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Araştırma Makalesi ● *Research Article*

The Effect of Electronic Customer Relationship Management On Perceived Customer Relationship Quality And Customer Loyalty

Elektronik Müşteri İlişkileri Yönetiminin Algılanan Müşteri İlişkileri Kalitesi ve Müşteri Sadakatine Etkisi

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ÖZ

Bu çalışmada, algılanan ödüller, ayrıcalıklı işlem ve kişilerarası iletişim faktörlerinin algılanan müşteri kalitesi üzerindeki etkisi ve algılanan müşteri ilişkileri kalitesinin müşteri sadakati üzerindeki etkisi araştırılmıştır. Araştırma modelini test etmek için kullanılan veriler, Bartın'daki otobüs firmalarının müşterilerine çevrimiçi anket oluşturularak elde edilmiştir. Bunun sonucunda 741 anket verisine ulaşılmıştır. Araştırma bulguları algılanan ödüllerin, ayrıcalıklı işlemin ve kişilerarası iletişimin algılanan müşteri ilişkileri kalitesi ve müşteri sadakati üzerinde önemli bir etkiye sahip olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca algılanan müşteri ilişkileri kalitesinin müşteri sadakatini olumlu ve güçlü bir şekilde etkilediği tespit edilmiştir. Bunlara ek olarak elde edilen bulgular algılanan müşteri ilişkileri kalitesi, algılanan ödüller ve ayrıcalıklı işlemler üzerinde aracı bir etkiye sahip olduğunu, ancak kişilerarası iletişimin müşteri sadakati üzerinde aracı bir etkiye sahip olmadığını göstermiştir. Bu makale, ulaşım hizmetlerinde E-CRM çalışmaları ile ilgili sınırlı literatüre katkıda bulunmaktadır.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effect of perceived rewards, preferential treatment, interpersonal communication on perceived customer relationship quality, and the effect of perceived customer relationship quality on customer loyalty. The data used to test the research model was applied to the customers of the bus companies in Bartın by creating an online questionnaire. As a result, 741 questionnaire data were collected. The results showed that perceived rewards and preferential treatment and interpersonal communication have a significant effect on perceived customer relationship quality and customer loyalty. Besides, perceived customer relationship quality positively and strongly affects customer loyalty. Perceived relationship quality has a mediating effect on perceived rewards and preferential treatment but has not a mediating effect on the effect of interpersonal communication on customer loyalty. This paper contributes to the limited literature on E-CRM studies in transportation services

1. Introduction

According to 2018 figures, 329,363,000,000 passengers-km were transported. 185,010 people were transported by sea. The number of passengers transported by air in the same year was 210,498,164 (TUIK, 2018). 89.9% of the passenger transportation is carried out on road. Bus companies have an undeniable role in road transportation. According to the figures of 2014, 342 bus companies are D1 certified and carry out intercity passenger transportation. Parallel to the increase in the share of the services sector in

GNP, intercity road transportation activities are also increasing. Service quality is also an important competitive factor in this sector (Çelik, 2009). Electronic marketing has been started with the marketing activities carried out on electronic media and with the help of network tools and the use of the internet for profit. Electronic marketing connects the marketer and the consumer electronically, through computers, mobile communication and television. In this way, it is defined as a strategic process that enables products to be developed, priced, promoted and distributed electronically (Metin, 2015). With the use of internet-based tools in the travel industry, customers meet the needs of easy access and comparison of destination information, travel packages, travels, accommodation and entertainment services and prices and accessibility of these services. Customers' satisfaction in the travel industry increasingly depends on the up-to-date and appropriateness of tourism information as well as the speed of meeting customers' requests (Pırnar, 2005). According to Palmer (2001), relational marketing concentrates on customer retention, continuous customer communication, customer value, long-term scale, high attention to customer service, high commitment to meeting customer expectations and quality that became one of the main concerns of all staff (Hendriyani and Auliana, 2018).

Road transport companies need to understand and meet the changing expectations and demands of their customers to gain a competitive advantage (Türkmen and Bildik, 2015). There are studies on service quality in transportation services (Çatı, 2003; Ardıç and Sadaklıoğlu, 2009; Bardakçıoğlu and Haşıloğlu, 2008; Çatı and Yıldız, 2005), satisfaction (Pratiwi, Zhao and Mi, 2014) and its results. However, E-CRM studies in transportation services are limited (Fjermestad and Romano, 2003; Lam, Cheung and Lau, 2013; Sökmen, 2018). For this purpose, electronic customer service applications are suitable for the necessities of the time. Understanding the effects of this application constitutes the purpose of this study.

2. Customer Relations Management

Using information technologies in establishing relationships with customers has both provided convenience and increased the opportunities in recent times (Ryals and Payne, 2001). According to a study conducted in Turkey, the intercity bus companies in Istanbul, Izmir and the Aegean region use their websites for advertising, promotion, communicating with customers, providing information to customers and creating a database (Gül and Gray, 2012). In the marketing communication process, businesses have to know the market they operate in, their customers they sell to, the position of the product in the life course and the position of the business in the market. Communication to be established with customers in service businesses is the most

important of these issues (Kotler, 2000). Customer Relationship Management CRM involves identifying best customers of a company and, by satisfying and retaining them, maximizing the value that comes from them. CRM is a product of a communication marketing approach rather than a transaction-based marketing approach. It is seen as an ideal platform where relationship marketing can be implemented. The purpose of CRM is to obtain long-term profitability by retaining the customer. CRM acts as a bridge between information technologies and marketing strategies (Kennedy, 2006). Businesses have long-term customer relationships and want to make them loyal to them. To do this, they must ensure that their customers are satisfied with the service they provide. In the study conducted on the Karadeveci Bus Company, it was concluded that satisfaction affects loyalty (Özgüven, 2008). The objectives of customer relationship management are to make customer relationships profitable, to provide differentiation, to ensure cost minimization, to increase the efficiency of the business, to provide compatible activities, and to meet customer demands (Kırım, 2001). Customer Relationship Management (CRM) removes marketing from being a department and spreads it to all business activities, so CRM should be designed for all units of the business simultaneously and with common goals (Yurdakul, 2002). A firm's success in today's competitive business environment increasingly depends on its ability to run CRM, which enables the development and implementation of more efficient and effective customer-oriented strategies (Chang, Park and Chaiy, 2010).

3. Electronic Customer Relationship Management (E-CRM)

Customer relationship management can be divided into operational, analytical, and collaborative. Operational CRM is applied to manage interactions of existing customers, analytical CRM to analyze and reorganize customer data, and collaborative CRM to improve customer experience by providing interdepartmental teamwork and communication (Fayerman, 2002). Customer relationship management is also considered as a process, strategy, philosophy, competence, and technology (Zablah, Bellenger and Johnston, 2004). E-CRM is to integrate new electronic channel technologies such as web, wireless technologies, and sound technologies into CRM strategies, expressing an integrated approach by contacting customers in all areas of the business through marketing, sales, and customer service, with the continuous integration of human, process, and technology by using the advantages of the internet. Besides, the integration of CRM strategies and e-commerce applications emerges as an e-CRM application (Pan and Lee, 2003). CRM technology is an information technology intended to promote sales support, data analysis, service support, and data integration (Chang, Park and Chaiy, 2010).

CRM technology capability is considered as an activity coordination mechanism allowing a company to better understand its customers, collaborate with them, and produce timely responses to their needs. Therefore, CRM technology includes systems that provide support for sales (e.g. sales force automation), marketing (e.g. planning and budgeting, campaign and promotion management, etc.), customer service, and analytics (e.g. customer lifetime value, calculation of customer retention rates, etc.), data integration and external collaboration (Rapp, Trainor and Agnihotri, 2010; Jayachandran, Sharma, Kaufman and Raman, 2005). The effective e-CRM strategy make it possible for a company to reach new international suppliers and consumers and obtain valuable stakeholder data which are essential for a company's growth and market competitiveness. Thus, e-CRM receives increasing attention from different organizations around the world (Lam, Cheung and Lau, 2013).

Dyche (2001) suggests two main types of e-CRM: operational e-CRM and analytical e-CRM. Operational e-CRM deals with customer contact points. These can include people who come following a phone call or outgoing people, such as a letter sent to a company's customer service center, or sales staff selling to a customer, or email advertisements.

E-CRM perceptions are measured in seven dimensions: social media usage, reliability, personalized service, user-friendliness, responsiveness, sensitivity and empathy, competence, and accessibility (Durukal and Kaderli, 2017). E-CRM is the most up-to-date technique used by companies to increase and improve their marketing skills and capabilities (Scullin, Fjermestad and Romano, 2004). E-CRM influences the purchasing decision, as well as helping to create customer profiles, thus offering them customized products based on the customer's browsing on the internet (Scullin, Fjermestad and Romano, 2004; Novo, 2003).

E-CRM systems aim to retain valuable customers, improve customer service, and help provide analytical capabilities. Furthermore, it is the right way for the infrastructure that enables the identification and increase of customer value and to motivate valuable customers to remain loyal (Dyche, 2001). Besides, e-CRM has benefits such as more effective marketing, improved customer service, and support, being more effective and achieve cost advantage (Fjermestad and Romano, 2003; Scullin, Allora, Lloyd and Fjermestad, 2002). E-CRM is a combination of hardware, software, processes, applications, and management commitment. The integrated e-CRM framework provides systems designers and the corresponding management team with a guideline to improve usability and reduce resistance. In many cases, a focus on usability can reduce resistance (training and educating users) while a focus on resistance can improve usability (pilot programs and prototyping.) These two strategies go hand-in-hand. The integrated eCRM framework provides system designers and the relevant management team with a guide to increase availability and reduce resistance. (Fjermestad and Romano, 2003).

Gödekmerdan and Deniz (2010), in their study on 300 people living in Erzurum and receiving service from bus companies, determined that they want satisfaction for customers, safe and timely travel, discounted tariffs, and reservation priority for frequent travelers.

Alnıaçık and Özbek (2009) measured the service quality of a sample bus company by implementing the SERVQUAL technique. As a result of the study conducted on 484 people in Kocaeli province, suggestions such as timely transportation, complying with travel rules, affordable prices, online booking, and ticket sales and lost property application, where there are differences between expected and perceived quality.

In the study which Sasono, Novitasari and Novitasari (2021) applied to the participants at the fair attended by air conditioning companies in Indonesia, they state that electronic marketing and electronic customer relationship management studies affect electronic loyalty significantly and positively, in other words, these studies increases the visiting frequency of the companies' websites.

E-CRM applications can be used in hotel businesses to acquire new customers, improve customer relations, retain customers and create customer loyalty. With E-CRM applications, the information needed by the customer is presented through the websites that facilitates the customer's work (Adnan, Rahayu, Hendrayati and Yusuf, 2021).

As a result of the study conducted on Vietnam Airlines customers, it has been revealed that there should be a customer orientation, information management and data quality, a good CRM strategy for a successful e-CRM application (Nguyen, Khanh, Phong and Cao, 2021). They found that an important way to achieve customer satisfaction, which is a premiss to customer loyalty, is E-CRM applications. They have also determined in their study on banking sector customers in Delhi that retaining existing customers as well as attracting new customers, in other words ensuring customer loyalty to gain a competitive advantage, depends on the quality of the relationship (Shastri, Sharma and Sethi, 2020).

4. E-CRM Tools

The transformation from relationship marketing to e-CRM stems from changes in an increasingly unlimited and interconnected business environment due to rapid technological advances. Since the 1980s, all phases of this relationship have been targeting loyalty, profitability, increased sales, customer retention, and customer engagement. Digitization has pushed companies to digitalize their platforms so that customers can engage with companies 24 hours a day through online services (Hendriyani and Auliana, 2018).

Electronic customer relationship management consists of three stages: pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase. Pre-purchase includes membership registration and

information gathering. The purchasing stage includes comparison shopping opportunities and the selection of products and orders. The post-purchase stage includes transactions related to after-sales services such as problem-solving and ordering. Therefore, all of these stages can create different levels of satisfaction. It is the personal interaction with the sales staff and the capacity of the sales parties to meet the individual needs of the customers that largely determines the satisfaction during the purchase. But satisfaction at the time of purchase in the online context is based on interaction with the website. In the post-purchase stage, satisfaction with the after-sales service depends on the quality of the service and the interpersonal experience with the after-sales service staff (Lu, 2003; Khalifa and Shen, 2005; Feinberg R., Kadam, Hokama and Kim, 2002; Homburg and Giering, 2001).

Electronic customer service tools emerge from the relationships between electronic direct mail, interpersonal communication, preferential treatment, perceived reward, perceived customer relationship quality, and customer loyalty (Lam, Cheung and Lau, 2013). Features of electronic customer service are listed below (Khalifa and Shen, 2005):

Customized site
Guiding, an educational site for the customer
Alternative channels, online, offline, etc.
Loyal customer practices
Advanced search engine applications
warnings for new products, desired products etc.
Product customization opportunity
Various payment methods
Clarity of purchase terms
Comparative shopping opportunity
Dynamic pricing
Order tracking capability
Online spare parts availability
Feedback system
The online community between customers

According to the results of the study conducted by Karakan, Türkmen, Giritlioğlu and Kılıç (2016), only 85 of 145 bus companies operating in Istanbul Esenler Bus Station have websites. These websites include "Telephone Numbers of Terminal and Ticket Sales Offices", "Ticket and Reservation Inquiry" and "Contact" and "Company Logo" information. The services of "Online Support Line" and "Ticket Buying Bus Position on the Map" are very limited. It was concluded that enterprises are not sufficient in e-CRM applications in terms of competition.

5. Customer Loyalty

Loyalty is the result of good customer relations management. This quality is called perceived relationship quality. Relationship quality occurs between the consumer and the business agent. It refers to the perception by the consumers of employee behaviors such as respect, kindness, sincerity, empathy, and helpfulness. Perceived relationship quality consists of trust, relationship satisfaction, relationship commitment, and communication elements (Sökmen, 2018). Loyalty consists of various elements. Some of these are:

(i).   Customer prefers one company over another,

(ii). Customer purchases the same product or service again,

(iii). Customer develops habits such as word of mouth, repeat purchasing, price insensitivity (Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman, 1996).

One of the sub-elements of service quality is accessibility. Recently, with developing technologies, companies use digital applications to facilitate customers' access to companies and services. E-CRM is one of them. There is a positive relationship between these accessibility practices and satisfaction. As a result of satisfaction emerges customer loyalty and the intention to recommend (Pratiwi, Zhao and Mi, 2014; Cho, 2006; Koç, Günalan, Özbek and Çinar, 2015). Businesses have to ensure customer satisfaction and customer loyalty to survive, no matter which lane of the business world they operate in. It is easier for a business with satisfied customers to compete with its competitors. It will be much easier to keep in the business a customer whose expectations about a good or service have been met and to get them to buy again. In this context, loyal customers are customers who are integrated with the business and have an emotional bond with it (Yıldız and Çizel, 2017) (Avcıkurt and Köroğlu, 2006; Çatı and Koçoğlu, 2008). Customer happiness emerges as a result of the presentation that meets the expectations of the customers by determining the wishes and desires of the customers and the changing customer expectations with good market research. Quality service and customer satisfaction can be achieved by providing service in line with the expectations of the customers (Çatı and Yıldız, 2005). Customer satisfaction is also the premise of customer loyalty. Customer loyalty is one of the most important criteria for measuring the success of an organization. Loyal customers reduce the marketing costs of the companies and increase demand. Loyalty is a commitment that results in the continued repurchase or re-promotion of a particular good or service in the future and repeated consumption of the same brand (Nyadzayo and Khajehzadeh, 2016) Loyalty is divided into behavioral loyalty and emotional loyalty. The most important indicator of behavioral loyalty is that it leads to repurchasing action. Emotional loyalty has a positive effect on many things such as psychological state, attitudes, a feeling of favor, intention, etc.

In their study on academic staff using web-based travel agents, Yıldız and Çizel (2017) concluded that the electronic service quality consists of website functionality, customer relations, request fulfillment and sensitivity, safety and security, information quality, and content and appearance and presentation dimensions. There is a positive relationship between e-service quality, satisfaction, and loyalty.

The intention to recommend refers to the customers talking and suggesting the business from which they purchase goods or services to their friends, relatives, or potential customers, in other words, the loyalty of the customer (Arlı, 2012). Re-choosing and recommending is an attitude and such an attitude should not be expected from every customer (Knox, 1998).

In their study on university students, Kocakaya, Şahin and Tektaş, (2018) stated that the factors related to reservation, ticket purchase, and baggage are the factors that affect customer satisfaction the most. They stated that satisfied customers or customers who show complaining behavior tell this to their friends and relatives. When customer satisfaction is achieved, the intention to recommend is also positively affected. As a result of their study on university students in Uşak, Ceylan and Aydın (2011) revealed that customers attach more importance to features such as reliability, compliance with travel time, internet applications, service environment, and access to ticket sales points. Therefore, companies must design themselves according to customer requests. E-CRM is one of these features.

In a study conducted by Sökmen (2018) to measure the effects of electronic customer relations applications with 479 students, a significant and positive relationship was found between customer loyalty, E-CRM applications, and perceived customer relationship quality. It is predicted that airline companies will have loyal customers thanks to the quality relationship they will establish with their customers.
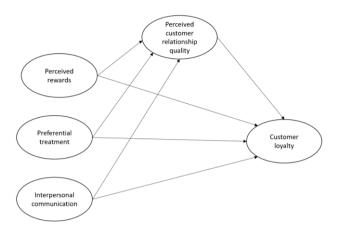
6. Method

This section presents the proposed model and the research hypotheses. A questionnaire was applied to the users of the bus companies in Bartın to test the hypotheses discussed in the previous section, and the data collection method used and the scales selected for each structure are presented below. The rest of the section is devoted to the findings of the research and these findings are interpreted.

5.1. Proposed Model and Research Hypotheses

The quantitative method was used in this study. The questionnaire method was used to collect data. It is research in relational scanning model. Figure 1 shows the proposed research model.

Figure 1: Proposed research model

As seen in the research model, the study has seven hypotheses.
H1: Perceived rewards effects to customer loyalty
H2: Preferential treatment effects to customer loyalty
H3: Interpersonal communication effects to customer loyalty
H4: Perceived rewards effects to perceived customer relationship quality
H5: Preferential treatment effects to perceived customer relationship quality
H6: Interpersonal communication effects to perceived customer relationship quality
H7: Perceived customer relationship quality effects to customer loyalty
H8: Perceived relationship quality has a mediating effect on the effect of perceived rewards on customer loyalty.
H9: Perceived relationship quality has a mediating effect on the effect of prefenetial treatment on customer loyalty.
H10: Perceived relationship quality has a mediating effect on the effect of interpersonal communication on customer loyalty.

5.2. Data Collection

The data used to test the research model was applied to the customers of the bus companies in Bartın by creating an online questionnaire. For the research, a comprehensive questionnaire was created that stated the purpose of the study and by whom it was conducted and included demographic information, perceived rewards, preferential treatment, interpersonal communication, perceived customer relationship quality, and customer loyalty scales. The survey was created via Google Forms and a survey link was obtained. This survey link was delivered to the customers of the bus companies in Bartın via different electronic communication means. The data of our research named "The Effect of Electronic Customer Relationship Management on Perceived Customer Relationship Quality and Customer Loyalty", which was approved by the Bartın University Ethics Committee on 30.09.2021 and has protocol number 2021-SBB-0322, was obtained through a questionnaire. As a result, 741 questionnaire data were collected (N = 741)

Table 1 includes the frequency-percentage distribution of the demographic data of the individuals participating in the research. Accordingly, 49.66% of the participants were women (n = 368) and 50.34% were men (n = 373). 74.49% (n = 552) of the participants were in the 18-23, 19.97% (n = 148) in the 24-29, 2.97% (n = 22) in the 30-35 age range. 1.2% (n = 9) were between the ages of 36-40 and 1.35% were 41 and over. 42.51% (n = 315) of the participants were married and 57.49% (n = 426) were single. 26.72% (n = 198) were high school graduates, 3.1% (n = 23) were associate degree graduates, 65.19% (n = 483) were bachelor's degrees, and 4.99% (n = 198) 37) was postgraduates. When the bus companies frequently used by the participants are examined, 68.02% (n = 504) uses Kamil Koc, 14.44% (n = 107) Metro, 11.2% (n = 83) Efe Tur and 6.34% (n = 47) Özemniyet. Concerning the number of travels by bus in the last 1 year, 40.22% (n = 298) travelled less than 5 times, 31.04% (n = 230) between 6-10 times, 13.9% (n = 103) between 11-15 times, 7.96% (n = 51) between 16-20 times and 6.88% (n = 59) travelled 21 times or more.

Table 1. Demographic Distribution of Participants

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	368	49.66
	Male	373	50.34
Age	Between 18-23	552	74.49
	Between 24-29	148	19.97
	Between 30-35	22	2.97
	Between 36-40	9	1.21
	41 and over	10	1.35
Marital status	Married	315	42.51
	Single	426	57.49
Education Status	High school	198	26.72
	Associate Degree	23	3.10
	Bachelor's Degree	483	65.19
	Postgraduate	37	4.99
Frequently used bus company	Kamil Koc	504	68.02
	Metro	107	14.44
	Efe Tur	83	11.20
	Özemniyet	47	6.34
Number of travels by bus in the last 1 year	Less than 5	298	40.22
	Between 6-10	230	31.04
	Between 11-15	103	13.90
	Between 16-20	51	7.96
	21 or more	59	6.88
Total		741	100

5.3. Scales

The scales used in this study were obtained by adapting from previous studies on the subject. Answers were taken on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). A questionnaire form was created for data collection and these questionnaires were also distributed electronically. The perceived rewards (3 items), preferential treatment (3 items), interpersonal communication (3 items), perceived customer relationship quality (3 items), and customer loyalty (3items) scales used in data collection were developed by Lam, Cheung and Lau (2013). The scales that were used and adapted into Turkish by (Sökmen, 2018) with appropriate validity and reliability values were used.

The original forms of the scales were translated from English to Turkish in two stages. First of all, two academicians and two translation experts who are proficient in English in their field have translated all scales into Turkish independently. In the next stage, the translations obtained were compared by a researcher and translation expert, and the translations thought to be the best expression were accepted. In this state, the scale expressions were finalized after being checked again by two academicians who are experts in their fields.

After the data was collected, they were processed into computers, questionnaires with missing data were removed, and those with proper data were included in the analysis. frequency analysis for demographic data, correlation, and regression analysis for relationship and effect were performed in the analysis of data suitable for parametric analysis to reach the result.

5.4. Data Analysis and Research Findings

The R program was used to create demographic information, confirmatory factor analysis. The reason why R is used is that it is an open-source and freely available program (Çelik et al., 2018). SPSS 18 program was used to create the correlation matrix and reliability of the scales and regression analysis used in the study.

Demographic data were analyzed in the first stage. The findings are presented in Table 1. Then, the goodness of fit values was obtained by performing confirmatory factor analysis.

The goodness of fit indices examined in the study are Chi-square fit test/degrees of freedom (X2 / df), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Tucker - Lewis Index (TLI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Relative Fit Index (RFI), Relative Noncentrality Index (RNI), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), and Adjustment Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI).

Table 2. Values of the goodness of fit

Fit index	Value	Good fit values	Acceptable fit values	Result
Chi square /df	334.2/80=4.17	<3	<5	Accep-table fit
CFI	0.964	>0.97	>0.95	Accep-table fit
RMSEA	0.065	<0.050	<0.080	Accep-table fit
TLI	0.953	>0.95	>0.90	Good fit
NFI	0.953	>0.95	>0.90	Good fit

RFI	0.939	>0.95	>0.90	Accep-table fit
RNI	0.964	>0.95	>0.90	Good fit
GFI	0.941	>0.90	>0.85	Good fit
AGFI	0.911	>0.90	>0.85	Good fit

Table 2 shows the goodness of fit values of the study. All values of the goodness of fit show a good fit and acceptable fit. This situation indicates that the data collected with the proposed model are compatible.

Table 3 shows the Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability (CR), and correlation matrix of all scales. Accordingly, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of all scales takes values between 0.785 and 0.946. As a result of the researches, the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient should be higher than 0.7 ((Nunallly, 1978; Iacobucci and Duhachek, 2003). Thus, the reliability of the scales is quite high.

Table 3. Cronbach's Alpha, AVE, CR values, and correlation matrix

	α	AVE	CR	1	2	3	4	5
1-PR	0.831	0.570	0.798	1				
2-PT	0.851	0.659	0.853	0.791**	1			
3-IC	0.785	0.515	0.760	0.521**	0.549**	1		
4-PCRQ	0.946	0.576	0.802	0.560**	0.589**	0.701**	1	
5-CL	0.881	0.696	0.872	0.432**	0.441**	0.658**	0.777**	1

AVE must be greater than 0.5 and CR must be greater than AVE for convergence validity (Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson, 2010), 2010; Fornell and Larchker, 1981). According to Table 3, AVE values take values between 0.515 and 0.816. Therefore, all values are higher than 0.50. Besides, CR values of all structures are greater than AVE. Thus, the scales are valid. Correlation analysis was conducted to show the relationships between variables. According to the results of the analysis, there is a significant (p <0.01) and positive relationship between all variables. The strongest relationship between the structures was between perceived reward and preferential treatment (r=0.791, p <0.01), and the weakest relationship was between perceived rewards and customer loyalty (r=0.432, p <0.01).

The regression analysis performed to test the hypotheses are presented below in tabular form. The four-step regression analysis proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) was used to measure the mediation effect (Baron and Kenny, 1986). The results of the regression analysis conducted to examine the effects between perceived rewards, perceived customer relationship quality and customer loyalty are presented in Table 4.

When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that perceived rewards have a statistically positive and significant effect on customer loyalty, and perceived rewards explain 18.6% of customer loyalty. When the effect of perceived rewards on customer relations quality is examined, it is seen that there is a statistically significant and positive effect and perceived rewards explain 31% of the perceived customer relations quality. When the effect of customer relations quality on customer loyalty is examined, it is seen that there is a favourable and positive effect. It is seen that perceived customer relationship quality alone explains 60% of customer loyalty. When the mediation effect of perceived customer relationship quality on the effect of perceived rewards on customer loyalty is examined, it is seen that there is a full mediator effect. Because when customer relationship quality is added to the model, the effect of perceived rewards on customer loyalty decreases. This result shows that perceived customer relationship quality has a full mediating effect on the effect of perceived rewards on customer loyalty. According to the regression results, H1, H4, H7 and H8 have been accepted.

Table 4: Perceived Reward, Customer Loyalty and Customer Relationship Quality Regression Model

	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	B	S.E.	B	Model Statistics
First Step	Perceived revards	Customer Loyalty	.438	.034	.432**	R^2=.186 $F_{(1,739)}$=170.035 p<0.001
Second Step	Perceived revards	Perceived customer relationship quality	.538	.029	.560**	R^2=.313 $F_{(1,739)}$=337.632 p<0.001
Third Step	Perceived customer relationship quality	Customer Loyalty	.819	.024	.777**	R^2=.603 $F_{(1,739)}$=1124.2 p<0.001
Fourth Step	Perceived revards	Customer Loyalty	-.004	.028	-.004	R^2=.602 $F_{(2,738)}$=561.36 p<0.001
	Perceived customer relationship quality	Customer Loyalty	.821	.030	.779**	

Note: ** $p<0.001$, S.E= Standard Error N=741

The effect of interpersonal communication on customer loyalty and quality of customer relations and the mediation effect of perceived customer relations quality on the effect of interpersonal communication on customer loyalty have been examined with regression analysis. Analysis results are shown in Table 5. According to these results, interpersonal communication has a statistically positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. Interpersonal communication explains 43% of customer loyalty. The effect of interpersonal communication on perceived customer relationship quality is also significant and positive. Interpersonal communication alone explains 49.1% of customer relations quality. When the mediator effect is examined, it is seen that the significance does not change when the quality of customer relations is added to the model of the effect of interpersonal communication on customer loyalty This result shows that perceived customer relationship quality has no mediating effect. In this case, H3 and H6 are accepted and H10 is rejected.

Table 5: Interpersonal Communication, Customer Loyalty and Customer Relationship Quality Regression Model

	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	B	S.E.	B	Model Statistics
First Step	Interpersonal communication	Customer Loyalty	.699	.029	.658**	R^2=.432 F(1,739)=564.500 p<0.001
Second Step	Interpersonal communication	Perceived customer relationship quality	.707	.026	.701**	R^2=.491 F(1,739)=715.056 p<0.001
Third Step	Perceived customer relationship quality	Customer Loyalty	.819	.024	.777**	R^2=..603 F(1,739)=1124.2 p<0.001
Fourth Step	Interpersonal communication	Customer Loyalty	.237	.033	.223**	R^2=.628 F(2,738)=624.684 p<0.001
	Perceived customer relationship quality	Customer Loyalty	.654	.033	.620**	

Preferential treatment, customer loyalty and perceived customer relationship quality relations and their effects on each other have been examined by regression analysis. The results are shown in Table 6. It is seen that preferential treatment has a significant and positive effect on customer loyalty. Preferential treatment alone explains 19.3% of customer loyalty. When the effect of the preferential treatment on the perceived customer relations quality is examined, it is seen that there is a significant and positive effect. Preferential treatment alone explains 34.6% of perceived customer relationship quality. When we look at the mediating effect of perceived customer relations quality on the effect of preferential treatment on customer loyalty, the positive effect of preferential treatment on customer loyalty is seen in the first model, but this effect becomes meaningless when perceived customer relations quality is added to the model. This result shows that customer relationship quality has a full mediator effect on the effect of preferential treatment on customer loyalty. According to the regression results, H2, H5 and H9 have been accepted.

Table 6: Preferential Treatment, Customer Loyalty and Customer Relationship Quality Regression Model

	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	B	S.E.	B	Model Statistics
First Step	Preferential treatment	Customer Loyalty	.432	.032	.441**	R^2=.193 F(1,739)=178.152 p<0.001
Second Step	Preferential treatment	Perceived customer relationship quality	.547	.028	.589**	R^2=.346 F(1,739)=392.733 p<0.001
Third Step	Perceived customer relationship quality	Customer Loyalty	.819	.024	.777**	R^2=..603 F(1,739)=1124.2 p<0.001
Fourth Step	Preferential treatment	Customer Loyalty	-.025	.028	-.026	R^2=.603

Perceived customer relationship quality Customer Loyalty			.835	.030	.792**	F(2,738)=562.360 p<0.001

7. Conclusions

According to the results obtained by performing analysis in accordance with the obtained data, it has been determined that perceived rewards and preferential treatment affect customer loyalty and relationship quality significantly and positively. Thus, H1, H2 and H3 are accepted. All these results show that providing various awards and some preferential treatments to the customers results in a better customer perception of relationship quality for the most preferred bus companies. The awards offered by these companies are preferred as sales discounts, promotions, free tickets, customer-specific discount agreements with companies from different sectors, etc. It can be concluded that such privileged transactions have a positive effect on the quality of relations between companies and their customers.

Today, the rapid developments in technology and the increase of competitive pressures show themselves in the service sector and especially in the bus transportation sector. Customer relationship management, which is one of the most influential factors in the customers' process of preferring a bus company, needs to be rearranged considering technological developments. Today, advances in big data, data mining, and data analysis have increased the use of E-CRM. Data obtained from customers can be analyzed with E-CRM. Customer relationship quality can be increased by using the results of these analyzes. It seems possible with the help of E-CRM applications to acquire new customers, regain lost customers, and ensure the loyalty of existing customers.

This study investigates the factors affecting customer relationship quality and customer loyalty by using E-CRM and traditional CRM of companies in the bus transportation sector. As a result, the bus companies in the current study do not use E-CRM efficiently. Customer data should be analyzed using E-CRM and the quality of customer relationship should be increased with the results obtained. Perceived rewards and preferential treatment positively affect the perceived customer relationship quality in many studies (Fjermestad and Romano, 2003; Lam, Cheung and Lau, 2013; Yıldız and Çizel, 2017). Similarly, perceived rewards and preferential treatment have a significant effect on perceived customer quality in the present study (H4 and H5 were accepted). Companies with highly perceived E-CRM contribute to customer satisfaction, transaction volumes and frequency, brand image, effective database management, and customer targeting, efficient business processes, technology use, service excellence and innovation, profitability, as well as reduced service support costs (Kımıloğlu and Zararlı, 2009). When bus companies offer their customers cash or surprise gifts, sales discounts, promotions, free tickets, and customer-specific discount agreements made with businesses from different sectors, thanks to E-CRM, it is thought that customers will have a

better relationship quality perception. On the other hand, when bus companies offer their customers special discounts and campaigns through the electronic channel, the quality of customer relationship will increase. Besides, when personal transactions are made, the customer relationship quality perceived by the person increases. The perceived quality of customer relationship will increase when companies offer their customers birthday discounts, discounts on additional product purchases, package discounts, and up-to-date product discounts. Along with relationship quality, factors such as improvements in financial ratios, customer value, innovation, excellence, and effectiveness in business processes will come to the fore.

Interpersonal communication has a significant effect on the perceived quality of customer relationship, thus supporting H6. Bus companies provide a comprehensive electronic service to their customers through call centers or mobile applications in problem-solving. Thus, customers can easily solve their problems and the customer relationship quality they perceive increases. Information, convenience, and communication are prominent in electronic customer relationships (Sivaraks, Krairit and John C.S. Tang, 2011). On the other hand, activities such as games, movies, and internet services offered to customers on buses increase the quality of customer relationship perceived by customers. Bus companies should have a platform where customers can express their opinions. In this way, they will have the chance to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and thus, the perceived quality of customer relationship will increase. For companies that mostly sell online or have internet-based applications, e-CRM forms the basis of their relationship marketing efforts. This is a way to strengthen customer loyalty and increase customer loyalty versus price sensitivity (Lee-Kelley, Gilbert and Mannicon, 2003). The way to be effective and efficient in marketing and to stand out strategically is to use e-CRM applications actively and efficiently. Thus, customer loyalty can be created and sales can be increased (Harrigan, Ramsey and Ibbotson, 2010).

It is well known that complaints can have a significantly positive impact on a company. Today, dealing with complaints effectively has a significant impact on consumer assessments of retail experiences and can increase the likelihood of customer repurchase and limit the spread of negative word of mouth (Blodgett, Hill and Tax, 1997). E-CRM applications should involve complaint management.

This study determined that perceived customer relationship quality positively and strongly affect customer loyalty, and H7 was supported. The more the factors affecting the customer relationship are strengthened, the more customer loyalty will increase. For this reason, the quality of customer relationship should be increased by taking the above-mentioned measures, and customers should be turned into loyal customers. The more electronic customer relations

applications are on the websites of the companies, the more customer satisfaction increases (Feinberg and Kadam, 2002).

According to Thorsten, Gwinner, Walsh and Gremler (2004), if the consumer perceives a high value, they can recommend the business and share positive opinions. The customers, who enjoy and have fun with the services offered by the bus company, are directed to share positively about the company. In other words, the customer who will communicate positively about the company is mostly the consumer who is emotionally satisfied with the trip (Demirgüneş, 2016). Each customer who is satisfied with the trip will share his/her experience and make other customers prefer the relevant company.

As a result, similar studies to be conducted in different sectors, with larger samples with different characteristics, by using similar scales, will contribute to the literature and bring different perspectives to businesses.

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