

MARKETPLACE ALIENATION OF CONSUMERS IN TURKEY

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Abstract: Alienation is defined as a psychological state of an individual. Marketplace alienation is most commonly referred to as consumer alienation and consists of individuals' failure to accept the doctrine of consumption or a failure to find fulfillment in the offerings of the marketplace. Despite the fact that marketplace alienation is an important concept in marketing literature, the number of research about the topic is not sufficient. The aim of this study is to determine the demographic profile of Turkish consumers who are alienated from marketplace. The sample size is 470. After performing statistical analyses the effect of demographic factors on marketplace alienation factors has been shown.

Key Words: Alienation, Marketplace Alienation, Consumer Alienation

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, sociologists have begun to make attempts to measure man's feelings of alienation. It is a psychological state of an individual. Its measurement is most always based on the presence of certain attitudes and feelings (Allison, 1978:565). Alienation has been conceptualized in differing ways in both the behavioral science and the marketing literatures (Durand and Lambert, 1980:185). In sociology, meaning of alienation is a feeling of separation or estrangement from some institution, person or society in general (Gaski and Ray, 2004:159). Social thinkers since the times of Hegel, Marx, and Weber have been concerned with man's relationship with the society in which s/he lives (Allison, 1978:565). Marx was a pioneer in the development of the alienation construct,

calling attention to the powerlessness aspect of alienation in the workplace (Lystad, 1972:90-91). Durkheim the "father of sociology", focused on normlessness or anomie, which means the lack of behavior standards and the resulting sense of social malintegration (Gaski and Ray, 2004:159).

CONSUMER ALIENATION IN MARKETING

Alienation, according to Seeman, is the sense of exclusion felt by an individual, based on one's subjective state of mind where the emphasis is placed on the focal individual's expectations and values (Krishnan, 2008:12). Consumer alienation is a consumer's global negative affect toward the dissatisfying firm's industry and is reflected by a negative feeling for the firm, its products/services, and even its competitors. When consumers feel alienated they are more likely to develop feelings

of helplessness and powerlessness that tend to exhibit negative attitudes towards complaining and, compared to those who do not feel alienated, have lower levels of perceived likelihood of successful complaints (Fernandes and Santos, 2007:90). The consequences of alienation from work are low productivity, absenteeism and turnover (Shuptrine, Pruden and Longman, 1977:233).

Alienation is not a universal construct, but it is situation-specific (Allison, 1978). Alienation, therefore, can only be examined within the domain of a specific social structure or social institution. Alienation from the marketplace is most commonly referred to as consumer alienation and consists of individuals' failure to accept the doctrine of consumption and/or a failure to find fulfillment in the offerings of the marketplace (Burns, 2011:51). Feelings of alienation can be expected to affect an individual's behavior. Individuals with high degrees of consumer alienation, therefore, can be expected to attempt to minimize contact with the marketplace. Lambert (1980) suggests that greater consumer alienation may lead to marketplace disengagement behavior.

Fromm sees the "marketing orientation" as the basis for all alienation. He believes the economic system is responsible for the feelings of alienation that individuals experience as consumers (Allison, 1978:566). Alienation occurs when "one fails to accept the doctrine of consumption or fails to find fulfillment in the offerings of the marketplace" (Gaski and Ray, 2004:160). The marketplace is conceptualized as the entire spectrum of institutions involved in the offering of goods and/or services and the practices or activities conducted by these institutions (Johnson, 1995). Alienated individuals

tend to lack any acceptance of or identification with the existing market institutions, practices, and outputs they must deal with as they assume their roles as consumers (Pruden, Shuptrine and Longman, 1974; Shuptrine, Pruden and Longman, 1977).

It has been found that those consumers who feel strongly alienated might resort to varying degrees of disengagement behaviors, such as, ignoring the issue, silently switching to competing brands, complaining to family, friends, etc (Krishnan, 2008:18). Individuals who feel alienated from the marketplace can be expected to limit their interaction with the marketplace (Lambert 1980). Consumer alienation appears to be related to the amount of power individuals perceive they possess in the marketplace (Burns, 2010:25). The more consumers feel alienated from the industry, the more they may have a negative, stereotyped attitude toward the firm and its industry. Alienation can result in a negative attitude toward complaint, lowered perceived value of complaint, and lowered perceived likelihood of successful complaint (Kim et al., 2003:356).

Consumer alienation from the marketplace conceived by Pruden et al. (1974) includes a normlessness component that represents an attitude where social norms are no longer considered to be effective as rules of behavior. Thus, an alienated consumer is less likely to use norms to guide his/her behavior and, therefore, one might expect that these consumers would find questionable types of consumer behavior to be more acceptable. That is, consumer alienation would be negatively related to consumer ethical beliefs (Vitell and Paolillo, 2003:153-154).

DIMENSIONS OF ALIENATION

Seeman (1959) systematically identified five variants or ways in which alienation has been conceptualized in the literature: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation and self-estrangement (Mady, 2011:194; Pruden, Shuptrine and Longman, 1974:611; Gaski and Ray, 2004:159). The first three dimensions center on a person's expectations or beliefs concerning the likelihood that particular behaviors and outcomes will take place (Lambert, 1980:8).

1. *Powerlessness*, derived from Marx's alienation, is the "expectance or probability held by the individual that his own behavior cannot determine the occurrence of outcomes or reinforcements, he seeks" (Seeman 1959:784). An individual experiencing this would typically express, "I can do nothing about the outcome" (Krishnan, 2008:13).
2. *Meaninglessness*, derived from Durkheim's anomie, is "when the individual is unclear as to what he ought to believe - when the individual's minimal standards for clarity in decision-making are not met" (Seeman, 1959:786). The individual experiencing this would typically express, "I can't make sense of it all anymore" (Krishnan, 2008:13).
3. *Normlessness*, derived from Durkheim's anomie, may be described as a belief that marketers will behave in ways that are unethical, unjust, and undesirable in order to meet their selfish goals (Johnson, 1995:261; Burns, 2010:28).
4. *Social isolation* from the marketplace is characterized by feelings of estrangement from the institutions, practices, and outputs of the market

system (Johnson, 1995:261; Burns, 2010:28). The individual experiencing this would typically express, "I am alone" (Krishnan, 2008:13).

5. *Self-estrangement* is "a mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as an alien and has become estranged from him. The individual experiencing this would typically express, "I feel alien to myself" (Krishnan, 2008:13).

Dauids (1955) has his own list of dimensions of alienation, which includes the following: (1) egocentricity, (2) distrust, (3) pessimism, (4) anxiety, and (5) resentment (Landon and Lundstrom, 1973:67).

METHODOLOGY

Allison (1978) developed a measure labeled "consumer alienation" defined as feelings of separation from the marketplace. Both consumer alienation and marketplace alienation are used interchangeably in the literature; however, the measure developed by Allison clearly depicts alienation from the marketplace. The marketplace was conceptualized as all institutions involved in offering goods and/or services and the practices or activities conducted by these institutions (Johnson, 1995:261).

The aim of this study is to explore the relationship between demographic factors and marketplace alienation. Since there is not sufficient research in marketing literature about market alienation of the Turkish consumer, this is an exploratory study.

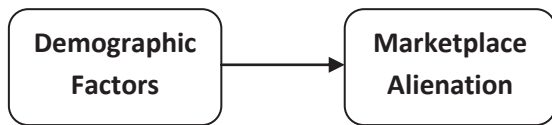


Figure 1: Research Model

According to the research model, we have a research hypothesis as follows:

H_1 : Demographic factors have significant effect on marketplace alienation of Turkish consumers.

SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Demographic Factors	N	Low Alienated		High Alienated		Total	
		%	N	%	N	%	N
Gender	Male	114	53,8	123	47,7	237	50,4
	Female	98	46,2	135	52,3	233	49,6
Age	18-25	100	47,2	91	35,3	191	40,6
	26-35	45	21,2	78	30,2	123	26,2
	36-45	39	18,4	57	22,1	96	20,4
	46-55	24	11,3	25	9,7	49	10,4
	56+	4	1,9	7	2,7	11	2,3
Marital Status	Married	86	40,6	130	50,4	216	46,0
	Single	126	59,4	128	49,6	254	54,0
No. of Children	0	127	59,9	133	51,6	260	55,3
	1	23	10,8	38	14,7	61	13,0
	2	35	16,5	56	21,7	91	19,4
	3	23	10,8	25	9,7	48	10,2
	3+	4	1,9	6	2,3	10	2,1
Occupation	Student	78	36,8	69	26,7	147	31,3
	Housewife	26	12,3	46	17,8	72	15,3
	White-collar	13	6,1	13	5,0	26	5,5
	Blue-collar	30	14,2	49	19,0	79	16,8
	Self emp.	29	13,7	43	16,7	72	15,3
	Retired	10	4,7	10	3,9	20	4,3
	Unemployed	9	4,2	5	1,9	14	3,0
Other	17	8,0	23	8,9	40	8,5	

Edu- cation	Primary	14	6,6	41	15,9	55	11,7
	High school	80	37,7	98	38,0	178	37,9
	Pre-graduate	48	22,6	49	19,0	97	20,6
	Undergrad.	63	29,7	66	25,6	129	27,4
	Graduate	7	3,3	4	1,6	11	2,3
Monthly Income (TL)	0-1000	62	29,2	60	23,3	122	26,0
	1001-2000	64	30,2	92	35,7	156	33,2
	2001-3000	36	17,0	59	22,9	95	20,2
	3001-4000	24	11,3	23	8,9	47	10,0
	4001-5000	9	4,2	10	3,9	19	4,0
	5001>	17	8,0	14	5,4	31	6,6

Convenience sampling method was used. The sample size of the research is 470 and no non-response was noted. All respondents are older than 18 years old and live in Istanbul. Consumers are categorized as low alienated consumers and high alienated consumers according to their scores they get from the alienation scale. In Table 1, demographic characteristics of the respondent are shown.

FACTOR ANALYSIS

The work of Allison (1978) is identified as one of the principal efforts in marketing to measure empirically the construct of consumer alienation (Brokaw and Finch, 1995:3). Alienation scale that is used in this study was adapted from Allison's alienation scale. Each statement in the scale was followed by a five place response scale ranging from (5) strongly agree to (1) strongly disagree. Positively worded statements were recoded so that higher scores represent higher levels of consumer alienation. Numerical scores for each statement were summed over the 15 items for the respon-

dent's total score. Factor analysis, with varimax rotations, was used with the assumption that the underlying dimensions of alienation were unrelated to one another (Mehta and Keng, 1984:134). The 15 items were then factor analyzed based on a quota sample of 470 individuals.

Table 2 shows the factors we get after doing factor analysis. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test result is 0,734 which mean the sample size is adequate for doing factor analysis. Bartlett test score is 0,000 which means the items in the scale can be used in factor analysis. 15 items were grouped into 5 factors which are called egocentricity, pessimism, distrust, anxiety and resentment. This classification is consistent with Davids' categorization about marketplace alienation. Factor loadings of each items are higher than 0,5 Alpha coefficient of .633 was found for the 15 item scale. Nunnally's (1978) criterion for acceptable item consistency in test development is .50 to .60 (Johnson, 1995:263).

Table 2: Marketplace Alienation Factors

Factor Name	Items	Factor Load.	% of Variance	Relia-bility
Ego-centricity	Q1	0,773	18,68	0,633
	Q2	0,705		
	Q3	0,674		
	Q4	0,597		
Pessimism	Q5	0,844	13,31	
	Q6	0,784		
	Q7	0,763		
	Q8	0,719		
Distrust	Q9	0,746	9,54	
	Q10	0,627		
	Q11	0,564		
Anxiety	Q12	0,713	8,46	
	Q13	0,708		
Resentment	Q14	0,769	8,23	
	Q15	0,736		

In Table 3, descriptive statistics of the factors are shown. According to the results pessimism factor have the highest degree for both low- and high-alienated consumers. For low-alienated

consumers, egocentricity factor has the lowest value; however resentment has the lowest value for the highly alienated consumers.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Factors

	Factors	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Low	Egocentricity	212	2,05	0,76
	Distrust	212	2,95	0,82
	Pessimism	212	3,18	0,85
	Anxiety	212	2,71	0,89
	Resentment	212	2,10	0,94
High	Egocentricity	258	2,92	0,92
	Distrust	258	3,73	0,74
	Pessimism	258	3,82	0,80
	Anxiety	258	3,47	0,99
	Resentment	258	2,73	1,14

Table 4: Correlation Analysis of Factors

		Ego	Dis	Pes	Anx	Res
Ego	Pearson Corr.		,107	,122	,154	,249
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0,021	0,008	0,001	0,000
	N		470	470	470	470
Dis	Pearson Corr.	,107		,179	,215	,096
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,021		0,000	0,000	0,038
	N	470		470	470	470
Pes	Pearson Corr.	,122	,179		,227	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,008	0,000		0,000	
	N	470	470		470	
Anx	Pearson Corr.	,154	,215	,227		,146
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,001	0,000	0,000		0,001
	N	470	470	470		470
Res	Pearson Corr.	,249	,096		,146	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000	0,038		0,001	
	N	470	470		470	

Ego: Egocentricity, **Dis:** Distrust, **Pes:** Pessimism, **Anx:** Anxiety, **Res:** Resentment

Correlation between marketplace alienation factors is seen in Table 4. Except for resentment and

pessimism, all factors have positive correlation with each other.

Table 5: Statistical Tests about Marketplace Alienation Factors

	Demographic Factors	Alienation Factors	Type of test	p-value	Post-hoc
High	Gender	Distrust	t-test*	0,002	Women
	Marital	Pessimism	t-test*	0,042	Married
	Age	Pessimism	ANOVA	0,002	46-55
	Occupation	Pessimism	ANOVA	0,031	Self-emp.
	Education	Pessimism	ANOVA	0,041	Primary
Low	Education	Egocent.	ANOVA	0,034	Primary
	Income	Egocent.	ANOVA	0,006	5001+

*Independent sample t-test

Table 5 shows us a summary of the statistical tests performed between demographic factors of consumer and marketplace alienation factors. According to the results, most demographic factors (except for the number of children people have) have statistically significant relationship with some of the marketplace alienation factors. For example, gender of highly alienated people has significant effect on distrust factor. Post-hoc column shows that highly alienated women's distrust perception from the marketplace is higher than men. Similarly, highly alienated married people are more pessimistic than single people. The only factor that is statistically significant for low alienated people is egocentricity. People who have the highest monthly income are more egocentric. Since many demographic factors have significant effect on marketplace alienation factors, our research hypothesis cannot be falsified.

CONCLUSION

Consumer alienation has an important place in marketing literature. It can affect all kind of consumer behavior. It has negative meaning and defined as

a consumer's global negative affect toward the dissatisfying firm's industry and is reflected by a negative feeling for the firm, its products / services, and even its competitors. Alienation is not a universal construct, but it is situation-specific, so the degree of alienation may change in time. Researchers try to measure consumer alienation; however, none of them is popular as Allison's scale of alienation. In marketing literature, the antecedents, the consequences, and the dimension of consumer alienation was determined. On the other hand academic literature in terms of alienation in Turkey is quite scarce. So the aim of this study is to determine the demographic profile of alienated Turkish consumers. Firstly, after doing the factor analysis we get five factors: egocentricity, distrust, pessimism, anxiety and resentment. Secondly, statistical tests were performed between alienation factors and demographic characteristics of consumers. Consumers were divided into two sub-groups as low- and high-alienated consumers in terms of their scores they get from the alienation scale. As a result alienation has a significant relationship with many demographic characteristics. However, Shuptrine, Pruden and

Longman (1977) suggested that marketplace alienation experienced by respondents in their study was largely unrelated to age, education, and income. In contrast, Allison (1977) reported that consumer alienation tended to be somewhat lower among middle-aged (50-59 years) and older people. Although we found a relationship with age, the result has a contradiction with Allison's finding; middle-aged people are the most alienated consumers in the marketplace. It is partially consistent with Lambert's (1981) analyses. Neal and Groat (1974) observed that alienation decreases with education (Burns, 2010:27) that is completely valid in this study. The consumers with lower level of education have the highest level of alienation. According to the analysis with other demographic categories, gender (women), marital status (married), occupation (self-employed, non-employed and retired) and monthly income (more than 5000 TL) have statistically significant relationship. The only demographic factor which has no significant relationship with alienation is the number of children that consumers have. These findings are indicators for a deeper understanding of which consumers are more alienated in Turkey and help companies to determine their strategies for gaining more consumers.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH AREAS

Upon the analysis of the research study, there are some limitations that may become further areas of research in order to be used for future progress in this subject. First, the size of the selected samples is small and they all reside in the same city in Turkey. It would be useful to repeat the study with larger and geographically

more diversified samples, so that the opinions of other demographic groups could also be taken into account. Second, this research focuses only on dimensions of marketplace alienation. However, its relationship with other marketing concepts should also be determined.

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TÜRKİYE’DE TÜKETİCİLERİN PAZAR YABANCILAŞMASI

Özet: Yabancılaşma bir bireyin psikolojik durumlarından biri olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Sosyoloji alanının önde gelen isimlerinden Marx ve Durkheim yabancılaşma kavramı üzerinde durmuşlar ve kavramın farklı boyutlarını ele alarak bireylerin toplumla olan ilişkilerini açıklamaya çalışmışlardır. Yabancılaşma kavramı ile ilgili olarak elde edilen bulgular, kavramın her duruma göre farklılık gösterdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Bu durumda her birey için yabancılaşma kavramı o bireye özgü bir yapıya sahip olacaktır. Pazar yabancılaşması kavramının pazarlama literatürüne kazandırılması Allison tarafından yapılmış olan çalışmaların önemli bir rolü bulunmaktadır. Pazar yabancılaşması çoğunlukla tüketici yabancılaşması kavramı ile eş anlamlı olarak kullanılmakla beraber, bireylerin tüketim doktrinini kabul etmede uğradığı başarısızlık veya pazar tekliflerinin yerine getirilmesinde karşılaşılan başarısızlıklar olarak ifade edilmektedir. Pazar yabancılaşması kavramı Seeman tarafından ele alınarak, boyutları tanımlanmıştır. Bu çalışmada yabancılaşma kavramı için toplam beş boyut belirlenmiştir. Bu boyutlar; güçsüzlük (powerlessness), anlamsızlık (meaninglessness), kuralsızlık (normlessness), sosyal izolasyon (social isolation) ve (self-estrangement) kendine yabancılaşmadır. Pazar yabancılaşması, pazarlama literatüründe önemli bir kavram olmakla birlikte, bu alanda yapılan araştırmaların sayısı yeterli seviyede değildir. Bu çalışmanın amacı pazar yabancılaşması yaşayan Türk tüketicilerin demografik özelliklerinin belirlenmesidir. Araştırmanın örnek kütlesi 470 kişiden oluşmaktadır. Araştırmanın ana kütlesini 18 yaşından büyük Türk tüketiciler oluşturmaktadır. Örnek kütleinin seçiminde kolayda örnekleme yöntemi uygulanmıştır. Araştırma verileri kapalı uçlu sorulardan oluşan bir anketle cevaplayıcılarla yüz yüze gerçekleşen görüşmeler sonucu toplanmıştır. Araştırma sorularında demografik soruların yanı sıra Allison tarafından hazırlanmış olan tüketici yabancılaşması ölçeğinden faydalanılmıştır. Yapılan faktör analizi sonucunda toplam beş faktör elde edilmiştir. Her bir faktörün içinde yer alan değişkenler incelendiğinde elde edilen sonuçların Allison tarafından yapılan sınıflandırma ile uyumlu olduğu görülmüştür. Elde edilen faktörler ben-merkezcilik (egocentricity), karamsarlık (pessimism), güvensizlik (distrust), kaygı (anxiety) ve kızgınlık (resentment) olarak adlandırılmıştır. İstatistikî analizlerin yapılmasından sonra tüketicilerin demografik özelliklerinin, pazar yabancılaşması faktörleri üzerindeki etkisi gösterilmiştir. Tüketiciler elde edilen Pazar yabancılaşma derecelerine göre yüksek ve düşük yabancılaşmaya sahip olmak üzere iki gruba ayrılmış ve bu iki grup arasında istatistikî farklılıklar olup olmadığı ölçülmeye çalışılmıştır. Sonuçlar pazar yabancılaşma faktörlerinden daha çok karamsarlık ve ben-merkezcilik faktörlerine göre farklılık bulunduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Eğitim seviyesi düştükçe ve yaş arttıkça tüketicilerin pazara karşı karamsarlığı artmaktadır. Evli insanlar bekârlara göre daha karamsarken, kadınlar erkeklere göre pazara karşı daha güvensizdirler. Gelir seviyesinin artması tüketicilerde ben-merkezcilik seviyesinde artışa neden olmaktadır. Pazar yabancılaşması kavramı hakkında Türkiye’de yapılan çalışmaların sayısı yeterli seviyede olmadığı için bu çalışma keşifsel bir özellik taşımaktadır. Çalışma ile hedeflenen bundan sonra konu ile ilgili yapılacak çalışmalar için hem bir rehber hem de elde edilecek verilerin kıyaslanmasında bir referans noktası olmasıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yabancılaşma, Pazar Yabancılaşması, Tüketici Yabancılaşması