

COVID-19, TÜKETİCİ TEPKİSİ, ANLIK SATIN ALMA DAVRANIŞI: TÜKETİCİLERDE KAYGI BOZUKLUĞU VE GELENEKSEL VE YENİ MEDYANIN ROLÜ

COVID-19, CONSUMER RESPONSES, AND IMPULSE BUYING BEHAVIOR: ANXIETY LEVELS OF CONSUMERS AND THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL AND NEW MEDIA

Asude Yasemin ZENGİN

Aksaray Üniversitesi
Sağlık Bilimleri Fakültesi
Sağlık Yönetimi Bölümü
asudeyaseminzengin@gmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0002-3147-7958

Burak ÇETİN

Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi
İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi
Sağlık Yönetimi Bölümü
burak.cetin@hbv.edu.tr
ORCID: 0000-0002-4252-4828

Arzu YÜKSEL

Aksaray Üniversitesi
Sağlık Bilimleri Fakültesi
Hemşirelik Bölümü
arzualtunay76@gmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0001-7819-2020

ÖZ

Geliş Tarihi:
27.04.2024

Kabul Tarihi:
10.07.2024

Yayın Tarihi:
29.09.2024

Anahtar Kelimeler

Covid-19
Tüketici tepkisi
Kaygı bozukluğu
Anlık satın alma
Medya

Keywords

Covid 19
Consumer responses
Anxiety
Impulse Buying
Media

COVID-19 salgını Türkiye'de tüketicileri psikolojik olarak etkilemiş ve tüketici davranışlarına da yansımıştır. Çalışmanın amacı, COVID-19 salgını sürecinde anlık satın alma davranışı ile kaygı düzeyleri arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemek ve tüketici tepkilerindeki değişimlerin yanı sıra geleneksel medya ve sosyal medyanın rolünü belirlemektir. Araştırmanın ikinci amacı ise tüketicilerin sosyo-demografik özelliklerine göre anlık satın alma davranışları ve kaygı düzeyleri açısından farklılaşp farklılaşmadığını belirlemektir. Türkiye genelinde 776 tüketiciye online anket uygulanmıştır. Sonuçlar tüketicilerin yaklaşık %42'sinin büyük miktarlarda ürün satın aldığını ve depoladığını ortaya çıkardı. Tüketiciler en çok taze gıda kategorisinin yanı sıra kişisel hijyen ve ev temizliği kategorilerinde de ürün satın aldı. Tüketiciler sağlıklı ve hijyenik olduğunu düşündükleri marka ve araçları tercih etti. Resmi açıklamalar ve TV haberleri insanları normalin ötesinde alışveriş yapmaya motive eden en önemli kaynak oldu. Tüketicilerin yüzde 20'sinden fazlasının Covid-19 haberlerini sosyal medya gruplarından takip ettiği belirlendi. Gençlerde, kadınlarda ve bekarlarda kaygı düzeyinin daha yüksek olduğu belirlendi. COVID-19 salgını sırasında anlık satın alma davranışı ile kaygı düzeyi arasında pozitif bir ilişki vardır.

ABSTRACT

COVID-19 outbreak has psychologically affected consumers in Turkey, and it reflects to consumer behavior. The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between impulse buying behavior and anxiety levels in the COVID-19 epidemic process and to determine the changes in consumer responses as well as the role of traditional media and social media. The secondary purpose of the study is to determine whether consumers differentiate regarding impulse buying behaviors and anxiety levels on the basis of their socio-demographic characteristics. Online questionnaires were conducted with 776 consumers throughout Turkey. The results revealed that approximately 42% of the consumers bought and stored large amounts of products. Consumers bought products mostly in the fresh food category, as well as in the personal hygiene and household cleaning categories. Consumers preferred brands and intermediaries that they thought were healthy and hygienic. Official statements and TV news were the most important source motivating people to shop beyond normal. It is determined that more than 20% of the consumers followed COVID-19 news from social media groups. It was found that the level of anxiety was higher in young, women, and singles. During the COVID-19 outbreak, there has been a positive correlation between impulse buying behavior and anxiety level.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30783/nevsosbilen.1474448>

Atf/Cite as: Zengin, A. Y., Çetin, B., & Yüksel, A. (2024). Covid-19, tüketici tepkisi, anlık satın alma davranışı: Tüketicilerde kaygı bozukluğu ve geleneksel ve yeni medyanın rolü. *Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli Üniversitesi SBE Dergisi*, 14(3), 1343-1367.

Introduction

COVID-19, reported first in December 2019 in Wuhan, China, has spread all over the world in a very short time. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization announced the threat of a pandemic. After the first case was reported publicly in Turkey on March 13, 2020, individuals began to perceive more serious concerns about COVID-19, which had been initially perceived as a distant threat for several months before that date. Measures were taken in Turkey as the number of cases as well as the number of the patients who died of the disease increased. As the measures started to affect the broader social sphere and society, this created an environment of anxiety throughout the community.

As they were continually exposed to the news stories about ways to prevent the coronavirus; the extent to which the disease is dangerous; panicking people in other countries; and shopping frenzies, on TV and via the Internet, at home, individuals were triggered into action as consumers. Despite the warnings from public authorities and industry representatives, consumers continued to purchase many products in large quantities from grocery store chains. According to a survey by Ipsos, cologne and vinegar, used as a disinfectant for protection from the virus, were among the best-selling products. Also, pasta alone corresponded to a fourth of the total shopping growth (Ipsos, 2020).

Literature on impulse buying focused on clinical and psychological development, education, and consumer purchasing behaviors (Piron, 1991; Rook et. al., 1995; Hausman, 2000; Kacen et. al., 2002). Different definitions of impulse buying behavior can be found in the literature. In Rook (1987), impulse buying was defined as an activity performed by a consumer with a sudden, strong, and persistent impulse and/or emotion caused by a complex emotional impulse (Rook, 1987: 191). In many studies, it was found that impulse buying is performed to ensure pleasure, social interaction, and satisfaction (Park, et. al., 2006, s. 434).

There are, many studies aimed at investigating the impulse buying behavior of consumers resulting from pandemics in the 2000s (Lee et. al., 2007; Akben et. al., 2008; Brug et. al., 2009; Beach et. al., 2009; Fenichel et. al., 2013). These studies sought to determine the purchasing intentions and behaviors of consumers, media, and communication channels and policies during the outbreak. Previous research tried to identify "*what*" triggered the impulse buying behavior and "*for what*" and "*why*" (Badgaiyan et. al., 2014, s. 537).

One of the most basic functions of the media is certainly that they are a source of information. The main purpose of the traditional and new media is to inform consumers and convey the message that is supposed to be delivered. The information they provide should clearly explain the risks of the virus and be specific and reliable.

With regard to psychosocial behaviors of consumers, the COVID-19 outbreak has led to changes in purchasing behaviors in addition to its social and economic impacts. The primary aim of this study is to examine the correlation between impulse buying behavior and anxiety level, determine changes in consumer responses, and identify the role of traditional media and social media. The secondary aim of the study is to determine whether consumers differentiate regarding impulse buying behavior and anxiety levels on the basis of their sociodemographic characteristics.

The World was unpredictable pandemic situation. Covid 19 has changed business models, consumer buying instruments, consumer behaviours in many ways (Lee & Lee, 2021; Verma & Naveen, 2021, s. 27-28). Consumers' purchasing behaviors have rapidly transitioned to online media. Thus, the pandemic has helped accelerate the development of digital infrastructure in many industries (Kim, 2020). However Covid pandemic effect consumer buying behaviour and studied include consumption shifts. Some studies focus impulse buying behaviour (Naeem, 2021; Ahmed et.al., 2020; Wang et.al., 2021 etc.), shifts preferences channel (Mehroliya et.al, 2021; Pantano et. Al., 2021; Ngoh & Groening, 2022) and external stimuli such as information and social media exposure (Laato et al., 2020; Naeem, 2020; Tran et.al., 2021; Lee & Jung, 2021; Tounes et. al., 2021; Kannan & Kulkami, 2022). Consumers were spending significantly more time in houses. Also forcing to perform their leisure and recreational activities in home. Consumers spending time on products and services via electronic devices, mobile applications via internet. Also in the digital age, information is playing important role. Consumers searching reliable information both traditional and new media channels. Covid-19 pandemic interplay between trustworthy information and effective communication through social media, and the public's trust in health authorities. In this regard Covid-19 pandemic period, trust in traditional media declined %53 and social media trust fell to %35 (Reuters, 2021). Nowadays, unfortunately overall trust in media in news is %40 in

the World and overall trust in news remains stable at 35% in Turkey (Newman et. al., 2023). However, trustworthy media is important. Because media that provides misleading and unreliable information influences consumer psychology and consumer buying behaviour. In this context, this study explores how traditional media and social media influences consumers impulse buying behaviour and anxiety level, consumer responses.

Impulse Buying Behavior and Anxiety

The fact that consumer behaviors are motivated behaviors emphasizes the understanding of the concept of need in the field. Within the framework of consumer behavior, the concept of need is examined on the basis of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1954). Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory that is closely related to human psychology. For safety needs, which are generally satisfied psychologically, individuals aim to keep themselves out of danger and be healthy and socially balanced. For example, individuals' efforts to protect their families that make them feel safe and make their children healthy are associated with the satisfaction of safety needs. In the course of life, it is undoubtedly inevitable for parents to take measures to protect their family members and make them feel safe. Healthy and normal individuals satisfy their safety needs (Maslow, 1943, s. 377-379; Poston, 2009, s. 347-350). In the face of the COVID-19 outbreak, consumers who are driven by physiological and safety needs at the bottom of Maslow's hierarchy of needs may act impulsively and in an unplanned way.

Purchasing is defined as a realistic decision-making that is performed in a planned and informed manner and to which due time is allocated, whereas impulse buying is referred to as an act that has an unplanned element that facilitates purchasing (Hausman, 2000, s. 404). Piron describes impulse buying behavior as hedonically complex purchasing behavior that is done with an emotional incentive (Piron, 1991, s. 509). Impulse buying is defined as a sudden and unplanned purchase (Beatty et. al., 1998, s. 170) that is often performed to satisfy the need to avoid an unwanted emotion and/or situation (Sohn et. al., 2014, s. 244).

Unplanned buying behavior stems from the consumer's certain tendencies. The tendency to make unplanned purchases is a tendency to buy something, which impulsively develops in the consumer, such as fear, excitement, or pressure. In addition, unplanned buying takes place in relation to personal features, such as education (Verplanken et. al., 2001, s. 71-78).

Buying is an ordinary part of everyday life. However, sudden events and unexpected developments may render the buying behavior of individuals to no longer be ordinary and trigger them to act with a strong impulse. In the literature on consumer behavior, many studies focused on the relationship of anxiety and stress with impulse and/or unplanned buying (O'Guinn et. al., 1989; Faber et. al., 1996; Phau et. al., 2008; Ridgway et. al., 2008; Kyrios et. al., 2013; Darrat et. al., 2016; Eroglu, 2016). In many of the studies, the behaviors of the people who exhibited unplanned purchasing behavior and who were under psychological follow-up were investigated. However, most of these studies were conducted in the field of psychiatry.

In the consumer behavior literature, anxiety is noted as one of the factors that provoke impulse buying. Psychological, socio-cultural, and external factors may trigger impulse buying behavior by increasing anxiety and stress in individuals (O'Guinn et. al., 1989, s. 148-149). Consumers who make unplanned purchases miss opportunities while making comparisons, or they aim at eliminating anxiety and stress by purchasing products in accordance with the specified specifications (Kyrios et. al., 2013, s. 194). Weinstein et al. observed that individuals who made unplanned purchases exhibited depressive characteristics. It was found that women made impulse purchases with the aim of avoiding symptoms of anxiety, depression, stress, and other risk factors (Weinstein et al., 2015, s. 49).

Consumer anxiety is at the center of unplanned buying. Simultaneously, anxiety affects the cause-effect relationship of buying behavior. Consequently, anxiety affects impulse buying (Darrat et al., 2016, s. 105). Recent health-related news stories and information also affect the anxiety level of consumers with regard to the outbreak. Based on the foregoing discussion, the research hypothesis was proposed as follows:

H1: There is a positive correlation between impulse buying behavior and anxiety level.

Some studies on impulse buying examined the role of socio demographics. Awan and Abbas (2015) claimed gender and age were expressively and contrariwise concomitant with impulse buying while income and education were directly associated with the impulse buying and demographic characteristics have a significant impact of impulse buying behavior of consumers. Bashir et al. (2013) showed that demographic factors, such as the disposable income and age, are related to most impulse buying indicators. However, education and gender produced marginal association with impulsive buying behavior. Chaudhuri et al. (2021) supported the findings from past research suggesting that there is a positive relationship between income of the consumers and their impulse buying behaviour. On the other hand, the relationship of gender and age with impulse buying behaviour is not significant. Mohiuddin and Iqbal (2018) studied based on the secondary data and concluded that all the factors gender, age, education, etc. have a strong association with impulse buying among consumers. Thus, following hypothesis proposed.

H2: There is a statistically significant difference in impulse buying in terms of socio-demographics.

During the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) epidemic 7.6% of 1,656 patients in Korea exhibited anxiety symptoms and 16.6% of them showed feelings of anger during the isolation period (Jeong et al., 2016). According to the results of Paz et al., (2020) a total of 759 patients completed the questionnaire, 22.5% moderate to severe symptoms of anxiety. Being a woman and from the Coastal region were risk factors. In addition during the COVID 19 lockdown gender was found to be associated with anxiety wherein males were more likely to anxious. Also employment status was significantly associated with anxiety symptoms (Verma and Mishra, 2020). Besides, findings of Hubbard et al., (2021) showed associations of anxiety and depression with sociodemographic as age, gender, deprivation. Zhou et al., (2020) conducted study among Chinese high school students during the COVID-19 outbreak. Results revealed that female gender was the higher risk factor for anxiety symptoms. In terms of grades, senior high school was a risk factor for depressive and anxiety symptoms; the higher the grade, the greater the prevalence of depressive and anxiety symptoms. Hence, the third research hypothesis was proposed as follows:

H3: There is a significant difference in anxiety levels of consumers in terms of socio-demographics.

Pandemic Period and Consumer Behavior

There have been studies conducted during previous outbreaks, focusing on consumer behavior (Wohlgenant et. al., 1982; Hendel et. al., 2006; Beach et. al., 2009). In these studies, it was stated that consumers exhibited price sensitivity in the short term rather than in the long term. The studies related to the avian flu outbreak found increased consumption of fresh meat, frozen red meat, and chicken meat in connection with product preferences (Beach et. al., 2009, s. 11; Yilmaz et al., 2011, s. 783-784).

With the emergence of the COVID-19 outbreak, the studies investigating the epidemic process from various aspects focused on different topics. Consumer behavior-oriented studies indicated that panic buying behavior emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic and that panic buying affects consumers' purchasing preferences in the medium term. During this period, consumers' restaurant, travel, and entertainment expenditures were reduced by 72% (Haiqian et.al., 2020). In a study on households, the pandemic was divided into two periods. The first period was taken as the beginning of the pandemic, and the second period was considered the course of the pandemic. It was found that consumers engaged only in food shopping in the first period and in food and takeaway shopping in the second period (Bakeret et. al., 2020). Another study determined that consumers were exhibiting panic buying behaviors and were engaging in stockpiling and that the authorities informed the public to prevent hoarding (Hobbs, 2020).

Along with the economic, the psychological dimension of the pandemic was also studied. During the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals exhibited increased levels of anxiety, stress, and paranoia, and it was noted that the pandemic negatively affected the mental health of individuals (Nicomedes et. al., 2020). Many educational practices and programs were conducted on TV and radio and through media channels to protect individual mental health; reduce anxiety, stress, and depression levels; and perform faster diagnosis and treatment procedures. The educational practices and programs not only improved the mental health of individuals but

also played an important role in the development of personal cleanliness and hygiene education and awareness (Wang et. al., 2020).

Media

In an outbreak, decision-makers, scientists, and media play an important role. The media outlets are crucial for conveying information about the statements of scientists and the decisions of policymakers to the public in the most effective manner. Information must be reliable, trustworthy, and responsible (Vasterman et. al., 2013; Albeak, 2011; Clark, 2008).

The guidance by the news and information sources is effective during an outbreak. During the avian flu epidemic, consumers exhibited fewer purchases when the risk rose, and it was found that newspaper news stories had an effect on food demand and consumer food preferences (Kuchler, 2008). It was reported that during the avian flu epidemic, educated individuals paid more attention to their daily consumption behaviors and that the media news stories influenced consumers' purchasing decisions (Yılmaz et al., 2011, s. 784-786).

The media plays an important role in conveying the news and as a source of information, particularly during viral outbreaks. Undoubtedly, the media is an important tool that enlightens society and affects, prevents, repairs, and saves behavioral and attitudinal reactions (Lee et. al., 2013, s. 120).

From the 1990s to the present, the Internet and the changing media venues facilitate access to information. The Internet and social media play an important role in enabling individuals to access information. According to the statistics on sources of access to information around the world in 2010, 70% of people received information from TV, 32% from the print media, 82% from online media, and 52% from social media. However, only 42% of the users relied on information from all media channels, while the rate of those who found social media reliable was 23% (Digital News Report, 2019).

The rate of those trusting the information obtained from all media channels in Turkey was 46%. The rate of those trusting the information obtained from social media was 40%. In Turkey, the Internet was the most important source of information, with a rate of 88%. The Internet was followed by TV (74%) and the print media (59%). Social media ranked fourth, with 46% (Newman et al., 2019, s. 114). As it can be seen, confidence in the information changes depending on the source of information. The information is effective in consumers' purchasing decisions and behavior.

Methodology

Sample

The population of this descriptive study consisted of consumers over 18 years of age living in Turkey. The sample consisted of 776 consumers from across Turkey who agreed to participate in the study between April 25 and May 11, 2020. Data collected through an online questionnaire.

Before proceeding with the study, written approval was obtained from Aksaray University Human Research Ethics Board (Date: 24.04.2020, Injunction number: 2020/03-27). Approval was obtained from the Ministry of Health of Turkey on May 19, 2020. The consumers who participated in the study were informed about the study, and they were told that their individual information would remain confidential. The data were collected online in accordance with the principles of the Helsinki Declaration.

Measures

The Participant Information Form, the Impulse Buying Behavior Scale (IBBS), and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) were used to collect data. Developed by the researchers, the Participant Information Form consists of questions designed to determine the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of consumers and their shopping patterns in the pandemic process. The information form also contains questions designed to identify changes in consumer responses. In the preparation of these questions, the stimulus-response model was taken as the basis. One of the most basic models used to describe the consumer buying decision process is the stimulus-response model that also referred to as the black box model (Kotler, 1997). This model describes

the stimuli that affect the consumer (marketing efforts and environmental factors); consumer characteristics (values, lifestyle, psychological situation, etc.); and their interaction with the consumer responses. Consumer responses are monitored in the form of product choices, brand choices, dealer choices, purchase quantities, purchase timing, and payment methods. Based on this basic model, the questions were designed to correspond to the COVID-19 pandemic threat in order to measure changes related to the sub-items in consumer responses. Because purchase timing is specific and due to curfew restrictions, it was not likely to direct the consumer to purchase on certain days or hours, no question was asked under this item. Expert opinions were taken in designing the questions.

The IBBS has been developed to determine the impulse buying behaviors of consumers. Developed by Angela Hausman in 2000, this scale consists of seven items. The IBBS is a 5-point Likert-type scale and the items are between items 1 and 5 (1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly agree). In the present study, the Cronbach’s alpha value of the scale was found to be 0.83.

The STAI was developed by Spielberger et al. (1970). Oner et. al. (1983) conducted the validity and reliability study of the inventory for the Turkish society. The alpha reliability coefficient was found to be between 0.94 and 0.96 in various applications. The STAI evaluates how an individual feels at a given moment and under certain circumstances. Each item on the inventory is scored with “Not at all,” “Somewhat,” “Moderately so,” or “Very much so.” Items 1, 2, 5, 8, 10, 11, 15, 16, 19, and 20 are reverse scored. After the total weighted scores of direct and reverse scored items are found, the total weighted score of the reverse scored items is subtracted from the total weighted score obtained for the direct scored items. The individual's anxiety score is calculated by adding a previously determined value (50) to this number. Higher points indicate higher levels of anxiety (Spielberger et al., 1970; Oner et. al., 1983). In the present study, the Cronbach’s alpha value of the scale was found to be 0.94.

The Statistical Package for Social Science for Windows (SPSS) (version 25.0) package program was used to assess the data. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was used to test whether the data was distributed normally. As the data showed no normal distribution, the Mann–Whitney U test was used for comparing two variables, and the Kruskal–Wallis test was used for comparing more than two variables, whereas the relationship between two variables was tested using Spearman’s correlation test. The $p < 0.05$ level was considered statistically significant.

Results

The socio-demographic characteristics of the consumers participating in the study are presented in Table 1. It was observed that the consumers were mostly in the 35–44 and 18–24 age ranges. Approximately 67% of the participants were women. Regarding their marital status, almost half of the consumers were married. Of the participants, 43.2% did not have children, and 56.8% had children. Of those who had children, 46.2% had two children. Of the participants, 37.9% were civil servants, 26.3% students, and 16.9% private sector employees. 40.1% of the consumers were found to have an income up to TL 5,000, 23.3% earned between TL 8,000 and 12,500, and 13% received remuneration of TL 12,501 and above.

Table 1. Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Consumers

Socio-demographic characteristics	Number	Percent	
Age	18-24	217	28.0
	25-34	194	25.0
	35-44	220	28.4
	45 and over	145	18.6
Gender	Female	519	66.9
	Male	257	33.1
Marital status	Single	385	49.6

	Married	391	50.4
Education level	High school and below	117	15.1
	Associate degree	83	10.7
	Bachelor degree	384	49.5
	Master's degree	122	15.7
	Doctoral degree	70	9.0
Have a child	Yes	335	43.2
	No	441	56.8
Number of children*	One	148	44.2
	Two	155	46.2
	Three and above	32	9.6
Your profession	Student	204	26.3
	Civil servant	294	37.9
	Housewife-unemployed	56	7.2
	Private sector employee	131	16.9
	Worker	22	2.8
	Retired	28	3.6
	Business owner (Merchant, Industrialist, or Tradesman)	41	5.3
Total monthly income of the family ^{1,2}	2.324 - 3.500 TL	194	25.0
	3.501 - 5.000 TL	117	15.1
	5.001 - 6.500 TL	109	14.0
	6.501 - 8.000 TL	69	8.9
	8.001 - 9.500 TL	60	7.7
	9.501 - 11.000 TL	75	9.7
	11.001 - 12.500 TL	51	6.6
12.501 TL and above	101	13.0	
Total		776	100

* Percentages were calculated based on 335 responses.

¹ Minimum gross wage 3.577,50TRY and net wage 2.825,90TRY in Türkiye in 2020(Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Labour and Social Security, 2020)

² Minimum gross wage is 332 USD exchange rate(Bloomberg,2022)

Table 2. IBBS and STAI Mean Scores

Scales	Mean \pm SD	Median	Min.–Max.
IBBS	15.08 \pm 5.26	15	7-35
STAI	44.79 \pm 10.89	45	20-74

Table 2 shows the IBBS and STAI overall mean scores and median values of the consumers participating in the study. The IBBS mean score and median value of the consumers were, respectively, 15.08 \pm 5.26 (Min. 7–Max. 35) and 15. Consumers' impulse buying behavior levels are close to medium level. The STAI mean score and median value of the consumers were, respectively, 44.79 \pm 10.89 (Min. 20–Max. 74) and 45. Scores from the state anxiety scale vary between 20 and 80. A large score indicates a high level of anxiety, a small score indicates a low level of anxiety. It seems that the anxiety level of consumers is at a medium level.

Table 3. Correlation Between IBBS And STAI Mean Scores

		IBBS	STAI
IBBS	R	1	
	P	-	
STAI	R	0.140**	1
	P	0.000	-

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Spearman's correlation analysis was used to determine the correlation between impulse buying behavior and state anxiety level. The results are given in Table 3. According to the results, there was a statistically significant correlation between the impulse buying behavior and the state anxiety level ($p < 0.05$). The correlation was weak and positive. Hence, H1 hypothesis was accepted.

The differences, if any, in the impulse buying tendency and state anxiety level of the consumers participating in the study on the basis of their sociodemographic characteristics were also investigated. Accordingly, the results of the Mann–Whitney U Test and the Kruskal–Wallis analysis are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Variables Affecting the Consumers' IBBS and Their STAI Mean Scores

Variables		IBBS X \pm S	STAI X \pm S
Age	18-24	15.22 \pm 5.03	47.16 \pm 10.69
	25-34	15.65 \pm 5.23	44.75 \pm 10.79
	35-44	15.26 \pm 5.48	43.70 \pm 10.90
	45 and over	13.83 \pm 5.13	42.97 \pm 10.80
	χ^2	14.870	13.386
	P	0.002	0.004

Gender	Female	15.03 ± 5.30	46.39 ± 10.46
	Male	15.17 ± 5.18	41.57 ± 11.06
	Z	-0.348	-5.825
	P	0.728	0.000
Marital status	Single	15.18 ± 5.15	46.47 ± 11.03
	Married	14.98 ± 5.36	43.15 ± 10.51
	Z	-0.867	-4.056
	P	0.386	0.000
Education level	High school and below	15.26 ± 5.59	44.96 ± 11.07
	Associate degree	14.75 ± 4.75	47.00 ± 10.74
	Bachelor degree	14.73 ± 4.92	44.76 ± 10.90
	Master's degree	15.45 ± 5.65	44.46 ± 10.85
	Doctoral degree	16.42 ± 6.15	42.70 ± 10.66
	χ^2	3.591	4.128
	P	0.464	0.389
Have a child	Yes	14.71 ± 5.36	43.54 ± 10.59
	No	15.36 ± 5.17	45.75 ± 11.03
	Z	-2.065	-2.624
	P	0.039	0.009
Number of children	One	14.66 ± 5.58	43.02 ± 10.41
	Two	15.05 ± 5.09	43.88 ± 10.71
	Three and above	13.21 ± 5.48	44.25 ± 11.10
	χ^2	6.247	0.791
	P	0.044	0.673
Profession	Student	15.26 ± 5.01	46.71 ± 10.89
	Civil servant	15.19 ± 5.33	43.48 ± 10.76

	Housewife-unemployed	14.30 ± 5.01	46.66 ± 9.48
	Private sector employee	14.77 ± 5.14	45.09 ± 10.56
	Worker	15.81 ± 5.54	45.00 ± 13.40
	Retired	14.42 ± 6.65	42.64 ± 10.96
	Business owner (Merchant, Industrialist, or Tradesman)	15.48 ± 5.57	42.56 ± 11.92
	χ^2	4.861	11.618
	P	0.562	0.071
Total monthly income of the family	2.324 - 3.500 TL	14.86 ± 5.02	45.88 ± 10.80
	3.501 - 5.000 TL	15.76 ± 5.66	45.88 ± 11.50
	5.001 - 6.500 TL	14.03 ± 4.42	44.10 ± 11.15
	6.501 - 8.000 TL	15.50 ± 5.63	43.13 ± 10.81
	8.001 - 9.500 TL	14.53 ± 4.83	44.55 ± 10.06
	9.501 - 11.000 TL	14.97 ± 5.45	44.73 ± 11.95
	11.001- 12.500 TL	15.31 ± 5.42	44.96 ± 9.46
	12.501 TL and above	15.85 ± 5.70	43.47 ± 10.43
	χ^2	9.780	5.286
	P	0.201	0.625

z = Mann Whitney U Test

χ^2 = Kruskal Wallis Test

There was a statistically significant difference between the IBBS mean scores of the groups in terms of age, child ownership, and number of children. It was determined that based on the age groups, the difference was between the consumers aged 45 and older and those aged between 18 and 24 years ($X = 15.22$), between 25 and 34 years ($X = 15.65$), and between 35 and 44 years ($X = 15.26$). The IBBS mean scores were the lowest in the group aged 45 and over ($X = 13.83$) among the age groups. In terms of child ownership, it was found that the mean scores of the consumers without children ($X = 15.36$) were higher than those of the group who had children ($X = 14.71$). In terms of the number of children that the consumers had, the difference was established to be due to the difference between those who had two children and those who had three or more children. Accordingly, the IBBS mean scores of the consumers having two children ($X = 15.05$) were higher than those of the consumers having three or more children ($X = 13.21$).

There was a statistically significant difference between the STAI mean scores of the groups in terms of age, gender, marital status, and child ownership ($p < 0.05$). Among the age groups, the STAI mean scores of those 18–24 years and older were the highest ($X = 47.16$). This age group was followed by the 25–34 age group ($X = 44.75$). The age group with the lowest level of state anxiety consisted of the consumers aged 45 and older ($X = 42.97$). Regarding the gender, the women's state anxiety level ($X = 46.39$) was higher than the anxiety level of men ($X = 41.57$). Regarding marital status, it was determined that the STAI mean scores ($X = 46.47$) of the single consumers ($X = 43.15$) were higher when compared with those who were married. Also, it was found that the consumers without children ($X = 45.75$) had higher status anxiety levels when compared with those with children ($X = 43.54$).

Within the scope of the study, questions were asked to determine the manner in which the consumers behaved during their shopping in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic. The results of descriptive analysis regarding the answers given in this context are presented below.

Table 5. Use of Protective Materials in Shopping

Answers	Number	Percent
After being reported in China for the first time	23	3.0
After being reported in our country for the first time	337	43.4
After the Ministry of Health announced the first death	179	23.1
After the government made it obligatory	213	27.4
I have not started using it	24	3.1
Total	776	100

The consumers were asked when they first started using protective materials such as gloves and masks during the COVID-19 outbreak (Table 5). According to descriptive statistics, a large number of consumers stated that they used protective materials in shopping after the disease was first reported in Turkey. Of the consumers, 27.4% stated that they did so after the government made it obligatory, and 23.1% stated that they started using protective materials after the Ministry of Health announced the first death in Turkey. The ratio of those who had not started doing so was 3.1%.

Table 6. Purchasing/Stockpiling a High Quantity of Products

Answers	Number	Percent
After being reported in China for the first time	15	1.9
After being reported in our country for the first time	111	14.3
After the Ministry of Health announced the first death	45	5.8
After the government suspended public schools and universities	97	12.5
After the government announced the transition to flexible work in the public sector	39	5.0
After the transition to distance education in universities	19	2.4
I have not started buying too many products that I could not use	450	58.1
Total	776	100

The statistics concerning the time when the consumers bought large quantities of products and started storing for the first time in the COVID-19 outbreak are shown in Table 6. Accordingly, 58.1% of the consumers (450

people) stated that they had not started buying too many products that they could not use. However, it was found that the consumers bought and stored a large amount of products after the disease was reported in Turkey for the first time (14.3%) and after the public schools and universities affiliated to the Ministry of National Education were suspended (12.5%).

Table 7. Top Destinations for Shopping

Answers	Number	Percent
Local shops and local tradesmen	209	26.9
Local chain retail markets	244	31.4
National chain retail markets	241	31.1
Online shopping sites	82	10.6
Total	776	100

Table 7 presents descriptive statistics for the answers to the question of where the consumers preferred to do most of their shopping during the COVID-19 outbreak. The consumers preferred to shop in local (31.4%) and national (31.1%) chain markets. The percentage of those who preferred online shopping remained at 10.6%.

Table 8. Media Channel Followed for the COVID-19 News

Answers	Number	Percent
TV	401	51.7
Internet news sites, newspapers	193	24.8
Social media (WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, etc.)	165	21.3
I am not following	17	2.2
Total	776	100

When asked, “Which channel do you follow the most about the recent developments on COVID-19?”, more than half of the consumers (51.7%) replied that they watched TV. It was determined that approximately 25% of the consumers followed Internet news sites and newspapers, and 21.3% followed social media. Only 2.2% of the consumers stated that they did not follow the COVID-19 news.

Table 9. Most Purchased Product Category

Answers	Number	Percent
Ready food – frozen food	140	7.6
Food – vegetables, fruits, etc.	607	32.9
Non-alcoholic packaged beverages – milk, juice, soda, etc.	139	7.5
Internet service	77	4.2
Personal hygiene products – hand sanitizer, wet wipes, etc.	423	22.9
Household cleaning hygiene products	391	21.3
Personal care products – hair dye, shaving foam, and hand moisturizer	58	3.1
Electronic items – laptop, tablet, etc.	10	0.5
Total	1845*	100

*Percentages were calculated based on 1845 answers (there are multiple answers to the question).

The descriptives regarding the categories of products bought most by the consumers during the COVID-19 measures are presented in Table 9. The consumers stated that they purchased products in the category of food (unfrozen and fresh) (32.9%); personal hygiene products (22.9%); and household cleaning products (21.3%). The electronics category was voiced only by 10 consumers (0.5%).

Table 10. Source of the Event or News Leading to Shopping Beyond Normal

Answers	Number	Percent
The statements by public authorities	321	23.0
A friend/family member who is a health Professional	60	4.3
TV programs on COVID-19	170	12.2
News reports on TV	246	17.5
The posts in the social media groups I belong to	168	12.0
My family members/friends' calling and warning	112	8.0
International press	79	5.7
No one or nowhere/my own assessments	241	17.3
Total	1397*	100

* Percentages were calculated based on 1397 responses.

Results regarding the event or news leading the consumers to shop beyond how much they would normally be given in Table 10. These events or sources were the statements by public authorities for 321 consumers (41.4%); the news reports on TVs for 246 consumers (31.7%); and TV programs on COVID-19 for 170 (21.9%) consumers. The number of consumers who reported the posts made in the social groups they belonged to was 168 (21.7%). Of the 1397 responses in total, the ratio of the statements by public authorities was 23%; that of news reports on TV was 17.5%; that of TV programs on COVID-19 was 12.2%; and that of social media posts was 12%. The number of the consumers who stated that they were shopping beyond what was normal for them on the basis of their own assessments was 241, and the ratio of this response to the total responses was 17.3%.

Table 11. Sufficiently Informed Issues

Answers	Number	Percent
Symptoms of the disease	613	22.8
Prevention measures	641	23.8
Immunostrengthening supplements	295	11.0
What to eat and drink	217	8.1
Practices and procedures such as quarantine, curfew, and travel permit	528	19.6
Where to report upon signs of illness	395	14.7
Total	2689*	100

*Percentages were calculated based on 2689 responses.

The consumers were inquired about the issues that they thought were sufficiently informed about COVID-19 (Table 11). Of 776 consumers, 82.6% (641 consumers) stated that they were informed adequately about disease prevention measures; 613 (79%) about disease symptoms; 528 (68%) about procedures such as quarantine, curfew, and travel permit; and 395 (51%) about the institutions to report to upon signs of illness followed by

immunostrengthening (38%); and healthy nutrition (28%). Of 2,689 responses, disease prevention measures corresponded to 23.8%; disease symptoms to 22.8%; and quarantine, curfew, travel permit, etc. and procedures to 19.6%.

The following are the distribution of the consumer responses to questions regarding consumer responses to the COVID-19 outbreak and on whether there were changes in the responses. In this context, product choice, brand choice, dealer choice, purchase quantity, and payment method choice were discussed.

Table 12. Consumer Responses – Brand Choice

Answers	Number	Percent
I continue to buy the brands that I normally buy	593	47.1
I bought whatever brand was in the market, and I did not prefer a specific brand	127	10.1
I bought the brands that I thought might be more expensive but more hygienic	105	8.3
I bought the brands that I thought were healthier	210	16.8
I used to evaluate the price before; now I buy branded products, regardless of the high price	44	3.5
I am still making a decision to buy a brand by comparing the prices	179	14.2
Total	1258*	100

*Percentages are based on 1258 answers.

On the question of determining consumer responses regarding brand choice in shopping patterns since the threat of the COVID-19 outbreak was first declared are given in Table 12. Of 776 consumers, 76.42% stated that they continued to buy their usual brands; 27% of the consumers bought the brands that they think are healthier; 23.07% of the consumers decided to buy brands on the basis of a price comparison as they did before. 16.37% of the consumers bought whichever brand they could find on the market; and 13.5% of the consumers bought the products that they thought were produced under more hygienic conditions even if they were more expensive. Of all the answers given, the least frequent answer (3.5%) was “I used to evaluate the price before, but now I buy branded products, regardless of the high price”.

Table 13. Intermediary Choice

Answers	Number	Percent
I bought them from the places I always went to and liked for product quality	680	81.9
I have changed the places I always went to because of the threat of infection	111	13.4
I started buying products from the places I never went to before	39	4.7
Total	830*	100

*Percentages are based on 830 answers.

The choices of intermediaries since the COVID-19 outbreak threat was first declared are presented in Table 13. Thus, 87.63% of the consumers bought products from the places they always went to; 14.30% consumers changed the places they always went to because of the threat of virus infection; and 5.03% of the consumers began to buy products from the places they never went to before.

Table 14. Product Choice

Answers	Number	Percent
I buy whatever products I would buy routinely	681	74.4
After the outbreak threat, the products I would buy have changed	83	9.1
After the outbreak threat, I started buying products that I would never bought before	83	9.1
I started buying some products that I did not need because of the outbreak threat	68	7.4
Total	915*	100

*Percentages are based on 915 answers.

Regarding product choice in shopping patterns since the COVID-19 outbreak threat was first declared are given in Table 14. Thus, 87.77% of the consumers stated that they buy whatever products they would buy routinely. On the other hand, 10.7% of the consumers changed their products after the outbreak threat; after the declaration of epidemic threat, 10.7% of the consumers began to buy products they had never bought before; and 8.8% of the consumers started buying some products that they did not need because of the outbreak.

Table 15. Purchase Quantity

Answers	Number	Percent
I still buy whatever amount I would buy routinely	438	43.3
I have increased the amount of products I purchase; now I buy more	289	28.6
I buy smaller amount of products	15	1.5
I buy many products although I have them at home in sufficient quantities	120	11.9
I do not buy any products before finishing them completely	150	14.7
Total	1012*	100

*Percentages are calculated based on 1,012 answers.

The descriptive statistics regarding the question about the quantity of products purchased since the COVID-19 outbreak hazard was first declared are presented in Table 15. Accordingly, 56.44% of the consumers still buy whatever amount they would buy routinely; 37.24% of the consumers have increased the amount of products that they buy; 19.33% of the consumers never buy any products before finishing them completely; and 15.5% of the consumers buy many products although they have them at home in sufficient quantities. Of the 1,012 responses in total, the least frequent answer (1.5%) was “I buy smaller amount of products.”

Table 16. Payment Method

Answers	Number	Percent
I continue to pay cash as I always did	178	20.9
I used to pay cash but I now use a credit card	132	15.5
I used a credit card, but I now pay cash	28	3.3
I continue to pay with a credit card as I always did	513	60.3
Total	851*	100

*Percentages are calculated based on 851 answers.

The answers to the question of payment method preferences in purchases since the declaration of the COVID-19 outbreak threat are given in Table 16. Thus, 66.11% of the consumers said that they continued to pay with a credit card as they always did; 22.94% of the consumers continued to pay cash. Thus, in total % 89.05 of the consumers reported no change in payment method. 17% of consumers started to pay with credit cards instead of cash. The ratio of those who stopped paying with a credit card and started pay cash was 3.3%.

Discussion and Implications

The COVID-19 outbreak has affected and changed daily life at a significant level in Turkey. The effects of the outbreak in human psychology, as well as in human physiology, have begun to be discussed. State anxiety is one of the most voiced psychological indicators in this context.

As individuals perceive threats to their lives and feel the need to strengthen their immune systems, physiological and safety needs have been stimulated. It was observed that the individuals who *stayed home*, watched TV, followed social media, and were exposed to COVID-19 news intensively have exhibited different behaviors in this process. Motivated by physiological and safety needs, which are at the bottom of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, in the face of the COVID-19 outbreak, people gave unprecedented consumer responses. Psychological factors underlying changes in consumer reactions and impulse buying behavior, as well as the role of traditional media and that of new media, have not been studied extensively in the literature, particularly in Turkey. In fact, no study that focused on this issue in Turkey was found. The data obtained in this study will be a first in the field and fill the gap in the literature.

Results claim that there was no significant change in the responses of a vast majority of the consumers during COVID-19 outbreak. Although it is hard to say that the COVID-19 outbreak led to a major change in consumer responses, the highest change rate observed in purchase quantities and brand choice, respectively. It was determined that a significant rate of consumers increased the amount of products they bought; and bought products even if they had them in sufficient quantities. Further, consumers tend to prefer purchasing certain brands because they considered them to be healthy and produced under hygienic conditions even if they were more expensive. Moreover, it is found that consumers' still consider the price in their brand choices in the COVID-19 period.

The period in which the data were collected within the scope of this study was the time when the transmission level of COVID-19 was the highest and the strictest measures were being implemented. Feeling that they were under pressure under these conditions, individuals may have experienced increased anxiety. Contemporaneously, the media served images of consumers emptying market shelves from around the world and from Turkey. Consumers exhibited unplanned shopping behaviors. In this context, the correlation between impulse buying tendencies and state anxiety levels during the COVID-19 outbreak was also examined. According to the results of the present study, a weak, positive correlation was found between impulse buying tendency and state anxiety level at the peak of the COVID-19 outbreak. The reason for the weak correlation was the possibility that multiple sociological and/or psychological factors might have influenced impulse buying behavior during this process. Nevertheless, the studies on the correlation between anxiety and impulse buying reported similar findings (e.g., O'Guinn et al., 1989; Kyrios et al., 2013; Weinstein et al., 2015; Darrat et al., 2016).

According to the results of differentiation in the impulse buying behavior based on socio-demographic characteristics during the COVID-19 outbreak, differences were found between the groups in terms of age, child ownership, and number of children. Accordingly, the impulse buying tendency was highest among the consumers aged 25–34 and 18–24, respectively. However, the lowest among the consumers aged 45 and over. These results are consistent with the Wood (1998), addressing the impulse buying level was higher in the 18-39 or lower age ranges than that in the higher ages (Bashar et al., 2013, s. 147). The impulse buying tendency was higher among those who did not have children than it was among those who had children and among those with two children than it was among those with three or more children. Based on an overall assessment of these findings, as suggested in Agarwal (2015), this can be explained by the change of lifestyle, depending on age, which, in turn, affects impulse buying behavior. It is expected that the consumers over 45 years of age will already have children and even more than two children in the course of life. Such a consumer is more likely to

spend on more important and predetermined products (such as their children's education) than they would on unplanned purchases. The fact that the impulse buying behavior was at the highest level in the 25–34 age group can be explained by the fact that the members of this group became new consumers, with their studentship having ended, and with their having started to earn their own money. In this age group, there are new consumers who have just started with their careers and created new families (Koseoğlu, 2002, s. 98). Therefore, they are likely to have a high tendency to purchase new and exciting products without planning. The results of the present study were similar to those of the studies that reported higher impulse buying behaviors among young people (e.g., Bellenger et al., 1978; Wood, 1998; Aytekin et al., 2015). Important groups in terms of consumption psychology are expressed as adolescents, students, people who are child owners, and elderly people (Orhan, 2002, s. 5). In this context, consumers who do not have any children will not feel any financial or spiritual responsibility for the present or future as would those with children, and this makes it easier for them to make unplanned purchases.

According to the research findings on whether the state anxiety level differentiates on the basis of socio-demographic variables, there was a difference between the groups in terms of age, gender, marital status, and child ownership. In terms of age groups, it was determined that the age group with the highest anxiety levels was the one comprising those aged 18–24 years and that composed of the youngest consumers. This may be due to the fact that the universities were closed; they were far from their usual education and social environment; and the people aged below 18 were banned from going outside. These results were similar to those of the study conducted by Pollective (2020) with over 500 people aged 16–35 years, in which 60% of the participants gave "negative" responses to the question of how they felt (CNN Türk, 25.05.2020). It has been seen that the level of anxiety of women is higher than that in men. This finding is further in line with the results of a study by Üsküdar University (Milliyet, 2020a), which found that women experience higher levels of anxiety and fear during the COVID-19 outbreak. Similarly, Haktanir et al. (2020) determined that women feared COVID-19 more when compared with men (Milliyet, 2020b). The higher levels of anxiety among single people when compared with married people may be associated with the fact that these consumers are often more likely to live alone. In addition to their daily activities/needs, the individuals who are alone have to deal with the negative psychology of the outbreak on their own.

There were extremely important findings for decision-makers. It was found that the decision-makers successfully carried out the process of conveying information on disease prevention, disease symptoms, and which institution to reach out to for suspected infection during the COVID-19 outbreak. It was established that consumers used the traditional media as the main source of information in this process. It may be recommended that in later periods or in a future outbreak, news reports and outbreak programs on TV be used as the main venue for disseminating information. It was found that social media venues were not as effective as TV in this process, and only about a fifth of the consumers used them as their primary source of information. In this context, it is crucial for decision-makers and media practitioners both in traditional media such as TV and in social media to focus on conveying information and refrain from causing panic, anxiety, stress, and fear. Particular attention should be paid so that the media content does not cause consumers to buy or stockpile products beyond their needs. Although the proportion of consumers who stockpile products is relatively low when compared with those who do not in Turkey, the present study found that approximately 42% of the participants bought and stored products more than they would usually. Given the fact that Turkey has a population of more than 83 million, 42% of that population corresponds to about 35 million consumers. This finding is important in production planning of producers; logistical planning of intermediaries; and operational planning of retailers. Considering the high anxiety levels of young people, decision-makers should develop policies that would ensure that young people are relieved psychologically with measures involving social distancing, rehabilitating media content, or other distracting activities. At this juncture, additional psychological support should be provided not only to young people but also to women, bachelors, and those who have no children, considering their higher levels of anxiety.

The study also revealed results that should be considered by businesses and marketing practitioners. It was found that the product categories that the consumers bought most in this process were food, personal and household cleaning and hygiene products, and frozen food. It may be recommended that the amount of production in these product categories should be increased in similar cases. Hygienic production conditions and

health elements should be emphasized in product and brand communication activities. Indeed, it was found that the consumers who changed their brand and product choices preferred the products or brands that they thought were hygienic and healthy. In terms of retailing activities, chain markets were found to be the most preferred intermediaries in this process. Retailers should pay attention to provide salubrious and hygienic conditions and consider in customer communication the fact that consumers change their existing stores because of the risk of virus infection. The ratio of those who used online shopping sites in this process was 10%. It was found that the consumers preferred physical stores during the COVID-19 outbreak; however, it is important to design and implement online retailing services in a more widespread, varied, and effective manner. With regard to the financing aspect of marketing, it is critical to implement payment by credit card and diversify applications. This is because the main payment method was found to be through credit card during the COVID-19 outbreak. Considering that the consumers not only bought products in an unplanned manner but also showed increased buying frequency in an effort to maintain their living comfort in a period where they were unable to leave the house, distribution should be rescheduled in this direction.

Limitations and Further Research

There were certain limitations in this study. The most fundamental limitation of this study was the time limitation. The study was conducted in the early months of the COVID-19 outbreak. Nevertheless, many preliminary findings were obtained for the first time in the literature, revealing consumption behavior and anxiety levels in this process. Another important limitation is that the study sample did not have the size and structure to allow for generalization to all consumers in Turkey. On the other hand, detailed results could be obtained based on the characteristics of the sample, which provides significant hints for decision-makers, businesses, and marketing practitioners.

This study proved to be a pioneering one in that it addressed consumer behavior, psychological factors, and media, together during the COVID-19 outbreak, in Turkey. In future studies, the effect of the COVID-19 outbreak on consumption patterns, consumer behaviors, and anxiety levels can be investigated in the medium term and the long term. The role of media in the long term can be examined. The data obtained from the different periods can be compared in order provide useful implications for policymakers. In addition, not only state anxiety level but also trait anxiety, stress, fear, and depression levels can be investigated collectively. Intercultural studies can be conducted to compare consumer responses in different countries.

Acknowledgements: This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Korona (Covid-19) virüs salgını, tüm dünyada olduğu gibi Türkiye’de de günlük yaşamı tamamıyla etkilemiştir. 11 Mart tarihinde ilk defa Türkiye’de görülmesinden sonra sıkı tedbirler alınmış ve evde kal politikasıyla sosyal izolasyon başlamıştır. Toplumun farklı bir süreç etkisi altında kaldığı bu dönemde, tüketicilerin tutum ve davranışları da değişkenlik göstermektedir. Tüketiciler psikolojik olarak etkilenmekte ve ani satın alma davranışları sergilemektedir. Bu kapsamda bu araştırmanın amacı son dönemde tüketicilerin düşünmeden satın alma davranışı üzerinde kaygı ve stres durumu, geleneksel medya ve sosyal medyanın etkisini incelemektir.

Tüketicilerin satın alma davranışları da bu dönemde değişikliğe uğramıştır. Pandemi döneminde satın alımı en çok artan kategoriler arasında başta virüsten korunmak ve dezenfektan olarak kullanılan ürünlerden kolonya ve sirkenin yer almaktadır. Sonrasında ise gıda ürünlerinden evde stoklanabilen makarna, bakliyat ve un gibi ürünlerde artış görülmektedir.

Tüketicilerin sergiledikleri ani satın alma davranışları ile ilgili literatür incelendiğinde, yapılan çalışmaların daha çok klinik ve psikolojik gelişim, eğitim odaklı çalışmalar olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Ani satın alma davranışı literatürde farklı tanımlamalar ile açıklanmıştır. Ani satın alma, tüketicinin ani, güçlü ve ısrarlı bir dürtü ve/veya his gerçekleştirdiği faaliyet olduğu ve ani satın alma karmaşık duygu dürtüsü ile oluştuğu belirtilmektedir.

Tüketicilerin psikososyal davranışları kapsamında, Covid-19 salgınının sosyal ve ekonomik etkileri yanında satın alma tutum ve davranış değişikliklerine neden olmaktadır. Bu araştırmanın temel amacı tüketici ani satın alma davranışı üzerinde ve tüketici tepkilerinin değişmesinde kaygı durumu, geleneksel medya ve sosyal medyanın etkisini ortaya koymaktır. Bu bağlamda bireylerin tüketicilerin bu dönemde nasıl bir tutum ve davranış sergiledikleri, satın alma davranışında kaygı durumlarının ve geleneksel ve sosyal medyanın etkisi incelenecektir. Tüketicilerin farklı özellikleri itibarıyla grupları arasında COVID-19 nedeniyle tüketici tepkileri ve ani satın alma davranışı bakımından farklılaşp farklılaşmadığını belirlemek çalışmanın ikincil amacıdır.

Ani ya da plansız satın alma işlevsiz tüketim davranışıdır. Ani satın alma genellikle istenmeyen bir duygudan ve/veya durumdan kaçınma ihtiyacı gidermek için yapılan satın alma davranışıdır. Satın alma günlük yaşamın sıradan bir parçasıdır. Ancak ani gelişen olaylar, beklenmedik gelişmeler bireylerin satın alma davranışlarını sıradan olmaktan çıkarmakta ve güçlü bir dürtü ile hareket etmesini tetiklemektedir. Kaygı ve stres ani satın almayı tetikleyen faktörler olarak literatürde belirtilmektedir. Psikolojik, sosyo kültürel faktörler ve dış faktörler, bireylerdeki kaygı ve stresi artırarak ani satın alma davranışını tetiklemektedir.

COVID-19 salgının ortaya çıkmasıyla, salgın sürecini inceleyen farklı çalışmalar bulunmaktadır. Kısa sürede elde edilen COVID-19 salgını ile ilgili çalışmalar farklı başlıklarda yoğunlaşmıştır. Bunlardan birisi de tüketici odaklı yapılan çalışmalardır. Tüketici odaklı çalışmalarda salgın döneminde ani satın alma davranışının ortaya çıktığı ve ani satın almanın orta vadede tüketicilerin satın alma tercihlerini etkilediği ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu dönemde kişiler restoran, seyahat ve eğlence harcamalarında azalma göstermiştir. Salgın döneminde politika yapıcılar, bilim insanları ve medya önemli rol oynamaktadır. Bilim insanları, virüs ile ilgili bilgi vererek politika yapıcılarının karar vermesinde kamu sağlığını korumada önemli rol oynamaktadır. Medya ise bilim insanlarının açıklamalarını ve politika yapıcılarının kararlarını halka en etkili ve verimli bir şekilde bilginin ulaştırılmasında önemli rol oynamaktadır. Mikro ölçekte Türkiye’ye baktığımızda tüm medya kanallarından elde edilen bilgiye güven %46 oranındadır. Sosyal medyadan elde edilen bilgiye güven oranı ise %40 olarak gerçekleşmiştir. Türkiye’de sosyal medya en önemli bilgi kaynağıdır. Bunu takiben televizyon ve basılı medya gelmektedir. Sosyal medya ise dördüncü bilgi kaynağı olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bilgi kaynakları değiştikçe elde edilen bilgiye olan güven de değişmektedir ve elde edilen bilgi kişilerin karar vermelerinde, satın alma davranışlarında etkili olmaktadır.

Tanımlayıcı türdeki araştırmanın evrenini Türkiye’de yaşayan 18 yaş üstü 776 tüketici oluşturmuştur. Verilerin toplanmasında, Katılımcı Bilgi Formu, Ani Satın alma Davranışı Ölçeği (ASDÖ) ve Durumluk Kaygı Ölçeği (DKÖ) kullanılmıştır.

Tüketicilerin ani satın alma davranışlarını belirlemek amacıyla geliştirilmiştir. Angela Hausman tarafından 2000 yılında geliştirilen bu ölçek 7 maddeden oluşmaktadır. Ani satın alma ölçeği 5’li Likert Tipi bir ölçektir ve maddeler 1 ile 5 arasında değerlendirilmektedir (1=kesinlikle katılmıyorum, 2=katılmıyorum, 3=kararsızım, 4=katılıyorum, 5=kesinlikle katılıyorum). Puanların yüksek olması tüketicilerin ani satın alma düzeylerinin yüksek olduğunu göstermektedir (Hausman, 2000). Bu çalışmada ölçeğin Cronbach alfa değeri 0.83 olarak bulunmuştur.

Durumluk Kaygı Ölçeği Spielberger ve arkadaşları tarafından (1970) geliştirilmiştir. Öner ve Le Compte (1983) tarafından, Türk toplumunda geçerlik ve güvenilirliği yapılmıştır. Alpha güvenilirlik katsayısı çeşitli uygulamalarda 0.94-0.96 arasında bulunmuştur. Durumluk Kaygı Envanteri, bireyin belirli bir anda ve belirli koşullarda kendisini nasıl hissettiğini değerlendirir. Durumluk Kaygı Envanterinde her bir madde “hiç”, “biraz”, “oldukça”, “tamamen” şeklinde 4 seçenekli olarak puanlanmaktadır

Araştırma bulgularına göre tüketiciler COVID-19 sürecinde alışverişlerinde koruyucu malzeme kullanmaya ağırlıklı Türkiye’de hastalık görüldükten sonra ve okulların tatil edilmesinden sonra başlamışlardır. Burada dikkat çeken önemli nokta ise araştırmaya katılanların yaklaşık %3’ünün anket cevaplandığı tarihte hala maske, eldiven gibi koruyucu malzemelerle alışveriş yapmadığı olmuştur.

Çok miktarda ürün satın alarak depolama davranışı ile ilgili olarak tüketicilerin %58,1’inin böyle davranmadıklarını belirttikleri görülmüştür. Bu durumda tüketicilerin %41,9’u COVID-19 sürecinde ürün depolamaya başladıklarını ifade etmiştir. İlk kez ne zaman böyle davrandıklarına ilişkin bulgulara göre hastalık ilk kez Türkiye’de görüldükten sonra ve okulların tatil edilmesinden sonra olduğu belirlenmiştir. Yaklaşık %42 Türkiye nüfusuna oranlandığında kayda değer önemde bir tüketici grubuna işaret etmektedir.

COVID-19 sürecinde alışveriş için en çok tercih edilen yerler yerel ve ulusal zincir marketler olarak tespit edilmiştir. Bu kapsamda en çok satın alınan ürün kategoriler sırasıyla sebze, meyve gibi gıda ürünleri kategorisi ile kişisel ve ev temizlik ve hijyen ürünleri olmuştur.

Medyanın etkisi bakımından araştırma sonuçları tüketicilerin COVID-19 haberlerini ve konu hakkındaki gelişmeleri ağırlıklı televizyondan takip ettikleri ortaya çıkmıştır. Televizyonu sırasıyla İnternet haber siteleri ve gazeteleri izlemiştir

Gelir, meslek, eğitim seviyesi bakımından COVID-19 sürecinde ani satın alma davranışında da durumluk kaygı düzeyinde de herhangi bir farklılık tespit edilmemiştir. Esasında bu bulgu da insanların çoğu için fizyolojik ve güvenlik ihtiyacının genel olduğunu ileri süren Maslow ile örtüşmektedir.

İşletmeler ve pazarlama uygulayıcıları bakımından göz önünde bulundurulması gereken sonuçlar elde edilmiştir. Tüketicilerin bu süreçte en fazla satın aldıkları ürün kategorileri dondurulmuş gıda dışındaki gıda, kişisel ve ev temizlik- hijyen ürünleri olarak belirlenmiştir. Böylece benzer durumlarda bu ürün kategorilerinde üretim miktarının artırılması önerilebilir. Ürün ve marka iletişimi faaliyetlerinde hijyenik üretim koşulları ve sağlık unsurları ön planda tutulmalıdır. Keza marka ve ürün değiştiren tüketicilerin hijyenik ve sağlıklı olduğunu düşündüklerine yöneldikleri tespit edilmiştir. Perakendecilik konusunda zincir marketlerin bu süreçte en çok tercih edilen araçlar olduğu görülmüştür.