

Research Article

# Hedonic and Utilitarian Consumption in COVID-19 Process



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## Abstract

Due to globalization, competitive marketing strategies, and developments in communication technologies, analyzing consumer behaviors becomes much more complicated these days. Fundamentally, the most noteworthy factors that affect consumer behaviors are getting benefits, entertainment, feeling satisfied, and taking pleasure. Analyzing consumer behaviors and developing new strategies becomes crucial for companies during the COVID-19 period that turns daily life upside down. This study aims to investigate if there is a difference between hedonic and utilitarian consumption behaviors of participants who have a high- and low-level fear of COVID-19. The aims of former researches that were carried out up to the present were to find reasons and effects of hedonic consumption. Since this study aims to investigate hedonic and utilitarian consumption from the perspective of COVID-19 fear, which is an ultimate crisis, this study differs from other studies. An online questionnaire is selected as the research method of this study and the sample involves 548 (N=548) individuals. The research showed that there is a statistically significant difference among participants who have a high and low level of COVID-19 fear in terms of hedonic and hedonic and utilitarian consumption behaviors. Research results and limitations are discussed within the context of the literature.

**Keywords:** Communication, COVID-19, Utilitarian Consumption, Hedonic Consumption.



Araştırma Makalesi

# COVID-19 Sürecinde Hedonik ve Faydacı Tüketim

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## Öz

Küreselleşme, iletişim teknolojilerindeki gelişmeler ve yüksek rekabete dayalı pazarlama stratejilerinden dolayı günümüzde tüketici davranışlarını analiz etmek oldukça karmaşık bir hale gelmiştir. Temel olarak baktığımızda tüketici davranışlarını etkileyen en büyük faktörlerin başında; sağladığı fayda, eğlence, tatmin ve haz olduğu söylenebilir. Bu kapsamda dünyadaki yaşam akışını alt üst eden COVID-19 sürecinde tüketici davranışlarını analiz etmek ve bu çerçevede yeni stratejiler geliştirmek firmalar açısından hayati öneme sahiptir. Bu çalışmanın temel amacı hedonik ve faydacı tüketim davranışlarının, yüksek ve düşük COVID-19 korkusuna sahip katılımcılar arasında farklılaşıyor olup olmadığının araştırılmasıdır. Hedonik tüketim davranışları ile ilgili bu zamana kadar yapılan çalışmalarda, hedonik tüketimin sebepleri ve etkileri araştırılmıştır. Çalışmamız hedonik ve faydacı tüketimin COVID-19 korkusu gibi büyük bir kriz perspektifinde araştırılması açısından diğer çalışmalardan ayrılmaktadır. Çalışmada bu amaç doğrultusunda veri toplama yöntemi olarak çevrimiçi anket yöntemi seçilmiş ve 548 (N=548) kişiden oluşan bir örneklem oluşturulmuştur. Araştırma sonucunda; hedonik ile hedonik ve faydacı tüketim davranışlarında, düşük ve yüksek COVID-19 korkusuna sahip katılımcılar arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark olduğu belirlenmiştir. Araştırma sonuçları ve sınırlılıkları ilgili literatür perspektifinde tartışılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İletişim, COVID-19, Faydacı Tüketim, Hedonik Tüketim.

## Introduction

COVID-19 virus was first seen in December 2019, in China, and then March 2020, in Turkey. Humanity faced and still facing with an isolation period that has never been seen in the modern era. As a consequence of this virus, people could not continue their daily activities such as going out for shopping, handshaking, going out for dinner, and traveling. After a while, they could continue these activities in a limited manner. This situation affects not only almost all activities of daily life but also the purchasing activities of consumers and their intentions. For instance, the lockdowns which are implemented by the government make people stay at home, thus people provide their essential needs from the local stores or markets close to their home. However, products that are not on the shelves of the local stores or markets can be found at online shopping websites. Therefore, these websites become an alternative for the people in lockdown.

While utilitarian consumption, which is one of the basic concepts of this study, is defined as a concept that shopping is a sense of mission, hedonic consumption, which is the other main concept of this study, is defined as an experience which is based on pleasure. The latter kind of consumption is almost defined as a way to escape from daily life (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994, p. 646). The main goal of this study is to investigate if there is a difference between hedonic and utilitarian consumption behaviors during online shopping among participants who has a high or low level of COVID-19 fear. The other relatively small goals of this study are to investigate if there is a difference between hedonic and utilitarian consumption behaviors during online shopping among different participants who has a semi-high or semi-low level COVID-19 fear.

Nowadays, authorities from all over the world focus more on finding a vaccine that could be effective against the virus and trying to find new treatment methods that could ease the symptoms. Therefore, currently, there is no study focusing on the psychological effects that the virus created over people for now. Considering the human body as a whole, taking into consideration an individual's fears and focusing on these fears in researches are as much crucial as finding a vaccine against the virus. Since there are a few resources both in our country's and global literature about COVID-19 and consumer behavior, each study will be a contribution to the literature.

### 1. COVID-19 Fear in Covid 19 Outbreak

COVID-19 was first seen in Wuhan, China in December 2019, and caused 727 thousand people to die in a period shorter than three months according to Google's immediate data. The death rate due to COVID-19 reached 3.6% in China and 1.5% in abroad as of 1st of March, 2020 (Baud, et al., 2020). There were virus cases in 135 countries on March 14, 2020, which was confirmed by the authorities (WHO, 2020).

Symptoms such as fever, fatigue, coughing, and difficulty in breathing can be seen approximately 2-14 days after one is infected with the COVID-19 virus (Wang, et al., 2020). This highly contagious virus causes anxiety, aggressiveness, and fear among people, which is an expected situation. COVID-19 fear is developed as a result of the number of deaths, awareness of the number of deaths, the infection possibility of the virus which cannot be seen, and labeling socially the people who have this virus (Lin, 2020). Therefore, this situation is likely to create soul-shattering remarks on people all over the world. Researches that have been carried out during the COVID-19 period are focusing on these fears. For instance, research conducted in Canada indicated that one-third of the total of 1354 participants were worried about COVID-19 (Institute,

2020). An online survey conducted in the USA indicated that 56% of the total 808 adults were worried about the virus and the infectiousness of the COVID-19 across the USA (Aubrey, 2020).

As a consequence of the struggle against the COVID-19 virus, many governments from all over the world take unprecedented public policies such as social distance policy, isolation, and self-lockdown. After the first case was detected in China on December 31, 2019, the Ministry of Health established the Coronavirus Science Committee on January 10, 2020, in Turkey. Starting from January 22, 2020, the flights coming from Wuhan, where is the first case was seen, to Istanbul was canceled and people's fever was started to be measured in airports with the help of thermal cameras. Right after this, the Iranian border was closed. The first coronavirus case was seen on March 11, 2020, in Turkey, and the next day all schools were suspended. Following this, authorities introduced limitations on public events. For instance, Friday prayer and other prayers with the community have been suspended. Treatment of health problems related to surgery and dentistry situations that are not urgent has been suspended. Civil servants have started a flexible working schedule as of March 22, 2020. Long-distance buses and planes have been subjected to permission as of March 28, 2020. All flights going abroad have been suspended. A curfew was declared for people who are under 20 as of April 4, 2020, and entrance-exit prohibition started in 30 great municipalities and Zonguldak. Another curfew was declared between April 17, 2020, at 00:00 and April 19, 2020, at 00:00, which lasted two days in 30 great municipalities and Zonguldak. During May, this curfew continued on Ramadan eve and Ramadan on May 23, 24, 25, and 26, 2020, and was implemented in all 81 cities. During June, curfews were implemented on June 20, 2020, Saturday between 09:00 am and 15:00 in all 81 cities, on June 27, 2020, Saturday between 09:30 am and 15:00, and on June 28, 2020, Sunday between 09:30 am and 18:30. People used local stores and markets for their essential needs during this pandemic period. However, people used online shopping websites for products that cannot be found in local stores and markets.

## 2. Hedonic and Utilitarian Consumption

Nowadays, purchasing a product is not just about satisfying a need, and also it is not related to the claims that decisions regarding satisfying this need are only rational decisions. Today, traditional purchasing experience leaves its place to an experience based on pleasure, entertainment, and satisfaction (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994) "Hedonic consumption behavior," which is a term based on pleasure and entertainment, is defined as a behavior that involves fantasy-driven emotional stimulations (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982). Consumers with hedonic consumption behavior tend to consume products by focusing on their symbolic meaning rather than their functional characteristics (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). This term was first studied at the end of the 1970s. "Separating Perceptual Dimensions from Affective Overtones: An Application to Consumer Aesthetics" by Holbrook & Huber, (1979) and "Hedonic consumption: Emerging concepts" by Hirschman & Holbrook, (1982) can be given as examples for the pioneer studies on this topic.

Hedonic consumption means more than just having a product. It involves emotional factors such as pleasures, fantasies, dreams, creating images, which are the bases of hedonism. Since hedonic consumption depends on imagination, it involves the reality that the consumer defines not the existing reality. Concurrently, the immediate sense of satisfaction is more dominant than the delayed satisfaction in hedonic consumption. Therefore, hedonic factors affect directly the consumption processes (Odabaşı, 2013, pp.

115-117) Individuals are going through a hedonic and utilitarian expectation process in the consumption process. Although these expectations are most of the time seen as contradicting concepts, many studies are indicating that hedonic and utilitarian values coexist (Dhar, Wertenbroch, 2000: 60; Saritaş, 2018: 38-40). The individual considers the functions and functionality of the product in utilitarian consumption and s/he behave rationally rather than emotionally. The goal of utilitarian consumption is to satisfy the needs of individuals and to help individuals economically. However, dreaming, pleasure, and entertainment are at the forefront of hedonic consumption. Hedonic consumption refers to individual experience based on emotions that are far from the economic aspect. While products like foods, clothes are part of utilitarian consumption; products like custom design clothes, luxury cars, diamond flowers are part of hedonic consumption. However, when one is trying to understand if a product is purchased with hedonic or utilitarian motivation, s/he should decide by checking the consumption motivation (Liu, Lim, Li, Tan, & Cyr, 2020); (Diefenbach & Hassenzahl, 2011); (Khan, Dhar, & Wertenbroch, 2004). On the other hand, when hedonic consumption is compared to utilitarian consumption, some claim that they are opposite of each other. Shopping in utilitarian consumption is an activity that responsibilities are fulfilled in some way. Consumer focuses on to satisfy her/his needs with the most appropriate product (Hopkins & Davashish, 1999, p. 280). Cognition is at the forefront of utilitarian consumption. Values that involve information such as saving time and economical convenience are part of this consumption (Ryu, Han, & Jang, 2010, p. 419). There are many studies focusing on people's tendency towards hedonic consumption (Arnold & Reynold, 2003); (Hirschman E. , 1893). According to these researches, reasons for hedonic consumption can be listed as follows; adventurous shopping, problem reflecting, evasion, innovation, seeking excitement, dreaming, forming an opinion, making others happy, taking advantage of the opportunities. From these reasons, one can infer that hedonic consumption is related to many sociological and psychological factors. A literature review about hedonic consumption shows that studies have focused on identifying reasons for hedonic consumption. It has been observed during the literature review that there is no study explaining the effect of crises over hedonic consumption. Furthermore, hedonic consumption has gained a new perspective in the online setting and online shopping websites have become a new dynamic field for hedonic consumption.

The online shopping environment has many advantages in terms of utilitarian consumption. The first one is the simplicity of shopping. Online shopping provides utilitarian consumers with the opportunity of shopping for 24/7 without making them move (Chang & Samuel, 2006, p. 71). Since consumers do not need to go somewhere for shopping, they can save the time they would spend for traveling (Jensen, 2012, p. 59). These shopping websites, which can be accessible throughout the day, when compared to other traditional stores, can provide their customers with a variety of products (Girard, Korgaonkar, & Sirverblatt, 2003, p. 107). Online shopping also provides options for making a comparison between the products such as price comparison, warranty comparison, and ease of use comparison, which are defined with millions (Michael, 2006, p. 52). Furthermore, online shopping provides an opportunity to make decisions without feeling the pressure of sale persons, making these decisions by carefully thinking in a socially isolated environment (Katawetawaraks & Wang, 2011, p. 68). When online shopping is compared to traditional shopping, online shopping focuses more on the hedonic side of the shopping experience (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994). Online shopping constantly focuses on the excitement element of shopping and overflows with ideas (Altulkari

& Kesari, 2017, p. 24), including periodic sales (sometimes one day, sometimes only lunchtime), sometimes free sometimes paid courier service regardless of the products' size and weight, shopping festivals (Black Friday, or special day events of the months), easiness of tracking new products and current discounts (Arnold & Reynold, 2003).

### 3. Methodology

The main purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between fear of the COVID-19 and hedonic & utilitarian consumption behaviors. In this context, the basic hypothesis of the study: There is a relationship between hedonic & utilitarian consumption behaviors and fear of the COVID-19 ( $H_1$ ). Another hypothesis of the study is: Both hedonic consumption behaviors and utilitarian consumption behaviors of participants with high and low COVID-19 fear are different in online shopping ( $H_2$ ).

#### Sample

The sample of the study consists of 548 people living in different regions of Turkey. The age distribution of the participants is as follows: 30 participants are under 18 and 518 participants are between the ages of 18-65. In the study, the convenience sampling method was chosen, in which only accessible participants were included in the sample due to time and cost constraints. The convenience sampling method is a method in which only accessible individuals are included in the sampling and which is used in cases where there are time-related and budgetary constraints (Gegez, 2015, p. 266).

#### Instruments

In this study, the Covid-19 fear scale, which is translated into Turkish by Satici, Gocet-Tekin, Deniz, & Satici (2020) was used to determine the fear of Covid-19. The Covid-19 fear scale consists of 7 items. To determine the hedonic and utilitarian consumer behaviors of the participants, the hedonic & utilitarian consumption behavior scale which is consists of 42 items developed by Coskun & Marangoz (2019) was used. The first 32 statements of this scale measure hedonic consumption behavior (1-32). The last 9 items are aimed at measuring utilitarian consumption behavior (33-42). In both scales used in the research, a 5-point Likert scale was used.

#### Ethics Committee Approval

Within the framework of the verdict taken in the session by Marmara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Araştırma Etik Kurulu dated 26/10/2020, No. 2020/23; the present study does not embrace ethical issues.

#### Findings

The demographic characteristics of the participants in the study are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Women	292	53.3%
Man	256	46.7%
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 18	30	5.5%
18-34	506	92.3%
35-64	12	2.2%

	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Income</b>		
no personal income	310	56.6%
Less than 1000 TL	122	22.3%
1001-2999 TL	78	14.2%
3000-7999 TL	31	5.7%
8.000 TL and above	7	1.3%
<b>Education that is currently in progress</b>		
Elementary-High School	312	56.9%
License	209	38.1%
Higher education	27	5.0%
<b>Who do you live with?</b>		
Alone	32	5.8%
With parents	480	87.6%
With friends	11	2.0%
Public places (labs, libraries, etc.)	20	3.6%
<b>How often do you do online shopping?</b>		
Never	282	51.5%
Rare	100	18.2%
Often	89	16.2%
Sometimes	33	6.0%
Usually	44	8.0%
<b>Did your frequency of online shopping increase during the Covid-19 pandemic?</b>		
I strongly disagree	108	19.7%
Disagree	129	23.5%
Undecided	147	26.8%
Agree	96	17.5%
Absolutely I agree	68	12.4%

According to Table 1, 46.7% of the participants are men (N = 256) and 53.3% (N = 292) are women. Participants' ages are between 18 and 64. The highest percentages are between the ages of 18-34 with 81.8% (N = 448). However, there are 61 participants under the age of 18 in the study (11.1%). Besides the age variable, 14.2% (N = 78) of the participants have an income between 1.001 TL and 2.999 TL. While 56.9% of the participants are undergraduate and graduate students (N = 312), 43.1% (N = 236) are primary-high school graduates. Among the answers given to the question "How often do you shop online?" the answer "never" has the highest rate. Its rate is 51.5%. 29.9% of the participants have chosen the option "I agree and strongly agree" as an answer to the question "Did your online shopping frequency increase during the Covid-19 pandemic?"

### Hypothesis Testing

Two scales were used to test the research hypotheses. Cronbach's Alpha values were examined to determine the reliability level of the scales. The test-retest reliability of the COVID-19 fear scale was  $\alpha = .82$  (Satici, Gocet-Tekin, Deniz, & Satici, 2020) and Hedonic and Utilitarian Consumption scale was  $\alpha = .88$  (Coskun & Marangoz, 2019). As a result of the analysis, the Cronbach's Alpha value of the "Fear of Covid-19" scale is 0.888, and the "Hedonic & utilitarian consumption behaviors" scale was determined as a Cronbach's Alpha = 0.932 in the study. These values are sufficient for the validity and reliability of the scales. Kolmogorov Simirnov and Shapiro Wilk tests were conducted to determine the

normality level of the data. Since the results of the tests (sig: 0.000) were significant, the test was put into non-parametric tests.

$H_1$ : There is a significant relationship between the Covid-19 Fear and Hedonic & Utilitarian Consumer Behaviours.

**Table 4.** The Relationship between the COVID-19 Fear/ Hedonic Consumption/ Utilitarian Consumption/Hedonic and Utilitarian Consumption

			Average of Hedonic Consumption	Average of COVID-19	Average of Utilitarian Consumption	Average of Hedonic and Utilitarian Consumption
Spearman's rho	Average of COVID-19	rs	0.378			
		p	0.000			
	Average of Utilitarian Consumption	rs	0.197	0.101		
		p	0.000	0.018		
	Average of Hedonic Consumption	rs	0.965	0.358	0.413	
		p	0.000	0.000	0.000	

According to the results of correlation analysis, it has been determined that there is a significant relationship between the COVID-19 fear and hedonic consumption (spearman's  $p = 0.000$   $rs = 0.378$ ) and hedonic & utilitarian Consumption (spearman's  $p = 0.000$   $rs = 0.358$ ).

However, it has been determined that there is no significant relationship between utilitarian consumption and the COVID 19 fear. It explains approximately 14% (rho's square) of the correlation between the COVID-19 fear and hedonic consumption behaviors. The COVID-19 fear also explains 13% (rho's square) of the correlation between hedonic & utilitarian consumer behaviors.

$H_2$ : There is a statistically significant difference between consumers with high fear of COVID-19 and consumers with low fear of the COVID-19 in terms of hedonic, utilitarian, and hedonic & utilitarian consumption behaviors.

**Table 5.** Comparison of Covid-19 High and Low Average Scores

COVID-19 High/Low		Average of Hedonic Consumption	Average of COVID-19	Average of Utilitarian Consumption	Average of Hedonic and Utilitarian Consumption
High	N	285,00	285,00	285,00	285,00
	Mean	2,50	1,76	3,45	2,73
	Std. Deviation	0,67	0,47	0,83	0,58
	Median	2,44	1,86	3,60	2,67
	Min.	1,25	1,00	1,30	1,62
	Max.	3,97	3,29	4,90	4,17



COVID-19 High/Low		Average of Hedonic Consumption	Average of COVID-19	Average of Utilitarian Consumption	Average of Hedonic and Utilitarian Consumption
Low	N	263,00	263,00	263,00	263,00
	Mean	3,09	3,42	3,65	3,22
	Std. Deviation	0,75	0,63	0,72	0,66
	Median	3,00	3,43	3,70	3,14
	Minimum	1,34	2,29	1,20	1,67
	Maximum	4,69	5,00	5,00	4,64

**Table 6.** Mann-Whitney Test

	Average of Hedonic Consumption	Average of COVID-19	Average of Utilitarian Consumption	Average of Hedonic and Utilitarian Consumption
Z	-8,948	-20,148	-2,370	-8,437
p	0,000	0,000	0,018	0,000
	<0,001			<0,001

The Mann-Whitney test was applied to determine the difference between the means of hedonic and utilitarian consumption and the average values of high and low-level COVID-19 fear. The results of the test are in Table 6 which is given above. This test aims to investigate whether hedonic and utilitarian consumption behaviors of the participants with high and low-level COVID-19 fear in online shopping differ. According to the Mann-Whitney test, which is conducted for this purpose, there is a statistically significant difference ( $z = -8.437$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) between hedonic consumption behaviors ( $z = -8.948$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) and hedonic and utilitarian consumption behaviors. The averages of hedonic and hedonic & utilitarian consumer behaviors revealed that the averages of COVID-19 high and low scores were below 8 standard deviations.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the areas where people spend their time, and their reactions to life have started to change. In many different regions of the world, behavioral changes have occurred in consumers due to this situation. These changes have affected people on a wide scale from their lifestyle to their expectations about the product they buy. Unfortunately, such crises and disasters are neither the first nor the last.

For this reason, analyzing social life and investigating the possible behavior of people until a solution is found are important research topics for the construction of a sustainable society. (Baker, Farrokhnia, Meyer, Pagel, & Yannelis, 2020; Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020). For the research, a sample of 548 participants was studied. These participants are living in different cities in Turkey and they have different demographic characteristics. The results of the research show that there is not a significant difference between the impacts of the COVID-19 fear on consumer behavior in terms of demographic characteristics. In other words, it has been revealed that there is not a meaningful effect of the demographic features of the people who have different demographic characteristics in terms of the COVID-19 fear. Similar results were obtained in the study conducted by Donthu & Gustafsson (2020) in 13 different sectors.

In today's modern consumption-oriented world, people are displaying consumption-oriented behaviors in pursuit of pleasure beyond meeting their needs. In this context, it has been revealed that hedonic tendencies affect directly consumer behavior (Özdemir

& Yaman, 2007). In our research, a significant relationship has been found between fear of COVID-19 and hedonic behaviors. When the studies conducted so far are examined, it is seen that demographic characteristics reveal significant relationships in hedonic behaviors (Aydın, 2010). It is observed that the relationship between the pleasure-oriented consumption trends of consumers and the fear of COVID-19 continues during the pandemic period. Although demographic features lose their meaning in terms of consumption in this process, it appears that hedonism is still an important factor affecting consumption behavior. To explain the relationship between the fear of COVID-19 and hedonic consumption behaviors more clearly, the scores of consumers with high-level COVID-19 fear and low-level COVID-19 fear were analyzed with the Mann Whitney test ( $H_2$ ). As a result, it was determined that there is a statistically significant difference between hedonic and hedonic & utilitarian consumption behaviors of participants with low- and high-level COVID-19 fear.

As a conclusion, in hedonic consumer behavior, consumers tend to consume products by focusing on their symbolic meanings rather than on their functional properties. Therefore, during the pandemic period, companies need to reveal creative and value-creating innovations aimed at revealing spiritual values rather than material values that would appeal to consumer pleasure.

### **Ethics Committee Approval**

Within the framework of the verdict taken in the session by Marmara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Araştırma Etik Kurulu dated 26/10/2020, No. 2020/23; the present study does not embrace ethical issues.

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## Attachment

### Fear of COVID-19 Scale

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1 Kesinlikle katılmıyorum					
2. Katılmıyorum					
3. Kararsızım					
4. Katılıyorum					
5. Kesinlikle katılıyorum					
Koronavirüsten çok korkuyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
Koronavirüsü düşünmek beni rahatsız ediyor.	1	2	3	4	5
Koronavirüsü düşündüğümde ellerim terliyor.	1	2	3	4	5
Koronavirüse yakalanarak hayatımı kaybetmekten çok korkuyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
Sosyal medyada Koronavirüs ile ilgili haberleri ve hikayeleri izlediğimde kaygılanıyor ve endişeleniyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
Koronavirüse yakalanmaktan duyduğum endişeden dolayı uykularım kaçıyor.	1	2	3	4	5
Koronavirüse yakalandığımı düşündüğümde kalp atışım hızlanıyor.	1	2	3	4	5

*Ölçek tek boyuttan oluşmakta ve ters madde bulunmamaktadır.*

# COVID-19 Sürecinde Hedonik ve Faydacı Tüketim

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## Genişletilmiş Özet

2019 yılı aralık ayında Çin'in Wuhan kentinde ilk kez görülen COVID-19 virüsü 3 ay gibi kısa bir sürede tüm dünyaya yayılarak Google'ın anlık verilerine göre 727.000 insanın ölümüne sebep olmuştur.1 Mart 2020 tarihi itibari ile COVID-19 virüsüne bağlı ölüm oranı Çin'de%3,6 iken bu oran Çin dışında %1,5'a ulaşmıştır (Baud vd. 2020). 14 Mart 2020 tarihine gelindiğinde ise 135 ülkede virüs vakaları teyit edilmiştir (Dünya Sağlık Örgütü, 2020).

COVID-19 virüsü ile mücadele kapsamında dünyanın dört bir yanındaki hükümetler sosyal uzaklık, izolasyon ve kendi kendini karantina gibi daha önce benzeri görülmemiş kamu politikaları almak zorunda kalmışlardır (Anderson, vd., 2020). Bu süreçte insanlar zaruri ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak üzere kendilerine en yakın olan marketlere ve bakkallara gidebilmişlerse de bu market ve bakkallarda bulunmayan ürünlere yönelik ihtiyaçlarını karşılayabilecekleri tek mecra çevrimiçi alışveriş haline gelmiştir.

Çevrimiçi alışveriş mecrası gereği faydacı tüketime yönelik birçok avantaj barındırmaktadır. Bunlardan ilki alışveriş kolaylığıdır. Çevrimiçi alışveriş fayda odaklı tüketiciler için yerlerinden hiç kalmadan günün her saati erişilebilir bir alışveriş imkanı sunmaktadır (Chang ve Samuel, 2006, s. 71). Tüketiciler alışveriş yapmak için fiziksel olarak bir yerden başka bir yere taşınmadıkları için zaman tasarrufu da sağlamaktadır (Jensen, 2012, s. 59). Günün her saati erişilebilir bu mağazalar, geleneksel mağazalar ile karşılaştırıldığında ise müşterilerine oldukça fazla ürün çeşitliliği sunmaktadırlar (Girarg vd., 2003, s. 107). Çevrimiçi alışveriş milyonlar ile ifade edilen ürünlerin arasından fiyat, garanti, kullanım kolaylığı gibi karşılaştırmaları kolaylıkla yapma olanağı da sunmaktadır (Michael, 2006, s. 52). Bunların yanı sıra, sosyal olarak izole bir ortamda bulunmak alışveriş seçimlerini satış görevlisinin baskısını hissetmeden zamana yayarak verme konusunda da fırsatlar sağlamaktadır (Katawetawaraks ve Wang, 2011, s. 68).

Çevrimiçi alışveriş, geleneksel alışveriş ile karşılaştırıldığında, çevrimiçi alışveriş, alışveriş deneyiminin hedonik yönlerine daha fazla odaklanmaktadır (Babin vd., 1994). Süreli satış teklifleri (kimi zaman bir gün, kimi zaman öğle arası süresince olmak üzere), boyutu ve ağırlığı ne olursa olsun eve kimi zaman ücretsiz kimin zaman ise ücretli teslimat, alışveriş festivalleri (muhteşem cumalar, her ayın belli günleri indirimleri gibi), yeni ürünlerin ve mevcut indirimlerin takip edilmesinin kolaylığı (Arnold ve Reynolds, 2003, s. 80) olmak üzere çevrimiçi alışveriş sürekli heyecan ögesini odak noktası olarak tutulan, fikirler ile dolu bir mecradır (Altulkar ve Kesari, 2017, s. 24).

Bu çalışmada yararlanılan 2 temel kavramdan biri olan faydacı tüketim, alışverişin bir anlamda görev bilinci ile gerçekleştirdiği bir kavram olarak tanımlanırken, diğer bir kavram olan hedonik tüketim ise, zevk odaklı bir deneyimdir. Bu tüketim adeta bir eğlence bir günlük hayattan bir kaçış olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Babin vd., 1994, s. 646). Bu çalışmanın temel amacı; çevrimiçi alışverişte, hedonik ve faydacı tüketim davranışlarının, yüksek ve düşük COVID-19 korkusuna sahip katılımcılar arasında farklılaşıyor olup olmadığının araştırılmasıdır. Çalışmanın yan amaçları ise çevrim içi

alışverişte hedonik tüketim davranışlarının ve faydacı tüketim davranışlarının ayrı yarı yüksek ve düşük COVID-19 korkusuna sahip katılımcılar arasında farklılaşıyor olup olmadığının araştırılmasıdır. Bu amaç kapsamında çalışmanın örneklemini Türkiye'nin farklı bölgelerinde yaşayan 548 kişi oluşturulmuştur. Katılımcıların yaş dağılımı 18'den küçük 30 katılımcı ve 18-65 yaş arası 518 katılımcı şeklindedir. Çalışmada zaman ve maliyet kısıtlarından dolayı sadece ulaşılabilir olan katılımcıların örnek kapsamına dahil edildiği kolayda örnekleme yöntemi seçilmiştir. Tesadüfi olmayan örnekleme yöntemlerinden olan kolayda örnekleme: zaman ve bütçe darlığı gibi durumlarda sadece ulaşılabilir bireylerin örnekleme dahil edildiği yöntemdir (Gegez, 2015, s. 266).

Araştırma kapsamında katılımcıların covid-19 korkusunu belirlemek için Satıcı ve arkadaşları (2020) tarafından Türkçe'ye çevrilen ve 7 maddeden oluşan Covid-19 korkusu ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Katılımcıların hedonik ve faydacı tüketici davranışlarını belirlemek için Çoşkun ve Marangoz (2019) tarafından geliştirilen 42 madden oluşan hedonik ve faydacı tüketim davranışı ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Bu ölçeğin ilk 32 ifadesi hedonik tüketim davranışını ölçmeye yönelik iken (1-32 maddeler), son 9 ifade (33-42 maddeler) faydacı tüketim davranışını ölçmeye yöneliktir. Araştırma kapsamında kullanılan her iki ölçekte de 5'li likert ölçek kullanılmıştır.

Günümüzdeki modern tüketim dünyasında insanlar ihtiyaçlarını gidermenin ötesinde zevk ve haz peşinde tüketim odaklı davranışlar sergilemektedir. Bu kapsamda yapılan araştırmalarda tüketici davranışlarını hedonik eğilimlerin doğrudan etkilediği ortaya çıkmıştır (Özdemir ve Yaman, 2007; Doğrul, 2012) Yaptığımız araştırmada COVID-19 korkusu ile Hedonik davranışlar arasında anlamlı bir ilişki çıkmıştır. Bu zamana kadar yapılan çalışmalar incelendiğinde demografik özelliklerin hedonik davranışlarda anlamlı ilişkileri ortaya çıkarken (Aydın, 2010), COVID-19 pandemi sürecinde insanların haz odaklı tüketim eğilimleri ile COVID-19 korkusu arasındaki ilişki devam ederken demografik özelliklerin anlamını kaybettiği ama haz alma duygusunun hala tüketim davranışını etkileyen önemli bir faktör olarak yer aldığı ortaya çıkmaktadır. COVID-19 korkusu ile hedonik odaklı tüketim davranışları arasındaki ilişkiyi daha net açıklamak için (H2) Yüksek COVID-19 korkusuna sahip tüketiciler ile düşük COVID-19 korkusuna sahip tüketicilerin puanları mann whitney testi ile analiz edilmiştir. Sonuç olarak hedonik ile hedonik ve faydacı tüketim davranışların, düşük ve yüksek COVID-19 korkusuna sahip katılımcılar arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark olduğu belirlenmiştir.

Sonuç olarak; Hedonik tüketim davranışında tüketiciler, ürünleri işlevsel özelliklerinden daha çok onların sembolik anlamlarına odaklanarak tüketme eğiliminde olmaktadır. Bu yüzden pandemi süreçlerinde insanların hazlarına hitap eden maddi değerlerden ziyade, manevi değerlerin ortaya çıkarılması noktasında firmaların yaratıcı ve değer yaratan yenilikler ortaya koymasına gerekmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İletişim, COVID-19, Faydacı Tüketim, Hedonik Tüketim.

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