



## E-COMMERCE FROM AN ETHICAL PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

The ethical environment of electronic commerce is multifaceted and emphasizes the importance of trust, privacy, transparency, and honest marketing practices. As e-commerce continues to grow, the need for robust ethical frameworks to address and mitigate the unique challenges posed by online retailing becomes even more apparent. Successful e-commerce businesses will need to develop an ethical culture that not only adheres to legal standards but also meets the growing expectations of their consumers. With the volume of e-commerce increasing day by day and becoming an important source of income for countries, the importance of this issue will increase even more. The aim of this study is to examine the ethical issues that arise with the rapidly growing internet and the concept of electronic commerce in our lives, taking into account new developments.

Understanding the ethical issues of e-commerce is critical for both business sustainability and consumer trust. The ethical issues of e-commerce are often related to the risks consumers face and their impact on businesses. These issues include data security, data privacy, misleading advertising, predatory pricing, consumer rights, copyrights, and fraud. In this context, the ethical principles businesses apply are shaped around consumer rights, data security, and data privacy issues. Although the amendments made to Law No. 6563 on the Regulation of Electronic Commerce in Turkey have taken important steps towards determining the ethical standards of e-commerce, with the development of electronic commerce, the standards are insufficient, and new regulations on ethics have become inevitable.

**Keywords:** Electronic commerce, Ethics, Macro economy

**Jel Codes :** L81, F1, D18, D22

## ETİK PERSPEKTİFİNDEN E-TİCARET

### Öz

Elektronik ticaretin etik ortamı çok yönlüdür ve güven, gizlilik, şeffaflık ve dürüst pazarlama uygulamalarının önemini vurgulamaktadır. E-ticaret büyümeye devam ettikçe, çevrimiçi perakendeciliğin ortaya çıkardığı benzersiz zorlukları ele almak ve hafifletmek için sağlam etik çerçevelere duyulan ihtiyaç daha da belirgin hale gelmektedir. Başarılı e-ticaret işletmelerinin yalnızca yasal standartlara bağlı kalmakla kalmayıp aynı zamanda tüketicilerinin artan beklentilerini de karşılayan bir etik kültür geliştirmeleri gerekecektir. E-ticaret hacminin her geçen gün artması ve ülkelerin önemli gelir kaynağı haline gelmesiyle bu konunun önemi daha da artacaktır. Hayatımızın içinde hızla büyüyen internet ve buna bağlı elektronik ticaret kavramı ile birlikte ortaya çıkan etik konuları, yeni gelişmeleri dikkate alarak incelemek bu çalışmada amacımızı oluşturmuştur.

E-ticaretin etik sorunlarını anlamak, hem işletmelerin sürdürülebilirliği hem de tüketici güveni açısından kritik bir öneme sahiptir. E-ticaretin etik sorunları, genellikle tüketicilerin karşılaştığı riskler ve bu risklerin işletmeler üzerindeki etkileri ile ilişkilidir. Bu sorunlar arasında veri güvenliği, veri gizliliği, yanıltıcı reklamlar, yıkıcı fiyatlandırma, tüketici hakları, telif hakları ve dolandırıcılık gibi konular yer almaktadır. Bu bağlamdan bakıldığında; işletmelerin uyguladığı etik ilkeler, tüketici hakları, veri güvenliği ve veri gizliliği gibi konular etrafında şekillenmektedir. Her ne kadar Türkiye'de 6563 sayılı Elektronik Ticaretin Düzenlenmesi Hakkında Kanun'da yapılan değişiklikler, e-ticaretin etik standartlarının belirlenmesine yönelik önemli adımlar atmış olsa da elektronik ticaretin gelişimi ile birlikte, standartlar yetersiz kalmakta ve etik konusu üzerinde yeni düzenlemeler kaçınılmaz olmuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Elektronik ticaret, Etik, Makro ekonomi

**Jel Kodları:** L81, F1, D18, D22

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## Introduction

Electronic commerce (e-commerce) has become one of the most important components of today's trade. This is because it offers the opportunity to shop independently from time and place, has a wider variety of products than physical stores, allows easy comparison of products from different sellers, allows shopping without going to the store, and enables buying and selling from anywhere in the world. In addition to these advantages, the disadvantages of e-commerce are; buying the product without physically seeing the product, taking time for the delivery of the ordered product, theft of personal information such as credit cards, and the return process is complex and time-consuming. Therefore, the rapid development of e-commerce has radically changed the shopping habits of businesses and consumers. However, this transformation has also raised various ethical issues. These issues include data security, data privacy, misleading advertisements, predatory pricing, consumer rights, copyrights, and fraud. In this context, businesses' ethical principles are shaped around consumer rights, data security, and data privacy issues. Understanding the ethical issues of e-commerce is critical for business sustainability and consumer trust. The ethical issues of e-commerce are often related to the risks consumers face and their impact on businesses. Consumers may also face fraud, data breaches, and misleading advertisements online shopping. This situation undermines consumers' trust in e-commerce platforms and thus negatively affects businesses' customer loyalty. Research shows that the ethical problems consumers face on e-commerce platforms affect their purchase intentions and satisfaction. Therefore, businesses must act ethically to increase customer trust and create a sustainable business model. Businesses must respect consumer rights, provide transparency, and adopt fair trade practices. In this context, businesses adopting ethical values is essential to fulfill legal obligations and increase consumer trust. For example, it is an ethical responsibility for businesses to comply with data protection laws and store consumers' personal data securely. In addition, the quality of products and services businesses offer directly affects consumer satisfaction.

The ethical issues of e-commerce are not limited to businesses; consumers also have ethical responsibilities. Consumers should be careful when shopping online and prefer reliable platforms. Consumers questioning the reliability of the platforms they shop on and reporting suspicious situations will contribute to raising the ethical standards of e-commerce. In addition, consumers also have responsibilities for issues such as fake orders, false and incomplete information, and credit card fraud. In this context, raising awareness and educating consumers plays an important role in solving the ethical problems of e-commerce.

### 1. Ethics

Ethics is a multifaceted discipline that integrates various frameworks and theories for understanding human behavior and moral principles. It can be broadly categorized into descriptive ethics and normative ethics, serving different roles in each ethical discourse. Descriptive ethics focuses on observing and describing the ethical behaviors and beliefs individuals or societies hold without judging their validity. It seeks to understand what people do in moral situations and captures a true account of human moral practices and attitudes. Descriptive ethics thus serves an empirical function by illuminating the ethical landscape in practice. Normative ethics, by contrast, specifies what moral actions should be taken. It establishes criteria for evaluating ethical behavior, aiming to provide a basis for distinguishing right from wrong (Bryson, 2018). In this context, normative ethics emphasizes moral reasoning, often drawing on broader philosophical principles to guide ethical practices in various professions, including health and business (Scheer and Widdershoven, 2004). It highlights how ethical decision-making requires a balance between empirical data (descriptive ethics) and ethical frameworks (normative ethics) (Chervenak and McCullough, 2012).

The e-commerce environment is significantly shaped by various ethical considerations that differ from traditional retail environments. These ethical dimensions are critical to building consumer trust, which is essential for the sustainability and growth of online businesses. An ethical framework for e-commerce encompasses various aspects such as consumer privacy, security, non-deceptive practices, and trustworthiness, which are strongly related to overall customer satisfaction and loyalty (Kelly and Rowland, 2000). In this context, digitalization is a phenomenon that has radically changed the way of doing business, social interactions, and lifestyles of individuals in today's world. This process increases efficiency and offers new opportunities in many sectors. However, these innovations brought by digitalization also bring ethical issues. The relationship between digitalization and ethics is shaped around individuals' privacy rights, data security, digital citizenship, and social responsibility. One of the most prominent effects of digitalization is the increase in the ability of businesses to collect and analyze data. This enables businesses to understand customer behavior better and reach their target audiences more effectively. However, ethical issues arise in this process, such as the unauthorized collection and processing of users' personal data. Violating users' privacy rights is one of the negative effects of digitalization, which undermines consumer trust. Especially in cases where data protection laws are inadequate or not enforced, users' personal data are at risk of being misused.

Another important dimension of digitalization is the concept of digital citizenship. Digital citizenship involves individuals understanding their rights and responsibilities in the digital environment, abiding by ethical rules, and behaving responsibly in online interactions. In this context, digital literacy education is critical to enable individuals to act more consciously and ethically in the digital world. In particular, young individuals need to be made aware of the risks they may face in the digital world and how to take precautions against them. Another ethical issue brought about by digitalization is the control of content on social media and digital platforms. Social media provides an important space for individuals to express their opinions and discuss social issues. However, negative situations such as misinformation, hate speech, and cyberbullying spread on these platforms question the ethical dimension of digitalization. Therefore, social media platforms must conduct content moderation and be more effective in protecting users.

## **2. E-Commerce and Ethics**

The rise of e-commerce has gained momentum, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Consumers can access various products and services quickly, thanks to their freedom to shop online. However, in this process, the ethical issues consumers face and the perception of trust also have an important place (Tuncer, 2021). E-commerce's ethical issues are generally shaped around data privacy, data security, fraud, predatory pricing, consumer rights, and copyrights. Especially during the COVID-19 process, consumers' trust in e-commerce platforms has been questioned, and this has become a critical policy for the sustainability of e-commerce (Toraman, 2021). The problems consumers face when shopping online further complicate the ethical complexity of e-commerce. Studies on the ethical dimensions of e-commerce show that consumers' perception of trust in online shopping significantly impacts customer satisfaction and loyalty. In particular, young individuals, such as Generation Z, shape their purchasing decisions through online reviews and review scores, and this includes the marketing strategies of e-commerce platforms (Paker, 2023). E-commerce businesses must also comply with transparency to increase customer trust (Yaşar, 2021). In addition, e-commerce platforms should consider user feedback and use it as an opportunity to improve (Sakinah and Adinugraha, 2022).

The ethical issues of e-commerce are not limited to companies; consumers also have ethical responsibilities. In order to expand the range of products they offer and reach their customer base, businesses have to provide consumers with options to act by ethical principles.

The rapid growth of e-commerce brings new ethical challenges, such as unfair competition and exploitation of consumer behavior through manipulative marketing tactics. The online environment can encourage unethical behavior due to lack of regulation and encourages businesses to adopt ethical practices compatible with consumers' expectations of honesty and fairness (Elbeltagi and Agag, 2016). The ethical dimensions of e-commerce are also linked to the dynamics of international trade. With the proliferation of e-commerce globally, there is a lack of harmonization of different operating rights and ethical standards.

## **2.1. Data Privacy, Data Security, and Customer Loyalty in E-Commerce**

The evolving e-commerce landscape is significantly impacted by the intertwined issues of ethics, data security, and data privacy, creating a complex environment where businesses must navigate between consumer expectations and regulatory requirements.

As e-commerce platforms become increasingly prevalent, they must provide robust security measures to protect sensitive consumer data and comply with ethical standards. This is all the more important as consumer trust significantly depends on these platforms' security and ethical practices.

One of the key ethical issues in e-commerce relates to consumer privacy and data security. The internet facilitates the accumulation of large amounts of personal data and raises concerns about how this information is used and protected. Ethics directly affect consumer loyalty and the desire to repurchase. Moreover, e-commerce ethics go beyond consumer privacy to include issues such as transparency in pricing, product authenticity, and fulfillment of promises made during the purchase process. When consumers perceive a lack of ethical behavior, such as deceptive marketing practices or insufficient transparency, this can lead to dissatisfaction and erosion of trust, negatively affecting customer loyalty (Kurt, 2013). The proliferation of e-commerce makes it imperative to focus on customer loyalty to increase competitiveness.

The relationship between data security and privacy concepts affects various dynamics at both individual and social levels. Especially in today's world, where digitalization is accelerating, online security and privacy have become critical factors affecting individuals' loyalty. In this context, the perception of security and privacy determines how individuals behave on online platforms and their loyalty levels. It is undeniable that privacy perception plays a decisive role in loyalty (Malakmadze et al., 2017). However, loyalty is not only related to individuals' perceptions of security but also to social ties. Customer loyalty refers to the repeated use of an e-commerce platform with a set configuration, a critical retention feature for the sustainability of records (Aydın and Çakır, 2021). Another definition is customer loyalty, which refers to the commitment to a brand or business. Customer trust is a customer's belief and confidence that a product, service, or brand will act by its commitments and promises. The elements that makeup customer trust are honesty, transparency, quality, reliability, consistency, communication, problem-solving ability, and personalization. In addition, customer trust is important for loyalty, a positive reputation, long-term relationships, and competitive advantage. Customer trust is directly related to factors such as service quality, brand experience, and customer relationship management and is critical to the long-term success of businesses.

Customer service plays a critical role in e-commerce success, and the quality of this service has a direct impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty. For example, on-time delivery is one of the most important elements for increasing the number of customers. In addition, the support

provided through customer service helps increase consumers' trust in e-commerce platforms, reinforcing customer loyalty.

Brand image is the way consumers perceive a brand, and this perception has a direct impact on brand loyalty and customer satisfaction. In particular, the quality of brand reputation increases consumers' trust in the product or service and reinforces brand loyalty (Cretu and Brodie, 2007). In the continuation of brand image, factors such as brand communication and brand trust have a great impact. Consumers' trust in the brand directly affects their purchase intentions and strengthens the brand image (Cuong, 2020). The impact of brand image on competitive advantage is becoming more evident, especially for SMEs. Competitive advantage is the factors enabling each other to outperform their competitors. A good brand image increases the efficiency with which consumers choose a brand, which helps to expand the structural market space (Esch et al., 2006).

Effective data governance practices, corporate transparency, and adherence to privacy regulations are the most important ethical considerations in e-commerce transactions. This ethical perspective goes beyond data protection regulations and involves a fundamental shift in how consumers view brands and their responsibility for ethical practices. Consumers increasingly prefer brands that prioritize ethical data practices. Given the growth of e-commerce, integrating ethical data practices into business models is not just a compliance requirement but a vital competitive strategy (Aldiyansyah et al., 2021).

## **2.2. Personal Data Protection**

The privacy of personal information has become an extremely important issue in today's digital age. Especially with the widespread use of electronic commerce, protecting individuals' personal data has become a major topic of discussion both ethically and legally. E-commerce platforms collect users' personal information and use this information in various ways. This raises consumer privacy concerns and leads to trust issues. The privacy of personal information is critical not only for the rights of individuals but also for the sustainability of businesses. Consumers' trust in e-commerce platforms depends on how these platforms protect personal data.

Research shows that consumers' perceptions of privacy affect their purchase intentions and customer loyalty. In this context, businesses must adopt a transparent and ethical approach to protecting user data. Otherwise, losing consumers' trust can damage the reputation of businesses and thus lead to economic losses. Ethical issues related to the privacy of personal information are not limited to data protection. How businesses use this data, whether sharing it without the consent of users or sharing it with third parties, are also important ethical issues. Consumers' knowledge of how their personal data is used is critical to protecting their privacy rights. Therefore, e-commerce platforms should provide clear and understandable information about data usage to their users.

Along with the development of e-commerce, various laws and regulations have also emerged on the privacy of personal information. For example, in Turkey, amendments to Law No. 6563 on the Regulation of Electronic Commerce have taken important steps towards setting ethical standards for e-commerce. In another example, the EU's General Data Protection Regulation provides an important framework for protecting personal data. The main purpose of data protection laws is to prevent the fragmentation of personal data and to ensure that it is kept confidential. (Purtova, 2018) Such regulations set clear rules on how businesses should handle personal data and protect the rights of consumers. However, the enforcement and monitoring of such laws varies in each country. This further complicates the ethical dimensions of international e-commerce. The privacy of personal information is also related to digital citizenship, which involves ethical rules governing how individuals should behave online. In this context, the

responsibility of individuals to protect their personal information is part of digital citizenship. Raising awareness of consumers about protecting their privacy in online environments has become an important necessity at both individual and societal levels.

### **2.3. Consumer Rights and Intellectual Property Violations**

Consumer rights protection not only protects the economic interests of consumers but also plays an important role in ensuring social justice. Consumer rights have become more complex in this context, especially with digitalization. The problems consumers face in digital shopping differ from those in traditional commerce. For example, the effects of digital advertising on children's rights are important in setting international standards in this field. Schrijer emphasizes the protection of children's personal data and how it is regulated within the scope of usage rights (Schrijer, 2023). In this context, regulations such as the European Union's Digital Services law have increased the protection of children's rights by major platforms. Such economic boundaries have been developed to enable digital relationships to transact more securely.

One of the main themes of current debates surrounding e-commerce ethics is the responsibility of online marketplaces to enforce intellectual property laws and prevent the spread of counterfeit products. Notification and takeback procedures mandated by legislation such as the E-Commerce Law are crucial in combating IP infringement across platforms. They emphasize that such procedures should be comprehensive enough to address all categories of IP infringement, requiring operators to act promptly upon receiving reports of suspected infringement and take appropriate measures to reflect an ethical obligation to protect the rights of original creators (Shmatkov and Cabrera, 2022).

Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as both a challenge and a potential solution in addressing IP infringement in e-commerce. In particular, while AI and data analytics offer opportunities for personalization of customer experience, it also raises ethical issues, such as violating consumers' privacy rights during the modification and operation of customer data. AI technologies can significantly improve detection mechanisms for products that violate digital marketplace rules, analyze patterns, and identify suspicious lists that may constitute trademark infringement, enabling platforms to respond quickly to potential threats to intellectual property integrity. However, implementing such technologies should be accompanied by ethical considerations regarding privacy and data protection under emerging regulatory frameworks (Pokrovskaya, 2024).

### **2.4. Transparent Practices and Fair Pricing**

Consumers are becoming increasingly conscious of the consequences of their purchasing decisions, leading to a demand for transparency about the origin and authenticity of the products sold. A key element of transparent pricing in e-commerce is reducing information asymmetry between consumers and sellers. Governments and regulators play a crucial role by promoting price transparency through regulations mandating the disclosure of pricing data. Consumers use price comparison platforms to make informed decisions, which supports consumer behavior, leading to a more competitive market. Research shows that price comparison platforms encourage retailers to offer competitive prices and increase overall market efficiency by making the price structure visible to all participants (Hackl et al., 2021).

The interplay between consumer expectations and ethical business practices underlines the need for e-commerce platforms to adopt rigorous ethical standards to maintain consumer trust and loyalty. In this context, social media and digital platforms make it easier for consumers to learn about and share brand information. Therefore, e-commerce businesses should establish sustainable and transparent communication through social media (Thomas, 2024; Purwaningsih et al., 2022).

## 2.5. Unauthorized Commercial Email (SPAM)

As businesses increasingly turn to email as a cost-effective means of reaching potential customers, spamming has increased, raising ethical concerns about consent, invasion of privacy and consumer deception. Ethical marketing is based on principles such as honesty, respect, fairness, and transparency, which are often violated by spam. Sending unsolicited emails can lead to a breach of trust between consumers and brands, ultimately damaging reputations built on a foundation of ethical interaction.

Unauthorized commercial email has become a major problem in digital communication and marketing today. Such emails are usually sent without the recipient's consent and are intended for commercial purposes. Unauthorized commercial e-mails are also referred to as spam and can have various negative consequences for individuals and businesses. In this context, unauthorized commercial e-mails must be addressed in terms of ethical dimensions, legal regulations, and consumer rights. One of the biggest problems of unauthorized commercial e-mails is the violation of recipients' privacy rights. Consumers expect to be informed about how their personal information will be used before sharing it. However, sending unauthorized emails does not meet this expectation and undermines consumer trust. Research shows that unauthorized commercial e-mails negatively affect consumers' trust in brands. This can damage the reputation of businesses and lead to customer loss in the long run. From a legal perspective, many countries have developed laws and regulations governing the sending of unauthorized commercial e-mails. For example, in the US, the Can-Spam Act (Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing) was created to limit the sending of unauthorized commercial emails. Email senders must identify themselves to recipients, avoid misleading headers, and respect recipients' right to unsubscribe from emails.

In the EU, the General Data Protection Regulation has introduced stricter regulations on protecting personal data and sending unauthorized e-mails. The enforcement of such laws contributes to the reduction of unauthorized commercial emails. The ethical dimensions of unauthorized commercial e-mails are also linked to businesses' marketing strategies. In addition to sending emails without consumer consent, businesses should understand that such practices are not sustainable in the long run. In order to gain consumers' trust and increase brand loyalty, businesses need to adopt ethical marketing practices.

In this context, avoiding sending unauthorized e-mails is also important for businesses to fulfill their social responsibilities. Raising awareness of consumers against unauthorized commercial e-mails plays an important role in solving this problem. Educating consumers on recognizing unauthorized e-mails and taking precautions against such e-mails is important at both individual and societal levels. Consumers' use of complaint mechanisms against unauthorized e-mails may contribute to reducing such practices.

## 2.6. Fraud

It is useful to examine e-commerce fraud both in terms of companies and individuals who make sales and in terms of customers. Examples of fraud in terms of sellers;

- Data theft Phishing is fraud with fake e-mails or SMSs that aim to capture users' personal information.
- Scam: Fraud that offers fake products or services, takes payment, and does not deliver the product.
- Examples of fraud in terms of buyers;
- Credit Card Fraud: Purchases made with stolen credit card information,
- Reverse Refund (Friendly Fraud): When customers unfairly demand a refund for a product or service they have received.

➤ **Order Fraud:** It is to deceive sellers and cause financial damage by placing fake orders can be given.

Government regulations and industry standards can provide frameworks that mandate best practices for e-commerce. Adhering to strict security measures, such as compliance with protocols such as 3D security for credit card transactions, is essential for creating a secure commerce environment. This compliance reduces fraud risks and increases customer trust in e-commerce platforms. (Wallny, 2022)

Moreover, implementing multi-factor authentication (MFA) and biometric security measures has shown promising results in preventing identity theft and unauthorized transactions in the e-commerce arena. Combining advanced technological solutions with effective consumer education and regulatory compliance will lead to a much safer e-commerce environment.

## **2.7. Misleading Advertisements**

Defined as any message that misrepresents the true qualities, benefits, or features of products, misleading advertising actively undermines consumer confidence and leads to dissatisfaction, economically weakening e-commerce platforms.

There are three main components of misleading advertising. These are unethical practices, dissemination of misleading information, and outright deception (Ahmed and Othman, 2024). Such practices create a harmful cycle where consumers become increasingly skeptical of online platforms, ultimately discouraging them from completing purchases. E-commerce platforms are plagued by various consumer complaints, including misleading advertisements that reflect inadequate service delivery, delivery delays, and pricing fraud (Oliveira et al., 2023). Consumer complaints are an important feedback interval when consumers' expectations are unmet.

## **2.8. Use of Cookies**

Today, digital privacy and data protection are important areas of debate. Cookies are small data files used by websites to enhance the user experience. However, the unauthorized use of these cookies can pose serious ethical and legal problems regarding collecting and processing users' personal data. Unauthorized use of cookies includes situations such as data collection without the consent of users and misuse of this data.

Unauthorized use of cookies leads to violation of users' privacy rights. Users do not know for what purposes cookies are used and what data is collected when they enter websites. This situation causes users' personal data to become a commodity. Research shows that users are increasingly concerned about the unauthorized use of cookies and are more cautious about sharing their personal data. In this context, users must be aware and protected against unauthorized cookie use. From a legal perspective, many countries have developed laws and regulations governing the use of cookies. The U.A.E.'s General Data Protection Regulation imposes an obligation to obtain users' consent to prevent the unauthorized use of cookies. This regulation ensures that users know which cookies are used and what data these cookies collect. In Turkey, the Personal Data Protection Law (KVKK) also provides an important framework regulating the use of cookies. The implementation of such laws contributes to the prevention of unauthorized cookie use. The use of unauthorized cookies is also linked to businesses' ethical responsibilities.

Businesses must respect users' privacy rights and transparently collect data. In this context, businesses must clearly state their cookie policies and obtain users' consent. In addition, providing the necessary tools for users to manage their cookie settings is important for businesses to fulfill their ethical responsibilities. Raising awareness of users against unauthorized cookie use plays an important role in solving this problem. Users' understanding of what cookies



are, how they work, and what data are collected will help them adopt a more conscious attitude toward unauthorized cookie use. In this context, digital literacy training and awareness campaigns can contribute to protecting users' privacy rights.

## **2.9. Electronic Commerce for Children and Ethics**

E-commerce applications shape children's shopping habits, consumption behaviors, and digital interactions in general. However, the risks and ethical issues children may face on these platforms concern parents, educators, and policymakers. Children's still-developing decision-making skills make them more vulnerable to advertising and marketing strategies. One of the most important aspects of e-commerce applications for children is the impact of these platforms on their cognitive and emotional development. Children are highly sensitive to the effects of advertisements and marketing messages. This may negatively affect their ability to make a healthy evaluation of product or service choices.

Children's interactions with advertisements shape their brand perceptions and consumption habits. Therefore, it is important to determine and implement ethical standards in e-commerce applications for children. E-commerce platforms have to take various measures to ensure the safety of children. Parents must supervise and guide their children's online shopping experiences in this context. Parental control and content filtering systems can limit children's access to harmful content. In addition, e-commerce applications for children should respect users' privacy rights and take measures to protect personal data. This will enable children to have a safer experience online.

Ethical issues in e-commerce applications for children are not limited to advertising and marketing strategies. The content that children are exposed to through digital games and apps is also an important issue. While digital games can help children develop social skills, they can also create negative effects, such as excessive gaming addiction. Therefore, game developers and e-commerce platforms must provide content supporting children's healthy development. Educators and parents guiding children's interactions with e-commerce applications can help children develop digital literacy skills. It is important to provide children with training on issues such as the points they should pay attention to while shopping online, safe internet use, and the protection of personal data. Such training will contribute to children becoming conscious consumers and protect them from possible risks. E-commerce practices should include strict guidelines to prevent the exploitation of child consumers while encouraging their autonomy in the shopping process. Easy access to technology means children often go online without parental supervision, emphasizing the urgent need for ethical frameworks protecting young users (Nawang and Shukri, 2023).

## **3. Conclusion**

The ethical dimensions of electronic commerce are an important topic of discussion for both consumers and businesses. Issues such as protection of consumer rights, data security, privacy, and fraud are critical to the sustainability of e-commerce. When businesses act according to ethical principles, customer trust increases, contributing to the development of e-commerce.

The ethical dimensions of e-commerce are also linked to the dynamics of international trade. Harmonization of consumer rights and ethical standards in different countries is critical for the sustainability of e-commerce. In this context, establishing international regulations and standards plays an important role in solving the ethical problems of e-commerce. In addition, the development of e-commerce necessitates new regulations in terms of competition law. In particular, the impact of large e-commerce platforms on the market should be carefully monitored to ensure competition.

While e-commerce offers many opportunities, it also raises ethical issues. Data security, privacy, misleading advertisements, predatory pricing, consumer rights, copyrights, and fraud are the most important issues. Issues such as protecting the privacy rights of individuals, raising digital citizenship awareness, and content moderation of social media platforms are the main factors shaping the ethical dimensions of e-commerce. In the future, more research and regulation will be required to solve the ethical problems digitalization brings. Individuals and businesses acting according to ethical principles will make the digital world safer and fairer.

Privacy of personal information is an important part of the ethical dimensions of e-commerce. Consumers' perceptions of privacy directly affect the reputation and sustainability of businesses. Therefore, businesses should act according to ethical principles in protecting personal data and providing information to consumers transparently. The main factors shaping the ethical dimensions of unauthorized commercial e-mails and unauthorized cookie use are the protection of consumer rights, privacy concerns, and legal regulations. Avoiding sending unauthorized e-mails using unauthorized cookies and adopting ethical marketing practices will both increase customer trust and contribute to building a sustainable business model.

Businesses should prioritize consumer trust and consensual relationships to create a clear ethical framework surrounding email communications. This requires a commitment to ethical marketing practices that promote transparency and respect for consumer autonomy. To this end, organizations are encouraged to adopt consent-based marketing strategies that enable subscribers to voluntarily opt-in to communications and be informed about the nature of the content they will receive. By aligning personalization strategies with consumer expectations, businesses can rely on practices that encourage long-term loyalty rather than relying on questionable practices.

Since the ethical dimensions of e-commerce directly impact consumers' perceptions of trust, they directly involve consumers' shopping experiences, perceptions of trust, and privacy concerns. The ethical and security dimensions of e-commerce are also among the factors that include customer loyalty. Therefore, e-commerce firms' recommendations to protect customer rights and exhibit ethical behavior will increase long-term customer loyalty. Service quality, brand experience, and digital transformation shape the relationship between trust and customer loyalty. Businesses must develop strategies that consider these factors to increase customer loyalty. E-commerce businesses should focus on this issue to increase customer loyalty and ensure sustainable growth. Furthermore, the cooperation and development of standards for data security and its components at the international level is vital for the future of e-commerce. Continuous review and improvement of the ethical and security/privacy dimensions of e-commerce will be the responsibility of both consumers and constituents.

By adopting sustainable practices, e-commerce businesses can fulfill both their marketing and social responsibilities. In addition, adopting ethical values increases spending trust and can strengthen brand image. A strong brand image increases consumers' trust in the brand, strengthening brand loyalty and providing a competitive advantage. To enhance brand reputation, businesses must develop effective communication solutions, optimize supply chain management, and embrace market orientation. Combining these factors will allow them to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage.

Electronic commerce applications for children involve both opportunities and risks. Parents, educators, and policymakers must carefully consider the ethical issues children may face on these platforms. Measures such as parental control, content filtering systems, and digital literacy education are critical to ensure children have a safe online experience. In the future, developing and enforcing ethical standards for e-commerce practices for children will be essential to supporting their healthy development.

In conclusion, the ethical landscape of e-commerce is multifaceted and emphasizes the importance of trust, privacy, transparency, and honest marketing practices. As e-commerce continues to grow, the need for robust ethical frameworks to address and mitigate the unique challenges posed by online retailing becomes even more evident. Successful e-commerce businesses will need to develop an ethical culture that not only adheres to legal standards but also meets the growing expectations of their consumers. Establishing transparent practices and fair pricing in e-commerce is a multi-faceted challenge that depends on effective regulatory frameworks, technological innovation, and a good understanding of consumer expectations. As the e-commerce landscape evolves, integrating these elements will be critical in shaping a fairer and more competitive market environment.

Firms gain the trust of their customers when they adhere to ethical practices and act transparently. They also encourage consumers to support their advocacy by communicating their values and ethical practices, leading to greater customer loyalty. In addition, brands with ethical, quality, sustainability, and fair labor practices have a more positive brand image and build longer-term customer relationships. In this context, child-related e-commerce ethics depends on developing a safe online shopping culture that encourages responsible consumer behavior, limits abusive marketing practices, and emphasizes the importance of parental guidance. E-commerce firms can promote a safer shopping environment for families by prioritizing ethical marketing practices and enhancing their reputation. As a result, elements such as ethical education and digital literacy will be crucial for the future of the e-commerce industry.

### Kaynakça

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