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USE OF PERCEPTUAL MAPS IN THE POSITIONING STRATEGIES OF THE ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES¹

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to investigate the use of perceptual (positioning) maps in the positioning strategies of accommodation facilities. Based on the market shares of five-star hotels regarding the use of positioning maps; the prepared maps according to levels “Strategic Planning and Marketing Research Application”, “Strategic Planning and Market Classification”, “Strategic Planning and Occupancy”, “Strategic Planning and Target Marketing” and “Market Classification and Occupancy Rates” are given as examples. As a result of the study, it was concluded that perceptual maps can be used by particularly marketing managers in accommodation facilities and by all decision makers in the facility and so the managers can easily and quickly analyze and decide on positioning strategies in the process of strategic marketing planning.

Keywords: Perceptual Map, Positioning Strategies, Accommodation Facilities

ÖZET

Çalışmanın amacı, konaklama işletmelerinin konumlandırma stratejilerinde algılama (konumlandırma) haritalarının kullanılmasını araştırmaktır. Konumlandırma haritalarının kullanılması ile ilgili olarak beş yıldızlı otel işletmelerinin sahip oldukları pazar payları esas alındığında “Stratejik Planlama ve Pazarlama Araştırması Uygulama”, “Stratejik Planlama ve Pazar Bölümlendirme”, “Stratejik Planlama ve Doluluk”, “Stratejik Planlama ve Hedef Pazarlama” ve “Pazar Bölümlendirme ve Doluluk Oranları” düzeylerine göre hazırlanmış olan konumlandırma haritaları örnek olarak verilmiştir. Çalışma sonucunda, algılama haritalarının konaklama işletmelerinde başta pazarlama yöneticileri olmak üzere işletmedeki tüm karar vericiler tarafından kullanılabilmesi, yöneticilere stratejik pazarlama planlaması sürecinde konumlandırma stratejileri konusunda analiz yapma ve karar almada kolaylık ve hız sağlayacağı sonucuna varılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Algılama Haritası, Konumlandırma Stratejileri, Konaklama İşletmeleri

1. INTRODUCTION

The accommodation sector, which is the leading of the tourism sector, offers many abstract and tangible products and services to the customers such as accommodation, eating and drinking, leisure, recreation, meeting, relaxation etc. Examples of abstract products; peace, satisfaction, memory, atmosphere, landscape, quality, prestige etc. The increasing demand on such products and services and the plurality of similar facilities increase the competition in the accommodation sector. On the other hand, the facilities are aware of making a difference in their products and services and they are in an innovational search of the offered products and services and management perception.

The rapid change of consumer preferences in changing market conditions makes the competition more important in the accommodation sector. It is of vital importance that managers make strategic decisions correctly and quickly. It is important that being market- and customer-oriented, analysis of obtained datas from the market and customers, evaluation and realistic interpretation of findings provide convenience to decision makers. It is the responsibility of especially the managers of the marketing department and all managers in the facility to ensure that the success of the facilities has a positive

¹ Bu çalışma Uğurlu, K. (2007)'nin “Konaklama İşletmelerinde Pazar Bölümlendirme ve Hedef Pazar Belirleme Stratejileri: İstanbul'daki 5 Yıldızlı Oteller Üzerine Bir Araştırma”, adlı doktora tezinden üretilmiştir.

position in the minds of the consumers. One of the issues, that needs to be considered by the facilities in the strategic marketing process, is positioning strategies to differentiate from their competitors in the market and to create a good perception in consumers' minds and the instrument, which they can use for this, is the positioning (perceptual) maps.

In this study, it is given the detailed information on positioning strategies in accommodation facilities and on positioning (perceptual) maps as an instrument used in positioning strategies and examples of applications in accommodation facilities are available.

2. POSITIONING STRATEGIES IN ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES

Many changes occur every day in worldwide. Human population is increasing, demographic characteristics of people become different; the needs, wishes and desires of the people are varying, technology reaches rapidly to higher levels, so the markets are changing and new markets are emerging. It is not easy for the businesses to offer the product and services that can address to all markets and it has also become increasingly difficult for them to be accepted by consumers. In parallel with these developments, it is needed to develop a marketing combination according to the needs, wishes and desires of each group by separating the consumers in the potential markets into homogeneous groups as possible (Mucuk, 1991: 188; Yükselen, 1998: 205; Sahilli Birdir, 2015: 3). The fact that demands and needs of the consumers are in the same direction, does not make it possible to mention the market classification. Although there are many similar products in tourism markets today due to the characteristics of the tourism product; changes in people's living conditions and buying behaviors has increased the competition to the top level. Businesses who want to keep competitive power should market-oriented restructure. For this reason and rather than the market classification; a special marketing approach, which is almost enough to recognize people who will be involved in individual marketing, began to dominate in tourism markets (Uğurlu, 2007: 223).

As a result of market classification, businesses choose the suitable markets for them and try to get information on the targeting markets in order to make an appropriate marketing combination for the chosen markets. The aim is trying to explain the doubts as much as possible whether the profitability, benefit, market attractiveness etc. will continue in targeting markets. By making a marketing combination for the markets which clear their doubts, the businesses began to develop positioning strategies for target markets at the final stage (Uğurlu, 2007: 123; Yükselen, 2008: 187; Cop, Candaş ve Akşit: 2012: 36-40; Kotler and Armstrong, 2018: 212-213). The positioning is a process of monitoring, determining, applying the opinions, perceptions, satisfaction, using levels, habits and similar behavior and attitudes of consumers about the enterprise, products and services in the market department (in the target market) in which the business carries the trade activities and making positive the perceptions of the consumers in comparison with the competitors (Altunışık and others, 2002: 138; Kotler and Armstrong, 2001: 269-270; Levinson and Lautenslager, 2006: 63; Kotler and Armstrong, 2018: 212-213).

2.1. Market Classification Strategy

Market classification is to divide the market into different groups in order to offer different marketing combinations to each department, considering that the needs, wishes and behaviors of consumers are different from each other (Kotler and others, 2002: 354). The market classification strategy includes the application and development of different marketing programs for different parts of the whole market (Blattberg and Sen, 1974: 17). Kotler and Keller (2006) recommended that the market could be classified based on geographic, demographic, psychographic and behavioral variables. However, classification (segmentation) means grouping the market at the level of individual consumers. These consumers want to provide marketing components to meet their products, services and needs.

In this context, the enterprises search the necessary methods to fulfill the desires of consumers. There the market classification should be consumer-oriented, define their heterogeneous needs, desires and wishes and classify the similarities as homogeneous groups. According to different homogeneous consumer groups, different product and marketing programs (marketing combination) need to be developed. It can be given as an example the fact that a brand of shampoo markets products with different characteristics for different needs and desires of consumers.

Market classification is an issue related to the market. Markets consist of the consumers and these consumers have different characteristics from each other. The consumers are different from each other by their needs, assets, settlements, buying behaviors and buying actions. One of these variables can be used to classify the market (Uğurlu, 2007: 70). Market classification is a marketing strategy that takes care of consumers as a necessity of contemporary marketing concept and at the same time takes care to keep the profitability of the company at the highest level. Businesses analyze the market better with market classification. It can determine not only the needs and desires of consumers, but also the other dynamics of the market (eg competition level). Businesses, that can monitor consumers' differences and purchasing behaviors, competitors' strategies, change and mobility of products and services in the market, can gain knowledge and skills to determine the requirements, standards and budget of each market segment like market classification. When considered from this point of view, the market classification is a strategic marketing planning that enables the businesses to use their resources correctly. It is more likely to develop the customer loyalty as a result of directing all of its facilities to market department (O'shaughnessy, 1984: 91).

2.2. Strategy of Target Market Determination

Market classification follows the target marketing strategy. The business may want to participate in one or several market departments, in which it believes to be successful. Target marketing strategy actually consists of the stages of positioning strategy (Brooksbank, 1994: 10). These are target customers, target competitors and competitive advantage. The most important stage of market classification is primarily the identification of target customers as previously mentioned. During the market classification, the most profitable, most attractive markets for the business are preferred. According to the results of the final analysis; the business will be able to define the affecting factors on many markets such as various consumers, competing enterprises, brokerage firms, manufacturing enterprises, similar products and services in the market, different sectors, state elements and laws, technology etc. Especially decisions on who the customers and potential customers are, will guide which market department the businesses should target. Competitors are just as important as customers for the survival of the businesses. Therefore, the businesses should compare to their strengths and weaknesses with their competitors in the targeting market departments and they should take the necessary investment and measures. The fact that competition is not well defined will undoubtedly be the greatest vital threat to businesses. As a value provider, having superior sides of a business is a competitive advantage compared to its competitors. Businesses can determine their market position based on their competitive advantage. By the fact that the applied strategies of the business are acceptable by the consumers, this position may be better or worse than its competitors. The business should always try to recognize new potential benefits and differences in order to make a strong competitive advantage (Kotler and Armstrong, 2018: 231). The businesses can decide to participate in the target markets with one of not-differentiated, differentiated or concentrated marketing strategies. The business can want to apply its marketing combination (or marketing combinations) to participate in market departments by not-changing, changing or concentrating on a single market according to these strategies. However it is important, whether the resources and facilities of the business are appropriate for the market. Many factors (product, structure of the market, competition etc.) in the market department in which the business wants to participate, can both restrict the activities of the business and need to be careful in the choice of strategy.

Kotler and Armstrong (2001: 387) stated that business resources, product change, product life cycle stage, market changing and the marketing strategies of competitors are effective in the selection of target marketing strategies.

Accordingly, the resources of the business are the limited; then the business will use the concentrated marketing strategy. Business will use non-differentiated marketing strategy for similar homogeneous products and use differentiated or concentrated marketing strategy for the products with different designs and specifications. If the product is new in the market, the differentiated marketing strategy will be preferred until consumers are accustomed to the product. When the competition increased and the product reached to the maturity cycle; the business may prefer a differentiated marketing strategy to increase the sales and market satisfaction. If the needs, wishes and buying behaviors of consumers in the market are similar to each other, the business will use non-differentiated marketing strategy. Finally,

if competitors are using undifferentiated marketing strategy, the business should absolutely use differentiated marketing strategy or concentrated marketing strategy (Uğurlu, 2007: 142).

2.3. Positioning Strategy

According to Doyle (1983); positioning strategy means target market selection. It defines the customers in the target market that a business wants to reach, the different advantages of the market and how the business can compete with competitors in this market department. According to this definition, the positioning strategy should be applied only in certain markets and major products and services. It should not be confused with a specific part (product strategy or pricing strategy) of company's corporate strategy or marketing combination (Brooksbank, 1994: 10).

According to Yükselen (2008: 190) the positioning is to improve the image of a product directly against competing products and other products of this company. Kotler (2000: 298) defines the positioning "the proposal and image of a business is to design a movement to occupy a certain place in the opinion of the targeting market". According to the definitions, the purpose of the positioning strategies of the business is to be able to benefit from the attractiveness of the market in order to be successful in the market department of the the business, to have a good position in the minds of consumers and to ensure that the image of the business is in a good position in comparison with its competitors. Positioning within a general framework; can be defined as defining and monitoring the dynamics of the market, especially consumers and competitors and the process of determining and applying the needs, wishes and desires, purchasing behaviors, feelings, thoughts, attitudes and perceptions of consumers to place the business, its products and services in the best position of the consumers' perception upon the resources and opportunities of the business in comparison with its competitors in the target markets. The positioning strategy has an exceptional importance in market classification, determination and implementing of target market and positioning strategies, while the businesses are starting a new market or introducing a new product and service to the market. Because creating a strong brand or product perception in the minds of consumers is a serious success.

If the business cannot provide this, all market efforts disappear instantly, the business loses favor with the consumer, loses its market shares and so disappears in the market. Positioning means being in a good position in the market. Position refers to current and potential customers' opinions and thoughts about a specific brand, product and business in comparison with its competitors (Etzel and others, 2004). The businesses try to transfer their knowledge, skills and resources etc. and their all advantages to targeting markets and to find the most appropriate positioning strategies, since the positioning is important for the existence and success of the business. For example, Crawford (1985) put forward that the businesses can make the positioning in the minds of consumers with three positioning strategies that will be used to advertise the products and services in the businesses. These; positioning based on the characteristics of the product, positioning based on various product advantages, and positioning based on substitution values (product value for potential customers) (Crawford, 1985: 243-253). Unlike researchers argue that product-oriented positioning differs from service-oriented positioning; some researchers developed a new typology based on customers' views by criticizing these positioning strategies that do not take into account customers' views.

According to the typology of Blankson and Kalafatis (2015); the following scales should be considered in the positioning models: giving priority to equality between products at the same level, value-added, reliability, attractiveness, country of origin, innovation, brand and product social class etc. Indeed, these scales are not just for products, they can be used in services. The consumers do not take pleasure only in concrete products (eg hotel rooms) by buying or consuming a tourism product, they also takes pleasure in abstract services (the view of the hotel room) and they can repeat these experiences.

2.4. Positioning Strategy in Accomodation Facilities

When the literature is examined, it is seen that positioning strategies can be positioned according to competitor, product class and feature, price and quality and target market (Sahilli Birdir, 2015: 167). Accommodation sector is one of the most competitive sectors with the businesses which sell concrete and abstract tourism product. Making a difference with its products and services and effectively using the product's advantages is essential to be successful in competition. Likewise, it is not just the

accommodation that consumers do not expect only the accommodation need from accommodation facilities. Consumers compare the accommodation facilities upon their experience in aspect of the quality, price, services, products and many features of the facilities and they are positioning the accommodation facilities their minds.

The businesses that meet ideally the expectations of consumers can find a good position for them in the market. Businesses in the accomodation sector with different concepts against competition brought innovative management approach to the service sector. Similar hotels to Titanic passenger ship, Topkapi Palace, cave hotels, hotels at treetops or ice hotels, eco-hotels etc. are the among of the examples of accommodation facilities. Hotels are positioned not only with their economy, service, reliability, quality, but also with different unforgettable experiences in the minds of consumers. Differences in products and services enable that the businesses attract the customers not only in their segment but also the customers in the other segments. At the same time, their famous and brand value will so increase in the tourism sector with these features.

Consumers tend to a price-sensitive purchase, not only in the accomodation sector, but also in almost every sector. Therefore, the businesses adopt the price-based positioning strategies in their positioning strategies. For example; the classification such as economics, luxury, delux hotels emphasizes the quality of the products and services offered by businesses and is an understanding that the demand does not ignore the ability to pay. The facilities such as hostel, apart hotel, guest house, social facility etc. have been positioned in the market as businesses that offer economic products and services directly to price-sensitive customers.

Accommodation facilities also want to position themselves according to the target market. Because of the reasons such as holiday and rest, business, health, adventure, luxury, exotic or authentic, economical etc; the consumers know which hotel they must choose. On the other hand, hotels are aware of their customer portfolio. The businesses are focusing more on the market (customer) to protect or increase their competitiveness; the consumers are making more intuitive and conscientious purchases in order not to be disappointed.

3. USE OF PERCEPTUAL MAPS IN POSITIONING STRATEGIES

In the process of strategic marketing planning of the businesses, one of the instruments, which they use in the positioning strategies of especially products, services, brands etc., is the perceptual maps. The perceptual maps are also called positioning maps, brand maps and spatial maps. (Rothschild, 1987). The special importance of the perceptual maps is to submit the market visually to the decision maker (Üner, 1998: 4).

The perceptual maps are used to obtain the required information when they make important decisions and in positioning studies, such as how decision makers perceive the products and services by consumers, what should be reviewed in products and services as a result of detection and how they should produce a product and service. Because the perceptual maps need to be positioned products and services according to the features used in the evaluation (Urban ve Hauser, 1980: 186; Mowen and Minor, 1998). The perceptual map shows on a a graph how the consumers perceive the significant characteristics or differences about product, service, brand etc. in comparison with their competitors. This map is drawn according to the opinions of consumers. The perceptual map describes sometimes a product or a project for a marketer, enables to see deeply and compare many differences or features on a graph as well as practical, contributes to the consumer's perception and positioning about the product, in other words, it is a summary report with visual quality of the product.

The perceptual map in Figure 1 shows the comparison of hotels in terms of price-service quality. The graphic on this map which was drawn upon the opinions as a result of customers' accommodation experiences shows that “Grand and Regency” hotels are among the hotels with high quality service and high-priced luxury hotels and “Castle, Alexander IV and Airport Plaza” hotels is among the normal hotels with inadequate service quality and less expensive price (www.wisdomjobs.com, 2018).

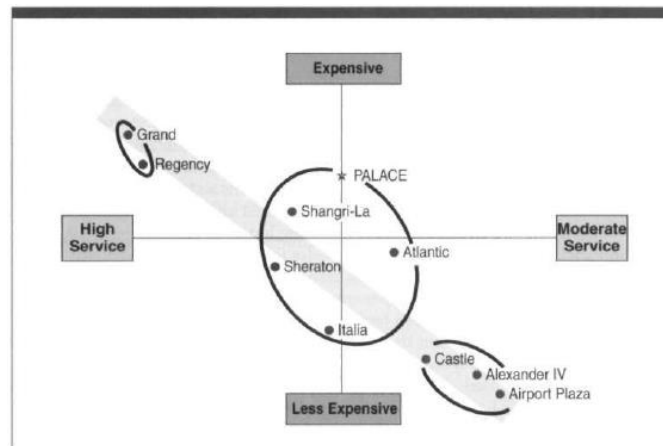


Figure 1. Comparison of Hotels in Terms of Price-Quality

3.1. Perceptual Maps

The businesses use two measurement methods as directly and indirectly for target market determination and positioning strategies. Direct measurement method is about the consumer buying behaviors (thoughts on the brand, features and benefits of the product); If the consumers do not want to say their thoughts about the product and service measurement, indirect measurement method is used as a measurement method. The most commonly using measurement method by businesses is indirect measurement method (Bulut, 2005: 37; Erdem: 2000: 25).

Perceptual maps are one of the indirect measurement methods used in positioning strategies. Others are preference maps and multidimensional scaling. One of the important instruments that business managers can use for their decision on positioning and one of visual instruments and one of the most widely used instruments is perceptual maps (Sahilli Birdir, 2015: 172). There are many definitions related to the perceptual maps. According to Myers (1996: 119); the perceptual maps are issued to place or determine the consumer perception of products or brands on an area and are based on quantitative and qualitative approaches. Hair and others (1995: 487) define the perceptual maps a visual illustration of object perceptions of respondent in two or more dimensions. According to the Lilien and Rangaswamy (2003: 119); perceptual map is a graphic illustration of competing alternatives in metric space (euclidean distance model). According to another definition, the perceptual map is a position update of the products in a market (Üner, 1998: 4). In the light of these definitions, perceptual maps can be defined as a visual instrument that shows the position of products, services or brands in consumers' minds compared to competitors. In perceptual maps; the visualization is firstly provided putting forth the current status of the market, then comparative coordinates are obtained marking horizontally and vertically the products or brands according to the responses obtained from consumer research on the current map. So the decision makers can see their position of their products, services or brands in the minds of consumers by making a comparison with their competitors or the characteristics of the products (price, quality, service, satisfaction, etc.) on the map.

The brands using the perceptual maps can be presented graphically according to consumer evaluation of their properties (Bijmolt and Van de Velden, 2012). On the perceptual maps, consumer research is required to identify the features that allow marking the product or brands on map (Dibb and others, 1996: 94-95).

3.2. Using Criteria and Techniques in the Arrangement of Perceptual Maps

Perceptual mapping technique is used by marketers for new product design, advertising, point of sale and many other marketing issues. The different perceptual mapping techniques are used which the cognitive dimensions consumers use to evaluate a product and to determine the relative positions of these dimensions. For example, Green and Wind (1973), used similarity scaling to define the basic dimensions used in the combined analysis. Pessemier (1977), applied discriminant analysis to produce common area maps used for new product design in DESIGNR model. Hauser and Urban (1977) used factor analysis to define the consumer perception and innovation opportunities, consumers' response to

innovation in modeling methods. All of these researchers demonstrated empirical studies involving perceptual mapping techniques in various product and service categories. If the perceptual maps are used correctly, they can be useful to identify the opportunities in the market, to encourage the creativity and to determine the marketing strategies according to the target market (Hauser and Koppelman, 1979: 495). In order to make perceptual maps, feature based and non-feature-based measurement methods are used. According to the non-feature-based approach; the perceptual maps are based on consumers' perceptions of similarities or differences related to competing brands. According to the feature-based approach; the perceptual maps are based on the evaluations of the brands in terms of predetermined features of consumers. Considering that the businesses do not want to bear the cost of data collection with simultaneously many measurement methods (Hauser and Koppelman, 1979: 495; it is important to determine which measurement method will provide more complete and accurate data. In this respect, it can be useful to examine the similarities and differences between the perceptual maps prepared by the analysis of the data obtained from various measurement methods. (Eryiğit, 2014: 248-249).

Three main techniques are prominent in approach of the perceptual maps to marketing problems. These are similarity scaling, factor analysis and discriminant analysis. In fact, although similarity scaling techniques are more difficult and more expensive than factor or discriminant analysis, most of the interest is on the similarity scale, because of the the assumption that similarity measures are more accurate perception criteria than direct feature points (Hauser and Koppelman, 1979: 495).

Another comparison approach is Monte Carlo simulation technique. This research instrument was used by researchers for similarity scaling to investigate differences in other techniques (Carmone and others, 1978; Cattin and Wittink, 1976; Pekelman and Sen, 1977). Monte Carlo simulation in perceptual mapping can compare the ability of various techniques to reproduce a hypothetical perceptual map. However, the researcher should be able to assume the basic cognitive structure of the individual. Whereas Monte Carlo simulation leaves the empirical question unanswered, whether the analytical technique can adequately describe and foresee the cognitive structure of a real consumer. As a result, the techniques should be compared by marketing researchers to decide which of these techniques to be used. Because a behavior based scale can make more useful propositions than similarity scaling technique. It should be considered that each technique can have sufficient and insufficient aspects.

3.3. Use of Perceptual Maps in Positioning Strategies

The use of perceptual maps in the brand and product positioning strategies of the businesses provides to see the market together with its differences. Marketing managers can define easier each market segment with different characteristics, they can compare competing products with each other and their products in each market segment. By determining the severity of competition, they can determine to which criteria the consumers give priority on their purchasing decisions. Thus, in the next phase, the business will have the opportunity to determine the new strategies and targets that can improve its competitiveness with the help of the perceptual maps. Businesses can use their perceptual maps not only for a new product, but also for the positioning of an existing product (Üner and Alkibay, 2001: 82).

The most important feature of the perceptual maps is to determine the most suitable position in the minds of consumers and the gaps in the minds. In addition, each manufacturer can identify gaps on their products by perceptual maps and they can see which instruments (factors) can fill these gaps. In fact, these gaps indicate two possibilities. The business has no product (or a market opportunity) that can meet a need or a chain of needs, or no customer who has not yet heard of the need (in other words, there is no opportunity for business). If there is an opportunity, the business must find answers to such questions, whether the business has a possibility to benefit from these opportunities, whether the business has the necessary resources and skills, whether this market segment is profitable and conducive to develop and communication possibility with buyers (Najafizadeh and others 2012: 8109).

Businesses should repeat detection methods at the end of each research. Because the deviations are possible in consumers' thoughts and preferences, such that there are deviations among the products, businesses, brands and so on. Therefore, positioning maps should be updated; this requires re-positioning efforts. Deviations between the predetermined position of the business and the perceptual maps according to the new data obtained from the consumers should be determined and new strategies and targets should be determined accordingly. Businesses can also prepare perceptual maps based on

data from not only consumers but also from business partners. For example, companies supplying goods and services, wholesalers and retailers are the companies that have an important position in the production, marketing, sale, image and delivery of goods and services to the customers. It is also necessary to take into account the impact and contribution of the business partners (shareholders) in the establishment of the positioning strategies of the businesses

3.4. Use of Perceptual Maps in Accommodation Facilities

The perceptual maps are an instrument that can be used for marketing planning strategies and positioning decisions by businesses in every sector. Especially socio-economic variables such as age, gender, nationality, income and psychographic and behavioral variables such as tourist types, travel purposes, travel vehicles, travel frequencies, etc. in the classification of the tourism market and in the selection of target markets are frequently used variables by tourism establishments. In addition to the variables such as brand, product, price and quality used by other enterprises in their positioning strategies, tourism establishments also use the products and services of accommodation and food and beverage departments to determine the physical conditions and spatial locations of the facilities (room price and service quality, customers' opinions about products and services, hygiene, security, personnel attitudes and behaviors).

In Figure 2; it is seen on the perceptual map that 3 chain hotels in Istanbul are within the high price and high-quality dimensions. In other words, the target customers of this hotel will be customers who consent to pay a high price for a high quality accommodation. It can be concluded from this perceptual map that these hotels are in the category of luxury hotels in this segment.

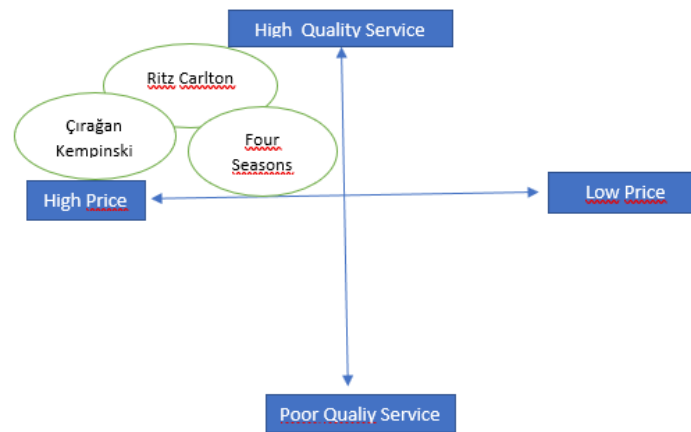


Figure 2. Market Positioning in Price-Quality Levels of 3 Hotel Chains in Istanbul

Yüksek Fiyat: Yüksek Kalite: Düşük Fiyat: Düşük Kalite Hizmet

High Price: High Quality: Low Price: Low Quality Service

It is vital important for tourism establishments that the market including consumers and competitors must be put on probation considering the similarity of the products and services marketed in tourism sector, characteristic of easily imitativensess and the consumers can easily change the brand.

The managers should follow the effects of marketing strategies as recommended by Dave and others (1995). These researchers recommend using the perceptual maps by using multi-dimensional scaling technique to identify consumer behaviors and perceptions and why consumers preferred a hotel brand instead of another and to show what the distinctive features are. Kim (1996) used perceptual maps to show how customers perceive food and drinks in competing hotels and also developed ideal points to show how a hotel can change its properties to achieve a better position than its competitors. The methodology used by Kim (1996) in the study can be used to position different products or product groups of a hotel or restaurant.

The use of price dimension in strategic positioning by Shaw (1991) is a guiding of self-positioning in a market using price by perceptual mapping techniques of hotels. According to Shaw, the price is both a strategic and tactical component and he stated that a positioning approach is focusing first on price

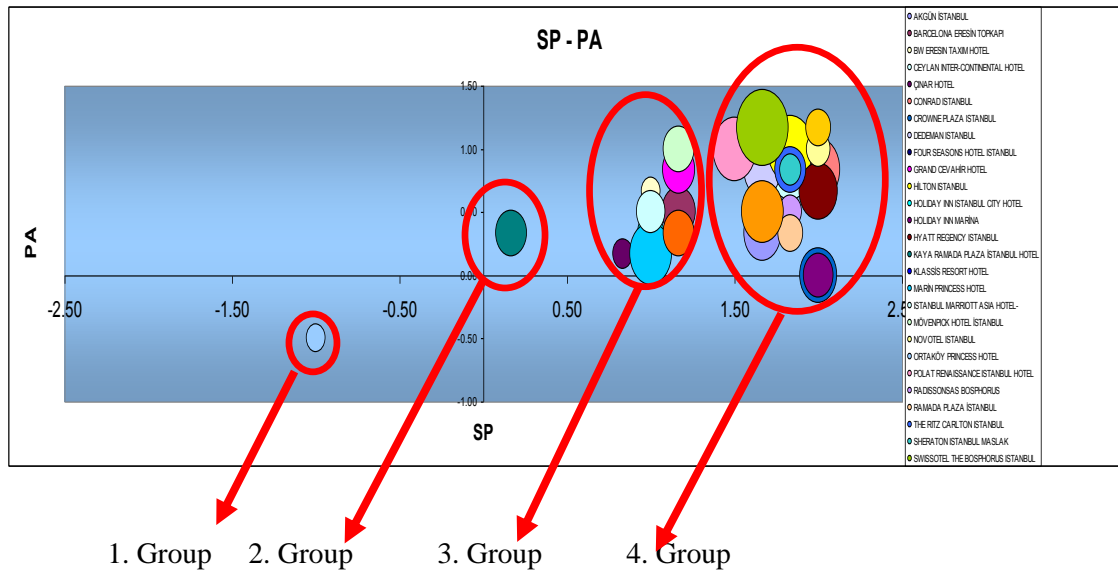
levels, then on actual price decisions of a certain product. Shaw's pricing approach can help a brand to achieve the desired position and it can be confirmed by one of the perceptual mapping techniques.

4. METHOD

4.1. Research Method

In this research, it has been tried to determine the effect of the relationship in the applications of market classification and in occupancy rates of international hotels on the sales of hotels. It has been applied to the positioning maps to find out how the participating hotels in the survey will be located assuming that the total rooms sold of the hotels participating in the survey is the total capacity of the market and considering what the market share of each hotel is and considering the field criteria of the asked questions. According to the answers of hotel managers participating in the research; it has been tried to be measured the strategic marketing, marketing research, market classification, target marketing and business performances (occupancy rates) and the efforts of the hotels in the related field criteria. In this context, these criteria of the hotels were questioned and binary grouped in accordance with the intended purpose. After this grouping, the following positioning maps have been produced within the framework of these criteria. By giving values between -2 and 2 instead of 1 to 5 coding to find the correlation and regression values at coding the answered questions of survey questions; the application level of the hotels' field criteria was compared relatively on positioning maps.

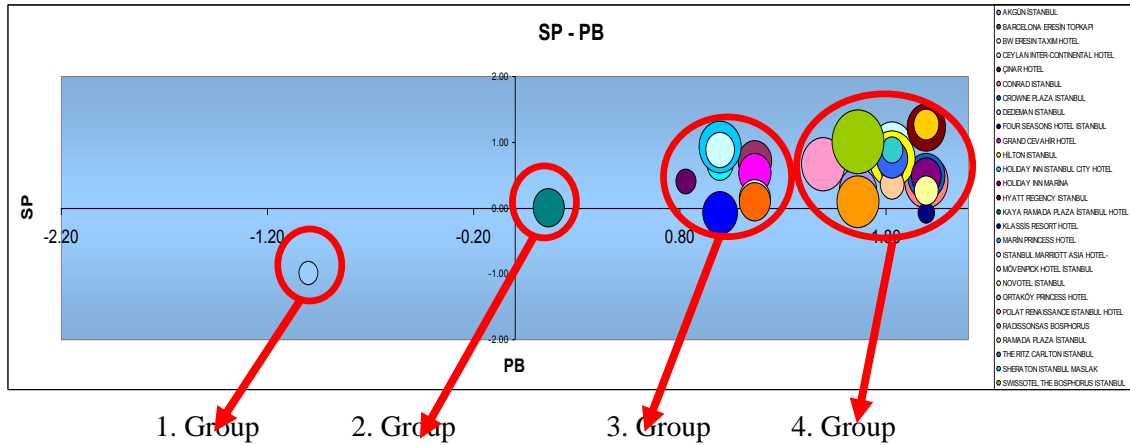
4.2. Some Applications of Relative Presentation on Positioning Maps of Strategic Marketing Plans of International Hotels



1. Group: Ortaköy Princess Hotel.
2. Group: Kaya Ramada Plaza İstanbul.
3. Group: Kumburgaz Marin Princess Hotel, Klassis Resort Hotel, Çınar Hotel, İstanbul Marriott Asia Hotel, Best Western Eresin Taxim Hotel, Mövenpick Hotel İstanbul, Grand Cevahir Hotel, Barcelo Premium Eresin Topkapı Hotel, The Plaza Hotel, Holiday Inn İstanbul City.
4. Group: Holiday Inn Marina, The Marmara İstanbul, Akgün İstanbul Hotel, Ramada Plaza İstanbul, Radisson Sas Bosphorus Hotel, The Ritz Carlton İstanbul, Dedeman İstanbul Hotel, Polat Renaissance İstanbul Hotel, Swissotel The Bosphorus İstanbul, Hilton İstanbul, The Green Park Merter, Novotel İstanbul, Hyatt Regency İstanbul, Ceylan Inter-Continental Hotel, Sheraton İstanbul Maslak, Conrad International Hotel, Crowne Plaza İstanbul, Four Seasons Hotel İstanbul.

Figure 3. Positioning Map according to the Application Levels of Strategic Planning and Marketing Research Based on the Market Shares of International Hotel Businesses.

In Figure 3, “strategic planning” and “marketing research” levels of participating hotels in the survey were compared relatively. According to the positioning map, hotels are grouped in four basic levels. The 4th group of these levels are the hotels that apply strategic planning and marketing research applications at the highest level. This group is followed by 3rd and 2nd group respectively. Strategic planning applications of the 3rd and 2nd groups are lower than the 4th group.



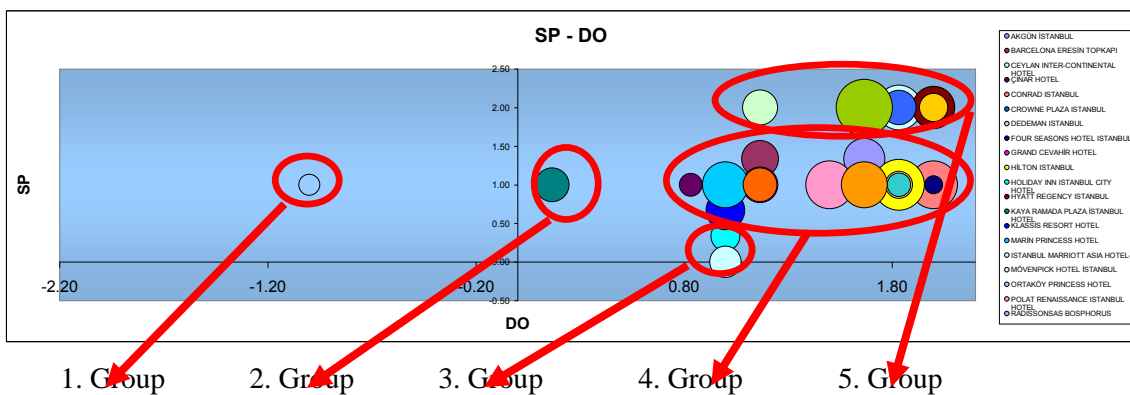
1. Group: Ortaköy Princess Hotel.
2. Group: Kaya Ramada Plaza İstanbul.
3. Group: Kumburgaz Marin Princess Hotel, Klassis Resort Hotel, Çınar Hotel, İstanbul Marriott Asia Hotel, Best Western Eresin Taxim Hotel, Mövenpick Hotel İstanbul, Grand Cevahir Hotel, Barcelo Premium Eresin Topkapı Hotel, The Plaza Hotel, Holiday Inn İstanbul City.
4. Group: Holiday Inn Marina, The Marmara İstanbul, Akgün İstanbul Hotel, Ramada Plaza İstanbul, Radisson Sas Bosphorus Hotel, The Ritz Carlton İstanbul, Dedeman İstanbul Hotel, Polat Renaissance İstanbul Hotel, Swisshotel The Bosphorus İstanbul, Hilton İstanbul, The Green Park Merter, Novotel İstanbul, Hyatt Regency İstanbul, Ceylan Inter-Continental Hotel, Sheraton İstanbul Maslak, Conrad International Hotel, Crowne Plaza İstanbul, Four Seasons Hotel İstanbul.

Figure 4. Positioning Map according to the Application Levels of Strategic Planning and Market Classification based on the Market Shares of International Hotel Businesses.

In Figure 4, “strategic planning” and “market classification” levels of participating hotels in the survey were compared relatively. According to the positioning map, hotels are grouped in four basic levels. The 4th group of these levels are the hotels that apply strategic planning and marketing research applications at the highest level. But it is observed that the application levels of market classification of some hotels in this group such as Four Seasons İstanbul, The Marmara İstanbul and Novotel have similarities with the hotels in 3th group at an intermediate position.

Although the strategic planning levels of the Klassis Resort Hotel and The Plaza Hotel in the 3rd group are close to the upper levels, they appear in negative and positive separation (0 point) at application level of market classification. There are 2 hotels away from the 4th and 3rd groups.

While Kaya Ramada Plaza İstanbul Hotel of these between 0 point and medium level in the strategic planning applications; it is at the 0 point of the market classification application level. According to the answers in survey, Ortaköy Princess Hotel is at the lower application level of strategic planning and market classification.

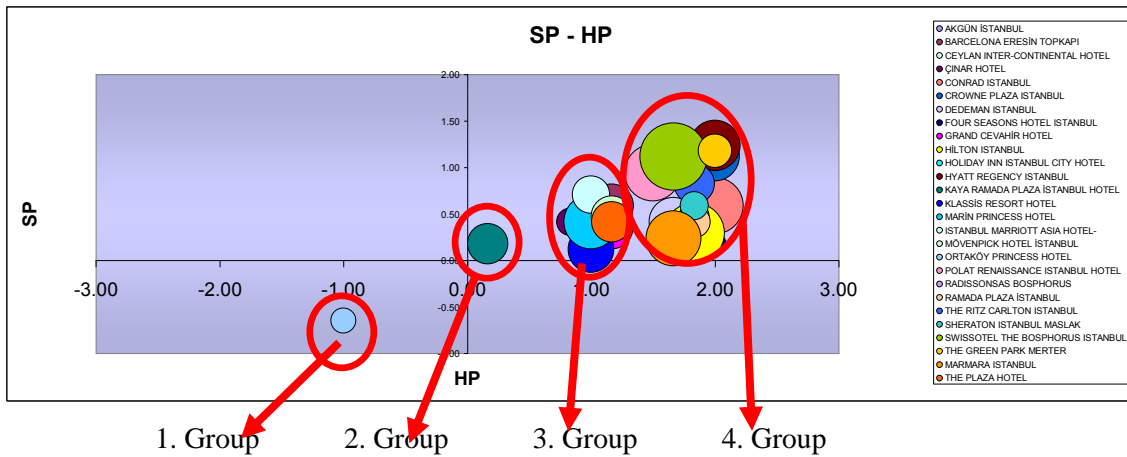


1. Group: Ortaköy Princess Hotel.
2. Group: Kaya Ramada Plaza İstanbul.
3. Group: İstanbul Marriott Asia Hotel, Holiday Inn İstanbul City, Klassis Resort Hotel.

4. Group: Kumburgaz Marin Princess Hotel, Çınar Hotel, Grand Cevahir Hotel, Barcelo Premium Eresin Topkapı Hotel, The Plaza Hotel, The Marmara İstanbul, Akgün İstanbul Hotel, Ramada Plaza İstanbul, Polat Renaissance İstanbul Hotel, Hilton İstanbul, Sheraton İstanbul Maslak, Conrad International Hotel, Four Seasons Hotel İstanbul.
5. Group: Mövenpick Hotel İstanbul, Swissotel The Bosphorus İstanbul, The Ritz Carlton İstanbul, Ceylan Inter-Continental Hotel, The Green Park Merter, Hyatt Regency İstanbul, Crowne Plaza İstanbul, Dedeman İstanbul Hotel, Radisson Sas Bosphorus Hotel.

Figure 5. Positioning Map according to the Strategic Planning and Occupancy Rates based on the Market Shares of Five-Star Hotels

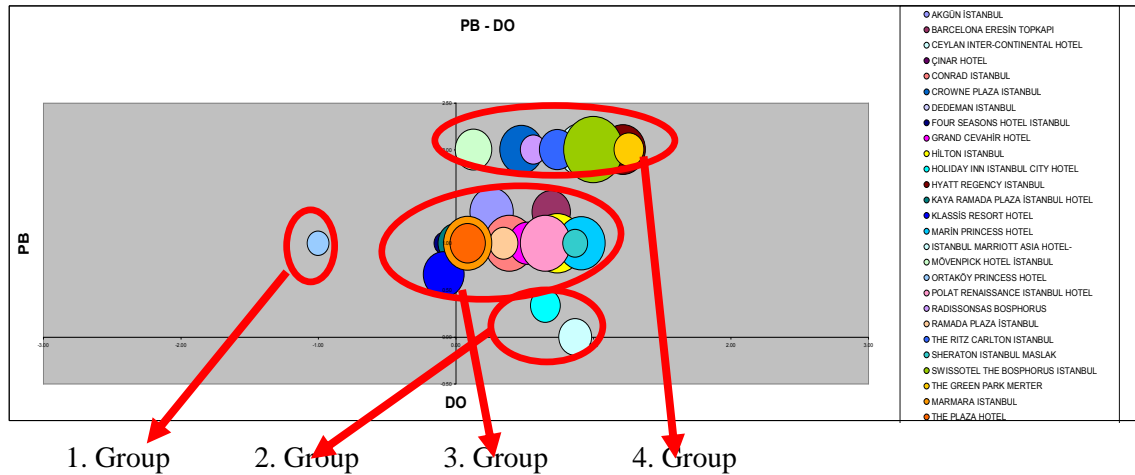
In Figure 5; when the “strategic planning” and “occupancy rates” of the participating hotels in survey are compared; it is seen that most of the hotels in groups 3, 4 and 5 are at high application level of strategic planning (for example: Four Seasons Hotel İstanbul, Conrad International Hotel, Hyatt Regency İstanbul and Crowne Plaza İstanbul). The occupancy rates of hotels are listed as 5, 4 and 2 group hotels from the highest level. While the strategic planning application levels of the hotels in the 4th and 5th groups are high, their occupancy rates are close to 0 points. While the occupancy rate of the hotel in group 2 is at the intermediate level, its strategic planning application level is at the lower level. Although the occupancy rate of the hotel in group 1 is at the intermediate level, its strategic planning application level is negative.



1. Group: Ortaköy Princess Hotel.
2. Group: Kaya Ramada Plaza İstanbul.
3. Group: İstanbul Marriott Asia Hotel, Klassis Resort Hotel, Çınar Hotel, Kumburgaz Marin Princess Hotel, Grand Cevahir Hotel, The Plaza Hotel, Mövenpick Hotel İstanbul, Barcelo Premium Eresin Topkapı Hotel
4. Group: Holiday Inn İstanbul City, The Marmara İstanbul, Akgün İstanbul Hotel, Ramada Plaza İstanbul, Polat Renaissance İstanbul Hotel, Hilton İstanbul, Sheraton İstanbul Maslak, Conrad International Hotel, Four Seasons Hotel İstanbul, Swissotel The Bosphorus İstanbul, The Ritz Carlton İstanbul, Ceylan Inter-Continental Hotel, The Green Park Merter, Hyatt Regency İstanbul, Crowne Plaza İstanbul, Dedeman İstanbul Hotel, Radisson Sas Bosphorus Hotel.

Figure 6. Positioning Map according to the Application Levels of Strategic Planning and Target Marketing based on the Market Shares of Five-Star Hotels

In Figure 6; when “strategic planning” and “target market” levels of the participating hotels in survey are compared; they appear to be quite similar to each other. The concentration of hotels in groups 3 and 4 shows this. It is seen that the strategic planning application levels of the hotels in the 4th group are high and that the target market application levels are at the lower and intermediate level. It is observed that the hotels in 4.th group such as “Swissotel The Bosphorus İstanbul, The Green Park Merter and Hyatt Regency İstanbul are high at both levels. While the strategic planning application of the hotels in 3. Group are at intermediate level; their target market application level is not negative, but low. Both levels of the hotel in 2. group is low. Both levels of the hotel in 1. group is negative. We can say that the determination applications of target market compared with the strategic planning application are in parallel with this hotel.



1. Group: Ortaköy Princess Hotel.
2. Group: İstanbul Marriott Asia Hotel, Holiday Inn İstanbul City.
3. Group: Klassis Resort Hotel Kaya Ramada Plaza İstanbul Kumburgaz Marin Princess Hotel, Çınar Hotel, Grand Cevahir Hotel, Barcelo Premium Eresin Topkapı Hotel, The Plaza Hotel, The Marmara İstanbul, Akgün İstanbul Hotel, Ramada Plaza İstanbul, Polat Renaissance İstanbul Hotel, Hilton İstanbul, Sheraton İstanbul Maslak, Conrad International Hotel, Four Seasons Hotel İstanbul.
4. Group: Mövenpick Hotel İstanbul, Swisshotel The Bosphorus İstanbul, The Ritz Carlton İstanbul, Ceylan Inter-Continental Hotel, The Green Park Merter, Hyatt Regency İstanbul, Crowne Plaza İstanbul, Dedeman İstanbul Hotel, Radisson Sas Bosphorus Hotel.

Figure 7. Positioning Map according to the Market Classification and Occupancy Rates based on the Market Shares of Five-Star Hotels

In Figür 7; when “market classification” and “occupancy rates” levels of the participating hotels in survey were compared relatively; they were grouped at 4 basic levels. When “occupancy rates” levels are compared; the hotels in 4th group are located at the upper level, the hotels in 3th group are located at the intermediate level and the hotels in 2th group are located at the lower level. When the occupancy rates of the hotels at these levels are examined, it is seen that they are not directly related to market classification levels. Although the market classification application of the hotel in the 1st group is at high level; occupancy rate is low.

5. CONCLUSION

Perceptual maps are used by businesses in many sectors due to their visuality and easiness. Therefore the marketing managers of accommodation facilities can use the perceptual maps especially in their positioning strategies. Since the strategies of the businesses will change in parallel with the conditions in the market, the perceptual maps should also be updated (For example; changes in consumer preferences, changes in the strategies of competing businesses, differences in product life cycle, introduction of a new product on the market or introduction of a new market etc.). The perceptual maps are such an instrument that it shows relatively whether or not the marketing efforts of the businesses can change or make positive the perceptions (positions) in the minds of consumers. The perceptual maps is such a useful instrument that the managers can see the position of their brand and products in the market compared to the competitors, the contribution of the business strategies to brand value and how business strategies can change the position of the business in the market and accordingly new strategy formulas can be found. If the results of positioning strategies, that have an impact on the establishment of image and brand value of the businesses, are shown graphically on a map, then manager can decide easily. It is possible to see the comparison of many variables (price, quality, brand, value, satisfaction, similarity, difference, etc.) and business strategies (such as relationship levels between strategic planning-market classification, market classification-occupancy) with each other in the perceptual maps.

This study emphasizes the importance of the supporting instruments to make the decision as well as the decisions of the managers. The easinesses for especially marketing managers and all decision-makers by using the perceptual maps especially in the positioning strategies in the marketing plans of the businesses are supported by the applications both in literature and in international hotels. It is expected to be useful for academicians and business managers.

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