	108	28%	19	25%	55	28%
<b>Gender</b>						
Female	199	51%	47	63%	110	56%
Male	192	49%	28	37%	88	44%
<b>Marital status</b>						
Single / divorced	324	83%	56	75%	166	84%
Married	67	17%	19	25%	32	16%
<b>Education Level</b>						
primary school & secondary school	9	2%	4	5%	3	2%
High school	18	5%	6	8%	8	4%
Vacational school	11	3%	1	1%	7	4%
university	319	82%	55	73%	164	83%
master degree-doctorate	34	9%	9	12%	16	8%

**Table 8:** GSM usage and attitude characteristics of groups

	N:391		N:75		N:198	
	"CONTENTED"		"SWITCHERS"		"YOUNG & HIGH"	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
<b>GSM line service provider</b>						
Turkcell	226	58%	39	52%	115	58%
Vodafone	67	17%	8	11%	28	14%
Avea	98	25%	28	37%	55	28%
<b>Subscription period for the current GSM line</b>						
1-5 years	143	37%	37	49%	74	37%
6-9 years	107	27%	19	25%	60	30%
10 and more than 10 years	141	36%	19	25%	64	32%
<b>Invoice amount of the current GSM line</b>						
Less than 30 TL invoice payers	238	61%	40	53%	101	51%
Between 31-60 TL payers	125	32%	26	35%	76	38%
More than 60 TL invoice payers	28	7%	9	12%	21	11%
<b>Who switched from a GSM line to another?</b>						
yes	171	44%	39	52%	107	54%
no	220	56%	36	48%	91	46%
<b>Information frequency on average in the last 6 months</b>						
1-4 times	-	-	62	83%	142	72%
5-9 times	-	-	8	11%	23	12%
10 and more than 10 times	-	-	5	7%	33	17%
<b>WOM method</b>						
just given	-	-	54	72%	121	61%
asked for	-	-	21	28%	77	39%
<b>The relationship with the information sender</b>						
casual acquaintance	-	-	11	15%	22	11%
family	-	-	8	11%	24	12%
friend	-	-	49	65%	145	73%
colleague	-	-	7	9%	7	4%

**Table 9:** Descriptive statistics of groups

FACTORS	N:391		N:75		N:198	
	"CONTENTED"		"SWITCHERS"		"YOUNG & HIGH"	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>CONSUMER CONFUSION</b>						
GSM Tariff confusion	3,96	0,96	3,85	1,05	<b>4,04</b>	0,88
GSM customer services	2,72	1,17	<b>2,83</b>	1,24	<b>2,83</b>	1,15
Information sources	2,32	0,85	<b>2,49</b>	1,00	2,43	0,76
Overload confusion	<b>2,98</b>	0,98	2,85	0,96	2,95	0,98
Information sources other	3,88	1,12	3,77	1,09	<b>3,90</b>	1,06
Unclarity confusion	<b>3,48</b>	0,93	3,37	1,03	<b>3,48</b>	1,02
Similarity confusion	<b>3,57</b>	0,96	3,47	1,02	3,51	1,04
<b>PERCEIVED RISK</b>						
Financial & time risk	2,80	0,84	<b>3,06</b>	0,89	2,87	0,81
Social & psychological risk	2,32	0,94	<b>2,57</b>	1,10	2,53	0,89
Performance risk	3,66	1,12	<b>4,03</b>	0,90	3,87	0,99
<b>WOM</b>						
WOM characteristics	-	-	2,41	0,59	<b>3,85</b>	0,47
WOM timing	-	-	2,61	1,05	<b>2,93</b>	1,15
<b>SWITCHING INTENTION</b>						
Switching intention	2,08	1,11	<b>2,40</b>	1,33	2,31	1,26

## 5. Results and Discussion

The first group, which did not get WOM, can be named as "Contented" (Hereafter referred to as "Contented"). Contenteds are paying the lowest amount of invoice among the groups. Secondly, they are the most loyal GSM users compared with the other groups. They have low switching intention and most of them use his / her current GSM line for a long time. Thirdly, they have the lowest risk perception about the GSM operators. However they are the most confused group by means of unclarity confusion, similarity confusion and overload confusion. Even though they are confused, they are not considering switching, collecting information or getting WOM, rather they are "doing nothing" (Mitchell and Papavassiliou, 1999) as a coping strategy.

The following two groups state that they have got WOM about GSM operators in the last six months. However, these two groups show different characteristics. The second group named as "Switchers" (Hereafter referred to as "Switchers") changed their GSM line recently. And they still have high switching intention. Secondly, they have the highest perceived risk in terms of financial and time risk, social and psychological risk and performance risk. Moreover, they are the least confused groups in the study by means of GSM tariff confusion, overload confusion, similarity confusion. This group perceives unclarity confusion more compared with the other confusion types.

Finally, the third group can be named as "Young and High" (Hereafter referred to as "Young and High"). They are the youngest group. Secondly, communication is more important for this groups since they are paying the highest invoice amount compared with other groups, secondly, they are not uniform because they have switched from a GSM line to another more frequently compared with other groups. Thirdly, compared with the second group, they have higher WOM since they are younger and get more information from friends and family. Moreover, they perceive GSM Tariff confusion and unclarity confusion high.

Smart phones are regarded as an integral part of their world –a necessity, not a luxury by Gen Y. (Ligerakis, 2004). This generation prefers to communicate through e-mail and text messaging rather than face-to-face contact (Lau and Phua, 2010). However, by contradiction "Contented" GSM users don't use mobile phone intensively since they are paying the lowest invoice among the groups. In addition they experience low level of financial and time risk. And therefore financial and time risk has a negative relationship with the switching intention.

Correspondingly, "Young and High" are used to pay high amount of invoices and they getting high amount of WOM. Therefore, they have negative relationship between financial and time risk and switching intention. As the information from friends and family increases exponentially, they get less confused and so they intent to switch less from one GSM operator to another. Besides, they are more responsive to their social environment and get more WOM. Hence, social & psychological risk has positive effect on switching intention.

## 6. Conclusion

There is only one academic research on consumer confusion in Turkey (Kayabasi; 2012) which has a general focus on confusion that is not related either with the risk perception of consumers and WOM.

Unlike the previous research, the present study explores on the issue in more detail by focusing on Y generation and determines the WOM tool separately in the context of coping strategy and evaluates risk types of GSM switching. In addition, the present study found that there is a specific factor named "GSM tariff confusion" which is the main source of consumer confusion in Turkish GSM sector for Gen Y. Some market dynamics of the Turkish GSM sector support the existence of GSM Tariff confusion factor. Price competition severely increased in the GSM sector especially after the MNP launch and it blurs the GSM users mind. GSM users don't perceive the tariffs of different companies as different. Why the consumers do not perceive tariffs to be different should be further researched. Is it due to communication strategies of the companies or are the tariffs really too similar?

Although, there are similar explanations for Gen Y, this study shows that this generation is not a homogenous group.

"Contented" GSM users are most loyal GSM users, their risk perception is low and their invoice amounts are low. Even though they experience higher confusion rates compared with other two groups, they don't attempt to get any information about GSM operators. Companies should develop strategies to increase "Contented" GSM users' share of wallet. Companies can offer individualized, tailor made tariff alternatives so that they can switch to higher service alternatives like smart phones to enhance their emotional connections with the brand. Through this strategy consumer will shift from being a passive audience to an active player. Furthermore, companies can reduce consumer confusion level of "Contented" GSM users, by giving high importance to corporate branding strategy.

"Switcher" GSM users, get information through passive listening mode. They are taking the objective information to make the most rational decision by maximizing their expected utility. Since, they have the highest risk perception and lowest consumer confusion level, they switch between tariffs easily according to the information they receive. Companies should develop a sense of belonging for their current and potential "Switcher" GSM users by increasing their brand identification and consumer loyalty. It is very difficult, to gain them as a consumer since they have no emotional bond with brand / company. They are the most rational consumer among Gen Y. Tariff optimization is a useful technique for reducing the complexity of the proposed tariffs for "Switchers". Also, the lowest priced-tariffs should be proposed with contracts lasting over a given period of time (e.g., one or two years) to decrease their switching intention in a given period. Besides, these strategies will also reduce the financial & time risk. In order reduce their performance risk perception; some statistics about transmission, coverage area can be shared through Integrated marketing communication plans. GSM operators should give a good value proposition to provide convincing reasons why a "Switchers" should use this GSM line. In order to get the best choice for "Switchers", GSM operators should analyze in detail the GSM usage and attitude database. Companies can launch online tariff comparison service that searches all the available tariffs and bring "Switchers" back the most relevant results based on their search criteria.

"Young & High" GSM users are good listener but compared with "Switchers" they provide information interactively. Pull marketing should be used for "Young & High" extensively. This group should be excited about the GSM operator and conveying this excitement to their family and friends. For Young & High building emotional loyalty with the brand seems to be very important to decrease their switching intention. GSM operators should create viral marketing campaigns or events like concerts, shows and festivals and try to get coverage in the press. This coverage can encourage momentum, through creating interesting stories for "Young & High" to talk about, which in turn to create emotional experiences that tightening the relationship between brand and consumer. In addition, Facebook and Twitter can make WOM and other pull marketing strategies more effective for this group. Furthermore, celebrity endorsement and Gen Y sales force can be used by companies to establish close relationship with "Young & High" by offering tariffs in a way like peer.

## 7. Limitations and Recommendations

There are some limitations regarding with the study that should be explained. The first limitation is related to the sampling population. The survey may not be adequately representative of the target population. Due to time and financial restrictions, questionnaires conducted only in Istanbul. Hence, it would be wrong to claim that the results are representative for all users in Turkey. Furthermore, there is slight disagreement in the literature in terms of the Gen Y's age range. The respondents' age level in this study may not representative of the Gen Y population. Another limitation was the length of questionnaire.

Besides, the study is conducted for the GSM operators. And maybe the market dynamics of the sector is different

from other sectors. There is a need for more studies to be taken out in other sectors and gain insights.

It could be interesting to further investigate; price sensitiveness, trust and brand image related with the consumer confusion concept.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1. Definitions of consumer confusion

Author(s)	Year	Definition
Sproles and Kendall	1986	(consumers) perceive many brands and stores from which to choose and have difficulty making choices. Furthermore, they experience information overload.
Huffman and Kahn	1998	the huge number of potential options (...) may be confusing' and 'The confusion a consumer experiences with a wide assortment of options, however is due to the perceived complexity not necessarily to the actual complexity or variety.
Mitchell and Papavassiliou	1999	Confusion is a state of mind which affects information processing and decision making. The consumer may therefore be aware or unaware of confusion.
Walsh	1999	Confusion is an uncomfortable state of mind that primarily arises in the pre- purchase phase and which negatively affects consumers' information processing and decision making abilities and can lead to consumers making sub-optimal choices.
Chrysoschoïdis	2000	Confusion is defined as a situation in which consumers form inaccurate beliefs about the attributes or performance of a less known product as they base themselves on a more familiar product's attributes or performance.
Turnbull et. al.	2000	(...) consumer confusion is defined as consumer failure to develop a correct interpretation of various facets of a product / service during the information processing procedure.
Walsh	2002	Consumer confusion is a conscious or unconscious disturbance of information processing of consumers, triggered by external stimuli and of temporary nature, (...) it can lead to sub-optimal purchase decisions.

Author(s)	Year	Definition
Walsh et. al.	2002	a conscious or unconscious state of mind that is associated with stimulus similarity, stimulus overload or cognitive unclarity.
Schweizer	2004	Consumer Confusion is an emotionally laden, dysfunctional state of mind, which makes it difficult for consumers to efficiently and effectively select and interpret stimuli.
Mitchell et. al.	2004	category is a conscious state of mind that can occur either in the pre- or the post-purchase situation and has not only a cognitive dimension, but also an affective and behavioral one.
Drummond and Rule	2005	is generally considered as a disturbing mental situation which basically increases in the buying process and might cause negative effects on consumers' information processing and ability to take decisions.
Leek and Kun	2006	Consumer confusion is a mental state characterized by a lack of clear and orderly thought and behavior
Schweizer et. al.	2006	is a result of a temporary exceedance of an individual capacity threshold for absorbing and processing environment stimuli. Consumer Confusion is an emotional state that makes it difficult for consumers to select and interpret stimuli.

**Source:** Created by the authors

**Appendix 2.** Definitions of WOM

Author(s)	Year	Definition
Arndt	1967	is defined as oral person-to person communication between a receiver and a communicator whom the receiver perceives as non-commercial, concerning a brand, a product or a service
Martilla	1971	Opinions sought from personal sources
Day	1971	WOM is person-to-person communication between receiver and a source that the receiver perceives as noncommercial
Richins	1983	The WOM communication was defined as the act of telling at least one friend or acquaintance about the dissatisfaction
Westbrook	1987	an informal communication between consumers about the experience had with a product or its sellers
Richins and Root-Shaffer	1988	is the process of conveying information from person to person and plays a major role in customer buying decisions
Haywood	1989	WOM is a process that is often generated by a company's formal communications and the behavior of its representatives.
Bone	1992	an exchange of comments, thoughts and ideas among two or more individuals in which none of the individuals represent a marketing resource
File et. al.	1994	WOM, both Input and Output, is the means by which buyers of services exchange information about those services, thus diffusing information about a product throughout a market
Silverman	1997	informal communications about products, services, or ideas between people who are independent of the company providing the product or service, in a medium independent of the company.
Patton	2000	a message about the products or services offered by an organization or about the organization itself, which involves comments about product performance, service quality and trustworthiness passed on from one person to another
Halstead	2002	the act of telling at least one friend, acquaintance or family member about a satisfactory or unsatisfactory product experience
Grewal et. al.	2003	the act of exchanging marketing information among consumers
Dellarocas	2003	consumers can have access to other consumers' experiences with or opinions about the product through online interaction such as electronic WOM messages
Hennig-Thurau et al.	2004	any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet
Godes et. al.	2005	face-to-face information exchange about a product or service
East et. al.	2007	informal advice between people about goods and services and social issues
Keller	2007	complex and often unpredictable communication process
East et. al.	2008b	written or oral information exchange between consumers

**Source:** Created by the authors