



CONSUMER VALUE IN APPAREL ONLINE MARKETING WITH REPERTORY GRID ANALYSIS

DEMIR MURAT¹, KILIC MUSA¹, ORHAN KEREM¹, KARASU GULBEN¹

¹Dokuz Eylul University, Faculty of Engineering, Department of Textile Engineering, 35390, Izmir, Turkey, E-Mail: murat.demir@deu.edu.tr, musa.kilic@deu.edu.tr

Corresponding author: Demir, Murat E-mail: murat.demir@deu.edu.tr

Abstract: Online marketing has been increasing year by year and with the great advantages either for suppliers or consumers and e-business become more popular for any scale companies. Although it was seen adequate to set up a website was enough for e-commerce, it definitely needs much more than this for growth and survive. Consumer value has been in the center of many research for online and offline marketing channels and showed as a key factor of success in marketing. In this study, consumer value was investigated via repertory grid analysis. In traditional data collection, researchers make interview or questionnaire with participants. However, these data collections make researches restricted, because participant answer only ready questions in questionnaire or many unrelated data can be collected in interviews. In repertory grid analysis, participants uncover their thoughts and feelings without any guidance from researcher. In the study, participants were asked to tell 5 different online retailers that they have shopped before and answers were noted as elements. In the second step, the differences between selected 3 out of 5 e-retailers were asked and answers were noted as constructs. Elements and constructs were used to build repertory grid. In the last part, analytic hierarchy process was employed to find out which constructs were defined by participants as a value in their online shopping experience.

Key words: apparel online marketing, repertory grid analysis, analytic hierarchy process, consumer value

1. INTRODUCTION

E-commerce has disrupted the traditional brick and mortar retail business model and is changing both supply and demand dynamics. The conflation of time and space afforded by online retailing has given retailers an unparalleled operational flexibility in terms of supply management, product internalization, making distant geographic markets and highly accessible supply resources. The selling of products has become truly global. On the demand side, the convenience of online shopping, now supported by easier cross-border transfers of goods, has made e-commerce an attractive alternative to physical shopping. E-commerce's rapid growth is predicted to severely impact traditional retailing, which continues to lose customers to their online counterparts. However, in online marketing which become necessity rather than choice, growth and survive needs require much more effort than start up. Lee and Overby [1] claimed that despite dramatic increase in number of visitors who come a retailer website, only small amount of those visitors actually make purchase.

Dictionary meaning of the value is 'value is the regard something is held to deserve, the importance, worth or usefulness of something' [2]. This is perhaps the most common concept about the meaning of the value. Nonetheless, the terms of value appear in different context. The American Marketing Association [3] has revised its definition of marketing to cover the concept of customer



value and subsequently there have been important discussions in the literature over the centrality of customer value. Kotler and Armstrong [4] defines marketing as a transaction between two parties in which each side gives up something of value in return for something of greater value.

Value plays a crucial role at the heart of all marketing activity and therefore it needs clear attention for consumer marketing researcher [5]. Many researchers have worked on consumer value and they brought out that customer value is perceived by customers rather than provided by seller [4,6,7]. Besides, another significant point was placed for online retailing that online customers choose retailer who offer the best value, value defined by customers [7]. Therefore, the examination of customer value determination has become a focal point in the marketing literature.

In this study, it was aimed to find out that what are the factors that consumers relate as value in their experience of online apparel purchasing. In a study, which aim to undercover consumers' perception toward apparel e-retailers, it is important to take into consideration of consumer view without any guidance. For this purpose, "Repertory Grid Method" was used as a data collection tool. Repertory grid is based on the 'Theory of Personal Constructs' and is a method of collecting and analysing data about how individuals view and shape their worlds employing construct psychology.

2. METHOD

This study has been conducted among 25 frequent online shoppers who are also at certain level of education. Research group contain male and female participants between the ages of 22 to 40. Each participant was asked to give the name of five online apparel retailers that they have shopped before. The answers were set as elements in grid structure. Afterwards, researcher asked participant the questions for each of the three online suppliers selected using the triple combination of five retailers. During this process researcher never asked any open-ended questions as in the interview or never offer any answer-options as in the questionnaires. The only questions were repeatedly asked 'which of the element is different as opposed to other two' and 'in which way this element is different?'. Thus, influence of interviewer on interviewee was minimized. Besides, answers of each triads were noted as constructs in the grid structure.

a. Repertory Grid Analysis

"Repertory Grid" technique includes two concepts, 'elements' and 'constructs'. The elements are the objects of people mind to which they relate their concepts and values. The constructs differentiate how people identify the elements in their individual world [8].

The process of repertory grid technique resembles as semi-structure interview which are asked two of the elements are similar as opposed a third. The characteristic that respondents use to differentiate between the elements is the construct. Participants are then asked to rate elements on scale and which element they prefer. This process repeated through a number of iterations involving different combinations of triads until the participant finds no more construct options [8].

Steps to complete repertory grid [8]:

1. Choose the topic for grid: Specific topic should be chosen for repertory grid.
2. Select elements: Products or services may be chosen as element.
3. Group elements in threes to undercover construct: The interviewer chooses three elements randomly and ask to interviewee for 'what do two of these elements similar as opposed to third?'
4. Create the grid framework: A simple grid will be created with the elements at the top and the poles of the constructs will be placed both side of the grid.
5. Interpret the grid: Columns are compared in order to search for similarity and contrasts in the elements, the interviewer can see how the respondents would profile a particular element. By comparing rows, the researcher is able to indicate related and unrelated constructs.



6. Aggregate the individual grids. Repertory grid technique is used to evaluate the constructs of groups in marketing research and organizational behaviour.

This study involves an evaluation of the constructs that respondents expressed in order to evaluate customer perceived value. Repertory grid analysis allows a highly individualized approach to each respondent and lets to take into consideration the mental, emotional and personality characteristics of interviewee's [9]. Other widely used methods (questionnaire and interviews) are usually criticized problems related to the issues of validity and reliability. A questionnaire which use questions with predetermined attributes are usually criticized for limiting respondent's choice and not give chance for open discussion [10]. An interview can partly deal with this issue and gives the respondents more opportunity to express their personal thoughts, but an interview cannot resolve the issue of interviewer's bias and inability to access the underlying reality.

2.1.1 Analytic Hierachy Process

The Analytic Hierachy Process (AHP), developed by Saaty [11], is a technique to rank a finite number of alternatives based on a finite number of criteria [12]. The process requires the decision maker to provide judgments about the relative importance of each of the criteria and then to specify a preference for each decision alternative on each criterion. The output of the AHP is a prioritized ranking indicating the overall preference for each of the decision alternatives [13].

Obtained constructs used in AHP table and below steps were followed;

1. Calculate the column sums
2. Normalize the columns: Divide each value of the column into column sum.
3. Calculate the row sums
4. Normalize the column of row sums and establish the priorities: Take the sum of the column of row sums and normalize the values by dividing each value into the sum. Thus, the priority of each preference is established.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the study, consumer value –value defined by consumers was investigated and for data collection repertory grid was used. During data collection process, all participants were asked to tell 5 different apparel online retailers that they have recently used. After the identification of retailers, 3 different retailers were chosed and asked participants to identify difference of one as oppesed to other two. This step was repeated to cover all possibilities of selected 3 retailers.

Participants identified totally 13 different online apparel retailers which are also elements in repertory grid and 27 different constructs were obtained (Table 1). As it seen from Table 1, each of the constructs has different number of repetitions. However, reperitions does not prove that consumer relate them as value. Even, in some cases, less repetitive constructs may be more important than others. Therefore, AHP was employed on collected data to uncover the constructs that consumers relate as value.

Table 1: Collected constructs

| Constructs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | total | (%) |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|------|
| fast cargo | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | 23 | 9,31 |
| luxury products | * | * | * | * | * | | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | | * | * | | * | * | * | | | * | | * | 19 | 7,69 |
| range of products | * | | | * | | | * | * | * | | | * | * | * | * | | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | 18 | 7,29 |



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|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|------|
| phsycal store | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | 18 | 7,29 |
| private discount and gift | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | 17 | 6,88 |
| free return and change | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | 17 | 6,88 |
| similar product with similar price | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | 13 | 5,26 |
| live customer service | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | 12 | 4,86 |
| sale own brand | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | 12 | 4,86 |
| monthly payment (never-never) | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | 11 | 4,45 |
| good navigation website | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | 10 | 4,05 |
| 3D secure payment | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | 10 | 4,05 |
| return in phsycal store | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | 10 | 4,05 |
| free cargo | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | 9 | 3,64 |
| availability of wide range products | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | 8 | 3,24 |
| qualitf of customer service | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | 6 | 2,43 |
| different seller | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | 6 | 2,43 |
| private designed products | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | 5 | 2,02 |
| recycled product use | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | 5 | 2,02 |
| importance of customer satisfaction | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | 4 | 1,62 |
| detailed descriptive product | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | 4 | 1,62 |
| payment at the door | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | 3 | 1,21 |
| direct | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | 2 | 0,81 |



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|---------------------------|---|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|---|------|
| contact with seller | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| mobile application | | | | | | | | | * | | | | | | | | | * | | 2 | 0,81 |
| easy product return | * | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 0,4 |
| enough stock | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | | 1 | 0,4 |
| weekly based new products | | | | * | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 0,4 |

After employing AHP, importance levels of constructs showed differences from frequency of each constructs. Result of AHP illustrated that similar products with similar price (12,20%), private discount and gift (8,74%) and security (%7,04) were three constructs with the highest importance levels. However, in a methodology that consumer perceptions are taken into consideration without any influence of researcher, different consturcts can show similarities. These similarities divide importance level and can misguide study. In order to eliminate these similarities, constructs were grouped by AHP team. New groups of constructs are given in Table 2. After new groups were created, “campaigns” have the gratest importance level (31,09%) followed by “shipping and return” (23,8%). Impotance level of “customer service and satisfaction” (21,12%) is also close to “shipping and return” and third the highest importance level. Surprisingly, “security” (%7,06) was found out as one of the least important factor.

Table 2. Groups of collected constructs

| Groups | Constructs | Importance Level (%) | Total Importance Level (%) |
|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Campaigns | similar product with similar price | 12,20 | 31,09 |
| | private discount and gift | 8,74 | |
| | free return and change | 4,04 | |
| | monthly payment (never-never) | 1,12 | |
| | payment at the door | 0,85 | |
| | weekly based new products | 3,22 | |
| | recycled product use | 0,93 | |
| Shipping and Return | fast cargo | 6,06 | 23,8 |
| | free cargo | 3,17 | |
| | return in physical store | 4,55 | |
| | physical store | 5,36 | |
| | easy product return | 4,67 | |
| Customer Satisfaction and Services | quality of customer service | 6,44 | 21,12 |
| | importance of customer satisfaction | 5,83 | |
| | live customer service | 3,69 | |
| | direct contact with seller | 1,53 | |
| | detailed descriptive product | 3,63 | |
| Availability and Range of Product | easy product return | 6,20 | 15,35 |
| | availability of wide range products | 2,80 | |



| | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|------|------|
| | range of products | 1,97 | |
| | luxury products | 1,22 | |
| | private designed products | 0,58 | |
| | mobile application | 0,52 | |
| | good navigation website | 2,04 | |
| Security | 3D secure payment | 7,06 | 7,06 |
| Different Sellers | Different seller | 0,90 | 1,59 |
| | sale own brand | 0,69 | |

4. CONCLUSIONS

In this study, it was aimed to determine the factors that online consumers relate as value in their apparel online shopping experience. In order to minimize the influence of researcher during data collection, repertory grid technique was used. For better assessment, AHP was employed to prioritize the importance levels of collected data independently of the number of repetitions. Research findings showed that most important constructs can be grouped under utilitarian values and are also more prominent in consumers' online shopping experience [7].

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