

## Understanding Consumer Values: An Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods

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### Abstract

This study aims to accomplish two goals: First, the analysis uses the means-end theory (MEC) to test a conceptual model that includes relevant variables, such as engagement, emotional value, functional value, attitude, and environmental consciousness established to comprehend how Turkish consumers evaluate non-auction-based C2C secondary marketplaces; second, in line with the variables, to reveal the views of Turkish users on these marketplaces through in-depth. A sequential exploratory mixed method design combining quantitative and qualitative parts is used in this study. The data in Study 1 acquired from 363 consumers via face-to-face surveys were analyzed using explanatory factor analysis, and the process model produced by Hayes tested the hypotheses—study 2 featured 20 in-depth interviews with C2C online secondary marketplace users. The findings reveal that the variable of consumer engagement partially mediated the relationship between functional value/emotional value and attitude toward platforms. Additionally, Environmental consciousness moderates the strength of the relationships between functional value/emotional value and attitude toward platforms mediated by consumer engagement. The results of Study 2 show that in addition to functional and emotional values, social and environmental values result from the consumer's evaluation of C2C online secondhand platforms. Moreover, consumer engagement, mainly associated with platform features, user comments, and seller profiles, leads to positive attitudes toward platforms. The study is original in that it uses a sequential explanatory mixed method approach to determine the thoughts of Turkish users about the online secondary marketplace in the relationship between consumer values dimension, consumer engagement, environmental consciousness, and attitudes.

**Keywords:** *Consumer to Consumer, Consumer Engagement, Consumer Attitude, Consumer Value, Environmental Consciousness, Mixed Methods.*



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Advancements in technology and resource scarcity are driving both consumers and organizations toward collaborative production and consumption in the sharing economy (Chen & Wang, 2019). Economic conditions, unemployment, and a desire for increased earnings may influence this shift, but the primary driving forces include the progress of digital technology, increased digital security, and the adaptation of these technologies to consumer needs (Bilgin, 2021). In globalized world, rapidly advancing technology is elevating the importance of the sharing economy, with people joining this economic model for reasons such as cost-effectiveness, environmental friendliness, and a willingness to engage with new applications (Belk, 2014).

C2C platforms are called sharing economies or collaborative consumption platforms, as described in the literature by Ek Styvén and Mariani (2020) and Joyner Armstrong and Lang (2018). A C2C platform is digital technology enabling the acquisition and distribution of goods through collaborative consumption. Online second-hand sales are re-commerce, which combines e-commerce and resale. Platform-related entities categorize them into three categories: peer-to-peer, business-to-consumer, and customer-to-customer (C2C) transactions (Wertz & Kingyens, 2015).

During the COVID-19 era, consumer-to-consumer (C2C) trade has significantly expanded, particularly on emerging social commerce marketplace platforms facilitated by digital technologies (Sim, 2023). This growth is especially notable in the used-product exchange and transaction markets within C2C platforms (Ofori et al., 2023). For instance, consumer spending on Amazon between May and July 2020 increased by 60% compared to the same period in the previous year, highlighting the surge in online shopping during the pandemic. Additionally, eBay's projected gross merchandise volume for the first quarter of 2025 ranges between \$18.3 billion and \$18.6 billion, indicating sustained activity in C2C transactions (Reuters, 2025). Moreover, recent market research shows that the global C2C e-commerce market is projected to grow from \$300 billion in 2024 to \$800 billion by 2032, with a compound annual growth rate of 13% (HTF Market Intelligence, 2024).

C2C second-hand trading platforms are proliferating. However, academic interest in the characteristics of consumers using C2C second-hand trading platforms is scant (Park, 2023; Wen et al., 2023). Second, prior research has concentrated chiefly on C2C electronic marketplaces that use auctions to determine prices (Meksopavankul, 2017). The C2C secondary marketplace, referred to as non-auction-based transactions (Moriuchi & Takahashi, 2023), has recently become more prominent. This research will focus on C2C electronic classified markets that do not use auctions. Furthermore, the number of second-hand shopping websites on digital platforms is expected to rise along with the shopping volume (Telli & Gezmişoğlu Şen, 2022). Despite the high growth projections, insufficient studies on Turkish users are a significant shortcoming. Also, no in-depth study exists in Turkey, except for Özkaya and Kazançoğlu (2021), to explain why consumers prefer online second-hand shopping.

In the context of these research problems, the central purpose of this investigation is to gain insight into Turkey's online C2C e-commerce. A sequential exploratory mixed method design, including a survey and in-depth interviews, was used to obtain broader and more detailed information based on the means-end theory (MEC). This theory addresses the consumer decision-making process through a cognitive approach, aiming to reveal what products consumers purchase for what purpose during this process and what they perceive in products from a consumer perspective. According to the theory, consumers perceive the products they choose not only as consumption tools but also as psychological and functional outcomes where they can express their goals, values, and aspirations (Costa et al., 2004). Therefore, this research study has a twofold purpose. First, it aims to test a conceptual model with relevant variables, including functional value, emotional value, consumer engagement, attitude, and environmental consciousness. This model is designed to understand how Turkish consumers evaluate non-auction-based C2C secondary marketplaces. Second, the study seeks to reveal the views of Turkish users on online second-hand shopping platforms through in-depth qualitative analysis and to examine whether the quantitative and qualitative data support each other.

This study contributes to the literature on consumer-to-consumer (C2C) e-commerce by applying the Means-End Chain (MEC) theory to understand consumer behavior in non-auction-based secondary marketplaces. Specifically, it extends prior research by conceptualizing functional and emotional value as independent variables, consumer engagement as a mediator, environmental consciousness as a moderator, and consumer attitude as an outcome. This integrated model provides a comprehensive framework for examining how consumers evaluate second-hand platforms, which have been underexplored in existing studies. In line with Gutman (1982), consumer value emerges from evaluations of product attributes that fulfill personal goals. These evaluations are shaped by platform-specific elements, such as consumer interest in second-hand platforms, advertisements, and product-related comments. Moreover, the study highlights the importance of psychological benefits obtained through buyer–seller interaction (Parihar et al., 2019), which in turn foster positive consumer attitudes (Ofori et al., 2023).

Secondly, this research adds to consumer engagement and environmental consciousness literature. In the present marketing literature, consumer engagement has become increasingly important (Kumar et al., 2019). Previous research has validated the affirmative correlation between engagement and several forms of conduct (such as pro-environmental, green citizenship, in-role, extra-role, etc.) (Mohammad et al., 2021). Hence, the roles of consumer engagement and environmental consciousness as attitudinal factors influencing attitude toward C2C e-commerce platforms have not been closely examined. This study contends that environmental consciousness will moderate the relationship between consumer engagement and attitude.

Thirdly, a mixed methods study is used to analyze consumer attitude toward C2C secondary marketplaces in Turkey using a holistic approach. Based on the MEC theory, it seeks to understand the

role of consumer value, consumer engagement, and environmental consciousness. Unlike previous studies that solely used quantitative or qualitative methods, this research employs this method approach to provide a comprehensive understanding (Creswell, 2013). A quantitative study examines constructs and relationships, with findings informing subsequent qualitative research to better comprehend and address anomalies in the quantitative results (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010).

The rest of this paper is structured as follows. First, it provides a short theoretical overview of functional value, emotional value, consumer engagement, attitude, and environmental consciousness, followed by a description of our mixed methods of research design. Subsequently, we report on the findings from our quantitative and qualitative research. We conclude with our theoretical contributions, managerial implications, and future research directions.

## **2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.1. Functional Value**

It is assumed that functional value is generally the most influential factor in consumer preferences (Sheth et al., 1991). A product or service's observable performance and beneficial features constitute the functional value (Furukawa et al., 2019). Functional value expresses individuals' rational and economic values, with the product and service quality shaping this dimension (Khan, 2010). In other words, functional value comprises the physical features that a product should have (Berry et al., 2002). The functional value of a product can also be derived from its unique characteristics, such as reliability, durability, and price (Sheth et al., 1991).

### **2.3. Emotional Value**

Emotional value is associated with a product or service's emotional gains to the consumer (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). While emotional value includes various positive emotions such as trust, excitement, etc., it also represents a value related to human emotions, sometimes encompassing emotions like fear, excitement, and tension (Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007; Sheth et al., 1991). Evaluated from the product perspective, it can be said that emotional value is a value that leads to preference due to the emotions or emotional states the product evokes in the consumer (Xiao & Kim, 2009).

### **2.4. Consumer Engagement**

Engagement is a complex concept in marketing literature, encompassing both a process and a state. Bowden (2009) defines it as a psychological process that drives customer loyalty, while Brodie et al. (2013) present it as a psychological state with specific intensity at specific points in time. Both views acknowledge that consumer engagement is a continuum, with different levels of intensity and complexity expected in different situations and times (Sim & Plewa, 2017). According to Hollebee et al. (2012), consumer engagement can also be defined as the extent to which an individual participates

in and feels emotionally connected to a company's offerings and activities, irrespective of whether these activities are initiated by the company or by the consumer. In the context of the research scope, according to Cheung et al. (2014), consumer engagement is the degree of a customer's mental, emotional, and physical presence about a particular online purchasing platform, which is known as consumer engagement.

Ofori et al. (2023), analyzing the structural equation model with survey responses from experienced users of C2C used-product platforms, reveals that multi-dimensional consumer values (hedonic, utilitarian, environmental, and social) significantly influence consumer engagement. Moriuchi and Takahashi (2023) found that Functional and emotional value indirectly affect consumer engagement through trust in the immediacy platform and trust in the online seller on the C2C e-marketplace. Another study discovered that, for utilitarian and hedonistic brands, there is a curvilinear relationship between customer engagement and customer value. It was observed that hedonic brands contribute to a more significant increase in customer value with increasing consumer engagement compared to brands that are beneficial for a brand, category, consumer, or situation (Hollebeek, 2013). Therefore, this study proposes that functional value and emotional values will directly influence consumer engagement.

H1a. Functional value positively impacts consumer engagement.

H1b. Emotional value positively impacts consumer engagement.

## **2.5. Consumer Engagement and Attitude**

Individual engagement and values can affect how customers feel about goods and services and what they buy. According to attitude research, a person's intention to carry out a behavior determines that person's behavior. One definition of action is the determination to carry out a course of action or activity, like engaging in a relationship (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). According to Vivek et al. (2012), a person actively involved in a brand, company, or product may form more positive attitudes toward it, strengthening the psychological process and raising the possibility of a positive behavioral response. With or without direct interaction, consumer engagement affects consumers' attitudes, behavioral intentions, and actual behavior (Kim & Lee, 2012). We assume then that engaged individuals are more likely to develop positive attitudes.

**H2:** Consumer engagements positively affect attitude toward platforms.

Based on the existing literature, it has been widely recognized that consumer engagement plays a central role in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors, especially within the context of value-based frameworks. According to prior research, customer engagement serves as a critical mediator in various relationships, such as between value and satisfaction (Parihar et al., 2019). Moreover, engagement has been shown to mediate the link between trust toward a retailer and consumer behavioral intentions (Thakur, 2018), emphasizing its role in influencing decision-making processes.

Further studies have demonstrated that customer engagement is essential in promoting value co-creation behaviors, which enhance the overall consumer experience (Merrilees, 2016; Zhang et al., 2017). Hollebeek (2011) also emphasized that engagement is a multifaceted concept, incorporating emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions, which aligns with the idea that engagement influences a consumer's attitude toward a brand or platform.

In the hospitality industry, research has confirmed that consumer engagement significantly impacts both attitudes and behaviors (Aluri et al., 2019; Ou et al., 2020). Functional value, in particular, has been found to affect engagement, which, in turn, shapes consumer attitudes toward platforms and brands (Vivek et al., 2012). Building upon this body of work, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**H3a:** Consumer engagement mediates the relationship between functional value and attitude toward platforms.

**H3b:** Consumer engagement mediates the relationship between emotional value and attitude toward platforms.

## **2.6. As a Moderator, Environmental Consciousness**

Previous research has explored the impact of environmental consciousness on consumers' decision-making processes. Consumers who care about the environment believe they should reduce their consumption and refrain from doing things that harm the environment (Segev et al., 2015). Fu and Kim (2019) found that buyers' awareness of environmental issues positively impacted their cognitive reactions, which in turn affected their intention to buy and willingness to pay a premium for eco-fashion. Furthermore, environmental and green factors can significantly impact a customer's behavior by encouraging them to look up more information about the product online from reputable sources (Luzio & Lemke, 2013).

The C2C used product platform promotes sustainable consumption, reduces resource waste, and addresses environmental pollution by offering economically efficient alternative used products to consumers (Liu et al., 2021; Moriuchi & Takahashi, 2023). Moreover, the ability of a C2C platform to share idle resources yields both demand and supply economic advantages that increase resource efficiency and provide societal and environmental benefits (Park, 2023; Teubner et al., 2014). In this context, we assume that environmentally conscious consumers are aware of the savings and environmental advantages of reusing products through the C2C online platform, leading to a change in attitudes. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was established.

**H4a:** Environmental consciousness moderates the mediation effects of consumer engagement in the relationship between functional value and attitude toward platforms.

**H4b:** Environmental consciousness moderates the mediation effects of consumer engagement in the relationship between emotional value and attitude toward platforms.

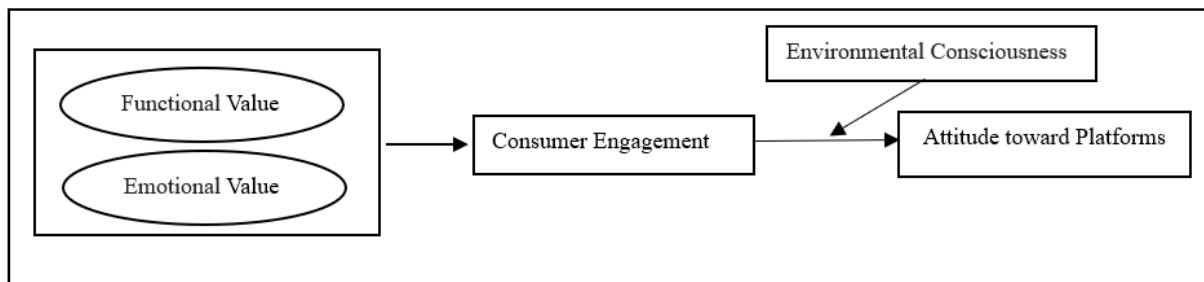
### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a mixed-method explanatory sequential design. This design aims to begin with a quantitative phase and subsequently explain the results obtained through qualitative studies (Creswell, 2017). This design commences with the collection of quantitative data, followed by the analysis of the gathered quantitative data and the identification of participants for the qualitative phase. In the subsequent stage, qualitative data are collected and analyzed, and finally, the quantitative and qualitative data are integrated (Creswell, 2017). Maxwell and Mittapalli (2010) have associated the significance of mixed-method research with its explanatory power. The use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches enables the attainment of results that would be unattainable through either method alone.

#### 3.1. Study 1: Quantitative research

Study 1 determined the variables of functional value, emotional value, environmental consciousness, consumer engagement, and attitude toward platforms. In terms of the purpose of the research and hypotheses, the research model depicting the interactions among the variables in question is presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** Research Model



##### 3.1.1. Sample and Data Collection.

The study sample comprises individuals 18 or older who have used online second-hand shopping platforms operating in Turkey. In the quantitative phase of the research, a survey form was employed as the primary data collection method. Four hundred twenty surveys were distributed by pollsters in the study, with 380 surveys completed. Seventeen surveys with incomplete or inconsistent responses were excluded from the analysis, resulting in 363 surveys being included in the analytical process. A 5-point Likert scale was utilized to rate the scales included in the survey form. The data were analyzed using statistical programs, specifically SPSS and AMOS.

##### 3.1.2. Stimulus Design and Measure

In this study, it is decided to include nine C2C online secondhand platforms: Letgo, Sahibinden, Dolap, Gardrops, Gittigidiyor, ModaCruz, Zebramo, BebeCruz, and Others (social media tools). Based on MEC theory, the study uses these secondhand platforms to reveal the relationships between consumer

values, engagement, attitude, and environmental consciousness. It is observed from previous studies that the most preferred platforms in Turkey are Letgo, Sahibinden, and Dolap (Akin, 2020; Telli et al., 2021).

The measurement of functional and emotional variables utilized a scale developed by Sweeney and Soutar (2001) and adapted by Moriuchi and Takahashi (2023). The scale Moriuchi and Takahashi (2022) were employed to measure the consumer engagement variable. The scale from Telli et al. (2021) was utilized to gauge consumer attitudes toward online second-hand shopping platforms. Finally, expressions related to environmental consciousness were adapted from the scales used in the study conducted by Banerjee and McKeage (1994), which has been widely employed and validated in more recent studies as well (Chang, 2012; Karakaş, 2022; Sadachar et al., 2016;), demonstrating its continued reliability and relevance.

### **3.1.3. Analysis and Results**

Mediation and moderated mediation models were evaluated using the PROCESS macro developed by Hayes (2013), incorporating bootstrapping to generate 95 percent bootstrap confidence intervals. The PROCESS analysis involved:

- Independent variables (functional value/emotional value).
- A mediator (consumer engagement).
- A moderator (environmental consciousness).
- A single dependent variable (attitude toward platforms).

To test the hypothesis, the 4-stage model suggested by Baron and Kenny was substituted with the mediation analysis method proposed by Hayes (2017) and other researchers (Mackinnon, 2000; Shrout & Bolger, 2002). As a result, a two-stage model was used. The process macro's number four model, the mediator analysis, was presented first, followed by the number fourteen model, the moderated mediation (Korkmaz & Gedik, 2020).

A reliability analysis was performed to assess the reliability of the measurement and the consistency of scale statements within the research. Following the approach suggested by Malhotra (2010), Cronbach's alpha method was employed in evaluating internal consistency. Each measurement demonstrated reliability, with alpha values higher than 0.70.

### **3.1.4. Explanatory Factor Analysis**

To investigate the structural validity of the research scales, explanatory factor analysis was carried out independently for the variables of functional value, emotional value, consumer engagement, attitude, and environmental consciousness. The suitability of the data for factor analysis was assessed through the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Sphericity Tests. Principal component analysis and the varimax rotation method were employed to determine the factors of the scale (Hair et al., 2010).



The final factor structures obtained from the conducted exploratory factor analyses, along with factor loadings, explained the variance of the factors, Cronbach's alpha values, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values, which are presented in Table I.

**Table 1.** Exploratory Factor Analysis and Reliability Analysis Results

Latent and Observed Variables	AVE	CR	Factor Loadings
<b>Consumer Value</b> (Variance Explained: 59.126%; Cronbach's Alpha: 0.784)			
<b>Functional Value</b>	.56	.83	
Products that I buy from a C2C online secondary marketplace are reasonably priced			.767
Products that I buy from a C2C online secondary marketplace offer value for money			.785
Products that I buy from a C2C online secondary marketplace is a good product for the price			.742
Products that I buy from a C2C online secondary marketplace would be economical			.700
<b>Emotional Value</b>	.58	.81	
Products that I buy from a C2C online secondary marketplace would make me want to use it			.751
Products that I buy from on a C2C online secondary marketplace would make me feel good			.759
Products that I buy from on a C2C online secondary marketplace would give me pleasure			.790
Environmental Consciousness (Variance Explained: 62.126%; Cronbach's Alpha: 0.796)	.62	.86	
I am a person who cares about the environment.			.724
The whole environmental issue is very important to me.			.807
Whenever possible, I choose products with the lowest environmental impact.			.760
When I have to choose between two equivalent products, I question the pollution level of the products and try not to select the most polluting product.			.856
<b>Consumer Engagement</b> (Variance Explained: 50.778%; Cronbach's Alpha: 0.805)	.50	.86	
I spend a lot of my discretionary time on online secondary marketplace platforms.			.767
I am heavily into online secondary marketplace platforms.			.771
I am passionate about online secondary marketplace platforms.			.687
My days would not be the same without browsing online secondary marketplace platforms.			.712
I love shopping on online secondary marketplace platforms with my friends.			.690
I enjoy shopping on online secondary marketplace platforms more when I am with others			.639
<b>Attitude toward Platform</b> (Variance Explained: 58.111%; Cronbach's Alpha: 0.819)	.58	.87	
Shopping 2nd hand online is a good idea.			.701
I find it rational to shop from 2nd hand online sites.			.756
I tell people around me positive things about 2nd hand online shopping sites.			.741
I have a positive attitude toward shopping on 2nd hand online shopping sites.			.856
I like using 2nd hand online shopping sites for shopping.			.752

As seen in Table 1, the consumer value variable maintained its two-factor structure. As stated in the literature, the first dimension was named "functional value", and the second dimension, consisting of three statements, was defined as "emotional value". The other variables, engagement, attitude toward platforms, and environmental consciousness, were explained by a single factor. When the explanation ratios and Cronbach's alpha values of these factor structures were evaluated, it was seen that they were within acceptable limits.

Each construct's underlying constructs are judged appropriately, and the indicators' factor loadings were both high and statistically significant (see Table 1). All loading estimates were found to be significant ( $p < 0.00$ ), with 0.856 representing the highest loading estimate and 0.639 representing the lowest. Table 1 shows that the CR and AVE were above the 0.50 and 0.70 thresholds, respectively. (see Table 1). Within the scope of convergent validity, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) values were calculated for each latent variable construct. CR values of at least 0.70 and AVE values of 0.50 and above are considered the limit for the convergent validity of the construct in the measurement model (Malhotra, 2010). Hence, the average variance extracted (AVE) was above the threshold of 0.50, and CR was above the threshold of 0.70.

Before conducting hypothesis tests, a correlation matrix depicting the relationships between variables was generated, and multicollinearity was assessed. There are no relationships ( $>0.85$ ) between variables that would lead to multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2010). Therefore, it was concluded that the variables are suitable for hypothesis testing.

### **3.1.5. Hypothesis Tests**

#### **3.1.5.1. Mediation Effects**

As seen in Table 2, functional value is predicted by H1 to positively affect consumer engagement ( $\beta = 0.66$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). H1a is therefore supported. According to H1a, there is a positive impact emotional value on consumer engagement ( $\beta = 0.24$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). H2 is therefore supported. Support is found for H3a's prediction that consumer engagement ( $\beta = 0.23$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) positively affects attitude toward platforms.

The bootstrap tests ( $N = 5000$ ) by SPSS Process (version 4.3) Model 4 were used to examine the mediation effects. The 95% BootCIs of Paths 1 and 2 do not include zero points, showing that the mediating role of consumer engagement between functional value/emotional value and attitude toward platforms is significant at 0.05.

Table 2 shows a significant and positive effect between FV and AtP, where the path coefficient decreases from  $\beta = .65$  to  $\beta = .07$  by incorporating the mediating variable into the model. Additionally, a significant and positive effect is found between EV and AtP, and the path coefficient decreases from  $\beta = .78$  to  $\beta = .13$  with the inclusion of the mediating variable in the model. These results indicated that CE partially mediated the relationship between FV and AtP and between EV and AtP. Namely,

Consumer engagement mediates between (a) functional value and attitude toward platforms and (b) emotional value and attitude toward platforms. Thus, H4a and H4b were supported.

**Table 2.** Mediation Analysis (n = 363)

	<b>Variables</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Path 1</b>	Functional Value → Consumer Engagement	.32	.07	4.561	.0000
	Functional Value → Attitude	.65	.05	12.42	.0000
	Consumer Engagement → Attitude	.24	.03	6.535	.0000
	Indirect effect(s) of Emotional Value on Attitudes toward Platforms	<b>Effect</b>	<b>BootSE</b>	<b>BootLL 95% CI</b>	<b>BootUL 95% CI</b>
		.07	.02	0.351	0.1309
	<b>Variables</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Path 2</b>	Emotional Value → Consumer Engagement	.56	.09	5.874	.0000
	Emotional Value → Attitude	.78	.07	10.08	.0000
	Consumer Engagement → Attitude	.23	.04	5.765	.0000
	Indirect effect(s) of Emotional Value on Attitude toward Platforms	<b>Effect</b>	<b>BootSE</b>	<b>BootLL 95% CI</b>	<b>BootUL 95% CI</b>
		.13	.03	.672	.2136

### 3.1.5.2. Moderated Mediation Effects

SPSS Process (version 4.3) Model 14 (bootstrap = 5000) is applied to examine the moderated mediation effects (Hayes, 2017). As shown in Table III, the mediation effects of consumer engagement in the relationship between functional value and attitude toward platforms are significant in a lower level of environmental consciousness. In comparison, the effects are also significant in a higher level of environmental consciousness. Moreover, the mediation effects of consumer engagement in the relationship between emotional value and attitude toward platforms are significant in a lower level of environmental consciousness. In comparison, the effects are also significant in a higher level of environmental consciousness. Hence, Hypotheses 4a and 4b were supported.

**Table 3.** Results of Moderated Mediation Effects

Outcome variable: Attitude toward Platforms					
	<b>Variables</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Path 1</b>	Functional Value → Attitude	.49	.05	9.828	.0000
	Consumer Engagement → Attitude	.17	.03	4.979	.0000
	Interaction (Consumer Engagement * Environmental Consciousness)	.02	.00	5.367	.0000
	R <sup>2</sup> = .52/p: 0.000				
	Moderator (Environmental Consciousness)	Indirect effect		95% BootCI	
				SE	
		Functional Value → Consumer Engagement → Attitude		LLCI	ULCI
	Higher	.1138		.0313	.0534
	Mean	.0565		.0194	.0222
	Lower	-.0009		.0183	-.0371

(Table 3 cont.)

Path 2	Outcome variable: Attitude toward Platforms				
	Variables	B	SE	t	p
	Emotional Value→ Attitude	.49	.08	6.039	.0000
	Consumer Engagament→Attitude	.17	.03	4.680	.0000
	Interaction (Consumer Engagament *Environmental Consciousness)	.03	.00	5.23	.0000
	R <sup>2</sup> =.44/ p: 0.000				
	Moderator (Environmental Consciousness)	Indirect effect		95% BootCI	
		Emotional Value→Consumer Engagament→Attitude		LLCI	ULCI
				SE	
	Higher	.2097		.0500	.1183 .3159
	Mean	.1017		.0317	.0463 .1712
	Lower	-.0064		.0399	-.0866 .0729

According to the degree of environmental consciousness, the slope plot analysis of the moderated mediation (Process model 14) reveals that the impact of consumer engagement on attitude toward platforms varies.

### 3.1.6. Discussion

Based on MEC theory, study 1 provides insights into the relationships between functional value, emotional value, consumer engagement, and attitudes in C2C online secondhand platforms. Moreover, the moderating role of environmental consciousness in the relationship between consumer engagement and consumer attitudes is investigated. The findings suggest that the extended MEC theory can explain consumer behavior in the C2C online marketplace. Consumer engagement, environmental consciousness, and attitude toward C2C e-secondary platforms are all additional factors that we added to the MEC theory.

The analysis findings show that consumer engagement is positively impacted by both functional and emotional values (H1a and H2a), with emotional value demonstrating a stronger influence. This result aligns with previous studies indicating that perceived value significantly affects consumer engagement (Moriuchi & Takahashi, 2023; Ofori et al., 2023; Pang, 2021). However, while Ofori et al. (2023) emphasized both types of value equally, this study highlights the relatively greater importance of emotional value in the context of second-hand C2C marketplaces in Turkey. Emotional value—such as enjoyment, satisfaction, and the sense of positivity—appears to be a more dominant motivator for consumer engagement in this context (Moriuchi & Takahashi, 2023). This may be due to the social and experiential nature of second-hand shopping, where users seek not only functional benefits like cost savings but also emotional satisfaction from making sustainable or unique purchases. In contrast, functional value, while still significant, plays a more supportive role by providing utility and convenience through access to in-demand products and efficient platform services (Ma et al., 2023).

These results contribute to existing literature by offering context-specific insights and suggest that enhancing emotional appeal may be more effective for increasing engagement in emerging C2C markets.

Moreover, consumer engagement positively influences attitudes toward the platform (Supported by H2). About this outcome, Venetis and Ghauri (2004) stated that engaging in a relationship is not solely indicated by behavior; instead, it is more strongly signaled by the attitudes and reasons behind the behavior. Also, affective and cognitive elements comprise the attitude structure, which serves as the basis for consumer engagement (Ofori et al., 2023). Hence, users selecting, sharing, selling, and tracking the products they are interested in on second-hand C2C online platforms through product notification services contribute to engagement and lead consumers to develop a positive attitude toward these platforms. Additionally, consumer attitudes have a positive effect on continuous use intention. Additionally, it is found that consumer engagement is a mediator in the relationship between functional value/emotional value and attitude toward platforms (Supported by H3a and H3b). As a result, functional and emotional values generate a cognitive and affective process triggered during platform engagement, resulting in attitudes toward online C2C secondhand platforms.

Finally, the moderating effect of environmental consciousness is observed, signifying that environmental consciousness moderates the indirect impact of consumer value on attitudes toward platforms through consumer engagement (Supported by H4a, H4b). This suggests that highly environmentally conscious consumers emphasize the savings and environmental advantages of second-hand purchases made through the C2C online platform, eventually changing attitudes.

### **3.2. Study 2: Qualitative research**

The qualitative section of this study was conducted using the mixed-methods explanatory sequential design following the quantitative research. In the second part of the study, qualitative research was undertaken to interpret the quantitative results better and understand the reasons behind the findings that emerged from the quantitative analysis.

For Study 2, a purposive sampling method was employed (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The characteristics of participants from Study 1 were considered to identify suitable participants. The purposive sample consisted of 20 participants who exclusively used second-hand online shopping sites and made purchases from these sites. Initial contact was established through a phone call. An intentional effort was made to select a sample that balanced age, usage experience, income, and occupational diversity. Individuals meeting the specified criteria and agreeing to the interview were scheduled for interviews at a mutually convenient time and location.

The interview form technique was employed in the research to gather similar information from individuals to comprehend related topics. The interviews were conducted face-to-face. These data for the research were collected in addition to Study 1, and a semi-structured interview form was employed

to elaborate on the results obtained in detail. The interview questions were prepared using the items in the scales used in Study 1. The content analysis technique, a qualitative data analysis method, was used to analyze the data obtained from 20 interviews.

### 3.2.1. Findings

This study explores how dimensions of consumer values serve as consumer engagement, leading to attitude toward C2C secondary marketplace platforms through the means-end result theory. As previously stated, a mixed-methods design incorporating an explanatory sequential pattern were employed to achieve this objective. This approach aimed to compensate for the limitations of qualitative and quantitative research, providing a more comprehensive outcome by examining online second-hand users from a broader perspective.

The first theme is related to the perceived value of the online secondhand platform and attitude toward platforms via consumer engagement. Subsequently, these values were categorized into four categories: "functional value", "emotional value", "environmental value", and "social value". Under the category "functional value", there are subcodes "property/profit advantage", "cheaper/compatible", "product features and variety", "space saver", "time-saving", and "ease of moving". The second theme, 'platform features', 'comments', and 'sellers', is associated with consumer engagement in the C2C e-commerce secondary marketplace. The third theme is linked to consumers' attitudes toward online secondhand platforms. This theme is further divided into two sub-categories internally. These are positive attitudes and negative attitudes.

**Table 4.** Themes, Categories, and Codes

Theme	Category	Code	Quotes
Perceived Values	Functional Value	Property/ Profit Advantage	"The product I bought is almost unchanged and at a reasonable price, according to which I do my shopping." (P-5). "I can reduce the cost by buying clean second-hand stuff instead of paying high prices to zero." (P-14)
		Cheaper/ Compatible	"Because it's much cheaper economically"(P-2). "There is a fair price difference between a zero product and a second-hand clean product, which encourages the purchase of second-hand products." (P-3)
		Product Features and Variety	"Some products have a continued warranty period, especially if I prefer second-hand products. I pay attention to this as much as possible, and the products must come in full package. For example, your phone comes with a charger." (P-9).
		Space Saver	"I'm an artist, and I sell works of art over the Internet. Besides, I also sell my personal belongings, such as clothes, books, and household items, over the Internet. It's both an extra source of income for me and a good way to throw away the excess stuff in the house." (P-15)
		Time-Saving	"The main reason I buy and sell second-hand products is to save time. And because it's online, I'm able to reach more people."(P-1).
		Ease of Moving	"The most important element that makes it easier for me to shop in applications is the ability to filter. Determining my desired product's category, color, body, brand, and price range makes it much more manageable. (P-14)

(Table 4 cont.)

Theme	Category	Code	Quotes
Perceived Values	Emotional value		"Sometimes, when it comes to shopping with products used in very old years, I feel like I'm traveling in time, and I am sure I can't even find those nostalgic products in most of the city's shops right now. I like it; I enjoy it." (P-6)
	Environmental value		"Second-hand trading makes sense for a more sustainable and livable world. In the 21st century, consumer madness has gone so far, and so far, I'd rather be part of this bullshit and, as an ecologist, not be in this bully." (P-12)
	Social Value	Ensuring that the Product Stays in Consumption	"I sell products that I rarely use or never use. It's mostly clothes, and I'm selling what I've been wearing once in a brother's style with the rental method. So it works for people who want to wear it once in a while on special days." (P-6)
		Social Interaction	"I'm using second-hand platforms more for phone exchanges. Communicating with a lot of people online has been a great achievement for me." (P-20).
		Meeting the Needs of Others	"I sell products that I have not used for a long time or that I will not be able to use continuously. They don't work for me. I sell them to the trash. Both I make money and people buy well." (P-20)
Consumer Engagement	Platform Features		"I use the sites I mentioned above because they are official and very prestigious." (P-1) "The 2nd hand sites do not leave in this sense with any circumstances that would sacrifice the buyer and seller."(P-3)
	Comments		"I look at customer reviews about the seller and the product." (P-2). "I'm looking at the products he's already sold, the reviews on the products." (P-11)
	Seller		"I'm conducting one-on-one talks with the sellers."(P-19). "Sellers always look at their score, so I take it."(P-18).
Attitude toward Platforms	Positive		"When I buy the product at a reasonable price, I make money by selling it at a decent price, as I have already contributed to my pocket. What could be better? The government should create public spot ads to promote these practices :)" (P-12).
	Negative		"I'm not very comfortable buying things that another person has, because I still think he has the smell, the air of that person, in this case, I am not positive." (P-10)

In conclusion, the findings of this stage have shown that consumer values of online second-hand shopping platforms are essential variables for Turkish consumers' positive attitudes to platforms that demonstrate their engagement with them if we interpret Table IV. Namely:

Theme 1: In Study 1, it was observed that consumers' perceived values of online second-hand platforms differed. These values include functional, emotional, social, and environmental values. Therefore, the interviewees confirmed the functional and emotional values identified in the first study, and two different values (social and environmental) were revealed together with these values. These benefits include the diversity of products offered, the savings of space and time, the ease of movement, and the economic cost advantage and affordability. In this case, it provided justification and clarity to the financial aspects of the functional values found in Study 1 and led to the emergence of new categories (time-saver, easy of moving, space saver). Hence, participants state that they continue to use C2C platforms by giving importance to factors such as ensuring that products remain in consumption,

meeting the needs of others in an alternative way, and social interaction. In addition, it is observed that participants also attach importance to ecological values while using these platforms.

The second theme, consumer engagement, is associated with the categories of platform features, comments, and seller in the C2C e-commerce secondary marketplace. The characteristics of a good or service are how it achieves values (Gutman, 1982). Nonetheless, the product's utility extends beyond its capabilities (Moriuchi & Takahashi, 2023). According to Calder et al. (2009), consumer engagement is defined as the overall experience of users on the C2C product platform. In a C2C context, as Abdul-Ghani et al. (2019) described, consumer engagement constitutes a cyclic process initiated by consumer experiences, generating value for the consumer and encouraging ongoing consumption activities iteratively. Similar to the findings in Study 1, this stage demonstrates that consumer engagement is a psychological state marked by providing information, assimilation, and interaction with the C2C platform and its users, thereby influencing the consumer decision-making process. Hence, most participants agree that platform awareness, security, seller reviews, seller profile, and the number of followers are of utmost concern to them.

Theme 3: The third theme, attitude toward online platforms, was divided into two subcategories: positive and negative, i.e., supportive and opposing views. Participants who expressed a positive attitude highlighted the advantages of one-to-one communication with the seller, cost savings, and a sense of contributing to a circular economy. As one participant stated, "When I buy the product at a reasonable price, I make money by selling it at a decent price, as I have already contributed to my pocket. What could be better? The government should create public spot ads to promote these practices :)" (P-12). This illustrates a value-oriented and economically mindful engagement with second-hand platforms. However, some participants expressed a more cautious or negative stance. Concerns were raised about hygiene, emotional discomfort, and trust-related issues. For instance, one participant remarked, "I'm not very comfortable buying things that another person has, because I still think he has the smell, the air of that person, in this case, I am not positive" (P-10). These views reflect emotional and psychological barriers to participation in the second-hand market and suggest a need for strategies to increase consumer trust and comfort on these platforms

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Today's businesses acknowledge customers' vital role in communications and product development, viewing them as co-creators (Sawhney et al., 2005). In today's marketing literature, consumer engagement has become increasingly prominent (Rather, 2020). However, our understanding of consumer engagement in C2C e-secondary marketplaces still needs to be improved. This study is essential to examine the effects of CE in the context of C2C e-secondary marketplaces and to address the consumer values that influence CE. Furthermore, the relationship between consumer engagement, attitude, and environmental consciousness has yet to be thoroughly studied, with most surveys



concentrating on Western nations. Consequently, this research makes a substantial contribution by presenting data on these relationships in the context of developing countries, especially in online secondhand marketplaces.

Secondly, in the Turkish literature, it has been observed that studies on C2C online second-hand shopping platforms are generally quantitative. Since most of such studies focus on individual users, studies indicating the need for more in-depth studies were identified as limitations. This study was conducted using mixed-method research to minimize these limitations. Various value concepts emerged for the users of this platform, different from those mentioned in the in-depth interviews and questionnaires.

Furthermore, the incorporation of a sequential exploratory approach is what adds value to the study. A survey was used in Study 1 to evaluate the moderating effect and look at the relationships between the constructs. The inclusion of in-depth interviews in Study 2, which sought to clarify the viewpoints of Turkish users of online second-hand platforms, strengthened the findings' robustness.

In addition to its theoretical and methodological contributions to literature, the study is vital for its recommendations targeting decision-makers, practitioners, users, and researchers.

Findings from Study 1 and Study 2 suggest that the values offered to their customers by online second-hand platforms positively influence attitude toward the platform and encourage its use through consumer engagement. Platform managers ought to assemble a team of experts to enhance user interaction and engagement by monitoring customer attitudes, satisfaction levels, recommendations, and complaints. This initiative has the potential to influence consumer engagement positively through an increase in platform interaction.

Especially, qualitative research findings indicate that participants raised concerns about online second-hand shopping platforms targeting sellers and platform operators. These concerns commonly encompass fraud, non-delivery of the desired product, hygiene issues, counterfeit products, and product loss. Considering the criteria that determine channel preferences, standardizing information such as how the product was purchased, used, and sold by its previous owners, and for what reasons, can reduce concerns. Practices such as buyer-seller identification, creating approved users, and accessing product history via blockchain are expected to impact second-hand consumption positively.

In addition, the 'My Money is Safe' feature available on some platforms, i.e., the existence of money pools, the registration of trading contracts on the application, the storage of contracts formed by the declaration of the parties in the application, and recourse to application management in some cases are important issues for users. These features minimize concerns and create a secure trading environment. Furthermore, enhancing platform security can be achieved by implementing an AI-based filter. This filter automatically reviews user ads, identifying potentially risky listings by detecting previously reported ads, similar content, specific keywords in descriptions, and images not meeting

safety standards. Such measures ensure a safer and more reliable shopping experience, ultimately enhancing the overall user experience.

C2C platforms can increase consumer trust by improving transaction security, dispute policies, and the safety of monetary transactions, primarily by elaborating product descriptions. To make the platform more usable features such as live chat, push notifications, and a customizable interface can strengthen trust by increasing user communication.

Based on the study results, merchants can improve their marketing communications by segmenting users based on utilitarian, hedonic, or social values and emphasizing specific value propositions to encourage user engagement. For example, based on users' value judgments, they could improve their search algorithms, allowing them to find the products they want faster. They can also customize the user experience using interest-based recommendation systems.

In digital business, consumer engagement is becoming increasingly important, where customers participate in company communication and buy products. Therefore, features such as events, competitions, or forums could be added so that users can build a sense of community within the platform. These suggestions increase the platform's credibility and ensure users have a more positive experience.

Similar to any empirical study, there are certain limitations to the current work. This study has four main limitations that can be resolved by additional research. Firstly, the qualitative study observed that various concerns and value differences related to online second-hand shopping vary across product groups. Future studies on second-hand shopping can be designed by focusing on a specific platform or specific product groups (such as clothing, electronics, and household products). In this way, the differences and similarities between product groups can be examined in more detail. Secondly, the fact that we did not measure age differences limits our understanding of variations within the overall age group of the study. The results from the in-depth interviews in Study 2 suggest that other factors influence consumers' behavioral intentions, such as trust in the seller, trust in the intermediary, and consumer values, such as social and environmental values. Future research should better encompass a broader range of age groups to understand the influence on platform usage intentions. Comparing the survey results with those of Generations X and Z may help obtain a more thorough understanding of second-hand consumption. The results from the in-depth interviews in Study 2 suggest that other factors influence consumers' behavioral intentions, such as trust in the seller, trust in the intermediary, and consumer values, such as social and environmental values. Survey models that take these factors into account can be future rules. Finally, people's character is quite complex and multifaceted. Therefore, people's inclination toward online second-hand shopping is not only limited to the desire to save money but may also depend on multifaceted character traits such as fast adaptation to new technologies, thriftiness, idealism, and ecological thinking. Therefore, it is essential to consider a broad context for further research models to assess people's character for future studies.

Ethics committee approval for the study was obtained from the Muş Alparslan University Ethics Committee on February 6, 2024, with decision number 4/54.

The author declares that the study was conducted in accordance with research and publication ethics.

The author confirms that no part of the study was generated, either wholly or in part, using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools.

The author declares that there are no financial conflicts of interest involving any institution, organization, or individual associated with this article.

The author affirms that the entire research process was performed by the sole declared author of the study.

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