



THEORETICAL APPROACH TO THE CONCEPTS OF PRODUCT, BRAND, PACKAGING AND LABEL

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ABSTRACT

The product is the first component of the marketing mix and the reason businesses exist. The most important factor that can transform a business into a world brand is the product or service it offers. The priority of the components of the marketing mix is the product. Then, the price determined for the product, the promotional activities to be applied to the product or service, and the supply chains or distribution channels decisions that will be used to deliver the product to the consumer are listed. In this case, marketing managers and companies should primarily determine their product decisions. Product decisions play a crucial role in marketing strategies and components. In the globalizing business world, where competition is getting harder day by day, innovative philosophy and the products or services that come with this innovation are essential for businesses to increase their competitiveness with their competitors. In this theoretical study, which was conducted with a wide literature review, the product concept and product decisions were investigated.

Keywords: Marketing; marketing mix; product; product decisions.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid developments in the global world have enabled the rapid development of competition. Businesses need to produce products or services that can meet the needs and demands of consumers faster than their competitors and just in time, which we define as Just in Time (JIT). In this way, they can gain an edge over their rivals. Consumers demand the products of businesses that meet their demands and expectations. This situation increases the sales in the business and increases the profitability rate. The survival of companies in intense competition conditions depends on the strategies and innovations

they will realize in products or services. The products or services obtained in this way give businesses a competitive advantage. This innovation can be done in the product itself, as well as in the packaging, shape, quality, label, and presentation [1]. We can briefly define innovation as any new product or service that enables businesses to gain a competitive advantage [2].

The concept of marketing has been defined in various ways. The most widely accepted definition is the definition of marketing by the American Marketing Association, which is effective and popular in marketing science; It defines it as the design, pricing,

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promotion, distribution, planning, and execution process of ideas, products, services (Bulunmaz, 2016: 353).

Marketing is a process of exchange (change) made to meet people's needs and expectations. At least one of the two parties is to obtain a valuable interest such as money, credit, receivables in exchange for goods, services or ideas to meet the personal expectation or needs of the other party [3]. Marketing professionals make product-related decisions at three basic levels. These; *individual or individual product decisions, product mix, and product line decisions*. Important factors to be considered in individual product decisions; quality of products, brand identity, packaging and labeling, after-sales product or service support [4].

Businesses are established to produce or directly sell a product. Their ability to create competition or achieve success is directly proportional to their success in the markets they enter. The product decisions made in this conjuncture will support businesses to survive against other competitors. Making decisions about the product or service and taking the necessary steps are of great importance for businesses. The main purpose of these decisions and activities is to create an attractive perception on the consumers by loading certain features into the products in a way that will meet the demands and needs of the consumers. A wrong action or a wrong strategic decision can lead to irreversible results for businesses. In this way, product decisions can be compared to the first button of a shirt to be buttoned. *If the first button of the shirt is buttoned incorrectly, it is obvious that the other buttons will be buttoned incorrectly.*

2. PRODUCT CONCEPT

The concept of the product first appeared in 1575. With the year 1695, it got rid of limited use and briefly entered the literature as the name given to each object where consumption activities take place. "product", which is a commercial or economic concept; It is predicted that it was used for the first time in Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* [5].

The product, which is the first of the basic components in the marketing mix; It is an object that contains important elements such as brand identity, product design and product quality and is offered to the market by companies. Companies can provide distribution and repair service, rental service, training, etc. as part or supplement to the products offered. activities should also provide [6].

Neil Borden was the first person to come up with the word marketing mix. The said mix consists of 12

components in total. These are listed as manpower, branding, analysis, pricing, distribution channels, packaging, demonstration, service, personal selling, promotion, product planning and advertising [7,8].

In fact, the main factor sought in a product is the satisfaction it gives to the person. The person who buys a car bases its appearance and durability. What we look for in a detergent is the benefit it gives us in cleaning. What we understand with cargo services is not how and how it is transported, but its timely delivery to us [9].

Product; Although it is a tangible object, the perception it creates in the buyer is benefit and value containing abstract concepts [10]. Product; A physical object or service that is paid by consumers for the realization of the purchasing activity, means a service. It can be a furniture product, textile or food, beverage, as well as intangible concepts that include the services offered to the customer. The main element that makes up the marketing mix, whether intangible or tangible, is the product. The product sales change consists of four phases in total. If a product is born, created, and introduced in the market, this phase is called the *promotion phase*. If the customers like the products and start to buy them, this is the *development or development phase*. We can characterize the stabilization phase of the product reaching saturation in the market as the *maturation phase*. More featured, well-equipped products enter the market and the product that loses its competitiveness begins to decline, and the last phase that lasts until it finally disappears in the market *can be defined as the regression phase* [11].

In addition, products are divided into some classes according to certain characteristics. *Durable, non-durable products and services. They are classified as consumption and industrial (commercial) products* according to their usage patterns [12].

2.1 Product Decisions

In our globalizing world, product decisions are very important for companies. Companies that enter the business life locally, should move forward by providing appropriate conjunctures and determining global strategies in the light of necessary precautions [13].

At this point, local productions should ensure compliance with both their own culture and global products by using the necessary compliance and standards quality management methodologies [14].

While applying international marketing strategies, dividing the consumers into non-heterogeneous (homogeneous) groups and making product decisions by the standards that will meet customer demands and needs will provide companies with a competitive advantage [15].

Product decisions play an active role in investment, Human Resources and long-term growth strategy decisions of businesses as well as the leadership of a company in the marketing mix [16].

Companies that turn to international markets while making product decisions should effectively adopt the adaptation process to the political, legal and economic rules of the local market. In India, where foreign investments were banned for a while, Pepsi company adopted the name Lehar-Pepsi to enter the market and set an example for its adaptation strategy [17].

Making the necessary changes on the product, taking into account the wishes and needs of the customers while making product decisions, directs them to purchase these products. We can list these types of decisions made on products as follows.

- Product Quality, Product attributes.
- Branding on the product, creating a brand.
- Product packaging
- Product label
- The continuation of the support after the sales transaction [18].

2.2 Product Quality

We can define the ability to meet the demands and needs of consumers as quality. It would be more accurate to define the concept of quality from the perspective of the customer, not the perspective of the marketer. In the conditions of globalizing competition, marketing experts should meet customer quality expectations and use quality effectively by using continuous improvement methods [19].

Product quality has a very important place in marketing strategy. Because the performance of a product is directly proportional to the quality. It becomes impossible for a product that is considered to be of poor quality in the eyes of consumers to have a place in the market. For this reason, the main task of marketing experts is to achieve the perception that their products are of very high quality. Product quality, which gives competitive advantage, will position it differently from other competitors as a featured product [12]. The difference in quality in service sectors is the satisfaction of the customers in return for the service, so the quality of

the personnel is an important factor in the service sector [20].

3. BRAND

The brand is an important function that provides an identity for businesses and global competition in markets. Companies that address consumer needs and create innovative and useful products grow. Marketing professionals should be aware that a strong identity can be created with branding. Businesses can create an identity that creates awareness with components such as name, spelling, symbols, signs and colors. Consumers demonstrate their loyalty or selectivity to this product by performing purchasing behavior thanks to these components [21].

A brand is a unit of value produced by a company, a measure of recognizability. The fact that the products are easily recognizable and gaining different classes and reliability will bring brand value to the companies. A company with a positive brand value can sell its products or services even if the prices are higher than other products, with the satisfaction value created on consumers. With brand value, companies can gain a stronger place in the market with the feelings of trust and admiration created on consumers [22]. We can define the concept of trust in marketing as follows: It is the consumer's belief in the fulfillment of expectations and promises at the point of meeting customer requests and needs of companies [23].

Another definition that can be made for a brand is the awareness that occurs at the focal point of consumer choice in an unbranded product that has the same features like the branded product [24].

4. PACKAGING

Packaging can be defined as a coating or cover that protects products from external influences and facilitates their transportation and distribution. From another important point of view, the packaging is an outfit that includes all the beauties for consumers to buy a product [25].

Another important factor to consider when implementing product decisions is the packaging. When packaging a product, strategies should be determined in accordance with the cultural structures of the countries in which it is marketed. For example, while the color of the packaging is green, it creates a positive perception in countries with a large Muslim population, while the same color is used in Southeast Asia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, etc. Since it is perceived as a disease in countries, it can create a

negative perception on consumers [26]. Again, in an article written on the adaptation of product decisions with culture, since pork is prohibited for Muslim societies, the labeling of products as halal or not containing pork indicates compliance with the political and legal environment while packaging the products [27].

5. TICKET

Labeling, which is also described as a continuation of the packaging process, is a product decision component that marketing professionals should pay attention to. In a word, a label is a piece that carries information about the product and the seller's company. It forms one of the cornerstones sought in a qualified product [28].

Developed countries regularly enact new laws on how labels should be. Because the information on a label is directly related to consumer health. For example, it contains information about the content of the product, production date, expiry date, price and how it should be stored. In the light of this information, the consumer can make healthy and correct product choices [29].

Recently, obesity is a process that all countries struggle with. At this point, the nutritional value information on the labels of the products is up-to-date data that consumers who want to have a balanced diet pay attention to and look for in the products they buy [30]. In addition, the information that the detail in the label information increases the reliability of the companies and positively affects the consumer purchasing decision has been obtained from many studies [31].

6. AFTER SALES SUPPORT OR SERVICE

After purchasing a product, it is natural for consumers to need some support information, repairs or services related to that product. At this point, companies that produce or provide services should effectively maintain their warranty policy at the point of after-sales customer requests and needs. Only in this way can they maximize customer satisfaction by obtaining permanent customers [12]. Guarantees, such as a guarantee certificate, have a positive effect on the consumer. It should be considered as an important strategy to increase the total income of companies, especially since it encourages customers who have a back stance to take risks [32].

After-sales support or service should be considered as part or a complement to the product or service. In this

context, after-sales services that increase the reliability of companies are an important component in product decisions [33]. The fact that consumers obtain these services in a timely and correct manner helps companies gain competitive advantage by increasing their perceived value positively [34].

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In our global world, where it is difficult to gain a competitive advantage, the different positions of businesses depend on the innovation and new products they will realize. Creating a new product or service industry is the first step of the ladder. The next important step is marketing strategies. While applying marketing strategies, the use of the marketing mix, which is the four components of marketing, is a very important process for companies.

The product, which is the reason for existence and the first component of the marketing mix, is a component that should be carefully considered. Because all the goals and strategies that are wanted to be realized depend on it. A wrong decision about the product and product decisions, which we describe as the first button of a shirt to be buttoned at the beginning of the research, will automatically affect other components negatively.

Marketing strategies should be adopted that can identify the components of quality, brand, packaging, label and after-sales support, which should be considered while implementing product decisions, with the ability to act locally with global thinking. However, with this vision, companies can gain a place on a global scale by obtaining a product that meets world standards.

Companies competing in international markets should analyze the cultures of the countries they serve very well and design the packaging and labels of the products according to the laws, norms and values of the country they are in. Otherwise, although they have a quality and suitable product, the bad perception that occurs in consumers will not position the product in the market.

As a result, with the motto "Health is the top of everything", companies should gain the trust of consumers by keeping consumer health at the forefront when making product decisions, and by emphasizing this meticulousness in the brand identity, packaging and labels they create, accurately and regularly.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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