



HANGİSİNE TIKLASAK ACABA? TÜKETİCİ PERSPEKTİFİNDEN E-TİCARET PLATFORMLARI: TÜRKİYE ÜZERİNE BİR ARAŞTIRMA¹

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Öz–Artan rekabet ve dünyayı derinden sarsan Covid-19 küresel salgını elektronik ticaretin (e-ticaret) kullanım oranını artırmış, firmaları kaçınılmaz bir yola sokmuştur. Bu makalenin amacı, e-ticaret platformlarının tüketici perspektifinden konumlandırılmasına etki eden unsurları belirleyebilmek, algı haritaları yardımıyla Türkiye’de faaliyet gösteren e-ticaret platformlarının tüketici perspektifinden konumlarını gösterebilmektir. Araştırma da nitel ve nicel yöntemlere yer verilmiştir. E-ticaret platformlarının markalaşmasında önemli olan faktörleri tespit etmek için ilk önce nitel bir çalışma yapılmıştır. Bu çalışmadan elde edilen veriler kullanılarak, nicel araştırmada kullanılacak ölçek için uygun ifadelerin yer verildiği anket formu hazırlanmıştır. Hazırlanmış olan anket formu hedef kitle üzerinde uygulanarak elde edilen veriler sonucunda boyutlar tespit edilmiş ve algı haritalarını ortaya çıkaracak son anket uygulaması yapılmıştır. Anket uygulaması sonucu oluşan boyutlar kapsamında e-ticaret platformlarının konumları algı haritaları ile gösterilmiştir. Çalışmada e-ticaret platformlarının konumlandırılmasına etki eden unsurların tespiti için açıklayıcı faktör analizi kullanılmıştır. Analiz sonucunda 7 boyutlu bir yapı ortaya çıkmıştır. Ancak algılama haritalarında faktörlerin net olması gerekliliğinden dolayı yapı 10 boyutlu olarak ele alınmış olup Türkiye’de faaliyet gösteren 9 e-ticaret platformu için algılama haritaları oluşturulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler– E-Ticaret Platformları, Konumlandırma, Algı Haritaları, Çok Boyutlu Ölçekleme

WHICH ONE SHOULD WE CLICK? E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS FROM A CONSUMER PERSPECTIVE: A STUDY ON TURKEY

Abstract –Increasing competition and the global epidemic of Covid-19, which shook the world deeply, increased the rate of use of electronic commerce (e-commerce) and put companies on an inevitable path. The purpose of this article is to determine the factors affecting the positioning of e-commerce platforms from the consumer perspective and to show the positions of e-commerce platforms operating in Turkey from the consumer perspective through the help of perception maps. Qualitative and quantitative methods are applied in the research. A qualitative study was first conducted to determine the factors that are important in the branding of e-commerce platforms. Using the data obtained from this study, a questionnaire in which appropriate statements for the scale to be used in quantitative research were included scale was prepared. As a result of the data obtained by applying the prepared questionnaire scale on the target group, the dimensions were determined, and the final questionnaire practice was made to reveal the perception maps. Within the scope of the dimensions formed as a result of the survey practice, the positions of e-commerce platforms are shown through the perception maps. In the study, explanatory factor analysis was used to determine the factors affecting the positioning of e-commerce platforms. As a result of the analysis, a 7-dimensional structure emerged. However, since the factors should be clear in the perception maps, the structure has been handled in 10 dimensions, and perception maps have been created for 9 e-commerce platforms operating in Turkey.

Keywords – E-Commerce Platforms, Positioning, Perception Maps, Multidimensional Scaling

¹ Etik Onayı: Bu çalışma için etik onay Karabük Üniversitesi Etik Kurulu’ndan 16.09.2020 tarih, 11 nolu toplantı ve 7 sayılı karar olarak alınmıştır.

INTRODUCTION

The infrastructure of the internet is a networked that connects computers and other electronic devices through the telecommunications networks. In recent years, the internet has become a global phenomenon that has significantly changed the nature of communication between people and enterprises. In addition, the internet has turned into a large distribution channel where goods and services are purchased. The Internet has profoundly changed the economy, markets, and even industrial structures in many countries (Laurie, 2006).

Even though the history of commerce dates back to ancient times and even thought to have started with the history of humanity, electronic commerce has come to the fore upon the use of the internet for e-commerce. Currently, there are many definitions for e-commerce in the literature. The definition by Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is as follows: E-commerce is an electronic transaction through networks, which is the sale or purchase of goods or services conducted between enterprises, households, individuals, governments, and other public or private entities (OECD, 2019).

Whereas the rate of internet users in the world in 2021 is 63%, this rate is 87% in Europe, 90% in developed countries and 57% in developing countries (International Telecommunication Union, ITU, 2021: 2). In parallel with the increase in internet usage in the world, it is seen that e-commerce sales are increasing rapidly. According to the data provided from Statista, it is seen that more than 2 billion people purchased goods and services through e-commerce in 2020, and it draws attention that the total turnover obtained in e-commerce sales exceeds the level of 4.938 trillion USD. Again in the same bulletin, it is emphasized that the global retail e-commerce traffic reached 22 billion record visits per month with the increasing demand in the Covid-19 epidemic in June 2020. In the Statista bulletin, it is estimated that the e-commerce volume will grow by more than 50% in the next 5 years and reach approximately 7.4 trillion dollars (Statista, 2022).

According to the data of household information technologies usage survey by TSI (Turkish Statistical Institute) for 2021, 92% of the households in Turkey have access to the internet from home, and the rate of individuals using the internet is 82.6%. In addition, in this study, it is given at the rate of ordering or purchasing goods or services over the internet. Accordingly, while the rate of individuals in the 16-74 age group purchasing via e-commerce was 36.5% in 2020, it is seen that this rate increased to 44.3% with an increase of approximately 8% in 2021. When the sectoral distribution of e-commerce in Turkey is examined, it is understood that, according to the first three months of 2021, 70.7% of the purchases through e-commerce are clothing, shoes, and accessories, and that 40.8% are restaurants and fast food, etc. It is seen that food products are purchased with 33.4%. In the light of these

data, it is seen that the rate of online purchases has increased steadily in Turkey. Therefore, it is also concluded that researches to be conducted on e-commerce in Turkey gain importance (TSI, 2021).

At present, in the intensely competitive environment, enterprises have to meet the demands, needs, and expectations of consumers in order to survive. For this, these enterprises need to know how their products are perceived by consumers and how they are positioned in their minds. By making a successful positioning, enterprises can understand how their brands are perceived by consumers, and can make them loyal customers by establishing an emotional bond within this framework. A very good positioning of a brand also plays a key role in ensuring brand continuity. In particular, the positioning process in the companies that produce service is very important in the perception of service quality (Şiker, Akar 2012: 54-68). Positioning is important to sustain competitive advantage. In the success of positioning, the vision and mission must be determined. Through the positioning of the brand, the enterprises can continuously convey their features, benefits, and experiences to the buyers (Kotler and Armstrong, 2006: 250).

This article aims to determine the factors affecting the positioning of e-commerce platforms from the consumer perspective and to show the positions of e-commerce platforms operating in Turkey from the consumer perspective with the help of perception maps. This study, unlike the literature, reveals the dimension of experience and application that will provide customer loyalty in virtual and physical spaces through the location perception maps of e-commerce platforms operating in Turkey. In this respect, our study aimed to fill the literature gap in the studies on Turkey. After the introduction part of the study, there is a selected literature review, which continues with the empirical methods and findings of the study. Finally, the findings are discussed in the conclusion part.

LITERATURE REVIEW

E-commerce

Electronic commerce is generally used to mean buying and selling on the internet. At this point, companies like Amazon immediately come to mind. However, e-commerce means much more than financial transactions between buyers and sellers on an electronic basis. E-commerce covers all of the pre-purchase, during-purchase, and post-purchase transactions between the parties. As it can be understood from here, it can be thought that e-commerce includes non-financial transactions such as customer requests, comments, and research (Chaffey, 2009: 10). E-commerce plays an important role in the development of jewelry, banking, telecommunications, hotels, real estate, software, and many other different sectors (Radovilsky, 2009: 9).

Brand Positioning and Perception Maps

A brand is defined as “any kind of sign that can be published and reproduced, combining details such as letters, numbers, names, physical features, which lead to the differentiation of the products of the enterprise from similar elements of the competitors” (Schroeder, Borgerson, & Wu, 2015: 262).

Considering the physical and emotional perception that the brand creates on consumers, it is a fact that a strong brand provides advantages in being preferred, creating a reputation on consumers, and distinguishing it from other brands (Perry and Wisnom, 2003: 12). If the physical features are a product, the service can be visible at the place where the brand is sold, at the time of the service. Emotional features, on the other hand, require a place in the minds of consumers as they contain psychological elements (Palumbo and Herbig, 2000: 122).

Brand positioning is defined as the activities of enterprises to place the brand in the consumer mind. While brand positioning helps enterprises gain a place in the market, it is a pioneer in transferring brand identity and brand value to the target audience (Aaker, 1995: 196). One of the main functions of the brand is to help the product or company to differentiate from the sector (Blythe, 2007: 290). It is thought that the more success can be achieved in this perception, the more likely it will be possible for consumers to find reasons to change their preferences in favor of the relevant product. In the brand positioning process, it is necessary to determine the superior aspects of the competitor, to analyze the consumer, to select the feature that will provide superiority against the competitor, and to meet the selected strategy with the consumers correctly (Dikmen, 2006: 85).

There are no widespread studies on brand positioning in production and service enterprises. The studies in this regard were carried out on sports brands (Lee, Yukyoun, & Won, 2018), cargo companies (Türkoğlu, 2019), bookstores (Tractinsky & Lowengart, 2003), laptop computers (Ceylan, 2003), mobile phone operators (Ekiyor, 2014), white goods (Erciş & Çelebi, 2016), accommodation businesses (Şiker, 2012: 54-68), cities (Beyaz, 2020), banks (Arslan, 2009) and e-commerce (Oey et al., 2020; Tarigan & Gultom, 2018; Tourisina Aziz & Rifaldi Windy Giri, 2019; Zrivan et al., 2006).

In consumer behavior, which is affected by perceptions and preferences, the consumer may perceive products with the same features as different, as well as perceive different products as the same. Three methods are used in the field of marketing. These are Perception maps, Preference maps, and Composite maps. In preference maps, preferences are determined by proportioning the alternatives. In composite maps, perceptual maps and preference maps are used together (Lilien & Rangaswamy, 1998). Techniques used

in the editing of perception maps are discriminant analysis, factor analysis, and multidimensional scaling analysis.

The dimensions included in the studies of e-commerce companies that use multidimensional scaling while positioning their brands are ease of use, information quality, customer service, application design, process management, price (Sujatna et al., 2020), usefulness, trust, service, promotion, security, product variety (Tourisina Aziz & Rifaldi Windy Giri, 2019), communication before purchase, communication after purchase, transaction process, order delivery, convenience of online manager, seamless online site, promotional offer and coupons (Tarigan & Gultom, 2018), e-commerce ability, customer service, value for money and product offering (Oey et al., 2020). Zrivan et al. (2006) examined the websites of companies engaged in e-commerce in their studies. Three dimensions have emerged in web sites, and these dimensions are user satisfaction, web site usability and user-oriented design. Content, accuracy, format, ease of use, and punctuality are under the dimension of user satisfaction. Web site usability dimension was found to be useful, and user-oriented design dimension included personalization, structure, navigation, layout, search, and performance.

As seen from the literature review above, the study can be shaped on different dimensions not included in the literature. As seen from the literature review above, the study can be shaped on different dimensions not included in the literature. To this end, Google Scholar, Web of Science, and Proquest databases dated 18.01.2022 were scanned using such keywords as multidimensional scaling, e-commerce platforms positioning, and perception maps. 4 similar studies were found. In these 4 studies, the dimensions mentioned above have been mentioned. Unlike these, in this study, the dimensions of e-commerce companies with experience in virtual and physical spaces and the dimensions of applications that will create customer loyalty are also discussed. The locations of e-commerce platforms operating in Turkey are shown through perception maps. It is considered that these two dimensions are important criteria in the market share and market positioning of e-commerce companies. With this aspect, this study purposed to fill the gap in this field with its innovative aspect since it has never been done before. This study is thought to be original in terms of the aspects above.

DESIGN, METHOD

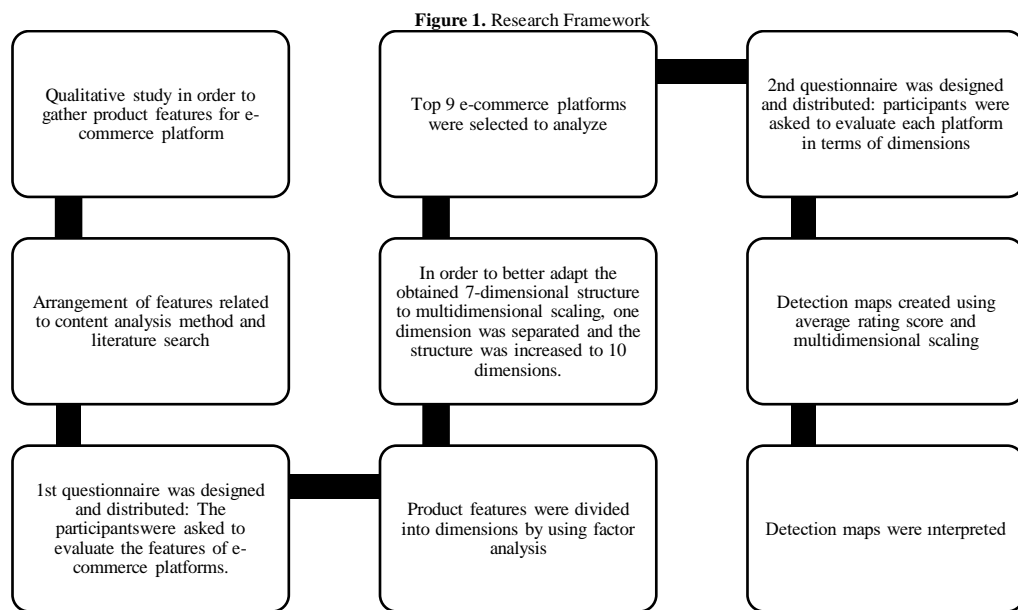
Types of Research and Data Collection Techniques

The study has an exploratory nature and was designed as an applied research. Qualitative and quantitative methods are included in the research. The purpose of the research is to determine the factors that affect the preference and branding of e-commerce platforms. In this context, a literature review has been made, and no study or scale of

this nature that directly covers the subject has been found. Therefore, it was deemed necessary to conduct a qualitative research primarily. The data were collected from a total of 18 people, including 10 people consisting of e-commerce platform owners, authorized managers, marketing officials, and 8 people consisting of university academic staff. These people were asked to indicate what factors are important for e-commerce platforms. The features related to content analysis method and literature review were arranged. In the light of these data, 63 statements that are thought to affect the preference and branding of e-commerce platforms have been developed. E-commerce platforms were evaluated with the questionnaire created within the scope of the first qualitative study. In the light of these data, 63 statements that are thought to affect the preference and branding of e-commerce platforms were developed by taking expert

opinions. The first quantitative study was applied to 400 participants by using face-to-face survey method and Google forms. While selecting the participants in the study, there is a condition that these nine e-commerce companies should have experienced. Since the size of the population subject to the study cannot be known exactly, the sample size was determined at the 5% deviation level of the estimated sample size. The second quantitative study was created by adapting the dimensions obtained from the first qualitative study on 9 e-commerce platforms, and the positions of e-commerce platforms were tried to be determined. The second qualitative study was conducted with 384 participants face-to-face and through Google forms.

Method Analysis



With the first qualitative study, the characteristics that affect the consumer purchasing decision while choosing the e-commerce platform were collected. These features were grouped as principal components by factor analysis using principal component analysis and varimax rotation. Varimax rotation aims to minimize the number of variables that load each factor. The basic assumption for using factor analysis is the existence of sufficient correlation between the data in the data matrix. It is possible to use various tests to analyze these correlations:

Bartlett test of sphericity: The null hypothesis assumes that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix. Kaiser–Mayer–Olkin test (KMO): It compares the dimensions of the experimental correlation coefficients with the dimensions

of the partial correlation coefficients. It is highly recommended that the KMO value be higher than 0.5 (Meloun et al., 2012). MSA: It provides the degree of internal correlations between the original markers and how they are estimated by other markers. It is recommended not to perform factor analysis when the MSA is less than 0.5 (Coussement et al., 2011).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Explanatory factor analysis was applied to determine the factors affecting the positioning of e-commerce platforms. The results of the factor analysis and the abbreviations of the names of the factors are provided in Table 1.

Statements	Site Optimization (ST-G-BK-ZY)	Recognition (B)	Product Customization (ÜK)	Product Variety (ÜÇ)	Applications to Provide Customer Loyalty (MSSU)	Experiencing the Product in Virtual and Physical Environments (ÜSFD)	Payment Features (ODO)
ST-G-BK-H-1	,885						
ST-G-BK-H-2	,844						
ST-G-BK-H-3	,840						
ST-G-BK-H-4	,834						
ST-G-BK-H-5	,832						
ST-G-BK-H-6	,830						
ST-G-BK-H-7	,826						
ST-G-BK-H-8	,819						
ST-G-BK-H-9	,811						
ST-G-BK-H-10	,776						
ST-G-BK-H-11	,774						
ST-G-BK-H-12	,758						
ST-G-BK-H-13	,755						
ST-G-BK-H-14	,752						
ST-G-BK-H-15	,751						
ST-G-BK-H-16	,742						
ST-G-BK-H-17	,741						
ST-G-BK-H-18	,722						
ST-G-BK-H-19	,700						
ST-G-BK-H-20	,699						
ST-G-BK-H-21	,698						
ST-G-BK-H-22	,644						
ST-G-BK-H-23	,634						
ST-G-BK-H-24	,628						
ST-G-BK-H-25	,622						
ST-G-BK-H-26	,609						
ST-G-BK-H-27	,576						
ST-G-BK-H-28	,575						
ST-G-BK-H-29	,573						
ST-G-BK-H-30	,566						
ST-G-BK-H-31	,549						
ST-G-BK-H-32	,545						
ST-G-BK-H-33	,525						
ST-G-BK-H-34	,424						
B-1		,809					
B-2		,798					
B-3		,788					
B-4		,767					
B-5		,739					
B-6		,591					
B-7		,488					
B-8		,446					
ÜK -1			,794				
ÜK -2			,785				
ÜK -3			,632				
ÜK -4			,609				
ÜK -5			,545				
ÜÇ -1				,598			
ÜÇ -2				,557			
ÜÇ -3				,463			
MSSU -1					,770		
MSSU -2					,730		
MSSU -3					,712		
MSSU -4					,691		
MSSU -5					,604		
SADA-6					,588		
ÜSFD -1						,803	
ÜSFD -2						,606	
ÜSFD -3						,469	
ÜSFD -4						,457	
FÖÇ-1							,576
FÖÇ-2							,568
FÖÇ-3							,558
Explained Variance	39.4	8.2	3.9	3.6	2.6	2.4	2.4
Cumulative Explained Variance	39.4	47.6	51.5	55.1	57.7	60.1	62.5
Reliability %	71.0	69.4	70.3	71.1	83.4	74.7	74.8
KMO=,932; P=000							

It is purposed to determine the dimensions of perceptions with factor analysis. The 63-item scale, which was formed as a result of the qualitative study, was analyzed. As a result of the analysis, the KMO value was determined as 0.932. It is seen that the Barlett sphericity test results are statistically significant ($p < .05$). In this study, in which all dimensions were determined reliable, dimensions explain 62.5% of the total variance. Based on the statements under the factor items, the factors are named as “Site Optimization”, “Recognition”, “Product customization”, “Quality, Product Diversity”, “Customer loyalty”, “Experiencing the product in virtual and physical environments”, and “Price, Payment diversity”. In terms of reliability, while “Site Optimization” was evaluated as highly reliable, other dimensions were considered quite reliable.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics on E-commerce Positioning Scale Dimension

Statements	\bar{x}	S
Site optimization	4,63885	,58524
Recognition	3,9431	,86274
Product Customization, Empathy Features	4,1260	,88003
Product Diversity	4,4842	,71213
Applications to Provide Customer Diversity	2,1923	,92426
Opportunity to Experience the Product in Virtual and Physical Spaces	3,6919	,85761
Price, Payment Variety	4,4283	,63709

In Table 2, the descriptive statistics for the dimensions obtained for the positioning of e-commerce platforms and the statements that make up these dimensions are evaluated. Accordingly, in the e-commerce platforms positioning scale, while the highest average dimension is site design, trust, information quality, and speed in the shopping stages, the lowest dimension is the applications dimension that will provide customer loyalty.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics Regarding the Statements Mostly Agreed by Participants

Statements	\bar{x}	S
It is important that the information on an e-commerce site is not deceptive.	4,7975	,69115
It is important that the information on an e-commerce site is complete.	4,8000	,65274
It is important that it is easy to contact an e-commerce company.	4,7675	,72093
It is important to feel safe when shopping on an e-commerce site.	4,7650	,71838

In Table 3, descriptive statistics regarding the statements that the participants agree with the most are given. According to Table 3, the most agreed statement by the participants in the e-commerce platforms positioning scale

was “It is important that the information on an e-commerce site is complete”.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of the Statements with the Least Agree by the Participants

Statements	\bar{x}	S
I always shop at the same site regardless of price.	1,8225	1,21436
Even if the product I am looking for is not on the site where I shop constantly, I still buy the product closest to it from that site.	2,5924	1,36618
I do not look at the price while shopping.	1,5950	1,13101
Even if there is no campaign, I always shop at the same site.	2,3900	1,35369
An e-commerce company does not need advertising.	2,3025	1,42340
I do not care which shipping company the product was sent with.	2,4650	1,44534

Table 4 indicates the descriptive statistics for the statements that the participants agree with the least. In other words, it seems that price information on e-commerce platforms remains an important element for participants. When an overview of the descriptive statistics in Tables 2, 3 and 4 is presented, it is seen that site design, trust, information quality, completeness and accuracy of information, speed in shopping stages, product variety and price information are important factors for the participants.

The dimensions revealed by this study form the basis for the study to be carried out in the next stage. In order to better adapt the obtained 7-dimensional structure to multidimensional scaling, one dimension was separated and the structure was increased to 10 dimensions. The first dimension, called “site optimization”, is separated. This process can be done because the dimensions must be completely separated from each other in order to obtain healthy results in multidimensional scaling (Beyaz, 2020). In the qualitative application at the last stage of the study, e-commerce platforms are compared within the scope of a structure consisting of ten dimensions. In the newly formed structure, dimensions were determined as site design, information quality, trust, time management, recognition, product customization and empathy, product diversity, customer loyalty practices, experiencing the product in virtual and physical places, and payment features.

Using the Multidimensional Scaling technique (ASCAL), the fit index should be R-square > 0.6 to generate all possible 2D continuous maps from the key components where the following requirement must be met. Stress value indicating poor fit should be $< 5\%$. Less than 30 iterations and a lower stress value indicating the degree of difference between the original difference matrix and the model indicate a good fit (George & Mallery, 2019; Maholtra & Birks, 2007).

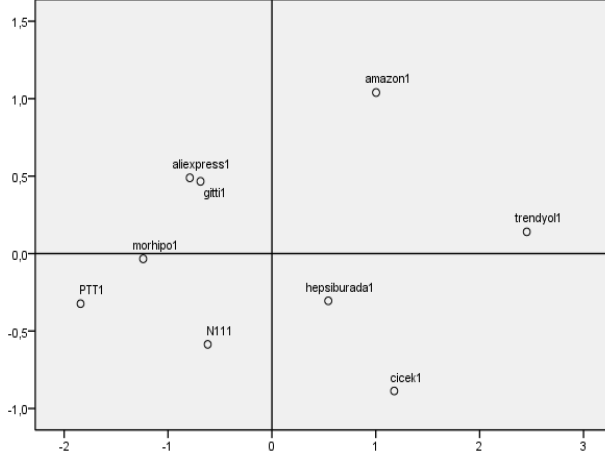
Table 5. Iteration, S-stress, Stress, RSQ Values in ALSCAL Analysis of Factors

Statements	Iterations	S-stress	Stress	R ²
Site design	8	0.048	0.064	0.979
Trust	8	0.084	0.085	0.957
Information quality	7	0.074	0.071	0.973
Time management	5	0.012	0.032	0.997
Recognition	7	0.020	0.023	0.997
Product Customization, Empathy features	9	0.018	0.058	0.991
Product Diversity	5	0.034	0.048	0.989
Applications to Provide Customer Loyalty	21	0.014	0.056	0.992

Opportunity to Experience the Product in Virtual and Physical Spaces	17	0.035	0.105	0.972
Payment Features	7	0.074	0.113	0.939

In Table 5, iteration numbers, S-stress values, stress values and R2 values are given. Whereas the factors with the highest R2 value were determined as the speed in the shopping stages, product customization and empathy features, the factors with the lowest stress value were determined as time management and recognition.

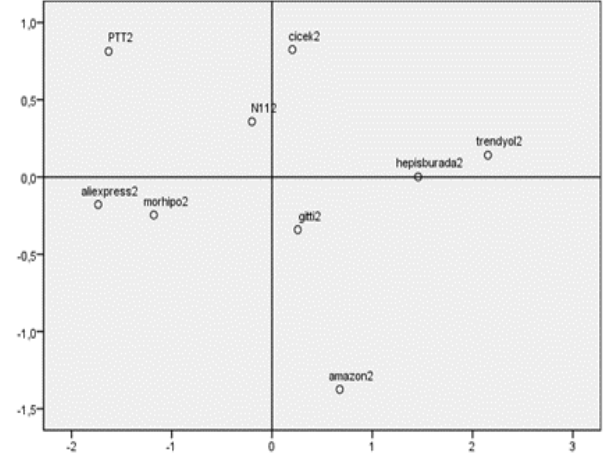
Figure 2. Euclidean Distances in terms of Site Design Dimension



In Figure 2, although Trendyol is separated from other platforms in terms of site design, Amazon has taken its place as the closest platform to Trendyol. In terms of site design, Pttavm is positioned as the farthest platform from Trendyol. Amazon, Hepsiburada and Çiçeksepeti are competing platforms in terms of site design. It is thought that it is important for the site to be easy to use by users and to be simple but flashy.

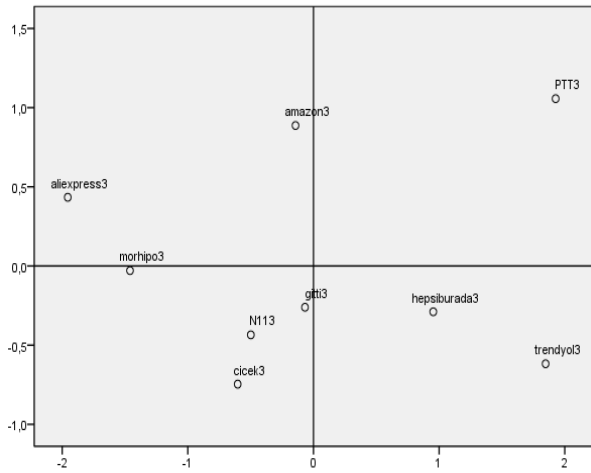
Figure 4. Euclidean Distances in Terms of Trust Dimension

Figure 3: Euclidean Distances in terms of Information Quality Dimension

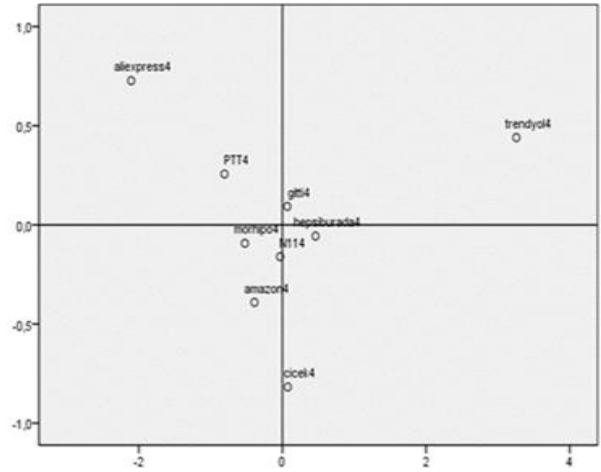


In Figure 3, Trendyol and Hepsiburada differ from other platforms in terms of information quality. Hepsiburada, Çiçeksepeti and amazon are platforms that have similar perceptions by consumers. In e-commerce platforms, consumers attach importance to the correct and sufficient information.

Figure 5. Euclidean Distances in Terms of Time Management Dimension

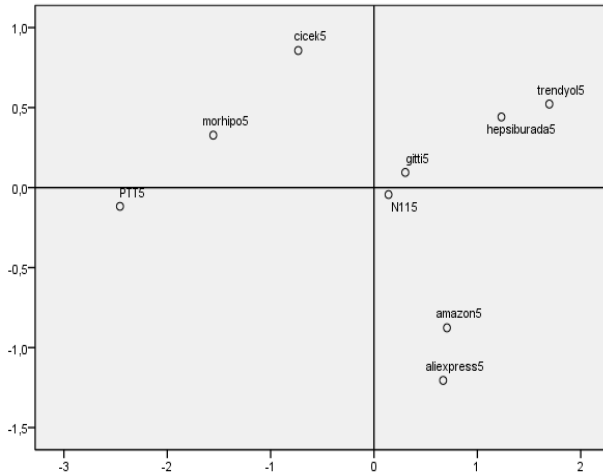


In Figure 4, while Trendyol and Pttavm differ from other platforms in terms of trust, Hepsiburada is the closest platform to these platforms in terms of consumer perception. In terms of trust, Aliexpress is the most distant platform. Trust is one of the most important elements for consumers engaged in e-commerce. Platforms need to give importance to the necessary infrastructure and promotion efforts in order to make consumers feel this trust.



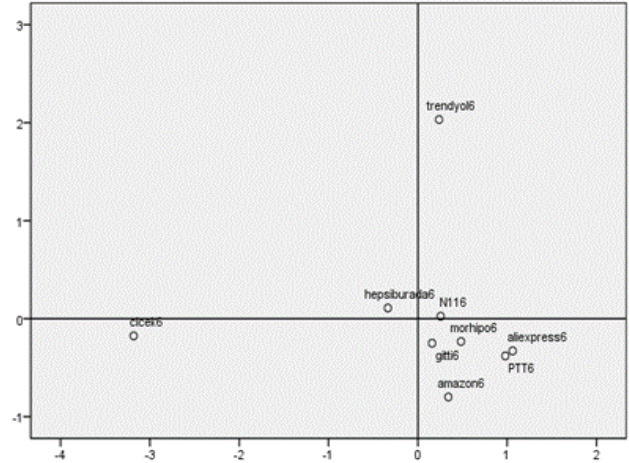
In Figure 5, whereas Trendyol differs from other platforms in terms of time management, platforms other than Aliexpress are located close to each other and are in competition. Aliexpress is the most remote platform. Consumers attach importance to timely and fast transactions during shopping, during the distribution stage and after shopping. Platforms need to improve themselves at this point.

Figure 6. Euclidean Distances in terms of Recognition Dimension



In Figure 6, while Trendyol is located close to Hepsiburada in terms of recognition, Amazon and Aliexpress are located close to these platforms. As the recognition of the platforms increases, both the number of users will increase, and the trust in the platforms will increase. At this point, promotion efforts gain importance.

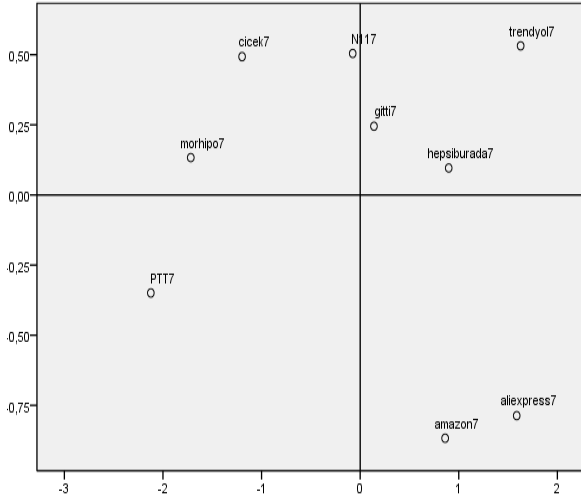
Figure 7. Euclidean Distances in Terms of Time Management Dimension



In Figure 7, Aliexpress and Pttavm are located close to each other in terms of product customization and empathy, and they are not very different from these platforms on other platforms except Çiçeksepeti. Çiçeksepeti is located away from these platforms. At present time, the consumers want to separate themselves from the patterns and demand customized products. At this point, it is important for companies to make consumers feel special.

Figure 8. Euclidean Distances in terms of Product Diversity Dimension

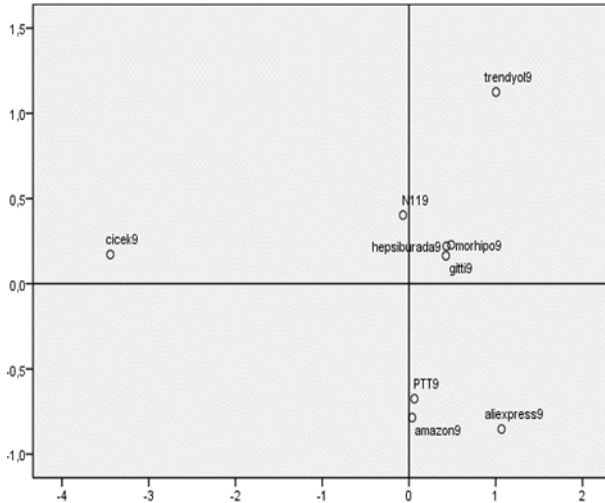
Figure 9. Euclidean Distances in terms of Applications to Provide Customer Loyalty Dimension



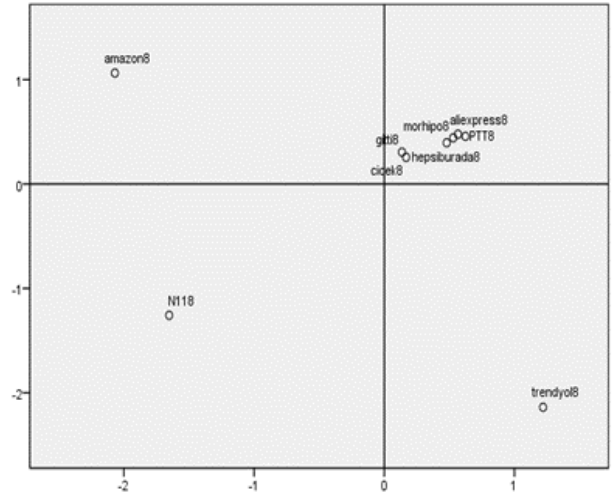
In Figure 8, Trendyol is located close to Aliexpress, and Amazon is located close to Hepsiburada in terms of product variety. Pttavm is seen as the platform with the most remote location. When consumers enter the platforms, they want to see every type of every product and every brand in order to be able to compare and see alternatives. For this reason, it is necessary for companies to give importance to diversity in their platforms.

Trendyol differs from other platforms in terms of applications that will provide customer loyalty in Figure 9.

Figure 10. Euclidean Distances in terms of Experiencing the Product in physical and virtual

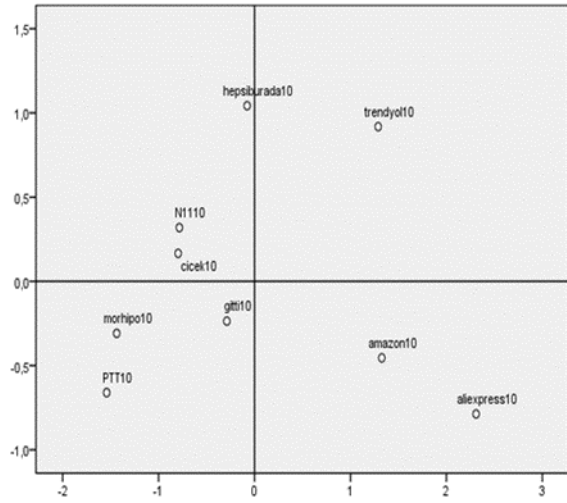


In Figure 10, Trendyol and Aliexpress have similar positions in terms of experiencing the product in physical and virtual environments. Çiçeksepeti was the worst perceived platform by consumers.



N11 and Amazon are separated from the other group and have different positions. The loyalty of the consumers to the company is ensured by the companies giving importance to the practices that will ensure customer loyalty. Due to competition, companies find it difficult to retain their loyal customers. Therefore, companies should make consumers feel that they are important and support this with applications and campaigns in order not to lose their current customers.

Figure 11. Euclidean Distances in terms of Payment Features Dimension Environments Dimension



In Figure 11, the dimension of payment features is discussed, whereas Aliexpress is the best positioned platform by consumers, amazon and Trendyol are platforms with similar positions. While consumers want to buy the product at the most affordable price, they expect companies to offer a variety of payment methods.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study purposes to help determine the positions of the platforms operating in the market from the point of view of consumers. In addition, the study reiterates the importance of performing perceived brand positioning analysis. This is especially important in highly competitive markets such as e-commerce.

Besides, this study analyzes the positioning of nine big branded platforms operating in Turkey. The results highlight the strengths and weaknesses of these leading platforms that will want to reformulate their marketing strategies.

It is seen in the study that site design, information quality and time management dimensions are among the important determinants of consumer preferences at the platform evaluation stage, and it is also supported by the literature. In terms of these dimensions, Trendyol distinguishes itself positively from other platforms and stands out in consumer perceptions.

As seen in the trust dimension, it is seen that the PTTAVM and Trendyol platforms are positively differentiated. In the consumer perception of PTTAVM, the trust dimension may cause a positive separation due to the perception of state participation. In the context of product diversity, platforms seem to have a similar and positive perception compared to other dimensions. In addition, it is seen that there is no perception that the Platforms have a distinct advantage over each other in customer loyalty practices.

It is possible for the platforms to determine their position in consumer perception by taking into account the dimensions in the study and to determine the basic principles that will reshape the positions of the platforms in consumer perception. In this respect, it is seen that corporate assurance is an important element in the trust dimension. It is thought that consumers' desire to experience products is an important factor in platform and product preference. In this context, allowing platforms to experience products in the physical environment may be advantageous in shaping consumer perception in terms of this dimension. In terms of time management, which is an important element of consumer perception, applications can be made on their platforms in order to carry out logistics processes more effectively and quickly.

When Factor Analysis and Multidimensional Scaling are used together, it becomes a very powerful and very useful instrument for brand positioning analysis.

While Factor Analysis helps to reduce the product characteristics perceived by the consumer to key components, Multidimensional Scaling facilitates the understanding of similarities and differences between brands through visualization. However, interpretation of continuous maps requires not only objective measurement but also some market insights from users or industry experts. Greater involvement of industry experts to

improve map interpretation and validation can also be beneficial.

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