Supplier Selection Criteria and Buying Problems of Retailers: Qualitative Evidence from Turkey

Şermin ÖNEM[1]   **Aykut PAJO**[2]   **Murat Selim SELVİ**[3]

[1]Doktora Öğrencisi, Tekirdağ Namık Kemal Üniversitesi / İİBF, İşletme Bölümü, serminonem@gmail.com,
ORCID: 0000-0003-3230-0801

[2]Öğretim Görevlisi, Kırklareli Üniversitesi / Pınarhisar MYO, pajoaykut@hotmail.com,

ORCID: 0000-0002-4515-6020

[3] Prof. Dr., Tekirdağ Namık Kemal Üniversitesi / İİBF, İşletme Bölümü, msselvi@nku.edu.tr,

ORCID: 0000-0002-9114-3183

Abstract: This study aims to determine the supplier selection criteria and buying problems of retailers buying and selling goods in various industries in Turkey. This study was conducted on retailers operating in eight different industries in Istanbul, Tekirdag, and Edirn. A semi-structured interview form was used as a data collection tool. Phone interviews were conducted with 43 authorities in eight different retail branches. Most of the data is qualitative. A document review was conducted in secondary sources, and the literature corresponding to the purpose of the research was summarized. Descriptive and discourse analysis was performed on the primary data. During the analysis process, necessary classifications and simplifications were made, the problems experienced by retailers in buying were conceptualized; similar and different problems were given in tables. Thus, a chain of evidence regarding the reliability and validity of the research could be established. According to the research results, timely delivery, quality product, trust, and experience play a significant role in selecting retailers' suppliers. The problems retailers face when buying are delays in delivery, early payment requests and delays in payments, product quality deterioration, cargo problems, fluctuating exchange rates, and price mismatches. Research findings point to retailers' buying problems and risks and measures to reduce these risks.

Key Words: Supplier Selection, retailer, on-time delivery, reliability, cargo problem, missing goods, delay in payments.

1. INTRODUCTION

Retailers (trade buyers) buy finished goods and resell them (Bahng & Kincade, 2014: 644). One of the essential issues to be decided for retailers in this process is supplier selection. Another critical point for retailers, according to Skytte and Blunch (2005: 103), is whether the supplier is foreign or domestic. If the supplier is foreign, having a contact office in the retailer's country is one of the retailer's features. Achieving a purchase event without facing too many problems for retailers depends on making a good supplier choice. In a good supplier selection process, buyers and sellers should consider all factors affecting supply chain selection and performance to increase their profits (Yang et al., 2008: 1481). Choosing the right supplier plays a crucial role in improving the quality of products and services, reducing costs, and ensuring customer satisfaction (Yangınlar, 2018: 237). Ipek (2019) notes that factors such as supplier experience, order management, payment terms, price and quality balance, delivery, business volume, packaging, communication are critical in selecting suppliers for retailers. According to Skytte and Blanch (2005: 110), experiences and purchasing policies for retailers are a powerful guide in buying behavior. In general, retailers prioritize price index, delivery performance, distance, product supply and range, and quality when choosing their suppliers

(Aouadni et al., 2019: 220). According to Skytte and Blunch (2005: 103), one of the most critical points for retailers is that physical distribution is done without delay and the order is delivered correctly. So the delivery time of the goods, timely delivery, and proper order are crucial for trade buyers. On the other hand, retailers can pay the wholesaler on a term basis rather than immediately after receiving the product provides a significant advantage for retailers (Jamal et al., 2000: 59).

This study explores the supplier selection criteria of various retailers in Turkey and their problems in buying. Within this aim, phone interviews were conducted with food, textile, pharmaceutical-cosmetic, stationery, electronics, hardware/hardware store, work safety equipment, and spare parts retailers in Istanbul, Tekirdag, and Edirne provinces in Turkey. It was assumed that the data collected with the semi-structured interview form were suitable for the research, the participants were sufficient in terms of quality and quantity, they had experience with the research subject, and the researcher adequately informed them. It was assumed that the specified retailers answered the questions in the interview form sincerely, without any pressure, correctly. It was also assumed that secondary data is accurate and unbiased. On the other hand, this study was conducted only on 43 authorities in eight different

retail branches mentioned; the findings obtained through the interview form included the experiences of the researchers. Therefore, it was not possible to include different retailers from more industry branches in the study. In addition, since the data collection was made over the phone, there was no opportunity to observe. Research findings point to retailers buying problems and risks and measures to reduce these risks.

2. LITERATURE

Today, businesses must continue exploring and using the supplier's knowledge (Andersen et al., 2018: 1). The main objective of the supplier selection process is to reduce buying risk, maximize total value for the buyer, and develop intimate and long-term relationships between buyers and suppliers in today's competitive industrial scenario (Pal et al., 2013: 2667). When the purchasing literature is examined, it is seen that the most commonly listed supplier evaluation dimensions in organizations are price, cost, quality, and delivery time (Bedey et al. 2008; Pal et al., 2013; Taherdoost & Brard, 2019; Makhita, 2017). Retailer divides the order between suppliers by considering cost, quality, capacity, etc. (Aouadni et al., 2019: 220-271). According to Skytte and Blunch (2005: 105), retailers prefer suppliers with a wide range of products, using different sources because they can offer lower procurement costs. Trade buyers are responsible for controlling costs when purchasing raw materials (Bahng & Kincade, 2014: 644). Buhutta and Huq (2002) note that it is essential for the supplier to provide low prices, short delivery time, and technical support; supplier selection is a multi-criteria problem involving qualitative and quantitative factors. A balance must be established between these concrete and abstract factors (Tahriri et al., 2008; Petrovic et al., 2019; Mina et al., 2020).

Retailers have essential evaluation criteria in selecting suppliers along with buying. The first is the physical space and size of the store owned by the supplier. The fact that a supplier has a large area with comprehensive and necessary conditions eliminates the concerns regarding health and safety (Insch et al., 2011: 257). The second is that suppliers have a wide range of products and can provide enough products to meet orders (Skytte & Blunch, 2001: 134; Skytte & Blunch, 2005: 103-104). Supplier evaluation is essential for retailers when deciding on product diversity (Bahng & Kincade, 2014: 645-647). As the market conditions change, it may be possible to choose different suppliers to supply the needed products. In this case, retailers select suppliers to the extent and quality that can meet their needs (Vokurka et al. 1996: 108). The third is the performance of existing suppliers to meet the demands of retailers as they increase. Retailers should not be weak in measuring and reporting the performance of their suppliers and should evaluate them well. In other words, if firms do not evaluate their suppliers' performance, suppliers will not be aware of their poor performance, will take less action to address their shortcomings, and will have to correct their poor performance and experience a below-normal delivery performance on new orders (Hanghøj, 2015: 18-22). The fourth is physical distribution. According to Skytte and Blunch (2005: 103-104), physical distribution (e.g., delivery time, timely delivery, and proper order) is crucial for trade buyers. On-time delivery means that the goods are ready for timely delivery for the supplier, and for the retailer, the customer has access to the goods on-site and on time (Forslund & Jonsson, 2010: 227). Early or untimely late deliveries consume resources, affecting the retailer's financial position and, therefore, the company's performance. Suppliers who want to provide a competitive advantage will work more efficiently to improve the delivery time to deliver to the market on time (Hanghøj, 2015: 16).

The fifth is manufacturers' prices and marketing campaigns (Skytte & Blunch, 2005: 102). Retailers are extremely sensitive to price stability. For example, a 5% increase in the supplier's product price is a rate that cannot be accepted unless there is a major problem with production. The last one is the recognition of the opportunity to buy on credit. Retailers who want to take advantage of this tend to work with wholesalers who sell futures. In today's competitive trade transactions, retailers are allowed to pay the wholesaler partially on credit.. Thanks to this advantage, retailers can defer their payments interest-free until the end of the month within the allowed period (Jamal et al., 2000: 59). On the other hand, it will be an important capital for retailers to develop long-term relationships with their suppliers while buying goods. According to Lourens (2014: 66), by establishing long-term relationships, both brand loyalty and trust will be achieved, as well as significant advantages for the manufacturer and retailer. According to the author, brand loyalty is effective in retailers' behavior to subsequent purchases.

3. METHOD

3.1. Research Model and Scope

In this study, the problems faced by each retailer during its past or current buying activities were presented separately, within its conditions, and as

is. In this aspect, the research is of the single screening model type and describes its current form what problems retailers have in buying (Karasar, 2014). In this study, the problems faced by retailers regarding supplier selection criteria, on-time delivery, payments, product quality, and price are described by open-ended questions. Such descriptive experiments on retail businesses can contribute to the solution of problems. On the other hand, the research shows exploratory properties. An exploratory study is desirable to conduct a detailed source scan and conduct interviews with relevant people. The first author currently works as an organizational procurement and supply officer at a large company. The second author has a year of experience as an organizational purchasing officer in Istanbul. Therefore, both authors had the opportunity to observe the retailers they bought goods from had with their suppliers. Therefore, the industrial experiences and interpretations of these two authors are included in the findings. With such exploratory studies, researchers can contribute to theory development by synthesizing information from theoretical and practical sources relevant to the purpose of the study with their knowledge (Dul & Hak, 2008: 38, 51).

Authorities of retailers operating in Istanbul, Tekirdag, and Edirne provinces in eight business lines in Turkey were covered by the research. These retailers are food-supermarket, textile-ready to wear-apparel, spare parts, hardware/hardware store, work safety equipment, pharmacy-pharmaceutical-cosmetics, stationery, and electronic goods. Coyne (1997) and Neuman and Robson (2014) note that large samples are not needed to provide qualitative data; detailed and rich content samples are sufficient. On the other hand, Strauss and Corbin (2014) emphasize that qualitative studies are carried out with a limited number of purposeful samplings. As part of the research, 43 retailers (commercial buyers) were selected using purposeful sampling methods. 19 of the retailers operate in Istanbul, 16 in Edirne, and 8 in Tekirdag city center. All retailers operate in the Thrace region of Turkey.

3.2. Data Collection Tools and Features

The survey, interview, observation, and so forth as a data collection tool in descriptive research methods are used; multiple-choice, open-end, fill-in, etc., measurement tools consisting of questions can be used. In this study, a Semi-Structured Interview Form was used. The interview form consists of two parts. The first section contained five demographic questions (gender, age, marital status, education, and professional experience/seniority). On the other hand, the second part contained five open-ended questions in addition to categorized, classified, purposeful questions. The main questions in the interview form related to supplier selection criteria, timely delivery, payments, product quality, and pricing problems.

3.3. Data Collection

Interviews were conducted by phone due to the covid-19 pandemic. In addition, as retailers spread over a wide geographic area, reasons such as saving costs, providing fast data, and making it easier to pre-test have forced interviews to be conducted over the phone (Wrenn et al. 2002; De Vaus, 2002; Ruane, 2005; Fielding & Thomas, 2008). Some hard-to-reach retailers were easily reached by phone, and negotiations were completed. In phone calls, retailers answered the questions more quickly because they did not have anyone near to be affected. Each interview lasted 10-20 minutes. According to Gillham (2005), phone calls are more tiresome and more challenging to maintain concentration. So it should be kept short. Hill et al. (2002) indicate that phone calls should last 10-15 minutes. The data obtained is qualitative. Telephone interviews continued for over a month (from April to May 2021).

3.4. Data Analysis

Qualitative findings obtained from systematically asked and open-ended questions in the interview form were collected by hand. The data collected were subjected to Discourse Analysis. Some concepts and expressions used by participants in the qualitative analysis process were evaluated as units of analysis. The collected data has been read repeatedly and converted into descriptive information. Necessary abbreviations were made, and sentences were simplified. This information is then categorically encoded and combined under the previously established concepts. Supplier selection criteria and buying problems are conceptualized and indicated in the tables. In this study, "document analysis" could also be done in a sense, like books, articles, and internet sites on the subject were also examined. In the document review, information appropriate to the purpose of the research is summarized from secondary sources.

3.5. Validity - Reliability and Generalization

It is stated how the data were collected from secondary and primary sources and the stages through which they were analyzed. In particular, some of the data obtained in the interviews are presented in summary tables in comparison. Some statements of the participants were conveyed as they were. (see Seidman, 2006: 125). The prepared

report was submitted for the approval of the participants, and their confirmation was received. All of these constitute the chain of evidence that can reveal the reliability and validity of the study. The findings and results obtained in this study may apply only to participants because each finding and conclusion applies within the retailers' natural conditions. Therefore, it would not be right to perceive the results as universal.

4. FINDINGS and ANALYSIS

Demographics features: According to Table 1, the majority of respondents were female (58.1%), between the ages of 31-40 (37.2 %), and married (58.1 %). The majority of participants are graduates (46,5 %) and have 6-14 years of professional experience (46,5 %).

Table 1. Demographics (n = 43)

Variables	Groups	F	%
Gender	Male	18	41,9
	Female	25	58,1
	Total	43	100,0
Age	30 years and younger	4	9,3
	31-40 years old	16	37,2
	41-50 years old	13	30,2
	51 years and older	10	23,3
	Total	43	100,0
Marital Status	Married	25	58,1
	Single	18	41,9
	Total	43	100,0
Education	High school and less	19	44,2
	Associates' degree	3	7,0
	Bachelors' degree	20	46,5
	Masters' degree	1	2,3
	Total	43	100,0
Professional Experience/ Seniority	5 years or less	4	9,3
	6-14 years	20	46,5
	15-24 years	8	18,6
	25 years or more	11	25,6
	Total	43	100,0

According to Table 2, the majority of retailers are food-supermarket (20.9 %), textile-ready to wear-apparel (20.9 %), pharmaceutical-cosmetics (11.6 %), hardware-hardware store (11.6 %) and spare parts (11,6%). More than half of retailers have been in business for 15 years or more. Most of the retailers are in Istanbul.

Table 2. Findings on Retail Establishments (n = 43)

Variables	Groups	F	%
Industries	Food-Cleaning-Supermarket	9	20,9
	Textile-Clothing-Apparel	9	20,9
	Pharmaceutical and Cosmetics (Pharmacy)	5	11,6
	Hardware/Hardware store	5	11,6
	Spare Parts	5	11,6
	Work safety equipment	4	9,3
	Electronics / sensor-items	3	7,0
	Stationery	3	7,0
	Total	43	100,0
Operating Period	5 years or less	1	2,3
	6-14 years	19	44,2
	15-24 years	10	23,3
	25 years or more	13	30,2
	Total	43	100,0
City (Place of establishment)	Istanbul	19	44,2
	Edirne	16	37,2
	Tekirdag	8	18,6
	Total	43	100,0

Supplier selection criteria: The interviewers' similar and different criteria for selecting suppliers are given in Table 3. The statement of a spare parts retailer that when choosing a supplier, the headings which are paid the most attention to are "consistent prices, product quality, after-sales support, availability and delivery time" is noteworthy. Another authority said, "We always prioritize whether the products are Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) when choosing a supplier". Reliability is the most critical issue, according to an electronics retailer authority. Other retailer authorities said they were most concerned with "reliability, price and lead-time" during the supplier selection process when making purchases.

Table 3. Considerations for Selecting Suppliers

Industries	Similar Supplier Selection Criteria	Different Supplier Selection Criteria
Electronics	past buying experiences, reliability, price, quality, time and duration of delivery, branded product, products guarantee	after-sales support
Hardware/Hardware store		not being a distributor, after-sales support
Work safety equipment		becoming a quick solution partner
Food		promotions
Textile-Clothing-Apparel		convenience in payment, manufacturing errors and returns, continuity
Pharmaceutical and Cosmetics Pharmacy	reliability, fast delivery	being experienced, work ethic, strong financial position, variety, maturity conditions
Stationery	price, timely delivery, maturities	
Spare Parts	being an OEM, after-sales support, consistent pricing, availability, delivery time	

Problems with timely delivery: According to spare parts retailers, the most common problem is the late arrival of the product due to problems at cargo companies. There are delays due to disruptions in the production process from abroad. It is stated that there are too many procedures. Shipping, customs procedures, cargo distribution errors, wrong material arrival are the source of problems. Similar and different problems of retailers are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Problems with Timely Delivery

Industries	Similar Problems	Different Problems
Electronics	- Delays due to product deformation when shipping with cargo - Delays due to constant change of customs regulations on imported materials - Price transitions, pandemics, etc.	-Having many customs procedures on electronic products supplied from abroad
Hardware/Hardware store		-Delays in delivery times due to late shipment of franchised brands
Work safety equipment	late shipment of products under such pretexts, - Pandemic-induced delivery delays, - Customs procedures' taking too long, - Damaged, deformed, defective delivery of products	- Restriction of the purchase of certain products due to the pandemic.
Food	- Delays in delivery, - Missing product, - Spoilage and deformation	-Some wholesalers change too often, - Problems in the production of certain goods
Textile-Clothing-Apparel		- Raw material problems - Some types of fabric can not be ready at any time in the desired amount
Pharmaceutical and Cosmetics (Pharmacy)	Sometimes difficulties in finding products	- Sometimes, wrong and missing products arrive due to the pandemic.
Stationery	Torn and broken products	
Spare Parts	- Product arrives late due to cargo, - Shipping, customs procedures, cargo distribution errors... - Problems of adaptation to the term, - Delivery of wrong material	

Problems with payments: A spare parts retailer's statement that "fees are requested before the maturity period in the agreement, freight charges are requested that are not in the agreement " indicates a problem. The statement of a pharmacy manager, "Sometimes our receivables from SSI are delayed," was found meaningful. On the other hand, a food retailer expressed his reproach by saying that "due to the Covid-19 Pandemic several companies demanded payment before the maturity".

Table 5. Payment-Related Problems

Industries	Problems
Electronics	-Difficulty in persuading businesses that sell in cash to buy on futures -Giving price offers over exchange rates.
Hardware/Hardware store	
Work safety equipment	
Food	- The problem of not making a year-term deal at the beginning of the season, - Due to the pandemic, payment requests arrive before maturity
Textile-Clothing-Apparel	-Not accepting check, -Cash payment problem, -Installment problem, -Payment disruptions due to pandemic
Pharmaceutical and Cosmetics (Pharmacy)	-Delay in SSI payments, late collection
Stationery	
Spare Parts	- Delay of payments, exchange rate, invoices in foreign currency, payment maturities

Product quality-related issues: Electronics and hardware retailers state that they receive offers for goods with specific features based on their past purchasing experiences and that they have problems with having the specified qualifications. Other issues, however, are given in Table 6.

Table 6. Product Quality-Related Issues

Industries	Different Problems
Electronics	-Problem of supplying products with different levels of quality in order to respond quickly to customer needs, - Guarantee processes of products, necessary documents, to have access to all documents that companies requested and can request
Hardware/Hardware store	- Obligation to create a product range of different qualities
Work safety equipment	- Manufacturer's certificate, supply of product CE certificates. Refusal to purchase in the absence of documents
Food	-Spoiled and defective products.
Textile-Clothing-Apparel	- Fabric defects, color harmony problem, sewing problem - Obligation to have textile products at various quality levels.
Pharmacy - Pharmaceutical and Cosmetics	- TSE stamp, product warranty, nationality, expiry date, packaging, and barcode number. Different quality and different prices in medical products.
Stationery	-Possession of goods of different quality, delivery of missing materials
Spare Parts	-OEM and originality -Case of a product other than the brand ordered - Compliance with quality standards - Sending defective product - Proper packaging and material durability issues

Problems with price policies: Price increases, floating exchange rate problem, increase in raw material prices are among the most critical problems. A textile retailer has stated that they have entered into a discount agreement with the supplier.

Table 7. Problems with Price Policies

Industries	Similar Problems	Different Problems
Electronics	- Creation of price contracts in foreign currency,	
Hardware/Hardware store		
Work safety equipment	- Fluctuating exchange rate problem - Price change despite fixed-price contracts - Shortening of fixed-price contract periods due to pandemic	The problem of adaptation to an instant price change in imported raw materials
Food		
Textile-Clothing-Apparel	- Cost increase in home textiles - Increase in raw material prices	Under-pricing
-Pharmaceutical and Cosmetics Pharmacy		
Stationery	Advance purchase obligation	
Spare Parts		Error in comparing the prices of original and sub-industry products

5. DISCUSSION

The purpose of the purchasing function in enterprises is to provide the goods and services needed from the right source, at the right price, at the right time, in the correct quantity and quality (Lysons & Farrington, 2006: 8-9). In this regard, the problems that arise when performing the purchasing function for retailers can, directly and indirectly, impact profitability and competitive advantage.

In this study, it has been revealed that timely delivery, quality product, reasonable price, product range, reliability, after-sales support, and experience are the most crucial supplier selection criteria for retailers. According to the research results of Skytte and Blunch (2005: 110), overall promotion, consistency, market knowledge, the ability to provide a wide range of products, and supplier reputation are the essential criteria for retailers. In this study, especially product range, trust and promotions emerged as standard criteria considered essential. According to Verma and Pullman (1998: 739), quality, cost, and delivery performance are the most crucial supplier selection criteria for purchasing authorities. According to Makhita (2017), independent retailers consider product quality, cost, and delivery time the most important criteria for selecting suppliers. In today's competitive world, most businesses are also looking to reduce costs and improve product quality. In some sectors, about 70 percent of the costs relate to details about purchasing (Mirzaee et al. 2018: 292).

In this study, one of the most common problems retailers face when purchasing is late delivery due to cargo. Some retailers are overcoming this problem by working with large suppliers who can respond to high-volume orders. The second problem in delivery is the delivery of perishable products without breaking the cold chain. This is a significant issue for food retailers. For retailers, delivery time is seen as one of the most important decision criteria in purchasing (Silva, Davies & Naude, 2002). According to Skytte and Blunch (2005: 119-120), one of the problems for retailers is delivery. According to the study of Mina et al. (2020: 24), the delivery criterion has a significant impact on determining the final suppliers. The ability of the supplier to quickly meet repeated orders ranks first in the retailer's decision criterion (Banting & Blenkhorn, 1988). In this study, it was especially noticeable that food retailers did not indicate such a problem. Duration and logistics services are perceived risks associated with delivery when purchasing. Duration and logistics services are perceived risks associated with delivery when purchasing (Juha & Pentti, 2008: 259). For example, warehouse facilities and timely distribution in the retail industry in India have been cited as critical infrastructure and logistics problems (Nagpal & Sinha, 2017: 23).

One of the critical problems in this study is deterioration in product quality, delivery of missing and faulty goods. It is essential to deliver the correct goods to the right place at the right time. It is noted that there is a lack of efficient supply chain management in India (Nagpal & Sinha, 2017: 23). According to Lourens ' (2014: 39-40) study, retailers buy brands that consistently show high quality. Forslund and Jonsson (2010: 227) note that the type, quantity, and correct delivery of ordered goods can pose serious purchasing problems for trade buyers. Product quality is one of the perceived risks in purchasing (Juha & Pentti, 2008: 259), and it is one of the criteria that comes first in the decision-making process of retailers (Banting & Blenkhorn, 1988). The research result of Makhita (2017)

supports this view. Retailers selling automotive spare parts consider product range and product quality as two crucial factors in customer satisfaction when choosing suppliers (Pandiya & Rahman, 2014).

Another major issue that has arisen concerns payments. Some suppliers have early payment requests from retailers. It has been noted that the pandemic mainly causes this problem. In today's competitive business transactions, retailers (buyers) are allowed to pay the wholesaler partially on credit. The fact that retailers can pay the wholesaler on a term basis rather than immediately after receiving the product provides a significant advantage. Thanks to this advantage, retailers can postpone their payments until the end of the month within the allowed period. The customer does not pay any interest within the time allowed for payment, but interest will be charged if the payment is delayed during that period (Jamal et al., 2000: 59). Retailers who want to take advantage of this will tend to work with wholesalers who sell futures.

Another problem is that retailers collect their receivables late. Long-term relationships between buyer and seller can solve such payment problems. In their research findings, several retailers have already stated that although they are contracted, they continue to have this kind of problem with the good faith relationships they have established between them. The study also captured clues that retailers prefer to maintain a long-term relationship with a particular supplier company. According to Skytte and Blunch (2001: 134), the product can be traced along the value chain at the purchase stage of the retailers, and the establishment and development of a long-term relationship between the buyer and the seller are significant in meeting the needs of the consumers. According to Skytte and Blunch (2005: 121-123), long-term relationships and traceability are problems for retailers. The goal of long-term relationships is to establish good dialogue, trust, and long-term payment methods. Traceability is a significant issue for retailers. Traceability is sharing information with retailers about the stages through which products are made, and ultimately consumers demand this information from retailers before purchasing products. In this study, price mismatches due to fluctuating exchange rates emerged as another problem. At this point, it is understood that retailers are susceptible to prices, so they are monitoring price stability. In Lourens's (2014: 39-40) study, price appreciation has emerged as an essential factor when retailers purchase a brand. According to the research results of Bahng and Kincade (2014:

651), the most critical factors affecting the decision of ready-to-wear textile companies are saleability, profit ratio, and fashion trend in order of importance. Despite the strategic importance of supplier selection, many companies still consider price performance as the only determinant when choosing a supplier. However, just evaluating the price criterion is not the appropriate approach because, for the selection process to be successful, many other factors must be considered (Taherdoost & Brard, 2019: 1028-1029).

The findings of this study were consistent with the relevant literature. For example, delivery time and duration, product quality, reasonable price, reliability, experience, after-sales support, and customer relations are critical in selecting suppliers for retailers. On the other hand, as stated in the tables above, the problems experienced by retailers in terms of deadline compliance, quality, price, and payments are similar to the work of many authors and include different aspects.

6. LIMITATION AND FUTURE STUDIES

Some retailers who were interviewed in advance did not want to participate in this research. Therefore, it was not possible to include different retailers from more industry branches in the study. In addition, since the data collection was made over the phone, there was no opportunity to observe.

This study, especially retail chains (food, textiles, hardware, etc.), was excluded from the research. Therefore, it could not be determined what retailers pay attention to in the supplier selection criteria and what problems they face in buying. Research has been limited in this aspect. However, buying problems of only the chain retailers with their suppliers can be made a separate study. On the other hand, unlike this issue, the problems faced by those who work as purchasing managers (purchasing department) of enterprises in various industries in corporate purchasing can be investigated and compared with qualitative data.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study, retailers' supplier selection criteria and what common and different buying problems were discovered using a semi-structured phone interview form. In the analysis, it was observed that factors such as timely delivery, product quality, reasonable price, reliability, experience, after-sales customer relations are the most important common factors in selecting suppliers, and these factors overlap with the literature. As part of the research, it was found that retailers faced problems with buying due to delivery time and duration, quality, payments, fluctuating exchange rates, and pricing. The results

of this research will contribute to reducing the purchasing risks of retailers and increasing their total value. With this research, it has been revealed that retailers should develop long-term, permanent and stable relationships with their suppliers. These results can be compared with the results of similar studies to be conducted in different countries. This kind of qualitative data can help the theory and hypothesis development studies on the subject. The emergence of common and/or different findings about different retailers in this study makes the research even more important. Based on the findings and results of the research, it is possible to make the following recommendations for interested parties. Retailers will be able to save time, energy and money by facilitating their purchasing work and transactions with some measures they can take in practice.

1.Retail companies need to create a correct purchasing and procurement structure to eliminate buying problems and survive in increasing and changing competitive conditions. Thus, retailers will be able to establish more accurate purchasing decision criteria.

2.Suppliers need to know that retailers are not a homogeneous group.

3.Suppliers can understand retailer market types and divide them into segments by considering the age, gender, experience, and perceptions of retail buyers.

4.Retailers should talk to the supplier in detail about the products from the beginning, and the contract should be made. During the agreement, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that the binding rules are included in the contract.

5.Retailers should check the expiry dates of the products at the time of receiving.

6.Preliminary examinations should be made, and businesses with complete documents whose permits have been obtained within the scope of the relevant legislation of the Ministry should be worked with.

7.In order to overcome the problem of the product not being delivered on time during the procurement process, food retailers can keep their warehouse stock over 1 month. In addition, they should try to overcome this by stating the working conditions and rules to the vendor.

8.Retailers can look for ways to coordinate with other branches to meet customer needs.

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