

Responsive Market Orientation: A Qualitative Research on Turkish Startup Companies

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ABSTRACT

Purpose- Market orientation has a crucial role to drive superior value for customers. In this research, it is aimed to investigate the market-orientated activities of startup companies based on three components of responsive market orientation following as customer orientation, competitor orientation, innovation orientation and additionally under a type of organizational culture as adhocracy cluster orientation.

Methodology- For this purpose, it is conducted a qualitative multiple case study on 6 Turkish startup companies which are located in Ankara. The startups are determined by theoretical (purposive) sampling and semi-structured face-to-face interviews are used for data collection. The data-treatment technique is ethnography based on content analysis.

Findings- The quantitative analysis findings revealed that the startups in the research sample show the behaviors supporting the conceptual model of the study as four dimensions of responsive market orientation are observed in their behaviors.

Practical Implications- Marketing efforts reaching customers is to achieve business performance goals for startups as well as large-sized companies. We think that the results revealing responsive market orientation in startups increase the awareness of the importance and cruciality of the concept for entrepreneurs. Originality- Our spectacular finding reveals the issues that it is not very clear what activities under marketing strategies startups build to be market-orientated. It is aimed to make a contribution about the phenomenon that is important to be scalable and growing up in entrepreneurship roadmap.

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Keywords: Responsive Market Orientation, Innovativeness, Startup, Proactivity, Adhocracy

JEL Codes:M31,L26,M13

1. Introduction

Startups are emerging companies that are surrounded by uncertainty (Tiba et al, p.2, 2021). That uncertainty is derived from the market dynamics where they operate. The most common failure observed in startups is lack of capability to address the market demand (CB Insights, 2018). It is assumed that the limited capital of the seed fund causes these ventures trade-off marketing budget for operational activities. Nearly, a century ago, Schumpeter also claimed that a creative business idea can be defined as innovation only if it meets the market needs (Schumpeter, 1934). This is valid for today in startups which are technology-oriented companies therefore it is expected that marketing efforts should

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evolve in startups to be scalable and profitable as well as in technology-oriented large companies (Narver et al, 2004).

From the small-sized companies to global ones, the necessity of market intelligence is very important (Porter, 1980). Marketing is one of the most crucial functions of a venture (Hills et al, 2008). Marketing concept was first defined by Kohli and Jaworski (1990) as market orientation and thereafter this approach leads many scholars to search about the subject (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990, Narver and Slater, 1990; Deshpandé et al, 1993; Kohli et al, 1993; Jaworski and Kohli, 1993; Day, 1994; Deng and Dart, 1994; Cadogan and Diamantopoulos, 1995; Hunt and Morgan, 1995).

After 2000's academic research conducted between marketing and entrepreneurship has been raised (Miles and Darroch, 2006; Hills et al, 2008). However, this can be said that the academic studies focusing on startups and their behaviors are not sufficient yet. Although the main reason of the failure of startup companies is related to marketing (CB Insight, 2018), there is still less interest to investigate the issue.

Like other developed and developing countries, Turkish Startup ecosystem is developing year by year. In 2020 Turkey acquired her first Unicorn with Pick Games. Social gaming company Zynga purchased *Peak Games* with \$1.8 billion investment (Lunden, 2020). Subsequently, in 2021 delivery startup *Getir* received \$300 million in new investment via Silicon Valley's Sequoia Capital and New York-based Tiger. The company value reached to \$2.6 billion becoming the second Turkish Unicorn (Ulukan, 2021).

According to these developments, the research on Turkish startup companies should be increased and diversified. With this respect, in our study marketing activities of Turkish Startups are analyzed according to market orientation components through the organizational culture. It is preferred to adopt the measurements of responsive market orientation approach as a previous study (Şahin, 2018) proved that Turkish startups are not very proactive in market orientation yet.

The motivation of the study is to provide deep insight into startups' marketing approach which is considered as a gap in the related field. Although there are previous studies focusing on startup commercialization (Al Natsheh et al, 2015; Gbadegeshin, 2018), business models (McDonald and Eisenhardt, 2020; Ghezzi and Cavallo, 2020;) and founders of startups (Roche et al, 2020), it is aimed to

advance the observation of startups marketing behaviors. The study of Şahin (2018) is examining market orientation of startup companies in Turkish market, however there is still a lack of academic research with the related issue in both national and international base. Thus, at first step it is aimed to explore more about startups' marketing approaches in Turkey and then compare the results with other countries via collaborative works.

Within this respect, the research questions of the study are determined as follows:

- 1) Do Turkish Startups have a marketing approach and display marketing activities?
- 2) Can Turkish Startups' marketing efforts be defined as responsive market-oriented?
 - Are the marketing efforts of Turkish Startups customer orientated?
 - Are the marketing efforts of Turkish Startups competitor orientated?
 - Are the marketing efforts of Turkish Startups innovation orientated?
 - Are the marketing efforts of Turkish Startups adhocracy orientated?

In this regard, the theoretical model is designed based on responsive market orientation components including customer orientation, competitor orientation, innovation orientation and a type of organizational culture as adhocracy. First, the market orientation concept is expressed through the marketing literature and subsequently marketing efforts of startup companies are explained. For data collection, semi-structured interviews are arranged and six selected startup companies are included for investigation. Collected data is analyzed through ethnography which is a type of content analysis technique. In conclusion findings are discussed comprehensively. Although the research aims to make contribution to the field on regional base, it is expected to lead for comparative future research in different countries during growing startup ecosystem.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Antecedents of Market Orientation

Market orientation is defined as the implementation of marketing concept representing the foundation of high-quality marketing practice (Kohli and Jawor-

ski, 1990). The interest to the concept has started more systematically late 80's and beginning of 90's (Shapiro 1988; Webster 1988; Day 1990; Kohli and Jaworski 1990; Narver and Slater 1990). Although the marketing professionals and academicians have been observing market orientation before, a systematic analysis is not provided before Narver and Slater (1990). Hence the first valid measure of market orientation (MKTOR) was developed by Narver and Slater (1990) examining the relationship of business and market orientation. According to Narver and Slater (1990), market orientation is based on the organizational culture of the company deriving behavioral components. Three main pillars under cultural approach as customer orientation, competitor orientation, and inter-functional coordination are considered in MKTOR scale (Narver and Slater, 1990).

Customer orientation is to understand the needs and wants of the customer to create superior value in the long run. A good understanding of the customer needs makes the company to present the right offer of the product or service to the target customer (Narver and Slater, 1990). Customer's perception of expected benefit and cost may differ and customer value is the balance between these two issues (Zeithmal, 1988). Thus, the customer orientation creates a mutually and long-run relationship between the customer and the company. The significance of the component should be also accepted at managerial level to get the long-run success (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990).

The main objective for a company to be market-oriented is profitability (Narver and Slater, 1990) and the business with high degree of market orientation are associated with high profitability (Narver and Slater, 1990; Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Reukert, 1992) hence profitability is accepted as a consequence of market orientation (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990). Making market orientation priority is the way to achieve competitive advantage in long run (Jaworski and Kohli, 1993; Kumar et al, 2011) which is derived from competitor orientation. Competitor orientation is the observation and examining the short-run weaknesses and strengths and long-term capabilities with the strategies of current and potential competitors (Porter, 1980; Aaker, 1988; Narver and Slater, 1990). Furthermore, the entire set of technologies should be analysed that is used while satisfying the customer's current and future needs (Levitt, 1960; Narver and Slater, 1994).

To define the needs, the market intelligence has the crucial role. The information obtained through the market includes regulative, social and macro-economic dynamics as well as customers and competitors (Jaworski and Kohli,

1996). Third component which is inter-functional coordination is tied to previous components of market orientation. While implying marketing strategy to create superior value for the targeted customers, the business functions and marketing interdependencies should be systematically incorporated and disseminate the market intelligence among the whole functions of the company (Narver and Slater, 1990). Kohli et al, (1993) focused on the market intelligence and the study is accepted as another valid measurement (MARKOR) of the literature. The scale items are designed to measure intelligence generation, intelligence dissemination and responsiveness (Kohli et al, 1993). Regardless of the difference of the dimensions of MKTOR or MARKOR measures, it is argued that the main goal of a company to be market orientated is to create superior value for the customers (Deshpandé and Farley, 1998).

Market intelligence includes multidimensional market factors and customers' current and anticipated needs. Being customer-oriented is to decide and take actions in accordance with the market dynamics also called as exogenous factors directly affect the customer preferences and needs (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990). A marketing strategy is built successfully after gathering the market intelligence including market environment dynamics and right after setting the behaviors (Kohli et al, 1993, Jaworski and Kohli, 2017).

Deshpandé et al (1993) have therewithal contributed to the field with the investigation of the relationship among the concepts of organizational culture, customer orientation and also innovativeness to business performance. Firms employ innovative-oriented marketing strategies to create superior value for customers through innovative products and services (Hurley and Hult, 1998). According to Deshpandé et al (1993), as one classification of culture, adhocracy culture including innovation, entrepreneurship, and risk-taking approach, is implying better market performance. While adhocracy is a part of culture and it includes the values of entrepreneurship, creativity and adaptability, the firms with adhocracy culture outperformed the firms with hierarchy culture (Desphandé et al, 1993). Thus, it is assumed that technology-oriented startup companies tend to be innovative and adhocracy-oriented (Narver et al, 2004).

2.2. Marketing Efforts in Startups

The marketing concept and its implementation in startups are assumed to be different. Currently, it has been investigated especially by the researchers who

are also entrepreneurs and strive for product-market fit to be able to survive in the market (Blank, 2006; Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010; Ries 2011; Blank and Dorf, 2021). One group of those practitioners (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010) evaluated a business model which is called *business canvas model* benefited by entrepreneurs all over the world instead of long business plans while preparing marketing strategies. In business canvas model, the middlebox including heart refers to customers that should be gained by the entrepreneurs via value creation (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010).

In the study of Şahin (2018), market orientation approach of Turkish startups and the relationship with business performance are analyzed based on responsiveness and proactivity. It is concluded that only the responsive market orientation affects the business performance with all its components built on financial, market and innovation dynamics. The proactivity is related with technology and innovation, since a company is innovative, it is promising to be proactive (Weber et al, 2005, Rubera and Kirca, 2012, Schulze et al, 2022) and offer comparative advantage (Narver et al, 2004) as besides responsiveness, proactivity has a crucial effect among market orientation (Narver et al, 2004, Stanko and Bonner, 2013, Jaworski and Kohli, 2017). The results of Şahin (2018) proved that the technology degree of Turkish startups in the study sample is not sufficient to lead the market with a proactive marketing approach and only responsive market orientation has a positive relationship with firm performance as obtained in the other studies (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Ruekert, 1992; Kohli et al, 1993; Deshpandé et al; 1993; Deng and Dart, 1994; Pelham and Wilson, 1995; Kumar et al, 1998; Han et al, 1998; Pelham 2000; Karahan and Varinli, 2002). Raju et al (2011) found out that small and medium-sized firms' market orientation degree is higher than larger ones as the former has to be flexible due to the limited resources. According to the report of CB Insights, lack of the competence of satisfying market demand takes the first place in the ranking of startup failures. Being solely technology-oriented, having no solid intelligence about customer needs and no evaluation of marketing strategies to create customer value are the main obstacles to startup growth. (Baker and Sinkula, 2005; Hills et al, 2008; Picken, 2017; Querishi et al, 2017).

Narver et al, (2004) claimed that the approach reliable to that date (2004) is to investigate merely the responsiveness of the market orientation.

".... A responsive market orientation is a business's attempt to understand and to satisfy customers' expressed needs, whereas a proactive market orientation is the attempt to understand and to satisfy customers' latent needs. To discover and to satisfy the latent needs of customers is, by definition, to "lead" them...." Narver et al (2004:336).

It is expected that technology firms (Blocker et al 2011) and ventures (Schindehutte et al, 2008) can be inclined to be more proactive. According to Han et al (1998), market orientation and innovation orientation should complement each other. Narver et al (2004) additionally mention that both proactive and responsive market orientation efforts should be innovative. Its necessity is for learning about customer needs for product or service development to meet those needs and to improve the internal processes with a good understanding and enhance product development (Narver et al, 2004).

However, startup companies have unique structures (Carstoiu, 2017) as well as innovative-oriented (Örnek ve Danyal, 2015) struggling in an uncertain market (Ries, 2011). The uniqueness of organizational culture differs the startup companies from traditional ones (Şen, 2014). Shontell (2014) emphasizes that the organizational culture of startup companies is based on independence and flexibility and it is advised not to leave this culture although they grew up (Ireland, 2017). Probably, it is assumed that startups have higher adhocracy culture based on their entrepreneurial structure with a flexible working atmosphere.

To clarify the research questions, the approach by Narver and Slater (1990) is primarily followed as it is expected that the sample companies are more disposed to be responsive market-oriented. In that framework, customer orientation and competitor orientation which are the two components of market orientation were adopted for the research. Innovation orientation defined in Narver et al, (2004) is benefited and finally, adhocracy orientation is inspired by the study of Desphandé et al, (1993). According to that, the study aims to investigate the marketing approach and marketing activities of startup companies in Turkey. The marketing efforts are analyzed through responsive market orientation as generally seen in previous studies (Genç et al, 2019) with its components on the basis of customer orientation, competitor orientation, innovation orientation and adhocracy orientation. The conceptual framework is designed as below seen in Figure 1. built upon research questions.

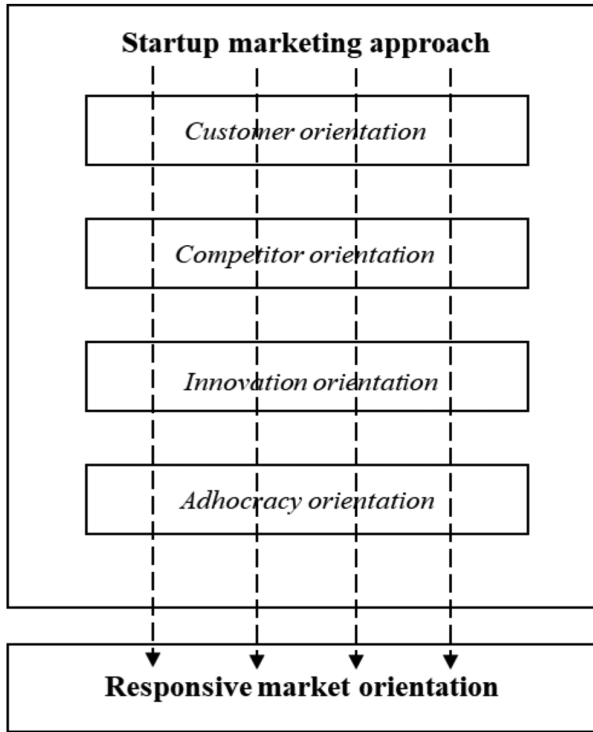


Figure 1. Conceptual Research Model

3. Method

3.1. Research Design

Since it is aimed to investigate the marketing activities of startups, it is literally the market orientation approach of the companies (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990). Market orientation activities are based on culture including the organizational behavior inside the company (Narver and Slater, 1990). Pioneering measures are valuable for the researchers in the field and benefited in many studies and provided the consensus that market orientation is the performance of behaviors created in the organization culture to create superior value for buyers and business continuously (Shapiro, 1988; Webster, 1988; Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Narver and Slater, 1990). This type of marketing orientation is accepted as responsive market orientation (Narver et al, 2004).

In this research, six startup companies are analyzed through responsive market orientation components as customer orientation, competitor orientation based on the organizational culture approach measured in MKTOR (Narver and Slater, 1990). Innovation orientation is also examined through the approach of Narver et al (2004) since the startups are usually technology-based companies and are expected to be innovative. Adhocracy is also a type of culture that is investigated in the study via the approach of Desphandé et al (1993).

According to that, six technology-orientated startup companies located in Ankara-Turkey are analyzed in the study. Among the content analysis techniques, ethnography is employed for seeking the culture of each startup and its behaviors (Curry et al, 2009). Ethnography research design is an ideal approach for the cross-cultural differences, however, this technique is not just used for the society, it is used to distinguish the differences of the organizations. To look inside the organizational culture, it is aimed to observe how that culture affects the company behavior (Sigri, 2021:192). Since market orientation activities are derived from company culture reflecting the organizational behavior (Narver and Slater, 1990), therefore ethnography is founded most suitable technique for the research.

Table 1. Case Startup Company Overview

Startup Industry	Main Business	Location	Global Office	Foundation
1. Robotics	Autonomous Mobile Robots (AMRs)	Technopark & Factory	USA	2011
2. Electronics	Antenna Design & Training Hardware Products	Technopark	None	2018
3. Defence	Unmanned Land Vehicles	Technopark & Factory	None	2015
4. Biotechnology	Diagnostic Devices & Kits	Technopark	None	2009
5. Computer Software	High-tech Visual Solutions & Design	Technopark	USA & Netherlands	2013
6. Internet of Things (IoT)	Smart Parcel Lockers	Technopark & Factory	None	2016

3.2. Data Sampling, Collection & Analysis

In quantitative research, the logic of data sampling method is to select the appropriate samples regarding to the aim, research questions, sources and research phase of the study (Sigri, 2021:188). In purposive sampling, the main issue is to listen to the people who are the experts of the research field. Therefore the sample size is limited enough compared to a wide range representation. The researcher decides on the samples according to the research aim. Thus the goal of the purposive sampling is to find the right samples that is able to reply the research questions clearly (Sigri, 2021:126). In this regard, to reach intense data and deep understanding, purposive sampling is preferred and interviews are done through six startup companies. According to OECD SME Policy Index Report (2016), TR51 Ankara region is in the first rank in employment with a rate of 2,7% in high technology production and knowledge-intensive services. This rate is close to the average of EU countries with the rate of 3,4%. While the mean of Turkey is 0,72%, Ankara is in a good place compared to developed countries (OECD, 2016:43). Therefore Ankara is considered as a target area for the research sample and continues with other regions such as TR10 İstanbul, TR 41 Bursa and TR42 Kocaeli which are coming after with the same qualifications. Within high technology products and services, six sectors are determined again related with high technology production and knowledge-intensive services.

Data is collected via semi-structured face-to-face interviews, observation and document reviews (brochure, website, available reports, etc.). For interviews, a formal interview guide is developed according to the theoretical framework aiming to increase the reliability of the study (Yin, 2009).

Data collection period was from February 2021 to April 2021. All startup companies are visited in their office for interviews. The interviews are executed between the founder of the company who is also the head of marketing and the researcher. All six interviews are recorded in a recorder and it takes approximately 45 minutes for each interview. Meeting rooms are preferred to have appropriate conditions to keep silent. Instead of the recorder, notes are taken during the interview and then added to the softcopy file of the record.

Furthermore, related documents about the company are investigated in the office. Also, digital resources such as website, whitepapers, social media ac-

counts are examined. An observation form is prepared for document investigation and filled after the observation. Data is transfer to digital environment and all data collected via interviews and documentation are combined before content analysis (Krippendorf, 1980).

Data is analyzed by “QDA Miner 6.0” software program. The outputs of the qualitative data analysis software QDA were reflected in the tables within the results section. The code and theme table are the main set of variables for entering data.

All data is uploaded to the program after a careful crosscheck reading. The items of the measures which are valid and reliable are adopted for determining the codes. The method designed for measurement had adequate reliability and validity as the procedure of “data-triangle” is used and the steps below are considered:

- The interview participants are including the general manager, founder and marketing director
- The startups are located inside a technopark zone or outside of it.
- The sectors are diversified as the marketing dynamics of each startup industry differ from each other.

Code items are formed through the scales in the literature for customer orientation and competition orientation (Narver & Slater, 1990; Deshpande et al, 1993; Kohli et al,1993; Deshpande & Farley, 1998; Narver et al, 2004) and for innovation orientation (Deshpande et al, 1993; Narver et al 2004) and finally for adhocracy orientation (Deshpande et al, 1993). Besides that, an academicians and practitioners have contributed to the study as their opinions are taken for reviewing the code and theme list. Codes are grouped to obtain the themes which are also categorized through the questions of the interview form. The themes are considered to be homogenous, distinctive, objective and wholistic. The findings are evaluated whether they are significant and consistent. The interview form and observation form are attached at the end of the study in Annex B.

4. Results

Market orientation approach is explained benefit from literature in the field. Accordingly, the respondents explained the strategies based on their main marketing activities within the company. Themes are adopted according to the items coherent with the responsive market orientation (RMO) scales (Narver and Slater, 1990; Desphandé et al 1993; Narver et al, 2004). Totally 26 codes are obtained to express the marketing approaches under four different orientations that some of which also occurred additionally during interviews. Customer orientation has 10 codes, competitor orientation has 6 codes, innovation orientation has 3 codes and finally adhocracy orientation has 7 codes. With this respect, the findings including frequency values and percentages are shown in Table.2. Frequency values defined as the count is defined as the number of repetitions of the items that are used by the respondents during the interviews.

The codes are analyzed in the research to answer research questions then the codes were grouped into related themes shown in the table below. Frequencies of codes analyzed from interview and observation content were shown at the QDA Minor analyze output shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Theme and Code List

Theme	Code	Count	% Codes
Customer orientation	customer focus	21	11,7
Customer orientation	good understanding of customers' needs	12	6,7
Customer orientation	good understanding of customers' wants	11	6,1
Customer orientation	good relationship with customers	11	6,1
Customer orientation	creating greater value for our customers	10	5,6
Competitor orientation	good competitor knowledge	10	5,6
Innovation orientation	being first to market with new products or services	10	5,6
Innovation orientation	following technologic innovation and being the leading edge	9	5
Customer orientation	priority to serving customers	8	4,4
Adhocracy orientation	being flexible	8	4,4
Customer orientation	after-sales service	7	3,9

Customer orientation	comprehensive market and customer knowledge	7	3,9
Customer orientation	measuring customer satisfaction	7	3,9
Competitor orientation	compete primarily based on product or service differentiation	7	3,9
Adhocracy orientation	being a leader such as entrepreneur, innovator, risk-taker	6	3,3
Adhocracy orientation	focusing on innovation, growth and new resources	6	3,3
Adhocracy orientation	focusing on competition and differentiation	6	3,3
Adhocracy orientation	behaving like an entrepreneur	5	2,8
Competitor orientation	catching the opportunities of competitive advantage	4	2,2
Competitor orientation	investigation of the strategies of competitors	4	2,2
Customer orientation	giving close attention to customer service	3	1,7
Competitor orientation	effort for competitive advantage	3	1,7
Adhocracy orientation	being adaptive	2	1,1
Adhocracy orientation	being creative	2	1,1
Competitor orientation	respond to competitive actions	1	0,6
Innovation orientation	recognizing as innovation leaders by competitors	0	0

As expected, there are differences between the cases of startup companies. Although the main question is to examine the market-orientated activities of these companies, the components of the phenomenon are also investigated case by case. The results are explained in Appendix A detailed and six different approaches are provided under responsive market orientation. Additionally, in Figure 2 it is preferred to explain the findings in different tables for “in-case” and “between-cases” separately. On the other hand, Table 3 shows the intensity of market orientation via customer orientation, competitor orientation, innovation and adhocracy orientation in high level, normal level, low and very low level derived by occurrence and frequency degrees. While the relative intensity of each orientation of the relevant startup as “between-cases” is shown in Figure 2 through an agglomeration, it is provided that the intensity of each result of RMO components is independent of each other shown in Figure 2. It is accepted as the magnitude of each orientation shown in Table 3 as well. The magnitude of

each orientation is shown in the table based on its codes. The correspondence of startup 3 and startup 6 are similar as it shows the respondents have similar replies and similar codes follow up to each other. The rest of the cases are dispersed as they stand far away in different places. There are some code items whose agglomeration can be observed as they are positioned very close which shows that they follow up with each other while the respondents reply to the interview questions.

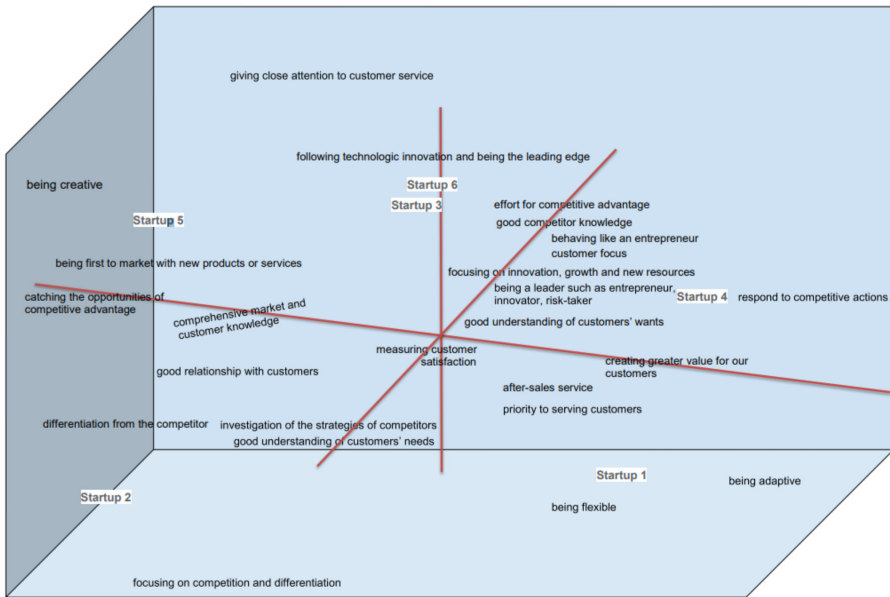


























Figure 2. Correspondence Map

In Table 3, the orientation density is given “in-case” values as it is provided the strongest orientation of each startup company. The frequency results of customer orientation codes are mostly occurred compared to other components. *Customer focus* has the highest ranking with 21 counts. Following that *understanding customer needs* has 12 counts in second place continuing with *understanding customer* and *close relationship with customer* with high counting rate. It is observed that the average of the repetitions is 6.92 which is accepted as the mean of the frequency level. When we compare each count number with the mean, it is seen from Table 2 that codes of customer orientation are mostly

over the mean value except one code. The code under the mean is *giving close attention to customer service* and the count number is 3.

Table 3. Customer Orientation Profile of the Case Startups

Startup Cases	Startup 1: Autonomous Mobile Robots	Startup 2: Antenna Design & Training Hardware Products	Startup 3: Unmanned Land Vehicles	Startup 4: Diagnostic Devices & Kits	Startup 5: High-tech Visual Solutions & Design	Startup 6: Smart Parcel Lockers
RMO						
Customer orientation						
Competition orientation						
Innovation orientation						
Adhocracy orientation						

Customer orientation is the effort to satisfy the needs and wants of the target customers to create the superior customer value and additionally a deep understanding to the customers' entire value chain (Narver and Slater, 1990). In our study, all cases have an attitude based on customer orientation. As seen in Table 3., startup 1, 3, 4 and startup 5 are more customer-oriented compared to the others and this can be defined as high level. Startup 2 and 6 have mid- level of market orientation attitude.

To create value and become preferred by the customers instead of the other companies, the competitive-orientated strategies should be well-established (Porter, 1980; Narver et al, 2004; Tsai et al, 2008). According to our results, it is observed that most of the participant startup companies has low level market orientation which are startup 3,4 and 6 although they operate in very competitive markets. Only startup 1, 2 and 5 has higher competition orientation and the intensity is accepted as mid-level.

The most frequent code of competition orientation theme is *competitor intelligence* with the number of 5,6 which is also lower than the mean. *Taking action according to competitors* has very low rate among the code items. *Competitive advantage opportunity*, *monitoring competitor's strategies* and *effort for competitive advantage* are also in the downside of the row.

Innovation-oriented marketing activities are aiming to create superior value for customer in accordance with novel and innovative marketing efforts (Hurley and Hult, 1998). In our study the results explaining the intensity of the innovation-oriented marketing approach are shown in Table.3. According to the results, innovation is highly important for the four startups in our sample which are startup 1, 3, 5 and 6. Although all the participants of the research are technology companies, startup 2 and 4 have mid-level intensity in innovation orientation.

Furthermore, it is observed that code of *being leadership in innovation* is not occurred in the interviews. *Market entry with innovative products and services* and *following technologic innovation* are listed in high ranks although the rates are under the mean.

Adhocracy is a type of culture within the firm and contains the values of entrepreneurship, creativity and adaptability (Desphandé et al, 1993). In our sample, the startups tend to have adhocracy orientation. In Table.3 it is shown that startup 1 and 4 has the highest degree of adhocracy whereas startup 2, 3, 5 and 6 have mid-level of adhocracy.

According to the items, *being adaptive* and *being creative* have a rate of 1.1 as these numbers have the lowest frequency values after the last one item. *Being entrepreneur* has also a low rank with a number of 2.8. Among the codes of the adhocracy orientation, *being flexible* has the highest rank which is 4.4. However, this number is still under the mean value (6.92) as this shows that adhocracy orientation count numbers are not high enough compared to other orientations. In our case startups it is shown particularly the opposite situation in startups 2, 5 and 6 while the adhocracy orientation is low, the innovation orientation is high. This situation may occur that innovation can be a priority compared to adhocracy independently. Also, for startup 2, the main issue about adhocracy is to be open-minded and flexible. According to the components of adhocracy orientation, creativity and adaptivity are also taken into consideration.

Furthermore, differentiation and competition are important factors managed by a risk-taker leader. For startup 4, the situation is the opposite as the adhocracy orientation is intense as they promote partnership and intrapreneurship as well however the innovation orientation is not strong that much. Furthermore, customer orientation is still powerful for startup 2 and 5 although they do not have high-level of adhocracy orientation. The best balance between the orientations is shown in startup 1 however according to the results, it is expected to be more competition and customer orientation. In startup 6, the founder engineer considers the importance of marketing and business management and strengthens the team in these fields.

According to the results, relationship marketing (Grönross, 1994) is also observed among marketing activity definitions when close contact to customers is mentioned as very important in case startup 2, 3 and 4. After sales service and customer satisfaction measurement are the strategies for improving the sustainability of customer relationship. For startup 3 and 4, customer segmentation and niche marketing strategy are also mentioned. Customization is very important for these startups as their target market is a little bit private and specialized. Social media marketing strategies are also preferred and good content creation is used by startup 6 to attract the customers. Although the business canvas model is not found among the wording of interviews, the respondents use the definition of value creation. Especially startup 5 highlights that their products focus on problem solving that differs them from the competitors and create value (Blank, 2006; Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010; Ries 2011; Blank and Dorf, 2021).

While a company reaches the goals of a successful marketing strategy, it is the achievement to be able to satisfy the target customers more effective and efficient compared to the competitors (Kotler, 2003). When two competitors have the same offerings for the same target customers, price competition will ensue. Since there is a differentiation for the product or service offerings, price losses its powerful effect. When one can exceed the expectations of the target customers, the customer preference will be independent from price advantage and price competition will be no more continued. This can be also derived to understand the latent needs of the target customers (Rust and Oliver, 2000; Narver et al, 2004).

In the case startups, competition orientation is only shown in antenna technology startup (startup 2) and visual solutions & design startup (startup5) in high

level. This can be because of the sectoral dynamics but it was expected to be more competition orientated in other sector startups as well. However, the other startups have a mid-level of competition orientation. It is assumed that all startups are competition-oriented and focus on many different competitive strategies however the results do not support it. This situation can explain that in practice they effort to lead only price competition. However, not only price competition but also evaluation of new strategies (differentiation, new-product development etc.) is necessary to get competitive advantage. Therefore, it results that startups in our sample are low competition-oriented.

According to Hurley and Hult (1998) and Han et al (1998) market orientation and innovation orientation should complement each other. It is directly observed in startup 3, 4, 5 and 6 that it is explained that innovation is derived from market. Customer feedback is the main resource for innovation. In the conceptual model, it is assumed that innovation orientation is a part of responsive market orientation. The items used for the expression of internal sources (R&D capacity etc.) and the innovation orientation can be related with external issues (leading customers, customer-need analyses etc.), this type of market orientation attitude more tends to be proactive market orientation (Van de Ven, 1986, Deshpande et al, 1993; Hurley and Hult, 1998; Narver et al, 2004). The results show that the case startups are all innovation-oriented companies and the innovation degree is high enough. That can be concluded that it is because they are techno-entrepreneurs and monitor technological development closely. Also, the innovation orientation shows explanatory power to explain new-product success (Narver et al, 2004), this can be supportive for our results.

Furthermore, responsive market orientation positively influences new-product success (Slater and Narver, 1994; Atuahene-Gima, 1995; Lukas and Ferrell, 2000; Atuahene-Gima et al 2005) as it can be accepted the same situation of our case startups. According to strategy of startup 1, they monitor the global competitors and feedback from the customers. Market demand leads them to new-product success. The market leads the company to new-products or innovation. However, in proactivity, it is vice-versa (Narver et al, 2004).

5. Discussion

Startup companies with their more technology-oriented structures intend to be less market-oriented. As a result, it is also observed from the profiles of the case startups in our study. The cases differ from each other according to the exhibited results structured with the framework of the conceptual model. It is observed that the intensity and level of occurrence and frequency degrees of orientations change case by case. Although high or low levels are shown, it can be concluded that startups in the research sample have a good attitude of market orientation.

Startups as performing in the different sectors in our sample determine the customer orientation to create value, being customer-focused and understand what the customers' needs and wants which directly support the antecedents of market orientation (Deshpande et al, 1993; Jaworski and Kohli, 1993; Deshpande and Farley, 1998). This approach seen in the case startups is later defined as responsive market orientation (Narver et al, 2004) in the literature.

Google, Facebook and Amazon were typical startups when they are founded, then they grow up rapidly and enter to execution process by company building (Blank, 2006). However, they still try to keep the work atmosphere flexible and comfortable for the employees. In our case, it can be said that Turkish culture tends to be more dependent and hierarchal as scored in power distance index (Hofstede, 1991). As adhocracy has driven via the culture (Desphandé et al, 1993), this dimension reflect the results of decentralization and formality.

Marketing activities of case startups are explained under the responsive market orientation as seen in the illustrative quotes (Appendix. A). The approach aims to satisfy the expressed needs of customers (Narver et al, 2004). It is interesting that startups also expressed the importance of market orientation under proactive market orientation approach. It is also observed that the aim of their marketing activities of startups to discover the needs of the customer which do not turn to a demand yet. When they understand the customer need, it directly reflects in their product and therefore they also become the first mover of the market.

It is assumed that case startups are not proactive yet, but they know the importance of the proactivity as they mention monitoring the latent needs. May

not yet have a position as leading the market satisfying the latent needs of the customers but it is promising to reach that level as also, they are operating in the technology sector.

It is observed generally that customer orientation and innovation orientation can be accepted as the strongest orientation in case startups. When the invention can reach the market and satisfy the market needs, the thing created is then called innovation (Schumpeter, 1934). While the innovation orientation stands out with customer orientation, it is accepted as an endogenous variable shown up through our case startups.

This consciousness also supports the promising behaviors of the startups correlated with proactive orientation. Thus it can be concluded that sample startups that are innovation-oriented are promising to perform proactive marketing activities however it can be observed after the completion of the early-state era. Because most of these startups are founded by the bootstrap method and have a limited budget in the beginning. It is difficult to behave proactively and lead the market at first. They can catch up the product-market fit by pivoting strategy and customer feedback. After a while, if grow-up turns to scale-up process, then they can spend their earnings for product improvement and R&D costs.

6. Implications, Limitations and Recommendations

The case startups in the study provided a glance of market orientation attitude in Turkish market as it can be concluded that the sample companies have a marketing approach and consider the importance of the phenomenon. As the startups failure is mostly derived from lack of marketing approach, this study strengthens the same conclusion as the marketing directors (if there is) or the founders should focus on real market dynamics. Marketing is the milestone for a company to extend and survive in long run therefore our results are considered to be useful for managerial point of view as well.

Although, some quotes are related to proactive market orientation, the core activities and results placed briefly in Table 3 proved that the approach is more related to responsiveness. Competition orientation level stands out as the lowest component among the other orientations. As this can be derived that proactivity approach should be improved and while the startups' self-confidence raises,

they reach the level of leading the market with innovative solutions. Also, the possibility to take the technology of the global competitors and localized it to be the innovator. Also, the adhocracy level of the startup cases proved the company structure is reflecting startup model with a flexible and adaptive atmosphere.

To sum up, the technology entrepreneurs in the study support the conceptual model of the study as four components are observed in their behaviors. Responsive market orientation is the current approach of the case startups but proactivity is also promising for coming days as they are aware of the cruciality of latent needs satisfaction.

The results reached in the study using the content analysis technique. Although it is reached via first sources from the participants, the data set is derived from non-numerical variables. Thus, the findings of the market orientation components of each startup (shown in Table 3) should not be directly compared to each other as they are all independent results. However, Figure 2 is inspirable providing the agglomeration of the cases for future research aiming at correlations of orientations.

Moreover, the sector of case startups and the locations (whether located in Technopark or not) can limit the research. The most technology-focused sectors are preferred for the study whereas Ankara is selected as the highest technology ranking area for SMEs in Turkey. For future research TR10 İstanbul, TR41 Bursa and TR42Kocaeli can be selected as the other high technology manufacturing regions coming after Ankara (OECD, 2016:43). Furthermore, it is suggested to measure more dynamics that directly affect the marketing approach of startups in the future and they should be investigated with more variables.

The investigation of the innovation and adhocracy orientation can be accepted as a solid contribution to both managerial and academic approaches of this research. As there is a gap in the literature observing these two important dimensions that are crucial for the companies with a startup structure, this paper can stand for an awareness for the coming research. Adhocracy opens space and releases freedom for the employees inside the organization while bureaucracy is the opposite with rigid structure and centralized decision-making (Wolfe, 1994; Narver et al, 2004). The bureaucratic atmosphere in the company directly affects the creativity and innovative thinking of the workers and thus it has a negative

effect on market information generation, dissemination and responsiveness (Jaworski and Kohli, 1993). As seen in Google, Facebook, Amazon, they are still protecting the flexible atmosphere in business while they are growing in complexity. Innovation is taken strength derived from a good business idea independent of other circumstances. However, not only for innovation orientation, but it is also suggested that all these results can be improved with other additional dimensions such as culture, crisis situation or different conditions as well.

Startups are really very unique structures and therefore it is assumed to be more difficult to get the generalized result. Also, technology and digitalization lead the markets to increase the number of this type of company founded. Therefore, it is suggested to increase the number of these studies to investigate the startup organizations intensely. For further research, both quantitative and qualitative analysis can be applied in the field. Also, culture is an important factor in entrepreneurship, therefore cross-national studies will add an essential contribution to the literature.

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Annex A. Responsive Market Orientation (RMO) Activities

Table A.1
RMO Activities of Autonomous Mobile Robots _ Startup #1

Theme	Codes	Key RMO activities	Illustrative Quotes
Customer Orientation	customer focus good understanding of customers' needs good understanding of customers' wants good relationship with customers	The robot (product) with high security solution, no infrastructure support, friendly use and easy system integration as designed to satisfy market need.	<i>"Customer voice! We have to listen to it carefully. You have to produce your product or service with that voice...It is to take the customer to your center..."</i>
Competition Orientation	good competitor knowledge investigation of the strategies of competitors	Competitor monitoring in global base, following technologic developments.	<i>"The competition is really tough... The players can change very rapidly so we have to monitor them very close... Otherwise, it is impossible to be in the game..."</i>
Innovation Orientation	being first to market with new products or services following technologic innovation and being the leading edge recognizing as innovation leaders by competitors	Monitoring global rivals, feedback from the customers and their demands new product development. Literature review and benefit from academic staff.	<i>"Both technology and state of art are important for us... That is the innovation orientation also we get support from academia as well..."</i>
Adhocracy Orientation	being a leader such as entrepreneur, innovator, risk-taker focusing on innovation, growth and new resources focusing on competition and differentiation behaving like an entrepreneur	Full- responsible of entrepreneur, leading & motivating the whole team.	<i>"One of the founders should the whole responsibility in the begging and lead the whole firm..."</i>

Table A.2
RMO Activities of Antenna Design & Training Hardware
Products _ Startup #2

Theme	Codes	Key RMO activities	Illustrative Quotes
Customer Orientation	good understanding of customers' needs measuring customer satisfaction giving close attention to customer service	Tailor-made production, customer feedback system and close contact with customer (fairs, visits etc.)	<i>"We prepare a Customer Satisfaction Form and getting feedback from the customers..."</i>
Competition Orientation	compete primarily based on product or service differentiation	PCT application, production secrets, non-disclosure agreement, differentiation	<i>"Our customers are academicians and researchers in the world... They are very suspicious people... but what we offer is we serve the products as kits which are very adaptive and customized... This is the first in antenna sector..."</i>
Innovation Orientation	being first to market with new products or services following technologic innovation and being the leading edge	Offering a new service to current market. Innovative approach, customized attitude and way of presentation.	<i>"We followed blue ocean strategy... Our products capabilities are very high and qualified... We are challenging in our sector..."</i>
Adhocracy Orientation	being flexible behaving like an entrepreneur	Founded by an engineer. Being scalable globally. Comfortable work atmosphere.	<i>"As a startup, we should be open to decentralization and care about the opinions of the team otherwise we can't survive...we are open-minded and innovative..."</i>

Table A.3
RMO Activities of Unmanned Land Vehicles _ Startup #3

Theme	Codes	Key RMO activities	Illustrative Quotes
Customer Orientation	good understanding of customers' needs customer focus comprehensive market and customer knowledge	Tailor-made production, customer segmentation, niche marketing strategy, relationship marketing	<i>"Turkish Military Forces is our sole customer so we have to get the perfection and we do our best... Also, network is very important in our business that we develop important relationships for business as well..."</i>
Competition Orientation	good competitor knowledge compete primarily based on product or service differentiation	The importance of know-how, no counterfeiting Competitor monitoring in global base, following technologic developments.	<i>"Although there is strong competition, know-how is the thing that featured us. It is what you have and your rivals do not... This market he differentiation"</i>
Innovation Orientation	being first to market with new products or services following technologic innovation and being the leading edge	Market driven innovation. Following technologic and innovative development worldwide and offer localized ones.	<i>"First of all the customers ask us for the product that they want, they explain what they need. Secondly, we follow the development of the technology of our sector, it will come to our country very soon..."</i>
Adhocracy Orientation	focusing on innovation, growth and new resources behaving like an entrepreneur	Founded by two young engineers. Limited budget. Technology orientation and being scalable.	<i>"Although it was a startup story, we know the market and the customer very well, therefore we grow up very fast and now defined as a big defense company..."</i>

Table A.4
RMO Activities of Diagnostic Devices & Kits _ Startup #4

Theme	Codes	Key RMO activities	Illustrative Quotes
Customer Orientation	customer focus good understanding of customers' needs good understanding of customers' wants good relationship with customers creating greater value for our customers priority to serving customers after-sales service		<i>"We visit the customer and learn what they need then we make our R&D..."</i> <i>"We do not quit the relationship, give strong support after sales..."</i>
Competition Orientation	effort for competitive advantage respond to competitive actions	Government funds, investment, successful merge and full quality and standardization documentation. Literature review and benefit from academic staff.	<i>"In our sector, there are very powerful foreign companies... They would like to buy all these new startups... We fight with them because of our strong financial structure and R&D studies..."</i>
Innovation Orientation	being first to market with new products or services	Monitoring global rivals, feedback from the customers and their demands for new product development. Literature review and benefit from academic staff.	<i>"Innovation is important inside the organization as we use an empathy map also academia is very important for us too..."</i>
Adhocracy Orientation	being flexible being a leader such as entrepreneur, innovator, risk-taker being adaptive	Support to intrapreneurship. Care about the happiness of the employees.	<i>"We promote people, they even become a partner or get premium payment. These are motivating people; we can call it a type of intrapreneurship may be..."</i>

Table A.5

RMO Activities of High-tech Visual Solutions & Design _ Startup #5

Theme	Codes	Key RMO activities	Illustrative Quotes
Customer Orientation	customer focus good relationship with customers creating greater value for our customers	Value creation, focus on problem solving, close monitoring on technologic development	<i>"The most important thing is solving a problem... Our product should be cure of a technologic or social problem. This is the added value or desired value creation..."</i>
Competition Orientation	effort for competitive advantage catching the opportunities of competitive advantage good competitor knowledge	Aim to be first mover of the market, market entrance in new and developing sector, global competition	<i>"Be careful to be in a sector that is promising to develop and grow... it will be better to be very new and no competitor in the market yet..."</i>
Innovation Orientation	being first to market with new products or services following technologic innovation and being the leading edge recognizing as innovation leaders by competitors	Leading role with a new technology product in the sector, market driven innovation and product development.	<i>"When we go to the customer, they become the ones who heard that business first from us..."</i>
Adhocracy Orientation	being creative being flexible being a leader such as entrepreneur, innovator, risk-taker	A team based on merit and capabilities, an atmosphere for free discussion	<i>"In our team there are people who do not even BA but also others who have PhD. We care about talent and capability not only educational background..."</i>

Table A.6
RMO Activities of Smart Parcel Lockers _ Startup #6

Theme	Codes	Key RMO activities	Illustrative Quotes
Customer Orientation	customer focus good understanding of customers' needs good understanding of customers' wants creating greater value for our customers	Value creation, raising awareness, close monitoring on technologic development, good content creation in social media, customer marriage approach, tailor-made production	<i>"Our main goal is to discover the customer needs before it turns to be a demand in the market..."</i>
Competition Orientation	good competitor knowledge investigation of the strategies of competitors compete primarily based on product or service differentiation	Close monitoring rivals, attending international fairs and visiting competitor stands, investigation of competitive products, differentiation strategy based on competitive advantage	<i>"We want to know the competitor and also want them to know us... we follow them through any channel, especially social media, it is very good for that..."</i>
Innovation Orientation	being first to market with new products or services following technologic innovation and being the leading edge	New-product development based on customer demand, proactive approach, market-driven innovation, Literature review, founded an office library and benefit from academic staff.	<i>"What we understand from innovation is to define the customer need and add it to our new-product development process..."</i>
Adhocracy Orientation	focusing on innovation, growth and new resources behaving like an entrepreneur	Founded by two young engineers, grow up fast, scalable	<i>"We do not focus on technology only; marketing and management are very important for us, so we are an engineer founded startup but adapt to managerial issues soon..."</i>

Annex B. Interview Form Questions & Observation Form Items

INTERVIEW FORM QUESTIONS

- 1) What does the term “market orientation” mean to you? Do you think your company is market-oriented? Why?
- 2) What does the term “customer orientation” mean to you? Do you think your company is market-oriented? Why?
- 3) What does the term “competitor orientation” mean to you? Do you think your company is market-oriented? Why?
- 4) What does the term “innovation orientation” mean to you? Do you think your company is market-oriented? Why?
- 5) What are the factors that prevent or vice versa support your innovation-oriented activities?
- 6) What is the importance of good market and customer knowledge for you?
- 7) How important are after-sales service and customer relations to you? Why?
- 8) How does your company respond to customer needs?
- 9) How do you create customer value? How do you measure customer satisfaction?
- 10) Do you monitor your competitors? Do you analyze their strategy?
- 11) How do you carry out the new product development process? How do you see yourself in terms of market entry and your competitors?
- 12) Could you tell us a bit about your organizational structure? Do you think your company founder has entrepreneurial qualities? Would you describe it a bit?
- 13) Do you focus on both innovation and product diversification/differentiation? Can you please give example both from the field and from practice?
- 14) Are these your competitive strategies?

OBSERVATION FORM ITEMS

- 1) The degree of market orientation taken into consideration within marketing activities of the company.
- 2) The extent to which market orientation (customer orientation, competitor orientation, innovation orientation) approach is preferred in the company
- 3) Any resistance to prevent market orientation activities within the company
- 4) The capacity and resources are sufficient for marketing activities

- 5) The awareness of the importance of the marketing concept is disseminated within the company and an organizational culture is evaluated related with this issue
- 6) Company is providing an after-sales service
- 7) Customers data is monitoring and stored for the feedback
- 8) Is there a conscious for value creation?
- 9) The characteristics of founder; a typical startup entrepreneur, traditional entrepreneur, social entrepreneur etc.

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