



## Research Article/Araştırma Makalesi

### Examining the Relationship Between Relationship Marketing, Cognitive Dissonance, Customer Satisfaction and Repurchase Behavior: A Study on Online Purchasing Behavior

*İlişkisel Pazarlama, Bilişsel Çelişki, Müşteri Memnuniyeti ve Yeniden Satın Alma Davranışı Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi: Çevrimiçi Satın Alma Davranışı Üzerine Bir Araştırma*

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#### Abstract

Especially the rapid technological development of and the rise in internet usage have diversified online shopping sites. Thus, consumers have started to evaluate alternatives in their online shopping site preferences. This situation can create a cognitive dissonance in them. In this direction, the objective of the study was to investigate the impact of bond strategies on cognitive dissonance behavior and the impact of the cognitive dissonance on satisfaction and repurchase behavior of customers in RM. The survey questionnaire forms prepared for this purpose were delivered to the participants using both online and face-to-face questionnaires. Totally 401 responses were submitted. Whether or not a relationship exists between the variables in the model was determined using the LISREL 8.7 software within the framework of the structural equation model. Study results revealed that social, structural, and financial bonds had negative and significant impacts on CD. In other words, it is determined that a one-unit increase in the social, structural, and financial bonds of the participants would have an adverse impact on their CD levels. Moreover, it was detected that CD had a negative and significant impact on customer satisfaction and repurchase behavior.

**Jel Codes:** M31, L96, M15

**Keywords:** Relationship marketing, cognitive dissonance, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty

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## Öz

Özellikle teknolojinin hızlı gelişimi ve internet kullanım oranının artması çevrimiçi alışveriş sitelerini de çeşitlendirmiştir. Böylece tüketiciler internet alışveriş sitesi tercihlerinde alternatifleri değerlendirmeye başlamışlardır. Bu durum onlarda bilişsel olarak çelişki yaratabilmektedir. Bu doğrultuda çalışmanın amacı, ilişki pazarlamada bağ stratejilerinin bilişsel çelişki davranışına etkisi ile bilişsel çelişki yaşayan müşterilerin memnuniyet ve yeniden satın alma davranışına etkisini incelemektir. Bu amaçla hazırlanan anket formu gerek yüz yüze gerekse de çevrimiçi anket yöntemiyle katılımcılara ulaştırılmıştır. Ankete toplamda 401 geri dönüş sağlanmıştır. Modeldeki değişkenler arasında ilişki bulunup bulunmadığı yapısal eşitlik modeli yardımıyla LISREL 8.7 programından yararlanarak tespit edilmiştir. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre, sosyal bağların, yapısal bağların ve finansal bağların bilişsel çelişki üzerinde negatif yönlü anlamlı bir etkisi olduğu belirlenmiştir. Diğer bir deyişle katılımcıların sosyal, yapısal ve finansal bağlar düzeylerinde meydana getirdikleri bir birimlik artış bilişsel çelişki düzeyleri üzerinde negatif yönde bir etki yapacağı belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca araştırmada çelişkinin müşteri memnuniyeti ve tekrar satın alma davranışına da olumsuz ve anlamlı bir etkisi bulunduğu saptanmıştır. Olmalıdır. Özetle, araştırmanın amacı, yöntem ve bulguları, veri toplama araçlarından bahsedilmelidir. 12, punto, Calibri, iki yana yaslı. Özetler, en az 150, en fazla 250 kelime olmalıdır.

**Jel Kodları:** M31, L96, M15

**Ana Kelimeler:** İlişki pazarlama, bilişsel uyumsuzluk, müşteri memnuniyeti, müşteri sadakati



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## 1. Introduction

In the 21st century, conventional marketing has been replaced by a relationship marketing approach, which establishes long-term and permanent relationships with customers, based on trust. This notion, which considers the customer as the focal point of all its activities, has become one of the crucial competitive instruments that would make a difference for companies. Relationship marketing (RM) is utilized in both service and production companies to enhance customer value, maintain customer satisfaction, and improve customer loyalty (Kılıç, 2010). Basically, the objective of RM involves maintaining and developing long-term associations with key parties, including customers, distributors, and suppliers ensuring the sustainability of customer satisfaction. As a result of establishing mutually satisfactory relationships in this regard; economic, structural, and social outcomes are obtained. This whole process is commenced as soon as the purchase takes place and persists after the sale (Kotler, 2001). Contemporary corporate managers are encouraged to strengthen the bonds between their companies and their customers, especially to establish these relationships through RM. Along with the increasing importance of customer loyalty, various companies strive for enhancing customer satisfaction through customer retention programs as well as RM strategies (Sharifi & Esfidani, 2014; Yi & La, 2004). Notwithstanding efforts are made by companies to ensure customer satisfaction and loyalty through RM, sometimes consumers may feel uncomfortable and regret this situation upon comparing the alternatives offered to them after the purchase and having to choose among various options (Solomon et al., 2006; Festinger, 1957).

Firstly, the impact of cognitive dissonance (CD), which has been the subject of psychology research studies, on contemporary consumer behavior is to be investigated. This situation, in which consumers experience following the purchase, has begun to draw attention as time passes, due to the possibility of negatively affecting the customer satisfaction and loyalty of the companies. Cognitive contradictions occurring in the inner and outer natures of consumers have led consumer behavioral scientists to feel that they should question such situations. The consumer who wishes to purchase a product is left with more than one alternative, and whenever he/she cannot attain the anticipated benefit/performance following the purchase of the attractive product, the regret that he/she would experience due to the fact that he/she did not purchase the first product triggers CD (Elüstün, 2020: 37). In the aftermath of most purchasing decisions, the consumer encounters the concern of having to consider many alternatives with various qualities and benefits. Frequently, consumers choose merely one alternative, making a decision versus other alternatives to purchase (Kaish, 1967). According to the CD theory, the inconsistencies felt by the individual cause psychological discomfort and this leads consumers to mitigate or eliminate CD (Yap and Gaur, 2014). Consumers experiencing CD are more likely to be in pursuit of information regarding the purchased product. They wish to realize whether they have picked the right choice and/or what has gone wrong and to get familiar with other brands' products. Besides, they wish to learn about the details of the products they purchase by asking around and accessing discussion groups and websites in order to reduce the perceived risk pertinent to the purchased product's performance (Leonidou & Skarmeas, 2015).



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Upon considering the studies in the marketing field, CD is perceived as the inconsistency in purchasing behaviors. Because being left with two or more options leads consumers to indecision. The individual may also plunge into CD along with the fact that better and different alternatives exist for the product he/she purchases as well as the regret caused by missing out on the alternatives. Nevertheless, consumers may experience dissonance, not only when it comes to products and services, but also when circumstances such as online or in-store shopping occur (Aydın & Yılmaz, 2018). In today's world with high prevalence level of online shopping, for various reasons such as the reliability of the information and the website, the visuals on the website may be effective in the CD of consumers who tend to shop online (Eskiler & Altunışık, 2012).

Along with the rapid development of technology, consumers may diversify their preferences and alter their shopping channels through the Internet and mobile devices. However, this situation also triggers the impulsive purchasing behavior of consumers since it facilitates the spread and convenience of e-commerce. This situation paves the way for the formation of negative cognitive and emotional states (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Chang & Tseng, 2014; Liao et al., 2016; Chen et al., 2021).

The CD concept has been thoroughly studied. Nonetheless, only a few studies have discussed the association between RM and CD. As stated in the relevant literature, although similar relationships have been tested previously, it is seen that the relationships discussed in this study have been tested more restrictively in the literature on the subdimensions of the variables. For instance, RM is discussed in terms of economic, social, and structural dimensions in this study, whereas it has been considered merely in terms of trust and communication dimensions in previous studies. Moreover, the study is also crucial in terms of addressing the issue of online cognitive dissonance. Because rapid development of technology and the rise in Internet usage have diversified online shopping websites. Thus, consumers have begun to consider alternatives in their online shopping website preferences. For this purpose, in the first part of the research, the concepts of RM, CD, and customer satisfaction, as well as customer loyalty, are explained and an overall literature review on its sub-dimensions is presented. In the second part, information regarding the variables of the research is presented and the obtained findings of the survey application and the analysis results are introduced. In the last part, the research results are assessed in terms of online shopping websites, and recommendations are made for future studies.

## **2. Literature Review**

In this part, a literature review on RM and its bonds, CD, customer satisfaction, and repurchase behavior is introduced.

### **2.1. Relationship Marketing (RM)**

RM, which is considered a new marketing practice, has emerged due to advanced communication and information technologies and the existence of new communication



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forums such as the Internet (Bolton & Bhattacharya, 2000). RM involves the process of developing, identifying, terminating, and maintaining relational exchanges between the parties in order to enhance the performance of companies (Palmatier, 2007: 3; Morgan & Hunt, 1994: 22). According to Kotler, the main aim of RM is to improve long-term trust-based relationships between the buyer and the seller (Kotler, 2001). Since having a new client requires higher costs than retaining an existing one, the focus of RM is, in general, usually considered to be customer retention (Reicheld, 1996).

Since its emergence, RM has been examined by various authors (Peltier & Westfall, 2000) in three different aspects such as financial, social, and structural bonds.

### **2.1.1. Financial Bonds**

Financial bonds involve the reinforcement of customer loyalty by using bonds, personalized price quotes, or other economic supports (Berry, 1995: 240). Financial bonds refer to a kind of business practice that aims to improve customer loyalty through pricing incentives. It is especially considered a source of motivation for customers to engage in relational exchanges (Peltier & Westfall, 2000). Financial bonds rank first in connecting customers to the company with economic factors.

Companies particularly tend to reward loyal customers by offering them personalized price offers. For instance, airline companies' application of mile points for their frequent flyer customers, and shopping points from supermarkets (Lin et al., 2003; Varinli, 2008). Financial incentives provided by companies also significantly affect customers' preferences for goods and services. Nonetheless, since the relationships established through financial bonds may be easily imitated by rival companies, a better economic advantage offered to customers as an alternative may discourage customers from doing business with the company (Yılmaz, 2016).

### **2.1.2. Social Bonds**

According to this strategy, keeping in touch with customers, being familiar with their needs, and maintaining a positive association with them provide significant benefits for companies (Berry, 1995; Williams et al., 1998). The friendships established among service providers and customers are extremely crucial in terms of customer retention for the companies and establishing long-term relationships (Lin et al., 2003). Companies that regularly implement both social and financial bonds assist their customers to fulfill their psychological and emotional needs besides financial advantages (Yılmaz, 2016). In establishing social bonds, salespeople should frequently communicate with customers, understand exactly what their needs are, and make each customer feel valued and unique (Tzokas, Saren & Kyziridis, 2001).

### **2.1.3. Structural Bonds**

Another way of maintaining customer loyalty is through structural bonds. Structural bonds occur whenever customers adapt their service delivery system to get rid of their problems.



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These solutions are specific to customers and cannot be easily imitated by competitors (Berry, 1995). Innovative channels, customer databases, and bilateral information exchange technologies developed especially in the banking sector are perceived as investments for structural bonds. These investments generate an easier and more customized environment for customers to purchase products or services and provide significant advantages over competitors (Lin et al., 2003). Since structural bonds also save time for customers to solve the major problems they experience within the company, male customers are seen as more likely to be affected by the structural bonds than female customers (Chen & Chiu, 2009: 1586).

## 2.2. Cognitive Dissonance (CD)

CD is a psychological disorder that emerges whenever an inconsistency occurs between a person's beliefs and contradictory information (Bolia et al., 2016). The concept was first coined by US psychologist Leon Festinger in the 1950s. According to Festinger, CD would have been defined as "the sum of the elements of knowledge that individuals have regarding their attitudes, behaviors, and environments". Such a concept also reflected the psychological discomfort that one might have encountered upon choosing among numerous options (Festinger, 1962). Although the concept of CD has been discussed in the field of psychology and sociology, it has also been the subject of studies in the field of marketing. Accordingly, the consumer may experience purchasing anxiety and this may be reflected in all aspects of the decision-making process. CD may influence consumers' choices, assessments, and behaviors (Ayazlar & Yüksel, 2012).

Odabaşı & Barış (2002) listed the causes of CD as follows:

- Increase in negativities in the purchased service or product due to the decision made regarding the purchase.
- Increasing the number of different options.
- The fact that products and services that are more attractive to the consumer could not be chosen and the increasing positive features of these options.
- Decisions made by chance and due to compelling reasons trigger CD.
- Conflicts between consumer groups that would affect consumers' preferences.

Consumers may have the concern of having to consider many alternatives with various features and benefits in most of their purchasing decisions. At such times, consumers choose merely one alternative, making a decision over other alternatives to purchase (Kaish, 1967). If consumers are unsure of their decision and think that they should give up on the favorite properties of non-chosen alternatives, they may experience psychological dissonance upon making a choice (Koller & Salzberger, 2012).

## 2.3. Customer Satisfaction and Repurchase



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Individuals who directly or indirectly benefit from the services or products provided by an institution or organization may be referred to as customers. Undoubtedly, one of the most crucial strategies for companies involves customer satisfaction (Eroğlu, 2005: 8). The psychological concept that describes consumers' contentment with the product they purchase, as well as feeling good and happy, is known as customer satisfaction (Lengler & Moyano, 2011). As of today, customer satisfaction is perceived as the main element in the success of companies. Customers, who are satisfied with the products they purchase, tend to keep receiving services from that company and recommend that service or product to their friends. Predicting customer expectations constitutes the basis of customer satisfaction. Therefore, companies are apt to organize the services they offer in a way that is high quality and effective in order to fulfill customer expectations and enhance their service quality (Şahin & Şen, 2017).

Customer satisfaction encourages future repurchase intention and enhances the frequency of purchase. Therefore, it has a positive impact on purchasing behavior. Meaning, as customer satisfaction increases, repurchase frequency and loyalty also increase (Puligadda et al., 2012).

Customer loyalty occurs as a natural outcome of customer satisfaction (Jones and Sasser, 1995: 89). Newman & Werbel (1973) described loyal customers as "individuals who repurchase a brand, merely think of that brand, and do not seek any knowledge regarding the brand". If consumers are satisfied and content due to the purchase of a product, they are likely to choose the very same company afterward. Thus, the first phase of customer loyalty is commenced (Martenson, 2007: 544).

### 3. The Relationship Between Relationship Marketing, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty, and Cognitive Dissonance Behavior

**Table 1: Some Studies Conducted on the Association between Relationship Marketing, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty and Cognitive Dissonance Behavior**

Author(s) Year	Research Subject	Application Field	Methods and Analyses	Results
Sharifi & Esfidani (2014)	The influence of relationship marketing on cognitive dissonance, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty: cognitive dissonance and the mediating role of trust	Cellular phone consumers	Structural equation modeling	Relationship marketing activities (communication and trust) reduced cognitive dissonance, and thus, customer satisfaction and loyalty were maintained. The mediating effect of trust was also proven.
Chiu et al. (2005)	The relationship between relationship marketing customer value and customer loyalty	Banking customers	Structural equation modeling	Relational bonds (financial, structural, and social) positively affected customer loyalty.
Salzberger & Koller (2010)	The effect of the relationship between cognitive dissonance and customer satisfaction on loyalty and complaint behavior	Consumers purchasing electronic appliances	Structural equation modeling	Although satisfaction had an impact on loyalty, as well as future purchase intention and word-of-mouth marketing behavior, cognitive dissonance had an impact on complaint behavior.
Kim (2011)	It proposes a model to examine the relationship between cognitive dissonance and relationship marketing variables (trust and value) and the extent to which consumers process and cognitively perceive information when encountering word-of-mouth (WOM) messages.	Hotel and Motel customers	Structural equation modeling / Semi-structured interview	When cognitive dissonance theory conflicted with consumers' beliefs, the consumers were confronted with WOM messages.
Mao & Oppewal (2010)	Investigating the impacts of the post-purchase cognitive dissonance on consumer satisfaction and perceived service quality.	Students choosing universities	Structural equation modeling / Semi-structured interview	Cognitive dissonance (inconsistent information) experienced after university selection was found to have an impact on customer satisfaction and perceived service quality.
Demirgüneş & Avçılar (2017)	The impact of the cognitive dissonance on external information seeking and consumer complaint assessments	Smartphone users	PLS-PM analysis	The findings revealed that once consumers had emotional and rational inconsistencies following the purchase of a smartphone, they needed external knowledge (such as asking other stores), and such knowledge-seeking behavior led to adverse consumer reactions such as complaints and intent to refund.
Aydın & Yılmaz (2018)	Investigation of cognitive dissonance behavior in online shopping.	Online shopping consumers	Structural equation modeling / (PLS-PM) analysis	According to the results obtained from the research, hedonic consumption tendency, instinctive purchases, perceived risk and value were found effective on cognitive dissonance since it affected purchase intention.
Cairns, et al. (2021)	Think eco, be eco? The contradiction between attitudes and behaviors of Generation Y fashion consumers	Generation Y fashion consumers	Semi-structured interview	According to the research findings, the members of Generation Y tried to justify their behaviors with cognitive dissonance feelings such as 'irritability' and 'guilt' upon purchasing fast fashion. Such a situation was seen as a crucial factor in sustainable product preferences in the future.

## 4. Methodology

In this part of the study, the sample and population of the study, the data collection method and tools, research variables, and scale dimensions are included.

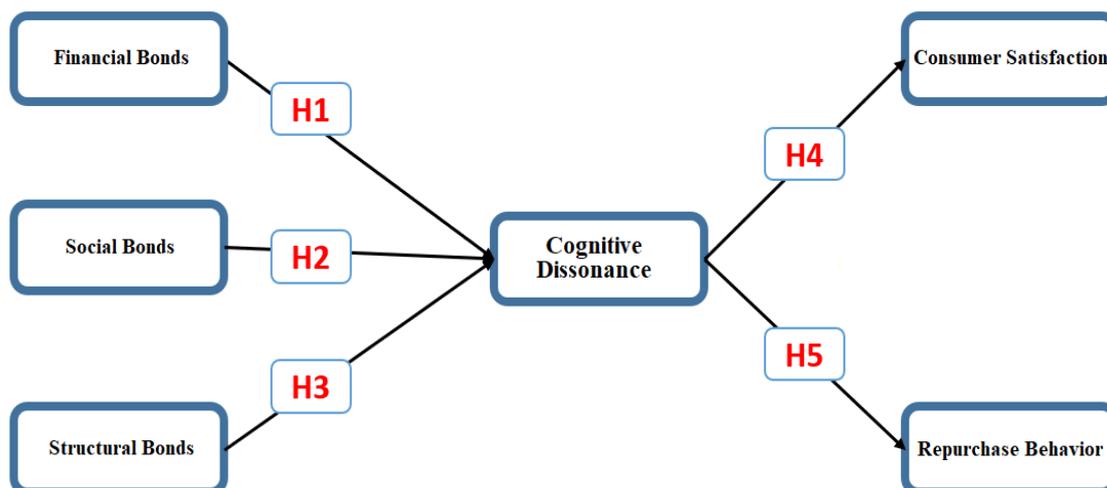
### 4.1. Research Population and Sample

The necessary permission to carry out the data collection process was obtained on 27 April 2022 by applying to the Ethics Committee of Gumushane University (Document no E-95674917-108.99-92910). This research study's sample consists of consumers over the age of 18 who have previously shopped online. In this context, in order to reach the participants, both face-to-face and online survey questionnaire forms were delivered to the participants as the data collection tool of the research. In this regard, it can be claimed that the sampling technique of the research study is simple random sampling method (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2018: 132). Therefore, the research findings are valid merely for the employees within the scope of the research, and one should act meticulously in applying them to the overall population. As a result of a data collection process of approximately one month, a total of 401 survey questionnaire forms were retrieved. According to Gürbüz & Şahin (2018), a sample of this size has the power to represent quite a large population at the 95% confidence level.

### 4.2. Research Model and Hypotheses

The model established according to the main objective of the study, and the hypotheses are illustrated as follows.

Figure 1: Research Model



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### Hypotheses:

- H<sub>1</sub>:** Participants' levels of financial bonds have negative impacts on CD.  
**H<sub>2</sub>:** Participants' levels of social bonds have negative impacts on CD.  
**H<sub>3</sub>:** Participants' levels of structural bonds have negative impacts on CD.  
**H<sub>4</sub>:** Participants' levels of CD have negative impacts on customer satisfaction.  
**H<sub>5</sub>:** Participants' levels of CD have negative impacts on repurchase behaviors.

### 4.3. Data Collection Method and Tool

Both face-to-face and online survey questionnaire methods are used to collect the research data. A 5-point Likert-type scale (1: Totally Disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Undecided, 4: Agree, 5: Totally Agree) is employed to measure the opinions of the participants in the survey questionnaire form developed within this framework.

### 5. Variables of the Research Model

The sources and dimensions used within the scope of the study are shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Research Variables and Scale Dimensions**

<b>Relationship Marketing Bond Strategies Scale</b>	
<b>Economic Bonds</b>	(Chen & Chiu, 2009), (Liang et al., 2008), (Lin et al., 2003)
<b>Structural Bonds</b>	
<b>Social Bonds</b>	
<b>Cognitive Dissonance Behavior Scale</b>	(Koller & Salzberger, 2007)
<b>Customer Satisfaction Scale</b>	(Sharifi & Esfidani, 2014)
<b>Repurchase Scale</b>	(Koçoğlu, 2016)

### 6. Findings

In this part of the research study, the SPSS 25 software is used to make assessments regarding the variables in the model. Furthermore, the association between the variables in the model is determined within the framework of the structural equation model (SEM) using the LISREL 8.7 software, and the findings are interpreted. Subsequently, the test results of the research hypotheses and the assessment of the findings are presented.

### 6.1. Findings Regarding Descriptive Features

In the first part of the questionnaire prepared to obtain data for the research study, some questions are included for determining the demographic properties of the participants. In this context, the findings of the demographic properties of a total of 401 participants are presented below.

**Table 3: Findings Regarding Demographic Properties**

Demographic	Group	n	%
<b>Age</b>	18-26	118	29.4
	27-35	86	21.4
	36-44	114	28.4
	45 +	83	20.7
<b>Gender</b>	Female	185	46.1
	Male	216	53.9
<b>Online Shopping Frequency</b>	Once a Year	36	9.0
	Once a Week	34	8.5
	Once a Month	60	15.0
	Several Times a Month	141	35.2
	Once in Several Months	130	32.4

According to Table 3, upon examining the demographic properties of the participants of the research, 29.4% of the participants are detected to be 18–26-year-old, 21.4% 27-35 year-old, 28.4% 36-44 year-old, and 20.7% are 45 or older; whereas 53.9% of the participants are male, and 46.1% are female. It is determined that 9% of the participants shop online once a year, 8.5% once a week, 15% once a month, 35.2% several times a month, and 32.4% once in several months.

### 6.2. Findings of the Reliability, Explanatory, and Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) Regarding the Scales

Explanatory factor analysis is performed to determine the validity as well as the reliability of the scales, and confirmatory factor analyses regarding the scales are performed for the research model.

#### 6.2.1. Findings of the Reliability and CFA Findings Regarding the Relational Marketing Strategies Scale

The item analysis results, reliability levels, and explanatory factor analysis results in terms of the validity and reliability of the RM scale are given in Table 4. It is anticipated that the association of the items with the others may not assume a value lower than 0.30 (Büyüköztürk, 2009).

**Table 4: Reliability, Explanatory Factor Analysis, and Item Analysis Results Regarding the Relationship Marketing Strategies Scale**

Item No	Factors			Item - Scale Relationship
	1	2	3	
11	.748			.782
12	.833			.853
15	.853			.848
18	.859			.861
16	.861			.858
14	.862			.862
17	.864			.849
13	.865			.852
7		.744		.654
10		.754		.812
9		.765		.802
8		.797		.782
6		.806		.752
5		.866		.742
4			.757	.727
3			.790	.772
2			.791	.786
1			.793	.781
<b>Confidence Level</b>	<b>.979</b>	<b>.948</b>	<b>.941</b>	<b>.972</b>
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	<b>6.755</b>	<b>4.906</b>	<b>3.515</b>	
<b>Variance Explained (%)</b>	<b>37.529</b>	<b>27.254</b>	<b>19.527</b>	<b>84.310</b>
KMO: .960; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity = $X^2(153)=9589,454$ ; $p=.000$				

As seen in Table 4, it is decided that there is no need to exclude an item from the scale, since the correlation value of the items with the others is lower than .30. The reliability level of the scale is determined as high (C.Alpha = .972).

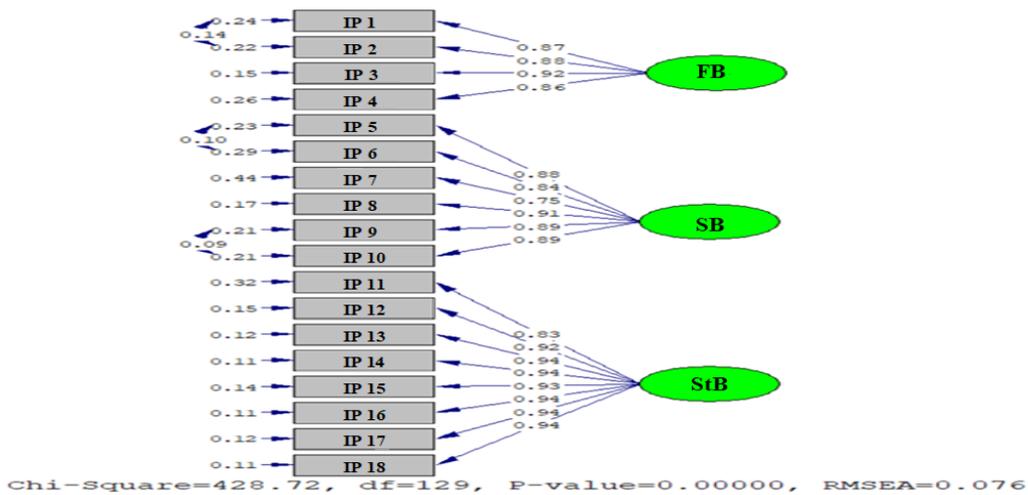
Prerequisites for conducting the factor analysis are examined. The first of these conditions is Barlett's Sphericity test to examine the existence of the relationship between KMO and variables to decide whether the number of data is sufficient for conducting the factor analysis (Tabachnick & Fidel, 2014). In Table 4, the KMO value is found to exceed .60, and Barlett's sphericity test is determined to be significant ( $p<.01$ ). Accordingly, the sample data is proven to be appropriate for factor analysis and the obtained data has a multivariate normal distribution (Kan & Akbaş, 2005).

In order to decide whether or not to exclude an item from the scale, the criterion of having a factor load value that exceeds .45 is considered (Büyüköztürk, 2009). Also, upon examining the overlapping, loading on a factor is also taken into consideration. The results reveal that the 18-item scale has a 3-factor structure and the total variance explained is 84.310%. "Varimax" vertical rotation is performed since the scale has more than one factor.

According to Table 4, upon examining the items/statements collected under Factors 1, 2, and 3, the factors are categorized as “**Structural Bonds**”, “**Social Bonds**”, and “**Financial Bonds**”, respectively. The reliability coefficient of the structural bonds sub-dimension ( $\alpha = .979$ ) is determined as high, and it explains 37.529% of the scale. Upon examining the items under the Social Bonds sub-dimension, it is found that the reliability analysis ( $\alpha = .948$ ) result is high, and it explains 27.254% of the scale. Upon examining the items under the Financial Bonds sub-dimension, the reliability analysis of this sub-dimension ( $\alpha = .941$ ) is detected to be at quite a high level, and it explains 19.527% of the scale.

The item statistics findings are illustrated in Figure 2. Upon examining Figure 2, it is determined that the factor structure of the RM strategies scale is also confirmed by the CFA findings. Therefore, the factor loading values range between .75 - .94 which may be accepted as high factor loads. However, the values of  $R^2$  range from .56 to 0.88, meaning that the  $R^2$  is also within the high and medium ranges (Kline, 2009). The t-values are detected as significant at  $p < .01$ , and all values are detected to exceed 2.58.

**Figure 2: Relationship Marketing Strategies Scale Path Diagram**



**FB= Financial Bonds, SB= Social Bonds, StB= Structural Bonds**

Upon examining Figure 2, modifications are made between items 1-2, 5-6, and 9-10 in order to confirm the explained factor structure. For a model to be within the acceptable or good-fit range, fit indexes should fulfill the expected or acceptable fit criteria. The boundaries of Goodness-of-Fit (GoF) criteria used in the study are given below.

**Table 5: GoF Criteria Intervals for the Model**

GoF Criteria	Good Fit	Acceptable Fit
RMSEA	$0 < RMSEA < .05$	$.05 \leq RMSEA \leq .10$
NFI	$.95 \leq NFI \leq 1$	$.90 < NFI \leq .95$
NNFI	$.97 \leq NNFI \leq 1$	$.95 \leq NNFI \leq .97$
CFI	$.97 \leq CFI \leq 1$	$.95 \leq CFI \leq .97$
SRMR	$0 \leq SRMR < .05$	$.05 \leq SRMR \leq .10$
GFI	$.95 \leq GFI \leq 1$	$.90 \leq GFI \leq .95$
AGFI	$.90 \leq AGFI \leq 1$	$.85 \leq AGFI \leq .90$

(SRMR: Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; AGFI: Adjusted GoF Index; RMSEA: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; NNFI: Non-Normed Fit Index; GFI: GoF Index; CFI: Comparative Fit Index; NFI: Normed Fit Index) (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003).

Upon examining the values in Figure 2 and Table 5, the  $X^2/df$  and RMSEA values among the RM strategies scale GoF values are seen to be within the desired range. However, the GoF values confirm the RM strategies.

**Table 6: GoF Values Regarding the Relationship Marketing Strategies**

$X^2/df$	p	RMSEA	NNFI	GFI	AGFI	NFI	CFI	RMR	SRMR
3.323	.000	.076	.99	.93	.91	.99	.99	.053	.031

### 6.2.2. Reliability and CFA Findings Regarding the Cognitive Dissonance Scale

The item analysis results, reliability levels, and explanatory factor analysis results pertaining the reliability and validity of the CD scale are given in Table 7.

**Table 7: Reliability, Explanatory Factor Analysis, and Item Analysis Results of the Cognitive Dissonance Scale**

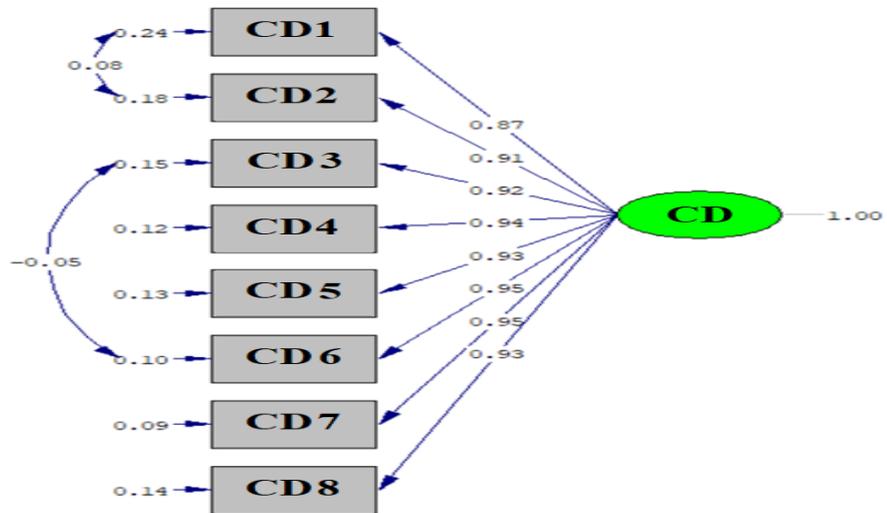
Item No	Factor Loads	Item - Scale Relationship
1	.905	.877
2	.931	.910
3	.932	.910
4	.945	.927
5	.937	.916
6	.940	.921
7	.953	.936
8	.936	.915
<b>Confidence Level</b>	<b>0.977</b>	
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	<b>6.993</b>	
<b>Variance Explained (%)</b>	<b>87.412</b>	
KMO: .955; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity = $X^2(28)=4838,188$ ; $p= .000$		

It is decided that there is no need to exclude an item from the scale, since the correlation value of the items with the others is lower than 0.30. The reliability is determined as high (C.Alpha = .977).

In Table 7, the KMO value is found to exceed 0.60 and the Barlett's sphericity test is determined to be significant ( $p < .01$ ). In order to decide whether or not to exclude an item from the scale, the criterion of having a factor load value that exceeds .45 is considered (Büyüköztürk, 2009). The factor analysis suggests that the eight-item scale has a single-factor structure and the total variance explained is 87.412%. Since the scale has only one factor, no rotation procedure is performed.

The item statistics are illustrated in Figure 3. Upon examining Figure 3, it is determined that the factor structure of the CD scale is also confirmed by the CFA findings. Meaning, the factor loading values of the items range between 0.87 - 0.95 which are accepted as high. On the other hand, the values of  $R^2$  range between 0.76 - 0.90. The t-values are detected as significant at  $p < .01$ , and all values are determined to exceed 2.58.

**Figure 3: Cognitive Dissonance Scale Path Diagram**



Chi-Square=55.12, df=18, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.077

CD= Cognitive Dissonance

Upon examining Figure 3, a modification is made between items 1-2 and 3-6 to confirm the explained factor structure.

Upon examining Figure 3 and Table 8, it is seen that  $X^2/df$  and RMSEA values among the CD scale GoF values are within the desired range. Nonetheless, the GoF values confirm the CD scale.

**Table 8: GoF Values of the Cognitive Dissonance Scale**

$\chi^2/df$	p	RMSEA	NNFI	GFI	AGFI	NFI	CFI	RMR	SRMR
3.062	.000	.077	.99	.95	.92	.99	.99	.015	.012

### 6.2.2. Reliability and CFA Findings Regarding the Repurchase Behavior Scale

The item analysis results, reliability levels, and explanatory factor analysis results regarding the reliability and validity of the repurchase behavior scale are shown in Table 9.

**Table 9: Reliability, Explanatory Factor Analysis, and Item Analysis Results Regarding the Repurchase Behavior Scale**

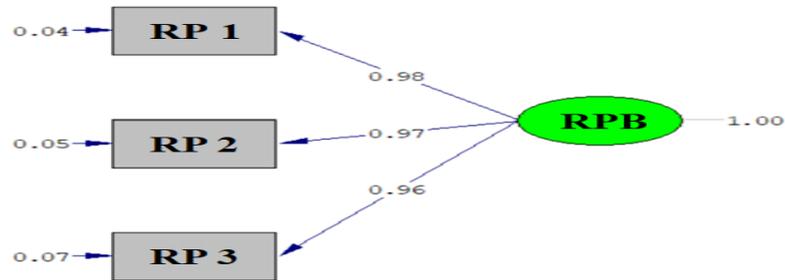
Item No	Factor Loads	Item - Scale Relationship
1	.984	.963
2	.982	.959
3	.978	.950
<b>Confidence Level</b>	<b>.981</b>	
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	<b>2.888</b>	
<b>Variance Explained (%)</b>	<b>96.261</b>	
KMO: .787; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity = $\chi^2(3)=1883,901$ ; p=.000		

It is decided that there is no need to exclude an item from the scale, since the correlation value of the items with the others is lower than 0.30. The reliability is determined as high (C.Alpha = .981).

In Table 9, the KMO exceeds 0.60, and Bartlett's sphericity test is determined as significant ( $p < .01$ ). In order to decide whether or not to exclude an item from the scale, the criterion of having a factor load value that exceeds 0.45 is considered (Büyüköztürk, 2009). The factor analysis result suggests that the eight-item scale has a single-factor structure and the value of total variance explained is 96.261%. Since the scale has merely one factor, no rotation procedure is performed.

The item statistic findings are illustrated in Figure 4. Upon examining Figure 4, it is determined that the factor structure of the repurchase behavior scale is also confirmed by the CFA findings. Meaning, the factor loading values range between .96 - .98 which may be accepted as high. However, the values of  $R^2$  range between 0.92 - 0.96. The t-values are detected as significant at  $p < .01$ , and all values are determined to exceed 2.58. Upon examining Figure 4, the explained factor structure is confirmed.

**Figure 4: Diagram of the Repurchase Behavior Scale**



Chi-Square=2.09, df=1, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.020

RB= Repurchase Behavior

Upon examining the values in Table 10 and Figure 4, it is seen that  $X^2/df$  and RMSEA values are within the desired range. Nevertheless, the GoF values confirm the repurchase behavior.

**Table 10: GoF Values of the Repurchase Behavior Scale**

$X^2/df$	p	RMSEA	NNFI	GFI	AGFI	NFI	CFI	RMR	SRMR
2.090	.000	.020	.99	.98	.97	.99	.99	.010	.009

### 6.2.3. Reliability and CFA Findings Regarding the Customer Satisfaction Scale

The item analysis results, reliability levels, and explanatory factor analysis results about the reliability and validity of the customer satisfaction scale are given in Table 11.

**Table 11: Reliability, Explanatory Factor Analysis, and Item Analysis Results Regarding the Customer Satisfaction Scale**

Item No	Factor Loads	Item – Scale Relationship
1	.981	.957
2	.981	.957
3	.978	.952
<b>Confidence Level</b>	<b>.979</b>	
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	<b>2.882</b>	
<b>Variance Explained (%)</b>	<b>96.073</b>	
KMO: .789; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity = $X^2(3)=1836,455$ ; p= .000		

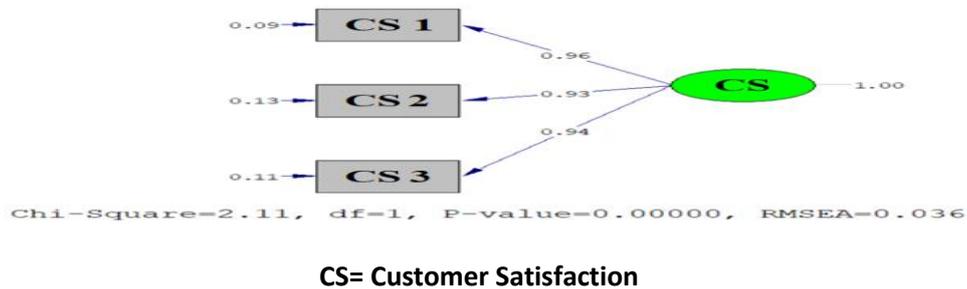
As seen in Table 11, it is decided that there is no need to exclude an item from the scale, since the correlation value of the items with the others exceeds 0.30. The reliability is determined as high (C.Alpha = .979).

The KMO exceeds 0.60 and Bartlett's sphericity test is determined as significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) in Table 9. In order to decide whether or not to exclude an item from the scale, the criterion of having a factor load value that exceeds 0.45 is considered (Büyüköztürk, 2009). The factor analysis results suggest that the eight-item scale has a single-factor structure and the total

variance explained is determined as 96.073%. Since the scale has merely one factor, no rotation procedure is performed.

The item statistic findings are illustrated in Figure 5. Upon examining Figure 5, it is determined that the factor structure of the customer satisfaction scale is also confirmed by the CFA findings. Meaning, the factor loading values range from 0.93 to 0.96 which may be considered as high. Nevertheless, the values of  $R^2$  range from 0.86 to 0.92. The t-values are detected to be significant at  $p < .01$ , and all values are determined to exceed 2.58.

**Figure 5: Path Diagram of the Customer Satisfaction Scale**



Upon examining Figure 5, it is seen that the explained factor structure is confirmed. Upon examining the values in Table 12 and Figure 5, it is seen that  $X^2/df$  and RMSEA values among the customer satisfaction scale GoF values are within the desired range. However, the GoF values confirm the repurchase behavior.

**Table 12: GoF Values Regarding the Customer Satisfaction Scale**

$X^2/df$	p	RMSEA	GFI	CFI	NFI	NNFI	AGFI	RMR	SRMR
2.110	.000	.036	.99	.99	.99	.98	.99	.010	.008

AVE (Average Variance Extracted) and CR (Composite Reliability) values for measurement tools are given in Table 13.

**Table 13: Table of CR and AVE Values Regarding the Measurement Tools**

Variables	CR	AVE
Financial Bonds	.93	.78
Social Bonds	.95	.74
Structural Bonds	.98	.85
Cognitive Dissonance	.98	.86
Repurchase Behavior	.98	.94
Customer Satisfaction	.96	.89

In order to evaluate the convergent validity of the scale, the CR and AVE values of the constructs included in the measurement tool are estimated. To ensure convergent validity, it is accepted that convergent validity would occur if the AVE values exceeded 0.50, and the CR value exceeds .60 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Gefen et al., 2000). Since it is seen that the CR

and AVE values of the constructs fulfill both criteria, it is thought that the measurement tool verifies convergent validity.

**Table 14: Pearson Correlation Analysis Results Regarding the Relationship Between Variables**

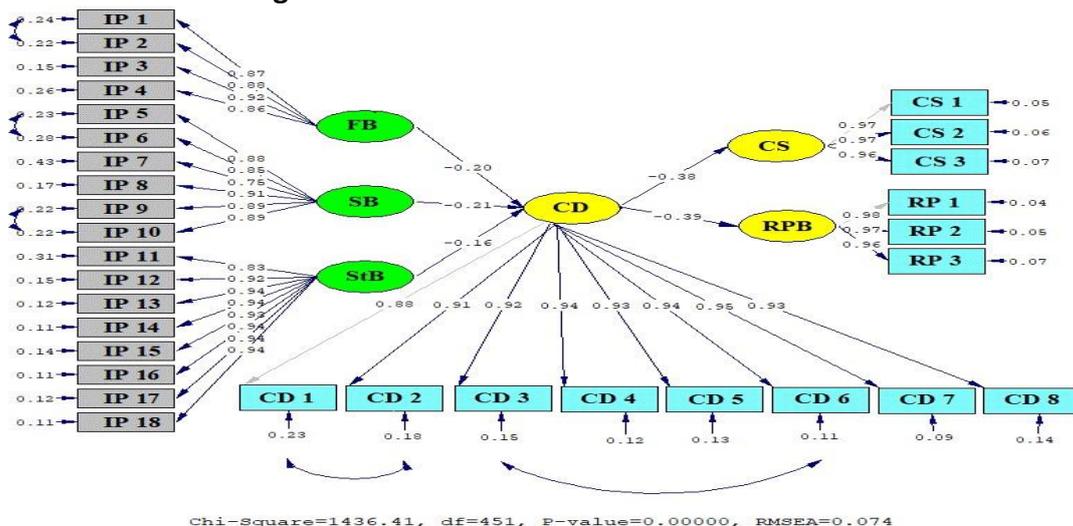
Variables	Financial Bonds	Social Bonds	Structural Bonds	Cognitive Dissonance	Customer Satisfaction	Repurchase Behavior
Financial Bonds	1	.726**	.698**	-.459**	.708**	.719**
Social Bonds		1	.680**	-.478**	.702**	.692**
Structural Bonds			1	-.458**	.772**	.768**
Cognitive Dissonance				1	-.376**	-.379**
Customer Satisfaction					1	.949**
Repurchase Behavior						1
**p<.01						

Pearson correlation analysis is conducted to investigate the associations among the variables. Accordingly, the correlation coefficients are determined as statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). It is determined that financial, social, and structural bonds have negative relationships with CD; whereas CD has negative relationships with customer satisfaction and repurchase behavior.

#### 6.2.4. Structural Equation Model – SEM (Path Analysis) Results of the Research Model

The results of the SEM established for the model and hypotheses of the study are given in Table 15 and illustrated in Figure 6.

**Figure 6: SEM Model Results of the Research**



Upon examining the fit criteria of the model illustrated in Figure 6, it is determined that  $X^2/df=3.184$ ,  $RMSEA=0.074$  are within acceptable fit values, whereas other fit criteria ( $NNFI=0.99$ ;  $CFI=0.99$ ;  $SRMR=0.025$ ,  $IFI=0.99$ ;  $AGFI=0.92$ ;  $RMR=0.047$ ;  $GFI=0.94$ ;  $NFI=0.99$ ) are also

found to be within both perfect and acceptable fit criteria. The hypothesis results of the research model are presented in Table 15 and illustrated in Figure 6.

**Table 15: Standardized Parameter Estimates, t-Values, and Research Hypothesis Results**

Hypotheses	Paths	Standardized Parameter Estimates ( $\beta$ )	t values	Results
H <sub>1</sub>	(FB)→( CD)	-0.20	-2.34*	Accept
H <sub>2</sub>	(SB)→( CD)	-0.21	-2.60**	Accept
H <sub>3</sub>	(StB)→( CD)	-0.16	-2.22**	Accept
H <sub>4</sub>	(CD)→( CS)	-0.38	-7.94**	Accept
H <sub>5</sub>	(CD)→( RB)	-0.39	-8.03**	Accept
*p< .05; **p< .01				

Upon examining the results of the research model presented in Table 15, it is determined that financial bonds have a negative and significant effect on CD ( $t=-2.34$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). It is determined that this result would have a negative impact of 0.20 on the CD levels when a one-unit increase occurs in the financial bonds of the participants. All these results indicate that the first hypothesis of the study is accepted.

Social bonds are determined to have a significant and negative impact on CD ( $t=-2.60$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). It is determined that this result would have a negative impact of 0.21 on the CD levels when a one-unit increase occurs in the social bond levels of the participants. All these results indicate that the second hypothesis of the study is accepted.

CD is determined to have a significant and negative impact on customer satisfaction ( $t=-7.94$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). It is determined that this result would have a negative impact of 0.38 on customer satisfaction when a one-unit increase occurs in the CD levels of the participants. All these results indicate that the fourth hypothesis of the study is accepted.

CD is determined to have a significant and negative impact on repurchase behavior ( $t=-8.03$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). It is determined that this result would have a negative impact of 0.39 on the repurchase behavior when a one-unit increase occurs in the CD levels of the participants. All these results indicate that the fifth hypothesis of the research is accepted.

## 7. Discussion and Conclusion

RM has an important place in generating long-term value and establishing permanent relationships between customers and companies. Especially with the recent development of technology-based RM, it has become crucial for companies to improve and maintain the quality of their online relationships with customers to enhance lifetime customer values. In some cases, customers may experience a CD following the purchase with online relationships,



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and this may have an adverse impact on their satisfaction and repurchase behavior. In this study, the impacts of RM bond strategies (financial, social, and structural bonds) on consumers throughout online shopping, and the impacts of the CD on consumers' satisfaction and repurchase behaviors are examined.

The social, structural, and financial bonds have negative and significant impacts on CD. In other words, it is determined that a one-unit increase in the social, structural, and financial bonds of the participants would have an adverse impact on their CD levels. This finding is consistent with the results of Sharifi & Esfidani (2014) who suggested that RM, which was handled with the dimensions of communication and trust, had a significant impact on CD. Aydın & Yılmaz (2018) revealed that hedonic consumption tendency, instinctive purchases, perceived value, and perceived risk had impacts on CD during online shopping. Besides, CD affected purchase intention. Moreover, it was determined that CD had a negative and significant impact on customer satisfaction and repurchase behavior. Salzberger & Koller (2010) determined that CD had no impact on satisfaction, however, had an impact on complaint behavior. Furthermore, Mao & Oppewal (2010) found that the CD (inconsistent information) which was experienced after university selection had an impact on perceived service quality and customer satisfaction. Therefore, it may be claimed that the findings of this study are similar to the results of the previously conducted studies.

Based on all these results and explanations, online shopping websites have important duties to mitigate the dissonance that may occur pertinent to consumers. It may be asserted that shopping websites have a significant impact on reducing CD behavior by offering conveniences such as improving communication, procuring customized products, utilizing more innovative products, and improved websites, besides economic conveniences.

Marketing managers in businesses should look for ways to reduce cognitive dissonance, which is one of the main factors that negatively affect customer satisfaction and loyalty. Especially after a high-participation purchase, they should strengthen the trust and communication between them by following the customers and measuring their satisfaction. Sometimes customers try on their own to reduce the negativities they experience after purchasing. Marketing managers should minimize the cognitive dissonance they experience by helping these customers. In addition, businesses should examine the purchasing experiences of customers who are not stable in their purchasing behavior and determine the reasons. In this direction, they should offer solutions to customers in order to reduce the negative situation they experience.

As consumers' conflict about purchasing increases, their repurchase intention decreases. Consumers are reluctant to reuse the site and recommend it to their friends if they are not sure of their purchase. For this reason, timely response to post-purchase consumer requests and complaints can help reduce conflict.



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**Etik Beyanı:** Bu çalışmanın tüm hazırlanma süreçlerinde etik kurallara uyulduğunu yazarlar beyan eder. Aksi bir durumun tespiti halinde Fiscaeconomia Dergisinin hiçbir sorumluluğu olmayıp, tüm sorumluluk çalışmanın yazarlarına aittir.

**Ethics Statement:** The authors declare that ethical rules are followed in all preparation processes of this study. In case of detection of a contrary situation, Fiscaeconomia has no responsibility and all responsibility belongs to the authors of the study.