

HOW E-COMMERCE COMPANIES USE RETAIL TO MAINTAIN E-COMMERCE AS AN INSTITUTION: A CASE FOR INSTITUTIONAL MAINTENANCE WORK

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

BAHTİYAR ONUR GEYİK

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

SEPTEMBER 2019

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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ABSTRACT

HOW E-COMMERCE COMPANIES USE RETAIL TO MAINTAIN E-COMMERCE AS AN INSTITUTION: A CASE FOR INSTITUTIONAL MAINTENANCE WORK

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September 2019, 90 pages

The main objective of this study is to investigate how e-commerce companies maintain e-commerce as an institution using traditional retail which is another institution and the underlying mechanisms. In this study, we used data collected from 10 interviews of top managers from selected e-commerce companies from Turkey and also additional data including interviews of top managers of e-commerce companies that went into traditional retail business collected from various media outlets. With the help of a qualitative research design, we observed that having retail stores impacted the e-commerce business of the companies in a positive direction in four different ways. Firstly, it affected the customers of these companies positively by creating a way of concretization and personalization. Secondly, we argued that it helped companies to retain their employees and increase their job satisfaction by creating new tasks and increasing their involvement. Thirdly, having retail stores have a positive impact on the relationship between the suppliers and the companies. Lastly, retail stores increase the brand image and awareness of e-commerce companies. With these findings, we concluded that using another institution is possible for actors trying to maintain an institution although it can cause an interplay between institutional maintenance work and other types of institutional work.

Keywords: institutional maintenance work, e-commerce, retail

ÖZ

E-TİCARETİN PERAKENDECİLİK ÜZERİNDEN BİR KURUM OLARAK SÜRDÜRÜLMESİ

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Yüksek Lisans, İşletme Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi : Yrd. Doç. Dr. Çağrı Topal

Eylül 2019, 90 sayfa

Bu tezin amacı, e-ticaret şirketlerinin, bir kurumsal yapı olan geleneksel perakendeciliği kullanarak, bir başka kurumsal yapı olan e-ticareti nasıl sürdürdükleri ve altında yatan mekanizmaları incelemektir. Bu çalışmada, Türkiye’den seçilmiş e-ticaret şirketlerinin yüksek mevkilerinde görevli 10 yönetici ile yapılan röportajlardan elde edilen veriler ile, çeşitli medya kuruluşlarından toplanan, geleneksel perakendeciliğe adım atmış farklı şirketlerin yöneticileri ile yapılan röportajlardan elde edilen veriler kullanılmıştır. Bir nitel araştırma tasarımı kullanarak gözlemledik ki, perakende mağazalara sahip olmak, şirketlerin e-ticaret taraflarını dört farklı şekilde olumlu yöne doğru yönlendirmektedir. İlk olarak, perakende mağazalar, somutlaştırma ve özelleştirme yöntemleri ile müşterileri olumlu yönde etkilemiştir. İkinci olarak, mağazalar, yeni görevler oluşturarak ve çalışanların işlere dahililiyetini artırarak, şirketlerin çalışanlarını ellerinde tutmalarını ve çalışanların iş tatminlerinin artmasını sağlamıştır. Üçüncü olarak, perakende mağazacılık, şirketler ve tedarikçileri arasındaki ilişkinin güçlenmesini sağlamıştır. Son olarak, perakende mağazalar, şirketlerin marka imajı ve bilinirliğini artırmıştır. Bu bulgular ışığında, diğer tipte kurumsal yapılarla arasında bir etkileşime sebep olmasına rağmen, bir kurumsal yapıyı sürdürmeye çalışan aktörlerin, bir başka kurumsal yapıyı kullanmasının mümkün olduğu sonucuna vardık.

Anahtar Kelimeler: kurumsal pratiklerin sürdürülmesi, e-ticaret, perakende

To My Wife

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Asist. Prof. Dr. Çağrı Topal for his guidance, support and contribution throughout this research. I would not dream of finishing this study without him. Also, I would like to thank the examining committee members, Prof. Dr. Nazlı Wasti Pamuksuz and Prof. Dr. Çetin Önder for their contributions and comments which help perfect the study. I would like to thank Evidea, E-Bebek, Supplementler.com, and Vivense and their managers who participated in this research for their help. I am very grateful to have the extensive support of every single member of my family throughout this process.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM	Error! Bookmark not defined.
ABSTRACT	iv
ÖZ	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
LIST OF TABLES	x
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	6
3. METHODOLOGY.....	24
3.1 Research Design	24
3.2 Research Site	24
3.3 Data Sources	27
3.4 Data Analysis.....	30
3.5 Limitations.....	32
4. FINDINGS	34
4.1 Introduction	34
4.2 Customer.....	35
4.2.1 Concretization	36
4.2.2 Personalization.....	38
4.3 Employees	41
4.3.1 New Tasks.....	42
4.3.2 Involvement	44
4.4 Suppliers	46
4.4.1 Concretization	47
4.4.2 Product Range.....	49
4.5 Company.....	50
4.5.1 Brand.....	51
4.5.2 Growth	55
5. DISCUSSION	58

6. CONCLUSION	63
REFERENCES.....	68
APPENDICES.....	76
APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	76
APPENDIX B: UEAM APPROVAL	77
APPENDIX C: TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET.....	78
APPENDIX D: TEZ İZİN FORMU / THESIS PERMISSION FORM	90

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Firm Profiles	29
Table 2: Profiles of Companies Outside of Turkey	31

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Retail is one of the ancient concepts in the history of humankind. Any exchange of goods or services can be considered a retailing activity. From the beginning of trading between humans to the first shopping malls in the USA in the 1930s (Feinberg & Meoli, 1991), retail developed from a primitive type of interaction between humans to a globally dominant industry. As an industry, retail saw some major changes over the years from the development of new marketing techniques to the introduction of TV to the masses (Hagel III, Brown, Samoylova, Lobaugh, & Goel, 2015). One of the most influential things in the history of the retailing industry is the invention of the internet.

With the development of the internet and the availability of the internet all over the world, the retail industry like many other industries saw some drastic changes. E-commerce companies emerged and became a real threat to traditional retail stores. For example, in terms of market cap, Amazon managed to surpass WalMart which is the biggest retail company in the world in terms of revenue (Pettypiece, 2015). Successful retail companies started to open their e-commerce sites to catch the trend and get a share from this emerging e-commerce industry. Organizational studies have focused on the impact of e-commerce on the retail industry and the adoption of the internet by successful retail companies at large.

In the last few years, this trend turned upside down. Successful e-commerce companies have started opening up their own brick-and-mortar stores. The number of e-commerce companies opening retail stores has been on the rise lately. This is an unexpected event since the traditional approach is the adoption of e-commerce by retail companies. However, digitally born companies began to open their brick-and-mortar stores. Amazon, Warby Parker, Nasty Gal, Everlane, Bonobos and Birchbox are among the first companies opening their stores (Shearman, 2016) and those are only the firms in the US. Even in developing countries like Turkey,

digitally born businesses started to open their retail stores. This shows that this trend has been followed in both developed and developing countries.

There is a certain irony in this trend. Amazon, for example, started its operations by selling books and moved on to sell their innovation of e-readers, Kindle, and e-books. It has been a revolution in terms of buying and reading habits and forced traditional bookstores to close (Butler, 2014). Although Amazon is one of the reasons for the decrease in the number of bookstores in the US, the e-commerce giant has decided to open its own brick-and-mortar stores (Schaub, 2018). The company now has stores in California, Oregon, and Washington, and has announced that they will open 5 new stores in different states as well. Another ironic event with the result of this trend is again coming from Amazon. The company has been in the grocery business for quite some time now and they have been trying to change the buying habits of customers with their technology of dash buttons which allow users to order a certain product with one-click and same-day delivery of groceries (Engdahl, 2008). However, Amazon has announced that they will open their own grocery stores in the US. The company named these grocery stores as Amazon Go. Although it will not be a traditional grocery store with its innovative technology and automation to avoid human interaction, it will be a brick-and-mortar grocery store, nonetheless.

One of the most successful e-commerce companies that adopt retail stores is Warby Parker. According to Co-founder and CEO of the company, David Gilboa, retail stores “drive a lot of traffic to our website and accelerate the company’s e-commerce sales” (Walsh, 2016).

This has become a real trend and new phenomena for organizational scholars to study. The opening of brick-and-mortar stores strategy positively influences these businesses’ sustainability. These companies are doing some intentional work to maintain their position, and in particular, decision makers of these companies engaged in institutional work. These actions of the decision makers of these companies offer a promising area of study, especially in the institutional work area (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). Institutional work is a relatively new topic among organizational studies. Of the three types of institutional work, institutional

maintenance work is the least covered topic (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2011). Although there is some growing literature around institutional maintenance work (e.g. Gawer & Phillips, 2013; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010; Turnbull & Wass, 2015), there is a lot of ground to make up for in terms of research. Although some researchers (e.g. Currie et al. 2012; Zietsma & Lawrence; 2011) pointed out the coexistence of different types of institutional work, there is a clear gap in the area of the coexistence of disruption and maintenance work.

Our main objective in this thesis is to focus on this gap and show how these companies can maintain their institution, e-commerce, using another institution, classical retail. There are numerous approaches to institutions therefore numerous definitions of what an institution is. Most scholars see institutions as an instrument to help the social life of people. Scott (2001), for example, defines institutions as “cultured-cognitive, normative and regulative elements that ... provide stability and meaning to social life”. Hodgson (2006) defines institutions as “systems of established and prevalent social rules that structure social interactions”. From this definition, a variety of different concepts and terms can be identified as an institution, from law, marriage, or family to organizations. However, in the context of this study, we use Jepperson’s (1991) definition of an institution. Jepperson (1991) defines an institution as “an organized, established procedure’ with “standardized interaction sequences”. According to Dunne, Lusch, and Carver (2014), retailing “consists of the final activities and steps needed to place the merchandise... or services to the consumer”. In traditional retailing, it usually consists of a physical store or office as a way to distribute goods or services to the consumers, and it usually includes human-to-human interaction. Brick-and-mortar stores enable customers to see and try the product before the purchasing. That is not the case for e-commerce or online retailing which is the process of selling goods or services over the internet (Laudon & Traver, 2016). It is usually the faster and more convenient way for customer to shop goods. E-commerce companies are newer generation companies compared to traditional retail companies. They are digitally born companies and usually define themselves as technology firms. Traditional retail offers more experience to the customers and retail as an institution is based on this experience logic. Retail is based on a face-to-face, direct interaction between

the company and customer. The role of technology is to support this interaction. E-commerce, on the other hand, offers more convenience to the customers and e-commerce as an institution is based on this convenience logic. It is based on a rather indirect interaction mediated by sophisticated technology. Technology plays a critical role to realize the interaction. With the technology, customers have more knowledge about the qualifications and the prices of the products. Technology allows customers to easily compare different products or different sellers in terms of price, delivery time, quality, customer service etc. Although online and offline are types of retailing and can be considered as different channels to reach customers, e-commerce and traditional retailing are considered different institutions with these fundamental differences. We selected a qualitative research method and put together comprehensive research including conducting interviews with 10 of top managers from 4 selected firms from the retail industry.

This study contributes in two main areas. The first one is its contributions to the institutional maintenance work literature. Institutional maintenance and institutional maintenance work in particular are growing areas in organizational studies. There is not much research covering the coexistence of different types of institutional work. To our knowledge, there is no particular study that shows the relationship between disruption and maintenance work. Also, there is no study that focuses on the maintenance of an institution through another institution. It shows an unexplored part of a growing literature and introduces a new area of research. The second contribution of this study is a practical one. There is a new trend of opening their own physical stores and going back to brick-and-mortar among different kinds of e-commerce companies. By focusing on this trend and these companies, this study shows a glimpse of the thought process of top managers of these companies, shows their reasoning of opening a brick-and-mortar store as well as their way of implementation of this trend and its implications to their e-commerce businesses. The findings of this study serve as a guidance and an additional research tool to the managers of e-commerce firms looking to open their stores and follow the trend.

This thesis continues as follows. The next chapter will give an overview of the growing literature around institutional work and institutional maintenance work, as

well as highlight research gaps and delineate the main research question. Chapter 3 will give information regarding the research method, reasoning behind choosing this method, selected company profiles, and interview questions. Chapter 4 will present the findings of this study, and finally, chapter 5 will conclude the thesis by summarizing the research in general and its findings, also presenting future implications of this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of this chapter is to review the literature regarding basic concepts that will be covered in this study. The first section will give a brief definition of what an institution is and move on to cover institutional work and the emergence of institutional work as a field of study. The next section will cover institutional maintenance work. Research questions will be presented in the third and the final section of this chapter.

Lawrence and Suddaby (2006, p.215) define institutional work as “the purposive action of individuals and organizations aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions”. Although institutional work is not entirely a new concept, it has brought different ideas and studies previously categorized under organizational studies which fall under the definition of institutional work together.

It represents an exciting direction for institutional studies of organizations, not because it represents a new idea, but because it connects a set of previously disparate ideas, and in doing so points to new questions and opens up space for new conversations (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2009, p.1).

Lawrence, Suddaby, and Leca (2011) introduced institutional work as a separate and alternative approach to the studies of institutional organization. The traditional approach only focuses on the work that leads to an accomplishment in terms of change. However, according to Lawrence et al. (2011), institutional work differs from it at this point since every effort aiming at creating, maintaining, or disrupting institutions are considered and taken into account in the concept of institutional work. Institutional theory in the organization study has covered real-life situations in an organization as well as theoretical studies. This feature of institutional theory must be appealing to those who study institutions and organizations as well as those who work in a real organization; however, it falls short of drawing attention from people who should be making use of those organizational concepts (Lawrence et al., 2011). Lawrence et al. (2011) believe that institutional work has the potential to

draw the attention of those people and help institutional studies and ideas to be understood and practiced by the members of an organization. This idea can be justified since there has been a growing literature around the concept of the institutional work including both theoretical and empirical studies. Lawrence and Suddaby (2009) followed up their initial studies and theorized the concept. Mena and Suddaby (2016), on the other hand, also took another step in the theorization of the concept. Some other researchers like Gawer and Phillips (2013) have put together an interesting case study, examining IBM and their actions which lead the company to market leadership in terms of both institutional change and institutional work over the course of nearly 20 years while the computer hardware industry was changing drastically. Zietsma and Lawrence (2010, p.189) have presented a case study of the coastal forestry industry in British Columbia to study “the role of institutional work in the transformation of organizational fields” while showing the relationship between boundary work and practice work. It shows that institutional work has opened up a new area of study for scholars to dive in as well as members of professional organizations. However, most studies are structured around two types of institutional work; creation and disruption, leaving institutional maintenance work understudied.

The main concept that this thesis will be focusing on is maintaining institutions. Six types of work in the aim of maintaining the institutions are identified by Lawrence and Suddaby (2006, p.229). These are enabling work, policing, deterring, valourizing and demonizing, mythologizing, and embedding and routinizing. Enabling work, policing, and deterring can be held under the same category as they are maintaining institutions through compliance with a set of rules. Valourizing and demonizing, mythologizing, and embedding and routinizing, on the other hand, are maintaining institutions by focusing on the commonly accepted standards and beliefs in society and focusing on recreating them.

Among all three types of institutional work, maintenance is the least covered one by scholars. According to Lawrence and Suddaby (2006), one of the main reasons is that scholars previously took institutions for granted and thought that maintaining an institution and simple “lack of change” are pretty much the same. However, to

maintain an institution, actors need to put in a good amount of effort and specialized techniques and, consequently, lack of change and maintaining an institution have to be distinguished from one another. Scholars have begun to see the difference and explore the institutional maintenance work.

In their research, Turnbull & Wass (2015) examined how the unpaid extra working hours along with the unpredictability and the dangers emergency services workers had to endure was widely accepted among these workers and society in general and the underlying institutional maintenance work to maintain this acceptance. They have focused their attention on one group of emergency services workers, Police Inspectors and the types of work done by different actors to maintain the acceptance of these unpaid extra working hours, which researchers defined as “extreme work”. To elaborate on the issue, Turnbull & Wass (2015) prepared a survey targeting Police Inspectors in the UK. In that survey, they asked officers both open-ended and closed-ended questions regarding their work habits, work hours, their perspective regarding extra working hours, and work-life balance. They collected responses from the England, Wales and Scotland Police force. They also interviewed several Police Inspectors to collect more data. The researchers found that many of the inspectors have been working overtime without keeping a record of it. This was mostly the fault of the police force in charge of keeping a record of their employees’ working time and comply with the rules of maximum working hours of 48 hours weekly. The researchers pointed out that this lack of control can be categorized under ‘detering’ (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). The researchers found that the development of technology and the Police Force’s adoption of it is an example of ‘enabling’ work. With emails, messages and online systems, Inspectors were pretty much expected to stay online every hour of every day. They used their phones and laptops to respond to emails and text messages even though they were not on duty. The other two categories of institutional maintenance work Turnbull & Wass (2015) identified is ‘demonizing’ and ‘valourizing’ (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). The researchers pointed out that some of the overtime work inspectors did were voluntary. The inspectors often felt guilty when they did not work overtime. The study demonstrated even the most taken-for-granted institutions were maintained through maintenance work. It shows that behind extra work done by the

police office and its acceptance in both public and within the police force itself, there are some mechanisms maintaining it.

Another research was conducted by Heaphy (2013). In her research, Heaphy (2013) focused on the roles and how they are maintained through institutional maintenance work despite the fact that they are constantly exposed to disruptions in terms of acceptance and expectations. Breaches as Heaphy (2013) described are "a form of disruption to institutions". They can occur at any moment and even though they are not a significant effect on institutions, they may have a disruptive effect to some degree. In the context of this study, she investigated hospitals and the roles of patients, families of patients and medical staff to investigate as they have been challenged by "breaches". She also selected patient advocates as the actor doing the maintenance work to maintain these roles. The patient advocate is a role in the United States healthcare system. Patient advocates help patients and their families in issues regarding the health care system and also take on the role of being the bridge between medical staff and patients. To collect data, she focused on an 18-month period. During that period, she interviewed a total of 49 patient advocates. She also collected data from various observations including attending patient advocate meetings and fieldwork observations. Heaphy (2013) found that patient advocates faced many challenges coming from patients, families and medical staff. They faced conflicts between medical staff and patients or families and medical staff. To overcome these challenges, patient advocates used rules. It could be explaining rules to patients or their families regarding their complaints, or it could be explaining the rules to medical staff to change their approach or business process. By using the power of rules, patient advocates, who have almost no power over neither the roles of patients, families and medical staff nor the rules themselves managed to handle those challenges. She pointed out the similarities between the work patients advocates were doing to maintain the institutionalized rules of these stakeholders and the "enabling work" as Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) have identified. With the fieldwork of patient advocates, Heaphy (2013) was able to point out that even the smallest forms of disruptions could cause problems to the institutions that need to be handled through institutional maintenance work of actors.

Institutions do not always face small disruptions; sometimes they face bigger disruptive forces and changes actors need to deal with. One research that focuses on the institutional maintenance work of actors whose work field has faced with a disruptive force has been conducted by Raviola & Norbäck (2013). To elaborate on the issue, they selected an Italian newspaper working to ease the negative effects brought by technological changes. The main data came from field observations one of the researchers made. They observed field work of journalists and editors for a period of 6 months between 2007 and 2008. The researchers selected an Italian newspaper that covers business and finance news. Besides its printed newspaper, journalists were also producing news and articles for the website of the newspaper. The researchers observed that differences between a printed newspaper and a website caused many challenges for journalists and editors. They pointed out that the content of a website can differ from a newspaper since it does not have the page restrictions. The newspaper usually covers finance and business; the website gives journalists to freedom and covers different topics as well. This is important since typical readers of the newspaper usually know what kind of content they will get when they buy a newspaper. But with search engines, a website can draw users from multiple places. Increasing the number of topics covered could be beneficial for the success of the website. This has caused a conflict among journalists and editors regarding what kind of content to publish on the website. To conquer those challenges, journalists have decided to use the newspaper's old way. For example, they have agreed to release sports news on weekends since it could contain financial news as well. The researchers also pointed out that the dynamic structure of a website has caused a challenge for journalists. For example, journalists sometimes changed the main page of the website in the morning to something different than the front page of the printed newspaper since newspapers were usually printed with the news covering yesterday's news. They also followed their "old way" of preparing a front page for a newspaper when they needed to change their main page of the website. This study of Raviola and Norbäck (2013) has significance since it shows that actors have used established institutions to face the challenges caused by external changes and to maintain those institutions. This also backs the claims of

Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) as it shows that institutions are not self-reproducing and need to be maintained by the work of actors.

Changes and external forces not only threaten institutions but actors of those institutions. New actors could threaten the established ones, consequently, forcing them to maintain their position through institutional work. For example, technological advancements and the development of the internet drastically changed news journalism in a way that everyone can become a journalist of their own with online websites and blogs. In their research, Grafström & Windell (2012) focused on how participants of new journalism were not only helping change the field but also help maintain it. Actors who held key positions in the field turned the threat of new entrants into their advantage and were able to maintain their positions through institutional maintenance work. To narrow down the field and to collect necessary information, Grafström & Windell (2012) focused on online blogs and online newspapers in Sweden. They collected data from blog posts and articles. They also interviewed stakeholders from a company in the field to collect further information. Researchers found that news and media companies allowed amateur journalists-bloggers to cite their articles in their blog posts. It allowed those articles to reach to more people and to spread more quickly. By allowing to cite their own articles, news and media companies used these new journalists and their blogs as a distribution channel which helped them maintain their established position in the field of news journalism. The researchers pointed out the fact that bloggers not only used articles published by news and media companies, many of them also backed the ideas of those articles. For example, articles of dominant online websites covering a pension payment scandal initially blame the company, then shift their blaming to a company manager. Bloggers followed a similar pattern in their blog posts. This helped to establish a view in the public that bloggers were mostly the followers and the leaders were still the dominant media and news companies. By backing ideas of the media and news companies, these new journalists helped them maintain their position. This study by Grafström & Windell (2012) has significance since it shows that dominant actors in a field can maintain their position despite the challenge of new actors in their field through maintenance work. It also shows that

the actions of the new actors could support the established institutions and actors rather than disrupt them.

Scholars are keen to highlight six types of work in the aim of maintaining the institutions first identified by Lawrence and Suddaby (2006, p.229) through both theoretical and empirical studies. One such empirical study was conducted by Bouty, Gomez & Drucker-Goddard (2013). They examined how Michelin has maintained its dominant position in haute cuisine, which is the term used for high-level or gourmet restaurants and hotels, through institutional maintenance work. They focused on how Michelin has maintained its position by branching in other continents than Europe, which is the continent where the company is founded and established its position. They narrowed down their focus and examined the guide's expansion to Tokyo and New York. The founders of Michelin, which is a French tire manufacturing company, has started a guide for a small number of car owners to help them travel more easily and in return, help increase the car and tire sales. After a couple of years, they have started to rate some restaurants and hotels with zero, one, two or three stars and included those restaurants and hotels to the guide which marks the beginning of the Michelin guide or Michelin red guide. Today, it includes over 30000 restaurants and hotels all around the world ("About the MICHELIN Guide", n.d.). To elaborate on the topic, researchers interviewed a top manager from the Michelin guide who is running the expansion process, collected data from the Michelin red guide and the local articles covering Michelin guide in Tokyo and New York in the time period between 2000 and 2010. Bouty et al. (2013) argued that Tokyo and New York restaurants which were featured in the red guide earned a place in the haute cuisine. It was made possible by Michelin's enabling work. The researchers argued that the star rating system of the red guide is an example of policing work. They also found that this rating system has added value to some of the restaurants that previously were not regarded so highly and detracted some value from the restaurants that were highly regarded previously. They argued that this was an example of valorizing work as Lawrence & Suddaby (2006) described. Michelin releases the red guide once a year in autumn. By doing that, the company managed to create a tradition in a way that generates excitement and anticipation among the stakeholders in haute cuisine. Furthermore, they found

that with the release of the red guide every autumn, the red guide rates both new restaurants and previously featured restaurants. It also added value to the restaurants or detract value from the restaurants every year by its release. These findings are significant indications of a relationship between embedding, policing, and valourizing work. The researchers also found that Michelin used almost the same methods that got them success in Europe. There were no significant changes in their process of star rating system or the guide itself. They did not alter their system to adjust to the differences between Europe, Asia, and America; rather, the ecosystem in those continents have adjusted to the Michelin red guide. This research is significant since it shows the different types of institutional maintenance work in action. It also points out the relationship between different types of institutional maintenance work. The study also shows that institutional maintenance can be achieved without altering successful methods despite the challenges brought by geological differences.

Although there has been ample evidence that supports the categorization of institutional work by Lawrence and Suddaby (2006), in some situations, the line between three types of institutional work has become thinner. In their research, Currie, Lockett, Finn, Martin & Waring (2012) examined the institutional work and institutional maintenance in the context of medical professionals facing an external threat. They conducted multiple case studies of English National Health Services where new roles threatened the existing status and position of medical professionals. They focused their attention on the mainstreaming genetics (MG) policy initiative within the English National Health Services. Before the MG initiative, tertiary care comprised of specialist clinical geneticists along with genetics counselors in charge of serving all patients regardless of their risk level. The aim of the MG initiative carried out by the Department of Health to mainstream the genetics service and distribute it to primary and secondary care to make it more accessible for patients as well as far less expensive. The Department of Health started pilot projects aiming to have nurses specialized in the area of genetics and give them autonomy to deliver genetics service to patients as well as become experts who give professional advice to not only other nurses but doctors as well. The Department of Health also started pilot projects aiming to give genetics service

through general physicians working in primary care instead of genetics specialists working in tertiary care. All of these pilot projects defy the common hierarchy and division of labor observed in the medical industry and make the MG initiative the external threat in the context of this study. The primary source of data for this study was over 149 interviews with medical professionals and other professionals affected by this initiative. Along with these interviews, the researchers use data from field observations and archives as well. Through these case studies, the researchers were able to examine the institutional work done by these medical professionals who face an external threat to their jobs and positions to maintain their position and status as well as institutional work done by outsiders, who are not part of the English National Health Services but powerful within their corresponding group and are affected by the same external threat, to maintain their status and arrangements with these professionals. Through their research, Currie et al (2012) observed different types of institutional work first categorized by Lawrence and Suddaby (2006). In some of the case sites, they observed that clinical geneticists have tried to maintain the typical model of medical professionalism by defining their role as the lead actor and the role of genetics nurses as their assistants. They usually gave nurses the day-to-day tasks that they did not want, and also gave them little autonomy. In other case sites, researchers observed a very different approach by the clinical geneticists. Geneticists in those case sites tried to theorize the policy set by MG initiative by giving nurses more autonomy, encouraging them to take more non-routine tasks. Basically, they saw an opportunity in giving nurses some of their jobs so that they could focus on the jobs that they see more important and require their expertise. Through theorizing work, they sought to not only maintain but enhance their position as clinical geneticists. The researchers also observed some examples of policing and educating work done by clinical geneticists. In some of the case sites, clinical geneticists tried to educate nurses as their assistants in accordance with the role they set for them in the first place. In other case sites, however, geneticists trained their nurses in a way that they could do some of the jobs without constant supervision. That is apparent in policing work as well. Nurses who trained to be assistants were constantly supervised by clinical geneticists. In other case sites, geneticists shifted some of their responsibilities to general physicians so that they

could supervise some of the tasks of nurses which resulted in more autonomy for nurses and more time for clinical geneticists. In some cases, researchers observed that clinical geneticists engaged with patients for constructing normative networks. Patients have the power to help clinical geneticists retain their position and power by demanding the involvement of these experts in patient care and these engagements with them help clinical geneticists to maintain their position. Currie et al. (2012) have observed “theorizing”, “defining”, “educating”, “policing” and “constructing normative networks” type work, all of which were initially categorized by Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) under types of work used in the creation of institutions, are also types of work used to maintain an institution. They have also observed the interplay between different types of institutional work. It shows that creation and maintenance work have some intersections and it is hard to draw lines to categorize types of institutional work as creation or maintenance.

Another empirical study using a broader timeline has been conducted by Nite, Washington and Ige (2016). In their research, they examined how one organization, National College Athletic Association (NCAA), managed to institutionalize itself and then how it managed to stay in power through institutional maintenance work. Unlike the similar research examining one organization’s institutional maintenance work in a smaller time period, this research focused on a much broader time period, starting from the first establishment years of NCAA through 2015. Founded in 1910 as the Intercollegiate Athletic Association, the organization later changed its name as the National College Athletic Association or NCAA quickly became the leading organization in collegiate and amateur sports in the United States. Now with its 1123 members of colleges and universities, it runs 90 championships in 24 different sports. Through its first 40 years, NCAA has worked through challenges to establish its dominance and legitimacy (“What is NCAA”, 2019). After it became the dominant organization in college sports, NCAA has faced new concerns challenging its power position. This research has focused on those challenges and how the NCAA has managed to solve them by doing institutional maintenance work. The researchers examined the archives of the NCAA, the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW), the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), and numerous academic papers regarding NCAA

and collegiate athletics in the span of nearly 100 years. Based on these data, they were able to draw some insights regarding institutional work done by NCAA. The study showed that NCAA established its legitimacy by creating new rules regarding membership, gameplay of different college sports, management of revenues, player safety and many others to bring all amateur sports under its umbrella. This institutional creation work is an extensive display of boundary and practice work. Although these are examples of institutional creation, the study showed that the boundary and practice work continued even after the NCAA claimed its legitimacy and institutionalized many aspects of amateur and collegiate athletics. The researchers indicated that NCAA continually faced challenges both internally and externally. One example of external challenges was the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics or NAIA which comprised of smaller colleges and universities that cannot seek membership from NCAA due to its rules. NAIA challenged the dominance of NCAA in the field of collegiate sports. NCAA responded to this threat by changing its rule set to attract smaller colleges and universities as well. By changing its rules, the NCAA opened the path for smaller schools to gain membership, thus eliminating the NAIA threat altogether. Another external threat NCAA faced was the development of TV broadcasting and the conflict it causes among schools regarding how to share the revenue coming from TV broadcasting. NCAA initially responded to this conflict by defending its rules which put NCAA in the driver seat in terms of how the revenue is shared. In response, colleges and universities started a legal case against NCAA forcing it to change its rules and give away some of its power over TV revenues. However, by compromising, NCAA continued its dominant position in the field of college sports including TV broadcasting rights and revenues. After smaller schools became members of the NCAA, they represented an internal threat to the organization. The first set of rules governed by NCAA favored the larger schools over smaller ones, so this caused a conflict within the organization. The NCAA managed this threat by changing its set of rules to become a fairer organization. All three examples show how the NCAA responded to both internal and external threats by expanding its boundaries and practices and it shows that boundary and practice work has extended to become institutional maintenance work. The research of Nite et al.

(2016) is significant in a way that it examines an organization from the first years it was formed through the years it became fully institutionalized, hence creating an opportunity to observe different types of institutional work done by that organization. The study shows that institutional creation and maintenance are continuous processes and the categorization and separation of the two which is initially offered by scholars (see Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006) is more of a theoretical perspective rather than practical, hence it backs up some of the recent findings by scholars like Currie et al.(2012) and Zietsma & Lawrence(2011).

Institutional maintenance work is not just about preventing outside or inside changes to an institution and actors. In some cases, changes are necessary to maintain an institution. Maintenance and innovation are two concepts that one expects not to coexist.

In their research, Koskela-Huotari, Edvardsson, Jonas, Sörhammar & Witell (2016) examined the innovation process in the service industry and what type of institutional work is necessary for innovation and change to happen. In order to elaborate on the topic, the researchers chose four different case studies, all in the service industry. They selected Volvo, Siemens, ICA Gruppen, and Eataly to examine different cases involving innovation in the service industry. They interviewed 21 different people from various organization levels and also gathered data from field observations and different sources like the internet and media. The researchers encountered two totally different findings in their cases, though they found a similar pattern of interdependence between different types of institutional work in all of them which is in line with the findings of other scholars (Currie et al., 2012; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2011). The researchers found that in Volvo, Siemens, and Eataly, actors used institutionalized rules to make the transition to a new system easier. They actively maintained the institutionalized rules of the previous system and made the innovation possible by using them as an incentive for users and managers, all of whom needed some convincing to accept the change coming with the innovation itself. This shows that maintaining institutions is sometimes crucial to creating new ones. Other findings of the researchers are somewhat opposite to the first finding. In the ICA Gruppen case, researchers observed that some

managers faced challenges while trying to implement a new marketing technique using loyalty cards due to existing institutions within the company. The researchers pointed out that mechanisms that maintain institutions could have a negative effect on innovation, thus it could prevent the creation of new institutions. This study is significant since it shows the conflicting nature of institutional maintenance. While it can support creating new institutions and innovation, in other cases, it could be a negative force standing in the way of innovation.

Institutional maintenance work is critical since actors often engage in institutional maintenance work not only to maintain an institution but to maintain their position as well. This raises some ethical questions whether institutional work is always morally correct. In their study, Clark and Newell (2013) aimed to show that there is a “dark side” in institutional maintenance work. By the dark side metaphor, they tried to explain that institutional maintenance work is not always in alignment with society’s ethical codes. Their research focused on professional service firms or PFSs and how these firms worked with different stakeholders in capital markets to maintain the institutionalized elements of the capital markets in the United States. In US capital markets, with the increase in the number of public firms and in the number of products that can be invested in, collecting information and interpreting that information becomes a challenge for investors. PFSs emerged as the solution for this problem and become critical actors for US capital markets. To gather more information, Clark and Newell (2013) selected credit rating agencies, security analysts, and governance advisory services to investigate how these firms engaged in institutional maintenance work. The researchers observed that all of PFSs have done some sort of "rating". For example, securities analysts have the responsibility to rate certain investment products as "buy" or "sell". Buy means that product has the potential to increase in value and sell means the product has signaled a decrease in their value. Governance agencies are responsible for rating firms according to how they are managed which can be a signal for potential investors looking to invest in those firms. Credit rating agencies have the responsibility to rate bonds. The researchers pointed out that "rating" is a type of "policing" work as Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) described. The researchers also observed conflict of interest in all of those firms' actions. For example, security analysts have usually been

employed by investment banks and they have been assigned to rate banks that are under the same corporate umbrella as their employer. The researchers have described this sort of conflict of interest in their policing work as "conspiring". The researchers also observed that all of PFSs did some sort of "tutoring". Firms that are rated by PFSs were willing to be educated on how those PFSs rate them. The researchers identified this tutoring work as a type of "enabling" work as described by Lawrence and Suddaby (2006). For example, firms that are rated by governance advisors have also employed those firms to educate themselves on how to increase their rating score. This obviously caused a conflict of interest, which researchers described as "cheating". Another type of institutional maintenance work that researchers observed is "embedding and routinizing" work as described by Lawrence and Suddaby (2006). All PFSs were "collaborating" with the firms they were going to rate since they needed inside information. The researchers pointed out that this collaboration is a form of "embedding and routinizing" work. However, Clark and Newell (2013) observed that this collaboration could cause a conflict of interest. For example, researchers observed that managers of the firms usually tended to share more information with the PFSs to increase their score when they have thought their score would be low. The researchers described this situation as "collusion". This study has significance since it backed the initial findings of Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) regarding institutional maintenance work. However, the real significance of this study is that it has also shown how institutional maintenance work could be conflicted with ethical codes in some situations because of the conflict of interest actors who are engaged to maintain the institution face.

Recent empirical studies covering institutional maintenance work usually focused on complex and purposive actions of the actors trying to maintain an institution. However, some research shows how concepts that seem small could be vital instruments of maintenance work. In their research, Blanc and Huault (2011) focused on the role of artifacts to maintain institutions in the face of a major disruptive force and a revolutionary change. To elaborate on the issue, the researchers chose the French recorded music industry as their case. They focused on a time period between 2004 and 2008 since this era was particularly important as it has significant value to capture the digital era and its effects on the recorded music

industry. This time period was also significant since there was a new bill of law in the parliament called “global license” which on paper would have a huge impact on how people share music over the internet. Therefore, this time period offered an area of research in terms of these institutions were maintained, and for the context of this research, how artifacts played a role in the maintenance of these institutions. To examine the role of the artifacts in maintaining institutionalized parts of the French recorded music industry, the researchers interviewed 26 people associated with the sector and collected a good amount of data from press articles. The researchers were able to differentiate one artifact that has the most influence in institutional maintenance in the context of this study which is the CD or disc. They pointed out that the meaning of the CD represents a profit and the preservation of the rights of the music artist as the sale numbers increased significantly with the introduction of the CDs and brought a significant amount of money to the industry. Artists were also able to preserve their rights and able to prevent illegal copying of their work. Researchers found that stakeholders in the music industry were associating the term CD with the term file, even though the term file carries completely opposite meanings like "sharing". With the internet, people were able to distribute and share music files among them, albeit illegally. This caused the term file to be associated with sharing and distributing which is the main thing music industry and artists have been trying to prevent. In order to alter the meanings associated with “file”, stakeholders in the music industry used the artifact CD and its associated meanings. By doing so, they were able to transfer some of the institutions to the term “file”. Those institutions are the factors behind the success music industry has achieved with CDs, like the prevention of illegal downloading and distribution or Digital Right Management in the case of files. Besides the artifacts, the researchers found another important factor that helps maintain the institutions of the French recorded industry which they have described as "dispositif". By dispositifs, the researchers have implied some undertakings, in the context of this study, this undertaking is the Hadopi project initiated by the French government and backed by many powerful figures in the French recorded music industry. This project aimed to monitor Internet users and their actions of illegal distribution of artistic files, in this case, music files. The researchers also found that

artifacts themselves were not enough of a factor to maintain the institutions and some projects were needed. They also pointed out that authorities that were in charge of this project have also used artifacts CD and file to support their project. This study has significance since it has shown that artifacts can be a mechanism to maintain institutions. It broadens the initial works of Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) and presents that a small concept like artifact could be a key part of institutional maintenance.

Another study was conducted by Dacin, Munir, and Tracey (2010) focusing on rituals as an instrument to maintain an institution. They sought to analyze how rituals and their performance affect institutional maintenance from a broader perspective. They argued that dining rituals that have been performed for centuries in two of the most respected universities in Britain, Oxford, and Cambridge, contribute to the maintenance and stability of the British class system. Most graduates of these universities are at the top of the British class system, working as judiciary, barristers, journalists, and politicians. They believe that the dining rituals of these schools have a permanent impact on those who participate in terms of their perspective in life, social norms, and values. To further investigate their argument, they conducted a qualitative study at Cambridge University and its colleges. Cambridge University is made up of 31 colleges and each college shares the same dining rituals with little differences them. In each college, formal dining took place with the participation of students, academicians, college master, and staff. Students and academicians are all expected to follow a dress code. Students sit on tables called “low tables” whereas Fellows and Master sit on tables called “high table” while they all are served by university staff in the form of butlers and stewards. Dacin et al. (2010) conducted 57 interviews with former or current participants of these dining rituals which includes students, academicians or Fellows, staff, alumni, and Masters. They also used data from newspapers, university sources, and books covering Cambridge University and its dining rituals. Their study concluded that rituals contribute to the maintenance of institutions in three ways. First, participants of the rituals became so accustomed to the underlying rules and notions that are needed for the institution to maintain that these rules and notions became taken-for-granted for them. In the context of the British class system, formal dining rituals

helped its participants to get accustomed to “social stratification and explicit categorization of people according to rank and station”, which are the basis of a class system. The second finding is that rituals create a willingness to perform what is needed to maintain the rituals themselves. Therefore, rituals are “highly effective at ensuring conformity to a particular set of practices” which would normally be hard to be accepted by some of the members of an organization. In the context of this study, the glamour comes with dining rituals; service by butlers and stewards, the dress code, the significant separation of Fellows and students, and the traditional values that are carried on for centuries make it practically impossible for participants to resist to the practices of this ritual. Third, they found that rituals have an impact on those who participate that lasts even after they are no longer the participants of those rituals. Participants carry the behaviors they picked up from the performance of those rituals into other aspects of their lives. In that manner, rituals have social and cultural implications as well. Graduates of Cambridge University occupy high ranking positions in numerous fields, which can be tied to their learning from those formal dining rituals. Graduates usually learn how to socialize with the elite as well as use those rituals as a bonding mechanism with the elite who are most probably experience the same formal dining rituals in their time at Oxford or Cambridge. It contributes to their career after graduation and allows them to occupy high ranking positions and become elites themselves, which contributes to the maintenance of the British class system. This study is significant since it extends the literature of institutional maintenance beyond what Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) first illustrate. It shows that smaller actions like rituals can be an effective way of maintaining a broader institution like the British class system which cannot be controlled or affected by one group. It shows that there is a “more complex” part of institutional maintenance beyond what existing literature has so far drawn attention to.

The review of the overall institutional maintenance literature highlights some crucial research gaps. This is due to the fact that institutional maintenance work is the least popular type of institutional work among scholars. (Lawrence et al., 2011)

Although maintenance work is still the least covered type of institutional work, there is a growing interest in institutional maintenance work as presented by this review. After Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) introduced and theorized the institutional maintenance work, many empirical studies were conducted by scholars. Some scholars like Turnbull and Wass (2015) showed that even the most taken-for-granted institutions needed maintenance work. Others like Raviola and Norbäck (2013) presented the work to maintain institutions under the threat of a disruptive force. The conflicted nature of maintenance work was highlighted by researchers like Koskela- Huotari et al. (2016). Other researchers like Dacin et al. (2010) showed that small things like rituals could help to maintain an established institution.

Most scholars focused on institutional maintenance work as separate from other types of institutional work as Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) categorized them. Although some researchers like Currie et al. (2012) showed that different types of institutional work entangled and even coexist, there is still a clear need for more research in this matter.

All in all, this leads us to derive our research question as:

How is an institution, e-commerce, maintained using another institution, retail and what are the underlying mechanisms of this institutional maintenance work?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used in this study. It intends to give the reasoning for the selected methodology, research site, and data sources, methods used as well as the limitations.

3.1 Research Design

A qualitative research design is used in this thesis. This design is selected since it is appropriate for the focus of this thesis that is institutional maintenance work. The main goal of this study is to understand how one institution can be maintained with another institution and the underlying mechanisms of this institutional maintenance work as Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) stated. According to Lawrence and Suddaby (2006), institutional work is “the purposive action” of actors to “create, maintain and disrupt institutions”. These actions of the individuals and/or organizations and the rationale for these actions need to be studied to truly understand the institutional maintenance work. As Denzin and Lincoln (2008) stated, a qualitative research design aims to understand the actions of the actors in a real-world situation with the help of empirical materials. From that perspective, a qualitative research design aligns with the goal of this study. A qualitative research design also helps to understand the underlying mechanisms of the maintenance work. To identify the mechanisms, the actors’ actions are needed to be organized and structured. This is hard to do without the help of qualitative data.

3.2 Research Site

After defining the research question and selecting the research design, we looked to gather qualitative data. We selected the retail industry as our main research site. In order to find answers to our research question, we had to narrow down the retailing industry to gather the necessary data.

We defined the following criteria to select firms we can analyze that are appropriate for our goals:

- 1) E-commerce firms: This criterion was the most obvious one since we aimed to show how e-commerce as an institution is maintained. The main criteria for a firm to be selected is that it had to begin its operations as an e-commerce only firm.
- 2) Firms in Turkey: This criterion is more about convenience than anything else. Since the researcher lives in Turkey, it is hard to gather data from firms that are operating outside of Turkey. As part of the qualitative research design, the researcher must gather data through empirical materials (Denzel and Lincoln, 2008), in this case, interviews which we will elaborate in this chapter.
- 3) Firms that opened a physical store: This is the most crucial criterion since we aimed to show how retail as an institution helps maintain e-commerce. We only selected firms that opened at least one physical store after their operations begun as an online-only firm.
- 4) Established firms: We defined an established firm as a firm that is operating for at least 5 years and had at least one operating physical store. We did not count firms that began their operations on an online marketplace like Gittigidiyor.com, n11.com or Hepsiburada.com, or social media like Instagram or Facebook.

In order to select firms that fit the above criteria, the researcher began to search for e-commerce firms in Turkey. According to a report by the Turkish IT Industry Association (“Türkiye’de E-Ticaret 2018 Pazar Büyüklüğü”, 2019), 799 e-commerce firms that had a monthly user of at least 15000 were operating in Turkey in 2017. According to the same report, of those 799 firms, only 358 firms were operating as an omnichannel firm which means that those firms were selling products through a channel that is not their website. We found that most of those firms had not begun its operations as an online-only firm, in fact, they are the opposite of our criteria. Most of them began their operations as traditional retailers,

then started their online businesses. After careful research, we found 4 firms that fit all the criteria. Vivense, E-Bebek, Evidea, and Supplementler are the selected firms.

A brief profile of selected firms is listed below with information in terms of the defined criteria. A side-by-side comparison of all 4 firms is also given in Table 1.

- Vivense: Vivense or Vivense.com is a company selling home furniture and decoration products. It is founded by Kemal Erol in 2013 and began its operations as an e-commerce company. The company opened its first showroom next to its headquarters in Istanbul, in 2014, merely a year after it was founded.
- Evidea: Evidea or Evidea.com is a company selling home products. Their main products include home decoration, home textile, kitchenware, bathroom ware, garden ware, and furniture. It is founded by Timur Tandoğar and Tuğberk Keselioğlu in 2008 as Malzemem.com selling hardware and construction materials. They later changed the name of their website and company as Evidea and start selling home products. The company opened its first physical store in late 2016 in Istanbul.
- Supplementler: Supplementler or Supplementler.com is a company selling supplements for athletes including whey protein, amino acid, and multivitamins. It is founded in 2006 as one of the first e-commerce companies specializing in selling supplements for athletes. After 4 years of operating as an online-only company, they opened their first physical store in Istanbul.
- E-Bebek: E-Bebek is a company selling mother and baby products. This is the oldest of the four companies we selected, it was founded by Halil Erdoğan in 2000 as “bebek.com”. In its first year of operation, it was a publishing company generating mother and baby related content. After failing to raise considerable user traffic, they pivoted the company to an e-commerce company and changing the name along the way as “e-bebek.com”. They opened their first physical store in 2003. They are the first e-commerce company in Turkey that open its physical store and also one of the very first in the world.

All 4 of the selected firms fit the defined criteria. All of them started as an online-only company and opened their stores later. They have operated for more than 5 years. All are based in Turkey and have currently at least one operational physical store.

Although Evidea and Vivense have some resemblance in terms of the products they are selling, they are placing themselves in different segments. Therefore, the companies have a different customer base, business models and business processes from each other. They also differ from each other in terms of the year they were founded and the number of years they operated before they opened their first stores. This kind of diversity in selected companies is certainly unintentional but most welcomed since it represents a chance to understand e-commerce and retail as institutions by analyzing companies operating in different segments of the industry.

3.3 Data Sources

This section discusses the data used in this study. The main data comes from interviews with company officials. Participants were contacted between May 2018 and December 2018 and a total of 10 interviews were conducted between September 2018 and December 2018.

The researcher conducted all of the interviews. Interview sessions lasted about 45 minutes on average. Most interviews were conducted over audio or video call since the researcher was located in Ankara as all the participants were located in Istanbul and most participants opted to conduct the interviews over a call.

All interview sessions were recorded fully with the consent of the participants in order to be transcribed later. Transcriptions of the interview sessions were done manually.

All interview questions are designed to be open-ended since our aim is to understand the thought process of actors. Interviewees were selected based on their positions in the selected firms. Top managers and directors were selected as interviewees as they had insight into the company's decisions about opening a physical store and the company in general. Interview questions included:

- Basic information about the participant and his/her position in the company
- Reasons behind the company's decision of opening a physical store
- The process of opening a store
- Effects of opening and owning a physical store as an e-commerce company
- Company culture
- Company's current status

With the firm selection criteria, only 4 firms were selected, and interviews were conducted. However, when we removed the location criterion for the firms, we could gather much more data. The geographical difference was a challenge as we mentioned before since it was hard to reach top managers to gather insightful data even for the selected firms. To overcome this challenge, we searched through the media outlets to see which firms fit the criteria and if there is any data we could use in this study. This research showed that opening a physical store is a trend among e-commerce only firms all around the world. From France to the USA, China to Canada, we gathered 16 different e-commerce only firms that fit the criteria. We found interviews covering the topic of opening a physical store with the top managers of those firms in different media outlets. Although these interviews were not as detailed nor as reliable as the interviews conducted for this study, they were still valuable data sources as they gave insight into the thought process of those companies' decision makers as they opted to open a physical store as a way to maintain their e-commerce company. Table 2 is a side-by-side comparison of the companies which we collected the interviews of their top managers.

The side-by-side comparison shows that the companies sell a wide range of products. They are founded and opened their first stores in different years. This is in line with the four selected firms as they also are different from one another. This data is also important since it adds a different component to the mix as the firms showed in Table 2 are located in different countries as well.

Table 1: Firm Profiles

FIRMS	VIVENSE	EVIDEA	SUPPLEMENTLER	E-BEBEK
Year of Establishment	2013	2008	2006	2000
Year of First Store Opening	2014	2016	2010	2003
Main Products Sold	Home Furniture and Decoration items	Home Products, Kitchenware, Garden ware	Supplements for Athletes	Mother and Baby Products
Operating Countries	Turkey	Turkey	Turkey	Turkey
Number of Physical Stores	23	1	32	136

Another component is the fact that among these companies, there are e-commerce giants like Amazon and Alibaba, the two biggest e-commerce companies in the world as well as growing startups. This data also shows that there is an ongoing trend of opening a physical retail store among e-commerce companies since it shows that e-commerce companies started to open their own brick-and-mortar stores independent of their location, products they sell, their year of establishment, and their size. It adds another dimension to this study as it can help analyze the reasons and effects of this trend.

3.4 Data Analysis

As we discussed in Section 3.2, a qualitative research approach is used in this study. This section describes the types of qualitative methods used in the data analysis process. We used methods based on grounded theory approaches (Glaser, 1978; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss and Corbin, 1990) to understand the supporting mechanisms of maintenance work from the data. Before we began to analyze the data, we checked if the responses to interview questions contained sufficient information in terms of the research question. After each interview was transcribed, we started to derive the main categories.

At first, we tried to form categories by grouping individual answers by each interview question. However, we realized that similar answers were given to different interview questions by different interviewees. After that, we grouped all interview questions into two: the ones that question the reasoning of opening a physical store and the ones that question the possible effects of owning a store to the e-commerce business and the company in general.

Table 2: Profiles of Companies Outside of Turkey

FIRMS	Year of Establishment	Year of First Store Opening	Main Products Sold	Location of Headquarters
MM Lafleur	2013	2017	Women clothing and accessories	USA
Casper	2014	2018	Mattress	USA
Away Travel	2015	2016	Luggage	USA
Everlane	2010	2017	Clothing	USA
Brika	2013	2015	Designer and crafted gift items	Canada
Warby Parker	2010	2013	Sunglasses	USA
Amazon	1996	2015	Marketplace- All kinds of items	USA
Birchbox	2010	2014	Makeup, haircare and skincare products	USA
Bonobos	2007	2012	Menswear	USA
Alibaba	1999	2017	Marketplace-Wholesaler	China
Indochino	2014	2017	Custom Made Menswear	Canada
Rent the Runway	2009	2014	Rental Designer dresses and handbags	USA
BaubleBar	2010	2015	Fashion Jewelry	USA
Adore me	2011	2018	Lingerie	USA/France
Frank & Oak	2012	2014	Clothing	Canada
Allbirds	2014	2018	Shoes	USA

Next step was to develop the key issues. In order to develop key issues, we tried to bring together different categories. For example, “design” refers to the look and functioning of the website or the application and the stores. “User experience” refers to the experience of website or application user; in this case, the customer of the company. Although the term “user experience” is related to online products, the interviewees used the term to describe the experience the store brought to their customers as well. They used these terms as a part of the company’s “brand”. Therefore, the categories “design” and “user experience” was transformed into one key issue, “brand”.

After developing key issues, these issues have been analyzed to identify the ones related to our research goal. The main focus of the whole analysis process is to understand if traditional retail is a tool to maintain e-commerce and if that is the case, what mechanisms support institutional maintenance work.

3.5 Limitations

One of the limitations of this study is to find companies that fit the criteria. The reason is the fact that e-commerce is only comprised of 3 percent all retail in Turkey, so there is not many e-commerce only companies. The other is that opening store is a relatively new trend among e-commerce companies. These were the expected limitations before beginning this research. Another unexpected limitation is to find managers that have knowledge about the decision of opening stores. Most firms that fit our criteria were only startup firms when they decided to open their stores. There are a limited number of people that play a part in deciding a startup’s future. This limits the number of people we can interview for this study. Also, technology firms by nature have relatively high turnover rates among their employees, therefore it makes it harder to find employees who work in those firms long enough to have enough information about the company. Also, this study only focused on the work of decision makers who represent the company in general and are part of the store opening process. Our main data source comes from the interviews with these decision makers who are likely to have the most knowledge

about the process. These companies have too many customers and suppliers to reach out and talk to. There are also many employees as stakeholders in these companies. It was beyond the temporal and monetary resources of the researcher to make interviews with them as well although those interviews would certainly enrich our data. Also, there is no organization or society that gathers all of e-commerce firms in Turkey under its roof, so it was not possible for us to interview such an organization or society. Hence, the analysis is limited to the institutional work of the decision makers in the selected companies.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

From the transcribed answers of the top managers, we identified 4 mutual categories that affect the success in both e-commerce and traditional brick-and-mortar retailing. We relate the key issues to those higher categories and analyze how each of them contribute to the maintenance of e-commerce as an institution. To put it in detail:

- In Section 4.2, we analyzed customer related key issues. We took a look at how having a store affects the existing or new customers of an e-commerce company and found two underlying mechanisms; concretization and personalization.
- Section 4.3 is dedicated to analyzing how not being an e-commerce only company affects its employees in terms of new tasks and involvement as well as its implications.
- Supplier related key issues were analyzed in the following section, Section 4.4. We relate two key issues to the supplier: concretization and product range.
- Last level we identified is company. We analyzed which underlying mechanisms of traditional retail support e-commerce business in terms of the company itself and found brand and growth as two key issues, which we analyzed in detail in Section 4.5.
- After successfully analyzing four different categories and their key issues, we analyzed their implications in terms of our research goal and come up with a number of propositions.

4.2 Customer

The customer is the single most important factor that affects the success in both e-commerce and traditional retailing. Almost all activities successful companies do, they do it with customers in mind. The founder and CEO (Jeff Bezos) of Amazon, an e-commerce company and also the largest public company in the world, links its company's success to a "secret sauce" which he described it as "obsessive focus" on customers rather than its competitors. Inditex, the parent company of fashion brands Zara, Pull&Bear, and Stradivarius, one of the biggest clothing firms in the world with over 7000 stores in over 200 countries worldwide, shares the one idea behind their success as "the customer is at the center of everything we do".

It is obvious that successful companies consider their customers, e-commerce and traditional retailing alike. The first thing any company should do is to reach the customer. For e-commerce companies, reaching the customer is not enough most of the time simply because the number of customers is much lower compared to traditional retail. According to the US Department of Commerce Statistics ("Quarterly Retail E-commerce Sales", 2018), only 9 percent of all retail sales were generated from e-commerce in 2017. This rate is much worse for the majority of the world considering the USA is in the top 5 with China (Keung, Yiu, Mubayi, Kawano, Cheng, & Liu, 2017), and the UK ("E-commerce and ICT activity, UK: 2017", 2018) on top. In developing countries like Turkey, this rate drops significantly. Only 3 percent of all retail sales come from e-commerce in 2017, according to a report by the Turkish IT Industry Association ("Türkiye'de E-Ticaret 2018 Pazar Büyüklüğü", 2019). These numbers suggest one of the reasons why e-commerce companies go into traditional retailing by opening brick-and-mortar stores. Another statistic that shows the struggle of e-commerce companies is the e-commerce penetration rates. These statistics show the percentage of active shoppers who made a purchase online at least once. It is just under 50 percent in 2018 according to Statista. This shows that there are a lot of customers e-commerce companies simply cannot reach. One upper level manager of Evidea, explains the situation when talking about the reasons for opening a store as:

The customer base for online and offline is a little different from one another. Every online customer is not an offline customer and there is a significant number of customers we cannot reach in the offline market. We aim to reach those customers and make them an online customer as well.

There is a discrepancy between penetration rates and sales rate of e-commerce. For example, 43% of all customers shop online; however, e-commerce sales were comprised of only 3% of all retail industry in Turkey in 2017 according to Deloitte. This means even online shoppers do not spend on e-commerce as they spend on traditional retail. This discrepancy has significance from both the e-commerce company and customer standpoint.

4.2.1 Concretization

It is clear that customers are spending more on traditional retail. E-commerce cannot offer something stores can, customers want to try, touch, feel or see the product before they buy it. Vivense is one of the companies that has the chance to see what their customers want. One manager from Vivense explains their experience with the case as;

When we did not have a store; some customers found our office address and visited our office to see our products. Maybe it is because of the nature of the products we sell, but customers really want to see them before they buy.

Vivense sells mainly furniture, so it is understandable customers want to sit on the couch or lie down on the mattress they want to buy. It is also understandable that they want to see the product before they buy it since the cost of buying furniture is usually relatively high for most customers. However, this case is also valid for a number of different products like clothing, accessories, watches, home products, and many more. Founder and CEO of Everlane, an e-commerce company selling clothing and accessories, Michael Preysman said in 2012, “We are going to shut the company down before we go to physical retail” (CBS This Morning, 2017). The company eventually went into physical retail in 2017 with its first store and Michael Preysman explained the rationale behind their decision in an interview in 2017 (CBS This Morning, 2017):

When we started six years ago, we thought we could do this online only, but what we found is customers like to touch things before they buy them.

One of the high-level managers of Vivense describes the experience physical stores can offer and a website cannot as:

It is very difficult to touch the customer when you are an online only company. Stores offer a richer experience obviously. The real life cannot be replicated with any virtual world. The physical store reveals all the richness of that real life. You experience everything with your five senses, you drink your coffee, talk to the interior designer, touch the fabrics, sit down and experience the environment in the place where you are experiencing the aromas in your nose so you experience with your 5 senses.

Physical stores can also bring convenience to customers e-commerce sometimes lack. Founder and CEO of Rent the Runway, a company that lets people rent luxury clothing explains their point of view (CBS This Morning, 2016):

... by nature of having a store in the physical market, you can courier her units from the store, if she ever has a problem you can swap for various pieces of inventory, so it is about creating an efficient experience for the user.

Concretization effect of having a physical store is evident from the customer standpoint. Customers can see, touch, and feel the products they want to buy as well as they can just come by the store if it is on their way, swap items, or return them. It creates a familiar experience for most customers that are used to traditional retailing and an alternative way of reaching customers for e-commerce companies.

Normally, one should expect an e-commerce company to gain more customers and sell more products through their stores. This is true to some degree as one case Vivense experienced showed us. When Vivense opened their first store in Kayseri, their e-commerce business saw a decline in sales from that city. This showed that using another institution to maintain their business can cause some disruption.

However, concretization has positive reflections on e-commerce business as well. Since companies sell the same products both online and offline, customers can first try the products, then buy online. The opposite is also valid as customers can visit the website to determine what to buy before they came to the stores. The CEO of

Warby Parker, a US based company selling glasses, explained the situation as (Estes, 2017):

We find that about 75 percent of our customers that shop in our stores has been on our website first. The world's not black and white...

E-Bebek is one of the companies experienced the positive effects of having a physical store on their e-commerce business. One top manager explained their case as;

When we open a store in the provinces where we sell very little online, we see that the sales increased from our website. It is like publicity. Customers are looking if we have a website as well, they have a point of contact so they shop online thinking they can just change or return the products from the store.

Vivense did not just experience the disruption or cannibalization, which is a term used in marketing usually for a decrease in sales of a product with the introduction of another product. They experienced some positive effects of concretization on their e-commerce business as well. They can display only a fraction of their whole product range in their store as they have a wide range of home furniture products, so if customers cannot find what they are looking for, their sales team shows them similar products to try and then they encourage their customers to order online which helps their online sale numbers.

4.2.2 Personalization

E-commerce companies use every available technology to reach their customers and give them a better user experience when customers visit their website or use their mobile application. They can collect a large amount of data about the customers. They can calculate their spending habits, track what they search for and advertise specifically to that, recommend similar items based on their previous preferences, offer them special discounts, and do a lot more with the help of advanced technology like big data, machine learning and artificial intelligence. They can design slick user interfaces for better user experience, roll out different features for the same website based on age, location, gender or another metric they choose. Personalization is something every e-commerce company tries to achieve.

Having a physical store is another way for companies to personalize the experience for their customers. One manager from Vivense describes their standpoint as:

Our stores are like the missing part of the user experience of our e-commerce business. We started them as a way to complete the user experience.

E-commerce companies use different methods for personalization to offer what they think their online business is missing in terms of user experience. They claim that the experience of their stores is unique and unlike traditional retail stores. One top manager from Evidea explains what they do differently from other stores as:

We added details like ordering from the store directly to your address. That is one of the things that separate us from other retailers.

Personalization in retail stores is not a new concept. Apple is usually credited for opening personalized brick-and-mortar stores selling technological products as most technology firms only sell online or through resellers. Apple Stores are highly regarded among retailers since their conversion rates or sales per visited customers are exceptionally high. One-to-one meetings with well-informed store personnel was an important addition to Apple stores then and since most stores opted to follow a similar approach. Vivense CEO said that:

We thought that in our showrooms, our interior designers can serve our customers more closely, help them decide which furniture or which color to choose.

MM LaFleur, a USA based company selling fashion and beauty products mostly for women, is another company that uses personalization. Aron Susman, a top manager for the company, described their point of view in an article (Susman, 2018):

We decided to reimagine the shopping process by having customers come in by appointment, work with a stylist and only try on items that have been curated for them.

These personalization tactics companies use help them engage with their customers more and help them decide what to buy. The idea behind all personalization approaches retailers used, traditional or not, is to increase conversion rates which means sales per visited customers. E-commerce companies, however, took it to

another level and tried to increase their online sales through personalization. They use stores as a way of introducing their products to the customer base. CEO of Casper, a USA based company selling mattresses, said about their stores (Hanbury, 2018):

It's a way to educate new consumers

Supplementer.com is a good example of this case. They are selling supplement foods for athletes and most of their new customers are also new to these kinds of products. They either hire educated store personnel or educate them after they hire them about their products so that they can assist customers. They use their personnel to educate new customers about what to use, when to use, and how to use their products. They can create cross-sale opportunities with this method as well. For example, if a customer who is new to bodybuilding and supplements wants to buy only whey protein, they can sell them amino acids as well by explaining the customer benefits of having them in the early phases of bodybuilding.

E-commerce companies are using their stores not only educate customers about their product but also about technology. Evidia and E-Bebek installed kiosks in their stores. Customers can look at the product catalog, customize their product, and even order online from the kiosks located in the stores. Store personnel assist customers if they have trouble using kiosks. Using kiosks, companies help customers get familiar with online shopping experience. This has positive implications on the e-commerce business since companies are basically acquiring new online shoppers. They are also able to direct customers who come to their stores to shop online instead of directly shopping from the store. One top manager from E-Bebek explained their point of view:

We are creating an environment for our customers to adapt to technology to familiarize them with e-commerce using kiosks and technology in our stores.

Both concretization and personalization are the mechanisms at the customer level. Customers can feel, touch, and experience the products they want to buy with the concretization factor of stores. It also creates a sense of familiarity at the customer

level. Once customers are familiar with the products or the company in general, they can shop online as e-commerce offers the same products as store and also a wider variety of products than stores. Personalization helps companies to bond with their customers. Stores enable organization members, employees, or managers, to engage in institutional work through a relationship with the customers. Customers became partners in this institutional work as stores offer a way to shop online in the stores.

4.3 Employees

In the context of this study, employees are a big part of our focus for many reasons. Going into brick-and-mortar retail requires some form of organizational change, big or small, for the companies studied in this thesis. Whether it hires new employees or fires old ones, shifts the position of current employees, gets outside counseling, or does outsourcing, many of the actions required to open a store involve employees of the firm. There are several studies focusing on firms going through organizational and structural changes which have implications on company culture, turnover rates among employees and many other aspects (Choi, 2011; Avey, Wernsing, & Luthans, 2008; Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005). Without going into much detail about organizational change, we aimed to focus on the effects of opening a store on employees working on the e-commerce side of the company.

Most of the e-commerce companies studied in this thesis were startup companies when they decided to open their first stores. The number of employees they had was between 5 and 50 for most of the companies at the time of opening their first stores. This has advantages and disadvantages when it comes to implementing a big strategic decision like going into traditional retailing. A small number of employees means that nearly all of the employees needed to be bought into the idea since nearly all of them had some part of their jobs affected by that idea. When asked about if there was any resistance from the employees to going into retail, answers from top executives to new employees at that time were relatively similar. Nearly all of the employees agreed with the strategic decision that the company should benefit from the retail business. Employee commitment is one of the most critical

aspects of implementing a strategic decision (Parish, Cadwallader, and Busch, 2008). However, not all employees were happy with the decision. Some were concerned that the company could transform into a more traditional retail company as they viewed their companies as a technology firm. They were concerned that adding multiple employees coming from a traditional retail background could alter the company culture and shift the power from the employees of the e-commerce units to the store employees. Despite these concerns, e-commerce companies were able to keep some key employees intact. This was a great accomplishment for the companies at that time. One factor was related to money since the core unit of employees of these startup firms were also shareholders in the company, but others were related to other factors as Cosack, Guthridge, and Lawson (2010) suggested. We focused on two key factors, new tasks and involvement, affecting the employees of the e-commerce units of these companies positively hence the e-commerce business.

4.3.1 New Tasks

Having a store brings a new dimension to an e-commerce company. Stores automatically create new jobs and new roles within the company. In the companies in the context of this study, most of these new positions were filled from outside of the company via new hires, consultancy, or outsourcing. For example, Supplementler.com opened a new department handling all store related jobs and filled the department with employees experienced in retailing. They also hired experienced store managers, and salespeople while giving on the job training in their store to the inexperienced salespeople they hired. Vivense took a similar approach and opened a department to manage all their stores. They also opened district and branch offices. They mostly hired experienced personnel in this department and their new offices. Vivense and E-Bebek hired outside consultants in the opening process of their stores before they trained their own personnel.

However, not all new tasks were welcomed with open arms by them neither. Employees were reluctant to complete new tasks created by having a store. For example, the software engineering team at one company were needed to implement

a new feature for their website to enable customers to shop small items directly from stores. That feature required significant changes to their system at that time despite the fact that sales of those small items only made up for a relatively negligible amount of their all sales, therefore the product management team were reluctant to make those changes to their system.

Although some of the positions were filled by hiring new employees, a growing company meant more opportunities and more career paths for employees. Vivense is a good example of this situation. After they opened up several stores, they created a showroom department to manage all their stores. They hired several employees experienced in retailing. They also wanted to bring in current employees to that department to benefit from their experience in the company and to instill company culture and values to newly hired employees. Another example of career opportunity created at Vivense was for interior designers. Designs of all Vivense stores were created in house by their interior design team. Their showrooms also enabled the interior designers to work with the customers. The company assigned some of its designers to their stores in rotation which enabled those designers to get some invaluable on the job training.

Stores created new positions within the e-commerce company which they filled mostly by hiring new personnel. However, these newly hired employees could shift their position within the company to work in the e-commerce units. Some companies placed their successful employees working in store-related jobs- salespeople, store managers, branch office managers, etc.- to more e-commerce related jobs such as digital inventory management or marketing departments. Companies aimed to use these employees as they gained field experience by working closely with the customers to add more insight into their e-commerce departments.

E-commerce companies needed to expand some of their operations and tinker with their business processes in order to accommodate changes brought by their offline presence. This caused some positions within the company to assume new responsibilities. One top manager from Evidia said that:

A little more responsibility was added to the existing positions. In the logistics section, for example, we only shipped to the customers before but now we are shipping to our store in mass. So, we could say it was an addition. Increased responsibilities for our existing staff.

Companies offer their key employees new career paths, training opportunities, added responsibilities, and ownership of their work with the added growth of having brick-and-mortar stores. By doing so, they were able to keep key employees and help maintain their e-commerce business.

4.3.2 Involvement

Opening a store brought some form of organizational change to the e-commerce firms. Companies in the context of this study were able to convince their employees about the benefits of stores. Furthermore, they used this change as a tool for employee involvement in a key strategic decision. Founder of E-Bebek explained the process as:

From the beginning, this has been a process we have done with all our employees.

Evidea is another firm that tried to involve all of its employees. One top manager from Evidea explained their experience:

We were a startup company, as this was a common decision, we have incorporated all of the company's employees into this process. Employees were even involved in the alignment of products, selection of products, design of the store. Everyone joined and merged under one goal.

Stores became a tool for employee involvement not just in the opening process but afterwards as well. For most of the employees of an e-commerce company, customers mean data. E-commerce companies collect a huge amount of digital data from their customers to give them a better shopping experience. For example, the software engineering team uses data to create a better user interface for the website. They add new features to the website to attract and retain more customers or increase the volume of shopping an average customer makes. They create recommendation systems to recommend similar items to the customers based on their shopping habits. The marketing team, on the other hand, collects data from

online advertisement channels to decide on which campaigns are more successful or decide their future marketing strategies. Operations team builds forecast models based on the data they collect from customers. With the help of ever-growing digital data about their customers and the help of new technologies like machine learning and artificial intelligence, e-commerce companies are able to position themselves to meet their customers' needs. Companies created different methods to get direct feedback from their customers as well. Online channels, emails, forums, blogs, real-time online chat and customer support lines are just some examples. However, for most of the employees, these feedback channels mean more data since companies usually aggregate this feedback into processable digital data as well. Having a store created an environment that enables human-to-human interaction. It enabled customers to engage with the company, but it also enabled company employees to engage with the customers. One executive from Vivense shared their experience as:

Our stores have a warm friendly atmosphere. It opens a channel of one-to-one communication with the customer. One year ago, our showroom and office were next to each other, so we could go directly working with the customer and establish one-to-one communication. Customers come and show us the screenshots of the product and say, "I have looked at here, I've done something like that here". It offers us to do customer research.

Stores help maintain e-commerce as an institution at the employee level through new tasks and involvement. In terms of new tasks, they create new responsibilities for existing positions in the company. Although not all tasks are welcomed by employees, these added responsibilities help employees develop new skills, and grow as employees. New tasks and new roles also mean new career paths for existing employees to follow. Stores also create new positions among the company which companies need to fill with new employees. Companies sometimes use this new workforce in e-commerce related positions as well.

In terms of involvement, stores help employee involvement in critical strategic decisions by creating an opportunity for companies. Companies involve their employees in the store opening process. It helps these employees to be bought in to the idea of having a brick-and-mortar store. Having a physical store also enable

employees to go into the field, study customer habits and get in touch with customers. It allows human-to-human interaction between employees who were able to interact with the customer indirectly or through online channels and the customers. More involved employees also help companies to retain these key employees of their e-commerce business.

4.4 Suppliers

Suppliers and supply chain management is another factor affecting the success of businesses; e-commerce and traditional retailers alike. The role of a supplier is to provide either services or products to the firm. Suppliers could provide raw or processed materials to a manufacturer or provide finished products to a reseller or retailer. In the context of e-commerce, the role of suppliers is to provide the company products it sells.

A number of factors drive customers to an e-commerce company. The Variety and, the quality of the products, delivery time and price are some of the most important ingredients for success for an e-commerce company. It is a fact not only for today but also for the future, says Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon (Clifford, 2019).

According to Bezos, Amazon builds its future strategy around the fact that customers want a vast selection of products, fast delivery time, and low costs today and they will want them in the future as well. Those attributes that customer want is highly dependent on the suppliers. Product quality is the most obvious factor that depends on the suppliers as a company either manufactures the goods which they buy raw materials from their suppliers or directly sell the products purchased from their suppliers. If an e-commerce company wants a wide variety of products to sell, it needs to work with multiple suppliers that can provide different kinds of products. Prices are also dependent on suppliers. Not only the cost of purchasing the product to sell but also delivery costs, storage costs and transaction costs which includes the finding of the product, legal fees, communication costs etc. affect the price of the product. All these costs associated with the price are again dependent on the suppliers.

It is obvious that the suppliers are a big factor in the success of an e-commerce company. There are numerous studies that show the correlation between the success of a firm and its supply chain management (Christopher & Ryals, 1999; Kannan & Tan, 2006). There are also a wide range of studies focusing on the buyer-supplier relationship and how it affects the success of the buyer firm (Koh, Fichman, & Kraut, 2009; Lefebvre, Lefebvre, Bendavid, Wamba, & Boeck 2006; Moharana, Sarangl, Sahoo & Sahoo, 2011).

In the context of this study, we focus on how brick-and-mortar stores help e-commerce in terms of suppliers.

4.4.1 Concretization

The concretization mechanism is not only in play with customers but suppliers as well. For most buyer-supplier relationships, trust is a key factor in a healthy relationship (Koh, Fichman, and Kraut, 2009). Suppliers want to trust the economic power of the buyer before they ever go into business with them. Considering e-commerce is a relatively new concept compared to traditional retailing and most e-commerce only companies are relatively new companies, it is understandable that most suppliers do not know or trust the e-commerce only companies. It was certainly the case for E-Bebek when they first emerged as an e-commerce company in the early 2000s when e-commerce was not a known concept among retailers or suppliers in Turkey. The founder of E-Bebek explained their case as:

We founded E-Bebek in 2001 and we could not grow our company that much until 2003 when we opened our first store. After we went into brick-and-mortar, customer trust and supplier trust to our firm increased significantly.

Another top manager from E-Bebek explained the situation further as:

There were suppliers that we wanted to work with, but they refused to work with us when we were just an e-commerce company. After we started opening stores, they became our suppliers.

This case is still valid for today's e-commerce world even though customer penetration and customer trust are significantly higher in Turkey compared to the

early 2000s. Top managers from Evidea and Vivense also mentioned about the supplier trust that brick-and-mortar store brought to their company. As one top manager from Evidea put it:

Having a store has a positive effect in the eye of the customer and supplier. Having a store helps e-commerce firms to be concretized in the eye of the suppliers. It creates a sense of familiarity since most suppliers are used to work with traditional retailers. Having a store has an economic part as well. It becomes an asset of the company which can be seen as collateral by people or businesses the company owes.

Trust is a part of a successful buyer-supplier relationship while successful communication and feedback is another factor (Prahinski and Benton, 2004). Concretization of an e-commerce company by opening brick-and-mortar stores help the company to engage with its customers on a more personal level. Stores enable companies to get direct feedback from their customers. This feedback from customers is not only about the stores, firms, or the buying process. More often than not, customer feedback is about products. Aron Susman (2018) from MM Lefleur explained their case as:

Our stylists have helped us determine what our customer wants. For instance, if you hear that they love a specific dress but are waiting for a new color, do whatever you can to ensure they are first in line when it comes in.

Since this customer feedback is often about the products, companies could analyze what their customers want more correctly. They use this new information to establish more successful communication with their suppliers since they now know exactly what to want from the product, they buy from them. For example, Vivense began to offer customization of their furniture in their stores. Customers could change the color of the furniture, adjust the softness to their liking, and even change the mechanisms of some of their furniture. They also added this feature to their website after they began offering it in their stores. It allowed their customers to change their furniture and tailor them to their needs. This also allowed Vivense to collect information about what their customers want from each of their furniture in

terms of its features. This direct feedback allowed them to better understand what their customers want from their products, and thus to give better feedback to their suppliers about the features of the product they asked them to produce.

4.4.2 Product Range

The product range is an important factor affecting the success of an e-commerce company. As Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon stated vast selection of products is something customers want (Clifford, 2019).

E-commerce has a big advantage over traditional retail when it comes to the selection of products. Stores have limited storage and shelves while an e-commerce website can display thousands of different products without any limitation. From that perspective, it is odd for stores to have an impact in terms of the product range. That is certainly the case for Supplementler.com, as one top manager stated:

E-commerce has a much wider selection of products compared to traditional retail, so having a store did not contribute to our product range.

Although stores did not affect the selection of products some companies sold, they certainly affected others positively. All of the companies that are studied in the context of this study sold the same products both online and offline. In the case of MM Lefleur, the company was able to add a new dress color they were not offering before. In the case of E-Bebek, some suppliers accepted to work with the firm thanks to their stores. E-Bebek was able to add the products from that supplier to its product range. Stores also contribute to e-commerce companies to add products that they did not think of adding before or simply did not make any sense adding to an online-only retailer. This was the case for Vivense. The company sold home furniture long before they went into brick-and-mortar, and customers could choose the fabrics and colors of the furniture. However, after they opened their stores and placed different fabric options to be displayed in their stores, the company decided to offer them online as well. They added an option to request different fabrics to be shipped online so that customers can see and touch those fabrics. This feature of their website enabled customers to experience something online shopping usually lacks. It also added a new dynamic between buyer and suppliers and enabled

suppliers to reach different customers as well. It helped to strengthen the relationship with the suppliers by offering more of their products and widening the product range which is also critical for the e-commerce businesses of companies.

Another aspect that stores help the supplier is visibility. Brick-and-mortar stores help e-commerce companies to show their product range to the customers. Evidia, Vivense, Supplementler.com, and E-Bebek all created their own brands working with different suppliers under different categories that cannot be bought elsewhere. However, not all of their products are exclusive to their stores or e-commerce website. They have a vast selection of products with different brands that can be bought from other stores or websites. Brick-and-mortar store especially helps those suppliers increase their visibility and brand image.

Concretization and product range are two mechanisms in play at the supplier level. Concretization helps the trustworthiness of the companies in the eyes of suppliers. It creates familiarity at the supplier level since most of them are accustomed to working with more traditional retailers. Stores also help create a better feedback channel between customers and companies which creates better feedback and communication between companies and their suppliers. Stores create opportunities to sell different products and also increase the visibility of the products which suppliers could take advantage of. In return, companies are able to widen their product range. Strengthening the relationship between the companies and their suppliers and widening the product range help maintain e-commerce as an institution since companies sell the same product in their stores and website.

4.5 Company

The last dimension we are going to talk about is the company itself. Although all other dimensions mentioned- customers, suppliers, and employees- are also related to the company, we will talk about two key factors directly affecting the company as a whole: brand and growth.

For the context of this study, we tried to distinguish companies' e-commerce and store businesses from one another to see how the latter can help maintain the

former. Although e-commerce and traditional retail as institutions are different from each other, both have the same purpose: to serve the company. E-commerce and traditional retail could have different customer bases, different suppliers and even different employees, but they both are under one company.

When asked about how they defined their company, e-commerce or traditional retailer, all participants responded with similar answers. For example, one executive from E-Bebek said that:

80% of our sales are intertwined. People sometimes shop from our website; they sometimes shop from the store, so both our e-commerce and physical stores are of equal importance.

One executive from Vivense said that:

We are not a retail store, but we do not place ourselves as an e-commerce site either.

Top executives from Supplementler.com and Evidea also said that they do not define themselves as either retailer or e-commerce websites. It is clear that companies do not want to choose either one of these institutions when defining themselves, but rather a combination of both. This led us to deduce that company is another dimension in the context of this study where we will analyze two mechanisms, brand and growth.

4.5.1 Brand

The brand is an important aspect influencing the success of a company. It is an important factor for the success of retailers because the brand image, brand awareness, and brand loyalty affect the shopping habits of customers (Esch, Langner, Schmitt, and Geus, 2006). While the shopping methods and habits of customers are changing, the brand image remains a key factor influencing customers' online shopping habits (Gommans, Krishnan, & Scheffold, 2001; Smith & Brynjolfsson, 2008), thus affecting the success of e-commerce companies. In that regard, opening physical stores becomes a method for e-commerce companies to increase their brand awareness among customers.

Trust is an important aspect when it comes to brand awareness and brand loyalty (Lau & Lee, 1999). Although internet usage and e-commerce penetration are increasing day-by-day, there is still a lack of trust. Some of it has to do with familiarity. As Luhmann (1979) suggests, familiarity is strongly correlated with trust. Since e-commerce is a relatively new concept compared to traditional brick-and-mortar retailing, it makes sense that there is a lack of familiarity with e-commerce among consumers. Brick-and-mortar stores act as a bridge between the brand and the customers creating a sense of familiarity and helping to build trust towards the brand of the company among customers. One top executive from E-Bebek said that building trust among consumers is the number one thing their stores brought to their company. Evidia is another company that mentioned the familiarity and trust factors stores brought to their brand. One top manager from Evidia said that:

Although e-commerce has a big market share in Turkey, having a physical store and putting your brand out there puts you somewhere else in the eyes of customers.

The introduction of the internet and the increase in internet access and usage all around the world change how companies raise brand awareness and brand loyalty among customers. Digital advertisements and online marketing campaigns become a major part of companies' marketing strategies. E-commerce companies have unique advantages when it comes to digital advertising. They are naturally online companies and they usually build their marketing strategies around digital advertising and new generation online marketing methods. They are the true children of the internet world, so it makes sense that they build their brand online. Besides digital advertising, e-commerce companies use more traditional advertising methods like billboards, TV, radio, or newspaper commercials as well. From an advertising standpoint, having a brick-and-mortar store is similar to having a permanent billboard or advertisement placed in a strategic point where a lot of customers pass by, like a crowded street or a shopping mall. Stores are a physical presence where the company brand can be advertised. It can be used as a source for

announcing new sale campaigns or new product launches. One top executive from E-Bebek explained how their stores are a source of advertisement for their brand as:

We see our stores as a permanent banner of our brand and our website spread to 124 different points in Turkey. We sold 10 million bags of product last year and those 10 million bags were carried around by our customers all over Turkey, advertising E-Bebek and E-Bebek.com.

Stores allow companies to get creative when it comes to advertising their brand. There is a trend among new generation retailers to host in-store events. With yoga classes or workshops, these new generation retailers get creative to build brand loyalty among their customers. For example, Everlane hosted an event about the future of retail where customers even get the chance to meet with the company CEO and ask questions about the company's decisions and strategies. E-commerce companies use their stores to connect with their customers on different levels to raise their brand awareness and loyalty.

Marketing and advertising are only a part of how companies raise their brand awareness and brand loyalty among customers. For an e-commerce company, the user interface of their website, their mobile applications, their choice of colors, shopping process, shipping process, product selection, and product quality are all part of their brands. They value customer experience (or as an online term user experience) over almost anything else because they think that is what their customers become attached to. In fact, in their research, Sahin, Zehir, and Kitapçı (2011) showed a strong positive correlation between user experience and brand loyalty. Stores are a way for companies to fill the void in a user experience they thought cannot be filled with online-only presence. They complete the lack of human-to-human interaction, lack of touch and feel of products. One executive from Vivense said that:

Stores are a part of user experience online. We opened our stores as a way to complete the missing piece in user experience.

Evidea is another company that opened its stores to complete the user experience. One top executive said that:

The main thing here is the fact that the two complement each other in the long term. In this way, we are trying to create a brand; this brand wants to create an online as well as an offline experience.

Companies try to maintain the consistency of user experience and brand image. Since they were online first companies, they built their brand image through their e-commerce website. They already had a logo, a website, a color palette they used on their website and advertisements when they opened their stores. They carried those properties over to their stores to have a consistent brand image. One top executive from Evidia explained their point of view:

Our idea was that we are actually a digital brand, but we wanted to give our customers a physical experience, so we designed this experience. With our colors, some kiosk experiences we made inside the stores, with the general design of the store, with the product catalog we have created inside, we have designed an Evidia experience for our customers.

Companies wanted to offer the same experience across their websites and all their stores, so they created a standard design for their stores in order to implement it in every store they had. For example, Vivense created a standard interior design and store opening process in order to standardize all their stores. E-Bebek initially built each store individually until 2012 which caused their stores to look different from one another. They standardized their interior design after 2012 and they now have 124 stores which have the same look and feel.

Stores also offer companies to build unique and creative experiences for their customers they cannot build with online-only presence. For example, Warby Parker, a US based company selling sunglasses, created an experience they called the green room where customers come in and make a video of themselves with special effects. At the same time, of course, customers can try a different selection of sunglasses Warby Parker offers. Such experiences companies created are important because they are not only a way to attract customers into stores but also a way to create brand awareness.

Some companies have a story to tell their customers about their brand. It could be a social responsibility work, environmental work, or an ethical part of their company. Stores can help companies spread those stories about their brand to their customers.

Everlane is a good example of this case. From the beginning of the company, they claimed that the essence of their company is ethics and transparency. They share the cost of every product they sell so that customers can calculate the markup. They also share the stories of their factories which they claimed are some of the cleanest in the world. The CEO of Everlane said that stores offer them an opportunity to tell those stories in real life, not just online (CBS This Morning, 2017). They tried to create an experience in their stores where customers actually listen to the sound of the product they want to buy. They recorded different processes of making their products in their factories; for example, they recorded 13 different sounds of making a t-shirt so that customers can actually listen to those sounds in the stores.

4.5.2 Growth

Every company wants to grow in terms of size, capital, revenue, and market share. E-commerce companies are not different as they look for ways to grow their company. Opening brick-and-mortar stores helps companies grow in terms of revenue, size, and capital since it adds another sales channel for them and allows them to reach more customers. It is especially true for countries like Turkey where e-commerce makes up for only 2 to 3 percent of the whole retail market. If successful, stores help companies grow in total, but companies could also cannibalize themselves as some existing customers prefer to shop from stores instead of their website. As we look into what these e-commerce companies experience, however, we can see that this was not the case most of the time as stores allow e-commerce side of the companies to grow as well.

E-Bebek was one of the first companies in the world that started out as an e-commerce firm that opened its stores. It started its operations in the early 2000s when the internet usage in Turkey was as low as 5.4 percent among all age groups, according to a report by the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey Strategy and Budget Office (2010). The founder of E-Bebek explained their experience of how stores help them grow their e-commerce business as well:

At that time, e-commerce would be used only on weekdays, and on weekends it would be entirely in stores. We have turned into a company that

works at the same speed for 7 days. We have achieved very good stock turnover, so we have a very nice structure that supports each other.

E-Bebek was a small e-commerce company when they opened their first store, so bad turnover rates were a problem at the time. They solved it by adding another sales channel. This is not the case for them now as they have 124 stores in Turkey and are the leading e-commerce website in mother and baby products category. However, according to their top executives, stores are not blocking the growth of their e-commerce business since online shopping penetration is increasing rapidly every year.

Supplementler.com opened its first store in 2015 when it was one of the leading e-commerce websites in Turkey in the category of supplementary athlete foods. Their idea of going into brick-and-mortar retail differs from most companies in the context of this study since they saw the potential to dominate the market not just online but offline as well as one of the leader companies in their sector decides to withdraw its operations and closed their stores in Turkey. After the company began opening physical stores, they expanded their operations and now they are the market leader both online and offline. Having physical stores allowed them to dominate the market not only offline but online as well as they were able to eliminate competition from small companies.

Retail as an institution help actors maintain e-commerce at the company level through the mechanisms of brand and growth. In terms of brand, brick-and-mortar retailing creates a sense of familiarity among customers who are accustomed to physical stores. It helps increase the trustworthiness of e-commerce companies in the eyes of these customers. Physical stores are also an organic advertisement source since their presence itself advertises the brand of the company. They also create multiple opportunities to get creative for companies to expand the user experience they offer through their e-commerce web or mobile application. Stores are a way for companies to offer their customers physical experiences which is impossible with an online-only presence. All in all, it helps increase the brand awareness and brand loyalty of the companies. Increased brand image in general has positive reflections on the e-commerce business of the companies.

Another mechanism that supports the institutional maintenance work at the company level is growth of the companies. Stores allow companies to add another sales channel. They help small e-commerce businesses to grow by having better inventory turnover rates or by allowing them to access to bigger inventories, and bigger markets. Since companies usually sell the same products through online and offline channels, better inventory turnover rates or bigger markets in general help e-commerce side of their businesses as well. Brick-and-mortar retailing also enables some companies to dominate the market as a whole and eliminate competition in both online and offline businesses.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, we answer the research question and discuss the results of this thesis. Our main goal is to expand the results of the analysis chapter and develop additional insights.

Retail as an institution help maintain e-commerce as an institution through enabling work

Enabling work is one of six forms of institutional work defined by Lawrence and Suddaby (2006). It refers to a set of rules which supports the maintenance of an institution. As Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) suggest it “may include the creation of authorizing agents or new roles needed to carry on institutional routines or diverting resources”. Bouty et al. (2013), for example, argued that when Michelin guide expanded its geographical region, they used their established set of rules to add new restaurants to their list. Heaphy (2013), on the other hand, showed how patient advocates used a set of rules to maintain an institution as an example of enabling work. She showed that a new role was created in order to help maintain the institution as Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) argued. When companies decided to open brick-and-mortar stores, they used some of their standard business processes. For example, they usually used the same warehouses to distribute goods that were sold via online or offline business. Most firms continued with their existing suppliers. This backs what Bouty et al. (2013) argued in their research. Opening stores also created new roles within the company in which companies opted to fill with new hires or role shifts within the company. This finding is also in line with what Heaphy (2013) showed in her study.

This study backs the initial thoughts of Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) regarding enabling work as a form of institutional maintenance work. It also supports the findings of other scholars like Bouty et al. (2013), Heaphy (2013), and Turnbull and

Wass (2015). It also expands the scope of enabling work since it shows that in order to use another institution in retail, actors needed to create new rules, use existing business processes, open new positions within the company, make their employees shift position, hire new employees, use existing resources for other purposes simultaneously. All of these were necessary steps to open then operate brick-and-mortar stores successfully. It shows that enabling work may include not just one of those steps but all of them.

Creation of institutions and maintaining institutions go hand-in-hand in the process

Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) initially divided institutional work into three logical categories: work to create, maintain, and disrupt institutions. Although the work of many scholars supported that there are indeed three types of institutional work along with subcategories under those three types, other scholars argued that the work to create and maintain an institution is often similar and hard to distinguish from one another. These scholars argued that the work to create and maintain institutions can coexist and be intertwined. For example, in their study, Currie et al. (2012) found that “theorizing”, “defining”, “educating”, “policing”, and “constructing normative networks” can also be types of institutional maintenance work instead of institutional creation work as Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) initially argued. In their research focusing on the NCAA from its founding days to its more established days, Nite et al. (2016) found that institutional creation and maintenance work are continuous processes and can coexist. Koskela-Huotari et al. (2016) argued that institutional maintenance work could enable the creation of an institution in some cases.

Using another institution to maintain an institution is a complex process and often requires actors to do the types of work Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) initially categorized under the institutional creation work. As e-commerce companies opened their stores, they were inspired by some of the practices or rules that are common in traditional retail. They adopted these rules or practices into their e-commerce businesses. For example, Vivense added a feature on their website which allows customers to order different kinds of fabric for the furniture, which is a

common practice in traditional furniture retail stores. Since stores could offer different products, many e-commerce companies added new products to their product range on their website as well. These works companies did were similar to “mimicry” which Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) described as “leveraging existing sets of taken-for-granted practices, technologies, and rules...” and categorized under creation work. By opening stores, e-commerce companies were also “constructing identities” by assigning new tasks to their employees, creating new departments, and assigning employees to these new departments in the stores. Companies were also “changing normative associations” tied to their brand by opening retail stores. They are changing the company image and brand in the eyes of their customers, suppliers, and employees from an online-only company to an omnichannel one that sells goods online and offline by opening brick-and-mortar stores.

This study supports the findings by scholars like Currie et al. (2012), Nite et al. (2016), and Koskela-Huotari et al. (2016) showing that institutional maintenance work and institutional creation work can be intertwined and coexist in some cases. It also adds to the work of those scholars by showing “mimicry”, “constructing identities”, and “changing normative associations”, which are types of institutional creation work but can also be used to maintain institutions.

Institutional maintenance work can cause the disruption of the institution to some degree

As we showed earlier, this study supports the works of other scholars such as Currie et al. (2012), Nite et al. (2016), and Koskela-Huotari et al. (2016) in terms of how the work to maintain and create institutions can coexist. It shows that the line separating different types of institutional work is sometimes blurred. Although there are some studies showing the coexistence of creation and maintenance work, there are not many studies focusing on the relationship between maintenance and disruption work. It seems unlikely that institutional maintenance work leads to disruption and vice versa. However, as this study shows, the work to maintain institutions done by actors could lead to some disruption to the same institution they aimed to maintain.

The disruption came in the form of cannibalization as opening stores drew some customers away from e-commerce to the stores. Stores offer familiarity and convenience for some internet shoppers; therefore, companies initially saw some drop off in the number of online customers from the areas where they opened their stores. Although they made up for their customer loss with the time, their initial efforts in certain areas became a force of disruption to their e-commerce business.

Although institutional maintenance work usually is taken for granted, this study shows how it could be a complex process. The actors' efforts could go to the exact opposite direction and disrupt the institution. This finding not only supports the findings of other scholars by showing the coexistence between different types of institutional work but also expands the findings by unveiling the relationship between institutional maintenance and disruption work.

An older and more established institution can help maintain a relatively new institution although the new one is regarded as a replacement to the old one

Brick-and-mortar retailing can be traced back to the first cities humans ever built when people stopped being hunter-gatherers and specialized in different areas which allowed them to exchange goods or services. Modern retailing as we know it today has roots dating back to the 1930s (Feinberg and Meoli, 1991), when first malls were opened in the USA. E-commerce, on the other hand, is a concept made possible by the invention of the World Wide Web in 1991. It became more popular in the early 2000s when more people around the world started to access the internet. Therefore, it is fair to say that retailing is an older and more established institution compared to e-commerce. In fact, with the ever-increasing popularity of internet shopping, whether e-commerce would become a replacement for shopping stores became a question scholars and industry experts tried to answer (Lin, 2003). Although e-commerce definitely affected how people purchase goods and services, it is currently an alternative for traditional retailing, not a replacement.

Our literature review revealed that researchers did not focus on using an older institution as a way to maintain a newer institution. The study of Grafström &

Windell (2012) came closest as it showed the relationship between two institutions, one older and one newer, the latter looking like the former's replacement. However, it showed that actors could use the established rules of an older institution to eliminate threats of the newer one and maintain it.

In this study, we searched for answers to how e-commerce companies used stores as a mechanism to maintain their e-commerce business. The study shows that using an older and more established institution to maintain a relatively new one is indeed possible. It adds a new perspective to the institutional maintenance work studies. It could potentially open a pathway for other scholars to explore and derive more studies.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study is to show how e-commerce as an institution can be maintained by actors using brick-and-mortar retailing as another institution. The intentional work done by these companies refers to institutional maintenance work. Institutional work is a relatively new area of study in the organizational research area, and institutional maintenance work is the least studied among the three types of institutional work, others being creation and disruption.

This area of research offers many gaps for scholars to fill. Although some scholars found coexistence between different types of institutional work, mainly between creation and maintenance work, the literature still has some gaps as not all types of institutional creation work were associated with the maintenance work. Also, there is limited mention of the coexistence between maintenance and disruption work in the institutional maintenance work literature. Using retailing to maintain e-commerce is an interesting topic since it offers an insight into how an institution can be used to maintain another which is seen as an alternative to it. This study aims to focus on these gaps and fill them to some degree.

In order to enlighten the underlying mechanisms of the institutional maintenance work, we focused on four firms, all of which have retail stores despite starting their life as an e-commerce only company in Turkey. We interviewed top managers who are either the decision makers responsible for opening physical retail stores or managing the aftermath of opening stores. Besides these interviews, we collected interviews of top managers from companies outside of Turkey that fit our criteria from different media outlets. We followed a qualitative research design to analyze the collected data. Our analysis led to insights regarding how retail could support e-commerce.

The analysis showed that retail stores help support e-commerce businesses of the companies in question in four levels. The first level we found is the customer. The customer is the number one priority for most firms, e-commerce and retail alike. This study shows that retail stores could help support e-commerce business at the customer level through concretization and personalization mechanisms. Companies were able to bring offline experiences like human interaction or touch and feel with the help of retail stores which was a familiar experience for most customers. It helped customers to get familiar with the product e-commerce companies sold, thus led customers to shop online more comfortably. Retail stores also enabled companies to personalize the shopping experience for each customer and even educate their customers about their products or shopping online.

The second level is the employees. Employees are essential parts of any company's success. This is especially true in the case of institutional work done by the companies since it is the work of actors which in this case, the employees of these companies. Traditional retailing created new tasks for employees and increased the involvement of employees both in critical decision making and daily jobs. It helped to support e-commerce at the employee level with these two key mechanisms.

The third level is the suppliers. For any company that produces or sells goods, suppliers and the relationship with the suppliers are important aspects of the success of the company and sustainability of this success. Traditional retailing could help strengthen the relationship between e-commerce companies and their suppliers through the concretization mechanism as well as help to widen their product range as it could provide additional opportunities to sell different products.

The fourth and last level is the company. All the companies we analyzed started their lives as an e-commerce only company before they opened their first retail stores. By going into the brick-and-mortar business, companies transformed themselves into omnichannel firms that are selling goods from different channels. When asked about this change in the company, the number one thing interviewees mentioned was the brand of the company. The brand was one of the major rationales of the decision-makers behind the decision of going into the retail

business. It was also one of the major positive influences of the retail stores on the company mentioned by interviewees. Retail stores created new ways for companies to advertise themselves and also created opportunities for them to try new methods to increase user reach and user experience. Stores helped companies increase their brand awareness and brand loyalty which in turn positively affected their e-commerce business as well. Retail stores also helped companies to grow organically simply by allowing them to reach more customers. With the additional growth supplied by retail stores, e-commerce companies became stronger in terms of economic stability and market reach. It allowed them to dominate the market, eliminate competition, or simply draw more customers to their e-commerce business.

After analyzing the findings, we conclude that this study makes four major contributions to the growing institutional maintenance work literature. Firstly, this study supports the initial work of Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) as it shows that actors do intentional work to maintain established institutions. By using retail stores and traditional retailing, companies helped support their e-commerce businesses by enabling work which is a type of institutional maintenance work defined by Lawrence and Suddaby (2006). It backs other scholars like Bouty et al. (2013), Heaphy (2013), and Turnbull & Wass (2015) arguing that enabling work is a type of institutional maintenance work.

Secondly, this study adds to work of the scholars like Currie et al. (2012), Nite et al. (2016), and Koskela-Huotari et al. (2016) arguing that there is a relationship between different types of institutional work, mainly creation and maintenance work. This is the first study that shows “mimicry”, “constructing identities”, and “changing normative associations” all of which are types of institutional creation work as first identified by Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) can be used as maintenance work.

Thirdly, the study shows the coexistence of institutional maintenance and disruption work. It shows the complexity of institutional maintenance work and unintentional consequences of the work of actors trying to maintain an institution.

Fourthly and lastly, this study argues that an older and more established institution like retailing can be used by actors to maintain a newer institution like e-commerce even though at first glance the latter is an alternative for or even a replacement of the former. It shows that institutional maintenance work can be done in many forms and actors can use other institution to their advantage.

Besides these contributions to the institutional maintenance work literature, this study is also significant because it is one of the initial studies that focus on the new trend which is e-commerce companies' going into the retail business. It shows both the reasoning behind this decision and the outcomes of that decision with regards to e-commerce business and the company itself by analyzing inside information coming directly from top managers of some of the early adopters of this new trend.

This study offers two directions in terms of future research. First, researchers could follow a similar approach focusing on the maintenance of a newer institution using an older and more established institution. Researchers could choose a similar situation happening in another industry or topic. Another direction that researchers could follow is to increase the scale of this study. The trend in this study is a relatively new one. With bigger e-commerce companies like Amazon and Alibaba leading the way, it is easy to suggest that many more companies would follow. Researchers could use a similar approach to this topic with more companies bigger in size and impact on the industry. It could be beneficial for future researchers to apply this study with data set collected from the USA market since it has the largest number of e-commerce companies following this trend and also some of the biggest e-commerce companies in the world are based in the USA.

The future research directions revealed some limitations of this study. Although similar research could generate similar results, and other relevant data is collected from other sources, the main findings are the result of the analysis of interviews with the top officials of the e-commerce firms located and operated in Turkey. It is also clear that the e-commerce industry is relatively new in Turkey compared to other countries like the USA or Canada. It limits us to select only four firms since it is much harder to find e-commerce companies fitting the defined criteria. It is also

fair to say that the selected firms are small firms in terms of size, revenue, and market share when it is compared to the whole retail industry in Turkey.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Could you tell us about yourself and your position in the company
2. As an e-commerce company, how did you decide to engage in physical retailing?
3. Are you aiming to take part in the retailing sector or to establish a structure that supports e-commerce?
4. What did you do during the store opening phase?
5. Did you use your existing business processes, or did you develop new ones?
6. Did you experience any resistance by employees?
7. Have there been internal shifts in the company?
8. Have you received external consultancy or new employment?
9. What were the reflections of the transition to retailing on your company culture as an e-commerce company?
10. Did it lead to changes in your company's established structures?
11. What were the reflections of retailing on the e-commerce side?
12. Is your company's number one source of revenue e-commerce or retail?
13. Would you now describe your company as an e-commerce company or a retail company?

APPENDIX B: UEAM APPROVAL

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
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05 NİSAN 2018

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Çağrı TOPAL

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız yüksek lisans öğrencisi Bahtiyer Onur GEYİK'in "**Institutional Maintenance: How E-Commerce firms maintain their position by opening traditional brick-and-mortar stores**" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay **2018-SOS-036** protokol numarası ile **05.04.2018 - 30.12.2018** tarihleri arasında geçerli olmak üzere verilmiştir.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

Prof. Dr. Ayhan SOL
Üye

Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil TURAN
Başkan V

Prof. Dr. Ayhan Gürbüz DEMİR
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APPENDIX C: TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Perakendecilik, insanlık tarihinin en eski kavramlarından biridir. Herhangi bir mal veya hizmet alışverişi, perakende satış faaliyeti sayılabilir. İnsanlar arasında ticaretin başlamasından 1930'larda açılmaya başlanan ABD'deki ilk alışveriş merkezlerine (Feinberg ve Meoli, 1991), perakende, insanlar arasındaki ilkel bir etkileşim türünden küresel baskın bir sektöre doğru gelişti. Bir endüstri olarak perakende, yeni pazarlama tekniklerinin geliştirilmesinden TV'nin kitlelere tanıtımına kadar geçen yıllar içinde bazı önemli değişiklikler gördü (Hagel III, Brown, Samoylova, Lobaugh ve Goel, 2015). Perakendecilik endüstrisi tarihindeki en etkili olaylardan biri ise internetin icadıdır.

İnternetin gelişmesi ve tüm dünyada internet kullanımının artması ile birlikte, diğer birçok sektör gibi perakende sektörü de bazı ciddi değişiklikler gördü. E-ticaret şirketleri ortaya çıktı ve geleneksel perakende mağazaları için gerçek bir tehdit haline geldi. Örneğin, piyasa değeri açısından Amazon, dünyanın gelir bakımından en büyük perakende şirketi olan WalMart'ı geçmeyi başardı (Pettypiece, 2015). Başarılı perakende şirketleri, trendi yakalamak ve geliştirmekte olan bu e-ticaret endüstrisinden pay almak için e-ticaret sitelerini açmaya başladı. Örgütsel çalışmalar, e-ticaretin perakende sektörü üzerindeki etkisine ve internetin genel olarak başarılı perakende şirketleri tarafından benimsenmesine odaklanmıştır.

Son birkaç yılda bu eğilim tersine döndü. Başarılı e-ticaret şirketleri kendi fiziksel mağazalarını açmaya başladılar. Perakende mağazaları açan e-ticaret şirketlerinin sayısı son zamanlarda bir artış içerisindedir. Bu olay bir sürpriz olarak kabul edilebilir çünkü perakende sektöründeki geleneksel yaklaşım, e-ticaretin perakende şirketleri tarafından benimsenmesidir. Ancak dijital olarak doğan şirketler bu yaklaşımı tersine çevirerek kendi fiziksel mağazalarını açmaya başladılar. Amazon, Warby Parker, Nasty Gal, Everlane, Bonobos ve Birchbox mağazalarını açan ilk şirketler arasındadır (Shearman, 2016) ve bunlar sadece ABD'deki firmalardır. Türkiye gibi gelişmekte olan ülkelerde bile dijital olarak doğan işletmeler

perakende mağazalarını açmaya başladılar. Bu bize gösteriyor ki, bu eğilim hem gelişmiş hem de gelişmekte olan ülkelerde takip edilmektedir.

Bu eğilim, örgütsel araştırmacıların incelemesi için önemli bir umut vaadediyor. Fiziksel mağazacılığa giriş, bu e-ticaret şirketlerinin sürdürülebilirliğini olumlu yönde etkiliyor. Bu şirketler ve şirketlerin karar mercileri, konumlarını korumak için bazı çalışmalar yapıyorlar. Şirketlerin karar vericilerinin bu eylemleri, özellikle kurumsal çalışma alanında, umut verici bir çalışma alanı sunmaktadır (Lawrence ve Suddaby, 2006). Kurumsal çalışma, örgütsel çalışmalar arasında nispeten yeni bir konudur. Örgütsel çalışmalar içerisinde, bir kurumun ne olduğuna dair sayısız tanım vardır. Çoğu akademisyen, kurumları insanların sosyal yaşamlarına yardımcı olacak bir araç olarak görüyor. Örneğin Scott (2001), kurumları “sosyal hayata istikrar ve anlam kazandıran kültürlü-bilişsel, normatif ve düzenleyici unsurlar” olarak tanımlar. Hodgson (2006) kurumları “sosyal etkileşimleri yapılandıran yerleşik ve yaygın sosyal kurallar sistemleri” olarak tanımlamaktadır. Bu tanımdan, hukuk, evlilik veya aileden, kuruluşlara kadar olarak çeşitli farklı kavramlar ve terimler bir kurum tanımlanabilir. Ancak, bu çalışma kapsamında Jepperson’un (1991) kurum tanımını kullanıyoruz. Jepperson (1991) bir kurumu “standartlaştırılmış etkileşim dizileri ile” “organize, yerleşik bir prosedür” olarak tanımlamaktadır. Dunne, Lusch ve Carver'a (2014) göre, perakende satış “tüketiciye malları veya hizmetleri yerleştirmek için gereken nihai faaliyetlerden ve adımlardan” oluşmaktadır. Geleneksel perakendecilikte, tüketicilere mal veya hizmet ulaştırabilmek için fiziksel bir mağaza veya ofis kullanılır ve bu alışveriş genellikle insanlar arası bir etkileşim içerir. Fiziksel mağazalar, müşterilerin ürünü satın almadan önce görmesini ve denemesini sağlar. İnternet üzerinden mal veya hizmet satma işlemi olan e-ticaret veya çevrimiçi perakendecilik için ise durum böyle değildir (Laudon & Traver, 2016). E-ticaret, genellikle müşterinin alışveriş yapabilmesinin için daha hızlı ve daha kolay yoludur. Geleneksel perakendecilik müşterilere daha fazla deneyimleme imkanı sunar ve bir kurum olarak temelini bundan alır. E-ticaret ise müşterilere hız ve kolaylık sunuyor ve bir kurum olarak temelini hız ve kolaylık üzerine kurmuştur. E-ticaret ve geleneksel perakendecilik, bu temel farklılıkları sebebiyle farklı kurumlar olarak kabul edilir.

Lawrence ve Suddaby (2006, s.215) kurumsal çalışmayı “kurumları yaratma, sürdürme ve bozma amaçlı bireylerin ve kuruluşların amaçlı eylemi” olarak tanımlamaktadır. Kurumsal çalışma tamamen yeni bir kavram olmasa da, daha önce kurumsal çalışma tanımına giren kurumsal çalışmalar kapsamında kategorize edilmiş farklı fikir ve çalışmaları beraberinde getirmiştir.

Literatür araştırması, bize bazı önemli araştırma boşluklarını vurgulamaktadır. Bu boşlukların bir kısmı, kurumların sürdürülmesi çalışmalarının, araştırmacılar tarafından en az işlenen konu olmasından ileri gelmektedir.

Kurumların sürdürülmesi çalışmaları hala en az kapsanan kurumsal çalışma türü olmasına rağmen, bu incelemenin önerdiği gibi kurumların sürdürülmesi çalışmalarına artan bir ilgi vardır. Lawrence ve Suddaby (2006) kurumların sürdürülmesi çalışmaları fikrini ortaya atıp, bu fikri teorikleştirdikten sonra, bu konu üzerine birçok araştırmacı yeni çalışmalar ortaya çıkarmışlardır. Turnbull ve Wass (2015) gibi bazı akademisyenler, en temel kurumların bile sürdürülmeleri için belirli çalışmalara ihtiyaç duyduklarını gösterdi. Raviola ve Norbäck (2013) gibi diğerleri, kurumların yıkıcı bir dış güç tehdidi altında sürdürülmelerini konu alan çalışmalarda bulundu. Bazı akademisyenler, kurumların sürdürülmesi çalışmalarının çelişkili doğasını vurgularken (Koskela-Huotari, Edvardsson, Jonas, Sörhammar & Witell, 2016), Dacin, Munir, ve Tracey (2010) ritüel gibi küçük şeylerin bile kurumun sürdürülmesine yardımcı olabileceğini göstermiştir.

Birçok araştırmacı, kurumsal yapıların sürdürülmesi çalışmalarına Lawrence ve Suddaby (2006) tarafından kategorize edilen diğer kurumsal çalışma türlerinden ayrı ve bağımsız olarak odaklanmıştır. Her ne kadar bazı araştırmacılar (Currie, Lockett, Finn, Martin & Waring, 2012), farklı türlerde kurumsal çalışmaların dolaştığını ve hatta bir arada bulunduğunu, bu konuda daha fazla araştırmaya hala ihtiyaç duyulduğunu göstermiştir.

Bu bilgiler ve araştırma boşlukları doğrultusunda, araştırma sorumuzu şu şekilde türettik:

Bir kurum, e-ticaret, başka bir kurum, perakende, kullanılarak nasıl sürdürülür, ve bu kurumsal sürdürme çalışmasının altında yatan mekanizmalar nelerdir?

Bu tezde bir nitel araştırma tasarımı kullanılmıştır. Bu tasarım, bu tezin odağı olan kurumsal yapıların sürdürülmesine uygun olduğu için seçilmiştir. Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, bir kurumun başka bir kurumla nasıl sürdürülebileceğini ve bu kurumsal sürdürme çalışmasının temel mekanizmalarını gibi anlamaktır. Lawrence ve Suddaby'e (2006) göre, kurumsal çalışma “kurumların oluşturulması, sürdürülmesi ve aksatılması” için aktörlerin “bilinçli eylemleri” dir. Bireylerin ve / veya kuruluşların bu eylemlerinin ve bu eylemlerin gerekçesinin kurumsal sürdürme çalışmasını gerçekten anlamak için incelenmesi gerekir. Denzin ve Lincoln'ün (2008) belirttiği gibi, nitel bir araştırma tasarımı, oyuncuların gerçek dünyadaki davranışlarını ampirik materyallerin yardımıyla anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu açıdan nitel bir araştırma tasarımı bu çalışmanın amacına uyum sağlar. Nitel bir araştırma tasarımı aynı zamanda kurumların sürdürülmesi çalışmalarının altında yatan mekanizmaların anlaşılmasına da yardımcı olur. Mekanizmaları tanımlamak için, oyuncuların eylemlerinin örgütlenmesi ve yapılandırılması gereklidir ve bunu nitel verilerin yardımı olmadan yapmak oldukça zordur.

Araştırma sorusunu tanımladıktan ve araştırma tasarımını seçtikten sonra, verileri toplamaya çalıştık ve bu bağlamda, perakende sektörünü ana araştırma alanımız olarak seçtik. Araştırma sorumuza cevap bulabilmek adına, perakende sektörünü gerekli verileri toplamak için daraltmak durumunda kaldık.

Hedeflerimize uygun, analiz edebileceğimiz firmaları seçmek için aşağıdaki kriterleri belirledik:

- 1) E-ticaret firmaları: Şirket, hayatına yalnızca bir e-ticaret firması olarak başlamış olmalı.
- 2) Türkiye'deki firmalar: Araştırmacı Türkiye'de yaşadığından, Türkiye içerisindeki firmalar tercih edilmiştir.

3) Fiziksel mağaza açan firmalar: Bir kurum olarak perakendenin e-ticareti sürdürmeye nasıl yardımcı olduğunu göstermeyi hedeflediğimizden, firma seçerkenki en önemli kriter budur.

4) Oturmuş firmalar: Oturmuş bir firmayı en az 5 yıl çalışan ve en az bir işletme fiziki mağazasına sahip bir firma olarak tanımladık. Faaliyetlerine Gittigidiyor.com, n11.com veya Hepsiburada.com gibi çevrimiçi bir pazarda başlamış veya Instagram ya da Facebook gibi sosyal medya üzerinden faaliyet gösteren şirketleri kritere dahil etmedik.

Belirlenen kriterlere uyan 4 firma belirlenmiştir. Bu firmalar, Evidea, Vivense, E-Bebek ve Supplementler.com'dur. Bu çalışmada kullanılan ana veriler belirlenen şirketlerin yetkilileri ile yapılan görüşmelerden gelmektedir. Mayıs 2018 ile Aralık 2018 arasında katılımcılarla temasa geçilmiş ve Eylül 2018 ile Aralık 2018 arasında toplam 10 görüşme yapılarak veriler toplanmıştır.

Veri analizi sürecinde, “grounded” teori yaklaşımlarına dayanan yöntemler kullandık (Glaser, 1978; Glaser ve Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss ve Corbin, 1990). İlk olarak, elde ettiğimiz verileri inceleyerek kategoriler oluşturduk. Bir sonraki adım kilit meseleleri geliştirmektir. Birden fazla kategoriyi içerisine alan kilit meseleleri tespit ettikten sonra, araştırma hedefimizle ilgili sorunları belirlemek için bu meseleler analiz edilmiştir. Tüm analiz sürecinin ana odağı, geleneksel perakendenin e-ticareti sürdürmek için bir araç olup olmadığını ve bu durumda, hangi mekanizmaların kurumların sürdürülmesini desteklediğini anlamaktır.

Bu çalışma belirli sınırlamalara sahiptir. İlk sınırlamalardan birisi, kriterlere uyan şirket bulmaktaki zorluktur. Bu zorluğa neden olarak, e-ticaretin Türkiye'deki tüm perakende satışların yalnızca yüzde 3'ünden oluşması ve bu nedenle yalnızca e-ticaretin çok fazla şirketi olmamasını gösterebiliriz. Bir diğer neden ise, fiziksel mağazacılığın e-ticaret şirketleri arasında nispeten yeni bir trend olmasıdır. Bunlar, araştırmaya başlamadan önce beklenen sınırlamalardır. Beklenmeyen bir diğer sınırlama, mağazacılığa giriş ile ilgili yeteri kadar bilgisi olan yöneticileri bulmakta yaşanan zorluktur. Kriterlerimize uyan firmaların çoğu, mağazalarını açmaya karar

verdiklerinde girişim şirketi ya da bir diğer deyişle startup firma konumundalardı. Bir girişimin geleceğine karar vermede rol oynayan sınırlı sayıda insan bulunması, çalışma için görüşme yapabileceğimiz insan sayısını oldukça sınırladı. Ayrıca, bu çalışma yalnızca şirketi genel olarak temsil eden ve mağaza açma sürecinin bir parçası olan karar vericilerin çalışmalarına odaklanmıştır. Temel veri kaynağımız, süreç hakkında en fazla bilgiye sahip olabilecek bu karar vericilerle yapılan görüşmelerden gelmektedir. Söz konusu şirketler, çok fazla müşteri ve tedarikçiye sahip şirketlerdir. Müşteri ve tedarikçilerle yapılabilecek görüşmeler verilerimizi zenginleştirebilecek olsa da, bu görüşmeleri gerçekleştirmek, araştırmacının zamansal ve parasal kaynaklarının ötesinde bir durumdu. Ayrıca, Türkiye'deki tüm e-ticaret şirketlerini çatısı altında toplayan hiçbir örgüt veya dernek yoktur, dolayısıyla böyle bir kuruluş veya dernek ile de görüşmemiz mümkün olmamıştır. Dolayısıyla, analiz, seçilen firmalardaki karar vericilerin kurumsal çalışmaları ile sınırlıdır.

Veri analizi sonucunda, perakendeciliğin, e-ticareti dört seviyede desteklediğini tespit ettik. Bunlar; müşteri, çalışan, tedarikçi ve şirkettir. Tespit ettiğimiz ilk seviye müşteridir. Müşteri, hem e-ticaretteki ve geleneksel perakendecilikteki şirketlerin başarısını etkileyen en önemli faktördür. Herhangi bir şirketin yapması gereken ilk şey müşteriye ulaşmaktır. E-ticaret şirketleri için, müşteriye ulaşmak çoğu zaman yeterli değildir, çünkü müşteri sayısı geleneksel perakendeye göre çok daha düşüktür. Türkiye Bilişim Sanayicileri Derneği ("Türkiye'de E-Ticaret 2018 Pazar Büyüklüğü", 2019) tarafından yayınlanan bir rapora göre, Türkiye'de tüm perakende satışların sadece yüzde 3'ü e-ticaretten geliyor. Bu rakamlar, e-ticaret şirketlerinin geleneksel perakendeciliğe girmesinin nedenlerinden birini gösteriyor. E-ticaret şirketlerinin mücadelesini gösteren bir başka istatistik de e-ticaret penetrasyon oranlarıdır. Bu istatistikler, en az bir kez çevrimiçi alışveriş yapan aktif müşterilerin yüzdesini gösterir. Bu oran 2018'de yüzde 50'nin altındadır. Bu, e-ticaret şirketlerinin ulaşamadığı çok sayıda müşterinin olduğunu bir göstergesidir. Müşteri seviyesindeki ilk destekleyici mekanizma somutlaştırmadır. Müşteriler, mağazaların somutlaştırma faktörü ile satın almak istedikleri ürünleri hissedebilir, dokunabilir ve deneyebilirler. Ayrıca, mağazalar, müşterilerde bir aşinalık duygusu

yaratırlar. Müşteriler ürün veya şirkete genel olarak aşına olduklarında, e-ticaret, mağazalarla aynı ürünleri ve aynı zamanda mağazalardan daha geniş bir ürün yelpazesini müşterilere sunabildiğinden, çevrimiçi alışveriş yapabilirler. Ancak somutlaştırma bir e-ticaret üzerinde istenmeye yıkıcı bir etkiye de sahip olabilir. Mağazalar, buldukları bölgelerde, e-ticaret müşterilerinin bir kısmını kendine çekerek, şirketlerin e-ticaret tarafına zarar verebilirler. Kişiselleştirme, müşteri seviyesindeki ikinci mekanizmadır. Kişiselleştirme, şirketlerin müşterileriyle bağ kurmasına yardımcı olur. Alışveriş deneyimini her bir müşteri için kişiselleştirebilmek, her e-ticaret şirketinin başarmaya çalıştığı bir şey. E-ticaret şirketleri, internet uygulamalarının kullanıcı deneyimi açısından eksik olduğunu düşündükleri yönleri kapatabilmek adına farklı yöntemler denemektedirler. Bu bağlamda, fiziksel bir mağazaya sahip olmak da, şirketlerin, müşterilerinin deneyimlerini kişiselleştirebilecekleri başka bir araca sahip olmak demektir. Mağazalar, organizasyon üyelerinin, çalışanlarının veya yöneticilerinin, müşterilerle ilişki kurarak kurumsal işlere girmelerine olanak sağlar. Şirketler, mağazalarını, müşterilerini, hem sattıkları ürünler, hem de teknoloji ve çevrimiçi alışveriş konusunda eğitmek için kullanıyorlar. Bu mağazalar aynı zamanda çevrimiçi alışveriş yapmaya olanak sağlayan kiosk benzeri uygulamalara sahip olduğundan, için müşteriler bu kurumsal çalışmada ortak konumundadırlar.

Tespit ettiğimiz ikinci seviye çalışan seviyesidir. Bu çalışma kapsamında çalışanlar, birçok nedenden dolayı odağımızın büyük bir bölümünü oluşturuyor. Fiziksel perakendeciliğine girmek, bu tez kapsamında bulunan şirketler için büyük veya küçük bir tür örgütsel değişim gerektirir. Yeni çalışanlar işe almak ya da eski çalışanları kovmak, mevcut çalışanların pozisyonunu kaydırmak, dış danışmanlık yapmak veya dış kaynak kullanmak gibi, mağaza açmak için gereken eylemlerin birçoğu firma çalışanlarını kapsamaktadır. Örgütsel değişim hakkında çok fazla ayrıntıya girmeden, bir mağazanın açılışının, şirketin e-ticaret tarafında çalışanlara etkisi üzerine odaklanmayı hedefledik. Bu bağlamda, perakendecilik, e-ticareti, çalışan seviyesinde ilk olarak yeni görevler yaratarak desteklemektedir. Fiziksel mağazacılığa giriş ile birlikte, şirket içerisindeki mevcut pozisyonlar için yeni sorumluluklar da doğmuştur. Bu yeni görev ve sorumlulukların bir kısmı çalışanlar

tarafından hoş karşılanmasa da, bu ilave görev, yetki ve sorumluluklar, çalışanların yeni beceriler geliştirmelerine ve çalışanlar olarak büyümelerine yardımcı olmuştur. Yeni görevler ve yeni roller ayrıca mevcut çalışanların izleyebileceği yeni kariyer yolları anlamına da gelir. Mağazalar, firmaların, şirket içinden yetki ve sorumluluk kaydırmaları ile dolduramadığı ve yeni çalışanlarla işe almalarını gerektiren yeni pozisyonlar da yarattı. Şirketler, zaman zaman bu yeni işgücünü e-ticaret ile ilgili pozisyonlarda da kullanarak, şirketlerinin e-ticaret tarafında da bu işgücünden katkı aldılar. Çalışan seviyesindeki ikinci mekanizma katılımdır. Mağaza açılış süreci, şirketler için özel bir durum ortaya çıkarmıştır. Organizasyonel bir değişimden geçen ve önemli bir stratejik kararı uygulamaya sokan bu şirketler, çalışanlarını da mağaza açma sürecine dahil ettiler. Bir e-ticaret firmasından, çoklu satış kanalı olan bir şirkete dönüşüm sürecine dahil olan çalışanlar, mağaza açılışının hem fikir hem de uygulama kısmında yer alarak, mevkileri ve sorumlulukları düşük olsa dahi şirketin geleceğinde önemli yer tutabilecek bu süreçte katılmış, bu sayede şirkete olan bağlılıklarını da artırmışlardır. Fiziksel bir mağazaya sahip olmak aynı zamanda, sadece çevrimiçi çalışan ve müşterilerini yalnızca dijital bir perspektiften gören çalışanların fiziksel dünyaya adım atmalarına olanak sağlamış, çalışanlara, müşteri alışkanlıklarını daha yakından inceleme ve müşterilerle birebir iletişim kurma fırsatını doğurmuştur. Mağazalar, çalışanlara hem şirket kararlarında ve uygulamalarında doğrudan yer alabilme hem de müşterilerle ikili ilişki kurma fırsatı sağlamış, bu sayede çalışan memnuniyetini artırmış ve e-ticaret şirketlerinin kilit çalışanlarını elinde tutmasına da olanak sunmuştur.

Fiziksel perakendeciliğin, e-ticareti desteklediği üçüncü seviye tedarikçidir. Somutlaşma mekanizması sadece müşteri seviyesinde değil, tedarikçi seviyesinde de rol oynamaktadır. Çoğu alıcı-tedarikçi ilişkileri için, güven, sağlıklı bir ilişki için kilit bir faktördür (Koh, Fichman ve Kraut, 2009). E-ticaretin geleneksel perakendeciliğe kıyasla nispeten yeni bir kavram olduğu ve çoğu e-ticaret şirketinin nispeten yeni şirketler olduğu düşünülürse, birçok tedarikçinin e-ticaret şirketlerini bilmemesi veya güvenmemesi anlaşılabilir bir durumdur. Fiziksel bir mağazaya sahip olmak, e-ticaret firmalarının tedarikçilerin gözünde somutlaşmasına yardımcı olur. Çoğu tedarikçi geleneksel perakendecilerle çalışmaya alışkın olduğundan,

mağazalar bu tedarikçiler için bir aşinalık yaratır. Güven, başarılı bir alıcı-tedarikçi ilişkisinin bir parçası iken, başarılı iletişim ve geribildirim başka bir faktördür (Prahinski ve Benton, 2004). Fiziksel mağazacılığa girerek bir e-ticaret şirketinin somutlaştırılması, bu şirketin müşterileriyle daha kişisel bir düzeyde iletişim kurmasına da yardımcı olur. Mağazalar, şirketlerin müşterilerinden doğrudan geri bildirim almalarına olanak sağlar. Müşterilerden gelen bu geri bildirimler sadece mağazalar, firmalar veya satın alma süreçleriyle ilgili değildir. Çoğu zaman, müşteri geribildirimleri ürünlerle ilgilidir. Bu müşteri geribildirimleri genellikle ürünlerle ilgili olduğundan, şirketler müşterilerinin ne istediğini daha doğru analiz edebilirler. Şirketler, artık müşterilerinin onlardan tam olarak ne istediklerini analiz edebildiklerinden, tedarikçilerle daha başarılı iletişim kurmak için bu yeni bilgileri kullanabiliyor ve doğru ürünleri tedarik edebiliyorlar. Tedarikçi seviyesindeki ikinci mekanizma ürün yelpazesidir. Ürün yelpazesi, bir e-ticaret şirketinin başarısını etkileyen önemli bir faktördür. Mağazalar, bazı şirketlerin sattığı ürün yelpazesinde herhangi bir değişikliğe sebep olmasa da, bazı e-ticaret şirketlerini olumlu yönde etkilediler. Mağazalar, şirketlere, farklı ürünler satmak için fırsatlar yaratmakta ve tedarikçilerin faydalanabileceği ürünlerin görünürlüğünü arttırmaktadır. Şirketler ile tedarikçileri arasındaki ilişkinin güçlendirilmesi ve ürün yelpazesinin genişletilmesi, şirketler aynı ürünleri hem mağazalarından hem de web uygulamaları üzerinden sattıkları için, e-ticaretin kurum olarak korunmasına yardımcı olmaktadır.

Tespit ettiğimiz son seviye şirkettir. Bir kurum olarak perakende satış, aktörlerin şirket düzeyinde e-ticareti sürdürmelerine marka ve büyüme mekanizmalarıyla yardımcı olur. Geleneksel perakendecilik, fiziksel mağazalara alışmış müşteriler arasında bir aşinalık duygusu yaratır. Bu müşterilerin gözünde e-ticaret şirketlerinin güvenilirliğini arttırmaya yardımcı olur. Fiziksel mağazalar aynı zamanda organik bir reklam kaynağıdır, çünkü varlıklarının kendisi şirketin markasını tanıtmaya yardımcı olur. Ayrıca, fiziksel mağazalar, şirketlerin e-ticaret web siteleri veya mobil uygulamaları aracılığıyla sundukları kullanıcı deneyimini genişletmeleri konusunda yaratıcı fikirler çıkarmaları için birçok fırsat yaratırlar. Mağazalar, şirketler için, müşterilerine yalnızca çevrimiçi ortamda sunmaları mümkün olmayan

deneyimler sunmanın bir yoludur. Sonuç olarak, mağazacılık, şirketlerin marka bilincini ve marka sadakatini artırmaya yardımcı olur. Genel olarak artan marka imajı, şirketlerin e-ticaret işi üzerinde de olumlu yansımalar yaratır. Şirket düzeyindeki bir başka mekanizma da şirketlerin büyümesidir. Mağazalar, şirketlerin başka bir satış kanalı eklemesine izin verir. Küçük e-ticaret işletmelerinin daha iyi stok devir oranlarına sahip olmaları veya daha büyük stoklara ve daha büyük pazarlara erişmelerini sağlayarak büyümelerine yardımcı olur. Şirketler genellikle aynı ürünleri çevrimiçi ve çevrimdışı kanallardan sattıkları için, daha iyi stok devir oranları veya genel olarak daha büyük pazarlar, işletmelerin e-ticaret tarafına da yardımcı olur. Tuğla ve harç perakendeciliği, bazı şirketlerin pazara bir bütün olarak hakim olmalarını ve hem çevrimiçi hem de çevrimdışı işletmelerdeki rekabeti ortadan kaldırmalarını sağlar.

Bu bulgular ışığında, bu çalışma, literatüre beş farklı alanda katkı sağlamaktadır. İlk olarak, bu çalışma gösteriyor ki; bir kurum olarak perakendecilik, çalışmayı mümkün kılarak e-ticaretin bir kurum olarak korunmasına yardımcı olur. Bu çalışma, Lawrence ve Suddaby (2006) 'nın kurumların sürdürülmesi çalışmaları altında kategorilendirdiği çalışmayı mümkün kılma kategorisine yönelik ilk düşüncelerini desteklemektedir. E-ticaret şirketleri, başka bir kurumu kullanmak için yeni kurallar oluşturmak, mevcut iş süreçlerini kullanmak, şirket içinde yeni pozisyonlar açmak, çalışanlarının pozisyonlarını değiştirmek ve yeni çalışanlar işe almak gibi eylemler yapmak durumunda kaldılar. Bunların hepsi, fiziksel mağazaların başarıyla işletilebilmesi için gerekli basamaklardı. Bu da, çalışmayı mümkün kılmanın bu adımlardan sadece birini değil, hepsini içerebileceğini göstermektedir.

İkinci olarak, çalışmamız gösteriyor ki; kurumların oluşturulması ve kurumların sürdürülmesi süreç içerisinde el ele gider. Bir kurumu sürdürmek için başka bir kurumu kullanmak karmaşık bir süreçtir ve genellikle kurumsal yaratma çalışması altında sınıflandırılan iş türlerine gereksinim doğurur. E-ticaret şirketleri mağazalarını açtıklarında, geleneksel perakendede yaygın olan bazı uygulama veya kurallardan ilham almışlardır. Bu kuralları veya uygulamaları e-ticaret işletmelerine

de uygulamışlardır. Bu çalışma, kurumsal sürdürme çalışması ve kurumsal yaratma çalışmasının iç içe geçebileceğini ve bazı durumlarda bir arada bulunabileceğini göstermektedir. Ayrıca literatüre, kurum oluşturma çalışması türleri olan “taklit”, “kimlik oluşturma” ve “değişen normatif dernekler” gibi kategorilerin kurumları sürdürmek için de kullanılabilirliğini göstererek de katkıda bulunur.

Üçüncü olarak, bu çalışma göstermiştir ki; kurumsal sürdürme çalışmaları, kurumun bir dereceye kadar bozulmasına neden olabilir. Bu çalışma bize farklı kurumsal iş türlerini ayıran çizginin bazen bulanık olduğunu göstermektedir. Yaratma ve sürdürme çalışmalarının bir arada varlığını gösteren bazı çalışmalar olsa da, sürdürme ve bozma çalışmaları arasındaki ilişkiye odaklanan çok fazla çalışma yoktur. Bu çalışma kurumları sürdürebilmenin karmaşık bir süreç olabileceğini göstermektedir. Kurumları sürdürme çabasında olan aktörlerin bu çabaları tam tersi yönde gidebilir ve kurumu bozabilir. Bu bulgu, farklı türlerdeki kurumsal çalışmaların bir arada bulunabildiğini göstererek hem diğer araştırmacıların bulgularını destekler, hem de kurumsal sürdürme ve bozma çalışmaları arasındaki ilişkiyi ortaya çıkararak bu çalışmaları genişletir.

Bulgulardan yaptığımız son çıkarım ise göstermiştir ki; daha eski ve daha köklü bir kurum, nispeten yeni bir kurumun korunmasına yardımcı olabilir. Literatür taramamız, araştırmacıların daha eski bir kurumu daha yeni bir kurumu sürdürmenin bir yolu olarak kullanmaya odaklanmadıklarını ortaya koydu. Bu çalışma göstermiştir ki, e-ticaret kurumunu sürdürme çabasındaki aktörler, daha eski bir kurum olan geleneksel perakendeyi kullanarak, e-ticaretin sürdürülmesine katkı sağlayabilmişlerdir.

Kurumsal bakım çalışmaları literatürüne yapılan bu katkıların yanı sıra, bu çalışma, e-ticaret şirketlerinin perakende sektörüne girmeleri trendi üzerine odaklanan ilk çalışmalardan biri olması sebebiyle de önem arz etmektedir. Bu tez, hem bu önemli stratejik kararın arkasındaki gerekçeyi hem de e-ticaret tarafı ile ilgili olarak bu kararın sonuçlarını ve bu yeni trendin ilk uygulayıcılarının bazılarının üst düzey yöneticilerinden doğrudan gelen bilgileri analiz ederek gösterir. Bu çalışma gelecekteki araştırmalar için iki yön sunar. İlk olarak, araştırmacılar daha eski ve

daha köklü bir kurum kullanarak daha yeni bir kurumun sürdürülmesine odaklanan benzer bir yaklaşım izleyebilirler. Araştırmacılar başka bir endüstride veya konuda benzer bir durum seçebilirler. Araştırmacıların izleyebileceği diğer bir yön ise bu çalışmanın ölçeğini büyütmektir. Bu çalışmadaki eğilim nispeten yenidir. Bu trende, Amazon ve Alibaba gibi daha büyük e-ticaret şirketleri önderlik ettiği için, daha fazla şirketin takip edeceğini söylemek yanlış olmaz. Gelecekteki araştırmacılar için bu çalışmayı ABD pazarından toplanan verilerle uygulamak faydalı olabilir, çünkü bu eğilimi izleyen en büyük e-ticaret şirketi ve aynı zamanda dünyanın en büyük e-ticaret şirketlerinden bazıları ABD pazarında faaliyet göstermektedirler.

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