CERCİ: TRADITIONAL & FOLKLORIC MERCHANT OF ANATOLIA

ÇERÇİ: ANADOLU’NUN GELENEKSEL VE FOLKLORİK TACİRİ

Asst. Prof. Dr. Yavuz AKÇİ

Adıyaman University Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences Department of Business

Abstract

Being one of the popular jobs until the late 20th century in Anatolia, “çerçi” (peddler) nowadays has lost its significance and is no longer common. Çerçi is the person who sells many different kinds of products in villages and village markets either on foot or with the help of any kind of automobile. This study was conducted to gather information about “çerçi” that adapts the marketing mix in a unique way. The study was performed using qualitative data collection method and the researcher held interviews with four people who exercised this job (çerçilik) in the past. To verify and support the qualitative data obtained from those four people, the researcher also conducted a quantitative survey on 76 people who were found to have shopping experience with the peddlers. According to the results derived from the data, “peddlers” is found to still continue operating by bringing the products needed by the consumers to their doorsteps; applying cost-based pricing, collecting his receivables in cash or selling mainly on a counter and by trade-off and performing his job based on trust.

Keywords: Peddler, Pitchman, Hawker, Haberdasher, Qualitative Research

Özet


Anahtar Kelimeler: Çerçi, Seyyar Satıcı, Nitel Araştırma
1. Introduction:

The word “çerçi” (peddler) which was a popular job until the late 20th century in Turkey is defined as the person who sells small haberdasheries by peddling around in places such as villages and village markets (Turkish Language Society – TDK, the last updated dictionary). The aim of this study was to collect information about the foundation and functioning of peddlers operating at micro level and make some comparisons for peddlers in the light of today’s business approach and particularly marketing approach. To this end, after general information was provided regarding the system of peddlers, information was obtained from those persons who still pursued this job through qualitative research method. Furthermore, to verify the data collected, quantitative data was obtained from the persons who had shopped from the peddlers in the past and had an idea about them through quantitative questionnaires. Finally, the system of peddlers as a folkloric way of sales and marketing was analysed in the light of the principles of business and marketing science. As I worked as an apprentice to a peddler when I was a child, I tried to perform this study in order to raise awareness about this profession and its sales approach.

2. Conceptual Framework:

It can be suggested that the origin of marketing is as old as the human history. In particular, one may argue that marketing emerged at the time when trade-off began (Paylan and Torlak, 2009:4). Although the science of marketing has a history of around one hundred years, it can be asserted that marketing practices are as old as human history (Torlak et al., 2013:184). Following a regular trend until the last century, the science of marketing was not a sub-branch of economics any more and became a separate field of science in the twentieth century.

The production and consumption activities continued until the last century when information and communication developed and became widespread. The increased production especially after the industrial revolution led to the expansion of the markets. Consumers then did not have the chance to obtain the products wherever and whenever they wanted contrary to the consumers in modern times. They had to content themselves only to those products that are offered to them. “Pitchmen” tried to fill that gap even partially.

There is a lack of information about exactly when pitchmen emerged. The pitchmen that are observed almost all around the world are considered to have a very old history. As regards the functioning of pitchmen, they initially strived for traveling about to sell the goods they produced to the consumers by carrying them on their back, on mounts or various vehicles and. As in many parts of the world, there are many pitchmen in Anatolia.

There was a connection between migration and pitchmen’s activities in Anatolia in the 16th century. The villagers and poor urban inhabitants were known to prefer more the pitchmen rather than the established vendors. Challenging transport conditions played an important role in this preference (Faroqhi, 2000:345). Today, majority of the pitchmen in Turkey are the ones who have migrated to larger cities (Kılıç, 2010:3). The pitchmen resemble in many aspects to the peddlers (çerçi).

Peddler (çerçi) is defined as an itinerant tradesman who travels about villages, marketplaces and similar places to sell small haberdasheries (TDK, Turkish dictionary, 1998: 462), and most of the time receives grains, wool and etc. instead of many (Meydan Larousse Encyclopaedia, 1970:198). This word is considered to have been borrowed from Mongolian to Turkish. In Mongolian, “car” means news and
sound. In old Turkish, “çarçi, çerci” means messenger of news.

Çerçi refers to the itinerant tradesman who travels about villages, marketplaces and similar places to sell any items one may name in addition to the haberdasheries such as beads, needles, rubber strips, scissors and etc. One of the most important reasons why the profession of peddling emerged was the need to meet needs of people who lived in areas without shopping facilities due to the difficulty of transportation. Therefore, the peddlers brought miscellaneous goods from the marketplaces and bazaars in cities to the towns and villages. When a peddler got closer, the items he carried absolutely hit one another and thus made different sounds (http://cercicim.org/cercici/).

The pitchman referred to as “colporteur” in France in the Medieval Age tried to sell the items they carried on his back door-to-door in villages and cities (Monet, 2006:10). The pitchmen dating back to the colonialism time in Brazil used to bring the fruits and vegetables they produced, agricultural crops and animal products to the doorstep of consumers (Gomes and Reginensi, 2007: 4). The foundation of pitchmen’s profession in Turkey lies on the peddlers. Although there are a limited number of peddlers only in rural areas today, they are not seen in many places.

The foundations of some large enterprises in the UK lie on peddling. Peddling dates back to colonialism in USA. At those times, they started with the sales of agricultural crops and animal products and then they diversified the products (Keir, 1913:183).

As a different form of trade, street selling resembles in some aspects to peddlers and pitchmen while they are also common in many parts of the world. In his study where street selling in some African countries was analysed, Motala (2002:7) found that the street sellers did that job due to poverty, worked informally, sometimes sold illegal items and the buyers usually bargained with them. Cohen (1986:3-4) analysed the sales of food products on the streets in Indonesia, Philippines, Senegal, Bangladesh, Egypt and Nigeria and found that there were more female street sellers than males in Nigeria, Senegal and Philippines while they were fewer in the other countries. He reported that the female sellers generated income by selling the surplus of their products and tried to get rid of the pressure imposed by their husbands in addition to fulfilling their traditional roles.

The activity of peddlers can be regarded as a different form of direct marketing. Kotler and Armstrong (2006:504) defined direct marketing as establishing a direct communication with the individual consumers and getting the responses directly from them. On the other hand, Mucuk (2004:234) defined direct marketing as an activity that is carried out anywhere face-to-face with individual customers rather than massive crowds in an interactive way. In the light of these definitions, it can be suggested that peddlers as one-man businesses carry out direct marketing activities. Although the direct marketing activities are costly for the enterprises compared to the other promotional tools (Kircova and Yılmaz, 2004:54), it forms the basic modus operandi of peddlers.

On the other hand, activities of peddlers represent the personal selling that is usually used for industrial consumers. Personal selling is a selling method in which the seller and the possible buyer comes face to face and the seller tries to persuade the buyer (Tek, 1999:804). Personal selling is used by many enterprises as a competition tool (Weitz and Bradford, 1999:241). From this perspective, one may
argue that peddlers who are one-man businesses also perform personal selling.

The business of peddlers can be considered as a one-man enterprise. Only a small amount of capital is needed for its establishment. The principal capital includes a mount to carry out the peddling activity and a vehicle connected to it as well as goods purchased for the start-up. They travel the streets of quarters or usually the villages and sell plastic, aluminium, textile products or haberdasheries by peddling around.

The peddlers try to earn money by adding only a very low amount of profit margin to the goods they purchase from the manufacturers. Low profit margin was just enough for the subsidence of the peddlers because they do not work in all seasons. For that reason, they don’t have the possibility to grow. The most important expenses while pursuing their activities include the feed and care for mounts, repair and maintenance of vehicles connected to the mount and weekly wage of the apprentices if they have any. The amount remaining after deducting the expenses from the gross profit is the net profit of a peddler. As the peddlers work informally, they are not subject to any tax liability.

When the retail sector is divided into formal and informal retail selling (Tustin, 2004:28), peddlers, pitchmen, street sellers are involved in the informal retail selling. Informal retail selling is unregistered and uncontrolled; thus the authorities aim to decrease it.

When the development of peddlers is examined, it is understood that they carried the goods on their back or on the mounts until the mid 20th century since the beginning. Over time, the use of mounts and vehicles attached increased and horse-drawn carts became widespread to pursue the peddling activity. Sometimes four-wheel vehicles moved by man power (also called trays) were used. By the late 20th century, peddlers started to use motor-vehicles for their activity but this activity lost its peddling feature and transformed into direct selling or doorstep sale.

Modus operandi of peddlers: They first purchase goods in masses from the manufacturers or wholesalers and store them. Then, they load a mix of these goods onto their peddling vehicles and travels about the villages yelling “peddler in town” to sell the goods. As they run out of goods in the vehicle, they supply additional products from the storage aiming at selling all these goods. After they sell all the goods they store, they reinitiate the cycle by purchasing goods in mass.

When peddlers traveled to villages to sell their goods, they rarely received cash in return for the goods they sell while they rather traded-off or swapped with other products. They used to get agricultural crops such as wheat and barley and etc., vegetables such as tomato, cucumber and etc. as well as animals or animal products such as chicken, eggs, cheese and etc. in return for the goods they sold depending on the village they travelled or the season. These goods are received over their market value and then turned into cash by selling them to the wholesalers, grocers and etc. when they returned to the city. The peddlers sometimes sold the goods on account. As they travelled to certain places and in specific intervals, they used to adjust the due date of the sale on account according to the next time they would travel to the relevant place.

The distance between the villages and the cities and the means of transport at the time caused challenges for the villagers to meet their needs. Whenever they needed a supply, the villagers had to travel to the cities, which was the case in most of the villages, and this led to various problems due to the circumstances at that time. Right at that point, peddlers were lending a helping hand to the villagers. The arrival of the
peddlers was relieving the villagers to some extent (http://cercicim.org/cercici/).

Considering these aspects, peddlers are different from their peers in the world because the sellers in the other countries work like street sellers while they receive mainly cash in return for the goods they sell. The peddlers in Turkey, however, use swap method in return for their sale rather than receiving cash. This also makes the peddlers more attractive for the customers.

3. Implementation

3.1. Method

This study was performed in order to determine the structure and functioning of the profession of peddlers that have a long history. The main aim of the study was to increase the raise the awareness of new generations about the peculiar features of peddlers who adopt specific sales and marketing practices that are different from their precedents and also contribute to the inclusion of this different kind of sales and marketing practices into the marketing science. To this end, first the literature review was conducted but there weren’t plenty of studies on peddlers. However, various studies on pitchmen who share similar features with peddlers were found and analysed. Therefore, it was decided to obtain information from those persons who have pursued or still pursue this profession as the source of data. As there was no information about the number of persons from whom the data would be collected, it was decided to collect data through qualitative method.

Those persons who have pursued or still pursue the profession of peddling in Gaziantep and Adıyaman were searched. One person who pursued the profession of peddling in the past was found in Gaziantep and 3 persons were found in Adıyaman. Nearly one-hour interviews were held with these people by using structured interview forms that had 15 items. All 4 people who were interviewed were peddlers in the past but do another job today. These peddlers who were interviewed were coded as G1, G2, G3 and G4. G1 was the one who was a peddler in Gaziantep while the others were in Adıyaman.

In order to support and verify the data obtained from the interviews held with the peddlers, a quantitative questionnaire was prepared and applied face-to-face to the randomly selected group of volunteers who had a shopping experience with the peddlers and had an idea about the peddlers. The questionnaire had two sections. The first section contained items related to the demographical data about the respondents. The second section contained items on the information about the persons who performed the peddling profession and about the functioning of this profession. 76 valid questionnaires were collected and analysed.

3.2. Data Analysis

For data analysis, first the qualitative data obtained from the interviews with the peddlers were interpreted. Then the data from 76 questionnaires were interpreted quantitatively. Some of the responses given by 4 peddlers to the structured interview forms are summarized in Table 1.
Table 1: Information about the Modus Operandi of Peddlers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places travelled</td>
<td>Villages</td>
<td>Villages</td>
<td>Villages</td>
<td>Villages, Nearby cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products sold</td>
<td>Glass, mirror, comb, yarn etc.</td>
<td>Haberdasheries</td>
<td>Plasticware</td>
<td>Rugs, fabric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Way of transport</td>
<td>First on foot and on the back then on donkey.</td>
<td>First on foot and on the back then by horse-drawn carriage.</td>
<td>On Trays</td>
<td>On horseback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection method</td>
<td>Mainly trade-off with agricultural crops and partially cash</td>
<td>Partially cash and on account, mainly trade-off</td>
<td>Cash, On Account, Swap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis of this table reveals that the peddlers mainly sold carpets, rugs, haberdasheries, plasticware and herbal products. Except G4, all the other peddlers only travelled to the nearby villages, while G4 also travelled to the villages in the neighbouring cities. It is clear that the market of G4 was bigger than those of the others due to the different kind of products he sold. When the responses to the question why they chose villages to travel are analysed, they stated that the villages found it difficult to travel to the cities to meet their needs and thus the peddlers coming to their doorstep were more attractive to them. Although it is not easy to understand such a need in today’s modern life, the villagers at that time could not travel to the cities so frequently and sometimes they could travel only once a year. Therefore, the products brought by the peddlers were attractive to them as they were unable to meet every need.

The information about the way of transport to sell their products shows that G1 travelled across the villages by carrying the products on his back for a very long time and then bought a donkey to carry the products on its back and in that way he could travel to far away villages as well. G2 stated that first he uploaded the products on horseback and travelled on foot but after a short period of time he purchased a horse-drawn carriage to travel to more villages in a short time and sell his products by travelling by the carriage. G3 said that he used 4-wheel tray for selling. G3 told that he travelled fewer villages than the other peddlers. G4 had a larger market than the other peddlers. Therefore, he stated that he carried his products on horseback and travelled to the distant villages and villages in the neighbouring cities.

When the peddlers were asked what collection method they used in return for the products they sold; G4 responded that he mainly received cash and sold on account as he sold somehow different products and had a different way of working compared to the other peddlers and sometimes he traded-off products. G1, G2 and G3, however, they hardly collected cash. Although they sometimes sold on account in short term, they mainly used the trade-off method. When they were asked why they preferred that collection method; G1 said “I used to travel village by village to sell. The villagers didn’t have...
money all the time but they used to offer trading-off with other products in return for the items they needed and I sold. And I used to accept the offer. They usually gave me pistachio, wheat or olive and took the products they wanted from me. Sometimes they wanted to take in abu dance. I used to sell on account to the customers I knew well as I travelled frequently to the same villages.”

-G2 said “Whenever I arrived in a village, the villagers used to gather around me and have a look at the products I brought. Some of them wanted to buy my products as they had an immediate need and majority of them bought the products as their dowry. Most of the time, they used to trade-off with various products such as wheat, tobacco, eggs and cheese as they did not have money. Some villagers whom I was familiar with and knew well used to offer that they would buy my products but could pay in the following month and I would accept the offer. There were some who bought on account but did not pay their debts. So I would request the headmen or the villagers I knew to warn those people to pay their debts. Nevertheless, I could not collect the money from some.”

-G3 said “I used to travel across villages and sold plasticware. The villagers were highly interested in my products. When I arrived in a village, all of a sudden people would gather around me. I did not peddle about the village and stay at a fixed point. It was very difficult to collect cash because the villagers hardly had money. For that reason, they used to trade-off with their crops. I used to take different crops depending on the village I travelled. I would get eggs, butter, cheese, wheat and tobacco. Some villagers wanted to buy on account. I would agree if I knew them well, but if I didn't know them I would ask the other villagers that I knew whether I could trust them. If they told me that there would be no problem, I would sell to them on account as well.”

-When the peddlers were asked about how they supplied the products they sold and the payment methods, they gave similar responses. 4 peddlers told that they supplied the products from the manufacturers or wholesalers. When they were asked how they decided on which product they would buy, they stated that they usually decided on buying the products that were most needed by everybody and that were not so expensive, and diversified their products by also supplying the items that the villagers asked when they travelled to the villages. For that reason, they sold multiple products instead of a single product. They used to buy the products from the manufacturers or wholesalers in cash or with 1-2 month maturity.

-When the peddlers were asked how they set the prices, it was understood from the response they gave that they used the cost-based pricing method. They set the selling price by adding a profit margin to the purchase price. As regards the question about the rate of profit margin, they told that it varied depending on the product, it might be 100% for some products (especially small and cheap items) while it might be around 15-20% for the others. In fact, they not only applied cost-based approach but also took the demand into consideration because they wanted to set the selling prices that the buyers could afford.

-All interviewed peddlers stated that they did not work in winter but in summer. Although they travelled in spring and fall, they told that they were busier in summer. The reason why they did not travel in winter was because the climate and transport conditions were not convenient. Villagers were the target group of these peddlers who told that the villagers used to
buy more at the threshing periods and preferred paying in cash. And some of the villagers paid for the products they purchased on account during the threshing time.

As regards the reason why the peddlers chose this profession, they were found to have common features. They did not have a land for agriculture, they did not have a profession requiring specific skills, and they were not hired in a job with a fixed fee. Another common feature is that the peddlers were in the lower income group. For these reasons, they chose this labour-intensive profession that did not require a high capital amount.

When the peddlers were asked about the current state of this profession,

-G1 said “The villagers can easily travel to the cities, bazaars more frequently and thus they don’t have to wait for and show from the peddlers. Therefore, I quit this job a long time ago.”

-G2 said “The number of transport vehicles in villages increased, the village roads are better now, for that reason there is a less need for the peddlers. Moreover, people who tend to buy by trade-off or on account can do this with their credit cards. I quit this job because it is not easy to sell any more.”

-G3 said “Time changed, life is easier, the villagers are not interested in the peddlers any more. As the number of pitchmen travelling by their vans and sell more diverse products increased, my products were not attractive any more, that’s why I quit this job.”

-G4 said “There are sellers now traveling by motor vehicles and sell more diverse and higher quality carpets and rugs. And some manufacturers are selling their own products by their vehicles. How could I compete with them? That’s why I could not earn and quit this job.”

The peddlers gave the following responses to the question “Today there are many itinerant merchants and pitchmen who try to sell in a similar way as you do. Is their business similar to yours? Are there any differences?:

-G1 said “As they also travel, we do a similar business, but they use vehicles such as vans and midibuses whereas I used to travel on foot or on a mount. Moreover, I used to know most of the people in villages I travelled to, I knew about their lives, I mean I knew who was born, who died, who was sick but I don’t think they have the same knowledge”

-G2 said “I used to travel and they are travelling too. But I was sincere with the people in villages I travelled, they liked me and trusted me.”

-G3 said “We have many similarities but they are not like me. I didn’t always sell in cash. I used to trade off with the crops of the villagers but these sellers always sell in cash.”

-G4 said “No matter how we are similar, people in villages I travelled trusted me, they used to entertain me as a guest at their homes. We were like friends and relatives. But I don’t think these sellers have such a relationship. They issue notes when they sell on account, and sometimes they may even end up in court. I never settled any dispute about my receivables at court.”

Table 2 presents the demographical data of the respondents to 76 questionnaires that were applied in order to support or verify the data obtained from the interviews with the peddlers.
Table 2: Distribution of Age, Educational Background and Income of the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Younger than 30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13,2</td>
<td>Literate</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25,0</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 30 to 50</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>34,3</td>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21,1</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>68,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26,4</td>
<td>Secondary School</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17,1</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21,1</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7,9</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and older</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5,3</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28,9</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As regards the age distribution of the respondents of the questionnaire, approximately 87% of them are older than 30 years of age. Those older than thirty are thought to have a better idea about the peddlers. Considering the educational background of the respondents, university graduates and the literates represented nearly half of the respondents. Majority of the respondents categorized themselves in the middle-income group. The respondents hesitated to mention a figure when they were asked about their monthly income amount or earnings but all of them responded, without hesitation, to the question about the earning level instead of uttering a number.

Table 3: Professional and Residential Distribution of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Residence in childhood</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18,4</td>
<td>City centre</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17,1</td>
<td>District</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27,6</td>
<td>Town</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13,2</td>
<td>Village</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>61,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5,3</td>
<td>Hamlet</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18,4</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the professions of the respondents, farmers represented nearly 27% of the respondents, which was the highest group. Likewise, the responses to the question where they spent their childhood revealed that nearly 61% of the respondents lived in villages. As the target group of the peddlers was mainly the villagers, it can be suggested that the distribution of the respondents to the questionnaires were appropriate to support and verify the data obtained from the interviews with the peddlers.

The second section of the questionnaire provided various data about the functioning of the peddling profession. These data were interpreted and compared with the results of the interviews. When the respondents were asked the question whether the peddlers mainly worked in summer and spring, 54% agreed, 37% were indecisive, while 9% disagreed. 33% of the respondents told that the peddlers also worked in winter. Furthermore, 65% of the respondents agreed with, 25% were indecisive about and 10% disagreed with the question whether the peddlers travelled regularly to sell. The peddlers who were...
interviewed mentioned that they frequently worked in summer and spring and didn’t travel much during winter and travelled across the villages in non-periodical intervals. Table 4 shows the answers of the respondents to the question about the products sold by the peddlers.

**Table 4: Products sold by Peddlers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fabric</th>
<th>Clothing</th>
<th>Plasticware</th>
<th>Metalware</th>
<th>Confectionery</th>
<th>Rugs, carpets etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>84,2</td>
<td>73,7</td>
<td>69,7</td>
<td>61,8</td>
<td>63,2</td>
<td>52,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indecisive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>6,6</td>
<td>2,6</td>
<td>7,9</td>
<td>6,6</td>
<td>6,6</td>
<td>10,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>9,2</td>
<td>23,7</td>
<td>22,4</td>
<td>31,6</td>
<td>30,3</td>
<td>36,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although there was a diverse range of products sold, they were grouped into six categories and asked to the respondents. The responses revealed that 84% of products sold were fabric and haberdasheries that were the most commonly sold products, while the clothing represented 74%, plasticware represented 70%, kitchenware such as metalware - aluminium etc. represented 62%, confectionery and chocolate accounted for 63% and rugs and carpets represented 53%. Items in the confectionery and carpet-rug group were sold less compared to the other product groups.

**Table 5: Items received by peddlers as trade-off**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items received by peddlers as trade-off</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>%3,9</td>
<td>%14,5</td>
<td>%81,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sold on account</td>
<td>%7,9</td>
<td>%40,8</td>
<td>%51,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grains (wheat, barley, maize etc.)</td>
<td>537,4</td>
<td>%32,9</td>
<td>%29,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crops (grapes, apricot, apple, pomegranate, tobacco, sugar beet etc.)</td>
<td>%37,9</td>
<td>%37,6</td>
<td>%24,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal products (chicken, eggs, milk etc.)</td>
<td>%24,2</td>
<td>%36,8</td>
<td>%38,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processed products (molasses, cheese, yogurt, pomegranate syrup etc.)</td>
<td>%43,2</td>
<td>%27,6</td>
<td>%29,2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The responses to the question about the collection method showed that the peddlers sold in cash, on account or by trade-off. This is consistent with the responses of the peddlers.

As regards the question “What would happen if the debtor who purchased on account did not pay his debt?”; 66% of the respondents agreed with the idea that the peddlers would lose money. In addition to that, 77% of the respondents disagreed with the idea that the peddler would face a hard time, 88% disagreed with the idea that the peddler would apply to the gendarmerie and police to collect the payment, while 57% disagreed with the idea that they would use headmen and elderly men in the village as mediators. During the interviews with the peddlers, they told that they used to sell on account to people they knew or with the reference of the people they knew, for that reason there were hardly unable to collect the payments for the products they sold on account. When they could not col-
lect the payment, then they would resort to the abovementioned means.

As regards the reasons why the respondents shopped from the peddlers; 84% of the respondents said that the peddlers were coming to their doorsteps, 72% said that it was difficult to travel to cities, 83% said that the peddlers were selling on account or by trade-off, 55% said their selling prices were lower while 45% said they sold diverse range of products. The general characteristic of the peddlers which was also highlighted in the interviews held with the peddlers was that they were bringing the products to the doorsteps of buyers. People preferred buying from the peddlers as they made it possible for such people to meet their needs easily without moving from where they are. Furthermore, selling on account or by trade-off was the second most important factor.

Finally the respondents were asked why the peddlers are so common and not travelling much compared to the past; 93% of the respondents agreed with the idea that the transport means are easier now while 97% of them agreed that it is easier to travel to the city centres. Therefore, they thought that there wasn’t a need for peddlers any more. Moreover, 68% of the respondents agreed that the manufacturers are also travelling like peddlers to sell their own products and 81% agreed that the direct selling and distribution channels such as television and internet have become widespread. These reasons led to a decline in the number of peddlers. The peddlers also mentioned that the transport conditions represented the main reason why they quitted this profession, which is consistent with the data obtained from the respondents to the questionnaires.

**Conclusion**

In this study that was performed to collect information about the peddlers as itinerant merchants with their traditional and folkloric characteristics in Anatolia and to find out their modus operandi and marketing methods, it was understood that the peddlers had a different trading approach. The peddlers who can be considered as commercial businesses represented a different example of direct selling. In the light of the data collected; it can be suggested that the peddlers identify the needs of the consumers (mainly the villagers) and accordingly bring the appropriate products to the consumers where they are. They usually set the prices based on costs. Although the rate of profit margin vary depending on the products, they add varying rates of profit to the cost price. The most important feature that distinguish the peddlers from many enterprises is the collection method they adopt. It is understood from the quantitative and qualitative data collected that the peddlers accept nearly all payment methods in return for the products they sell. They accept such methods as cash, on account and trade-off. Furthermore, the fact that the peddlers bring the products to the doorstep of the consumers and more importantly accept any kind of non-cash agricultural and animal products as trade-off makes them attractive for the consumers.

The most important reasons why the peddling profession that is based on trust and sincerity is not common nowadays include the improved living conditions, easier means of transport and widespread use of other payment methods such as credit cards.

It was aimed to analyse the profession of “peddlers” that was a common sales and marketing method in the recent past in all cities of Turkey from the perspective of marketing science and also enable the next generations to have an idea about this profession-job that is disappearing nowadays. Furthermore, it was also aimed to make this
paper an informative reference, even if partial, about the profession of peddlers.

REFERENCES


"Cerci: Traditional & Folkloric Merchant Of Anatolia"


http://cercicim.org/cercici/ 03.05.2015

Appendix: Çerçi Pictures


http://www.manisainternethaber.com