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Patient-Centred Marketing Strategies in the Turkish Pharmaceutical Sector: Product Managers' Perspectives on Decision-Making Factors in the 21st Century

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the MSc in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology (QQI 9)

Innopharma Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences

Griffith College Dublin

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Presented by

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2024

CANDIDATE DECLARATION

Candidate Name: Ceren Onder Bayram

I certify that the dissertation entitled:

“Patient-Centred Marketing Strategies in the Turkish Pharmaceutical Sector: Product Managers' Perspectives on Decision-Making Factors in the 21st Century” submitted to the Department of Pharmaceutical Business and Technology, Griffith College, Dublin, for the degree of Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology, is entirely my work. Where the work of others is referenced, appropriate attribution and acknowledgement has been given.

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I dedicate this thesis to my mother for her constant encouragement and support.

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Abbreviations Used in This Document

- 1. AHP** - Analytic Hierarchy Process
- 2. CSR** - Corporate Social Responsibility
- 3. DTCPA** - Direct-to-Consumer Pharmaceutical Advertising
- 4. GDP** - Gross Domestic Product
- 5. GDPR** - General Data Protection Regulation
- 6. HTP** - Health Transformation Program
- 7. ICF** - Informed Consent Form
- 8. IT&C** - Information Technology and Communications
- 9. MOH** - Ministry of Health
- 10. NAS** - New Active Substance
- 11. NVivo** - Qualitative Data Analysis Software
- 12. OTC** - Over the Counter
- 13. PIL** - Participant Information Leaflet
- 14. R&D** - Research and Development
- 15. Rx** - Prescription
- 16. SAVE** - Solution, Access, Value, Education
- 17. TITCK** - Turkish Medicines and Medical Devices Agency
- 18. VR** - Virtual Reality
- 19. WHO** - World Health Organization

ABSTRACT

Patient-Centred Marketing Strategies in the Turkish Pharmaceutical Sector: Product Managers' Perspectives on Decision-Making Factors in the 21st Century

Ceren Onder Bayram

This study investigated factors that influence product managers' decision-making processes when implementing patient-focused marketing strategies in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry. Qualitative interviews were used. The data was examined using theme analysis.

Regulations in Turkey do not allow direct marketing to patients, which makes it difficult to implement patient-centred solutions. There's a direct link between economic factors and medicine availability, especially drug pricing policies. The Turkish marketing strategy is also very much influenced by culture.

The study also found that healthcare professionals are predominantly resisting digitalisation even as digital technologies become more prevalent. In addition, the study highlighted the importance of adapting global trends to Turkish markets. Research shows that OTC and Rx pharmaceutical marketing strategies differ a lot. The study also examined in what way the different approaches of Turkish and global pharmaceutical companies affect patient-centred marketing.

Lastly, the Turkish pharmaceutical company faces special difficulties while creating patient-centred marketing strategies. Product managers have to take into account a lot of elements in order to create their plan, including regulations, financial situation, cultural issues, and technological developments. Examining local market trends and adjusting to global ones helps Turkish pharmaceutical companies create patient-centred strategies in the most effective way feasible.

CHAPTER I

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Turkish pharmaceutical marketing strategies have undergone significant changes throughout the 21st century. Of those changes the patient-centred approach to healthcare is worth further study and understanding. These initiatives mainly aim for the satisfaction of patients by striving for a positive outcome for the patient. This is done by focusing on the preferences and needs of patients. This shift towards patient-centred change is supported by the case study proposed by (Toker et al., 2013), which includes a decision model that prioritises patient-centred methods in pharmaceutical marketing with systematic approaches

Due to the large influence of regulatory factors, Turkey's pharmaceutical sector faces many challenges. It's obvious that Turkey has an extremely diverse market structure that requires an effective decision-making process.

Furthermore, (Deniz et al., 2023) discussed the importance of patient-centred care in healthcare in Turkey. They highlighted the negative and positive experiences of competent pharmacists when implementing these patient-centred approaches. Additionally, their qualitative analysis highlights the importance of incorporating the pharmaceutical industry's strategies into changing patient expectations and regulatory environments. This aimed to demonstrate how patient centred decision process methods are instrumental in effective decision-making procedures in the various regulated markets (Deniz et al., 2023).

(Deniz et al., 2023) also investigated the challenges associated with Turkish patient-centred care in community pharmacies. Here the specific decisional approaches and the challenges faced by pharmaceutical product managers in Turkey when attempting to implement these strategies have not been fully researched and addressed. This study 'Patient-Centred Marketing Strategies in the Turkish Pharmaceutical Sector: Product Managers Perspectives on Decision-Making Factors in the 21st Century' aims to assess the current situation and any barriers to the adoption and implementation of these approaches, meaning this study aims to fill the gap between the academic knowledge and practices in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry.

1.2 RESEARCH PURPOSE

In this study, the effects of changes in patient expectations and regulations on the decision-making processes of product managers in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry will be analysed.

This study aims to assess the current situation in the adoption and implementation of patient-centred marketing strategies in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry and the challenges encountered in these processes. In addition, it is planned to reach some practical recommendations based on the views of experienced product managers in the pharmaceutical industry. As a result of these studies, it is aimed to fill the gap between academic knowledge and the real world.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

In countries like Turkey, where the pharmaceutical market structure is multidimensional and subject to strict regulations, it is very important to understand the marketing mechanism. Patient-centred approaches play a critical role in improving patient satisfaction and healthcare outcomes, and all these market trends are similar to many countries around the world. These significant points emphasise the importance of the research.

Additionally, this research aims to provide some practical and useful recommendations in order to improve the adoption and effectiveness of patient-centred marketing strategies in Turkey by exploring in-depth the challenges and opportunities faced by relevant pharmaceutical product managers.

1.4 RESEARCH AIM, OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

The main aim of this study is to analyse the implementation of patient-focused marketing strategies in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry. Analysing their impact on decision-making processes will be explored. The research aims to examine how changing the regulatory environment and patient expectations affect strategic decisions and aims to provide practical solutions based on the experiences of industry professionals in this context.

Table 1: Research Objectives - Research Questions (Author)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify the main obstacles encountered by pharmaceutical product managers in Turkey when implementing patient-centred marketing strategies in recent times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which regulatory challenges do pharmaceutical product managers in Turkey face when they implement patient-centred marketing strategies? How do internal restrictions affect the implementation of patient-centred marketing strategies in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To investigate the key factors that influence pharmaceutical product managers' decision-making for patient-centred marketing strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the main market needs and regulatory requirements that influence the decision-making processes of pharmaceutical product managers in Turkey towards patient-centred marketing strategies? How do current changes in health policies and patient expectations affect the strategic decisions of pharmaceutical product managers in adopting patient-centred marketing approaches?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To determine the impact of recent regulatory changes on the implementation of patient-centred marketing techniques. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How have recent regulatory changes in Turkey affected the adoption of patient-centred marketing techniques in the pharmaceutical industry? In which areas have these regulatory changes created challenges or opportunities for pharmaceutical product managers in implementing patient-centred marketing strategies?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide practical recommendations for the adoption and effectiveness of patient-centred marketing approaches based on the observations of pharmaceutical product managers in Turkey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What practical suggestions do pharmaceutical product managers in Turkey have to improve the adoption and effectiveness of patient-centred marketing approaches? What are the key factors that the observations of pharmaceutical product managers in Turkey reveal in the implementation of patient-centred marketing strategies?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To discuss the current trends of patient-centred marketing strategies in the world pharmaceutical industry and the applicability of these strategies to the Turkish market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which factors specific to the Turkish pharmaceutical market affect the application of global patient-centred marketing strategies to the Turkish market? • What are the current trends of patient-centred marketing strategies in the global pharmaceutical sector?
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1.5 STRUCTURE OF STUDY

Chapter I: This section aimed to define the main idea of the research, present the general background of the study, emphasise the importance of the subject and present the main objectives of the analysis. The hypothesis and research questions that form the basis of the research are stated in this section. It also explains the reasons for choosing the research topic and how this study aims to fill the gaps in the relevant literature. In general terms, the introduction summarises the structure of the study and the themes that will be addressed in the following chapters. This helps the reader to understand the general framework and content of the study and gives an idea about the academic contribution of the research.

Chapter II: This chapter includes a critical review of the existing literature on patient-centred marketing strategies in Turkey and globally. It also discusses practices, regulatory guidelines and ethical marketing strategies in Turkey, as well as the impact of global health policies and technological advances on the Turkish market. This section aims to identify gaps in how the theoretical frameworks of patient-centred marketing strategies can be developed and to provide a clearer understanding of the questions related to the research objectives.

Chapter III: In this part of the study, the basic research philosophy approaches and the subsequent methodological choices are discussed. In addition, it is essential to define the strategy of the study and the population in which the study is conducted.

Chapter IV: In this section, it is essential to detail the results gathered from the research. Data presentation and analysis are discussed in order to make sense of the raw data produced in accordance with the research objectives. While analysing the obtained data, statistical tools were used, and the results were presented systematically. This process clearly presents the findings of the study and presents the answers to the research questions in an objective way. Thus, the results of the

study are compared with the relevant theoretical frameworks and literature to achieve the research objectives.

Chapter V: This section summarises the findings of the research. Based on the findings of the research, practical recommendations are included. Additionally, the limitations of the study are given and a useful perspective on what needs to be done in the future is presented. Finally, the contribution of the study to the academic world in a scientific sense is highlighted.

CHAPTER II

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 OVERVIEW

In the health sector, the pharmaceutical industry is one of the most important sources of information for doctors. The main marketing objectives of the pharmaceutical industry are to provide accurate, up-to-date information to doctors and to promote new products. In this regard, the definition made by WHO in 1988 is very important; "Promotion of medicinal drugs is all informative and persuasive activities carried out by manufacturers and distributors, the effect of which is to encourage the prescription, supply, purchase and/or use of medicinal drugs" (WHO,1988). Pharmaceutical companies generally aim to make a profit in order to meet the health needs of the society and to maintain the sustainability of the company. This profit provides new resources for the development of new drugs. Another important task of pharmaceutical companies is to ensure that physicians provide accurate and effective solutions for patients (Kulkarni et al., 2023).

Globally, the pharmaceutical industry has been undergoing a critical and important transformation in recent years by adopting a patient-centred approach. One of the most important objectives of this transformation is to encourage patients to be more involved in the treatment process. It is to provide ease of use for end-users with various characteristics (elderly, children, chronic patient groups) who will actually use the medicine. Patient-centred marketing strategies basically try to understand the

preferences and needs of patients. As a result, it is aimed to use the data obtained appropriately in product development and marketing areas (Timpe et al., 2020).

Global pharma marketing strategies are also changing with digitalisation and personalised medicine. Using modern digital technologies, pharmaceutical companies are able to get more interaction with patients and get more reliable feedback. This enables marketing strategies to become much more patient-centred, targeted, and adaptable. Also, by making healthcare easier to access, patients can make better decisions about their own treatment. On the other hand, changing marketing strategies are causing pharmaceutical companies to rethink theirs. More transparent communication helps the pharmaceutical industry improve its regulatory compliance and competitive edge. Also increasing patient satisfaction and safety, these new marketing strategies improve innovation (Asif et al., 2023).

In Turkey's pharmaceutical sector, pharmaceutical marketing strategies are usually influenced by both global trends and requirements of local regulations. When literature is examined, Mashaki Ceyhan et al. (2020) state in their study that in Turkey, patients do not have enough information about access procedures for new drugs and the regulatory requirements needed for approval in these processes. Additionally, it is mentioned that the introduction of new drugs to the Turkish market generally takes longer compared to other developed countries. This situation clearly shows that people responsible for marketing strategies of pharmaceutical companies in Turkey need to make some adjustments to better meet the information and access needs of Turkish patients. In this context, pharmaceutical companies should develop and implement more effective strategies to improve patient information and access processes (Mashaki Ceyhan et al., 2020a). To better understand these strategies, it is important to understand the different roles in pharmaceutical companies. The main tasks of product managers in the pharmaceutical industry include formulating market penetration strategies and organising product content materials. In addition, product managers play a major role in the development of marketing strategies by continuously analysing market dynamics and customer behaviour. Importantly, operational managers are the first-line managers in the sales process, meaning they are in a highly functional position. Here they act as a bridge between the field workforce and the management team. They are in constant communication with the sales teams in the field, the healthcare providers, the medical representatives and the supply chain team. They are also involved in day-to-day supervision and marketing activities in their companies. Strategic managers are, however, responsible for planning and developing the strategies that are aligned with organisational objectives including creating action plans for these strategies (Oamen and Omorenuwa, 2022). Although the research on these task allocations was

conducted in Nigeria, pharmaceutical companies in Turkey exhibit a similar structure in terms of the roles and responsibilities.

Pharmaceutical companies in Turkey should adapt to local regulations and global changes when developing their marketing strategies to succeed. These strategies aim to increase the ease of use and effectiveness of medicines, while encouraging patients to participate more actively in the treatment processes. As product managers hold a critical role acting as strategic decision makers in this process they are responsible for optimising product and marketing strategies by continuously analysing market dynamics and customer behaviour (Timpe et al., 2020). The objective of this chapter is to investigate in detail the development of patient-centred marketing strategies in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry and the impact of these mentioned strategies on decision-making processes in Turkey. It will also address the challenges and potential opportunities that are encountered during this process. This research will also analyse some global examples.

2.2 GLOBAL CONTEXT OF PATIENT-CENTRED MARKETING STRATEGIES

In the 21st century, the impact of patient-centred marketing strategies in the global pharmaceutical industry has become increasingly important in terms of adopting patient engaged approaches and increasing patient satisfaction. Some studies suggest that the practical implementation of these strategies is not as easy as it may seem in theory. This is supported by Lara and de Mesa's (2006) study. Here they examined the gap between the theoretical expression and the actual practical application of market orientation principles in the Spanish pharmaceutical sector, which often points to a wider global problem where pharmaceutical companies fail to fully integrate strategies that recognise and respond to patient needs. Study shows pharmaceutical companies often mention patient-centred strategies, but their implementation is poor. These inconsistencies result in inadequate outcomes for patients, researchers say. The study also suggests that this gap between statements and action might decrease public trust in pharmaceutical companies (Lara and de Mesa, 2006).

According to Camacho (2014), patient empowerment affects pharmaceutical marketing and the patient-physician relationship. Pharma companies have built patient engagement into their marketing strategies because of the importance of patient empowerment. This move towards marketing that focuses more on patients and tries to be more ethical is based on talking directly to patients and working with patient support groups. Companies are trying to communicate with patients in new ways, not just through physicians like before (Camacho, 2014).

Also, Rejikumar et al. (2018) underlined the importance of a customer oriented approach and client

satisfaction in the pharmaceutical sector in their analysis of pharmaceutical marketing. In addition, this study found that the compatibility of marketing strategies with the 'SAVE' (Solution, Access, Value, Education) philosophy is of great help in achieving patient satisfaction. In this research they pointed out that customers' risk perception and trust in the company are also important concepts and the role of the customer oriented approach in increasing this trust was discussed (Rejikumar et al., 2018).

Clearly, patient-centred marketing strategies are needed everywhere, based on studies on the subject. To implement these strategies successfully, more research needs to be done.

Pharmaceutical companies need to shift their traditional product centred marketing approach towards a more patient-oriented direction based on the development and distribution of their pharmaceutical products. While making these changes, personnel working in the pharmaceutical field should be trained and new metrics should be developed. In the case of all these changes, it is considered inevitable that there will be structural and cultural changes within the company.

The implementation of global trends in Turkey requires a thorough understanding of the local market and regulatory environment. Despite the significant amount of research on patient centred marketing strategies worldwide, the Turkish pharmaceutical industry appears to have made relatively little progress in the adoption of these approaches. This presents an opportunity to analyse in more depth how Turkish pharmaceutical companies are adapting to and implementing patient-centred strategies. Further research is required to examine these adaptations. Such analyses could prove highly valuable not only for the Turkish market, but also for other developing economies struggling with similar transitions in their healthcare sectors.

2.3 GLOBAL CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING PATIENT-CENTRED MARKETING STRATEGIES IN THE PHARMACEUTICAL SECTOR

In this section of the literature review, the global impact of some of the challenges encountered in the implementation of patient-centred marketing techniques in the pharmaceutical industry will be discussed, with the main challenges being regulatory environments, cultural differences between countries and ethical standards.

In the pharmaceutical industry, direct-to-consumer pharmaceutical advertising (DTCPA) has an important place in the implementation of patient-centred marketing strategies. Ventola (2011) defines DTCPA as "a pharmaceutical company's effort (usually through popular media) to promote its prescription products directly to their patients". The application of this concept in an international setting creates a structurally different and complicated regulatory environment. When

the literature is analysed, it can be seen that DTCPA is legal only in New Zealand and the United States of America, while it is either subject to some restrictions or completely prohibited in other countries. This complex situation brings along the necessity of complying with different legal requirements while creating international marketing strategies. Ventola's (2011) research analyses in detail the marketing challenges caused by the DTCPA and its implications for the pharmaceutical industry. In this context, pharmaceutical companies wishing to implement patient-centred marketing methods should develop creative strategies that can adapt to the specific legal rules of each country that their product is to be used. It concluded that this is a challenging process that requires an effective solution to work in the pharmaceutical market (Ventola, 2011).

Additionally, according to Mackey and Liang (2013), the regulatory problems in the pharmaceutical industry have increased with the emergence of digital marketing. The fact that the Internet is now a global tool that can be accessed from anywhere leads to the increased reach of pharmaceutical advertisements, even outside the countries where they are used. This causes major problems in terms of legal regulations and creates grey areas in the framework of legislation. Therefore, digital marketing makes the already difficult global marketing strategies even more complex (Mackey and Liang, 2013).

Another challenge faced while implementing global pharmaceutical marketing strategies is ethical and reputational issues. Kessel (2014) conducted a study on this subject and explained the reputational challenges with some examples. The study mentions some unethical practices of GlaxoSmithKline in China in 2013 and the scandals caused by these practices. According to the scandal, in the GlaxoSmithKline office in Beijing, Chinese doctors were bribed by local managers to prescribe the company's drugs. While such incidents are considered unacceptable and even criminal in the West, they are considered as common business practices in the Chinese pharmaceutical market. On the other hand, the fact that such practices are portrayed as criminal by news channels in the West primarily damages the reputation of the company and thus the reputation of the pharmaceutical industry. Looking at the big picture, it is seen that these reputational problems not only undermine the credibility of the company, but also affect public trust. (Kessel, 2014).

In their research, Morgan and Zane (2022) analyse the issue of information asymmetry, which is another challenge of global marketing strategies. This study states that complex relationships between physicians, patients and pharmaceutical companies often lead to communication difficulties and conflicts of interest. For example, when a decision is to be made about patient care, many intermediaries such as doctors, pharmacists and insurance companies come into play. This is one of the factors that make information flow difficult and leads to information asymmetry. The

study focuses particularly on the pharmaceutical market in the United States and emphasises that the complex healthcare system in the country makes this asymmetry even more apparent, but also mentions that companies' marketing activities should not be limited to product promotion. Researchers state that patient education and increasing health literacy would be an important step in reducing information asymmetry (Morgan and Zane, 2022). As is clear from these sources, further research is needed to understand how marketing strategies differ globally in the pharmaceutical industry and how solutions can be adapted to cultural differences, especially the development of innovative approaches to mitigate the problem of information asymmetry.

2.4 THE INFLUENCE OF GLOBAL TRENDS ON LOCAL MARKETING PRACTICES IN THE TURKISH PHARMACEUTICAL SECTOR

A review of the available literature on how global trends affect local marketing practices in the Turkish pharmaceutical business shows a complex and dynamic relationship of local and global trends, especially with the impact on patient-centred marketing approaches. The current study has some limitations and gaps.

It is clear that there is a big gap in research about how health policies like the Health Transformation Programme (HTP) affect patient-focused marketing in the long term. While the HTP's impact on pharmaceutical sales and market dynamics has been well documented, Hilal et al., (2014), the exact consequences for marketing strategies that directly address patient requirements and preferences is still unclear. This gap shows an obvious need for more detailed and comprehensive studies that can provide a full view of how these policies such as the HTP affect marketing efforts over time (Hilal et al., 2014).

Also, the research does not cover enough of the practical implications of the Turkish government's localisation policies. Strict import controls are meant to reduce reliance on imports, but a lot more can be done. However, Zhou (2023) discuss that they also have an effect on how pharmaceutical companies adapt their marketing techniques to these local markets. This includes understanding how these restrictions affect patients' access to medicines and how businesses manage local manufacturing regulations besides global competition. Therefore, it is important to examine how localisation rules in Turkey affect product managers' marketing decisions (Zhou, 2023).

In addition, there is again a lack of research on the relationship of international trade restrictions to local marketing approaches. The effects of World Trade Organisation (WTO) disagreements on

local marketing tactics have not been fully explored in the literature. Further research is needed in this field to analyse how pharmaceutical market can effectively blend global trends and local market dynamics with the aim of producing successful patient-centred marketing strategies (Zhou, 2023).

2.5 CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING PATIENT-CENTRED MARKETING STRATEGIES IN TURKEY

Developing patient-centred marketing strategies in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry has many challenges. One of the main concerns is the strict regulatory environment, which can change often and not directly addressed in the context of marketing, as mentioned in Kayserili and Kiyak's (2020) R&D challenges. Regulatory challenges, such as financial limits and restricted government-industry coordination, have an indirect impact on the strategies for marketing by creating an often restricted environment that could prevent creative and or patient centred approaches (Kayserili and Kiyak, 2020).

Additionally, the Turkish pharmaceutical sector meets big challenges when it comes to R&D and competitiveness. It is difficult to find innovative marketing strategies when costs are high, and regulations are strict. As said by Tahtasakal (2021) in his research, "Financial capital is very important for R&D activities. However, financial capital alone is not sufficient for R&D activities. In addition to financial capital, human capital is also of great importance." Based on this analysis, both financial and human capital are needed to overcome patient-centric marketing challenges (Tahtasakal, 2021).

Prasanthi (2021) talks about blending business goals with ethical and fair marketing tactics. The study shows how pharmaceutical companies need to prioritize patient wellbeing in their marketing activities. Basically, moving away from old profit-driven practices and towards ethical and patient-centred ones. Sadly, this transition is made more difficult by industry disagreements and regulation that's not always in line with ethical marketing (Prasanthi, 2021).

Memişoğlu and Bilen (2021) stress that digital technologies play an important role in marketing Over the Counter (OTC) medications by primarily enhancing health literacy in the population. Digital technology also makes more information available. These technologies improve patient participation and education. They do however also raise issues about the integrity and reliability of the health information that they distribute. Maintaining public trust and supporting safe self-medication activities requires verifying the credibility of the content on these digital networks (MEMİŞOĞLU and BİLEN, 2021).

In fact also, the competitive nature of the pharmaceutical sector in Turkey further increases the

complexity. With the large number of companies in this sector, it makes global competition inevitable and countries that invest heavily in R&D will likely gain a competitive advantage in international markets. In order to maintain their market position, companies may have trouble focusing on patient-centred strategies (Tahtasakal, 2021).

In summary, although patient-centred marketing strategies are useful for the Turkish pharmaceutical industry, they also bring many obstacles to be overcome. These include a tight regulatory environment, high R&D costs and a lack of human and financial capital. In addition, balancing competitive nature and ethical marketing practices makes aligning these strategies even more difficult. One suggestion to this problem is to consider a multidimensional approach that aligns regulatory reforms with ethical codes and standards, while at the same time enabling more R&D investment.

2.6 DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES OF PRODUCT MANAGERS IN THE PHARMACEUTICAL SECTOR: TURKISH AND GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Product managers in pharmaceutical companies are people with strong management skills who play active roles in the process of drug development right up to its commercialisation. Decision-making processes for product managers are of course influenced by numerous factors such as market dynamics, patient demands and regulatory requirements. Therefore, the decision-making methods for these managers are complex and multidimensional. In a Turkish context, these processes are under the influence of both local and international regulatory requirements (Naseef Pp et al., 2023).

Stremersch and Lemmens (2009) underline the negative effects of regulatory environments on marketing strategy. Having the manufacturer control the price has a positive effect on sales of new medicines. Advertising directly to consumers and restrictions on doctors' prescribing budgets have a negative impact on sales. Meanwhile, allowing DTCA in countries like the United States of America and New Zealand, which was previously discussed in our literature review, increases drug sales. Moreover, product managers should plan their strategies by taking into account the duration of the drugs on the market, which will positively affect the results (Stremersch and Lemmens 2009).

In addition, activities such as marketing methods, meetings and sample distribution to physicians are highly effective in promoting pharmaceutical products. Some other factors on pharmaceutical sales are cultural and economic factors. In societies that are individualistic and tend to avoid uncertainty, patients are more willing to seek medical treatment and pharmaceutical sales are high

in these societies. In parallel with this situation, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita is a very important factor in personal welfare. Drug sales and high income are positively correlated, which is evidence that wealthy countries have access to better treatments (Stremersch and Lemmens 2009). In the Turkish context, product managers and other specialised pharmaceutical officials should have adequate knowledge of the approval processes for products at both local and international levels. Turkey's drug approval process involves a long and complex evaluation model, such as marketing authorisation for new active substances (NAS). As well, the Turkish Medicines and Medical Devices Agency (TİTCK) requires that the medicine also obtains approval from reference countries such as the US and the EU for final authorisation. While all these are desirable to provide assurance on the safety and quality of the medicine, they are factors that prolong approval times (Mashaki Ceyhan et al., 2018). This can be seen as another example of the negative impact of a regulatory environment on the pharmaceutical sector's performance and time frames to deliver a product.

According to Naseef Pp et al. (2023), a product manager needs to do lots of research and pay attention to patient preferences when it comes to marketing. In addition, when determining product strategies, should be given to enough importance to understand patient needs and to analyse competitive market trends (Naseef Pp et al., 2023).

In 2022, based on a study conducted by Yanik et al. on Turkish health managers, the effect of the managers social intelligence on the decision-making process was examined. This research has shown that managers with high social intelligence are more successful in understanding and predicting the behaviour of others. This situation shows an understandable correlation with the fact that managers with high social intelligence have more effective communication skills. This privilege of some managers is also a critical factor in product management. The findings suggest that managers with high social intelligence are able to make more rational and beneficial decisions by using decision-making mechanisms effectively (Yanik et al., 2022).

In terms of the pharmaceutical regulations and market in Turkey, another responsibility of product managers is to clarify the aspects of the reimbursement system that are not clearly understood by patients and to help raise awareness on this issue. The majority of patients are satisfied with the state reimbursement system and the fact that the state covers most of the costs of medicines. However, some patients would like to know more about the approval of new medicines and the reimbursement system. This will enable patients to take a more active role in these processes. In this case, the importance of including the patient perspective and informing patients while determining the product management strategies of a company is emphasised (Mashaki Ceyhan et al., 2020b).

As this literature review shows, the decision-making processes of managers who play an active role in pharmaceutical marketing are influenced by market dynamics, regulatory requirements and even their social intelligence. From the point of view of product managers, many factors need to be analysed and understood in order to achieve more effective results in the market and provide better service to patients.

2.7 DECISION-MAKING FACTORS FOR PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCT MANAGERS IN THE TURKISH MARKET

The strategic selection of pharmaceutical products to be launched is an important and controversial issue that determines a company's long-term performance and competitiveness. As pointed by Toker et al. (2013), selecting products for a pharmaceutical portfolio is often a difficult process. Various factors such as market demands and regulatory obligations play a major role in the selection of products that pharmaceutical companies aim to introduce to the market. This decision making process is critical for a company to sustain its long-term commercial success. Such decisions require the use of complex strategies. The Fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) model suggested in this study provides an effective approach in this context. This 'Fuzzy AHP' model combines both mathematical methods along with human judgement that allows it to evaluate options in difficult and complex decision scenarios. Thus, the model provides an advanced strategic planning approach to difficult scenarios. This method aims to help identify the potential in various products, which is of course an important component of pharmaceutical strategic planning (Toker et al., 2013).

Regulatory issues were an obvious stand-out theme in the literature. Zhou (2023) discusses Turkey as an example of how local rules and regulations affect international market dynamics. The Turkish government's localisation requirement, which prioritises domestic manufactured medications above imports, understandably poses a real challenge for Turkish product managers.

This regulatory framework forces managers to vary their approaches, potentially affecting the market in favour of local manufacture, and limiting the variety of medicinal products available for patients in the Turkish market (Zhou, 2023).

In addition, Anusha et al.(2017) emphasised the beneficial importance of management skills in pharmaceutical business. Effective product management is regarded as a critical aspect in meeting market demands and gaining a competitive advantage in the market. This involves not just product selection but also the administration of a trained sales team that understands and fully communicates the technical aspects of pharmaceutical products. The report advocates that

improving these qualities can lead to improved marketplace performance (Anusha et al., 2017).

However, one significant gap in the literature is a lack of scientific information on the effects of various decision-making models in the Turkish pharmaceutical sector. While Toker et al. (2013) proposes a theoretical model, the practical application and real-world effectiveness of such models in Turkey are mostly unknown. This gap creates a good opportunity for future study to assess the impact of decision-making frameworks on pharmaceutical product efficacy in the Turkish market.

2.8 IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS ON PATIENT-CENTRED MARKETING IN THE TURKISH PHARMACEUTICAL SECTOR

The pharmaceutical sector is going through a major shift as a result of technological advancements and shifting market dynamics. These transformations are radically changing medication development processes, marketing strategies, and the general healthcare environment, affecting a variety of stakeholders. In this new dynamic and increasingly complex world, product managers should consider their ethical and legal responsibilities when making strategic decisions.

According to Spielberg's (2014) research, the effect of corporate actions in the pharmaceutical industry, particularly mergers and acquisitions, on the drug development processes is significant. Such organisational changes can and does lead to longer drug development periods. This prolongation reflects the complexities and difficulties of organisational changes. Although these modifications are intended to encourage innovation and improve efficiency, they may cause unexpected delays in bringing new medicines to market (Spielberg 2014).

In addition to these corporate dynamics, the Turkish healthcare sector shows the mixture of traditional approaches with many novel marketing strategies. The historical setting of Anatolian medical culture, as well as the ongoing growth of pharmaceutical marketing in Turkey, shows a blend of tradition and modernity. This novel emphasis on quality, ethics, and social responsibility in promotional activities highlights an established value system. This value system is in line with the culture of modern corporate social responsibility (CSR) concepts (Basal, 2015).

This combining approach of old and modern strategies maintains the cultural legacy. Again this approach also adapts to the often changing landscape and market demand. Advances in information technology and communications (IT&C) are crucial for transforming pharmaceutical marketing techniques and the provision of healthcare. Radu and Iosub (2017), go on to explore the importance of IT&C in improving the efficiency and efficacy of health systems, while paying particular focus on the area of patient centred care and personalised medicine. The integration of electronic health

records, diagnostic imaging, and patient-specific data enables the development of individualised and patient tailored treatments, which likely improves the outcome for patients (Radu and Iosub, 2017).

The pharmaceutical industries ever evolving and complex structure is mixture of numerous elements. These elements such as its corporate strategies, Turkey's cultural heritage, and the various advancements in pharmaceutical technology all play a part. These combining elements all have an impact on pharmaceutical companies' product development. Furthermore, their marketing and distribution elements are of course impacted. As the pharmaceutical industry changes over time, it is very important to balance innovative ideas with ethical issues that arise in the healthcare sector. This balance is to ensure that companies developments benefit both patients and the general public's health.

Table 2: Summary of Literature Review (Author)

Themes	Summary of Literature Review	Relation to Theme	Related Research Gaps
Global context of patient-centred marketing strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In recent years, patient-centred marketing strategies emphasise patient satisfaction and the active participation of patients. -Challenges are faced in the practical application of marketing approaches developed with theoretical models. -Integration of patient empowerment with marketing strategies and patient physician relationship is important. - In the global setting marketing has shifted towards a more ethical standing. This allows for increased direct to patient communication and patient advocacy groups. 	The importance of patient-centred marketing approaches globally and the challenges faced in the practical application of these models are underlined.	Further studies are needed to assess how patient-centred marketing strategies can be effectively implemented in more culturally and legislatively diverse communities.

<p>Global Challenges in Implementing Patient-Centred Marketing Strategies in the Pharmaceutical Sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Direct-to-consumer pharmaceutical advertising (DTCPA) is prohibited and restricted except in a few countries. -The complex regulatory environment requires marketing strategies to be adapted to the rules of each country. -The complexity of pharmaceutical businesses and their practices in different cultures will often leads to ethical and even repetitional issues.. -Information asymmetry between patients, doctors and pharmaceutical companies creates a disconnection in determining marketing strategies. 	<p>The regulatory, cultural and ethical challenges faced when implementing patient-centred marketing strategies in the pharmaceutical industry in a global context are evaluated.</p>	<p>There is a need for more comparative analyses about how marketing strategies in the pharmaceutical industry are implemented. This should be in the context of cultural differences, regulatory rules and ethical standards based in different countries.</p>
<p>The influence of global trends on local marketing practices in the Turkish pharmaceutical sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Business relationships between local and cultural factors has a significant impact on available marketing strategies. - Local adaptation requirements of health policies such as the Health Transformation Programme have an influence on marketing decisions. 	<p>It points to the interaction between global trends and local policies in shaping patient-centred marketing in Turkey.</p>	<p>Lack of detailed research on the long-term effects of health policies and commercial restrictions on pharmaceutical marketing methods.</p>
<p>Challenges in Implementing Patient-Centred Marketing Strategies in Turkey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The strict regulatory structure in Turkey indirectly limits the development of creative and patient-centred approaches. -Pharma companies face industry disputes and legal challenges as they align business objectives with ethical marketing strategies. -Although digital technologies have positive aspects such as access to health information and patient engagement, they are likely to have negative effects on information reliability. -High R&D costs combined with other factors to create challenges. 	<p>It highlights the main barriers to patient-centred marketing approaches in the Turkish pharmaceutical market and the points to be considered.</p>	<p>Further research on regulatory and ethical constraints in the Turkish pharmaceutical market is needed, and the reliability of digital technologies for health information should be evaluated in more detail.</p>

<p>Decision-Making Processes of Product Managers in the Pharmaceutical Sector: Turkish and Global Perspectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Product managers' decision-making is influenced by market dynamics, patient demands and regulatory requirements. -Regulatory environments lead to price controls and advertising restrictions, affecting sales. -In Turkey, the complex drug approval process, which requires approval from reference countries, leads to prolonged time to market. 	<p>The main factors affecting the decisions of pharmaceutical product managers in the implementation of patient-centred marketing strategies in Turkey and in the world were investigated.</p>	<p>Comparative research on the decision-making processes of global and Turkish pharmaceutical product managers in patient-centred marketing is insufficient.</p>
<p>Decision Factors for Pharmaceutical Product Managers in the Turkish Market</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pharmaceutical product selection is influenced by market needs and regulatory requirements. - In pharmaceutical markets that prioritise local production, such as Turkey, pharmaceutical product selection is under the control of local regulations. - Effective management and a well-trained pharmaceutical sales team are essential to maintain a competitive advantage in the pharmaceutical industry and to meet market demands. 	<p>The important factors affecting the strategic decisions of product managers in the Turkish pharmaceutical market are underlined.</p>	<p>There is a need for more applied research on the factors affecting the decision-making mechanism in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry market.</p>
<p>Impact of Technological Advancements on Patient-Centred Marketing in the Turkish Pharmaceutical Sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Technological developments in the pharmaceutical sector play a highly influential role on drug development processes and marketing tactics. -Diagnostic systems that are technologically advanced are encouraging in terms of efficiency and personalisation of health care. 	<p>The impact of IT systems on patient-centred marketing and health outcomes is investigated.</p>	<p>How technological developments can be better aligned with the ethical considerations around patient-centred care and marketing methods needs to be further explored.</p>

2.9 CONCLUSION

The literature review addressed the challenges encountered in the process of identifying and implementing patient-centred marketing strategies in the pharmaceutical industry, mainly in the context of Turkey and within the scope of available resources, taking into account the global dimension where possible. Global trends and local regulations have a great impact on the shaping of the Turkish pharmaceutical market. Research has shown that patient-centred marketing strategies are becoming increasingly important in the pharmaceutical industry. Especially in recent years, the

pharmaceutical industry has started to adopt new approaches such as enabling patients to use medicines more effectively and encouraging them to participate more actively in their own treatment plans. However, it is a difficult process to balance between regulations, high R&D costs, ethical requirements and market dynamics in the adoption of these approaches.

According to the study, another challenge in applying pharmaceutical marketing strategies in Turkey is the long and complex drug approval process. On the other hand, technological developments also have an effect on the sector. The use of digital technologies in the pharmaceutical sector has a positive impact on patient education and engagement. However, this situation also brings ethical and trust issues.

In conclusion, patient-focused marketing strategies in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry depend on various factors and require a multidimensional approach. On the other hand, there are some gaps in the literature. In particular, the relationship between the marketing department and the product manager in Turkish pharmaceutical companies is a subject that is known in the industry, but theoretically has not been sufficiently covered in academic research. Furthermore, the impact of cultural factors and regulatory rules specific to the Turkish pharmaceutical market on marketing strategies should be analysed in more depth in comparison with global examples. The expansion of such research will make a great contribution to the development of the Turkish pharmaceutical industry.

CHAPTER III

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 OVERVIEW

In this chapter, the methodology adopted during the study will be discussed. Every research is conducted based on a certain philosophical principle and strategy. In this section, the philosophical approach of the research, data collection methods, strategy, data analysis processes and ethical considerations will be examined. This section will also explain how this research was structured and why specific methods were chosen.

The "research onion" model developed by Saunders et al. (2023) forms the basis for this study (Saunders *et al.*, 2023). This model explains everything from the research philosophy to data collection techniques. Also, it provides a systematic approach at every stage.

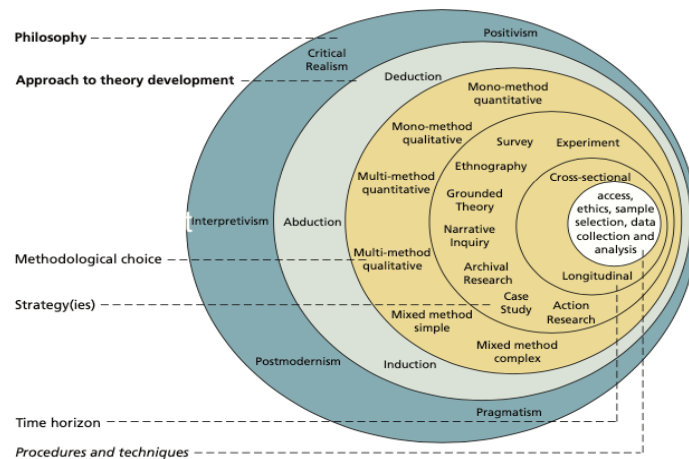


Figure 1: The ‘research onion’ , source Saunders et al. (2023) modified from Saunders et al. (2019)

Table 3: Research strategy and original data collection (Author)

Stages	Primary data	Method
1	Methodology	Qualitative Research
2	Research Paradigm	Interpretivism
3	Data Source	Product Managers and Individuals in Equivalent Positions from Local and International Pharmaceutical Companies
4	Data Collection Method	Semi-Structured and Structured Interview
5	Data Collection Format	15-22 minutes Zoom audio recordings

3.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

As a research paradigm, an interpretivist approach was adopted. Interpretivism is a philosophy that propose that the realities we experience in our social world are based on individuals own perspectives and their own experiences. Meaning interpretivism is based on a subjective understanding of people's perception of their social realities. This philosophical approach focuses on qualitative research methods. This is because it analyses text or narrative data rather than quantitative data. Interpretivism analyses research topics in depth with their social, cultural and historical contexts, rather than only superficially evaluating them with a statistical formula. This perspective provides a thorough understanding of the issues being analysed allowing for contextual insight (Saunders *et al.*, 2023).

The interpretivist approach was chosen as a suitable method for analysing the participants recorded data in this study. Interpretivism is considered as an effective method for analysing and thus understanding complex and often multi layered social trends. These trends can often be dynamic and multifaceted topics such as product management and marketing strategies in the pharmaceutical industry. The main reason for choosing this philosophical paradigm is the need for an in-depth understanding of the experiences, perceptions and decision-making processes of industry professionals. Interpretivism allows us to take into account the social, cultural and institutional contexts that shape the working practices in these areas. Thus, it allows us to understand not only what they do, but also why and how they may do it. Moreover, this approach will help us to better understand some of the complex decision-making processes behind marketing strategies in the pharmaceutical industry and the factors that may influence them.

In conclusion, the interpretivist approach has the potential to provide insightful, valuable, contextualised and in-depth insights for studying product management and marketing strategies in the pharmaceutical industry. This is perfectly in line with the aim of this research.

3.3 RESEARCH STRATEGY

The chosen strategy for this research is a qualitative research methodology. Punch (2005) states that qualitative research is an effective method for evaluating complex social dynamics (Phellas, 2006). Therefore, this strategic approach is ideal when examining the decision making mechanisms of product managers on marketing tactics. This study is based on a multiple case study design. According to Yin (2009), research studies such as this study, in which the researcher has no direct involvement in current events and seeks answers to questions such as 'how' and 'why' are suitable for a case study research strategy (Aberdeen, 2013). The interview method, which will be explained in more detail in the following sections, will be used as the data collection method, with semi-structured and full-structured questions. This method is an effective qualitative research method that will enable the participants to analyse their personal perspectives and experiences, as stated by Punch (2005) (Phellas, 2006). The data obtained as a result of the research will be analysed using the thematic analysis method. This research strategy provides a highly effective research framework to examine the patient-centred marketing approaches of experienced product managers working in the local and international pharmaceutical industry in Turkey in a real life context.

3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH

Qualitative data are data that allow for in-depth analysis of data through text audio or visual materials. According to Punch (2005), what is essential when researching qualitative data is that the participants share from their own perspectives. In this way, it is possible to make more significant and detailed analyses with the information that they provide (Phellas, 2006). Qualitative research plays an important role when trying to analyse and understand participants' perspectives and experiences. This process is often achieved through semi-structured or structured questioning (Creswell, 2014).

In this research, interviews with pharmaceutical experts in the field are used as the main data collection method. These interviews are conducted to analyse the participants' personal experiences on product management and marketing strategies in the pharmaceutical industry. Qualitative data collection and analysis enables researchers to understand the participants' experiences in a more in

depth way and contributes to the researchers development of skills such as critical thinking, data categorisation, coding and thematic analysis (Phellas, 2006).

Thematic analysis is a flexible and understandable qualitative data analysis method for identifying themes and patterns in a data set. This method helps users to better understand the main themes that emerge from their data. The data being participants' interviews in this study. In addition to this, thematic analysis allows us to develop insightful understanding by requiring the repeated examination of the data in a systematic way (Byrne, 2020).

3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

3.5.1 Key Informant Interviews

Primary data will be collected through interviews with product managers from local and international pharmaceutical companies in Turkey. Participants were selected from among people with experience in the pharmaceutical industry, involved marketing decision-making processes and with a role at the product management level. Interviews will be conducted through an online Zoom meeting and each session is planned to last 15 to 22 minutes. According to Saunders et al. (2023), to gain a more detailed understanding in interviews the researcher asks semi-structured questions, the researcher shapes the questions and interprets the responses according to each participant. This provides a richer insight into the participants' perspectives. This flexibility offers the possibility of collecting more in-depth and participant-oriented information compared to questionnaires (Saunders *et al.*, 2023). In this study, all data will be collected by asking structured and semi-structured questions to each participant.

3.5.2 Interview Process

Participants will be contacted via LinkedIn and WhatsApp and given a Participant Information Leaflet (PIL) and Informed Consent Form (ICF). Their consent will be obtained before the interviews. These documents will ensure that participants are fully informed about the purpose, procedures and rights of the study. Participants will receive interview questions via e-mail and

WhatsApp approximately one week before the scheduled zoom meetings. Interviews will be audio-recorded via Zoom, thus creating an accurate and comprehensive data pool.

3.5.3 Interview Questions and Themes

Structured Questions:

1. Can you explain the main regulatory challenges you face when implementing patient-centred marketing strategies in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry?
2. What are the key market demands and regulatory requirements that influence your decision-making processes for patient-centred marketing strategies?
3. How did the evolution of healthcare policies in Turkey and the transformation in patient expectations affect your strategic decisions to adopt patient-centred marketing approaches?
4. What suggestions do you have to increase the adoption and effectiveness of patient-centred marketing approaches in Turkey?
5. What are the Turkey-specific factors affecting the application of global patient-centred marketing strategies to the Turkish pharmaceutical market?

Semi-Structured Questions:

6. Can you please provide an example of a successful patient-centred marketing strategy you have recently implemented? What were the key factors that contributed to the success of this strategy?
7. How do your company's internal dynamics or restrictions affect your implementation of patient-centred marketing strategies? For example, can you mention factors such as budget, human resources, or company policies?
8. In your experience, what are the main challenges when implementing patient-centred marketing strategies? How do you overcome these challenges?
9. Can you give a specific example of the challenges or opportunities created by regulatory changes in the implementation of patient-centred marketing strategies?
10. What are the current trends in patient-centred marketing strategies in the global pharmaceutical industry and how do you think these trends can be applied in the Turkish market?
11. How do you ensure the balance between your business objectives and ethical standards in patient-focused marketing practices? Can you give an example of a situation where these two elements potentially conflict and how you resolved it?

Table 4: Themes and Related Interview Questions (Author)

Themes	Interview Questions
Global Context of Patient-Centred Marketing Strategies	5,10
Global Challenges in Implementing Patient-Centred Marketing Strategies in the Pharmaceutical Sector	1,2,9
The Influence of Global Trends on Local Marketing Practices in the Turkish Pharmaceutical Sector	3,10
Challenges in Implementing Patient-Centred Marketing Strategies in Turkey	1,2,4,8
Decision-Making Processes of Product Managers in the Pharmaceutical Sector: Turkish and Global Perspectives	2,3,7,11
Decision-Making Factors for Pharmaceutical Product Managers in the Turkish Market	2,6

The table above summarises the source of the interview questions. These questions were designed to gather insights into the factors that influence product managers in pharmaceutical companies when deciding on patient-centred marketing strategies. The questions were based on regulatory challenges, market demands, health policy evolution, Turkey-specific factors, examples of successful strategies, internal dynamics, key challenges and ethical issues. The results of this approach aims to provide a comprehensive and insightful understanding of the current state, challenges and opportunities of patient-centred marketing strategies in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The data collection process for the research will be completed and then the data analysis phase will begin. The first step in this process will be the audio-recorded interviews conducted online via the Zoom platform. These interviews will be transcribed into written text. Secondly, these written data will be analysed systematically using thematic analysis. This analysis period allows for a deep understanding of collected qualitative data. It makes the extraction of meaningful findings through themes which are retrieved from the research questions.

Byrne (2022), on interpreting Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach, described in detail that this method is based on structured examination of data and the identification of main themes that emerge (Byrne, 2022). In this study, product managers' approaches and experiences in patient-centred marketing will guide the whole data analysis process. Byrne (2022) described,

Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis approach which involves the process of identifying, analysing and reporting on themes. These themes develop when analysing qualitative data and are seen as a suitable method for analysis of qualitative research. This method enables a systematic handling of large amounts of qualitative data. Also, the rich and detailed insights can be found from the qualitative data collected using this method (Byrne, 2022).

Another important advantage of thematic analysis is that it helps the researcher to develop a clearer understanding of their recorded data. This happens by analysing the data repeatedly in a systematic way. This analysis methodology requires a structured and repeatable process for analysing qualitative data. This enables the researcher to retrieve more meaningful connections from the available data. Aberdeen (2013) states that Yin's (2009) study describes the importance of systematic and reproducible analysis methods used in case studies (Aberdeen, 2013).

This is consistent with the basic principles of thematic analysis. These characteristics suggest that thematic analysis is an appropriate method to analyse the complex and multidimensional views of product managers in the pharmaceutical industry on patient-focused marketing strategies.

At the end of this section, the researcher will facilitate the thematic analysis process by selecting an appropriate software programme (NVivo 14) for the analysis of the data and ensure a more effective evaluation of the results.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations will be meticulously and carefully handled throughout the research process. As emphasised by Saunders et al. (2023), protecting the rights of participants and ensuring the integrity of the research are very important factors (Saunders *et al.*, 2023). Accordingly, in interviews with a small group of participants, each participant will be fully informed about the purpose of the study through the Participant Information Form (PIL) and Informed Consent Form (ICF) and their consent will be obtained before the interview. Confidentiality and anonymity will be strictly protected, and all data will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Ethical approval will be secured from the relevant ethics committee to ensure that the study complies with ethical standards.

As Aberdeen (2013) stated in his evaluation of Yin's study, the limited consideration of ethical issues in case studies is seen as a deficiency (Aberdeen, 2013). Therefore, the researcher will demonstrate his commitment to ethical principles at every stage of the research. In addition, he will take all necessary measures to protect the rights of the participants. This approach aims to increase

the reliability and validity of the research by emphasising the importance of ethical standards even for a small-scale study.

3.8 INCLUSION and EXCLUSION CRITERIA

In this study, purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants. This non probability sampling technique ensures that participants are selected from people with relevant experience and knowledge in accordance with the purpose of the research. The inclusion criteria included people with at least 3 years of experience in the pharmaceutical industry, who were also identified as having relevant experience and knowledge of patient-centred marketing strategies, working as product managers or equivalent positions. They were to be directly involved in the decision-making process.

Table 5: Participant Characteristics (Author)

Participant	Role	Company Type
1	Junior Product Manager	Local Firm
2	Product Marketing Specialist	International Firm
3	Strategic Marketing and Product Licensing Manager	International Firm
4	Product Manager	International Firm
5	Product Manager	International Firm
6	Group Product Manager	International Firm

Saunders et al. (2023) notes that purposive sampling is a very useful method for obtaining in-depth information for specific contexts (Saunders *et al.*, 2023). Using this purposive sampling approach ensured that data collected are meaningful and relevant (Phellas, 2006).

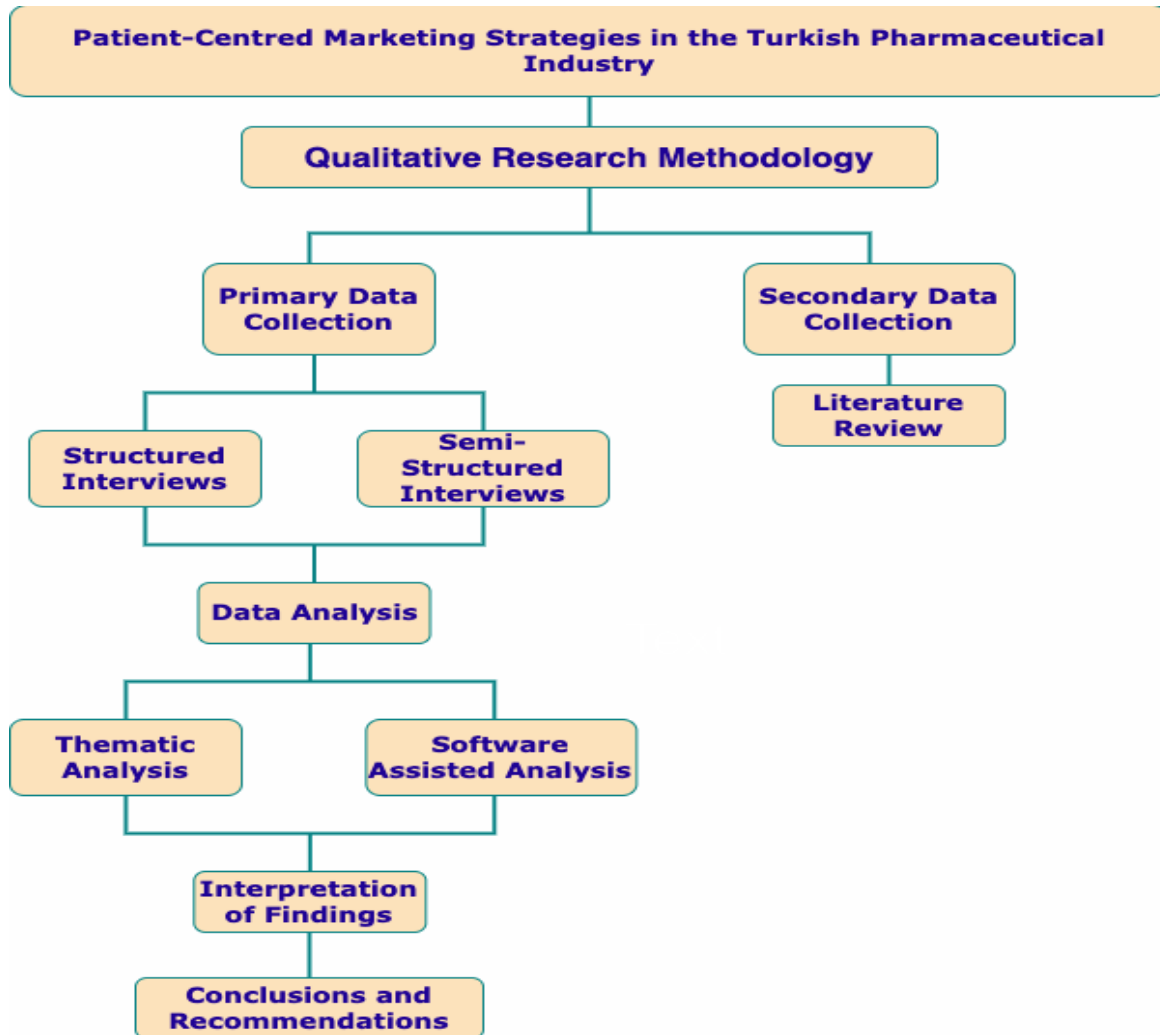
As outlined in Aberdeen's (2013) review of Yin's study, it was highlighted as important that the cases selected in case studies can answer the actual research questions. This approach is in line with the purposive sampling technique and thus allows the research to be successful completed in all its needed depth and detail (Aberdeen, 2013).

3.9 CONCLUSION

This methodology section summarises the systematic approach that will be taken to conduct the study. The study aims to examine the decision-making factors of product managers in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry. This is carried out in regard to patient-centred marketing strategies. To achieve this goal, a qualitative research design will be adopted using in-depth interviews. These interviews will employ a mixture of structured and semi-structured questions as the method of data collection. This approach aims to obtain a balance between standardised data collection along with a flexible, in-depth exploration of this data. The data will then be thematically analysed to reveal any subjective experiences that the participants have including the meanings that they give to these experiences. This analysis process is expected to provide a rich and detailed understanding into marketing decision-making processes in the pharmaceutical industry.

3.10 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework



CHAPTER IV

4. FINDING AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This part of the research used Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis method, as mentioned in the methodology section. Thematic analysis is a qualitative technique which offers flexibility for the researcher during the analysis of qualitative data. This thematic analysis method facilitates data analysis based on finding themes which emerge from the data making it much more suitable for reporting (Braun and Clarke, 2006) on data of a qualitative nature. The data here were analysed by dividing it into main themes and sub-themes using qualitative data analysis software called 'NVivo 14'. This software allowed for a deeper understanding of the coding process and also enabled the visualisation of themes through charts and word clouds. Six of the seven themes analysed in the literature review were addressed in the questionnaires given to each of the participants. In this section, these mentioned 6 themes will be examined and analysed in detail. Thematic analysis aims to identify important points in data and then capture emerging meanings known as themes represented in a data collection (Braun and Clarke, 2006). By using this process of analysis the study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' subjective perspectives while trying to comprehend their responses to the posed research questions.

This thematic analysis process provided the study with in-depth insights into many of the factors influencing patient centred marketing strategies in the pharmaceutical industry, including the challenges they faced. This was based on the answers to the questions posed to each of the product managers and industry professionals at similar levels of management. Visual tools such as the word cloud, the hierarchy chart and codes were utilised to explain the data. Codes were used to allow comparisons by the number of coding references and a concept map was obtained using NVivo 14 software. This software enabled a multidimensional analysis of the available data. The visual analyses provided an easy to interpret and clearer picture of the patterns and relationships of the participants' responses. This enabled a systematic analysis of the dynamics and challenges faced in this sector. This approach combined the detailed content of the qualitative data with the visual analyses. This resulted in the researchers' questions being addressed in a fairly comprehensive and multidimensional way.

4.2 THEMES AND CODES

In this section, the main themes and sub-themes that emerged from the research conducted are presented. The main themes were firstly obtained from the literature review. The sub-themes were formed by the researcher as a result of the analysis of the in-depth interviews conducted with the 6 participants. The data analysis process was conducted by using NVivo 14 qualitative data analysis software. The interview transcripts were uploaded to the 'Files' section of this software. The themes and sub-themes were structured in the 'Codes' section. This was all done to allow the recorded data to be coded and analysed in a structured and systematic way as recommended by Braun and Clarke, (2006). The concept map was obtained as a result of the NVivo analysis that visually revealed the relationships between the main themes and the developed/emerged sub-themes.

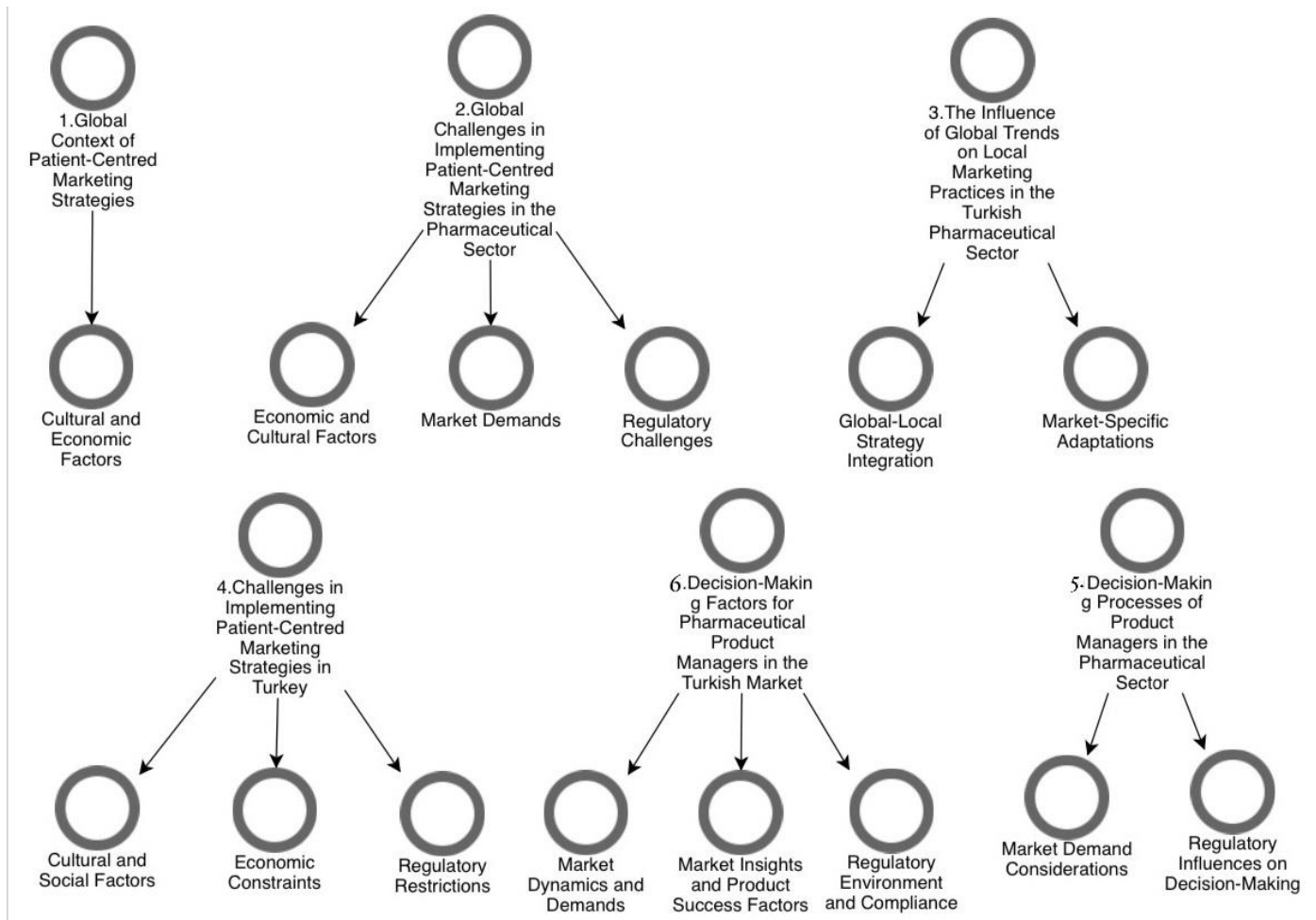


Figure 3: Concept Map of Main Themes and Sub-themes Generated Using NVivo 14 by the Author

4.3 THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF INDIVIDUAL THEMES

4.3.1 Global Context of Patient-Centred Marketing Strategies

This 'Global Context' theme explores the trends in the adoption and implementation of patient-focused marketing strategies in the context of a global pharmaceutical industry. Participants generally emphasised that strategies differ from country to country and that Turkey's unique high inflationary and economic conditions are decisive in this process. It was revealed that global marketing strategies have changed over time and have shifted towards patient-oriented approaches. However, the implementation of these strategies within the Turkish landscape should take place all within the framework of the rules set out by the Ministry of Health.

Participants stated that global patient-centred strategies are a very broad topic and vary from country to country, meaning it is difficult to find subject matter experts in this area. For example, one participant stated that Turkey's average age, number of patients and economic levels are very different from other countries:

"Global patient-centred strategies are a broad topic and vary from country to country. Turkey's average age, patient numbers, and economic level are very different from other countries."

(Participant 3)

Another participant also pointed out that marketing strategies in the global pharmaceutical industry are constantly changing, but emphasised that these practices in Turkey must always be conducted within the regulations set out by the Ministry of Health:

"Global marketing strategies in the pharmaceutical industry are constantly evolving. We hear that patient-centred approaches are becoming more important. Even though there are such global changes, their implementation in Turkey must always take place within the framework of the rules of the Ministry of Health." (Participant 6)

These findings support the difficulties in implementing globally accepted patient-centred strategies which at the local level are more apparent in countries such as Turkey. At the same time, in line with Camacho's (2014) findings on patient empowerment and ethical marketing methods, it is seen that the importance of patient-centred strategies is increasing. Rejikumar et al.'s (2018) study emphasising the impact of customer-centred approaches on patient satisfaction and trust is also in line with these findings.

It is generally understood that patient-oriented marketing strategies are gaining importance globally, but the implementation of these strategies varies according to the cultural and economic structure of the country. In the case of Turkey, the importance of the emotional bonds, the difference in

demographic structure and the impact of regulatory institutions come to the forefront. Therefore, pharmaceutical companies should take local dynamics into consideration while following global trends.

4.3.2 Global Challenges In Implementing Patient-Centred Marketing Strategies In The Pharmaceutical Sector

This theme explored the global challenges faced when implementing patient-centred marketing strategies in the pharmaceutical industry. The NVivo analysis conducted shows that this theme was quite frequently referred to by interviewed participants.

Although this theme generally aims to reach some answers considering patient centred marketing strategies in a global context, unfortunately no answers were directly associated with this theme within the scope of the research. A total of 3 questions were asked under this heading, yet the participants answers were mainly focused on examples and experiences specific to Turkey.

Although these responses were specifically focussed on Turkey, they do indirectly provide some insights into global challenges that emerge in a local context such as Turkey. This situation does provide some important information on how global challenges are perceived in Turkey. It also illustrates how these challenges can be expressed in a local context. This indirect approach provides valuable perspectives on how global issues are understood and assessed in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry.

The literature review revealed that regulatory environments, cultural differences between countries and ethical standards are the main challenges for Turkish pharmaceutical companies. The complex regulatory environment for direct-to-consumer pharmaceutical advertising (DTCPA), which was further emphasised in Ventola's (2011) study, is completely in line with the views of the participants here.

For example, Participant 6 went on to explain, "Promotion can be made in line with the legislation determined by the Ministry of Health. This legislation is very strict for pharmaceuticals. It is strictly forbidden to promote medicines to the patient" underlines the strict regulations in Turkey.

Mackey and Liang's (2013) findings on regulatory challenges of digital marketing were also consistent with the participants' views on the complexities of the regulatory environment in Turkey. Participant 4's comment for example was that "Regulations in the pharmaceutical sector in Turkey

can vary according to the type of company" can further be cited as another example of this complexity.

Economic and cultural factors, one of the sub-themes of this heading, reflect the differences between countries underlined in the literature. In the case of Turkey, these factors appear as important challenges. For example, Participant 4 stated that 'The economic structure of each country is different. The most important factor is the economic structure, because at the end of the day everyone is thinking about the profit margin from the sale of the medicine' emphasises the important role of the economic structure in the implementation of patient-centred strategies.

Market Demands was another subheading and is an important aspect considering the challenges faced with the implementation of patient-oriented marketing strategies. The relationship between the market's demand and pricing policies and of course including the performance of original products is an area that has not been addressed in much detail in the available literature.

Considering this the opinions of the participants provide important insights. Participant 1 for example stated that 'Key market demands are completely related to pricing policy. Whatever your marketing strategy is, if the patient's contribution is minimal and the product is original, it will sell', this offers a new perspective in this area. This opinion further highlights how pricing policy and the market position of an original product plays a critical role in the success of patient-centred strategies.

4.3.3 The Influence Of Global Trends On Local Marketing Practices In The Turkish Pharmaceutical Sector

The analysis of this topic is based on the impact of global trends on local marketing practices in the Turkish pharmaceutical sector. In the analysis conducted with NVivo, it was observed that respondents provided limited information on this topic; however, some relevant conclusions could be drawn from this limited information. In this case, sub-themes such as 'Global-Local Strategy Integration' and 'Market Specific Adaptations' stand out.

In the sub-themes "Global-Local Strategy Integration", Participant 6's statement "Even though there are such global changes, their implementation in Turkey must always take place within the framework of the rules of the Ministry of Health". This shows that it can be difficult to fully implement global trends in Turkey as the Ministry of Health's rules can of course evolve over time. This idea points out that global trends can only be partially implemented by adapting them to meet

the current rules of the Turkish health system. Considering global trends, this finding is only partially adaptable as it needs to be adjusted to the rules of the Turkish health system.

For another sub-theme ‘Market-Specific Adaptations’, Participant 3's statement ‘Turkey's average age, patient numbers, and economic level are very different from other countries. Therefore, demographic structure, psychographic structure, geographic information, and behavioural information are factors that will cause changes unique to Turkey’. This statement also underlines the necessity of adapting global strategies to local market conditions.

To summarise, the findings show the heavy impact of global trends on local marketing practices in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry. Insights gained from the participants clearly highlight the importance of the demographic, economic and legal factors specific to Turkey. These reflect the many challenges of a global / local strategy combination. These results show the complexity and difficulties when trying to implement patient-centred marketing strategies in Turkey.

4.3.4 Challenges In Implementing Patient-Centred Marketing Strategies In Turkey

Implementing patient-centred marketing strategies in Turkey has always faced a number of challenges and obstacles. The importance of this is clearly supported by the results from the NVivo analysis of the interviews conducted with experienced professionals in the industry. These interviews revealed that this theme of ‘Challenges’ was the most frequently referenced topic by the participants, with a total of 24 references to this mentioned theme. This emphasises the sensitivity of the topic in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry.

Turkey’s strict regulatory environment appears to be a key challenge. This is apparent from the literature and from the views of the participants. As stated in Kayserili and Kıyak's (2020) study, this is seen as a major obstacle to establishing creative and patient-oriented approaches. Participant 6 stated that "Promotion can be made in line with the legislation determined by the Ministry of Health (MOH). This legislation is very strict for drugs. It is strictly forbidden to promote drugs to the patient" further underlines obstacles created via the strict rules regarding patient oriented drug promotion in Turkey.

Turkey's economic constraints are another important barrier for the implementation of patient-centred strategies. Pharmaceutical companies' need for financial and human capital as was pointed

out by Tahtasakal (2021) is again in line with the views of the interviewed participants. Participant 1's statement "The most serious problem in patient-centred marketing is drug costs and how much these costs are reflected to the patient" clearly reveals some of the financial impacts which Turkey's economic constraints can lead to difficulties for the patients buying the product.

Cultural and social factors also stand out as an additional but important sub-theme under this heading. Participant 2's statement "As Turkish people, building emotional bonds and personal relationships are very important to us. Therefore, empathy and emotional communication play a major role in patient-oriented strategies" again clearly indicates the great importance of cultural factors that are specific to the Turkish people.

Although not questioned under this theme, Participant 2's statement "Doctors' defence against digitalisation is also an important factor. Many doctors I believe are cautious about digitalisation and technological innovations preferring traditional methods". This suggests that digitalisation is still not fully accepted by all doctors in Turkey. As mentioned, the role of digital technologies was mentioned in the Memişoğlu and Bilen (2021) study, again discussed in the literature review. This study interestingly underlined those digital technologies can have a massive potential to increase health literacy and facilitate information access in the marketing of OTC medicines to the general public. However, the participant's observations suggest that the attitude of healthcare professionals can be a major obstacle in realising this marketing potential of the various digital technologies. This is of course an important factor that must be taken into account whenever product managers or doctors are implementing patient-centred marketing strategies using the various digital platforms that are available.

Participant 1's statement "There are significant differences in marketing strategies between local and global companies in Turkey" is further evidence that these differences can affect the implementation of patient-centred strategies and therefore add to the list of ongoing challenges product managers.

The findings obtained within the scope of this theme often show how challenging it is to implement a patient-centred marketing strategy in the current Turkish landscape. The obstacles encountered do not only come from a single area but also from many different aspects. Strict legal regulations, the economic conditions of the country, the unique cultural characteristics of Turkish society and the difficulties in adapting to technology make the adoption of these strategies quite complex. Our

findings here are in harmony with the challenges mentioned in the literature, while at the same time providing a clearer picture of the conditions specific to Turkey.

4.3.5 Decision-Making Processes Of Product Managers In The Pharmaceutical Sector: Turkish And Global Perspectives

This theme analyses the decision-making processes of product managers in the pharmaceutical industry in a comparative perspective in Turkey and globally. NVivo analysis shows that this theme was addressed in a limited way by the participants. However, the data gathered indicate the complex and multidimensional nature of the decision-making processes of product managers.

Under this main theme and the sub-theme of ‘Market Demand Considerations’, the participants pointed out the importance of market research and pricing policy in their decision-making process. For example, Participant 3 used the following statement:

"Before a drug is released, extensive market research is conducted. During this research, we must consider health policies and even the socio-economic structure of the country when determining prices."

Similarly, the views of Participant 1 also underline the importance of market demand:

"All products on the market have patient prescription analysis data. No pharmaceutical company takes the risk of launching a product without demand. First, market research is conducted, the cost and profitability of the product are calculated."

Another sub-theme, ‘Regulatory Influences on Decision-Making’, presents the impact of the regulatory environment on decision-making processes. As previously mentioned, the complexity and strictness of the Turkish regulatory environment often significantly affects the available options and thus decisions for Turkish product managers. In this context, participants 4 and 6 ‘s perspectives clearly demonstrate the impact of the Turkish regulatory environment on decision-making processes.

"Regulations in the pharmaceutical sector in Turkey can change depending on the type of company. For example, if you work for a global company, the rules are different compared to a local company." (Participant 4)

"Promotion can be made in line with the legislation determined by the Ministry of Health (MOH). This legislation is very strict for drugs. It is strictly forbidden to promote drugs to the patient."
(Participant 6)

These findings suggest that the decision-making processes for product managers in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry can be quite complex and often multidimensional. A country's market dynamics and regulatory environment appear to be important factors in these processes. In the concluding section of the study, a comprehensive analysis will be presented that discusses the literature in more detail.

4.3.6 Decision-Making Factors For Pharmaceutical Product Managers In The Turkish Market

This theme is different from the decision-making processes analysed in the previous section, focusing on the specific factors that influence the decisions of product managers in the Turkish pharmaceutical sector. The NVivo analysis shows that this theme was moderately addressed by the participants. The data gathered highlights the diversity and complexity of decision-making factors. The participants underlined the importance of market demands under the sub-theme of Market Dynamics and Demands. The opinion of Participant 1 gives an insight into this subject:

"Key market demands are completely related to pricing policy. Whatever your marketing strategy, if the patient's contribution is minimal and the product is original, it will sell."

The sub-theme Market Insights and Product Success Factors emphasises the importance of market research and product success factors. Participant 1's statement clearly summarises this sub-theme: "All products on the market have patient prescription analysis data. No pharmaceutical company takes the risk of launching a product without demand. First, market research is conducted, the cost and profitability of the product are calculated."

The sub-theme 'Regulatory Environment and Compliance', which has been mentioned often in the other themes, also illustrates the impact of the Turkish regulatory environment on decision-making factors for product managers in this context. Participant 4's statement is an obvious example of this: "Regulations in the pharmaceutical sector in Turkey can change depending on the type of company. For example, if you work for a global company, the rules are different compared to a local company."

This subjective perspective clearly stresses the complexity of the regulatory environment in Turkey and that this complexity would likely vary depending on the type of company.

Referring to the literature, Zhou's (2023) findings on how localisation policies in Turkey affect international market dynamics are of course in accordance with the interviewed participants' observations relating to the complexity due to the regulatory environment. This again confirms that the regulatory environment and its resulting factors plays a crucial role in the decision-making process of product managers in Turkey.

4.4 NVIVO ANALYSIS AND VISUALISATIONS

4.4.1 Thematic Analysis Results and Hierarchy Chart

The NVivo analysis of the six main themes and their sub-themes analysed in this study visually shows which themes were emphasised more by the participants. The Hierarchy Chart shown in [Figure 3] illustrates how often each theme and sub-theme was referenced by the participants.

Upon analysis the results from theme 4, 'Challenges in Implementing Patient-Centred Marketing Strategies in Turkey' showed that it was the most frequently referenced topic. There were a total of 24 references under this theme and its sub-themes include 'Economic Constraints', 'Cultural and Social Factors', and 'Regulatory Restrictions'. This indicates the importance of the challenges faced in implementing patient-centred marketing strategies in Turkey.

The second most referenced theme is 6. 'Decision-Making Factors for Pharmaceutical Product Managers in the Turkish Market'. Under this theme, there are sub-themes such as 'Market Insights and Product Success Factors', 'Regulatory Environment and Compliance', and 'Market Dynamics and Demands'.

The theme '2. Global Challenges in Implementing Patient-Centred Marketing Strategies in the Pharmaceutical Sector' also has been referred to significantly. This theme addresses the challenges in implementing patient-centred marketing strategies in a global context.

Alternatively, theme 5, 'Decision-Making Processes of Product Managers in the Pharmaceutical Sector: Turkish and Global Perspectives' and theme 3, 'The Influence of Global Trends on Local Marketing Practices in the Turkish Pharmaceutical Sector' received fewer references. This shows that these themes are less addressed by the participants.

The least referenced theme was theme 1, ‘Global Context of Patient-Centred Marketing Strategies’. This theme presents the general framework of patient-centred marketing strategies in a global context.

This visual analysis supports the findings of the study and highlights which themes are more important to industry professionals. The fact that the challenges and decision-making factors especially in Turkey come to the centre of attention shows that these issues are of critical importance for the sector.



Figure 4: Hierarchy Chart of Themes and Sub-themes Derived from NVivo Analysis (Generated using NVivo 14, Source: Author)

4.4.2 NVivo Coding Structure and Reference Numbers

The coding structure that emerged as a result of the analysis in NVivo and the number of references showing how many times each code was used show the main topics of the research and how often these topics were addressed. The [Figure 5] below shows how many times the main themes and sub-themes were mentioned in the files and how many times they were mentioned in total. Thanks to this structure, it is easy to see which topics the participants emphasised more and which topics were discussed more frequently.

Name	Files	References	Created on	Created by
1.Global Context of Pat	2	2	7/29/2024 5:11 PM	CRN
Cultural and Econ	2	2	7/29/2024 5:30 PM	CRN
2.Global Challenges in	1	1	7/29/2024 5:12 PM	CRN
Economic and Cult	3	3	7/30/2024 5:02 PM	CRN
Market Demands	2	2	7/29/2024 5:29 PM	CRN
Regulatory Challen	2	2	7/29/2024 5:29 PM	CRN
3.The Influence of Glob	2	2	7/29/2024 5:14 PM	CRN
Global-Local Strat	1	1	7/29/2024 5:32 PM	CRN
Market-Specific A	2	2	7/29/2024 5:33 PM	CRN
4.Challenges in Implem	3	9	7/29/2024 5:16 PM	CRN
Cultural and Social	2	3	7/30/2024 9:50 AM	CRN
Economic Constrai	4	6	7/29/2024 5:22 PM	CRN
Regulatory Restrict	3	6	7/29/2024 5:26 PM	CRN
5.Decision-Making Pro	1	1	7/29/2024 5:15 PM	CRN
Market Demand C	1	2	7/29/2024 5:28 PM	CRN
Regulatory Influen	2	2	7/29/2024 5:28 PM	CRN

Figure 5: NVivo Coding Structure and Reference Numbers - Part 1 (Generated using NVivo 14, Source: Author)

Name	Files	References	Created on	Created by
6.Decision-Making Fact	2	2	7/29/2024 5:16 PM	CRN
Market Dynamics a	2	2	7/29/2024 5:27 PM	CRN
Market Insights an	2	3	7/30/2024 1:50 PM	CRN
Regulatory Environ	3	3	7/29/2024 5:27 PM	CRN

Figure 6: NVivo Coding Structure and Reference Numbers - Part 2 (Generated using NVivo 14, Source: Author)

4.4.3 General Evaluation of Participant Views and Word Cloud

4.4.3.1 Participant Views

This section presents the analysis of six zoom audio interviews conducted as part of the research on patient-focused marketing strategies in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry. The interviews were carried out with product managers or equivalent professionals working in different pharmaceutical companies in Turkey. The participants provided valuable and useful insights on the various topics such as the regulatory framework, economic factors, cultural dynamics and the local application of global trends in the Turkish pharmaceutical market. The perspectives of each of the participants in this section will be analysed. This will be conducted separately for each participant with the challenges, opportunities and emerging themes that are related to the implementation of patient-centric marketing strategies in the pharmaceutical industry will be fully examined in response to the participants' recorded responses.

Participant 1:

In this interview, the challenges and opportunities in implementing patient-centred marketing strategies in the Turkish pharmaceutical sector were discussed in depth with the participant. The responses drew attention to the regulatory differences between OTC and Rx pharmaceutical groups. The participant also explained that marketing strategies are generally a lot more flexible in OTC products, in contrast to the strict regulations in the Rx group. The participant went on to explain that the pricing policies and reimbursement systems are very different for OTC products. It was highlighted that the pricing policies and reimbursement systems play a very important role in their patient-oriented strategies. The participant also mentioned the differences in strategies between local and global companies and further emphasised the importance of maintaining a balance between a company's ethical standards and business objectives. The participant finally described how current economic factors in Turkey can affect patient access to drugs and that this dynamic situation continually forces companies to reshape their marketing strategies.

Participant 2:

In this interview, the participant talked about the various challenges and opportunities when implementing patient-centred strategies in Turkey. The participant particularly discussed with interest the use of digital technologies and emotional ties in Turkish society. The participant went on to emphasise the importance of emotional and personal relationships which he believed to be specific to Turkey and further mentioned the effectiveness of utilising multi-channel communication strategies. The participant also underlined what he believed to be some difficulties, such as doctors' resistance to digitalisation and time management problems. Participant 2 continued with an example of an innovative approach. This approach is the use of VR (virtual reality) which has been shown to be a successful tool in patient-centred strategies. The participant also underlined the importance of cultural factors and technological innovations happening in Turkey in the area of patient-centred marketing strategies.

Participant 3:

In this interview, the participant stated that the regulatory environment in Turkey changes quite frequently and this heavily affects marketing strategies. The participant emphasised the importance of reimbursement policies for patients. The challenges in pricing and delivery of medicines for

these patients was then discussed. Challenges in adapting global strategies for Turkish companies were discussed and the impact of demographic and economic factors on these strategies was also emphasised by the participant. The importance of maintaining a balance between patient-centred approaches and a company's commercial expectations was again underlined. Participant 3 finally stated that the prolonged length of drug development which includes the approval processes also affected how they approached their marketing strategies.

Participant 4:

In this interview, participant 4 stated that health policies in Turkey generally try to be patient oriented. Economic factors however can create many difficulties in the implementation of these policies. The participant emphasised that regulations which can even vary by company type affect how they conduct their marketing strategies for the drug. The dynamics between an original and generic medicine also guide how they market a drug. Participant 4 went on to mention the current impact of Turkey's high and how the high inflation can limit some patients' access to these medicines thus showing the challenge for companies when implementing global trends in the Turkish market. Participant 4 did go on to highlight some of the lower costs in healthcare services in Turkey compared to some other countries. Finally, the participant explained with some examples how regulatory changes continually affect their marketing strategies.

Participant 5:

In this interview participant 5 discussed how Turkey has trouble implementing truly patient-centred strategies. In the participant's opinion, when a company's profit oriented economic factors create obstacles for patients it is in complete contrast to the creation of a genuine patient-centred strategy. The participant went on to emphasise the many challenges caused by the current high levels of inflation in Turkey in addition to the high foreign dependency in the country. The rapidly changing health policies, and the clash between ethical norms and business aims was then discussed. The participant also emphasised the importance of logistics and distribution in marketing strategy and underlined the differences in the approaches of global companies in local markets.

Participant 6:

This interview focused on implementing patient-centred marketing strategies in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry. The Ministry of Health has strict rules against direct marketing to patients, so the participant said it's important to follow them. In addition to that, the participant highlighted indirect marketing and the importance of scientific research. The participant mentioned that budget constraints and very limited human resources make regulation difficult but added that the regulations bring safe products to the forefront. However, the participants including number 6 often stated that the implementation of global trends in Turkey should always be within the rules of the Ministry of Health.

4.4.3.2 Word Frequency Cloud Analysis:

In the research, 11 questions asked in the interviews carried out with 6 participants and the answers given to these questions were analysed using NVivo 14 software. The word cloud created as a result of this analysis visually presents the most frequently used words of the participants.

This word cloud shows the main points of patient-centred marketing strategies in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry. It's clear the words 'patient', 'marketing', 'centred' and 'strategies' reflect the main topic of the study.

It's obvious from the frequency of words like 'pharmaceutical', 'company', 'Turkey' and 'market' that the interviews were focused on the Turkish pharmaceutical market. In the sector, 'regulations', 'policies', and 'Ministry' emphasize the importance of the legal framework.

The words "obstacles," "challenges," "implementation," and "changes" are used in this context to indicate, in general, to the challenges and shifting conditions that participants meet when putting patient-centred solutions into action.

Another important point is that the words 'global', 'trends' and 'Turkey' come together and the adaptation of global trends to the Turkish market is frequently discussed.

medicine and the patient's economic access to that medicine. Another interesting finding is that personal relationships in Turkish culture are influenced by emotional ties and this may have an indirect effect on marketing strategies in the field.

The findings of this study show that although global trends are shifting towards patient-centred strategies, their implementation in Turkey still needs work and needs to be carefully managed and shaped according to current economic conditions, local regulations and cultural factors specific to Turkey.

There is still a lot of potential for digital and multichannel communication, however there unfortunately seems to be a lot of resistance from Turkish healthcare professionals. Furthermore, participants highlighted the contrast where companies' commercial objectives and ethical standards still need to be balanced with patient-centred approaches.

Finally, in Turkey there are significant differences in the marketing strategies between OTC and Rx medicines. As well as that, through the interviews the study found that local and global companies have different approaches to how they conduct their patient-centred marketing strategies. These findings provide valuable information for academics and current industry professionals to help develop and adapt more effective patient-centred strategies all within the unique structure of the Turkish pharmaceutical market.

CHAPTER V

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Evaluation and Discussion of Research Findings

The main aim of this research is to examine the perspectives of product managers and other similarly positioned specialists in the Turkish pharmaceutical business. Examining their perspectives on patient-focused marketing tactics and their different viewpoints. The study's findings indicate that pharmaceutical marketing in Turkey has distinct obstacles and many dynamics to navigate.

A key finding of the study was that legal restrictions were the main obstacle to implementing patient-centred marketing techniques in Turkey. The strict regulations of the Ministry of Health greatly restrict companies' marketing activities, especially as the Ministry of Health prohibits the promotion of prescription medications directly to the patients. For example, Participant 6 stated that: "Promotion can be made in line with the legislation determined by the Ministry of Health. This legislation is very strict for pharmaceuticals. It is strictly forbidden to promote medicines to the patient." This situation indirectly urges pharmaceutical companies to develop patient-oriented strategies.

In the implementation of patient-centred strategies, economics plays a big role. In Turkey, the economy, drug pricing policies, and reimbursement system directly affect patients' access to drugs. In particular, high drug costs and how these costs are reflected to patients is a critical factor in shaping marketing strategies. In this regard, Participant 1 stated the following 'The most serious problem in patient-centred marketing is drug costs and how much these costs are reflected to the

patient.’ Economic factors are emphasized in this statement, and tips on how pharmaceutical companies should price drugs are provided. Pharmaceutical companies should review their pricing policies and develop strategies that are compatible with reimbursement systems to simplify patient access to medicines. This will increase both patient satisfaction and the effectiveness of marketing strategies.

The use of digital technologies is becoming increasingly important in patient-centred strategies. However, the research demonstrates that health professionals in Turkey show a resistance to digitalisation. The following statement of Participant 2 clearly reveals this situation: ‘Doctors’ defence against digitalisation is also an important factor. I believe many doctors are cautious about digitalisation and technological innovations, preferring traditional methods.” This finding is an example of the difficulties encountered in implementing digital marketing strategies. The cautious approach of healthcare professionals towards digitalisation makes it difficult to adopt digital tools and innovations. This limits the effectiveness of patient-centred marketing strategies. This is why training and information programmes for healthcare professionals need to be increased in order for digital technologies to be more widely accepted in the healthcare sector.

5.2 Comparison With Literature And Contributions

The research contributes to the existing literature in a few different ways and is in line with it in others. The study illustrates a situation similar to Ventola's (2011) findings on the DTCPA in the Turkish market. Basically, it explores how Turkish law affects patient-centred marketing. The law for pharmaceutical marketing in Turkey is better understood this way.

In terms of economic factors, the effects on pharmaceutical sales identified in Stremersch and Lemmens (2009) are analysed for Turkey in this study. In this study, the effects of economic factors such as manufacturer price controls, direct-to-consumer advertising (DTCA) bans, physicians' prescription budgets and the length of time drugs remain on the market on pharmaceutical sales were analysed. These findings give us a better understanding of how Turkey's economic structure influences patient-centred care. A special focus is put on how the reimbursement system and patients' role in drug costs impact marketing strategies. Taking economic factors into account when making pricing and marketing decisions is important.

The findings of Memişoğlu and Bilen (2021) about the potential of digital technologies to increase health literacy are similar to how healthcare professionals in Turkey handle digitalisation. Turkish healthcare professionals are cautious and reserved about digitalisation despite Memişoğlu and Bilen's findings, so obviously they cannot take advantage of these benefits.

It extends the literature's knowledge to Turkey and highlights the challenges to digital marketing. There's a need for more training and information on digital technologies among health care professionals.

Within the scope of this study, Zhou's (2023) findings regarding the ways in which localisation requirements in Turkey influence the dynamics of international markets are examined in the context of patient-focused strategies. Compared to Zhou's work on localization policies in the pharmaceutical sector, this one focuses on patient-centred marketing strategies. This helps to understand how pharmaceutical companies in Turkey need to balance between local and global strategies.

5.3 Limitations Of The Study And Suggestions For Future Research

This study has some limitations. Firstly, the study was conducted with a limited number of participants. A larger sample would have increased the generalisability of the findings. Secondly, the study focussed mainly on product managers. The inclusion of health professionals and patients would have provided a more comprehensive perspective.

Several suggestions can be made for future research. A comparison of patient-centred marketing strategies in the pharmaceutical sectors of Turkey and similar developing countries would likely provide valuable insights. Furthermore, future studies could collect and analyse quantitative data to support the qualitative findings of this study. A more detailed examination of patients' perceptions and experiences of patient-centred marketing strategies may also be an important area of research. Finally, a more in-depth examination of the impact of changes in healthcare regulations on patient-centred strategies may provide valuable insights to decision-makers and practitioners in the industry.

In addition, there are not many studies in the literature showing the hierarchy in the marketing department of pharmaceutical companies. For example, in the Turkish pharmaceutical marketing hierarchy, it is known in healthcare circles that product managers generally work under marketing

managers and marketing regional managers work under product managers. Under them are various teams of pharmaceutical representatives who have direct contact with doctors, pharmacies and health institutions. However, the literature that directly proves this information could not be found within the scope of the research. Explaining this relationship is very important for marketing strategies in the Turkish pharmaceutical market. As a result, future research should investigate this structure of hierarchy and its impact on marketing techniques in detail.

5.4 Personal Reflection

The information I gained during this research has contributed significantly to my understanding of the complex dynamics of the pharmaceutical industry in Turkey. In particular, it was enlightening to see how patient-centred marketing strategies are implemented in the presence of legal restrictions. Although formal and direct patient-centred marketing activities are prohibited in Turkey, I observed that pharmaceutical companies often implement these strategies indirectly through various medical avenues such as doctors, pharmacies and other healthcare professionals. This shows how the pharmaceutical sector must adapt and produce innovative solutions to stay productive despite the possible legal restrictions.

The process of this study helped me to see how effective qualitative methods can be to understand complex and difficult issues. Having only utilised quantitative analyses in my previous studies, employing NVivo's thematic analysis software for this study was a good learning experience that expanded my knowledge and methodological perspectives. The deep and comprehensive perspectives provided by the participants allowed me to better understand the realities of the pharmaceutical sector. This procedure certainly enhanced and broadened my academic research skills. Furthermore, it strengthened my critical thinking abilities. As a result of this, it has definitely made a large contribution to my ongoing academic development and thus provided me with a deep understanding of the sector.

This study analysed in great detail the challenges and opportunities in implementing patient-centred marketing strategies in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry. The results of the study revealed how legal regulations, economic conditions and technological advances have heavily shaped these strategies. Future studies should aim to expand on this research. I would suggest that future studies include the views of different stakeholders and be supported by quantitative data which would likely build a more comprehensive picture of the industry. With these suggestions we would most

likely have a much better opportunity to understand and improve on patient-centred marketing approaches in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry.

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APPENDICES A



Ethics Application & Declaration Form

DISSERTATION TITLE: Patient-Centred Marketing Strategies in the Turkish Pharmaceutical Sector: Product Managers' Perspectives on Decision-Making Factors in the 21st Century

RESEARCHER'S NAME: Ceren Onder Bayram

PROGRAMME OF STUDY: Pharmaceutical Business and Technology

SUPERVISOR'S NAME: André Luiz Maiocchi A. Costa

DECLARATION:

The information in this application form is accurate to the best of my knowledge. I undertake to abide by the principles outlined by Innopharma/Griffith College ethics policy in my research dissertation. I confirm that I have completed a full ethics assessment for my research dissertation as per the college guidelines. I will not begin my primary research until such approval from my supervisor and/or ethics Committee has been obtained.

I pledge to carry out my research according to the Innopharma/Griffith College academic integrity standards. Any results presented in my dissertation will be from my own, original research, I will reference and/or acknowledge any material or sources used in its preparation and I will not plagiarise the work of anyone else.

For Student:

STUDENT SIGNATURE: Ceren Onder Bayram

DATE: 01/07/2024

The research contained within this research dissertation proposal has been approved.

For Supervisor:

Ethics Committee Approval Required:

Yes No

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE: *André Luiz Maiocchi A. Costa*

DATE: 03 July 2024

For Ethics Committee (if required):

Ethics Committee Approval Given:

Yes No

ETHICS COMMITTEE MEMBER SIGNATURE:

DATE:

NOTE: Supervisors are responsible for ensuring their students fill in this form correctly and that all ethical areas have been considered.

SECTION 1: DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH STUDY

1.1 Purpose and objectives of research The primary aim of this research is to examine the factors influencing decision-making processes of product managers in the Turkish pharmaceutical sector, with a particular focus on the impacts of regulatory changes and evolving patient expectations. The Turkish pharmaceutical sector has undergone significant transformations in the 21st century. These changes, aimed at enhancing healthcare service quality, have created a complex operational environment for pharmaceutical companies. Consequently, the sector has shifted towards more patient-centred marketing strategies. However, stringent regulations and Turkey's diverse market landscape pose various challenges to the implementation of these strategies. Similar observations are noted in the global pharmaceutical industry, providing valuable insights for Turkey from practices in different countries.

This study aims to evaluate the current status of patient-centred marketing strategies. It will thoroughly investigate the obstacles encountered by product managers and the factors influencing their decision-making processes. Additionally, it will examine the impacts of recent regulatory changes and evolving patient expectations on strategic decisions. Based on insights from experienced industry managers, the research seeks to contribute to the development of effective decision-making strategies in a tightly regulated market like Turkey. Ultimately, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the implementation of patient-centred marketing strategies in the Turkish pharmaceutical sector.

1.2 Research methodology: This study will examine the factors influencing decision-making processes of product managers in the Turkish pharmaceutical sector regarding patient-centred marketing strategies. Both structured and semi-structured interviews will be conducted to gather qualitative data. Interviews will be conducted via Zoom platform with product managers working in pharmaceutical companies in Turkey, each lasting 30-45 minutes. Interviews will be recorded with participants' permission.

Participants will be selected using purposive sampling from various pharmaceutical companies and different product categories. Ethical guidelines will ensure participants' confidentiality and anonymity, informed consent will be obtained, and participants will have the right to withdraw at any time. In structured interviews, all participants will be asked the same questions in the same sequence. In semi-structured interviews, questions allowing participants to provide more detailed information will be included. These questions aim to deepen understanding of product managers' experiences and perspectives. Collected data will be transcribed, coded, and thematically analysed. This analysis aims to identify patterns and themes in product managers' decision-making processes. Member checking will be used to enhance the reliability of findings.

This methodology aims to thoroughly understand product managers' experiences and perspectives, and explore challenges and opportunities in implementing patient-centred marketing strategies.

SECTION 2: POSSIBLE ETHICAL ISSUES

Answer 'yes' or 'no' to the following questions.

SUBJECT MATTER

Does the research proposal involve:

Research into specific company activities that would be deemed sensitive or confidential

Yes No

Research into politically and/or racially/ethnically and/or commercially sensitive areas

Yes No

Sensitive, personal, professional or corporate issues

Yes No

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Does the research proposal involve:

Research that might damage the reputation of companies or participants

Yes No

Research that may negatively affect the reputation of Griffith College/Innopharma

Yes No

Use of personal records without consent

Yes No

Use of company data without consent

Yes No

The offer of any inducements to participate
Audio or visual recording without consent
Using a language other than English

Yes No
Yes No
Yes No

PARTICIPANTS

Does the research proposal involve:

People who are not competent and/or fluent in English

Yes No

Does your research group include any of the following vulnerable groups

Yes No

(Adults with psychological impairments; Adults with learning difficulties; Adults under the protection/control /influence of others (e.g. in care/prison); Relatives of ill people (e.g. parents of sick children); Hospital or GP participants recruited in a medical facility; persons under the age of 18)

If you have answered NO to ALL questions, please go straight to Section 4.

If you have answered YES to ANY question in SECTION 2, you must fill in SECTION 3.

SECTION 3: STEPS TAKEN TO AVOID ETHICAL ISSUES

[Only fill in this section if you answered YES to ANY of the questions in Section 3. For example, if you answered yes to including participants who are not fluent in English, you might put forward a plan that offers your survey in two languages to take this into account. Another example could be a study where the researcher wants to include information about the care received by children with a long-term condition but it would not be ethical to approach the children directly but it might be acceptable to instead ask parents questions about their child's care. If these plans are acceptable to your supervisor, you may not need to apply for ethical approval from the Ethics Committee].

3.1. If your ethics relates to **Subject Matter**, outline your action plan to work around any sensitive issues.

3.2. If your ethics relates to **Research Procedures**, outline your action plan to deal with possible ethical issues in your research procedures.

3.3. If your ethics relates to **Participants**, outline how you will protect vulnerable persons or those that do not have English as their first language.

SECTION 4: ABOUT YOUR PARTICIPANTS

4.1. Outline your participant profile and why you have chosen them for this study :

Participants in this study will be product managers working in the marketing departments of various local and international firms operating within the pharmaceutical sector in Turkey. These managers will be selected from companies active in the fields of medical devices, pharmaceuticals, and biotechnology.

These product managers play a crucial role in developing and implementing marketing strategies for their companies' diverse product portfolios. Their work spans across different product categories, providing a comprehensive perspective on strategies tailored to various patient groups. These participants are chosen because they hold direct responsibility for implementing patient-centred marketing strategies and have firsthand experience with the impacts of industry changes. Their experiences navigating regulations in the pharmaceutical market, managing patient expectations, and aligning company strategies will provide valuable insights for this research.

By focusing on this group, the study aims to understand practical challenges and opportunities in implementing patient-centred marketing strategies within the Turkish pharmaceutical sector. Examining the factors influencing product managers' decision-making processes will enable an evaluation of how the industry adapts to changes and balances regulatory requirements with patient expectations. These insights will be critical for developing strategies to enhance the effectiveness of patient-centred marketing strategies in the Turkish pharmaceutical sector and supporting industry professionals in strategic decision-making.

4.2 How do you plan to gain access to/contact/approach your participant(s).

I will contact some participants through mutual LinkedIn connections, and others through my existing professional network in the healthcare sector via WhatsApp.

SECTION 5: INFORMATION, CONSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY

5.1 Participant Information Letter (PIL) for participants

Please confirm below that your information letter covers:

Description of the research topic and method

Yes No

Details of what participation will involve

Yes No

Rights to anonymity

Yes No

Confidentiality

Yes No

Rights to withdraw from the research

Yes No

The contact details of the researcher and supervisor (if necessary)

Yes No

5.2 Informed Consent Form (ICF) for participants

Please indicate below if your research requires a signed consent form by selecting the relevant option only:

Yes: my research requires signed consent and I have attached an ICF in the appendices of my application.

No: my research study involves an online survey only and/or does not require signed consent

SECTION 6: STORAGE OF DATA

6.1. How will you store the research data and for how long? How will you manage data protection issues?

Research data will be securely stored electronically on a password-protected computer, with encrypted backups on external drives. The data, including primary data and completed Informed Consent Forms (ICFs), will be retained for five years post-completion of the study for potential further research and publication, after which it will be deleted.

To manage data protection issues, all participants will be fully informed about the data collection process and their rights under GDPR, including their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Personal identifiers will be removed to ensure anonymity, and pseudonyms will be used in all transcripts and reports. Participants will provide written informed consent before participation. Regular audits and reviews will be conducted to ensure compliance with data protection standards.

SECTION 7: NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT & STUDENT CONSENT

7.1 Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA)

Will the final dissertation contain any information pertaining to any source that would warrant the use of a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) e.g. industry-based research?

Yes No

7.2 Student consent

If a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) is not required, does the Student consent to allow their completed dissertation to be held/published by Innopharma/Griffith College?

Yes No

SECTION 8: RECORDING AND RETENTION OF DISSERTATION VIVA

8.1 Viva Recording

The Dissertation viva will be recorded. This recording may be used to facilitate assessment by Innopharma staff, a third reader if necessary and/or if requested by the external examiner for the Programme. The recording will be held in line with current GDPR guidelines and will not be made publicly available.

SECTION 9: DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

NOTE: Applicants must attach the following documents in electronic format to the appendix.

Which documents are added to the appendix? Please tick N/A if not applicable:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 9.1 Participant Information Letter (PIL) for participant | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> N/A |
| 9.2 Informed Consent Form (ICF) for participant | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> N/A |
| 9.3 Questions/survey for interviewees/focus groups etc (<i>can be in draft form</i>) | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> N/A |
| 9.4 Any other documents e.g. Non-Disclosure Agreement | Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> N/A |

I confirm that this application is complete and all required documents are included in the appendix.

For Student:

STUDENT SIGNATURE:



Ceren Onder Bayram

DATE:01/07/2024

SECTION 10: APPENDIX

Interview Questions

A. Structured Questions

1. Can you describe the main regulatory challenges you face when implementing patient-centred marketing strategies in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry?
2. What are the key market demands and regulatory requirements that influence your decision-making processes for patient-centred marketing strategies?
3. How did the evolution of healthcare policies in Turkey and the transformation in patient expectations affect your strategic decisions to adopt patient-centred marketing approaches?
4. What suggestions do you have to increase the adoption and effectiveness of patient-centred marketing approaches in Turkey?

5. What are the Turkey-specific factors affecting the application of global patient-centred marketing strategies to the Turkish pharmaceutical market?

B. Semi-Structured Questions

6. Can you please provide an example of a successful patient-centred marketing strategy you have recently implemented? What were the key factors that contributed to the success of this strategy?

7. How does your company's internal dynamics or restrictions affect your implementation of patient-centred marketing strategies? For example, can you mention factors such as budget, human resources or company policies?

8. In your experience, what are the main challenges when implementing patient-centred marketing strategies? How do you overcome these challenges?

9. Can you give a specific example of the challenges or opportunities created by regulatory changes in the implementation of patient-centred marketing strategies?

10. What are the current trends in patient-centred marketing strategies in the global pharmaceutical industry and how do you think these trends can be applied in the Turkish market?

11. How do you ensure the balance between your business objectives and ethical standards in patient-focused marketing practices? Can you give an example of a situation where these two elements potentially conflict and how you resolved it?



Participant Information Letter

Title: Patient-Centred Marketing Strategies in the Turkish Pharmaceutical Sector: Product Managers' Perspectives on Decision-Making Factors in the 21st Century

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not to take part.

WHO I AM AND WHAT THIS STUDY IS ABOUT

My name is Ceren Onder Bayram, and I am a master's student in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology at Griffith College Dublin. I am conducting this study as part of my dissertation requirement for my degree program. The aim of this study is to evaluate the effects of significant changes in rules, laws, and regulations, as well as changing patient expectations, on the decision-making processes of product managers in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry. This research seeks to assess the current status of the adoption and implementation of patient-centred marketing strategies and the challenges encountered during this process.

WHAT WOULD TAKING PART INVOLVE?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be invited to participate in an interview that will last approximately 15-22 minutes. The interview will focus on your experiences and perspectives on the implementation of patient-centred marketing strategies and decision-making processes in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry. The interview will be conducted via Zoom and will be audio recorded only to ensure that your answers are transcribed and analysed accurately. The interview will be scheduled at a time that is convenient for you.

During the interview, I will ask both structured and semi-structured questions to explore your experiences and perspectives in depth. All recordings and transcriptions will be kept confidential and you have the right to use pseudonyms if you wish to protect your identity. You will have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences and your responses will remain anonymous in all reports and publications.

By participating in this study, you will contribute valuable insights into the real-world implementation of patient-centred marketing strategies and decision-making processes in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry. Your contributions will significantly help inform industry leaders and potentially lead to improvements in marketing practices and better patient outcomes.

WHY HAVE YOU BEEN INVITED TO TAKE PART?

You have been invited to participate in this research because you are a product manager in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry. This role places you in a unique position to provide valuable insights into the decision-making processes and challenges faced when implementing patient-centred marketing strategies. You have been identified as a potential participant through professional contacts and recommendations from subject matter experts. Your experiences and insights are crucial and valuable for understanding the marketing strategies in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry that are investigated in this study.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART?

Please note that participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate, refuse to answer a particular question or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. If you decide to withdraw, you can do so by contacting me, Ceren Önder Bayram, at +353892292270. Your decision to participate or withdraw will not affect you in any way and your confidentiality and privacy will be protected throughout the research process.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?

Taking part in this study involves some minimal risks and potential benefits. The main risk is the possible breach of confidentiality. However, this risk will be minimised by anonymising the data and using pseudonyms. There is also a very low risk of potential repercussions from disclosing sensitive information about the pharmaceutical industry. This risk will be minimised by ensuring that no identifiable information is associated with your responses. In addition, psychological distress may arise from discussing sensitive topics. If you feel uncomfortable, you can pause or stop the interview at any time. Support resources will be made available to you if necessary.

The benefits of participation include providing valuable insights into the implementation of patient-centred marketing strategies in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry. This information will be useful

to industry leaders and decision makers. In addition, the interview will provide you with the opportunity to reflect on your experiences and challenges. This will enable you to contribute to addressing important issues affecting your professional environment. Your well-being and confidentiality are our top priorities throughout this research.

WILL TAKING PART BE CONFIDENTIAL?

Yes, participation in this study will be kept confidential. All participants and any individuals mentioned will be anonymized using pseudonyms in all records, transcripts, and reports to ensure their identities are protected. Confidential data, including company information, will only be used with prior authorization and will be handled with the utmost care to maintain confidentiality.

Confidentiality will only be breached if there is a strong belief that there is a serious risk of harm or danger to the participant or another individual. This includes cases of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, concerns for child protection, rape, self-harm, suicidal intent, or criminal activity. In such situations, appropriate authorities will be informed to ensure the safety and well-being of those involved.

Non-anonymized data, such as signed consent forms and audio recordings, will be collected and securely stored as part of the research process. These materials will be retained only for the duration necessary for the research and will be handled in strict accordance with data protection regulations to ensure your privacy and confidentiality are maintained.

HOW WILL INFORMATION YOU PROVIDE BE STORED AND PROTECTED?

Signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in a secure, password-protected digital storage system accessible only to me, Ceren Onder Bayram, and my research supervisor. This data will be kept until after my degree has been conferred. A transcript of interviews from which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for a further two years. Under freedom of information legislation, you are entitled to access the information you have provided at any time. This approach ensures that your data is stored securely and confidentiality is maintained throughout the research process.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

The results of this study will primarily be used for my master's dissertation in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology. Upon completion, the dissertation will be submitted to my academic institution and made accessible in the college library. Additionally, the findings may be included in online e-journals or repositories if applicable. There are no current plans for dissemination through conferences or publications beyond the dissertation submission. However, the research may be used for teaching purposes within the academic program.

WHO SHOULD YOU CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?

Ceren Onder Bayram

Master's Student, Pharmaceutical Business and Technology

onderceren07@gmail.com

+353892292270

[THANK YOU]

Consent to take part in research

Patient-Centred Marketing Strategies in the Turkish Pharmaceutical Sector: Product Managers' Perspectives on Decision-Making Factors in the 21st Century

The researcher retains one copy signed by both themselves and the participant. The participant should also receive a copy of consent form as a record of what they have signed up to.

- I [*insert participant name*] voluntarily agree to participate in this research study
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study
- I understand that participation involves an interview with the researcher, which will last approximately 30-40 minutes. During the interview, I will be asked about my experiences and views as a product manager in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry. This will help provide insights into the decision-making processes and strategies employed by product managers in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry when implementing patient-centred marketing approaches. Participation is voluntary, and I can withdraw at any time without consequences.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- [if conducting interviews by Skype/Zoom etc.] I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the researcher's dissertation.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm, they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in a secure, password-protected digital storage system accessible only to Ceren Onder Bayram and the research supervisor until the exam board confirms the results of the dissertation.

- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for will be retained for two years from the date of the exam board.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Researcher Details

Name Ceren Onder Bayram
 Degree Programme Pharmaceutical Business and Technology
 College Details Griffith College Dublin
 Contact number +353892292270
 Contact mail onderceren07@gmail.com

Signature of participant

[Full Name – Printed]

Signature of research participant

----- Date

Signature of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Ceren Onder Bayram

Signature of researcher

----- Date