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KAPSAM

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İÇİNDEKİLER

(Araştırma)

TÜKETİRKEN DAVRANIŞLARIMIZLA ÇEVREYİ KORUMAK İÇİN NELER YAPIYORUZ? NİTEL BİR ARAŞTIRMA

Vildan GÜNEŞ[1]

ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın başlıca araştırma sorusu, çevreyi koruyan tüketici davranışlarının neler olduğuna yöneliktir. Literatürde konuyla ilgili yapılan çalışmalar, ürünlerin kullanımından sonra elden çıkarma ve atıkların bertaraf edilmesiyle ilgilidir. Bu çalışma, atık yönetimi konusuna ürünlerin elden çıkarma aşamasına ek olarak tüketim düşüncesinin başladığı andan itibaren yeniden ele almaktadır. Bu amaçla tüketimin çevre üzerindeki zararlı etkilerini azaltmaya yardımcı olan davranışları, 5R sıfır atık modeli üzerinden ele alınmaktadır. Nitel araştırma desenlerinden fenomenoloji yaklaşımı kullanılmaktadır. Amaçlı örnekleme yöntemine göre Kırşehir ve Ankara illerinde yaşayan farklı demografik özellikler taşıyan toplam 20 katılımcı ile görüşülmüştür. Veriler, yüz yüze derinlemesine mülakat tekniği ile toplanmış ve MAXQDA programı ile analiz edilmiştir. Bu çalışmanın sonucunda tüketicilerin davranışları, çevreyi koruyan davranışlar teması altında yedi kategori altında toplanmıştır. Bunlar; çevreyi korumaya yönelik girişimler, çevre duyarlılığı, azaltma, yeniden kullanma, ayrıştırma, geri dönüşüm ve türeticilik davranışlarıdır. Bu kategoriler, atık yönetimi hiyerarşisi aşamalarına göre değerlendirildiğinde çevreyi korumaya yönelik girişimler ve çevre duyarlılığı reddetme aşamasına karşılık gelmektedir. Türeticilik ise reddetme ve azaltma aşamaları içerisinde değerlendirilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çevreci tüketim, atık yönetimi, 5R, türeticilik, geri gönüşüm

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WHAT ARE WE DOING TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT WITH OUR BEHAVIORS WHILE CONSUMING? A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

ABSTRACT

The main research question of this study is about consumer behavior that protects the environment. The studies on the subject in the literature are about the disposal of the products after use and the disposal of waste. This study revisits the issue of waste management from the beginning of the consumption thought in addition to the disposal phase of the products. For this purpose, the behaviors that help to reduce the harmful effects of consumption on the environment are discussed through the 5R zero waste model. In this study, the phenomenology approach, one of the qualitative research designs, is used. According to the purposive sampling method, a total of 20 participants with different demographic characteristics living in the provinces of Kırşehir and Ankara were interviewed. The data were collected by face-to-face in-depth interview technique and analyzed with the MAXQDA program. As a result of this study, the behaviors of consumers were gathered under seven categories under the theme of behaviors that protect the environment. These categories are initiatives to protect the environment, environmental awareness, reduction, reuse, separation, recycling, and derivatization behaviors. When these are evaluated according to the waste management hierarchy stages, they correspond to the initiatives to protect the environment and the rejection of environmental awareness. On the other hand, the prosumer is evaluated within the stages of rejection and reduction.

Keywords: Environmental consumption, waste management, 5R, prosumer, recycling

1. Giriş

Dünya nüfusu, 2021 yılında yaklaşık 7,8 milyara ulaşmıştır (Population Reference Bureau, 2021). Nüfusun bu denli hızlı artışı, ürünlere olan talebi de arttırmaktadır. Bu artışlar, çevre sorunlarının da içinde yer aldığı iklim krizine yol açmaktadır. Çevre sorunlarının, en önemli sebebi insan faaliyetleridir. Bu yüzden çevreyi koruyan davranışlar, her geçen gün daha da önem kazanmaktadır. Son yapılan araştırmalar, dünya nüfusunun %60'ından fazlasının yaşanan iklim krizini kabul ettiğini göstermektedir (Chomsky ve Pollin, 2020). Tüketiciler tarafından çevre sorunlarının kabullenilmesi çevreye karşı sorumlu davranışlara yönelinmesine neden olmaktadır. Sorumlu tüketiciler, çevreye verdikleri zararı önlemek için satın alma, kullanma ve elden çıkarma süreçlerinde çevreye olan etkilerini düşünerek daha dikkatli davranırlar (Juwaheer, Pudaruth ve Noyaux, 2012; Peattie ve Crane, 2005).

Tüketimin, çevre üzerindeki etkisi tüketicileri azaltma, yeniden kullanma ve geri dönüşüm gibi davranışlara yöneltmektedir. Çevreyi koruyan davranışlarla ilgili literatür incelendiğinde çevreye zararı az, enerji kullanımı konusunda verimli, tekrar kullanılabilir, geri dönüştürülebilir, organik vb. ürünlerin satın alınması (Mishra ve Sharma, 2010), atıkların ayrıştırılması, kompostlama yönetimi gibi evsel atıklar ile ilgili davranışlar (Agrawal ve Gupta, 2018) ve atık yönetimi davranışları araştırılan konular arasında yer alır. Literatürde araştırılan konular göz önünde ürünlerin kullanımından sonra elden çıkarma ve atıkları bertaraf edilmesiyle ilgilidir. Atık yönetimi çalışmalarında ise değinilen konular arasında sorumluluğun kimde olduğu tartışılmaktadır. Bu konuyla ilgili görüşler, insanlar ve kültürler arasındaki farklılıklardan kaynaklı olarak üretici ve tüketicilerle ilgili araştırmalar bulunmaktadır. Üreticiler, ambalajın geri dönüşümü için bir miktar depozito ücreti ödeyerek bu sorumluluğu alırken tüketiciler, geri dönüşüm konteynerlerine atarak üzerlerine düşen sorumluluğu yerine getirmektedirler. Üreticileri ve tüketicileri, atıkları azaltmak ve geri dönüşümü artırmak için tek aracı olarak görmek gerçekçi değildir. Hükümetler ve şirketler de israfı azaltmaya ve daha sürdürülebilir bir topluma doğru ilerlemeye katkıda bulunmalıdır. Atık yönetimi hiyerarşisinin temel kavramları olan “3R” (azalt, yeniden kullan ve geri dönüştür) çevreyi koruyan davranışlar arasında yer almaktadır. Balwan, Singh ve Kour, (2022), atık yönetiminin 3R’si olarak bilinen azalt (reduce), yeniden kullan (reuse) ve geri dönüştür (recycle) aşamalarına reddetme (refuse) ve farklı formda yeniden kullanmayı (repurpose) ekleyerek 5R olarak güncellemişlerdir (Balwan, Singh ve Kour, 2022). 5R ise reddet, azalt, tekrar kullan, başka bir formada yeniden kullan ve geri dönüşüm olarak kavramlaştırılmıştır.

Atık yönetimi, ürünler kullanıldıktan sonra elden çıkarılması süreci olarak düşülmemelidir. Tüketim sürecinin her aşamasında atıkların yönetimiyle ilgili kararlar verilir. Çalışmamız atık yönetiminin sadece ürünlerin kullanımından sonraki bir süreç olmadığı aksine tüketimin her aşamasında atık yönetiminin yapılacağı düşüncesinden yola çıkmaktadır. Bu düşünce doğrultusunda çalışmamız tüketimin, çevre üzerindeki zararlı etkisini azaltmaya yardımcı olan davranışları, 5R sıfır atık modeli ile ele almaktadır. Tüketicilerin bilinçli ya da bilinçsiz şekilde yapmış oldukları tüketim davranışlarının sıfır atık modeli ile ele alınmasının literatüre farklı kazanımlar sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca, bu alanda yapılan çalışmaların çoğunlukla nicel çalışmalardan oluştuğu dikkate alındığında, konunun derinlemesine bir bakış açısıyla ve nitel bir araştırma tasarımı ile yürütülmesinin alana ilişkin farklı bakış açılarını sağlayacaktır. Tüketicilerin, gerçek hayatta çevreye duyarlı tüketim yapıp yapmadıklarını ve tüketimleri esnasında çevreye karşı sorumlu davranmak için ne yaptıklarını konusunda katkı sağlamaktadır. Çalışma, atık yönetimi konusuna ürünlerin edinilmesi düşüncesinden başlayarak satın alınması ve elden çıkarılması aşamalarını kapsamaktadır. Böylece çevreci tüketim alanındaki bilgilere, atık yönetiminin 5R sürecini de ekleyerek mevcut literatüre katkıda bulunmaktadır.

2. Kuramsal Çerçeve

2.1. Çevreyi Koruyan Tüketim Davranışları

Çevreyi koruyan tüketim davranışı literatürde farklı şekillerde adlandırılmıştır. İlk kez 1973 yılında Fisk tarafından küresel insan nüfusu açısından kaynakların rasyonel ve verimli bir şekilde kullanımı için "sorumlu tüketim" terimi kullanılmıştır (Fisk, 1973). Steg ve Vlek (2009), "çevreye, fayda sağlayan veya mümkün olduğunca az zarar veren alışkanlıklar" olarak tanımlamaktadır (Steg ve Vlek, 2009). Çevreci davranışın yaygın olarak kabul edilen tanımı ise çevre üzerindeki olumsuz etkilerin azaltılması sağlayan eylemler olarak ifade edilir (Kollmuss ve Agyeman, 2002; Stern, 2000).

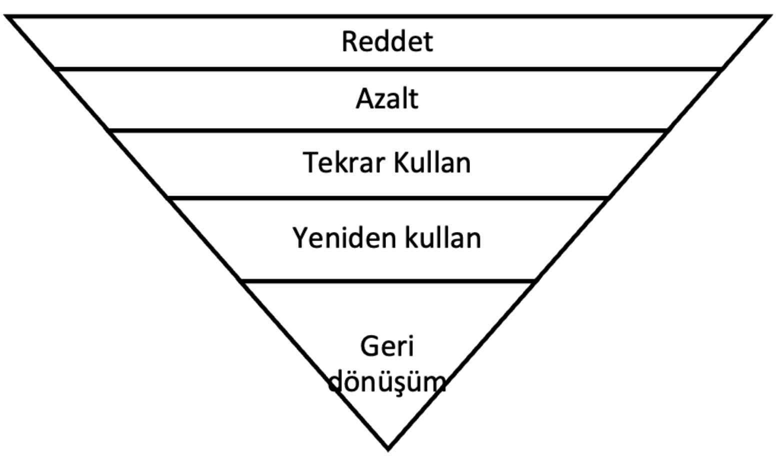
Çevreci tüketim kavramı, tüketim düşüncesinin tersi bir durum oluşturmaktadır. Çünkü çevreyi düşünmek, geleceğin düşülmesi bugünkü her türlü kazançtan vazgeçmesini gerektirir. Çevreye verilen zararın farkına varıldığında, artan endişe ile tüketimde de azalma başlar (Hofmeister-Tóth, Kelemen ve Piskóti, 2011). Mevcut çalışmaların çoğu, çeşitli öncüller ile çevreye duyarlı tüketim davranışları arasındaki ilişkileri değerlendirmeye odaklanır. Örneğin Raymond De Young (1985), kaynakları korumak için tüketici motivasyonlarını araştırırken malzemelerin geri dönüşümü, yeniden kullanımı ve tasarrufu ile ilgili tüketim davranışlarını incelemiştir (Raymond De Young, 1985). Diğer bir çalışmada ise çevrenin korunması için tüketicilerin çevre standartlarına uygun ürünler için daha yüksek fiyatlar ödemeye istekli olma durumları incelenmiştir (Newton, Tsarenko, Ferraro ve Sands, 2015).

Çevre dostu davranış, geri dönüşüm (Alnıaçık, 2010; Ebreo, Hershey ve Vining, 1999; Hansmann, Bernasconi, Smieszek, Loukopoulos ve Scholz, 2006; Klöckner ve Oppedal, 2011; Sarıyar, Odabaşı ve Büyükgüngör, 2021; Tufaner, 2019; Xu, Zhang ve Ling, 2018; Zheng ve diğerleri, 2020), atık yönetimi (Bilgili, 2021; Bilitewski, Härdtle ve Marek, 1996; Deepak, Sharma ve Kumar, 2022; Demir ve

Şahinkaya, 2019; Kirkeby ve diğerleri, 2006; Pujara, Pathak, Sharma ve Govani, 2019; Reno, 2015), enerji tüketimi (Chappells ve Shove, 2005; Khan, Hou ve Le, 2021; Koçak ve Tektaş, 2022; Paço ve Lavrador, 2017; Pala ve Esen, 2018; Tester, 1992) gibi farklı davranış türlerini içerir. Bu davranışlar üç ana çevresel davranış olarak özetlenebilir. Bunlar; azaltma, yeniden kullanım ve geri dönüşümdür. Bu davranışlar atık yönetimi kavramı altında detaylı olarak incelenmektedir. Atık yönetimi ile bireyler kendi çabalarıyla (zaman ve enerji) ve davranışlarıyla çevreyi koruyabilirler.

2.2. Atık Yönetimi Modeli

Yenilenemeyen kaynaklar, aşırı tüketim sonucu yok olmaktadır. Bu nedenle, küresel kaynakların daha fazla tükenmesini önlemek için (1) atık önleme, (2) malzeme verimliliği ve (3) kaynak geri kazanımına dayalı sürdürülebilir tüketim ve stratejik atık yönetim sistemlerine ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır (Lehmann, 2010). Atık yönetimi hiyerarşisiyle atıkların en aza indirilmesini amaçlanır. Hiyerarşinin aşamaları 3R'den yani azaltma, yeniden kullanım ve geri dönüşümden oluşur (Tam, Kotrayothar ve Loo, 2009; Tam, Tam ve Le, 2010; Wang ve diğerleri, 2010). İlk başlarda 3R olarak karşımıza çıkan atık yönetimi aşamalarına reddetme (refuse) ve farklı formda yeniden kullanma (repurpose) aşamaları eklenerek 5R olarak güncellenmiştir (Balwan ve diğerleri, 2022). 5R sıfır atık hiyerarşisi adımları atıklarımızın kontrolünü sağlamak için belirli bir sırayı takip eden çevreyi korumak için yol gösterici davranışlardır (Gharfalkar, Court, Campbell, Ali ve Hillier, 2015). Atık hiyerarşisinin amacı, ürünlerden maksimum fayda elde etmek ve minimum miktarda atık üretmektir. Şekil 1'de beş adımdan oluşan sıfır artık hiyerarşisi piramidi gösterilmektedir (Balwan ve diğerleri, 2022).



Şekil.1 5R Sıfır Atık Hiyerarşisi

Sıfır atık hiyerarşisi adımları aşağıdaki gibi açıklanmaktadır;

Reddetme, 5R sürecinin ilk adımıdır. İhtiyaç duyulmayan her şeyin alınmasını reddetmeyi teşvik eden ana ilkedir. Örneğin tek kullanımlık plastik ve geri dönüştürülemeyen ürünlerin satın alınmaması bu adımın içerisindedir.

Azaltma, sürecin ikinci adımıdır. Zararlı atık ve geri dönüştürülemeyen malzemelerin azaltılmasını ifade eder. Atıklar azaltılarak malzeme, enerji ve su gibi kaynakların gereksiz kullanımının önüne geçilir. Bu şekilde hem paradan tasarruf etmeye yardımcı olur hem de çevreye fayda sağlanır. Örneğin Toplu satın alım yaparak ambalaj atığının azaltılması, zararlı kimyasal içeren temizlik ürünlerinin kullanımının sınırlandırılması gibi davranışlar bu adım içerisinde yer alır.

Tekrar kullanım, sürecin üçüncü adımdır. Atık malzemelerin yeniden kullanılmasıdır. Yeni ürün yapmak için kullanılacak olan para, enerji ve kaynaklardan tasarruf edilmesine sağlar. Örneğin hediye paketlemek için kullanılan kâğıt ve kutularının tekrar kullanmak üzere saklanması, kullanılmayan eşyaların bağışlanması gibi davranışlar.

Yeniden kullanma, sürecin dördüncü adımıdır. Bu adım, belli bir amaç için tasarlanmış ürünlerin ya da eşyaların başka amaçlar için kullanımını içerir. Aynı zamanda, yeşil veya çevre çemberinde ileri dönüşüm olarak da bilinir. Farklı formada yeniden kullanmanın, geri dönüşümden önce geldiğini unutmamak önemlidir. Ürünlerin ya da eşyaların, geri dönüşüme gitmeden önce yeniden kullanılabilir olup olmadığını görmemiz gerektiği anlamına gelir. Örneğin kurutulmuş gıda maddelerini saklamak için eski cam kavanozların kullanılması gibidir.

Geri dönüşüm, 5R sürecinin son adımıdır. Atıkları ve diğer kullanılmış malzemeleri yeniden kullanılabilir ürünlere dönüştürmeyi içeren bir atık yönetimi şeklidir. Geri dönüştürülebilen başlıca ürünler kâğıt, karton, cam, alüminyum, kalay ve plastik kaplardır. Kompostlama ve solucan çiftlikleri, organik atıkları geri dönüştürme yöntemleridir (Roper, 2006).

Atık yönetiminin ilk dört adımını başarılı bir şekilde geçmek için çaba gösterildikten sonra geri dönüşüm harika bir son seçenektir. Atık yönetimiyle ile tüketimin her aşamasında çevre dostu bir şekilde atıkların yönetilmesini sağlanır (Zaman, 2014). Atık yönetimi davranışları yalnızca geri dönüşüm veya yeniden kullanım davranışlarıyla değil, aynı zamanda geri dönüştürülmüş ürünlerin satın alınması gibi tüketim uygulamalarıyla da ilgilidir (Barr, Gilg ve Ford, 2005).

Literatür taraması kapsamında elde edilen bilgiler doğrultusunda atık yönetimi modeli, tüketim sonrası ortaya çıkan atıkların yani çöplerin elden çıkarılması davranışlarıyla ilişkilendirilmiştir. Bu çalışma da sıfır atık yönetimi modeli tüketicilerin satın alma davranışlarının her aşamasıyla ilişkilendirilerek ele alınmaktadır. Çünkü çevreyi düşünerek ihtiyaçları olan ürünleri satın almaya karar veren tüketiciler, ürün araştırma sürecinde birtakım kararlar vermektedir. Bunların başında ürünün çevreye zarar verdiğine ilişkin bilgiler edindiği durumda o ürünü almaktan vazgeçmektedir. Bu durumda atık yönetimin modelinin ilk aşaması olan reddetme ya da azaltma davranışlarını sergilenir. Çalışmanın kuramsal çatısını, 5R atık yönetimi modelinin reddetme, azaltma, tekrar kullanma, yeniden kullanma ve geri dönüşüm aşamaları oluşturmaktadır. Bu aşamalar tüketicilerin satın alma davranışları ile ilişkilendirilerek çevreyi düşünme konusunda tüketicilerin nasıl davrandıkları açıklanacaktır.

3. Metodoloji

3.1. Araştırmanın Yöntemi

Tüm dünyayı etkileyen çevre sorunları, özellikle tüketici davranışlarını konusunda önemli bir gösterge olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bu nedenle çalışmanın amacı, tüketicilerin çevreyi korumaya yönelik satın alma davranışlarının satın alma kararı öncesi, satın alma esnası ve elden çıkarılması süreçlerinde atık yönetimi hiyerarşisi aşamaları ile ilişkilendirilerek açıklamaktadır. Araştırmada, söz konusu çevreci tüketim davranışlarının neler olduğunun görüşme yapılarak ölçülebilmesinden dolayı nitel araştırma yöntemi ile veriler toplanmıştır. Toplanan veriler tüketicilerin çevreyi korumaya yönelik satın alma davranışlarını, atık yönetimi modelindeki aşamalar doğrultusunda sınıflandırılmasının yapılmasını sağlamaktadır. Bu kapsamda, araştırma soruları aşağıdaki gibi sıralanmıştır:

1- Tüketicileri, çevreyi düşünerek tüketmeye iten sebepler nelerdir?

2- Tüketicileri, reddetme, azaltma, tekrar kullanma ve yeniden kullanma gibi davranışlara yönelten sebepler nedir?

3- Tüketim sonunda oluşan atıklar nasıl önlenebilir?

4- Çevreyi koruyan tüketim davranışları ve atık yönetimi aşamaları arasında nasıl bir ilişki vardır?

3.2. Araştırma Tasarımı

Araştırmada, katılımcıların içinde hareket ettikleri belirli bağlamı ve bu bağlamın eylemleri üzerindeki etkisini anlamaya odaklanan nitel araştırma yaklaşımını benimsemiştir (Maxwell, 2018). Amaç, bireylerin incelenen olguyu nasıl anlamlandırdıkları ana hatları ile belirlemek ve deneyimlerini nasıl aktardıklarını tarif etmektir. Bu açıdan bakıldığında incelenen konu katılımcıların bakış açısından ele alınmaktadır (Merriam 2018). Bu kapsamda nitel araştırma desenlerinden fenomenoloji (olgu bilimi) yaklaşımı kullanılmıştır. Fenomenolojik çalışmalar, mevcut durum ve kavramla ilgili yaşanan deneyimleri bireylerin bakış açısından anlamaya odaklanmaktadır (Creswell, 2016). Bu nedenle katılımcıların, tüketim süreçlerinde çevreyi düşünerek hareket etmeleri ve bu doğrultuda yaşamış oldukları deneyimlerin ortaya konulması için uygun bir yaklaşım olduğu kanaatine varılmıştır. Çalışmada, farklı bakış açılarının aktarılması amacıyla farklı ölçekteki iki şehirde yaşayan, farklı yaş gruplarında olan kadın ve erkek katılımcıların konuya ilişkin düşüncelerinin ve deneyimlerinin ortaya çıkarılması hedeflenmiştir.

3.3. Katılımcıların Belirlenmesi

Araştırmadaki katılımcılar, nitel araştırmalarda yaygın olarak kullanılan amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak seçilmiştir (Patton, 2018). Creswell ve Plano Clark'a (2011) göre amaçlı örnekleme, ilgilenilen olguyla ilgili deneyime sahip olan kişi veya grupları belirlemeye odaklanır. Amaçlı örneklemde amaç evrenin yeterince temsil edilmesi değil, araştırılan konu hakkında bireylerin deneyimlerine başvurulmasıdır (Özbilen, Eser ve Siğri, 2022). Bu doğrultuda çevreci tüketim davranışı deneyimine sahip Kırşehir ve Ankara illerinde yaşayan 20-60 yaş aralığında kadın ve erkeklerden oluşan toplam 20 katılımcı ile görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Katılımcıların seçiminde yaş, cinsiyet ve eğitim durumu açısından çeşitliğinin sağlanmasına özen gösterilmiştir. Katılımcıların Ankara ve Kırşehir illerinin seçilmesinin nedeni Ankara'nın büyük bir il olması ve tüketicilerin satın alma kararı verirken birçok ürüne ulaşma imkanlarının olmasıdır. Bunun yanı sıra belediyenin şehir sakinlerine geri dönüşümle ilgili verdiği hizmetlerin daha çeşitli olmasıdır. Kırşehir ise küçük bir il olması ve yaşayanların ürün çeşitliliği açısında Ankara'ya göre seçimlerinde kısıtların bulunmasıdır. Bu özellikleri ile iki farklı ölçekte şehirde yaşayan katılımcıların karşılaştırılmasına olanak sağlamaktadır. Katılımcılara ait bilgiler Tablo 1'de gösterilmektedir.

Tablo 1. Mülakat Yapılan Katılımcılara İlişkin Bilgi Tablosu

İsim	Cinsiyet	Yaş	Meslek	Eğitim durumu	Yaşadığı Şehir
K1	Kadın	40	Akademisyen	Lisansüstü	Kırşehir
K2	Erkek	36	Mühendis	Lisansüstü	Ankara
K3	Kadın	32	Akademisyen	Lisansüstü	Kırşehir
K4	Kadın	60	Emekli memur	Lise	Ankara
K5	Kadın	58	Emekli Öğretmen	Lisans	Ankara
K6	Erkek	36	Akademisyen	Lisansüstü	Kırşehir
K7	Kadın	30	Akademisyen	Lisansüstü	Ankara
K8	Erkek	31	Akademisyen	Lisansüstü	Ankara
K9	Kadın	38	Akademisyen	Lisansüstü	Kırşehir
K10	Kadın	39	Akademisyen	Lisansüstü	Kırşehir
K11	Kadın	39	Akademisyen	Lisansüstü	Ankara
K12	Erkek	39	Restoran İşletmeci	Lisans	Kırşehir
K13	Erkek	28	Çiftçi	Lisans	Kırşehir
K14	Erkek	38	Akademisyen	Lisansüstü	Kırşehir
K15	Kadın	38	Akademisyen	Lisansüstü	Kırşehir
K16	Kadın	20	Öğrenci	Lise	Ankara
K17	Kadın	21	Öğrenci	Lise	Ankara
K18	Erkek	22	Öğrenci	Lise	Kırşehir
K19	Erkek	23	Öğrenci	Lise	Kırşehir
K20	Kadın	22	Öğrenci	Lise	Ankara

Tablo 1'de görüldüğü gibi katılımcıların cinsiyet açısından dağılımı 12’si kadın ve 8’i erkektir. Yaşlarına göre altısı 20-29, beşi 30-37, yedisi 38-40 ve birer tane olmak üzere 58 ve 60 yaşlarında katılımcılardan oluşmaktadır. Katılımcıların yaşadığı iller incelendiğinde 9’u Ankara ve 11’i ise Kırşehir’de yaşamaktadırlar. Mesleki durumları ise 10’u akademisyen, 5’i öğrenci, 2’si emekli, 1’i çiftçi, 1’i restoran işletmecisi ve 1’i mühendistir. Eğitim durumları ise 6’sı lise, 3’ü lisans ve 11’i lisansüstü eğitim derecesine sahiptir. Bu bilgiler, katılımcılar arasındaki çeşitliliği temsil etmektedir.

3.4. Veri Toplama ve Uygulama

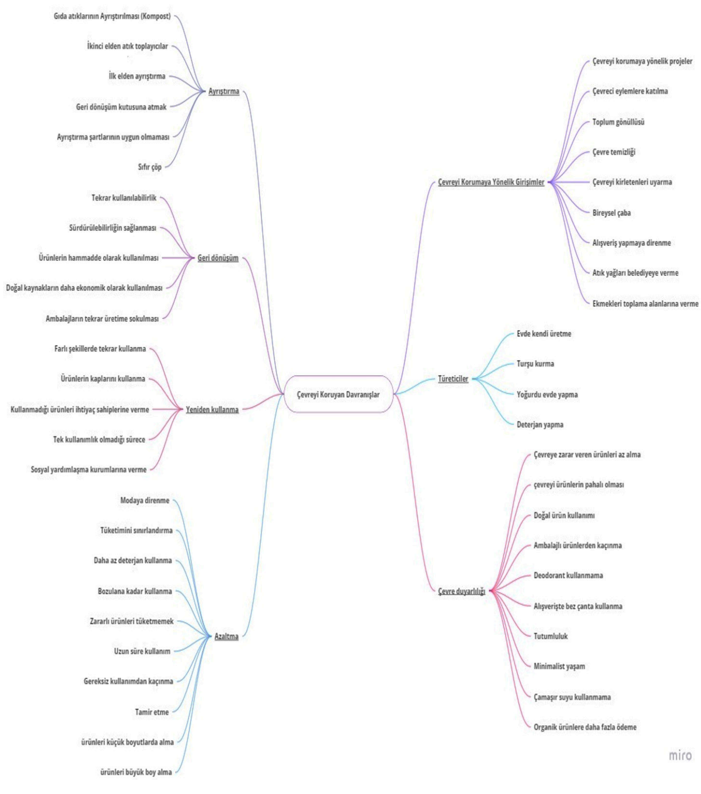
Veri toplama aracı olarak açık uçlu yapılandırılmış mülakat tekniği ile derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Derinlemesine görüşmenin temelinde, diğer insanların yaşadıkları deneyimleri anlamaya ve o deneyimi anlamlandırmaya olan ilgi vardır (Hermanowicz, 2002; Seidman, 2006). Görüşme yapan kişiler, katılımcıların sorulara verdikleri yanıtları dinlerken onların hikayelerinin önemli olduğunu hissettirirler. Bu durumda mülakatların amacı, insanların zihninden nelerin geçtiğini ortaya çıkarmak ve hikayelerinin bir araya getirilmesidir. Fenomeni deneyimleyen en az 5 en çok 25 kişi ile görüşmeler yapılması önerilmektedir (Creswell, 2016; Guest, Bunce ve Johnson, 2006; Marshall, Cardon, Poddar ve Fontenot, 2013; Polkinghorne, 1989). Bunun yanı sıra nitel araştırmalarda veri doygunluğu kavramı araştırmanın geçerliliği için önemlidir. Veri doygunluğuna, çalışmanın tekrarlamaya başlanması, yeterli bilgi olduğunda, yeni ek bilgilere ihtiyaç duyulmadığında ve daha fazla kodlama artık mümkün olmadığında ulaşılır (Francis ve diğerleri, 2010; Fusch ve Ness, 2015; Guest ve diğerleri, 2006). Görüşmelerin kodlanması aşamasında 18. katılımcıdan sonra yapılan kodlama işleminin tekrarlamaya başladığı fark edilmiştir. Bu aşamadan sonra kalan iki katılımcıya ait görüşmelerinde kodlama işlemi yapıldıktan sonra veri doygunluğuna ulaşıldığına karar verilerek toplam 20 katılımcı ile araştırma sonuçlandırılmıştır.

Görüşme soruları, araştırmacı tarafından belirlenmiş ve katılımcılara yöneltilmiştir. Görüşme sorularının şekillenmesinde, (Balwan ve diğerleri, 2022), (Agrawal ve Gupta, 2018), (Raymond De Young, 1985), (Steg ve Vlek, 2009), (Paço ve Lavrador, 2017), (Zaman, 2014), (Xu ve diğerleri, 2018), (Laustsen, 2007) ve (Sarıyar ve diğerleri, 2021) gibi kaynaklardan faydalanılmış. Görüşmelere başlamadan önce literatürde bağlı kalınarak oluşturulan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu için uzman görüşleri alınmış ve sonrasında gerekli düzenlemeler yapılarak görüşme formuna son hali verilmiştir. Tüm görüşmeler gönüllük esasına göre yapılmıştır. Görüşmelere başlamadan önce katılımcılara, araştırmanın amacıyla ilgili gerekli bilgiler verilerek görüşmelerinin tamamen bilimsel amaçlı kullanılacağı hakkında ön bilgilendirme yapılmıştır. Görüşmelere başlamadan önce katılımcılara gerçek isimlerinin ve kişisel bilgilerin gizli kalacağı garanti edilerek ses kaydı alınabilmesi için gerekli izinleri alınmıştır. Dijital kayıt cihazı kullanılarak yapılan görüşmelerin her biri yaklaşık 20-25 dakika sürmüştür.

3.5. Verilerin Analizi

Görüşmelerin analizi, nitel veri analiz yazılımı olan MAXQDA kullanılarak yapılmıştır. Katılımcılarla yapılan görüşmeler, Microsoft World belgesine aktarılarak Strauss ve Corbin'nin kodlama paradigması kullanılarak açık, seçmeli ve seçici kodlama adımları göre MAXQDA yazılımı ile kodlanmıştır (Kuckartz, 2014). İlk olarak veriler açık kodlarla parçalara ayrılmış, ardından kategorileştirme ve temalaştırma yapılmak suretiyle eksen ve seçici kodlamalar yapılarak tamamlanmıştır (Kuckartz, 2014). Son olarak, betimsel ve ilişkisel analizler yapılmış olup, verilerin görselleştirilmesinde frekans grafikleri ve kod haritaları kullanılmıştır.

Bu çalışmada, veri analizinin geçerliliğini sağlamak için veri üçlemesi yapılmıştır. Bu adımlar şunlardır: (1) Görüşme dökümleri tekrar tekrar gözden geçirilmiş, (2) katılımcı ifadeleri uzman kişilerle görüşülerek tartışılmış, (3) bir kodlama tablosu oluşturulmuştur. Kodların geçerliliğini sağlamak ve araştırmacının kendi kişisel yorumuyla sınırlı kalmamak için farklı kodlayıcılar tarafında kodlamaların yapılması istenmiş ve birbirinden bağımsız olarak kodlama kategorileri geliştirmiş ve sonuçlar karşılaştırılmıştır. Bu aşamada kodlama için bir kod tablosu hazırlanmıştır. Araştırma kapsamında oluşturulan kod tablosunu Şekil 2'de Çevreyi Koruyan Davranışların Kod Sistemi olarak gösterilmektedir.



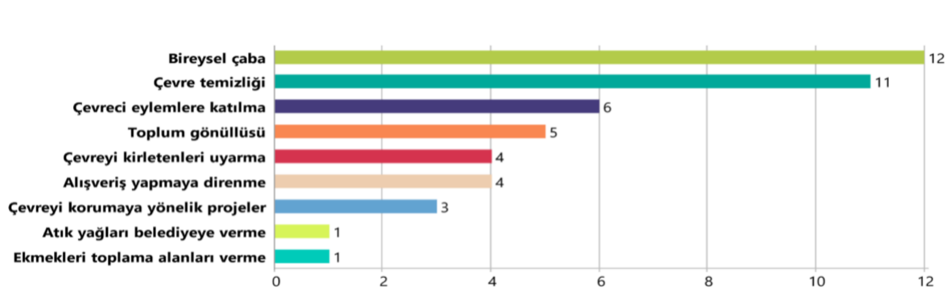
Şekil 2. Çevreyi Koruyan Davranışların Kod Sistemi

4. Bulgular

Katılımcıların mülakat sorularına verdikleri cevaplar incelendiğinde, tüketirken çevreyi korumak için neler yaptıkları ve çevreyi korumaya yönelik ne gibi girişimlerde bulundukları sorulmuştur. Analizlere dayalı olarak, çalışmanın bulguları çevreyi koruyan davranışlar teması altında yedi kategori altında toplanmıştır. Bunlar; Tüketicilerin çevreyi korumaya yönelik girişimleri, yeniden kullanma, azaltma, ayrıştırma, geri dönüşüm, türeticilik ve çevreye duyarlı davranışlardır.

Tüketicilerin Çevreyi Korumaya Yönelik Girişimleri

Görüşmeler de katılımcılara sorulan "Çevreyi korumaya yönelik bir çabanız ya da girişiminiz var mı?" sorusuna verdikleri cevaplar incelendiğinde, sıklıkla vurgulanan bireysel olarak gösterilen çabadır. Buna göre Şekil 3'te katılımcıların çevreyi korumaya yönelik girişimleri hakkındaki ifadelerin kişi sayısına göre gösterimi yer almaktadır.



Şekil 3. Katılımcıların Çevreyi korumaya Yönelik Girişimleri Hakkında İfadeleri Kişi Sayısına Göre Gösteren Grafik

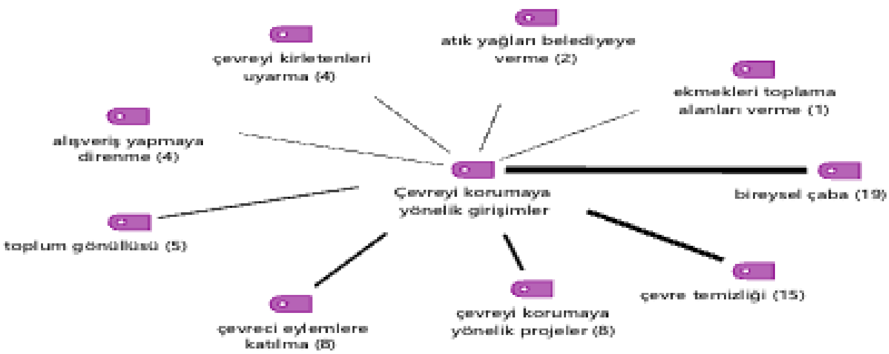
Çevreyi korumaya yönelik girişimlerini anlatan katılımcılar arasında bireysel olarak gösterilen çaba 20 katılımcının 12'si tarafından dile getirmiştir. Bu durum katılımcıların yarıdan fazlasının aralarında fikir birliği olduğunu göstermektedir. Ayrıca katılımcılar, çevre temizliği, çevreci eylemlere katılma ve toplum gönüllüsü olmak gibi davranışlarla çevreci davranış girişimlerini vurgulamaktadır.

Ankara'da yaşayan "katılımcı 11" şu ifadeleri kullanmıştır:

"Bireysel olarak şöyle ki herkes kendi çevresinden başlarsa minik minik belki bir faydası olabilir ben çevremi bu konuda düzeltmeye çalışıyorum. En basiti kendi yeğenlerime öğretmeye çalışıyorum, kız kardeşim fazladan harcama yaptığında onu uyarmaya çalıyorum. Buna ihtiyacımız yok, bunu almayalım diye. Etrafımdaki arkadaşlarımı uyarmaya çalıyorum." (K11, Kadın, Ankara, Akademisyen)

Başka bir katılımcı ise bireysel olarak gösterdiği çabayı dile getirirken şu ifadeleri kullanmıştır.

"Yani bireysel olarak mesela derste filan ben bunu örnek veriyorum çağımızın sanayi devriminden sonra aşırı şekilde tüketim çılgınlığına, sahipliğin çok önemli bir şey olduğu aslında bir sürü şeye sahip olduğumuzu derslerde anlatmaya çalışıyorum. Sahipliğin iyi bir şey olmadığını derslerle bağlantılı olduğu için… İşte bu anlamda belki çocuklara küçük bir bilinç kazandırmak noktasında belki bir şey olabilir. Onun dışında kendi hayatımızda etrafımızda olan insanları değiştirmeye çalışıyorum." (K15, Kadın, Kırşehir, Akademisyen)



Şekil 4. Katılımcıların Çevreyi korumaya Yönelik çabalarını Kodlu Bölüm Sayısına Göre Gösterimi

Şekil 4'te ise katılımcıların ifadeleri kodlu bölüm sayısına göre gösterilmektedir. Buna göre, bireysel çaba 20 katılımcı tarafından 19 defa söylenirken, çevre temizliği 15 defa, çevreyi korumaya yönelik projeler 8 defa söylenmiştir. Buradan da anlaşılacağı gibi bireysel çaba gösterilmesi katılımcılar arasında oldukça önemsenen bir davranıştır. Bireysel çaba gösterdiklerini söyleyen katılımcıların büyük çoğunluğu, çevreyi kirletmemeye çalıştıklarını hatta yere çöp atmadıklarını söylemektedir. Diğer taraftan yakın çevrelerinde bulunan insanları (yeğen, kardeş, arkadaş vb.) uyardıklarını ve böylece gösterdikleri bu çabayla çevrenin kirlenmesini önleyebilecekleri düşünmektedirler.

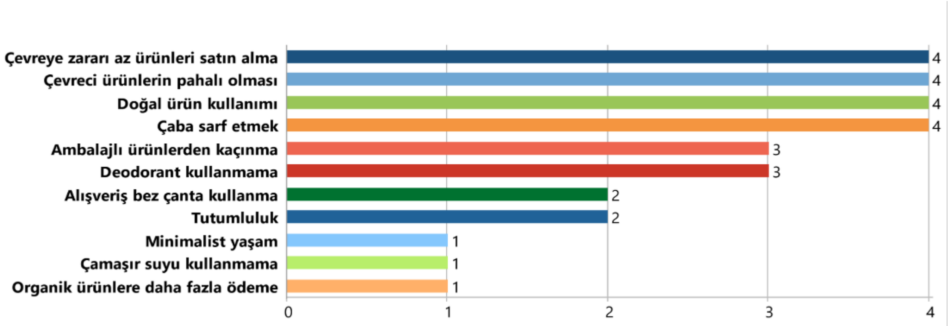
"Bir derneğe üyelik çabası içerisinde bulunmadım ama biz çok doğa ziyaretleri yaparız o zaman arabada çöp torbamız vardır, yürüğümüz yerlerde elimde o çöp poşetiyle plastik şeyleri toplamaya çalışırım." (K14, Erkek, Kırşehir, Akademisyen)

"Zaman zaman çevrecilerle buluşuyorum. Özellikle bir dönem zeytinlerin yok edilmesinden, sosyal medyadan da fiziksel olarak da destekledim." (K5, Kadın, Ankara, Emekli memur)

Çevreyi korumaya yönelik girişimler, demografik değişkenlere göre incelediğinde dikkate değer bir farklılık göstermemişlerdir. Katılımcıların yarısının eğitimci olmalarından kaynaklı çevreyi korumaya yönelik projeler ürettikleri ya da projelerde görev aldıklarını vurgulamışlardır. Çevreye karşı duyarlı olduklarını ve bu duyarlılıkları derslerde öğrencileri ile paylaştıklarını söylemişlerdir. Çevreyi korumaya yönelik girişimler atık yönetimi aşamaları açısından değerlendirildiğinde alışveriş yapamaya direnme azaltma aşamasıyla ilişkilendirilirken, bireysel olarak gösterilen çabalar tüm aşamalar ile ilgilidir. Ekmeklerin toplanma alanlarına götürülerek verilmesi ise yeniden kullanma ve farklı formlarda yeniden kullanılması aşamaları ile ilişkilendirilmiştir.

Çevreye Duyarlı Tüketim Davranışları

Görüşmeler de katılımcılara sorulan "Bir ürün satın alırken ve kullanırken ürünün doğaya zarar verip vermediği sizin için önemli mi?" sorusuna verdikleri cevaplar incelendiğinde, çevreye zararı az ürünleri satın aldıkları üzerinde durmuşlardır. Fakat çevreci ürünlerin pahalı olmasından kaynaklı ekonomik durumları el vermediği için almadıklarını da vurgulamışlardır. Şekil 5'te katılımcıların çevreye duyarlı tüketim davranışının kişi sayısına göre grafiği yer almaktadır.



Şekil 5. Katılımcıların Çevre Duyarlı Tüketim Davranışı ifadelerinin kişi sayısına göre grafiği

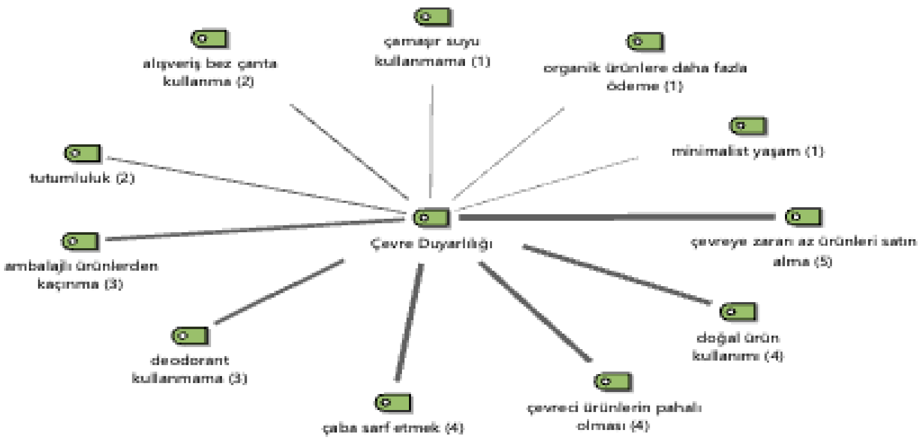
Katılımcıların çevreye duyarlı tüketim davranışlarının kişi sayısına göre grafiğinde "çevreye zararı az ürünleri satın alma" dört katılımcı eyleme geçirdiğini söylemiştir. Bu katılımcılar şu ifadeleri kullanmışlardır:

"Çamaşır suyu artık pek kullanmıyorum. Çevreye zararı az olan evde kendi üretimimi yapıyorum." (K4, Kadın, Ankara, Emekli Öğretmen)

"Tükettiklerime dikkat ederim çevreye zararı ne kadar az ve ne kadar özel malzemeler varsa onları almaya çalışırım." (K5, Kadın, Ankara, Emekli Memur)

"Ben ürünlerin üzerindeki yaşam döngüsü işaretine bakıyorum. Eğer ürünün üzerinde yaşam döngüsü işareti varsa ve fiyatı çok fazla değil ise çünkü bazı ürünlerde bu yaşam döngüsü ibaresi olduğunda ve kaliteli olduğunu gösterdiği için ciddi bir katma değer koyup fiyat üzerinde artış yapıyorlar. Fiyatı da uygun ise genelde tercih ederim." (K2, Erkek, Ankara, Akademisyen)

Şekil 6. Katılımcıların Çevre Duyarlı Davranış Kodlu Bölüm Sayısına Göre Gösterimi



Katılımcıların çevreye duyarlı davranışlarının kodlu bölüm sayısına göre şekil 6'da verilmektedir. Buna göre çevreye zararı az olan ürünleri satın alma 20 katılımcı tarafından 5'er defa söylenirken, doğal ürün kullanımı, sarf edilen çaba 4'er defa, deodorant kullanmama ve ambalajlı ürünlerden kaçınma 3'er defa söylenmiştir. Buradan da anlaşılacağı gibi katılımcılar arasında çevreye zararı az ürünlerin satın alınması oldukça önemsenen bir davranıştır. Bu katılımcılar şu ifadeleri kullanmışlardır:

"Deodorantlar ozon tabakasına zarar veriyor. Deodorant kullanmayıp yerine losyon gibi bir ürün kullanmayı tercih ettiğim oldu." (K18, Erkek, Kırşehir, Öğrenci)

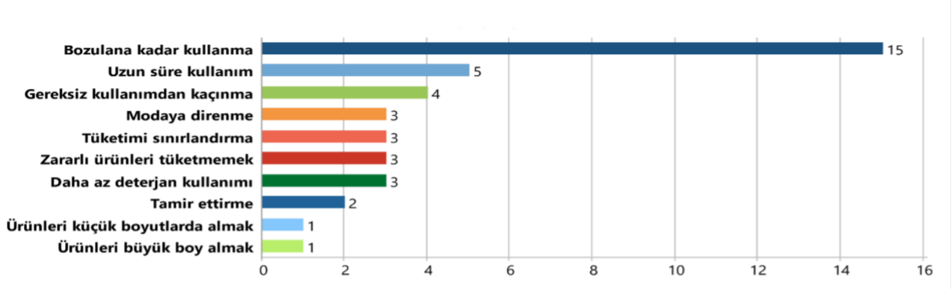
"Marketten olabildiğince ambalajlı ürün almamaya çalışıyorum. Onun dışında ambalajlı ürün tüketmemeye çok özen gösteriyoruz." (K14, Erkek, Kırşehir, Akademisyen)

"Paketlenmiş ürünler tüketmemeye çalıyorum. Daha doğal şeylere yönelmeye çalışıyorum. Özellikle minimum düzeyde deterjan kullanmaya çalışıyorum." (K12, Erkek, Kırşehir, İşletmeci).

Çevreye zararı az olan ürünleri satın aldıklarını söyleyen katılımcıların büyük çoğunluğu birçok ürünün kullanımından vazgeçtiklerini çünkü küresel ısınma, ozon tabakasının delinmesi gibi çevre felaketlerine neden olduğunu söylemişlerdir. Bu soruya verilen cevaplar katılımcıların demografik bilgilerine göre analiz edildiğinde hiçbir farklılığın olmadığı dikkat çekmektedir. Atık yönetimi aşamalarından ise ilk aşaması olan reddetme davranışı ile ilişkilendirilmektedir. Bu aşama tüketiciler, ürünlerin zararından dolayı satın almayı ve kullanmayı reddetmektedir.

Azaltma

Katılımcılara sorulan “Çevreyi korumak için kullandığınız ürünlerde daha az kullanma veya azaltmayı tercih ediyor musunuz?” sorusuna verdikleri cevaplar incelendiğinde bazı ürünlerin kullanımı azalttıklarından söz etmiştir. Şekil 7’de katılımcıların azaltma davranışının kişi sayısına göre grafiği yer almaktadır.



Şekil 7. Katılımcıların Azaltma Davranışı ifadelerin kişisi sayısına göre grafiği

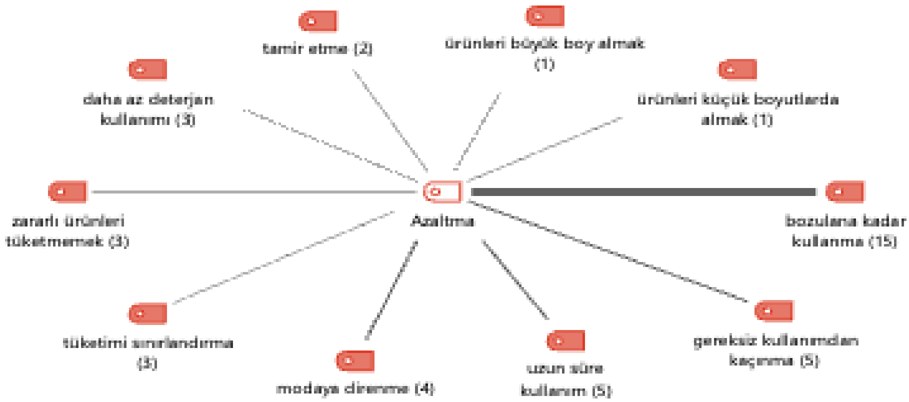
Katılımcılar, azaltma davranışlarından bahsederken genellikle kullandıkları ifadeler aldıkları ürünleri bozulana kadar kullandıkları, uzun süreli kullanım ve tamir ettirme davranışıdır. Söz konusu davranışları genellikle dayanıklı tüketim ürünlerinde yapılmaktadırlar. Bu davranışlarıyla ürün alımını azalttıklarını ifade etmektedirler. Bu soruya cevap verirken şu ifadeleri kullanmışlardır:

“Ekonomik olarak sınırlıyız, o yüzden bozulmadan hiçbir şeyi değiştirmiyorum.” (K4, Kadın, Ankara, Emekli öğretmen)

“Eğer artık hala kullanılabilir bir durumda ise bozulduğunda tamir ettiririm. Benim şu an bile kullandığım ürünler en az 20 yıllıktır.” (K5, Kadın, Ankara, Emekli memur)

“Ben fiyatına bağlı olarak yapıyorum mesela bilgisayarımı bozulana kadar kullanıyorum.” (K7, Kadın, Ankara, Akademisyen)

Yukarıdaki ifadeler de vurgu yapılan nokta azaltma davranışında etkili olan diğer bir faktör ekonomik durumlarıdır. Söz konusu dayanıklı tüketim ürünleri olduğunda azaltma davranışı, kişilerin ekonomik durumlarının çevre faktörünün önüne geçtiği görülmektedir. Atık yönetimi aşamalarında da bulunan reddetme davranışından sonra gelen azaltma davranışı, zararlı atık ve geri dönüştürülemeyen malzemelerin azaltılmasını ifade eder. Fakat görüşmeler esnasında katılımcılar yeni ürün satın almadan ellerinde var olan ürünlerin bozulana kadar kullanılmasından bahsetmişlerdir. Bu durumda atık yönetimi aşamalarından reddetme basamağıyla ilişkilendirilmektedir.



Şekil 8. Katılımcıların Azaltma Davranışının Kodlu Bölüm Sayısına Göre Gösterimi

Şekil 8'de katılımcıların azaltma davranışının kodlu bölüm sayısına göre gösterimde sıklıkla ifade edilen davranışlar gereksiz kullanımdan kaçınma, modaya direnme, tüketimini sınırlandırma, ürünleri büyük boylarda ya da küçük boyutlarda alma davranışıdır. Bu davranışlardan bahsederken şu ifadeleri kullanmışlardır:

"Çamaşır suyu artık pek kullanmıyorum. Onun yerine evde kendi yaptığım sirke, limon kabuğu gibi doğal ürünleri kullanıyorum. Bu yüzdende deterjan kullanımımı azalttım." (K4, Kadın, Ankara, Emekli öğretmen)

"Ben artık tüketimimi azalttığım için modası geçtiğinde ya da yenisi çıktığında kendimi durdurarak satın almamayı tercih ediyorum." (K9, Kadın, Ankara, Akademisyen)

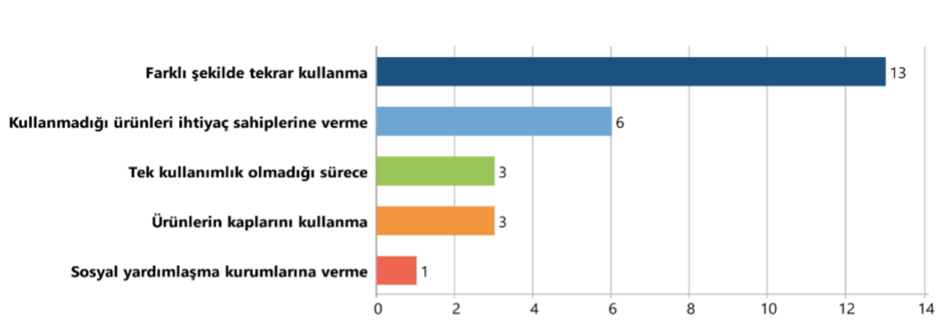
"Paketlenmiş ürünler tüketmemeye çalıyorum. Daha doğal şeylere yönelmeye çalışıyorum. Özellikle deterjanı minimum düzeyde kullanmaya çalışıyorum." (K12, Erkek, Kırşehir, İşletmeci)

Mesela küçük litrelik sular var ya çok mecbur kalmadıkça onları almamaya gayret ediyorum. Çünkü onun yerine daha büyük boylarını alıp daha az atık çıkartıyorum. (K15, Kadın, Kırşehir, Akademisyen)

Katılımcıların birçoğunun bu davranışı yapmalarının altında farklı sebepler yatmakta. Fakat dolaylı olarak çevreyi düşünerek yaptıklarını söylemiştirler. Bir ürünü, atmadan önce onarmak ve yeniden kullanma katılımcıların ekonomik durumlarına göre yaptıkları davranışlar arasındadır. Bu davranışlar, çöp veya geri dönüştürülebilir toplam atık miktarını azaltmaktadır (R. De Young, 1986). Yeni ürün satın alma ihtiyacı azaltılarak doğal kaynaklar üzerindeki baskıda azaltılmaktadır (Cox, Griffith, Giorgi ve King, 2013). Böylece çevreye verilen zarar da azaltılmaktadır. Tüketimi sınırlandırma, zararlı ürünleri tüketmemek ve daha az deterjan kullanımı ise atık yönetiminin azaltma aşamasıyla ilgilidir.

Tekrar Kullanma ve Yeniden kullanma

Katılımcılara sorulan "Kullanım süresi dolan ürün/eşyalarınızı nasıl değerlendirirsiniz?" sorusunun cevaplarının analizinde yeniden kullanma ve farklı formlarda yeniden kullanma davranışı üzerinde durulmuştur. Bu davranış türüne tekrardan kullanmada denilmektedir. Şekil 9'da katılımcıların yeniden kullanma davranışını hakkındaki ifadelerinin kişi sayısına göre grafiği yer almaktadır.

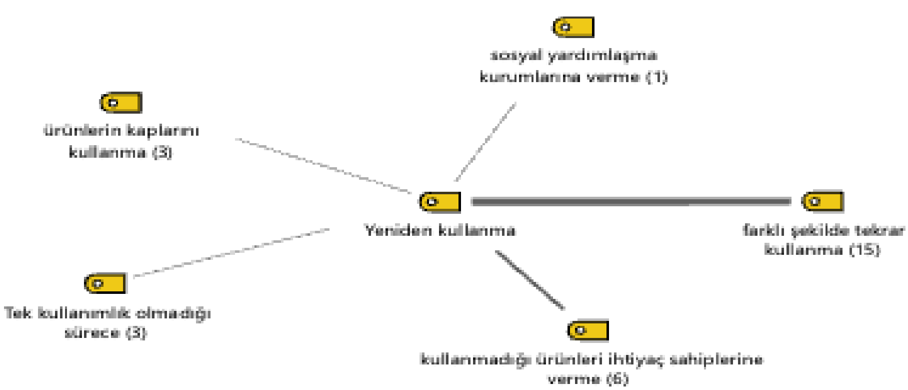


Şekil 9. Katılımcıların Yeniden Kullanma Davranışı hakkında ifadelerinin kişi sayısına göre grafiği

Grafik incelendiğinde katılımcıların büyük çoğunu önceden alıp kullandıkları ürünlerin kutularını, ambalajlarını veya cam kavanozlarını tekrardan kullanmaktır. Bu durum katılımcılar tarafından şu şekilde ifade edilmektedir:

"Cam kavanozda aldığım bir ürün bittiğinde içine kendi yaptığım bir ürünü koyarak kullanabiliyorum, değerlendiriyorum." (K9, Kadın, Ankara, Akademisyen)

"Haşladığım tavuk suyunu plastik kap almak yerine mesela evde peynir kutuları var onun içine koyup kullanıyorum." (K15. Kadın, Akademisyen)



Şekil 10. Katılımcıların Yeniden Kullanma Davranışı Kodlu Bölüm Sayısına Göre Gösterimi

Katılımcıların kodlu bölüm sayısına göre yeniden kullanma davranışı ile ilgili sıklıkla dile getirdiği diğer bir davranış ise kullanmadıkları ürünleri atmak yerine ihtiyaç sahiplerine vermeleridir. Bu kavramla ilgili şu ifadeleri kullanmışlardır:

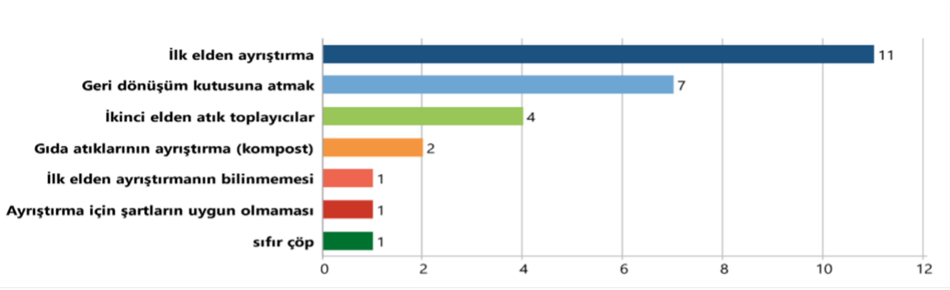
"Kullanmadığım ürünleri ihtiyaç sahiplerine vererek tekrardan kullanılmasını sağlıyorum." (K2, Erkek, Ankara, Akademisyen)

"...çok yıpranmadıysa ya da kilo sebeplerinden dolayı artık bana olmuyorsa mutlaka bir yakınama ya da ihtiyacı olan birine veririm. Kesinlikle bir şekilde benden sonraki bir tüketiciyle devam ediyor." (K11, Kadın, Ankara, Akademisyen)

Katılımcıların, ürünleri farklı şekilde kullanmayı ya da biten ürünlerin kaplarını çiçek saksısı olarak kullanmanın yanı sıra çoğunlukla saklama kabı olarak kullandıkları dikkat çekmektedir. Bu davranış şekli genellikle tüketimden sonra elden çıkarma aşamasında karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Kullandıkları ürünlerin kullanım ömrü dolduğunda ya da ürün bitip kutusu ellerinde kaldığında başvurulan bir bertaraf etme şeklidir. Atık yönetimi başlığı altında değinilen aşamalardan yeniden kullanma ve farklı formlarda yeniden kullanma aşamalarına karşılık gelen aşamalardır. Bir ürünü farklı formlarda kullanmadıkları zaman ise azaltma, ayrıştırma ve geri dönüşüm gibi davranışlara başvurulmaktadır.

Ayrıştırma

Görüşmeler de ayrıştırma davranışı ile ilgili doğrudan soru sorulmamıştır. Görüşmeler esnasında katılımcılar atıkların elden çıkarılması kısmında ayrıştırma yaptıklarından bahsetmiştirler. Şekil 11'de katılımcıların ayrıştırma davranışının kişi sayısına göre grafiği yer almaktadır.



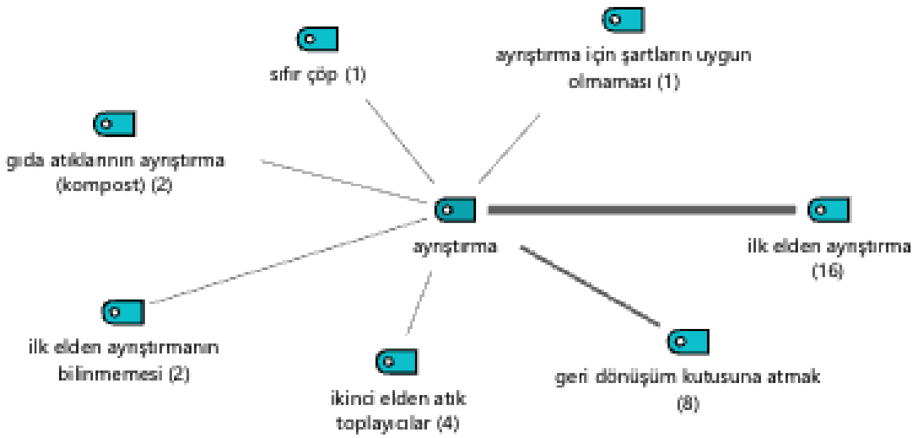
Şekil 11. Katılımcıların ayrıştırma davranışı ifadelerinin kişi sayısına göre grafiği

Katılımcıların çevreyi korumak için evlerinde, iş yerlerinde, okul vb. mekanlarda ilk elden ayrıştırma yapmaya özen gösterdiklerinden bahsetmiştirler. Katılımcıların, 11'i ayrıştırma davranışı ilk elden yaptıklarını söylemişlerdir. Bu davranışlarını şu ifadelerde anlatmıştırlar:

"Evdeki atıkları cam, kâğıt, plastik ve diğerleri diye ayırıyorum sonrasında ilgili çöp kutularına atmaya ciddi önem ve özen gösteriyorum." (K12, Erkek, Ankara, Akademisyen)

"Mesela biz evde mutlaka çöplerimizi geri dönüşüm ve geri dönüşüm olmayan diye ayırıyoruz." (K11, Kadın, Ankara, Akademisyen)

"Geri dönüşüm çöp kutularının olmasından kaynaklı özellikle evde plastik, cam, teneke vs. ayrıştırılmasını yapıyorum. Onun dışında kompost diyorlar, gıda atıklarının ayrıştırıp onları da ayrı atmaya çalışıyorum." (K3, kadın, Kırşehir, Akademisyen)



Şekil 12. Katılımcıların Ayrıştırma Davranışı Kodlu Bölüm Sayısına Göre Gösterimi

Katılımcılar ilk elden ayrıştırmadan yukarıdaki gibi bahsederken bazı durumlarda bu yaptıkları ayrıştırma işlemi için geri dönüşüm kutularına giderek atıklarını ya da ikinci elden ayrıştırıcılar için çöp konteynerlerinin yanına koyduklarını söylemişlerdir. Bu davranışlarını şu ifadelerde açıklamışlardır:

"Evde çöplerimi kâğıt, ambalaj, mutfak atıkları, plastik atıklar olarak gruplandırarak atıyorum. Sabahları çöp toplayıcılarına ayrı ayrı paketler halinde veriyorum." (K4, Kadın, Ankara, Emekli Öğretmen)

"….Tabi ki çevreyi korumak için bunlar yetmiyor. Onun dışında plastikleri elimden geldiği kadar evde ayırıp çöpe atıyorum. Çünkü toplayıcılar var." (K3, kadın, Kırşehir, Akademisyen)

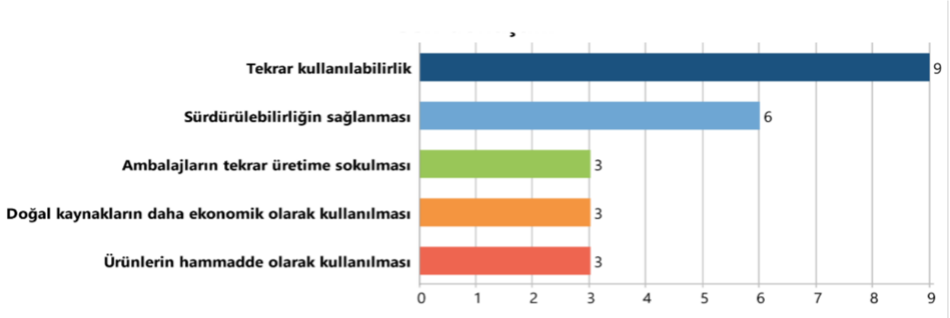
"Kırşehir'de güzel uygulamalardan biri her Pazartesi kapının önüne yeşil bir poşet bırakıyorlar. Kullandığınız su petleri ya da buna benzer şeyleri geri dönüşüm için topluyorlar. Uygulama başladığından beri hep onu takip ediyoruz." (K14, Erkek, Kırşehir, Akademisyen)

Ayrıştırma davranışı, katılımcıların birçoğunun yaptığı ya da yapmaya çalıştığı bir davranıştır. Fakat ayrışma işlemini yaptıklarında bu atıklarını atacak yer bulamadıklarını söyleyen katılımcılar da vardır. Bu konu hakkında bulundukları illerdeki belediyelerden gerekli hizmetin yapılmasını istemektedirler.

Bazı katılımcılar ilk elden ayrıştırmanın bilinmemesinden söz etmişlerdir. Katılımcıların ayrıştırma ilgili bilgilerinin olduğu çoğu da bu davranışı ellerinden geldiği kadar yapmaya çalıştıkları sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Atık yönetimi aşamaları açısından bakıldığında ayrıştırma, geri dönüşüm davranışının öncülü şeklinde yorumlanabilir. Tüketiciler, geri dönüştürülebilen başlıca ürünler olan kâğıt, karton, cam, alüminyum, kalay ve plastik gibi ürünleri ayrıştırarak geri dönüşüm işlemini kolaylaştırmaktadırlar.

Geri dönüşüm

Görüşmeler de katılımcılara sorulan "Geri dönüşüm sizce ne anlama gelmektedir?" soruyla geri dönüşümle ilgili ne kadar bilgi sahibi oldukları anlaşılmaya çalışılmıştır. Katılımcıların geri dönüşümün ne olduğuyla ilgili verdikleri bilgiler Şekil 13'te yer almaktadır.



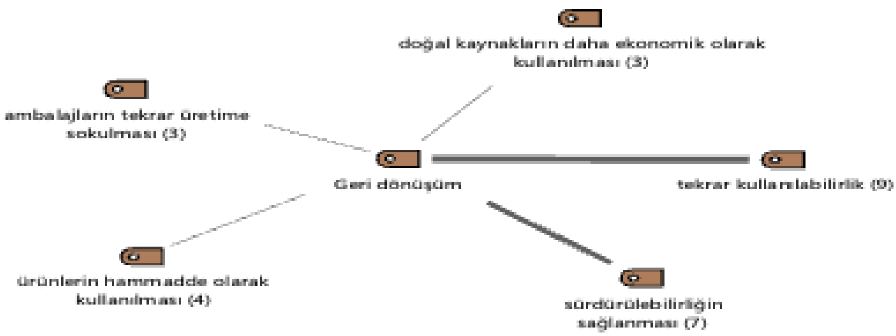
Şekil 13. Katılımcıların geri dönüşüm hakkında ifadelerin kişi sayısına göre grafiği

Geri dönüşüm için sıklıkla "tekrar kullanılabilirlik" kavramına değinmişlerdir. Bu kavramdan bahsederken şu ifadeleri kullanmışlardır:

"Üretime girerek tekrardan yeni ürünler ya da üzerinde yapılacak değişikliklerde hem aynı amaç hem de farklı amaçlar için kullanılabilir." (K1, Kadın, Kırşehir, Akademisyen)

"Geri dönüşüm işte ambalajların tekrardan kullanıma sokulabilmesi manasına geliyor." (K8, Erkek, Ankara, Akademisyen)

"Doğal kaynakların daha ekonomik olarak kullanılması." (K7, Kadın, Ankara, Akademisyen)



Şekil 14. Katılımcıların Geri dönüşüm Kodlu Bölüm Sayısına Göre Gösterimi

Katılımcılar geri dönüşümle ile ilgili kodlu bölüm sayısına göre tekrar kullanılabilirlikten sonra sıklıkla söyledikleri diğer bir açıklama ise sürdürülebilirliğin sağlanmasıdır. Bu durumu anlatırken şu ifadeleri kullanmışlardır:

"Bence geri dönüşüm, sürdürülebilirliğin sağlanmasında çok önemli bir basamak. Bir yerde, bir kamu binasında, evimizde eğer geri dönüşümü uygulayabilirsek, Avrupa standartlarına gelebiliriz." (K2, Erkek, Ankara, Akademisyen)

"Geri dönüşüm sürdürülebilir kalkınmanın temel ilkesi çöpe attığımız bir ürün dönüştürülerek tekrar kullanıma sokuluyor, belki aynı belki de farklı formatta sunuluyor." (K6, Erkek, Kırşehir, Akademisyen)

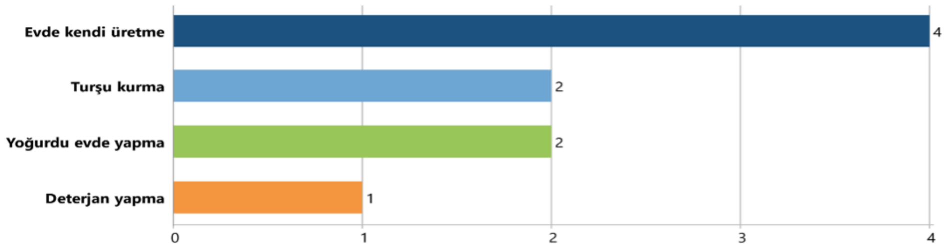
"Ürünlerde dikkat ediyorum ve özellikle geri dönüşümü ne kadar kolay, geri dönüşümünün çevreye zararı minimum olacak ürünlerden seçmeye çalıyorum." (K11, Kadın, Ankara, Akademisyen)

Katılımcıları, geri dönüştürülebilen atıkları ayırmaktan alıkoyan engeller mesafe ve geri dönüşüm tesislerinin olmamasıdır. Geri dönüşüm atık yönetiminin son aşamasıdır. Bu aşamaya gelene kadar diğer aşamaların başarılı bir şekilde geçilmesi gerekir. Bu aşama da genellikle ürünlerin kullanım ömrünü doldurdukları dikkat çekmektedir. Bu ürünler geri dönüşüm sürecine girerek çevreye daha zarar verilmesi suretiyle farklı ürünlere dönüştürülmektedir.

Türeticiler

Alvin Toffler (1980), "Üçüncü Dalga" adlı kitabında, Saf tüketicilerin Sanayi Çağının bir olgusu olduğunu savunur. Toplum, sanayi sonrası çağa doğru ilerledikçe saf tüketicilerin sayısının düşeceğinin ve onların yerini kendi mal ve hizmetlerinin çoğunu üreten insanlar olan "üreten tüketicilerin" alacağını savunmaktadır (Alvin, 1980). Slowfood'un kurucusu Carlo Petrini, "yaşadığımız çağda gıdamıza sahip çıkmamız için artık ne üretici ne de tüketici olamayacağımızı iddia etmektedir. Her birimizin üretim-tüketim birliktelikleri kurarak "türetici" olabileceğimizi" söylemektedir. Türetici (Prosumer); producer (üretici) ve tüketici (consumer) kelimelerinden türetilmiş bir kelimedir. Literatürde kendi ürünlerini yapan bireyler için "türetici" kavramı kullanılmaktadır.

Görüşmeler sırasında katılımcılar çevreyi koruyan davranışlarından bahsederken çevreye daha az zarar vermek için ürün alımlarını azalttıkları söylemişlerdir. Genellikle evde doğal olarak kendi deterjanlarını yaptıklarını böylece çevre daha az zarar verdiklerinden bahsetmiştirler. Şekil 15'te katılımcıların dile getirdikleri türetici davranışının kişi sayısına göre grafiği yer almaktadır.

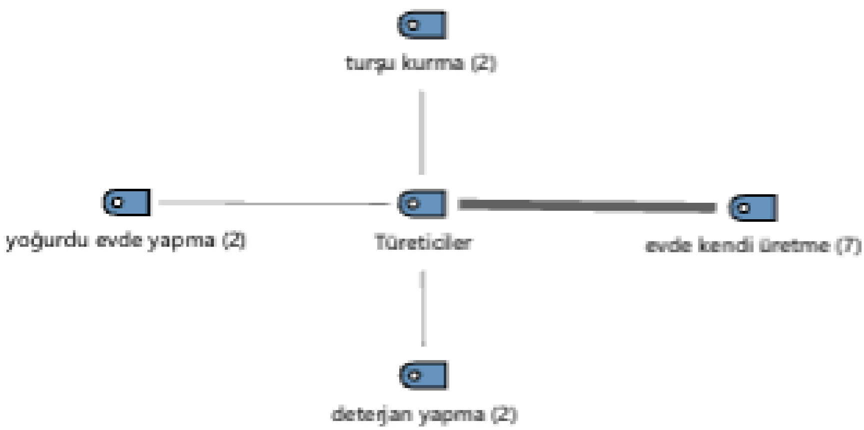


Şekil 15. Katılımcıların Türetici davranışı ifadelerinin kişi sayısına göre grafiği

Katılımcılar görüşme esnasında ürünleri marketten satın almak yerine evde kendilerinin ürettikleri konusuna değinmiştirler. Bu konuyla ilgili şu ifadeleri kullanmışlardır:

"Yaş kemale erdikçe (ben 35 yaşındayım), kendi yoğurdumuzu yapmaya başladık, kendi turşumuzu kuruyoruz." (K6, Erkek, Kırşehir, Akademisyen)

"....Deterjanlarda ise kendi yaptığım deterjan var onu kullanıyorum. Onun dışında sirkeli limonlu kendi yaptığım bir karışımın var." (K15, Kadın, Kırşehir, Akademisyen)



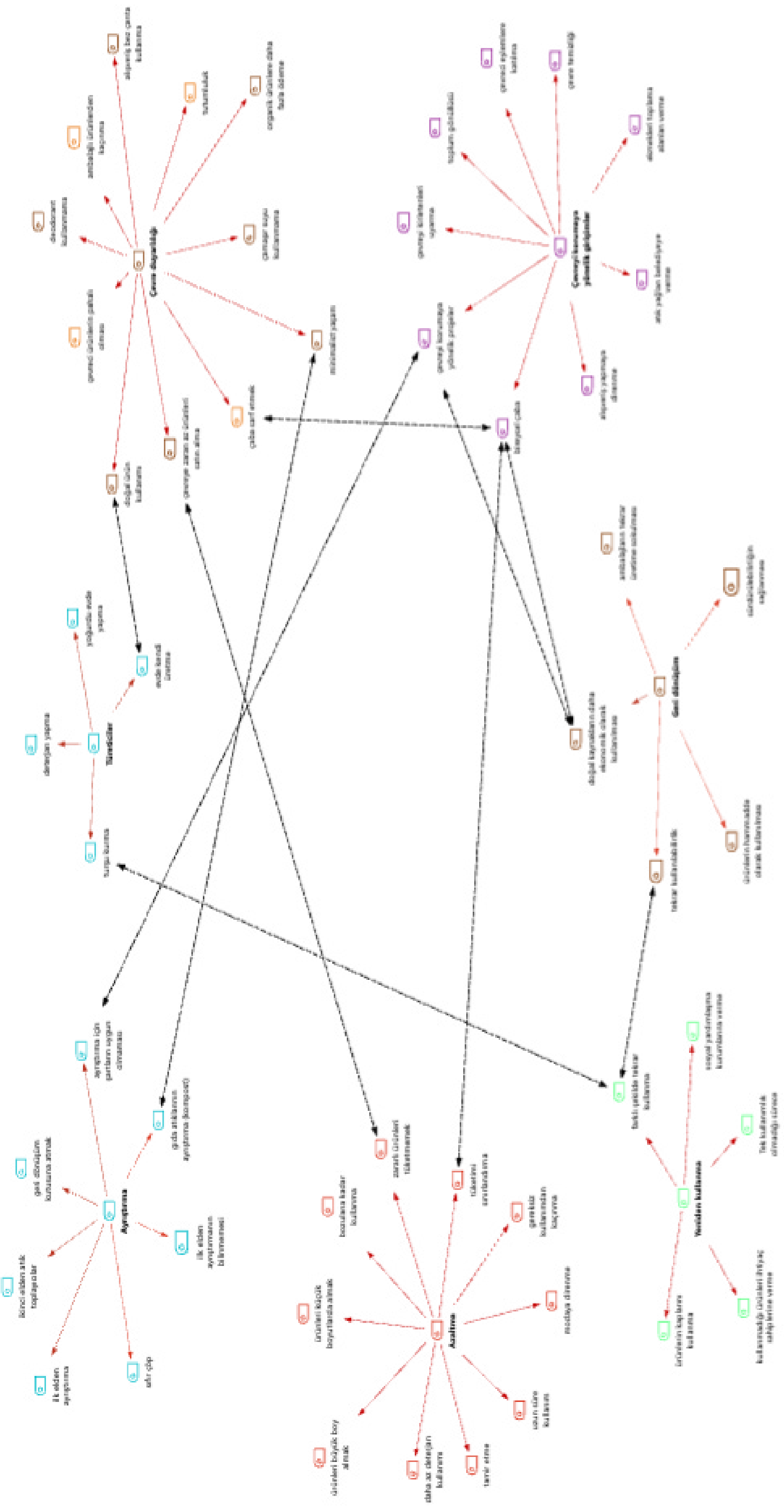
Şekil 16. Katılımcıların Türetici Davranışı ifadelerinin Kodlu Bölüm Sayısına Göre Gösterimi

Katılımcıların türetici davranışı ifadelerinin kodlu bölüm sayısına göre gösteriminde evde üretim en sık yapılan eylemler arasında yer almaktadır. Sonrasın da ise evde yaptıkları üretim ürünlerinden bahsetmişlerdir. Bunlar; deterjan yapma, turşu kurma ve yoğurt yapma eylemleri gelmektedir. Katılımcılar bu eylemlerle hem daha sağlıklı olduklarını hem de çevreye daha az zarar verdiklerini dile getirmişlerdir.

Türeticilik kavramı son yıllarda literatüre giren bir kavram olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Tüketicilerin, türetici olmalarının başlıca sebepleri çevresel bozulmadan dolayı sağlıklı ürünlere ulaşamamaları ve kültürel olarak evlerinde bu ürünlerin yapılıyor olması gelir. Atık yönetimi açısından türeticilik kavramı incelendiğinde tüketicilerin marketten bu ürünleri almayı reddetmesi bu sayede ürün kullanımın azaltılması aşamaları ile ilgilidir. Bu şekilde daha sağlıklı ve çevreye zararı daha az ürünler üretilerek tüketilmektedir. Türeticilik davranışı ile atık yönetimin her aşaması başarılı bir şekilde uygulanmaktadır.

Şekil 17'da nitel araştırma sonucunda oluşturulan kategorilerin birbirleri ile aralarında oluşan ilişkiler gösterilmektedir. Network analizinde, kategoriler arasında birçok bağlantı bulunmaktadır. Bu da çevreci tüketim davranışlarının birbirileri ile olan ilişkilerinin göstermektedir.

Şekil 17. Verilerin Ağ Analizi



5. Sonuç ve Tartışma

Doğal kaynaklara olan ihtiyaç, nüfusa ve tüketime paralel olarak her geçen gün giderek artmaktadır. Bu yüzden, alternatif kaynakların yaratılması ve var olan kaynakların daha bilinçli tüketilmesini gerektirmektedir (Bandura, 2007). Doğal kaynakların, sonsuz şekilde kullanılması sonucu yaşanan çevre sorunlarının etkileri son yıllarda daha çok hissedilmeye başlanmıştır. Bunun sonucu olarak tüketiciler, daha çevreci tüketim davranışları sergilemeye başladılar. Genel olarak çevreci tüketim kavramı, doğal kaynakların korunması, atık miktarının en aza indirilmesi ve tüketicilerin yaşam kalitesiyle ilişkilendirilmektedir (Seyfang, 2006).

Tüketim kararlarıyla dolu günlük hayatımızda aldığımız ürünlerin atıklarının da doğru şekilde yönetilmesi gerekmektedir. Bu atıklarla başa çıkmak zaman almaktadır. Bu yüzden tüketicilerin atık yönetimini uygulayabilmeleri için anlamlı ve uygun bulmaları gerekmektedir. Örneğin atıkların geri dönüşümü için taşınması gereken mesafenin kısa olması gerekmektedir. Bugün birçok Batı ülkesinde atıkları kaynağında, yani tüketicinin evinde ayırmasına dayalı bir atık yönetimi stratejisi yaygın şekilde uygulanmaktadır. Ülkemizde de birçok şehirde belediyeler aracılığı ile atıkların geri dönüştürülmesi sağlamaktadır.

Çevre üzerindeki olumsuz etkiyi azaltmak için atık yönetimi modeli kapsamında tüketicilerin deneyimlerinin incelendiği çalışmada katılımcılar, günlük yaşamlarından çok sayıda çevreci tüketim davranışı örneği aktarmışlardır. Bu davranışlar, çevreyi koruyan davranışlar teması altında yedi kategori altında toplanmıştır. Bu temalar atık yönetiminin 5R (reddetme, azaltma, yeniden kullanma, başka bir formada yeniden kullanma ve geri gönüşüm) aşamaları bağlamında incelenmiştir. Araştırmanın bulguları incelendiğinde bu aşamaların her birinin iç içe geçmiş durumda olduğu görülmektedir. Katılımcıların, çevreyi korumak için ilk yaptıkları davranışın ürünleri kullanmayı reddetmek olduğu göze çarpmaktadır. Eğer vazgeçemeyecekleri bir ürün ise satın almayı ya da kullanmayı azaltma yöntemini tercih etmektedirler. Tüketimlerini çevreye duyarlı hale getirmek amacıyla yenilerini satın almak yerine eskileri onarmak ya da başka amaçlar için yaratıcı bir şekilde yeniden kullanmak yer alıyor. Bu şekilde tüketimleri de azaltmaktadırlar. Doğal kaynaklar üzerindeki baskıyı azaltmak için yalnızca ihtiyaç duydukları şeyi satın almak için çaba sarf ettiklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Zararlı kimyasallar içermeyen çevre dostu ürünler almayı tercih etmektedir. Çevreye verilen zararın fazla olduğunu düşündükleri temizlik malzemeleri grubunda bulunan ürünlerin kullanımı azaltarak ya da kendi yaptıkları ürünleri kullanma yolunu başvurmaktadırlar. Bu davranışlar atık yönetimi modelinin ilk iki basamağı olan reddetme ve azaltma aşamalarını temsil eden davranışlardır.

İhtiyaç duymadıkları ancak kullanılabilir durumda olan eşyalarını doğru bir şekilde elden çıkarmak için farklı şekillerde kullanmak ve ihtiyaç sahipleri için hayır kurumlarına bağışlamak gibi alternatif yollar tercih etmektedirler.

Bu şekilde kullanılabilir durumda olan eşyalarının farklı formlarda yeniden kullanılabilmesini sağlamaktadırlar. Atık yönetimi modelinin reddetme ve azaltmadan sonra gelen yeniden kullanma ve farklı amaçlar için yeniden kullanma aşamalarını temsil eden davranışlardır. Evsel atıkların yönetilmesi ve uygun şekilde bertaraf edilmesi görüşmelerde en sık dile getirilen davranışlar arasında yer almaktadır. Katılımcılar tarafından üstlenilen atık imha davranışları arasında geri dönüşüm, kompostlaştırma, ayrıştırma ve zararlı atıkların uygun şekilde bertaraf edilmesi yer almaktadır. Katılımcılarla yapılan görüşmelerde yeniden kullanım ve geri dönüşüm, aşırı tüketime yönelik vicdan azabını azaltmanın bir yolu olarak görülmektedir.

Atık ayrıştırma ve bertaraf etme davranışları çevre açısından önemlidir (Anantharaman, 2014; Peattie, 2010). Görüşmeler esnasında Ankara'da bulunan katılımcıların atık ayrıştırma konusunda belediyenin gereken özeni gösterdiğinden bahsederken Kırşehir'deki katılımcılar belediyenin eskiden atıklarını aldığını şu an bu konuda hiçbir şey yapmadığını söylemiştirler. Görünen o ki, konunun etkin bir şekilde ele alınması için bireyler ve sivil makamlar arasında iyi koordine edilmiş bir sisteme ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır.

Çalışmada, katılımcıların çevreyi korumak adına tüketici karar verme sürecinde bireysel çaba harcadıkları sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu süreçte, bir ürün satın almaya karar verdiklerinde ihtiyaçlarının olup olmadığı sorgulamaktadırlar. Ev ya da işyerinde atıklarını ayrıştırma konusunda hassasiyetleri dikkat çekmektedir. Çevreyi koruyan davranışların ve atık yönetimin yapılabilmesinin fazladan zaman ve para harcamayı gerektirmektedir. Çevre dostu ürünlerin diğer ürünlerden daha pahalı olarak algılanmaktadır. (Lim, Yong ve Suryadi, 2014). Bu yüzden katılımcılar, çevre dostu ürünlerin fiyatları çok yüksek olmadığında almayı tercih ettiklerini ifade etmiştirler. Bazı katılımcılar enerji tüketimi sağlayabilmek için beyaz eşyalarını tasarruflu olanlardan yana tercih ettiklerini söylemişlerdir. Bazı davranışların altında yatan sebeplerin ekonomik olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Çevreyi koruyan tüketim davranışlarının atık yönetimi modeli ile incelemesinde katılımcıların 5R aşamalarını sırasıyla reddetme, azaltma, tekrar kullanma, yeniden kullanma ve geri dönüşüm olarak uygulamaktadırlar. Buna ek olarak tüketicilerin sıklıkla tekrar ettikleri davranış şekli kendi ürünlerini kendi yapmalarıdır. Tüketicilerin bu davranışları atık yönetimi sürecinde reddetme ve azaltma aşamaları kapsamına dahil edilebilir. Literatürde yapılan araştırmalarda bu davranışla ilgili bir araştırma sonucuna rastlanmamıştır. Bu bağlanma araştırmanın literatüre katkısı türeticilik davranışının atık yönetimi modeline dahil edilerek çevreci davranışlar kapsamında incelenmesidir.

Çöpü azaltmak ve yeniden sisteme dahil edilebilmesi için finansal ve yasal teşvikler gerekmektedir. Bu yüzden ekolojik, sosyal ve ekonomik faktörler göz önünde bulundurarak şimdi ve gelecekte atıkların olumsuz etkisinin azaltılması gerekmektedir. Bilimsel araştırma ve bulgular, ambalajlama ve atık azaltma ile ilgili tüketici eğitiminin öneminin altını çizmektedir. Gelecekte atık sorunu, üreticiler ve perakendeciler tarafından gönüllü girişimler, kanun koyucuların ve daha iyi bilgilendirilmiş tüketicilerin birlikte hareket etmesiyle çözülebilecektir.

5.1. Çalışmanın Kısıtları ve Gelecek Çalışmalar için Öneriler

Çalışmada kullanılan veriler, katılımcılar tarafından bildirilen davranışlardır. Bu yüzden, gerçek davranışlar ile farklılıklar gösterebilmektedir (Sudbury-Riley ve Kohlbacher, 2016). Bu çalışmada fenomenolojik bir model kullanılmıştır. Farklı nicel ve nitel araştırma tasarımlarının kullanılması yeni bakış açıları sunacaktır. Çalışmanın bir diğer sınırlılığı, bulgularının yalnızca belirli bir tüketici kesimi için doğru kabul edilebilmesidir. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, nüfusa genellenemez. Bu nedenle, katılımcıların genel nüfusu daha fazla temsil ettiği benzer nitel araştırmaların yapılması önerilmektedir. Daha mikro düzeyde (her bir temayı/ davranışı temsil eden belirli davranışlar) bir veya daha fazla tanımlanmış davranışa ilişkin bir anket (nicel araştırma), gelecekteki araştırmalar için başka bir fırsat sunabilir. İlgili alanlarda çalışan araştırmacılar, tüketicilerin neden ve ne zaman çevreye duyarlı tüketim yaptıkları sorularına yanıt arayarak bu çalışmayı daha da genişletebilirler. Tüketim ve israfa yalnızca mikro bir perspektiften, yani bireylerin veya şirketlerin bununla nasıl başa çıktığına bakılmamalıdır.

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Extended Summary

What Are We Doing to Protect the Environment with Our Behaviors While Consuming? A Qualitative Research

The world population has reached approximately 7.8 billion in 2021. The rapid increase in population has also increased the demand for products. These increases lead to the climate crisis, which also includes environmental problems. The most important cause of environmental problems is human activities. Therefore, environmental protection behaviors are gaining more and more importance day by day. The impact of consumption on the environment leads consumers to reduce, reuse and recycle behaviors. Literature on the topic focuses on the disposal and removal of waste generated by product use. Our study provides a broad perspective on waste management by considering the issue of waste management from the beginning of the consumption thought in addition to the disposal phase of the products. It contributes to the existing literature by adding the 5R process of waste management to the knowledge in the field of environmental consumption. This study discusses behaviors that help reduce the harmful effects of consumption on the environment through the 5R zero waste model. It is thought that a study that deals with the behaviors of consumers unconsciously with the zero-waste model will provide different gains to the literature. In addition, considering that the studies in this field mostly consist of quantitative studies, conducting the subject with an in-depth perspective and a qualitative research design will provide different perspectives on the field.

Conceptual / Theoretical Framework

In this research, first of all, the consumption behaviors that protect the environment and the waste management model are defined, and the relationship between them is analyzed. In addition, the effects of the participants in the waste management process are considered, such as their social responsibility behaviors and their sensitivity to the environment. The stages of the waste management hierarchy will be defined, and their effects on behaviors that protect the environment will be examined one by one. In this way, environmental behaviors are examined at the stages of the waste management hierarchy and contribute to the academy and practitioners with theoretical applications.

Environmental problems affecting the whole world, especially the behavior of consumers, have become important. For this reason, the study aims to explain the relationship between consumer behavior and 5R zero waste management stages by determining the consumption behaviors that protect the environment within the framework of the stages of the waste management hierarchy. In the research, data were collected with the qualitative research method since the environmental consumption behaviors in question can be measured by interviewing. The collected data enables the classification of environmentally sensitive behaviors of consumers in line with the stages in the waste management model.

Research Questions

1- What reasons push consumers to consume by considering the environment?

2- What motivates consumers to refuse to consume, to reduce?

3- How can wastes generated at the end of consumption be prevented?

4- What is the relationship between the consumption behaviors that protect the environment and the waste management stages?

Methodology

In the study, phenomenology, one of the qualitative research designs, was used. The research aims to outline how the participants made sense of the phenomenon under study and describe how they conveyed their experiences. For this reason, it has been concluded that it is an appropriate approach to reveal the environmental-oriented worldviews and experiences of the participants in their consumption processes. The study aims to reveal the thoughts and experiences of male and female participants living in different cities and age groups to convey different perspectives. The interviews were conducted to collect the data with face-to-face in-depth interview technique.

Participants were selected using the purposive sampling method. In purposive sampling, the aim is not to adequately represent the population but to refer to the experiences of individuals about the researched subject. In this direction, a total of 20 participants, consisting of men and women between the ages of 20-60 living in the provinces of Kırşehir and Ankara, who have environmental consumption behavior experience, were selected.

The interviews were analyzed using the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA. It was coded with MAXQDA software according to open, select, and selective coding steps using the coding paradigm developed by Strauss and Corbin (Kuckartz 2014). First, the data was divided into parts with open codes, then categorization and thematization were made, and axis and selective coding were done. Finally, descriptive and relational analyzes were made, and frequency graphs and code maps were used to visualize the data.

In this study, data triangulation was performed to ensure the validity of the data analysis. These steps are as follows: (1) Interview transcripts were reviewed repeatedly, (2) participant statements were discussed with experts, and (3) a coding table was created. In order to ensure the validity of the codes and not be limited to the personal interpretation of the researcher, coding was requested by different coders and coding categories were developed independently and the results were compared.

Findings and Discussion

In the face-to-face interviews about environmental consumption behaviors and waste management models, the expressions of the consumers were associated with the codes within the framework of the concepts in the literature. These codes were obtained by frequency analysis. In the research, the refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose, and recycling stages of the 5R zero waste management hierarchy will be explained with the codes and frequencies that affect the environmental consumption behavior. Based on the analyses, the findings of the study were gathered under seven categories under the theme of behaviors that protect the environment. These are consumers' attempts to protect the environment, environmental sensitivity, reduction, reuse, decomposition, recycling, and prosumer behavior.

When the findings of the research are examined, it is seen that each of these stages is intertwined. It is striking that the first behavior of the participants to protect the environment was to refuse to use the products. If it is a product that they cannot give up, they prefer to buy or reduce their use. It includes repairing old ones or reusing them for other purposes instead of buying new ones in order to make their consumption more environmentally friendly. In this way, they also reduce their consumption. They stated that they tried to buy just what they needed in order to reduce the pressure on natural resources. It prefers to buy environmentally friendly products that do not contain harmful chemicals. They choose the way of reducing the use of the products in the cleaning materials group, which they think is more harmful to the environment, or using the products they make themselves. These behaviors represent the first two steps of the waste management model, the refuse and reduction stages.

They said they preferred alternative ways, such as using them in different ways and donating them to charities for those in need, to dispose of the things they do not need but that are usable. In this way, they ensure that the items that are in usable condition can be reused in different forms. Behaviors that represent the phases of reuse and repurpose different purposes, following refuse and reduction, of the waste management model. The management of household waste and its proper disposal are among the most frequently mentioned behaviors in the interviews. Waste disposal behaviors undertaken by the participants include recycling, composting, separation, and proper disposal of hazardous waste. Reuse and recycling are seen as ways to reduce the guilt about overconsumption in the participant interviews.

In order to protect the environment, the participants pay attention to first-hand discrimination in the places they are in. Waste separation behavior is a behavior that many of its participants do or try to do. However, they mentioned that they could not find a recycling container when they did the decomposition process. In this case, they put the materials they decompose to recycle next to the trash cans for second-hand decomposers.

Participants often referred to the concept of reusability for recycling. It is emphasized that recycling will ensure sustainability by using the products as raw materials, using natural resources more economically, and putting the packaging back into production.

Conclusion, Recommendations, and Limitations

In analyzing the consumer behavior that protects the environment with the waste management model, the participants apply the 5R stages as refusing, reducing, reusing, repurposing, and recycling, respectively. In addition, the behavior that consumers often repeat is to make their own products. These behaviors of consumers can be included in the reject and reduction stages of the waste management process. In the studies conducted in the literature, no research results related to this behavior were found. The contribution of this attachment research to the literature is to examine the prosumer behavior within the scope of environmental behavior by including it in the waste management model.

Financial and legal incentives are needed to reduce waste and re-channel it into the system. Therefore, considering ecological, social, and economic factors, it is necessary to reduce the negative impact of waste now and in the future. Scientific research and findings highlight the importance of consumer education regarding packaging and waste reduction. In the future, the waste problem can be solved by voluntary initiatives by manufacturers and retailers and by the concerted action of legislators and better-informed consumers.

The data used in the study are the behaviors reported by the participants. Therefore, it may differ from actual behavior. The limitation of the study is that its findings can only be accepted as true for a certain segment of consumers - only environmentally conscious/ sensitive consumers. The findings of this study cannot be generalized to the population. Therefore, it is recommended to conduct similar qualitative studies in the future in which the participants are more representative of the general population. A phenomenological model was used in this study. Using different quantitative and qualitative research designs in future studies will offer new perspectives. At a more micro level, specific behaviors representing each broad theme/behavior, a questionnaire (quantitative research) on one or more defined behaviors may offer another opportunity for future research. Researchers working in related fields can further expand this study by seeking answers to why and when consumers consume environmentally friendly products.

(Araştırma)

UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECTS OF FEAR OF CONTRACTING COVID-19 ON CUSTOMER BEHAVIOR AND PSYCHOLOGY FROM AN ONLINE SHOPPING PERSPECTIVE

Çağlar SAMSA[1]

ABSTRACT

This study, designed based on the psychological reactance theory, examined the reasons and consequences of the increase in customers' online shopping experiences during the Covid-19 period from a customer-based perspective. In the model formed with the idea that the fear of contracting Covid-19 is a reason for the increase in online shopping, the effect of the fear of contracting Covid-19 on trust in online shopping was evaluated. In addition, the effect of trust in online shopping on the value of the online shopping experience during the Covid-19 process was exhibited. It was also determined that the effects of the online shopping experience value on online shopping addiction reveal the online shopping behavior of customers. Using the PLS-SEM algorithm, a questionnaire form was applied to 231 participants (increased to 5000 participants by bootstrapping method) with the convenience sampling method, and the collected data were analyzed using SEM (Structural Equation Modeling). As a result, it was concluded that the fear of contracting Covid-19 increased the trust in online shopping, and the trust in online shopping affects customer value perceptions (hedonic and utilitarian). Another notable result is hedonic value, one of the customers' online shopping value perceptions, affects all dimensions of customer online shopping addiction, but it has been noted that utilitarian value perceptions have no effect on the dimensions of online shopping addiction.

Keywords: Fear of Covid-19, trust to online shopping, experience value, hedonic value, utilitarian value, PLS-SEM

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COVİD 19 KORKUSUNUN MÜŞTERİ DAVRANIŞLARI VE PSİKOLOJİSİ ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİLERİNİ ÇEVRİMİÇİ ALIŞVERİŞ PERSPEKTİFİNDEN ANLAMAK

ÖZ

Psikolojik tepki teorisi temelinde dizayn edilen çalışma, Covid-19 döneminde müşterilerin online alışveriş deneyimlerindeki artışın sebeplerini ve sonuçlarını müşteri temelli bir bakış açısıyla incelemiştir. Covid-19 korkusunun online alışverişteki artışın bir sebebi olduğu fikriyle oluşturulan modelde Covid-19' a yakalanma korkusunun online alışverişe güven üzerindeki etkisi incelenmiştir. Ayrıca Covid-19 sürecinde online alışverişe güvenin ise online alışveriş deneyim değeri üzerindeki etkisi araştırılmıştır. Yine müşterilerin online alışveriş davranışlarındaki artış dikkate alınarak online alışveriş deneyim değerinin online alışveriş bağımlılığı üzerindeki etkileri tespit edilmeye çalışılmıştır. PLS-SEM algoritması kullanılarak 231 katılımcıya (türev örneklemesi aracılığıyla 5000 katılımcıya çıkarılmıştır) kolayda örneklem yöntemiyle anket formu uygulanmış ve toplanan verileri yapısal eşitlik modellemesi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Araştırmada Covid-19 korkusunun online alışverişe güveni arttırdığı, online alışverişe güvenin ise müşterilerin değer algılarını (hedonik ve faydacı) etkilediği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Çalışmada göze çarpan bir diğer önemli sonuç ise müşterilerin online alışveriş değer algılarından hedonik değerin müşterilerin online alışveriş bağımlılığının tüm boyutlarını etkilediği ancak faydacı değer algılarının online alışveriş bağımlılığının boyutları üzerinde herhangi bir etkisinin olmadığıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Covid-19 Korkusu, Online Alışverişe Güven, Deneyim Değeri, Hedonik Değer, Faydacı Değer, PLS-SEM

1. Introduction

The covid-19 pandemic has affected many sectors both economically and socially, including factors such as high infection rates, high death rates, quarantine, social distance, and isolation also cause significant changes in the perceptions such as fear and behaviors of individuals (Sakib *et al.*, 2020). The first of these behaviors is the use of information and communication technologies. Here, individuals started to virtually realize their daily physical experiences (shopping, health, educational experiences, etc.) (Mouratidis and Papagiannakis, 2021). One of these experiences is the customer's online shopping behavior, which increased significantly during the Covid-19 period (Donthu and Gustafsson, 2020; Le *et al.*, 2021).

The change in customers' online shopping behavior can be evaluated within the framework of the psychological reactance theory (Akhtar *et al.*, 2020). This theory explains that individuals are motivated to regain their freedom when restricted or threatened (Brehm and Brehm, 1981; Rosenberg and Siegel, 2018). This theory, which is widely used in understanding the changes in customer attitudes and behaviors (Kavvouris et al., 2020), has been evaluated with the restrictions in the pandemic process. When individuals' freedoms are restricted, they show reactions such as anger, ignorance, and regaining their freedom (Argouslidis *et al.*, 2018). During the Covid-19 pandemic period, individuals preferred to secure their freedom of shopping through online shopping (Akhtar *et al.*, 2020).

The transformation into online shopping brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic has paved the way for intensifying studies in marketing (Alaimo *et al.*, 2021). When the literature examined, online shopping satisfaction has been investigated through the use of mobile technologies (Fernando, 2021), participation in online activities (Mouratidis and Papagiannakis, 2021), food stocking through online channels (Hao *et al.*, 2020), virtual reality and augmented reality in e-commerce (Billewar *et al.*, 2021), food prices in online channels (Hillen, 2021), customer online shopping behaviors and changes in these behaviors (Chenarides *et al.*, 2021), customer online food shopping demands (Chang and Meyerhoefer, 2021), fruit and vegetable markets (Richards and Rickard, 2020), risk factors in online shopping (Alhaimer, 2021), factors that customer satisfaction created factors (Alaimo *et al.*, 2020), online shopping motivators according to generations (Koch *et al.*, 2020) fields. Furthermore, many researchers have investigated the factors contributing to online shopping behavior during the Covid-19 pandemic period (Ben Hassen *et al.*, 2020; Eger *et al.*, 2021; Grashuis *et al.*, 2020; Moon *et al.*, 2021; Pham *et al.*, 2020; Safara, 2020; Sheth, 2020). These studies showed significant increases in customers' online shopping experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic (Pantano *et al.*, 2020). Despite the increasing number of studies, the causes and effects of these increases are still an important research gap. It has been aimed to investigate the relationship between "fear of contracting Covid-19," "trust in the online shopping experience," "value of the online shopping experience," and "online shopping addiction" in order to reveal these dynamics. On the other hand, the increase observed in customers' online shopping behavior (especially in the Covid-19 pandemic) in recent years, where shopping is considered an activity or experience, led marketers to explain the factors affecting this increase. Understanding the online shopping experiences of customers is of great importance not only for researchers but also for companies. These research results will help to understand how effective customer fears are in online shopping during the pandemic process and how customers are affected by shopping addiction, which is quite common today. It is predicted that the research data findings will have an important place in today's marketing conditions. In this context, answers to the following questions were sought.

Question 1: Does the fear of contracting Covid-19 trigger customers' trust in online shopping?

Question 2: Do customers' trust in online shopping trigger their perception of experience value?

Question 3: Do customer experience value perceptions affect customer online shopping addiction?

2. Conceptual Background

World Health Organization data show that the Covid-19 pandemic began in December 2019 and affected many people worldwide. About 245 million Covid-19 cases have been reported worldwide between the pandemic's start and October 29, 2021, and about 5 million people have died as a consequence of the pandemic. These numbers are increasing day by day. Both the restrictions and prohibitions and the individuals' psychological situation led to various changes in people's behavior. One of them was that it caused changes in the activities of individuals. The pandemic has prompted individuals to engage in online activities globally (Nguyen *et al.*, 2020; Wijesooriya *et al.*, 2020) and has triggered a new wave of online shopping in both developed and developing countries. Scientists assumed that this wave of online shopping would continue for years to come. (Chetioui *et al.*, 2021). The psychological reactance theory can explain these changes in the behavior and habits of individuals. The basis of the theory is based on the motivation of individuals to regain their freedom when their freedoms are threatened by the behavior and may bring about a variety of behavioral reactions (Brehm, 1966). Since psychological reactance is a factor that motivates individuals, the response is measured through behavior and attitude (Lee and Lee, 2009). In the study, customer attitudes were examined within the scope of fear, trust, and value, and customer behavior are discussed within the framework of the addiction concept.

Fear of contracting Covid-19 is considered an individual's fear of contracting infectious diseases. Although there are many disasters in the world, epidemics of infectious diseases are among the most remarkable disasters due to their uncertainty. This disaster affects individuals both physically and mentally and causes individuals to feel at risk and vulnerable (Brief *et al*., 2004; Reznik *et al*., 2021). Today, one of the most important of these disasters, the Covid-19 pandemic, is a global danger that seriously affects public health. Fear is the most common psychological response to this danger (Broche-Pérez *et al.*, 2022).

Perceived trust has been identified with many different concepts in the literature. Perceived trust is the individual's low-risk perception of individuals about their current situation (Siegrist, 2000). In other words, customers' perceptions of low anxiety about a particular situation (Freidenburg, 1993). Psychological reactance theory, as mentioned above, is about turning to alternatives when freedom is endangered. This orientation is possible with confidence in other alternatives. Therefore, trust plays a critical role for individuals during the outbreak of infectious diseases (Balog-Way and McComas, 2020). The fact that people avoid physical contact with other people and objects during the Covid-19 pandemic period has allowed online shopping to come to the fore as an alternative to physical shopping.

Perceived value is the ratio of benefits to products and sacrifices from value products and services based on customers' interactions with products and services (Payne and Holt, 2001). It is also defined as the increase in social self-benefit resulting from the purchase of products and services by customers (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001). In other words, customers' overall evaluation of products, services, and experiences is defined as the perceived value (Zeithaml, 1988). In the study, perceived value has been discussed in two basic dimensions: hedonic and utilitarian. *Hedonic value* is where stimulation and pleasure come to the fore in product and service purchases (Kuikka and Laukkanen, 2012)brand equity, brand value, brand trust. It is the perception of value from the emotional, sensory and hedonistic aspects of individuals' shopping experiences (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982). *Utilitarian value* has been defined as rational and cognitive evaluations of products and services (Whitten *et al.*, 2014).

Online shopping addiction; the concept of dependency is the continuation of the use of something despite the problems arising from its use in the traditional sense (Young, 2004). Internet addiction is the excessive use of the internet and the display of moody and restless behaviors when not used (Mitchell, 2000). Online shopping addiction occurs after internet addiction, defined as excessive online shopping characterized by moody and restless behavior when it is not done. This type of addiction has been reported to consist of salience, tolerance, mood modification, withdrawal, relapse, and conflict dimensions (Duong and Liaw, 2021). Salience is that online shopping takes the most important place in consumer life and that the individual dominates her/his emotions, behaviors, and thoughts. Tolerance has been defined as online shopping being done more and more every day, and this thought dominates the individual's emotions, behaviors, and thoughts. Mood modification is when online shopping creates a calming effect on the mood of the customers at that moment and is expressed as the domination of the individual's emotions, behaviors, and thoughts. Withdrawal is the unpleasant emotional state that occurs when online shopping does not take place, and this thought dominates the individual's feelings, behaviors, and thoughts. Relapse is an effort to quit online shopping, but this effort does not yield results, and online shopping dominates the individual's emotions, behaviors, and thoughts. Conflict is the customer's online shopping dominates the emotions, behaviors, and thoughts of the individual and comes into conflict with those around him as a result of online shopping (Griffiths, 2005).

3. Hypotheses Development

The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic has brought various negative changes in individuals' emotional states. One of these negative changes is the fear of contracting Covid-19 (Eger *et al.*, 2021; Martínez-Lorca *et al.*, 2020). Fear of contracting Covid-19 has caused various psychological symptoms, such as fear of death and doubt in people. These emotions also lead to behavioral changes (Khan *et al.*, 2020). One of these behavioral changes among individuals is consumer purchasing behavior. Many studies in the literature suggested that fears about the Covid-19 pandemic have influenced customer purchasing behavior (Addo *et al.*, 2020; Chinazzi *et al.*, 2020; Wiranata and Hananto, 2020). The observed behavior change can be clarified by the fear theory, which is the emotional reaction of individuals to the emergence of fear in the human mind (Eger *et al.*, 2021). By considering the trust variable, one of these emotional responses, the following hypotheses have been developed within the framework of this theory.

***H_1*: Fear of contracting Covid-19 positively affects trust in online shopping.**

Customers' shopping value perceptions are one of the most critical factors shaping customer behavior in customer experiences (Lao *et al.*, 2021). These perceptions also significantly affect other perceptions, such as trust in shopping, and play a crucial role in customers' online shopping experience. The lack of customers' trust in the online shopping experience is an essential factor and causes them not to prefer online shopping (Beldad *et al.*, 2010). The prospect theory can explain this situation. Prospect theory, first introduced into the literature by Kahneman and Tversky (1979), was developed to study how individuals behave in risky situations (Edwards, 1996). Considering this theory, it has been proven that customers' attitudes toward online shopping were influenced during the Covid-19 process (Chetioui *et al.*, 2021). Based on this, it has been aimed to investigate the trust-value relationship in online shopping, and the following hypothesis has been determined.

***H_2*:** *Trust in online shopping positively affects online shopping value. (H_{2a}: Trust in online shopping positively affects hedonic value. H_{2b}: Trust in online shopping positively affects utilitarian value).*

Changing conditions during the pandemic brought up shopping addiction, which gained significant momentum in customer behavior. Factors such as stress, social isolation, ample free time, and risk caused customers to become addicted to shopping. During this period, changes in the social sphere also led to the acceleration of digitalization and online shopping (Niedermoser *et al.*, 2021). The reflection of this increase in customer behaviors and its uncontrolled continuation in the following processes led to customer online shopping addiction (Duong and Liaw, 2021). According to the main-end chain theory, the value factor is critical in shaping customer behaviors in online environments (Chiu *et al.*, 2014). One of these behaviors is the online shopping addiction of customers. It has been formed the following hypothesis by considering the value of experience, which is an essential antecedent in shaping the decisions and behaviors of customers (Samsa and Yüce, 2022; Zhang *et al.*, 2022).

***H*$_{3}$*:** Online shopping value has a positive effect on online shopping addiction. (**H**$_{3a}$**:** Hedonic value has a positive effect on mood modification. **H**$_{3b}$**:** Hedonic value has a positive effect on relapse. **H**$_{3c}$**:** Hedonic value has a positive effect on salience. **H**$_{3d}$**:** Hedonic value has a positive effect on tolerance. **H**$_{3e}$**:** Hedonic value has a positive effect on withdrawal. **H**$_{3f}$**:** Hedonic value has a positive effect on conflict. **H**$_{3g}$**:** Utilitarian value has a positive effect on mood modification. **H**$_{3h}$**:** Utilitarian value has a positive effect on relapse. **H**$_{3i}$**:** Utilitarian value has a positive effect on salience. **H**$_{3j}$**:** Utilitarian value has a positive effect on tolerance. **H**$_{3k}$**:** Utilitarian value has a positive effect on withdrawal. **H**$_{3l}$**:** Utilitarian value has a positive effect on conflict)*

4. Research Method

Sample and Measures

In this study, the questions of each scale were translated from English to Turkish, and some of the questions were adjusted according to the Covid-19 process. After translation and adaptation, it was thoroughly checked by an expert. In this stage, the required permission was obtained by the Kafkas University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee (Issue: E-35608, Date: 10.01.2022). In addition, a pre-test study was conducted to test the survey questions' suitability and gather the participants' opinions. In the pre-test application, the validity and reliability values were checked, and the questionnaire was finalized by taking into account the participants' opinions. The questionnaire form consists of 5 multiple-choice questions containing the characteristics of the participants and 36 measurement items determined using a 5-point Likert scale. The characteristics of the participants and measurement items are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

In this study, which was carried out under pandemic conditions, an online questionnaire was used in line with the predictable request of both health conditions and participant demands. Since the sample group also consisted of online shoppers, it was assumed that individuals who would fill out the online survey would be interested in online shopping, and the data were collected through an online survey. These may constitute the limitation of the study. The data were collected through an online survey from people who had an online shopping experience during the Covid-19 outbreak between August 28, 2021, and March 18, 2022, using the convenience sampling method. Participants were first asked if they had shopped online during the Covid-19 period. In the next step, the questionnaire was sent to the participants, and they were asked if they would like to answer it. Thus, 231 participants who had an online shopping experience during the Covid-19 period were reached. The PLS-SEM algorithm, which is used in cases where the sample group is relatively small, offers a significant advantage over other algorithms. This advantage is the bootstrapping method. In this method, the sample was increased to 5000 using derivative sampling, and the data were analyzed over 5000 samples (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Characteristics of the sample group are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of the Sample

Characteristics		**N**	**Percantenge (%)**
Sex	Male	104	45.2
	Female	126	54.8
	No answer	1	-
Age	Under 20	10	4.3
	20-29	125	54.1
	30-39	78	33.8
	40-49	14	6.1
	50 and older	4	1.7
Marital Status	Single	134	58
	Married	97	42
Revenue (Monthly)	Under 1500 TL	50	22.5
	1501 TL-3000 TL	34	15.3
	3001 TL-4500 TL	27	12.2
	4501 TL-6000 TL	53	23.9
	Over 6000 TL	58	26.1
The product categories with the most online shopping during the Covid-19 process	Clothes	119	52.7
	Food- Nutrition	69	30.5
	Hobby (Game-Toy etc.)	12	5.3
	Cosmetic	7	3.1
	Household appliances	7	3.1
	Herbal supplements	3	1.3
	Book	2	0.9
	Others	7	3.1
	No answer	5	-

According to Table 1, about 55% of the participants are women; the vast majority (87.9%) is between 20 and 39 years old. In addition, about 58% of the participants are single. The monthly income of the participants was distributed pro-rata, and the participants mainly shopped online in the categories of clothing (52.7%) and food nutrition (30.5%) during the Covid-19 period.

Table 2. Measurement Items

Construct	Measurement Items	References
	Fear of contracting Covid-19	
	Q1. I am most afraid of Covid-19 during the pandemic process.	
	Q2. It bothers me to think about Covid-19 in the pandemic process.	
	Q3. My hands get sweaty when I think of Covid-19	Sakib et al., 2020
	Q4. I am afraid of losing my life because of Covid-19.	
	Q5. I get nervous or anxious when watching news and stories about Covid-19 on social media.	
	Q6. I cannot sleep because I am worried about catching Covid-19.	
	Q7. My heart beats fast when I think of catching Covid-19.	
	Perceived Value	
Utilitarian Value	Q8. Considering the quality during the Covid-19 process, the prices of the products and services I buy from online stores are reasonable.	
	Q9. I save time when I shop from online stores during the Covid-19 process	
	Q10. The products and services I bought from online stores during the Covid-19 period are excellent purchases.	
	Q11. During the Covid-19 period, online stores offer good economic value.	Overby and Lee, 2006
Hedonic Value	Q12. The thought of shopping from online stores during the corona period absorbs me.	
	Q13. During the Covid-19 period, I not only bought products and services but also had fun shopping in online stores.	
	Q14. During the Covid-19 period, shopping from online stores took me away from everything.	
	Q15. Shopping from the online store during the Covid-19 process gives me the feeling of "escape from the pressure of life."	
	Trust to Online Shopping	
	Q16. Trusts what the company says about the products while shopping online during the Covid-19 period.	
	Q17. Online shopping is reliable during the Covid-19 process.	Kim et al., 2009
	Q18. The claims and promises of the online shopping site about the product during the Covid-19 process are reliable.	
	Online Shopping Addiction	
Salience	Q19. When I am not shopping online, I think about it all the time during the Covid-19 process	
	Q20. I often think about how you can devote more time or money to online shopping during the Covid-19 process	
	Q21. Online shopping has an important place in my life during Covid-19 process	
Tolerance	Q22. During the Covid-19 process, I desire to do more online shopping.	

	Q23. I spend much more time online shopping during the Covid-19 process.	
Mood Modification	Q24. During the Covid-19 process, I am shopping online without a plan.	
	Q25. When I am feeling bad, online shopping makes me feel better.	
	Q26. When I feel bad, worried, helpless, or restless during the Covid-19 process, I shop online to feel better.	
	Q27. Online shopping helps me temporarily forget my troubles during the Covid-19 process.	Duong and Liaw, 2021
Withdrawal	Q28. I feel depressed when I find some excuses and do not shop online during the Covid-19 process.	
	Q29. A life without online shopping for a while during the Covid-19 process would be boring and unpleasant for me.	
	Q30. I feel restless or depressed when I try to shop online during the Covid-19 process but fail.	
Relapse	Q31. I tried to cut or stop my online shopping during the Covid-19 process but failed.	
	Q32. During the Covid-19 process, I decided to do online shopping less frequently, but I could not.	
	Q33. If I reduce the amount of online shopping in a certain period during the Covid-19 process and then start again, I will shop as often as before.	
Conflict	Q34. My work or educational productivity has decreased due to online shopping during the Covid-19 period.	
	Q35. There were times when I argued with my family about my online shopping during the Covid-19 process.	
	Q36. During the Covid-19 process, I cut my time with my family and friends for my online shopping.	

This study consisted of four main elements, fear of contracting Covid-19, trust in online shopping, perceived value, and online shopping addiction. Fear of contracting Covid-19 has been associated with one of seven items scales adapted from Sakib et al. (2020). Trust in online shopping was measured with three items scale adapted from Kim et al. (2009). Perceived value scale adapted from Overby and Lee (2006). This scale consists of two dimensions, utilitarian value (4 items) and hedonic value (4 items). The online shopping addiction scale was adapted from Zhao et al. (2017) and consists of 6 dimensions, salience (3 items), tolerance (3 items), mood modification (3 items), withdrawal (3 items), relapse (3 items), and conflict (3 items) adapted from Zhao et al. (2017) and Duong and Liaw (2021). Participants evaluated the items on a 5-point Likert scale.

5. Data Analysis

Here, SmartPLS 3 was used to test the hypotheses. SPSS 20 program was used for the analysis of demographic data and descriptive. Structural equation modeling was used to test the study model, and the study was handled within the scope of the "measurement model" and "structural model."

Measurement Model

The measurement model is used to test the construct validity and reliability of the study. For this purpose, it is appropriate to examine the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), item loadings, t-statistics values, Cronbach alpha(α), and composite reliability (CR) values (Kaya *et al.*, 2020). These results are shown in Table 3 and Figure 1.

Table 3. Convergent and Discriminant Validity

Variables	α	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Fornell-Larcker Criterion												
Conflict	0.782	0.873	0.696	**0.834**									
FearCV19	0.882	0.910	0.629	0.135	**0.793**								
Hed.Value	0.707	0.837	0.632	0.369	0.128	**0.795**							
M.Modif.	0.826	0.920	0.852	0.566	0.131	0.588	**0.923**						
Relapse	0.858	0.913	0.779	0.773	0.214	0.470	0.612	**0.883**					
Salience	0.773	0.868	0.687	0.616	0.172	0.473	0.617	0.658	**0.829**				
Tolerance	0.811	0.888	0.725	0.598	0.147	0.567	0.749	0.677	0.692	**0.851**			
Trust	0.804	0.884	0.717	0.177	0.198	0.382	0.362	0.264	0.420	0.335	**0.847**		
Uti.Value	0.769	0.866	0.684	0.029	0.110	0.302	0.244	0.162	0.207	0.213	0.537	**0.827**	
Withdr.	0.818	0.892	0.734	0.670	0.171	0.502	0.718	0.755	0.704	0.678	0.347	0.205	**0.857**

AVE = ((summation of the square of the factor loadings)/ (summation of the square of the factor loadings))+(summation of the error variances)), CR(Composite reliability) = (square of the summation of the factor loadings)/ ((square of the summation of the factor loadings)+(square of the summation of the error variances))

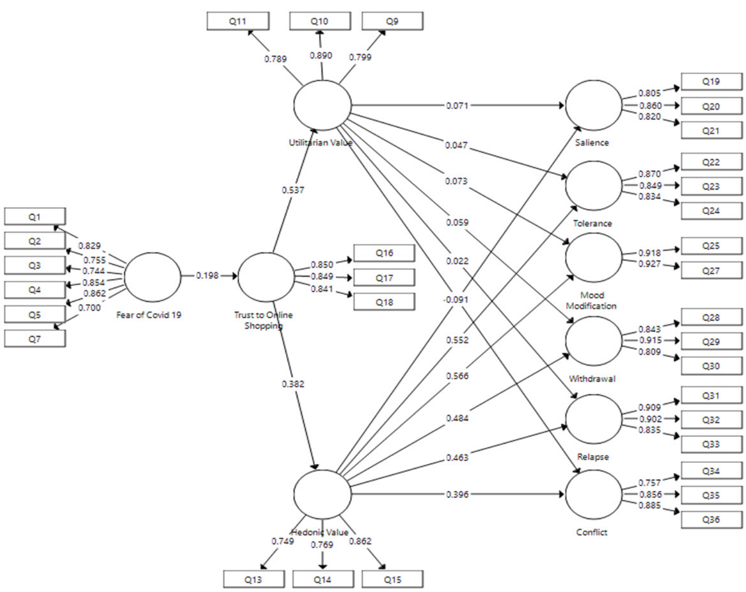

Figure 1. Measurement Model Results

To ensure construct validity, AVE, item loadings, t-statistic values, Cronbach alpha(α), and CR values must meet certain criteria. AVE scores, the first of these criteria, were greater than 0.60 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). In addition, the square root of the AVE value of each variable was greater than the correlation coefficient of the other variables and was also considered an important criterion (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). It has shown that AVE values meet the conditions (Table 3). Cronbach alpha values of the variables were greater than 0.70 indicating high reliability (Hair et al., 2013). The variables in Table 3 have a high degree of reliability. In addition, CR values were greater than 0.70 (Hair et al., 2013). Therefore, Table 3 shows that the CR values meet the necessary criteria. It has been given item loads and t-statistics values. These values also proved to be significant.

Structural Model

The structural model shows the relationship between dependent and independent variables. Therefore, the structural model tests the hypotheses (Hair et al., 2011). The structural model results and the hypothesis tests are presented in Figure 2 and Table 4.

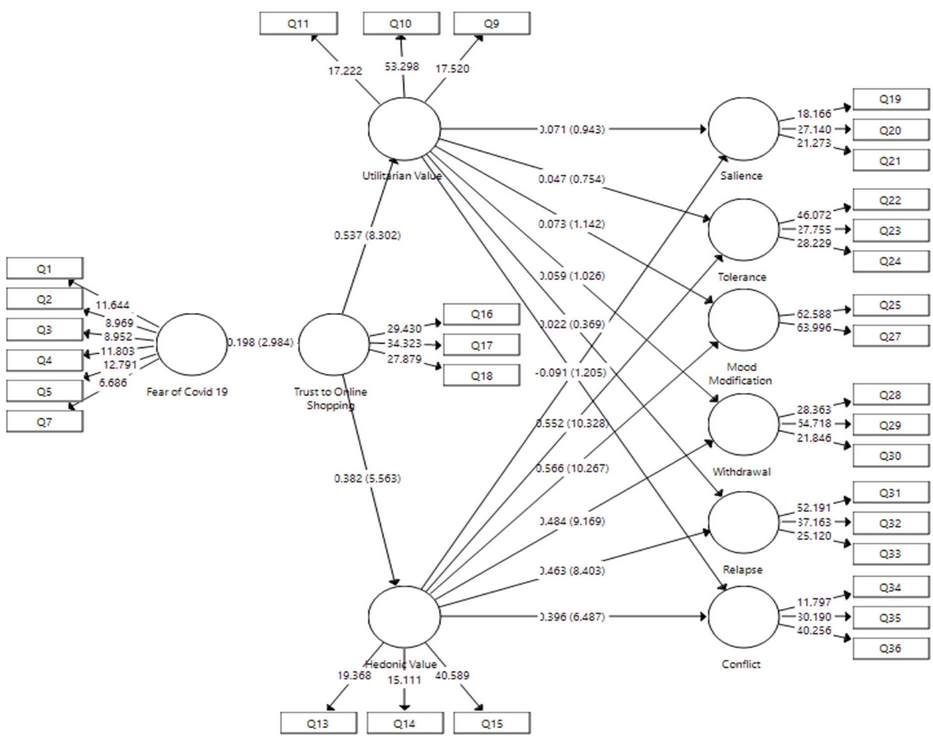

Figure 2. Structural Model Results

Table 4. Hypothesis Test Results

	Hypothesis	O-Samples	S-Mean	St-Dev	P-Values
H_1	***Fear of cont.Covid-19 -> Trust to online shopping***	0.198	0.214	0.066	**0.003**
H_2	***Trust in online shopping -> Online shopping value***				
	H_{2a}: *Trust to online shopping -> Hedonic value*	0.382	0.385	0.069	**0.000**
	H_{2b}: *Trust to online shopping -> Utilitarian Value*	0.537	0.539	0.065	**0.000**
H_3	***Online shopping Value -> Online shopping addiction***				
	H_{3a}: *Hedonic Value -> Mood modification*	0.566	0.567	0.055	**0.000**
	H_{3b}: *Hedonic Value -> Relapse*	0.463	0.465	0.055	**0.000**
	H_{3c}: *Hedonic Value -> Salience*	0.451	0.455	0.062	**0.000**
	H_{3d}: *Hedonic Value -> Tolerance*	0.552	0.554	0.053	**0.000**
	H_{3e}: *Hedonic Value -> Withdrawal*	0.484	0.487	0.053	**0.000**
	H_{3f}: *Hedonic Value -> Conflict*	0.396	0.402	0.061	**0.000**
	H_{3g}: *Utilitarian Value -> Mood modification*	0.073	0.076	0.064	0.253
	H_{3h}: *Utilitarian Value -> Relapse*	0.022	0.025	0.060	0.712
	H_{3i}: *Utilitarian Value -> Salience*	0.071	0.075	0.075	0.346
	H_{3j}: *Utilitarian Value -> Tolerance*	0.047	0.051	0.062	0.451
	H_{3k}: *Utilitarian Value -> Withdrawal*	0.059	0.062	0.058	0.305
	H_{3l}: *Utilitarian Value -> Conflict*	-0.091	-0.089	0.075	0.228

According to the structural model results, fear of contracting Covid-19 affects trust in online shopping. Furthermore, the research results supported that trust in online shopping significantly impacts all dimensions of online shopping value. Of the shopping value dimensions, utilitarian value is more influenced by other hedonic values than trust in online shopping. Another research finding demonstrated that hedonic value significantly impacts online shopping addiction, but the utilitarian value is not affected. When the effect of hedonic value on shopping addiction was examined based on dimensions, the hedonic value was most affected by the mood change dimension and the least by the conflict dimension. In this respect, the dimension of online shopping addiction in which hedonic value was most effective is mood modification. The third dimension of addiction, in which hedonic value has the most effect, is withdrawal. It has been concluded that customers with hedonic values feel bad when they do not shop online and push themselves to shop online. According to the effect levels, the relapse dimension is found in the fourth dimension. It has been concluded that the new hedonic value caused customers not to give up even though they tried to give up shopping. The fifth dimension in terms of impact levels was salience. The new hedonic value has led customers to constantly think about online shopping. The dependency dimension where hedonic value was least effective is conflict. In other words, it caused customers to constantly shop online and to be in conflict with their social environment.

6. Discussion

The present study includes an experience-based view of the impact of fear of contracting Covid-19 on customers' online shopping addiction. The study has analyzed the impact of fear of contracting Covid-19 on customers' online shopping experiences (trust in online shopping experiences and online shopping experience value) and the outcomes of these experiences (online shopping addiction) concerning rated online shopping. The fear of contracting Covid-19 was discussed for the significant increase in online shopping with the pandemic. The effect of this fear on the trust of the customers in the online shopping experience and the effect of the trust in the online shopping on the value of the online shopping experience was investigated. Another aspect of the study examined the effect of the value of the online shopping experience on shopping addiction.

It has been investigated first how the fear of contracting Covid-19 is affecting customer trust in online shopping. Appraisal theory argues that individuals' experiences lead to various changes in their emotions and behaviors (Roseman, 1991). Based on the theory, it has been discussed the fear factor a critical situation affecting customer behavior. There are many studies examining the online shopping behavior of customers at risk (Bianchi & Andrews, 2012; Dinev & Hart, 2006; Lee, 2009). Since customers used masks, adapted social distancing, and avoided touching during the Covid-19 pandemic process (Samsa, 2021), trust in online shopping increased. This study, parallel to this information, has concluded that the fear of contracting Covid-19 positively affected customer trust in online shopping. Customers can rely on safer alternatives in case of fear of circumstances. As a result of the study, this aspect came to the fore, and individuals felt fear of the risk posed by Covid-19, and they trusted online shopping, which is a less risky medium. It has been mentioned above that there was a remarkable increase in customers' online shopping behavior during the Covid-19 process. The reason is that customers find online shopping more reliable as a result of the fear of contracting the disease.

Secondly, the effect of customer trust in online shopping on customer shopping experience values has been examined. Trust is a concept that has a very important place in the online shopping behavior of customers (Chetioui et al., 2021; Kim & Peterson, 2017) because trust affects many perceptions of customers about shopping. For example, customers' trust in online shopping was a significant share in their online shopping, and trust in online shopping had a very important effect on the WOM (word of mount) behavior of the customers (Rita et al., 2019). Another important effect of trust in online shopping was customer satisfaction. The satisfaction level of customers who trust online shopping was just as high (Muhdiyanto and Pramesti, 2018). In literature, it has been found that trust had a very important effect on the intention to use (Park et al., 2018). Apart from these relationships, the trust had a very important place in the perception of the purchase value (Ponte et al., 2015; Chai et al., 2015). In this study, the effect of online shopping trust on online shopping value perceptions was investigated. The study has filled a very important gap in the literature both in terms of process (Covid-19 pandemic) and dimensions of online shopping experience value (hedonic and utilitarian value). It has been concluded that trust has a very important effect on the utilitarian value and hedonic value in the Covid-19 process. While it has a very high effect on utilitarian value, it has relatively little effect on hedonic value.

In the final, the effect of online shopping experience value on online shopping addiction has been measured. It has been found that the utilitarian value of online shopping did not affect customers' online shopping addiction. In contrast, hedonic values influence online shopping addiction. In previous studies, the effects of various variables on online shopping addiction were noted. These variables were age, gender, marital status, internet experience, daily internet shopping use, daily internet shopping frequency (Duong and Liaw, 2021), well-being, time spent online (Savci *et al.*, 2021), daily spiritual experiences and self-efficacy (Charzyńska *et al.*, 2021). In addition, hedonic motivators affect the shopping addiction of customers (Jhamb and Mittal, 2022). It has been concluded that hedonic value is effective across all dimensions of customers' online shopping addiction. In other words, the hedonic value offered by online shopping to customers created relief in the moods of customers, and this situation has led them to continue shopping. Considering that hedonism is conceptualized as openness to pleasurable experiences, it has an important place in the happiness of customers (Veenhoven, 2003). Therefore, the effect of hedonic value on mood modification, which is based on keeping the customers' moods at a high level, was inevitable. The second dependency dimension on which the hedonic value had the most influence was tolerance. Hedonic value caused customers to realize their purchasing behavior constantly and to dominate customer feelings and thoughts. It triggers customers' repurchase intention (Kim et al., 2012). The third dimension of addiction, in which hedonic value has the most effect, is withdrawal. Customers with hedonic values feel bad when they do not shop online and need online shopping. When the dimension of pleasure is examined, it has been noted that individuals' lack of hedonism caused them to seek pleasure again. This situation leads individuals to addiction (Victoria et al., 2021). Therefore, the effect of hedonic value on withdrawal can be evaluated from this perspective. Hedonism caused individuals to not be able to control themselves and to realize unplanned buying behavior. Therefore, considering that hedonism causes impulsive buying, it can be supported that hedonic value in online shopping has a significant effect on the behavior of customers not giving up on online shopping. Another important online shopping addiction variable affected by hedonic value is salience. In other words, it has been concluded that the hedonic value aspect of online shopping causes customers to constantly think about online shopping and that online shopping is an important part of their lives. The opinion that the above-mentioned customer pleasures affect customer happiness provides important support for this result. Because it is possible for individuals to always have in their minds the elements that increase their happiness. The dimension of online shopping addiction that hedonic value affects the least compared to other dimensions is conflict. Today, addiction has become not only a problem for individuals but also a problem for the individual's social environment. The dependence of individuals on technological devices leads to continuous use of these devices and leading a life disconnected from society (Zhang and Wu, 2022). In such a case, the individual can conflict with his social environment. Therefore, the pleasure that customers get from online shopping may cause conflict with their social environment. This evidence supports that hedonic value affects conflict.

7. Conclusion

In this article, the linear effect between the triad of fear-experience-dependence has been examined. Fear has been studied as customers' fear of contracting the coronavirus. Within the scope of experience, trust in the online shopping experience of customers and the effect of this trust on customers' perceptions of experience value have been discussed. The addiction dimension has been designed as the online shopping addiction of the customers. This study provides theoretical and practical contributions to the literature on the impact of global changes in the Covid-19 pandemic process on customer emotions and behaviors.

The study is based on psychological reactance theory. The presented study is important both to examine online shopping experiences during the pandemic and to examine the relationships in terms of variables to understand the new world order brought by the pandemic. In addition, expectancy theory, main chain theory, and fear theory, which is used to create working hypotheses, allowed the study to be examined from different theoretical backgrounds.

The value perception of customers' online shopping experiences holds an essential place in customers' online shopping addiction during the pandemic period. However, results supported that hedonic values create online shopping addiction, but utilitarian values do not create online shopping addiction. Another important finding is that trust in online shopping influences both the hedonic and utilitarian aspects of the online shopping experience value. Customers' fear of contracting Covid-19 has made them safer in their online shopping experience.

The study contains beneficial results both in the pandemic process and in theory. In times of crisis, people trust the online shopping experience with the instinct of protection when their health is at risk, and they perceive value in those experiences. However, it has been observed that hedonic values rather than utilitarian values trigger customers' online shopping addiction. Fear of contracting Covid-19 pushes customers to trust online shopping. Confidence in online shopping positively affects individuals' perceptions of value. On the other hand, customer value perceptions partially affect online shopping addiction. That is, while customers' hedonic value perceptions affect online shopping addiction positively, customers' hedonic value perceptions do not affect online shopping addiction. In addition, it was concluded that the most effective dimension of the hedonic value was mood modification, and the least affected dimension was the conflict dimension.

The Covid-19 process has brought along various changes in customer typologies. The restrictions brought by the Covid-19 process have caused social isolation of individuals and brought a significant increase in online shopping rates. With the thought that this increase will trigger online shopping addiction, the factors affecting online shopping addiction have been examined. In this respect, online shopping behaviors in the quartet of fear-trust in alternatives-value-dependence were examined based on the Covid-19 pandemic process.

In future studies, it may be interesting to investigate which emotions are triggered in customers other than the fear of contracting Covid-19, to what extent emotions affect the online shopping experience, and to examine the differences in online shopping according to product categories. It may also be interesting to examine which of the product categories with online shopping experience create online shopping addiction. It is known that demographic factors such as age, gender, and marital status also affect online shopping, but due to the nature of the study, there are very few studies investigating these variables. Again, trust is not the only factor affecting the value of the online shopping experience, and further studies are needed.

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(Araştırma)

KRİZ ORTAMINDA TÜKETİCİ ATALETİ: WHATSAPP KİŞİSEL VERİ DÜZENLEMESİ ÜZERİNE BİR ARAŞTIRMA

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ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı, mahremiyet endişesi ve özerkliğe verilen önemin kalma niyetiyle ilişkisinde tüketici ataletinin rolünü incelemektir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda çevrim içi anket aracılığıyla toplanan 250 veri kapsamında analizler yapılmıştır. Yapısal eşitlik modeli yardımıyla gerçekleştirilen analizler sonucunda özerkliğe verilen önem ile kalma niyeti arasında negatif bir ilişki olduğu belirlenmiştir. Buna ek olarak, tüketici ataletinin mahremiyet endişesi ile kalma niyeti arasındaki ilişkiye tam aracılık, özerkliğe verilen önem ile kalma niyeti arasındaki ilişkiye ise kısmi aracılık ettiği ortaya konmuştur. Çalışmanın bulguları ataletin, kriz anlarındaki olumsuz tüketici deneyimlerine karşın kalma niyeti için belirleyici bir role sahip olduğuna işaret etmektedir. Bu bağlamda çalışma, tüketici ataletine ilişkin tartışma zeminini derinleştirerek gelecek araştırmalara katkı sağlamayı hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mahremiyet endişesi, özerklik, tüketici ataleti, WhatsApp

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CONSUMER INERTIA IN A CRISIS ENVIRONMENT: A STUDY ON WHATSAPP PERSONAL DATA REGULATION

ABSTRACT

This study aims to reveal the relationship between inertia and the intention to stay with the service provider in the face of regulations that create privacy concerns and restrictions by businesses. For this purpose, 250 survey data collected via an online platform were analyzed. Structural equation modeling results indicate that intention to stay has a negative relationship with the importance of autonomy. Furthermore, we demonstrate that consumer inertia fully mediates the relationship between privacy concerns and intention to stay and partially mediates the relationship between the importance of autonomy and intention to stay. The findings indicate that inertia has a decisive role in the intention to stay despite negative consumer experiences in times of crisis. In this context, the study aims to contribute to future research by deepening the discussion ground on consumer inertia.

Keywords: Privacy concerns, autonomy, consumer inertia, WhatsApp

1. Giriş

Gerçek zamanlı sohbete imkân veren anlık mesajlaşma uygulamaları, sosyal ağlardan daha fazla ilgi görmekte (Business Insider Intelligence, 2016), bu uygulamalardan biri olan ve Ocak 2022 itibariyle aylık olarak iki milyar kullanıcının erişim sağladığı WhatsApp, A.B.D. dışındaki pazarlarda en popüler uygulamaların başında gelmektedir (Statista, 2022). WhatsApp, 4 Ocak 2021 tarihinde kullanıcılardan elde edilen verilerin nasıl işleneceğini de içeren gizlilik sözleşmesini güncelleme kararını almıştır (WhatsApp, 2021). Yeni koşullara onay vermeyen kullanıcıların, güncellemenin yürürlüğe gireceği tarihten itibaren uygulamayı kullanamayacakları bilgisi endişeyle karşılanmış ve kullanıcıları alternatif arayışına itmiştir (Akgün vd., 2021). Gelen tepkiler üzerine WhatsApp güncellemeyi önce ertelemiş, daha sonra da hiçbir kullanıcının hesabını kaybetmeyeceğini açıklamıştır (Porter, 2021). Buna karşın uygulama, global ölçekte milyonlarca kullanıcısını kaybetmiş (Hern, 2021) ve rakipleri Signal ve Telegram da ilgili dönemde yüksek indirme rakamlarına ulaşmıştır (Kleinman, 2021).

Tüketiciler, WhatsApp için olduğu gibi, genel itibariyle işletmelerin bu tür kısıtlayıcı düzenlemeleri karşısında mahremiyet endişesi (Phelps vd., 2001) duyabilir ve özgürce karar vermelerinin engellendiğini (Wendlandt ve Schrader, 2007) hissedebilir. Bu türden olumsuz deneyimlere karşın tüketicilerin aynı markayı ya da hizmeti kullanmayı sürdürdüğü durumlar da söz konusudur ve bu tüketici davranışının altında yatan nedenler araştırmacıların ilgisini çekmektedir. Tüketicilerin olumlu eğilime sahip olmasa bile aynı hizmet sağlayıcıyı kullanmaya devam etmesini açıklayan kavramlardan biri tüketici ataletidir (Gray vd., 2017). Tüketici ataleti, "gerçek sadakat olmadan, pasif hizmet bağlılığı ile çaba harcama isteksizliğinden oluşan ve bilinçli olmayan bir sürdürme biçimi" olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Yanamandram ve White, 2010). Tüketici ataletiyle ilgili geçmiş çalışmalar, sadakat ile atalet arasındaki ilişkiyi ortaya koymuş (Wu, 2011), endüstriyel bağlamda (Bozzo, 2002) ve finansal hizmetlerde ataleti incelemiş (Yanamandram ve White, 2004), çeşitlilik arayışı ortamına karşı atalet ortamının risk eğilimine etkisini ele almış (Kim, 2013), hizmetler bağlamında tüketici ataletinin öncülleri ve sonuçları (Gray vd., 2017) ile marka genişletmeye yönelik müşteri tepkilerinde tüketici ataletinin rolü (Cao vd., 2022) gibi konulara odaklanmıştır. Ancak, kişisel verilerle ilgili mahremiyet endişesi yaratan ve tüketicilerin özgürlüğünün kısıtlandığı bir bağlamda tüketici ataleti ile kalma niyeti ilişkisi henüz ele alınmamıştır. Tüketicilerin işletmelerle mevcut ilişkilerini sürdürmesinde olumlu tutumların ve sadakatin ötesinde farklı öncüllerin de etkili olması mümkündür. Dolayısıyla sadakatten farklı olarak bilinçsiz bir sürdürme ve alışkanlık eğilimi olan tüketici ataletinin kalma niyetiyle ilişkisinin ve özellikle bu tür kriz ortamlarında da tüketicilerin kararlarını ve davranışlarını etkileyen bir mekanizma olup olmadığının anlaşılmasına ihtiyaç vardır. Bu bilgi edinimi doğrultusunda, ilişkisel pazarlama paradigmasının merkezinde bulunan uzun dönemli ilişkiler sürdürebilme ve müşterileri elde tutma noktasında pazarlama uygulayıcılarına bir kavramsal çerçeve sunulacaktır. Bu nedenlerle, bu boşluğu doldurmak kavramsal ve pratik öneme sahiptir. Çalışma bu boşluğa odaklanarak, bir kriz ortamında tüketici ataletinin rolüne ilişkin bilgi birikimine katkı sunmayı hedeflemektedir.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, mahremiyet endişesi ve özerkliğe verilen önemin kalma niyetiyle ilişkisinde tüketici ataletinin rolünü incelemektir. Bu kapsamda çalışmanın, iki açıdan katkı sunması beklenmektedir. İlki, mahremiyet endişesi ve özgürlüğe verilen önemin, hizmeti kullanmaya devam etme niyetiyle ilişkisinde tüketici ataletinin aracı rolüne odaklanan ilk çalışma olmasıdır. Bu sayede özellikle kişisel verilerin gittikçe önem kazandığı ve mahremiyetin daha fazla tartışıldığı dönemde söz konusu boyutlarla ilişkisi, tüketici ataletiyle ilgili gelecek araştırmalara yeni bir perspektif sunabilecektir. Çalışmanın ikinci katkısı ise WhatsApp gibi işletmelerin tüketicilere yönelik düzenlemeleri karşısında ortaya çıkan kriz durumlarında, tüketici ataletinin rolünü tespit etmektir. Bu katkının, işletmelerin kriz dönemlerinde müşterilere yönelik içgörülerini geliştirmesine yardımcı olması hedeflenmektedir. Buradan hareketle ataletin, tüketicilerin hizmet sağlayıcıya yönelik olumsuz eğilime sahip olduğu kriz dönemlerinde de mevcut hizmet sağlayıcıyla ilişkilerini sürdürmede bir rolü olabileceği ileri sürülmektedir. Araştırmanın, dönem itibariyle bu tür bir kriz ortamında gerçekleştirilmesi, benzer durumlarda yapılacak çıkarımlar için sağlam bir zemin oluşturmaktadır.

2. Kavramsal Arkaplan

İşletmeler, tüketicilerle sorunsuz ve olumlu müşteri deneyimi aracılığıyla iyi ilişkileri güçlendirmeyi ve uzun vadeli müşteri ilişkisi yaratmayı amaçlarken, gerçekte bu ilişkinin durağanlıktan uzak olduğu ifade edilebilir. Süreç içerisinde ortaya çıkan sorunlar, kriz dönemleri ve memnuniyetsizlik durumları, tüketicilerin işletmelerle ilgili olumsuz tutumlara sahip olmasına ve işletmeyi terk etmesine neden olabilmektedir. Bazı durumlarda ise tüketiciler, olumsuz deneyimlerine karşın işletmeyle ilişkilerini sürdürmeyi ve kalmayı tercih edebilmektedir. Tüketicilerin mevcut ilişkiyi sürdürme ya da kalma nedenleri uzun süreden beri araştırmacıların ilgisini çekmektedir (Bendapudi ve Berry, 1997; Colgate vd., 2007; Jones vd., 2002; Mahmoud vd., 2018). Tüketicilerin, olumsuz deneyimlerine karşın geçmişteki tüketim davranışlarını ve işletmelerle kurdukları mevcut ilişkileri sürdürmelerinin arka planını açıklamayı amaçlayan kavramlardan biri de tüketici ataletidir.

Atalet, pek çok yakın kavramla ilişkili olarak ele alınmakta, kavramın kullanımı ve yorumlanmasıyla birlikte tanımında da bir netlik olmadığı ileri sürülmektedir (Cui vd., 2021). Tüketici ataleti ile ilişkili kavramların başında sadakat gelmektedir. Tüketici ataleti, aynı markanın pasif bir biçimde ve yoğun bir zihinsel çaba harcanmadan tekrar satın alınması şeklinde tanımlandığında, bir tür sahte sadakat olarak nitelendirilmekte (Gray vd., 2017) ve tercih edilen bir hizmet sağlayıcıya bağlı kalmaya yönelik güçlü bir kararı ifade eden tutumsal sadakatten farklılaşmaktadır (Lee ve Neale, 2012). Kavramsal olarak farklılıkları olsa da yüksek düzeyde tüketici ataletinin, fayda ve maliyete yönelik bilinçli değerlendirmelerin yerini alışkanlığın alması nedeniyle daha yüksek düzeyde sadakati beraberinde getirdiği belirtilmektedir (Anderson ve Swaminathan, 2011). Ayrıca tüketici ataleti, başarısız hizmet deneyimleri karşısında tepki eksikliğiyle ve dolayısıyla hedefe yönelik davranışın yokluğuyla da ilişkilendirilmektedir (Zeelenberg ve Pieters, 2004). Bir başka perspektiften tüketici ataletinin, önceki tüketim davranışlarının harekete geçirdiği bir zihniyet ile ortaya çıktığı ve bu zihniyetin de diğer seçenekleri ve yeni niyetleri değerlendirme ihtiyacını ortadan kaldıran mevcut durumu koruma eğilimi ile ilişkili olduğu ifade edilmektedir (Henderson vd., 2021). Bu eğilime paralel şekilde atalet kavramı, tüketicilerin tembel, hareketsiz ve pasif olmasıyla da ilişkilendirilmekte (Yanamandram ve White, 2006) ve alışkanlığı sürdürme eğilimi olarak da ifade edilmektedir (Bozzo, 2002). Tüketici ataleti, aynı markanın alışkanlık nedeniyle satın alındığı bilinçsiz bir süreç olduğu için (Huang ve Yu, 1999), tüketicilerin işletmeler, ürünler ve markalara dair bilgi arayışıyla ilgili zihinsel ve fiziksel çabalarla baş etmesini sağlamaktadır ve bu nedenle ataletin oldukça uzun süreli olabileceği ileri sürülmektedir (Pitta vd., 2006).

Geçmiş çalışmalar, tüketici ataletini çeşitli bağlamlarda incelemiştir. Tüketicilerin yeniliklere adaptasyonu bağlamında ele alındığında tüketici ataletinin, bulut teknolojilerini kullanmaya yönelik tüketici direncini açıklayan faktörlerden biri olduğu tespit edilmiştir (Lucia-Palacios vd., 2016). Risk alma bağlamında tüketici ataletini ele alan bir çalışmadaysa, atalet ortamının riskten kaçınma zihniyetini harekete geçirdiği ve bu nedenle anında gerçekleştirilecek tutundurma çabalarının daha çekici hale geldiği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır (Kim, 2013). Ancak tüketici davranışı alanında atalet ile ilgili çalışmalar ağırlıklı olarak sadakat ve kalma niyeti gibi çıktılara odaklanmıştır. Bu bağlamda tüketici ataletinin, sadakat ile pozitif yönlü ilişkisi, elektronik pazar yerleri (Anderson ve Swaminathan, 2011), mobil telekomünikasyon sektörü (Wu, 2011) ve otel endüstrisi (Han vd., 2011) bağlamında ortaya konmuştur. Ayrıca tüketici ataletinin, marka değiştirme niyetini azalttığı ve tatmin üzerinde de olumlu bir etkiye sahip olduğu tespit edilmiştir (Gray vd., 2017). Buna ek olarak Lee ve Neale (2012), atalet nedeni memnuniyet olan ve atalet düzeyi yüksek müşterilerin kalma eğiliminin daha fazla olduğu ve daha olumlu ağızdan ağıza pazarlama eğilimi gösterdikleri sonucuna ulaşmışlardır.

Bu çalışma kapsamında ele alınan bir diğer kavram olan mahremiyet ise bireyin, kendisine ilişkin hangi verilerin, kimler tarafından, ne zaman elde edileceğini ve bu verilerin nasıl kullanılacağını belirleme hakkı olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Westin, 2003). Tüketim bağlamında ise mahremiyet, işletmelerin tüketicilerin verilerini nasıl işlediğiyle ilişkilidir. İşletmelerin, satışlarını ve kârlılıklarını artırmak amacıyla tüketicilere ilişkin kişisel verileri kullanması tüketicilerin mahremiyet endişesi duymasına neden olmaktadır (Phelps vd., 2001). Mahremiyet endişesi duyan tüketicilerin, izlendiklerine yönelik algılarının daha yüksek olduğu ve bu algının da tüketicileri bilgi paylaşma konusunda daha hassas kıldığı ifade edilmektedir (Lefkeli vd., 2022). Bu görüş, mahremiyet endişesinin tüketicilerin çevrim içi satıcılarla kişisel verilerini paylaşma niyetini olumsuz yönde etkilediğine yönelik bulgularla desteklenmektedir (Choi vd., 2018). Bu endişenin bir sonucu olarak tüketiciler kişisel verilerini koruma altına almaya yönelik çeşitli koruma davranışlarında bulunabilmektedir (Bandara vd., 2021). Bunlar arasında çerezleri kaldırma, IP adresini gizleme ve e-posta listesinden çıkma yöntemlerine ek olarak (Lwin vd., 2016) hatalı veya uydurma kişisel veriler ile manipüle etme (Wirtz vd., 2007) gibi savunma mekanizmaları bulunmaktadır.

Özerklik (otonomi) ise bireylerin özgürce seçim yapabilmeleriyle ilişkilidir. Tüketici seçimi bağlamında özerklik, “başkaları tarafından dayatılan dış etkilerden bağımsız olarak kendi başına karar verme ve yürürlüğe koyma yeteneği” şeklinde tanımlanmaktadır (Wertenbroch vd., 2020). İçsel ve özgürce motive edilen, seçim eyleminin bilinçli bir farkındalıkla gerçekleştirildiği ve karar sürecinde bir kısıtlamanın olmadığı durumlarda tüketiciler için özerklik deneyiminden söz edilebilir (Andre vd., 2018). Tüketici özerkliğinin, bireyin bilişsel süreçleri ve iradesi gibi içsel koşulların yanında bilgiye erişimi ve tüketici hakları gibi piyasa bağımlı dış koşullarla da ilişkili olduğu ifade edilmektedir (Anker, 2020). Bir diğer deyişle tüketici özerkliği, tüketicilerin kendi istekleri ve kapasiteleri doğrultusunda verdikleri kararların yanında işletmelerin gerçekleştirdiği pazarlama iletişimi çabaları ile işletmeler de dahil olmak üzere pazardaki aktörlerin uygulamaları ve düzenlemelerinden de etkilenebilmektedir. Bu doğrultuda tüketicilerin seçim özgürlüğünün çeşitli müdahalelere maruz kaldığı ve kısıtlandığına yönelik tartışmalar da yürütülmektedir (Hyman vd., 2022).

Tüketici davranışlarıyla ilgili araştırmaların odağında olan bir konu da neden bazı tüketicilerin mevcut işletmeyi ya da hizmet sağlayıcısını değiştirme kararı alırken bazılarının kalmayı tercih ettiğidir (Panther ve Farquhar, 2004). Bu kapsamda incelenen kalma niyeti, tüketicilerin mevcut işletmeyle ilişkilerini sürdürme kararı şeklinde ifade edilebilir ve bu çalışma bağlamında hizmet sağlayıcısında kalma niyeti olarak ele alınmaktadır. Tüketicilerin kalma kararının arkasında pek çok mekanizmanın etkisi söz konusu olabilir. İşletmelerle geçmiş deneyimlerinden memnun olmaları ya da marka sadakati nedeniyle tüketicilerin işletmeyle ilişkilerini sürdürme eğilimi göstermesi beklenebilir. Diğer taraftan tüketicilerin yalnızca olumlu deneyim ya da sadakat eğilimi nedeniyle mevcut işletmeyle olan bağlarını sürdürmediğine yönelik bulgular da söz konusudur. Örneğin Burnham ve arkadaşları (2003), tüketiciler için başka bir hizmet sağlayıcıya geçmede prosedürlerle ilgili, finansal ve ilişkisel olarak değerlendiren üç tür geçiş maliyetinin algılanabileceği ve her birinin de mevcut hizmet sağlayıcıda kalma niyetini artırdığı sonucuna ulaşmıştır. Colgate ve arkadaşları (2007) ise tüketicilerin mevcut hizmet sağlayıcıyla olan ilişkilerini değiştirmek yerine sürdürme kararı almasında değiştirme maliyetleri gibi faktörlerin yanı sıra duyulan güvenin, hizmet sağlayıcıyla sosyal bağlar geliştirmiş olmanın ve hizmet telafisinin etkili olabileceğini ortaya koymuştur. Bir diğer çalışmada ise (Gray vd., 2017), tüketici ataleti arttıkça hizmet sağlayıcıyı değiştirme niyetinin azaldığına ilişkin bulgulara ulaşılmıştır. Dolayısıyla, tüketicilerin mevcut ürünü yeniden satın alma, hizmeti devam ettirme ya da uygulamayı kullanmayı sürdürme kararının arkasında işletmenin hata telafi stratejileri, geçiş maliyetleri ya da alışkanlığı sürdürme eğilimi gibi faktörler etkili olabilmektedir.

3. Hipotez Geliştirme

Geçmiş çalışmalar, tüketicilerin mevcut işletmede kalma nedenlerini sadakat, geçiş maliyetleri ya da tüketici ataleti gibi kavramlarla açıklamaya çalışmışlardır. Ancak, işletme kaynaklı bir kriz ortamında tüketicileri kalmaya iten faktörlere ilişkin tartışma yeterince ilgi görmemiştir. Tüketici ataleti, farklı boyutlarla birlikte ele alınarak kapsamlı bir şekilde incelenmiş olsa da kriz dönemlerinde ataletin tüketicilerin davranışları için rolü henüz net değildir. Mevcut çalışma dönem itibariyle, kişisel verilerle ilgili bir düzenlemenin gündem olduğu ve tüketicilerin tepkisini çektiği bir ortamda gerçekleştirilmiştir. Kişisel verilerle ilgili düzenlemelerin yol açtığı olumsuzluklardan biri daha önce de açıklandığı gibi mahremiyet endişesidir. Mahremiyet endişesi, tüketicileri çeşitli davranışsal tepkilere itmekte ve bu davranışlar da işletmeler için olumsuz sonuçlar doğurabilmektedir. Kişisel verileriyle ilgili mahremiyet endişesi duyan tüketiciler sonuç olarak kızma, şikâyet etme ve çekimser kalma (Sheehan ve Hoy, 1999) gibi tepkilere ek olarak uydurma verilerle manipüle etme, teknoloji yardımıyla korunma ya da satın almayı ve kaydolmayı redderek vazgeçme (Lwin vd., 2007) gibi tepkiler gösterebilmektedir. Bu doğrultunda Wang ve arkadaşları (2019) mahremiyet endişesinin tüketicileri mevcut hizmetten uzaklaştıran ve alternatiflere doğru iten bir faktör olduğunu ileri sürmektedir. Dolayısıyla mahremiyet endişesinin hem kalma niyeti hem de tüketici ataletiyle ters yönlü bir ilişkiye sahip olması beklenmektedir.

H_1*: *Mahremiyet endişesi ile hizmet sağlayıcısında kalma niyeti arasında negatif bir ilişki vardır.

H_2*: *Mahremiyet endişesi ile tüketici ataleti arasında negatif bir ilişki vardır.

Özerklikle ilgili yapılan açıklamalar kavramın, bireylerin seçim durumunda sahip oldukları özgürlükle ilişkili olduğuna işaret etmektedir. WhatsApp düzenlemesi bağlamında, ilk aşamada yeni koşulları kabul etmeyen kullanıcıların uygulamadan faydalanamayacağı belirtildiği için tüketicilerin söz konusu durumda özgürce seçim yapmasının önünde bir engel olduğu ifade edilebilir. Tüketiciler, seçim yapma hakları engellendiğinde çeşitli tepkiler gösterebilmektedir. Bunlar arasında, özgürlüklerine yönelik bir tehdit algıladıklarında reakte etme yani seçmeleri engellenen alternatifi daha şiddetli bir şekilde isteme (Wendlant ve Schrader, 2007) ve özgürlüklerini yeniden canlandırmak için aksi takdirde tercih edecekleri markalardan kaçınma gibi tepkiler yer alabilir (Bhattacharjee vd., 2014). Dolayısıyla tüketicilerin özerklik arayışındaki artışın WhatsApp (2021) düzenlemesinde olduğu gibi özgürce tercih yapmayı engelleyen durumlarda kalma niyetiyle olumsuz bir ilişkiye sahip olması beklenmektedir. Ancak seçim durumunda, özgürlüklerini koruma isteği nedeniyle özerkliğin, halihazırdaki alışkanlıkları sürdürme eğilimi olan tüketici ataletiyle olumlu bir ilişkiye sahip olması beklenmektedir.

H_3*: *Özerkliğe verilen önem ile hizmet sağlayıcısında kalma niyeti arasında negatif bir ilişki vardır.

H_4*: *Özerkliğe verilen önem ile tüketici ataleti arasında pozitif bir ilişki vardır.

İşletmeler tarafından gerçekleştirilen düzenlemelerin neden olabileceği mahremiyet endişesi ve özerkliğe yönelik kısıtlanma algısı gibi sonuçlar, tüketicilerin mevcut işletme ile ilişkisini sürdürme niyetini olumsuz etkileyebilecektir. Buna karşın, mevcut hizmetten yeterince tatmin olmasa da atalet, tüketicinin, alternatif hizmetlerin gizlilik ile ilgili uygulamaları konusundaki kararsızlığıyla ilişkili olabilir (Wang vd., 2019). Ayrıca tüketicilerin tercihlerinin olumsuz deneyimlerden ya da memnuniyetten etkilenmemesi (Henderson vd., 2021) ve geçmişteki alışkanlıklarını sürdürme eğilimi (Bozzo, 2002) olarak nitelendirildiğinde tüketici ataleti, olumsuz deneyimlerin ya da kriz zamanlarındaki gelişmelerin seyrini açıklamada bir rol oynayabilir.

H_5*: *Tüketici ataleti, mahremiyet endişesi ile hizmet sağlayıcısında kalma niyeti arasındaki ilişkiye aracılık eder.

H_6*: *Tüketici ataleti, özerkliğe verilen önem ile hizmet sağlayıcısında kalma niyeti arasındaki ilişkiye aracılık eder.

4. Tasarım ve Yöntem

Bu çalışma, kesitsel anket tasarımına sahiptir. Çevrim içi ortamda anket aracılığıyla 15 Şubat 2021 – 15 Mart 2021 tarihleri arasında kolayda örnekleme ile veriler toplanmıştır. Analize hazır son veri seti büyüklüğü 250’dir.

İlk aşamada, 272 katılımcıdan veri elde edilmiştir. Daha önce hiç Whatsapp kullanmadığını belirten 3 katılımcı ile son bir yıl içerisinde sadece Telegram kullandığını belirten 3 katılımcının veri setinden çıkarılmasının ardından geriye 266 katılımcı kalmıştır. 14 katılımcı dikkat sorularına doğru cevabı veremediği için dikkatsiz katılımcı olarak nitelendirilerek veri setinden çıkarılmış ve geriye 252 katılımcı kalmıştır. Son olarak, 2 katılımcı anketin tamamını cevaplamadığı için veriden çıkarılarak, analize hazır son veri seti olan 250 veri elde edilmiştir. Katılımcıların çoğunluğunu kadınlar oluştururken (%58), yaş aralığının 15-64 olduğu belirlenmiştir (= 29,68, ss = 9,56). Eğitim durumu incelendiğinde, lise veya altı eğitim derecesine sahip olanlar çok küçük bir oranla temsil edilirken (%3,6), lisans ve lisansüstü eğitim derecesine sahip olanlar katılımcıların çoğunluğunu oluşturmaktadır (%96,4). Ayrıca konuyla ilgili olarak katılımcıların son bir yıl içerisinde haberleşme uygulaması olarak hangi programları kullandığı sorulmuştur. Yalnızca WhatsApp kullananların ağırlıkta olduğu görülürken (%51,2), WhatsApp ve Telegram uygulamalarını birlikte kullananların da önemli bir oranda olduğu ifade edilebilir (%24).

Anket uygulaması başlamadan önce, anketi tamamlayan ve e-posta adresini paylaşmak isteyen her 100. katılımcıya, toplamda 4 adet olmak üzere, Amazon.com.tr adresinde geçerli 100 TL hediye çeki verileceği bilgisi paylaşılmıştır. Açıklamaların ardından katılımcıların rıza onam formları alınmıştır. Bu çalışmanın etik kurallara uygunluğu, İzmir Bakırçay Üniversitesi Etik Kurulu tarafından 08.06.2022 tarihli ve 626 sayılı kararla onaylanmıştır. Son olarak, ölçek ifadeleri ile karşılaşmadan önce katılımcılara aşağıda yer alan bilgilendirme notu sunulmuştur.

"WhatsApp, 4 Ocak 2021 tarihinde Türkiye'deki kullanıcıları için kullanım şartları ve gizlilik politikasında değişiklikler içeren bir düzenleme yapacağını duyurdu. Bu düzenlemeye göre, bir önceki kullanım şartlarında mevcut olan "WhatsApp hesap bilgilerini paylaşmama" seçeneğinin kaldırılması planlanıyordu. Bu durum WhatsApp kullanıcıları için verileri paylaşmanın zorunlu olacağı ve bunu kabul etmeyen kullanıcıların WhatsApp servisini daha fazla kullanamayacağı anlamına geliyordu."

Yukarıda yer alan bilgilendirme sonrasında değişkenlerin ölçümü yapılmıştır.

Mahremiyet endişesi, tek boyuttan ve dört ifadeden oluşan Bleier ve Eisenbeiss (2015) ile Dinev ve Hart (2004) tarafından geliştirilip test edilmiş olan ölçek ile ölçümlenmiştir.

Tüketici ataleti, tek boyuttan ve üç ifadeden oluşan Gray ve arkadaşları (2017) ile Han ve arkadaşları (2011) tarafından geliştirilip test edilmiş olan ölçek ile ölçümlenmiştir.

Özerkliğe verilen önem, tek boyuttan ve üç ifadeden oluşan Wendlant ve Schrader (2007) tarafından geliştirilmiş olan ölçek ile ölçümlenmiştir.

WhatsApp uygulamasında kalma niyeti ise Burnham ve arkadaşları (2003) tarafından geliştirilmiş olan tek soru ile ölçümlenmiştir.

Dikkatsiz cevaplayıcıları tespit ederek veri setinden çıkarabilmek için üç kontrol ifadesi anket içinde ölçek ifadeleri arasına konumlandırılmıştır. Bu kontrol ifadelerinde katılımcıların dikkatli cevaplayıcı olduklarını sergileyebilmeleri için iki (2) numaralı cevabı vermeleri istenmiştir. Daha önce değinildiği üzere, 14 katılımcı kontrol ifadelerine takılmış ve dikkatsiz cevaplayıcı olarak nitelendirilip veri setinden çıkarılmıştır. Ölçüme dair tüm detaylar Tablo 1'de görselleştirilmiştir.

Tablo 1. Ölçüm Detayları

Değişken	Ölçüm Düzeyi	Ölçek ifadeleri	Ölçeğin Kaynağı
Mahremiyet endişesi	[7-Likert] 1 = Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum 7 = Kesinlikle Katılıyorum	(i) Whatsapp'ın bilgilerimi gözetleyebiliyor olması beni rahatsız eder. (ii) Whatsapp'ın benim hakkımda çok fazla bilgiye sahip olması beni endişelendirir. (iii) Whatsapp'ın bilgilerime erişebiliyor olması beni rahatsız eder. (iv) Whatsapp'ın bana ait bilgileri bilgim ve iznim dışında kullanabilme ihtimali beni endişelendirir.	Bleier & Eisenbeiss (2015) Dinev & Hart (2004)
Tüketici ataleti	[7-Likert] 1 = Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum 7 = Kesinlikle Katılıyorum	(i) Yeni bir mesajlaşma servisine geçmek can sıkıcı olacaktır. (ii) Genel olarak, başka bir mesajlaşma servisine geçmek zahmetli ve rahatsız edici olacaktır. (iii) Benim için mesajlaşma servisimi değiştirmenin çaba ve zaman açısından maliyeti yüksektir.	Gray vd. (2017) Han vd. (2011)
Özerkliğe verilen önem	[7-Likert] 1 = Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum 7 = Kesinlikle Katılıyorum	(i) Aldığım Whatsapp hizmeti hususunda kısıtlanmaktan hoşlanmam. (ii) Aldığım Whatsapp hizmetini kısıtlama olmaksızın dilediğim gibi kullanmak isterim. (iii) Aldığım Whatsapp hizmetine ilişkin özgür seçim iradesine sahip olmak benim için önemlidir.	Wendlant & Schrader (2007)
Kalma niyeti (WhatsApp)	[% 0 - % 100 aralığı, kalma olasılığı] % 0 = 0 % 25 = 1 % 50 = 2 % 75 = 3 % 100 = 4	(i) Whatsapp uygulamasında kalma olasılığınız nedir?	Burnham vd. (2003)

5. Bulgular

Araştırma modelimizde yer alan değişkenlerin betimleyici istatistiklerine, içsel tutarlık düzeylerine ve kendi aralarında korelasyonlarına ilişkin bilgiler aşağıda yer alan Tablo 2'de yer almaktadır.

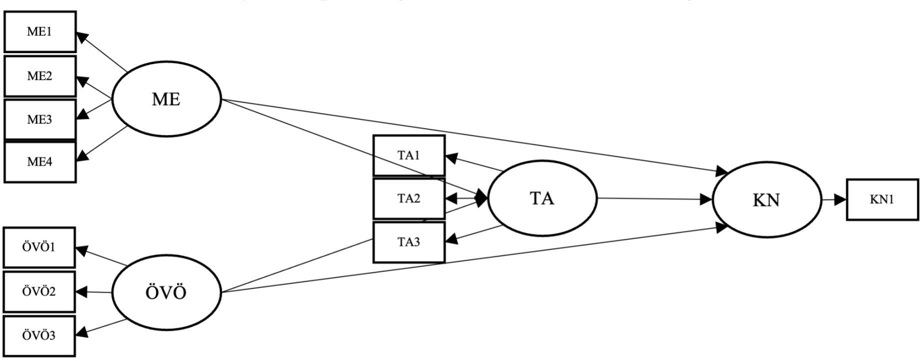
Tablo 2. Betimleyici İstatistikler

Değişken	Ortalama	Standart Sapma	α	Mahremiyet endişesi	Tüketici ataleti	Özerkliğe verilen önem	Kalma niyeti (WhatsApp)
Mahremiyet endişesi	6,10	1,32	,90	-	-	-	-
Tüketici ataleti	4,95	1,62	,83	-,04	-	-	-
Özerkliğe verilen önem	6,45	,93	,77	,40**	,18**	-	-
Kalma niyeti (WhatsApp)	3,02	,91	-	-,25**	,29**	-,18**	-

* = % 95 güven aralığında anlamlı, ** = % 99 güven aralığında anlamlı

Her ne kadar yukarıda yer alan korelasyon analizi ile bazı hipotezlerimiz test edilebilse de ölçüm hatalarını kontrol altında tutarak ve bütüncül perspektifle (Bagozzi ve Yi, 2012) hipotezlerimizi test edebilmek için Yapısal Eşitlik Modeli analizi aracılığıyla hipotez testleri gerçekleştirilmiştir.

İlk olarak ölçüm modeli test edilmiştir (Doğrulayıcı faktör analizi). Ölçüm modelinin veri ile oldukça uyumlu olduğu görülmüştür (χ^2 / df = ,933, p = ,582, GFI = ,976, TLI = ,989, CFI = ,991, SRMR = ,058, RMSEA = ,002). Ayrıca birleşik güvenilirlik açısından (composite reliability, CR) tüm değişkenlerin güvenilir olduğu görülmüştür (CR_{me} = ,91, CR_{ta} = ,87, $CR_{övö}$ = ,81). Öte yandan ortalama açıklanan varyans değerleri açısından da tüm değişkenlerin kritik değer olan ,50'den yüksek AVE değerine sahip olduğu (AVE_{me} = ,71, AVE_{ta} = ,70, $AVE_{övö}$ = ,58) ve dolayısıyla yakınsak geçerliliğe (convergent validity) sahip olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Değişkenlerin AVE değerleri ile diğer değişkenlerle olan korelasyon katsayıları karşılaştırıldığında ise tüm değişkenlerin ıraksak geçerliliğe (discriminant validity) sahip olduğu çıkarsanmaktadır (Bagozzi ve Yi, 2012).



Şekil 1. Yapısal Model

Ölçüm modeli testi ve beraberinde güvenilirlik ile geçerlilik testleri sonrasında hipotez testlerinin sınanacağı yapısal model test edilmiştir (Şekil 1). Yapısal modelin veri ile kabul edilebilir seviyede uyumlu olduğu görülmüştür (χ^2 / df = 2,143, p = ,001, GFI = ,950, TLI = ,959, CFI = ,973, SRMR = ,088, RMSEA = ,068). Yapısal modelin parametre tahminleri neticesinde hipotez test sonuçları Tablo 3'de yer almaktadır.

Tablo 3. YEM Analizi Sonuçları ve Hipotez Testleri

Hipotez	Test Sonucu	Yol katsayısı	SE	p
H_1	Desteklenmedi	-,033	,21	,084
H_2	Desteklendi	-,170	,86	,040
H_3	Desteklendi	-,084	,35	,018
H_4	Desteklendi	,589	,133	,001
H_5	Desteklendi (Tam aracı)	[-,165] [-,033]	[,26] [,21]	[,001] [,084]
H_6	Kısmi desteklendi (Kısmi aracı)	[-,185] [-,084]	[,34] [,35]	[,001] [,018]

[] [] = direkt etkinin aracı değişken öncesi ve sonrası (sırasıyla) tahminlerini temsil eder.

Yukarıda yer alan Tablo 3'de görüldüğü üzere, H_1 hipotezi %95 güven aralığında desteklenmemiştir. Fakat H_1 hipotezinin %90 güven aralığında desteklendiği de dikkat çekmektedir. Böylece mahremiyet endişesi ile hizmet sağlayıcısında kalma niyeti arasında zayıf bir negatif ilişki olduğu fakat bu ilişkinin şans ile açıklanabilecek kadar küçük olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Öte yandan H_2 hipotezinin ise desteklendiği tespit edilmiştir. Mahremiyet endişesi ile tüketici ataleti arasında tespit edilmiş olan ,17 büyüklüğündeki negatif ilişkinin %95 güven aralığında anlamlı olduğu görülmektedir. H_3 ve H_4 hipotezlerinin de %95 güven aralığında desteklendiği Tablo 3'den anlaşılmaktadır. Yani özerkliğe verilen önemin hizmet sağlayıcısında kalma niyeti ile negatif, tüketici ataleti ile pozitif ilişkili olduğu anlaşılmaktadır.

Aracılık hipotezleri olan H_4 ve H_5 hipotezlerinin testi için ise yapısal model kovaryans temelli yapısal eşitlik modeli analizi ile sınanmıştır. İki aşamalı şekilde gerçekleştirilen aracılık testi şu şekilde operasyonelleştirilmiştir. İlk aşamada, tüketici ataleti değişkeninin modelde yer almadığı yapısal model analiz edilmiştir. İkinci aşamada, tüketici ataletinin değişkeni modele dahil edilmiştir. İlk aşama model analizi neticesinde, mahremiyet endişesi ile hizmet sağlayıcısında kalma niyeti arasında tespit edilen negatif anlamsız ilişkinin, ikinci aşama model analizi neticesinde %95 güven aralığında anlamlı ilişkiye döndüğü ve ilişki katsayısının yükseldiği görülmüştür. Bu bulgu, tüketici ataleti değişkeninin mahremiyet endişesi ile hizmet sağlayıcısında kalma niyeti arasındaki ilişkide tam aracı rol oynadığını ortaya koymaktadır. Böylece H_5 desteklenmiştir. Aynı süreç H_6 hipotezinin testi için tekrarlanmıştır. İlk aşama model analizi neticesinde, özerkliğe verilen önem ile hizmet sağlayıcısında kalma niyeti arasında tespit edilen negatif anlamlı ilişkinin, ikinci aşama model analizi neticesinde yine anlamlı olduğu fakat ilişki katsayısının yükseldiği görülmüştür. Bu bulgu ise tüketici ataleti değişkeninin özerkliğe verilen önem ile hizmet sağlayıcısında kalma niyeti arasındaki ilişkide kısmi aracı rol oynadığını ortaya koymaktadır. Böylece H_6 kısmi desteklenmiştir.

6. Tartışma ve Sonuç

Bu çalışmada, mahremiyet endişesi ve özerkliğe verilen önemin kalma niyetiyle ilişkisinde tüketici ataletinin rolü incelenmiştir. Çalışmada elde edilen bulgulara göre, mahremiyet endişesi ile kalma niyeti arasındaki ilişki anlamsızdır. Ancak mahremiyet endişesi ve kalma niyeti arasındaki ilişkiye tüketici ataleti aracılık etmektedir. Diğer taraftan özerkliğe verilen önem ve kalma niyeti arasında negatif bir ilişki mevcuttur. Tüketici ataleti, özerkliğe verilen önem ile kalma niyeti arasındaki ilişkiye de aracılık etmektedir. Genel itibariyle değerlendirildiğinde bulgular, kişisel verilere ilişkin kriz anlarında tüketici ataletinin, kalma niyeti için önemli bir belirleyici olabileceğine işaret etmektedir.

Kişisel verilerin tüketiciler için yarattığı mahremiyet endişesi ve bu endişelerin yarattığı davranışsal tepkiler geçmiş çalışmalarda ortaya konmuş olsa da (Lwin vd., 2007; Bandara vd., 2020) bu çalışma kapsamında mahremiyet endişesiyle kalma niyeti arasında anlamlı bir ilişkiye ulaşılmamıştır. Bu durum, araştırmanın merkezinde yer alan WhatsApp uygulamasının tüketiciler tarafından yaygın bir şekilde kullanılmasından ve diğer kullanıcıların değiştirme/kalma kararlarının da süreci etkilemesinden kaynaklanıyor olabilir. Araştırmanın gerçekleştirildiği dönemde, WhatsApp tarafından yapılan düzenlemenin kabul edilmemesi durumunda uygulamanın kullanılamayacağı bilgisi, tüketicilerin seçim özgürlüklerinin kısıtlanmasıyla ilişkilidir. Çalışmanın bulguları doğrultusunda, özerkliğe verilen önem ile tüketicilerin kalma niyeti arasındaki ters yönlü ilişki, tüketiciler için seçim özgürlüğünün önemli olduğuna işaret etmektedir. Buradan hareketle işletmelerin ve hizmet sağlayıcıların bu türden kısıtlayıcı düzenlemeler konusunda daha temkinli olmaları gerektiği ifade edilebilir. WhatsApp'ın da benzer şekilde kısa süre içerisinde bu konuda geri adım attığını açıklaması bu görüşü desteklemektedir.

Geçmiş çalışmalar, tüketici ataleti arttıkça hizmet sağlayıcıyı değiştirme niyetinin azaldığını (Gray vd., 2017), tüketici ataleti eğilimine sahip tüketicilerin tatmin, güven ve bağlılık açısından ortalama değerlere sahip olduğunu (Bozzo, 2002), riskten kaçınma eğilimlerinin daha yüksek olduğunu (Kim, 2013) ve atalet zihniyetinin, statükoyu koruma yani mevcut durumu sürdürme isteğini arttırdığını göstermektedir (Henderson vd., 2021). Bu çalışmaların bulgularına paralel olarak, tüketici ataletinin kalma niyetiyle pozitif ilişkiye sahip olduğu bulunmuştur. Ancak, geçmiş çalışmalar tüketicilerin deneyimleyebileceği mahremiyet endişesi ve özgürlüğe yönelik tehdit durumlarında tüketici ataletinin rolüne odaklanmamıştır. Bu çalışma ilk olarak, tüketici ataletinin hem mahremiyet endişesi hem de özerkliğe verilen önem ile kalma niyeti arasındaki ilişkiye aracılık ettiğini ortaya koymuştur. Buna göre, tüketicilerin pasif bir şekilde alışkanlıklarını sürdürme eğilimiyle birlikte (Carter vd., 2016), yeni bir hizmet sağlayıcıya geçmeyi can sıkıcı ve zahmetli bulmaları (Cui vd., 2021), hizmet sağlayıcı tarafından yapılan düzenlemelerin yarattığı endişeye ve kısıtlara rağmen tüketicilerin kalmayı tercih etme ihtimallerinde belirleyici bir role sahiptir. Genel itibariyle değerlendirildiğinde, tüketicilerin hizmet sağlayıcıyı değiştirmek yerine kalma niyetini sürdürmesi tüketici ataletiyle ilişkili görünmektedir. Çalışma kapsamında elde edilen bu bulgular, uygulayıcıların uzun vadeli müşteri ilişkileri geliştirme ve müşterileri elde tutma bağlamında ataletin rolüne odaklanmasının faydalı olabileceğine işaret etmektedir.

İkinci olarak bu çalışma, dönem itibariyle kişisel verilere ilişkin bir kriz ortamında gerçekleştirildiği için varsayımsal bir senaryonun ötesinde bilgiler sunmaktadır. Geçmiş çalışmalar, tüketici ataletinin mevcut durumu korumayla ilişkisini ortaya koysa da (Gray vd., 2017; Henderson, 2021), bu tür bir kriz ortamı üzerinden çıkarımlar sağlamamaktadır. WhatsApp'ın yol açtığı kişisel veri mahremiyeti endişesi, çok sayıda kullanıcının tepkisine yol açmış ve alternatif arayışını beraberinde getirmiştir. WhatsApp'a yönelik olumsuz görüşlerin güçlendiği ve rakiplerin pazarlama iletişimi çabalarıyla daha görünür olduğu bu dönemde, tüketicilerin kalma niyetinde etkili olan mekanizmayı anlamak farklı bir perspektif sağlamaktadır. Mevcut çalışmanın bulguları tüketici ataletinin, yaşanan kriz dönemlerindeki olumsuz tutumlara ve değerlendirmelere karşın kalma niyetinde belirleyici olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Çalışma kapsamında elde edilen bu bulgular, geçmiş çalışmalarda kalma niyetinin önemli bir öncülü olarak işaret edilen tüketici ataletinin, kişisel verilerle ilgili kriz durumları için de geçerli bir rolü olduğunu ortaya koyarak kavramla ilgili tartışmanın bağlamını genişletmektedir.

Çalışmanın sonuçlarından hareketle uygulayıcılara yönelik bazı çıkarımlar yapmak da mümkündür. İlk olarak işletmelerin, tüketici ataleti ve sadakatin bilinç düzeyinde birbirinden farklılaşan olgular olduğunu (Cui vd., 2021) göz önünde bulundurarak kriz süreçlerinde müşteri ilişkileri yönetimini bu doğrultuda tasarlamaları önerilebilir. Buradan hareketle, müşterilerin kriz dönemlerinde kalmasını sağlayan faktörlerin tespit edilmesi ve farklılaşan müşteri gruplarına uygun pazarlama programlarının oluşturulması işletmelerin gereksiz pazarlama maliyetlerinden kaçınmasına yardımcı olabilir. Buna ek olarak daha yüksek atalet düzeyine sahip tüketicilerin pazarlama değişkenlerine daha duyarlı olduğundan hareketle (Huang ve Yu, 1999; Yanamandram ve White, 2004) kriz dönemlerinde pazarlama iletişimi ve fiyatla ilişkili çabalara ağırlık verilebilir. Ayrıca atalet, zayıf performans gösteren bir rakibin müşterilerini kazanmak için aşılması gereken bir engel olarak değerlendirilmektedir (Colgate ve Lang, 2001). Bu nedenle, ataleti azaltmaya yönelik çabaların rekabet üstünlüğü elde etmek açısından katkı sağlaması da mümkün olabilir. Ayrıca, müşteri memnuniyeti odaklı ve tüketici ataletini güçlendirmek için geçiş maliyetlerini artırmaya yönelik çabalar da (Gray vd., 2017) işletmelerin müşterileri elde tutmak için izleyebileceği bir yöntem olabilir. Kriz dönemlerinde dahi tüketici ataleti ve kalma niyeti arasındaki ilişkinin varlığı dikkate alındığında işletmelerin, alternatif hizmet sağlayıcılara geçiş maliyetlerini artırması önerilebilir. Ancak bu noktada bir dengenin sağlanması ve yaratılan geçiş maliyetlerinin, müşterilerin işletmeyle ilişkisine zarar vermemesi gerekliliği göz önünde bulundurulmalıdır.

Bu çalışmanın çeşitli kısıtları mevcuttur. Mevcut araştırma kesitsel tasarıma sahiptir ve katılımcının kendi beyanına dayalı bir ölçüme dayanmaktadır. Bu nedenle gelecek çalışmaların deneysel tasarım yardımıyla tüketici ataletiyle ilgili bulguları geliştirmesi söz konusu olabilir. Ayrıca, tüketici ataletine ek olarak, prosedürle ilgili, finansal ve ilişkisel boyutlarıyla değiştirme maliyetleri de (Burnham, 2003) kalma niyeti için açıklayıcı olabilir. Bu nedenle söz konusu boyutların kriz dönemleri için bir arada ele alınması bütüncül çıkarımlar yapmaya imkân tanıyabilir. Kısıtlanan davranışı gerçekleştirme isteği ile ilişkilendirilebilecek reaktans teorisinin de (Brehm, 1989), söz konusu ilişkileri düzenleyici bir etki yaratma ihtimali nedeniyle atalet ile ilişkili gelecek çalışmalarda araştırılması önerilebilir.

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CONSUMER INERTIA IN A CRISIS ENVIRONMENT: A STUDY ON WHATSAPP PERSONAL DATA REGULATION

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction

Consumers may have privacy concerns (Phelps et al., 2001) and feel hindered from making independent decisions (Wendlandt & Schrader, 2007) due to the restrictive regulations of businesses. The regulation on using personal data by the instant messaging application WhatsApp in early January 2021 caused similar consumer concerns. As with the Whatsapp regulation, the reasons why customers stay with their current service provider despite negative feedback and dissatisfaction are of interest to researchers. Consumer inertia is one concept that explains why consumers continue to use the same service provider even if they do not have a positive tendency (Gray et al., 2017). Consumer inertia is "an unconscious persistence without genuine loyalty, consisting of passive service commitment and unwillingness to exert effort" (Yanamandram & White, 2010). Past studies have addressed the concept in the context of different sectors and different circumstances (Bozzo, 2002; Yanamandram & White, 2004; Kim, 2013; Gray et al., 2017; Cao et al., 2022). However, the relationship between consumer inertia and intention to stay in a context that creates privacy concerns regarding personal data and restricts consumers' freedom has not yet been addressed. By focusing on this gap, this study aims to reveal the relationship between inertia and the intention to continue using the service in a crisis environment.

Conceptual Background

Businesses aim to create long-term relationships with consumers, but crisis and dissatisfaction prevent them from doing so. However, in some cases, even after negative experiences, consumers may maintain relationships with businesses. While consumers' reasons for staying or maintaining an existing relationship have long attracted the attention of researchers (Bendapudi & Berry, 1997; Colgate, Tong, Lee & Farley, 2007; Jones et al., 2002; Mahmoud et al., 2018), one of the concepts that explain this situation is consumer inertia. When consumer inertia is defined as passively repurchasing the same brand without intense mental effort, it is characterized as false loyalty (Gray et al., 2017). It differs from attitudinal loyalty, which refers to a strong decision to stick with a preferred service provider. (Lee and Neale, 2012). As well as inertia is associated with laziness and inactivity (Yanamandram & White, 2006); it is also expressed as the tendency to maintain habits. (Bozzo, 2002).

Privacy, another concept emphasized in this study, is defined as the individual's right to determine which data about them will be obtained, by whom, when, and how (Westin, 2003). In the context of consumption, while businesses aim to increase their sales and profitability, using personal data about consumers causes consumers to be concerned (Phelps et al., 2001). On the other hand, autonomy is related to individuals' ability to choose freely. In consumer choice, autonomy is defined as "the ability to make decisions on one's own, independent of external influences imposed by others" (Wertenbroch et al., 2020). Consequences such as privacy concerns and the perception of restrictions on autonomy that the regulations made by businesses may cause may negatively affect consumers' intention to maintain their relationship with the business. However, when consumers' preferences are not affected by negative experiences or dissatisfaction (Henderson et al., 2021) and the tendency to maintain their past habits (Bozzo, 2002), consumer inertia can explain the course of development in times of crisis. The hypotheses formed in the light of the above explanations are as follows:

H_1: *There is a negative relationship between privacy concerns and the intention to stay with the service provider.*

H_2: *There is a negative relationship between privacy concerns and consumer inertia.*

H_3: *There is a negative relationship between the importance of autonomy and the intention to stay with the service provider.*

H_4: *There is a positive relationship between the importance of autonomy and consumer inertia.*

H_5: *Consumer inertia mediates the relationship between privacy concerns and intention to stay with the service provider.*

H_6: *Consumer inertia mediates the relationship between the importance of autonomy and the intention to stay with the service provider.*

Method

The data of this study, which has a cross-sectional survey design, were collected by convenience sampling between February and March 2021. Two hundred fifty (250) data were included in the analysis. After the participants were informed about the study, the variables were measured. Privacy concern was measured with a one-dimensional, four-item scale developed and tested by Bleier & Eisenbeiss (2015) and Dinev & Hart (2004). Consumer inertia was measured with a one-dimensional and three-item scale developed and tested by Gray et al. (2017) and Han et al. (2011). The importance of autonomy was measured with the scale developed by Wendlant and Schrader (2007), which consists of one dimension and three items. The intention to stay in the WhatsApp application was measured with a single question developed by Burnham et al. (2003). Measurements were made using a 7-point Likert (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree).

Findings

The hypotheses proposed within the scope of the research were tested through the Structural Equation Model analysis with AMOS 26. First, the measurement model was tested (Confirmatory factor analysis). It was seen that the measurement model fit the data well (χ^2 / df = .933, p = .582, GFI = .976, TLI = .989, CFI = .991, SRMR = .058, RMSEA = .002). Also, in terms of composite reliability (CR), all variables were found to be reliable (CR_{pc} = .91, CR_{ci} = .87, CR_{ioa} = .81). On the other hand, in terms of average explained variance values, it was determined that all variables had AVE values higher than the critical value of .50 (AVE_{pc} = .71, AVE_{ci} = .70, AVE_{ioa} = .58) and thus had convergent validity. When the AVE values of the variables are compared with the correlation coefficients with other variables, it is deduced that all variables have discriminant validity (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). After the measurement model test and the reliability and validity tests, the structural model was tested. The structural model was found to fit with the data at an acceptable level (χ^2 / df = 2.143, p = .001, GFI = .950, TLI = .959, CFI = .973, SRMR = .088, RMSEA = .068). As a result of the structural model parameter estimations, it was determined that hypotheses other than H1 were supported.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined the role of consumer inertia in the relationship between privacy concerns and the importance given to autonomy with the intention to stay. According to the findings, the relationship between privacy concerns and the intention to stay is insignificant. However, consumer inertia mediates the relationship between privacy concerns and the intention to stay. On the other hand, there is a negative relationship between the importance given to autonomy and the intention to stay. This relationship is positively mediated by consumer inertia. When evaluated in general, the findings indicate that consumer inertia can be an important determinant of intention to stay in times of crisis regarding personal data. In line with the findings of past studies (Bozzo, 2002; Henderson et al., 2021), consumer inertia was found to be positively associated with the intention to stay.

The current study, unlike previous studies, focused on the role of consumer inertia in privacy concerns and threats to autonomy and revealed that inertia mediates the relationship between privacy concerns and the intention to stay. Also, inertia mediates the relationship between the importance of autonomy and the intention to stay. Secondly, this study provides information beyond a hypothetical scenario, as it was conducted in a crisis environment regarding personal data. The findings of the present study reveal that consumer inertia is a determinant in the intention to remain despite negative attitudes and evaluations during crisis periods, and in this context, they expand the context of the discussion on consumer inertia.

Based on the study's results, it can be suggested that businesses should develop marketing programs for customer management in crisis periods, focusing on the difference between consumer inertia and loyalty (Cui et al., 2021). Furthermore, businesses should pursue balanced approaches to increase the costs of switching providers while also considering customer interests (Gray et al., 2017) to retain customers.

(Araştırma)

CONTRACTUAL AND RELATIONAL GOVERNANCE, SUPPLIER INTEGRATION AND NEW PRODUCT PERFORMANCE: MODERATING ROLES OF SUPPLIER DEPENDENCE AND SUPPLIER-SPECIFIC INVESTMENT

Volkan YENİARAS[1]

ABSTRACT

This study provides deeper insight into the management of supplier integration and a better understanding of ways that companies in emerging economies should govern these relationships to enhance new product performance. Looking through the lens of relational governance, transactional cost, and resource dependence theories, we distinguish between the effects of relational and contractual governance on the outcome of supplier integration conditional to supplier dependence and supplier-specific investments. An analysis of dyadic survey data, which consists of 125 dyads (i.e., 125 manufacturers and 125 main suppliers) in Turkey, reveals that supplier dependence enhances the relationship between contractual governance and supplier integration while decreasing the relational governance – supplier integration relationship. In addition, we offer empirical evidence to suggest that supplier-specific investment has a negative effect on the relationship between supplier integration and new product performance. We also find that the indirect relationship between contractual governance and new product performance is at its highest at high levels of supplier dependence and low/medium levels of supplier-specific investments. Conversely, we discover that relational governance has the strongest relationship with new product performance at low levels of supplier dependence and supplier-specific investment.

Keywords: Contractual and relational governance, supplier integration, new product performance, supplier dependence, supplier-specific investment

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SÖZLEŞMEYE DAYALI VE İLİŞKİSEL YÖNETİŞİM, TEDARİKÇİ ENTEGRASYONU VE YENİ ÜRÜN PERFORMANSI: TEDARİKÇİ BAĞIMLILIĞININ VE TEDARİKÇİYE ÖZEL YATIRIMIN DÜZENLEYİCİ ROLLERİ

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, tedarikçi entegrasyonunun yönetimine ilişkin daha derin bir kavrayış ve gelişmekte olan ekonomilerdeki şirketlerin yeni ürün performansını artırmak için bu ilişkileri yönetmesi gereken yolların daha iyi anlaşılmasını sağlar. İlişkisel yönetişim, işlemsel maliyet ve kaynak bağımlılığı teorilerinin merceğinden bakıldığında, tedarikçi bağımlılığına ve tedarikçiye özgü yatırımlara bağlı olarak tedarikçi entegrasyonunun sonucu üzerindeki ilişkisel ve sözleşmeye dayalı yönetişimin etkileri arasında ayrım yapıyoruz. Türkiye'de 125 ikiliden (125 üretici ve 125 ana tedarikçi) oluşan ikili anket verilerinin analizi, tedarikçi bağımlılığının sözleşmeye dayalı yönetişim ve tedarikçi entegrasyonu arasındaki ilişkiyi geliştirirken ilişkisel yönetişim-tedarikçi entegrasyonu ilişkisini azalttığını ortaya koymaktadır. Ek olarak, tedarikçiye özgü yatırımın, tedarikçi entegrasyonu ile yeni ürün performansı arasındaki ilişki üzerinde olumsuz bir etkiye sahip olduğunu öne süren ampirik kanıtlar sunuyoruz. Ayrıca, sözleşmeye dayalı yönetişim ile yeni ürün performansı arasındaki dolaylı ilişkinin, yüksek düzeyde tedarikçi bağımlılığı ve düşük/orta düzeyde tedarikçiye özgü yatırımlarda en yüksek seviyede olduğunu bulduk. Tersine, ilişkisel yönetişimin, düşük tedarikçi bağımlılığı ve tedarikçiye özgü yatırım seviyelerinde yeni ürün performansıyla en güçlü ilişkiye sahip olduğunu keşfediyoruz.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sözleşmeye dayalı yönetişim, ilişkisel yönetişim, tedarikçi entegrasyonu, tedarikçi bağımlılığı, tedarikçiye özel yatırım

1. Introduction

In PWC's 2022 survey on supply chain trends[2], 64 percent of 244 participating operations and technology leaders identified securing raw materials from suppliers as a moderate to major risk, while 68 percent highlighted supplier operational issues, and 58 percent perceived the financial health of the supplier as areas of moderate to major risk. Under such conditions, logistics managers need to be wary of strategies to ascertain sourcing and procurement while overseeing supply management pursuits (Stank et al., 2005) to avoid the adverse effects of dependence on suppliers (Maltz & Ellram, 1997; Petersen, Handield, Lawson & Cousins, 2008). Supplier integration strategy, where the supplier becomes dependent on the buyer to enhance performance while the buyer continues to depend on the supplier for services or materials, makes supplier integration a powerful dependence-coping mechanism for buyers (Freije, de la Calle & Ugarte; 2022; Kull & Ellis, 2016). Nevertheless, in relationships where the buyer is dependent on the supplier, the supplier is not equally willing to integrate since the balance of power within the exchange is tilted toward the supplier (Emerson, 1962). This causes the supplier not to be equally cooperative, resulting in weaker buyer-supplier integration (Williamson, 1985), which may reduce the buyer's ability to the external acquisition, outsourcing, and cost reduction (Das, Narashiman, & Talluri, 2006; Handfield & Ragatz, 1999).

To mitigate risks and promote supplier cooperation in their attempts to integrate with their suppliers, buyers rely on governance mechanisms (Carey et al., 2011; Lumineau & Quélin, 2012; Memis & Korucuk, 2021). The extant literature recognizes relational and contractual governance as antecedents of successful inter-organizational relationships in general (Kwon & Suh, 2004; Kingshott, 2006; Hawkins et al., 2008) and supplier integration specifically (e.g., Cai, Cheng, Shi & Feng, 2022; Cao and Lumineau 2015; Huo et al. 2016; Li et al. 2010; Sheng et al. 2018; Yang et al. 2016). Nevertheless, the role that both relational and contractual governance may play in supplier integration where the buyer depends on the supplier has not been empirically tested. In this study, to add to the limited extant literature (Carr et al., 2008; Krause & Scannell, 2002), we scrutinize relational and contractual governance as strategic tools that may be resorted to when supplier firms face a dilemma regarding whether to provide valuable resources to a few dominant customers or offer them to a more expanded customer base (Irvine, Park & Yildizhan, 2016).

Supplier integration aims to make information and material exchanges between a company and its suppliers more effective and efficient, creating streamlined processes and coherent supply networks that are challenging for rivals to match (Memis & Korucuk, 2021; Yeung et al. 2009; Lai et al. 2012; Zhao et al. 2013).

2 Last access: 28/07/2022: https://www.pwc.com/us/en/services/consulting/business-transformation/digital-supply-chain-survey.html

This also helps manufacturers to establish a sustainable competitive advantage through co-value creation in developing new products with suppliers (Hartley, Zirger, & Kamath, 1997; Petersen, Handfield, & Ragatz, 2003). Supplier-specific investments, which are investments done by the buying company that is exclusively committed to a particular supplier, are often used to incentivize the supplier to the relationship and to return the buyer's investment (Bensaou & Anderson, 1999). The extant literature underscores the performance benefits of supplier-specific investments (Dyer & Singh, 1998; Pulles, Ellegaard & Waldman, 2022). Nevertheless, there exists a dark side of such investments, which may create unplanned lock-in effects (Dyer, Singh & Hesterly, 2018), limiting knowledge sharing for innovation (Noordhoff et al., 2011) and market orientation capabilities of parties in collaboration (Wei & Morgan, 2004). Successful new product performance is becoming the chief factor behind sustainable competitive advantage and the main element of a company's success (Loch, Stein & Terwiesch, 1996; Thomas, 2013). We aim to uncover whether supplier-specific investments have new product performance implications in buyer-supplier relationships where supplier integration exists. Based on these issues, our research questions can be condensed as follows:

RQ1. What are the dissected effects of contractual and relational governance to supplier integration at different levels of supplier dependence?

RQ2. How does a supplier-specific investment affect the relationship between supplier integration and the new product performance of the manufacturer?

RQ3. How does contractual and relational governance affect new product performance through supplier integration and, ultimately, new product performance at varying levels of (1) supplier dependence and (2) supplier-specific investment?

We build a conceptual model encompassing four hypotheses to scrutinize our research questions. Through empirical observation, we test our hypotheses using a dyadic survey research design to capture both the manufacturer's and the supplier's perspectives. To that end, we use survey data from a total of 250 SMEs, which consists of 125 dyads of a manufacturing firm and its main supplier. We test our hypotheses by using a dyadic SME sample in Turkey for four reasons. First, we intend to address calls to test the role of supplier integration in firm performance in an emerging market (Simpson, Meredith, Boyer, Dilts, Ellram & Leong, 2015; Kouvelis, Chambers &Wang 2006; Zhang et al., 2022). Second, and relatedly, SMEs in emerging economies have significantly restricted internal and external capital equity (Schiffer & Weder, 2001; Yeniaras et al., 2021) and professional ability (Hitt, Li & Worthington IV, 2005) in comparison with developed economy SMEs (Yeniaras et al., 2020). The lack of such vital resources makes it imperative for emerging economy SMEs to rely on external capital (Yildirim, Akci & Eksi, 2011) that they may have access via interfirm integration (Yeniaras, Kaya & Ashill, 2020; Zhou & Poppo, 2010). Third, Turkey continues to perform strongly in the global economy from 1999 to 2022, with an average GDP growth rate of 6.8 %. Turkish businesses are driven to achieve worldwide success. Fourth, research pertinent to examining governance and supplier integration mainly draws from transaction cost, relational exchange, and resource dependence theories (Kwon & Suh, 2004; Kingshott, 2006; Hawkins et al., 2008; Tangpong et al., 2010). Nevertheless, while the extant literature uses single respondent and dyadic samples when customers and suppliers are in the same relationship, antecedents and dynamics are rarely evaluated between buyers and suppliers in the same relationship (O'Toole & Donaldson, 2002; Terpend et al., 2008). To fill this gap, we use 125 dyads, which consist of a manufacturing firm and its main supplier.

In a nutshell, the purpose of the study is to dissect interfirm governance into relational and contractual governance mechanisms and examine their distinct relations to supplier integration and new product performance where (1) the manufacturer is dependent on the supplier for the procurement of vital resources and where (2) supplier-specific investments are made. Theoretically, this study unpacks whether relational and contractual governance mechanisms are dependence-coping mechanisms. Simultaneously, this study specifies the boundary conditions where contractual and relational governance achieves higher new product performance levels via supplier integration. Managerially, we aim to provide emerging economy SME manufacturers with a toolbox that will help them increase new product performance levels through the pursuit of supplier integration strategies. Concurrently, this study tries to uncover whether supplier-specific investments hinder or enhance the relationship between supplier integration and new product performance. This will help emerging-economy SME managers to better manage their already restricted resources while integrating with their suppliers.

2. Overview of the conceptual model

Firms are not self-sufficient; they depend on other organizations for vital resources, which makes them vulnerable and weaker in an exchange relationship (Provan & Gassenheimer 1994). The buyer's dependence on the supplier, where the supplier mediates the buyer's goals, restricts the buyer's capacity to secure value in the exchange relationship (Priem & Swink 2012). In such instances, suppliers may be implementing harsh treatments, refusing knowledge, and offering inadequate service to obtain benefits from dependent buyers (Kumar et al., 1995). While the anecdotal and descriptive evidence indicates that the buyers may be benefiting from buyer-supplier relationships at the expense of the suppliers (e.g., Womack et al. 1990, Helper & Sako 1995), suppliers may employ financial and operational reprimands (Gundlach & Codotte, 1994) and engage in opportunistic action (Lumineau & Henderson, 2012) in their relationships with dependent buyers. Given this potential of supplier opportunism, buyers, as a potent dependence-coping mechanism, attempt to integrate with suppliers, where the suppliers also become reliant on the buyer for performance improvements. This integrative strategy suppresses high supply-dependent conditions for buyers (Gundlach &

Cadotte 1994). In the process of this integration, buyers depend on governance instruments to alleviate risks and encourage collaboration (Carey et al., 2011; Lumineau & Quelin, 2012).

Traditionally, the extant literature approaches supply chain governance from two theoretical perspectives, namely relational and contractual governance. The first viewpoint considers relational governance as a technique for regulating inter-organizational interaction by enforcing a set of standards that define satisfactory conduct among exchange parties (Heide & John, 1992; Lusch & Brown, 1996; Macneil, 1980). The relational governance lens, which draws from relational exchange theory (Macneil, 1980; Palmetier et al., 2007), suggests that as the buyer-supplier relationship evolves temporarily, the relational values of participation, flexibility, cohesion and trust (Griffith & Myers, 2005) will emerge to ascertain the longevity of the relationship and restrict the individual goals of the parties (Heide & John, 1992; Zhang et al., 2003). The second perspective, which draws from transaction cost economics (Williamson, 1985), focuses on the chief role of contractual governance between the trading partners (i.e., buyers and suppliers) and formalizes a set of rules and clauses. This ensures that conflict and opportunism are minimized. Contractual governance mechanisms ascertain this minimization by specifying the responsibilities, monitoring processes, and penalties for non-compliance to be performed by the exchanging parties (Poppo & Zenger, 2002; Reuer & Arino, 2007). Nevertheless, the dissected dependence-coping role that relational and contractual governance mechanisms may play in supplier integration remains to be scrutinized. Our research focuses on the performance consequences of governance preferences that come with buyer-supplier relationships where the buying party is dependent on the supplier and seeks to integrate with its main supplier. Furthermore, we aim to understand the performance implications of supplier integration given varying degrees of manufacturer supplier-specific investment, as exhibited in Figure 1.

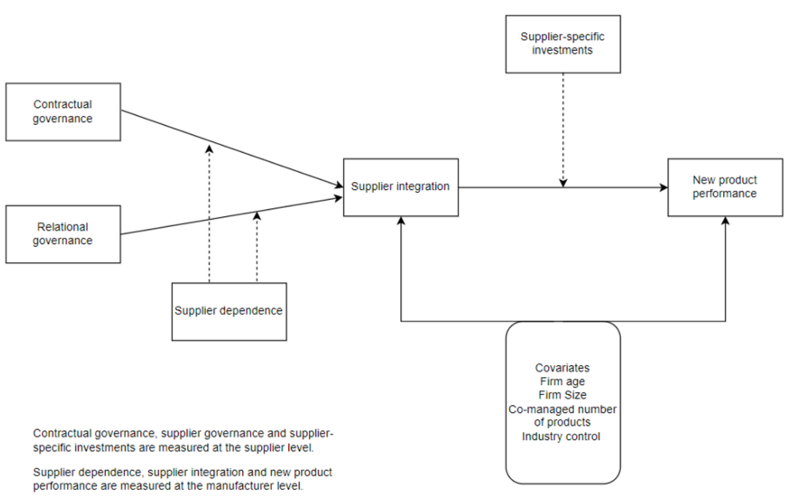

Figure 1. Conceptual framework

2.1. Contractual governance

Due to the relationship between power dynamics in a relationship and dependency (Bresnen, 1996; Buchanan, 1992), the supplier may be inclined to exploit its strong dominance, which could lead to opportunistic actions and conflicts (Heide & John, 1988; Kumar, Scheer, & Steenkamp, 1995). Given that the manufacturer is dependent on a specific supplier and that there is a limited number of supplier options, the supplier will be less concerned about the effects of any hidden action, should they ever become evident (Steinle, Schiele, & Ernst, 2014). In such conditions, the manufacturer dependent on a supplier may rely on formal and legal contracts where both partners explicitly specify their responsibilities, requirements, and expectations (Cao & Lumineau, 2015) to minimize opportunism and ascertain long-term collaborations (Williamson, 1985). To that end, we draw from transactional cost theory (henceforth, TCT), which suggests that fitting governance mechanisms should be in place to control potential deviations that may be caused by asset specificity and uncertainty (Williamson, 1985) from previously agreed-upon inter-organizational responsibilities. TCT, which is extensively employed in investigations encompassing contractual governance (e.g., Cai & Yang, 2008; Malhorta & Lumineau, 2011), underlines the importance of contractual governance in maintaining inter-organizational relationships where parties rely on formal (Li et al., 2010), legal (Achrol & Gundlach, 1999), explicit (Zhou & Poppo, 2010) or legitimate contracts (Lui & Ngo, 2004).

Contractual governance may be used as an exchange hazard control mechanism (Weber & Mayer, 2011), which helps coordinate inter-organizational relationships. Nevertheless, TCT also acknowledges that contractual governance may not be as effective due to bounded rationality and opportunism (Williamson, 1985). First, incomplete contracts (e.g., lack of specific clauses) may not only create room for opportunistic behavior (Luo, 2002) but also constrain the flexibility of the inter-organizational partnership (Briody et al., 2004) due to its ineffectiveness in regulating both parties' behavior in unanticipated conditions. Second, contracts indicate a dearth of trust, which is damaging to cooperation (Ghoshal & Moran, 1996; Poppo & Zenger, 2002). Finally, the strict use of contracts may cause disputes and corrosion of inter-organizational trust (Cao et al., 2013), degrading the cooperation between the parties (Cao & Lumineau, 2015).

2.2. Relational governance

Relational exchange theory (henceforth, RET) offers an alternative theoretical lens to TCT. RET underlines the importance of relational norms in the scrutiny of the actions that are likely in inter-organizational relationships (Palmatier et al., 2007). According to RET, relational requirements like adaptability, knowledge sharing, and solidarity remind cooperating partners that their relationship is complete and that they should act in accordance with mutual relational norms (e.g., Heide & John; Gencturk & Aulakh, 2007). Relational governance, as opposed to contractual governance, which depends on official composition and third-party implementation, relies on informal structure and self-enforcement by every single partner (e.g., Malhorta & Munighan, 2002). The extant literature considers trust (i.e., belief in the other person's honesty, reliability, and goodness in an uncertain exchange) and relational norms (i.e., mutually shared expectations as predictors of future actions of the collaborating parties (Cannon et al., 2000; Heide & John, 1992). RET assumes that strong mutual inter-organizational trust ascertains that the parties will act in the expected ways. As a result, trust and relational rules are viewed as crucial governance mechanisms limiting opportunism (Liu et al., 2009; Poppo & Zenger, 2002). Nevertheless, risks do exist, as trust has limits; it cannot be taken for granted and is susceptible to erosion (Dasgupta, 1988). RET suggests that in relationally governed inter-organizational relationships, both parties have faith that the other will not take advantage of unfavorable circumstances (Barney & Hansen, 1994). That is because relational norms and trust reduce opportunistic inclinations as they lay the foundation of references to guide the firms in collaboration (Liu et al., 2009). Nevertheless, given that when the incentives are right, even a trustworthy party may defect (Dasgupta, 1988), relational governance is also jeopardized by opportunism due to its ambitious nature (Cannon et al., 2000; Dyer & Singh, 1998; Uzzi, 1997).

2.3. Contractual governance, supplier dependence, and supplier integration

In the transaction cost framework, dependence creates an opportunism potential in the buyer-supplier relationship that the dependent party faces in exchanges (Eckerd & Sweeney, 2018; Joshi & Arnold, 1997). In manufacturer-supplier relationships specifically, supplier dependence refers to the manufacturer's need to maintain a connection with a specified supplier to achieve its objectives (Frazier, 1983). In such relationships, the balance of power within the exchange is skewed towards the supplier (Emerson, 1962), which may lead to the use of less cooperative means and the problem of opportunism (Williamson, 1985), hence weaker integration with the supplier. According to TCE, using contractual governance to manage operations and minimize supplier opportunism where the manufacturer is dependent on the supplier may help both parties attain reciprocal objectives (Dwyer et al., 1987; Poppo & Zenger, 2002; Wu et al., 2007). Contractual governance, which refers to the design, application, and enforcement of the contractual clauses (Faems et al., 2008; Zhou & Xu, 2012), ascertains and identifies the parties' roles, obligations, and responsibilities prior to the exchange (Luo, 2002; Wuyts & Geyskens, 2005). We acknowledge that manufacturer-supplier exchange may lead to mutual adaptation where actors develop trust and a long-lasting relationship (Nooteboom, 1996). Nevertheless, trust is not unbounded and cannot be taken for granted, especially when the manufacturer is dependent on the supplier to secure vital resources. Given that when the incentives are right, even a trustworthy party may defect (Dasgupta, 1988), contractual governance may be used as a coping mechanism in exchanges where there exists a buyer dependency where the supplier may be tempted to take advantage of its stronger position (Steinle, Schiele, & Ernst, 2014).

A manufacturer may become reliant on a supplier once the supplier has mastered crucial resources for dealing with environmental dynamics and uncertainties (Zhao, Pan, & Song, 2018). Manufacturers pursue a supplier integration strategy to secure critical resources and learn, transfer, and apply the knowledge that may be obtained from the suppliers. Nevertheless, we believe that contractual governance may be leveraged to minimize the costs of running the system (Coase, 1937) and stimulate familiarity, trust, and mutual goal establishments in the manufacturer-supplier relationship (Gulati, 1995). Considering that the balance of power is skewed towards the supplier in exchanges where the manufacturer is dependent, the supplier party may seek to terminate the relationship and/or engage in opportunistic behavior (Poppo & Zenger, 2002). Accordingly, we believe that managers may use contracts to avoid such obstructionist behavior. Contracts outline needed not only tasks and conditions of the contractual breach but also a framework for resolving unforeseen disagreements, promoting the length of partnerships, and enabling easier supplier integration for dependent manufacturers. Accordingly, we hypothesize the following:

H1: *Supplier dependence positively moderates the relationship between contractual governance and supplier integration*

2.4. Relational governance, supplier dependence, and supplier integration

Prior research has connected the significance of supply chain integration to competitive advantage, performance, and low transaction costs (Lee & Billington, 1992; Frohlich & Westbrook, 2001; Zhao et al., 2008). Although some empirical investigations have failed to find a link between supplier integration and performance consequences (Swink, Narasimhan, & Wang 2007; Flynn, Huo, & Zhao 2010; Lai et al. 2012; Zhao et al. 2013), a developing stream of research demonstrates that supplier integration causes more probable advantages (Frohlich & Westbrook 2001; Huo 2012; Alfalla-Luque, Medina-Lopez, & Dey 2013; Moyano-Fuentes, Sacristán-Daz, & Garrido-Vega 2016).

The resource dependence theory (RDT) is that organizations are immersed in a network of exchanges and rely on other corporations to survive (Kim & Zhu, 2018; Li et al., 2018; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). The criticality of the resources, the size of the purchases, the accessibility of substitute partners, and the cost of switching can all impact an organization's dependence (Gelderman & van Weele, 2004). As such, manufacturers interact swiftly and efficiently with their suppliers to supply customized goods to their clients promptly and may rely on a supplier for essential tangible and intangible resources (Zhan & Huo, 2013). This setting necessitates a considerable adjustment in mindset for businesses, where the supplier is viewed as a collaborator rather than a competitor (Stock et al., 2010). A company can integrate with suppliers by proactively engaging with suppliers and cooperatively managing inter-organizational processes (Flynn, Huo, & Zhao 2010).

Supplier integration relates to the relationship between a company and its primary supplier that entails information sharing, collaboration in planning, and cooperative production development in order to overcome inter-organizational barriers. It allows companies to collaborate more successfully with just a few key suppliers willing to take responsibility for the product performance. Supplier integration seamlessly integrates buyers' and suppliers' key competencies and abilities to create greater service offerings at lower costs. As a result, supplier integration refers to the level of cooperation between suppliers and manufacturers in managing inventories, planning, forecasting, replenishment, and physical resource flows. (Wong et al., 2011).

Supplier integration allows for outsourcing and external acquisitions, reducing the internal complexity of product development or allowing the producer to concentrate on the subset of project tasks where they can use their key competencies, skills, and information, greatly reducing the project schedule and accelerating the process (Tessarolo, 2007; Richey, Roath, Whipple & Fawcett, 2010). Supplier integration also strives to increase the efficacy and efficiency of information and material exchanges between a firm and its suppliers, resulting in seamless operations and cohesive supply networks that are difficult for competitors to match (Yeung et al. 2009; Lai et al. 2012; Zhao et al. 2013).

According to RDT, asymmetric dependence creates uncertainty for the more reliant firm. Besides, in manufacturer-supplier partnerships, relational governance has little impact on curbing opportunism. Relational governance's collaborative planning behaviors do, in fact, give opportunistic behaviors more leeway, and appropriate information sharing between partners in enterprises is necessary for cooperative planning behaviors, which subsequently provides possibilities for partners to participate in opportunistic behaviors (Dong, Ma, & Zhou, 2017).

Suppliers might be considered key resources since firms need information and knowledge from supply chain partners to not only improve their capabilities but also gain a competitive advantage (Pires, Dean & Rehman, 2015; Swink, Narasimhan & Wang, 2007). It is difficult for a manufacturer to get vital resources from its suppliers by building an arm's length partnership if the degree of dependence on a supplier is high (Zhang & Huo, 2013). In this instance, the manufacturer may be better off creating secure and long-term ties (Swink, Narasimhan & Wang, 2007). On the contrary, when the degree of reliance on suppliers is less significant, the manufacturer is less likely to form long-term partnerships with its suppliers. Suppliers may engage in opportunistic behaviors detrimental to the relationship on this occasion (Yeung, Selen, Zhang & Huo, 2009; Chae, Choi & Hur, 2017). As a result, the manufacturer will be hesitant to form long-term partnerships with its suppliers. In conclusion, if a company is reliant on its suppliers, it is more likely to involve them in cooperative problem-solving efforts.

Organizational dependence degrees in a particular reciprocal trade relation frequently vary in extent, resulting in asymmetry (Emerson, 1962). As a result, the party that is more reliant on the relationship is advised to implement balancing measures in order to lessen the asymmetry in their dependency, such as finding a new partner and limiting the number of transactions with the dominant enterprise (Emerson, 1962). In addition, regulating supplier behavior through personal interactions (i.e., relational governance) necessitates the allocation of a significant amount of initial resources (Shi et al., 2014), which SMEs simply do not possess. In such relationships where the balance of power within the exchange is skewed towards the supplier (Emerson, 1962), the benefits obtained outweigh the cost of development and cultivation of supplier integration via relational governance. Consequently, we offer the following hypothesis:

H2: *Supplier dependence negatively moderates the relationship between relational governance and supplier integration*

2.5. Supplier integration, supplier-specific investment and new product performance

The new product development process involves a chain of intra-firm operations and a network of inter-firm processes due to its information and resource requirements (Mele, Spena, & Colurcio, 2010). This necessitates manufacturers to integrate externally with suppliers (Hartley, Zirger, & Kamath, 1997; Petersen, Handfield, & Ragatz, 2003), which enables the restructuring of inter-organizational strategies, procedures, and actions into synchronized collaborations to create value that may not have been possible otherwise (Das, Narasimhan & Talluri, 2006; He, Lai, Sun, & Chen, 2014; Jayaram & Tan, 2010). Supplier integration, which refers to the coordination of choices connected to inventory management, concerted forecasting, renewal, and the flow of resources (Wong, Boon-Itt, & Wong, 2011), allows the manufacturers to access external talent and capabilities, which may be leveraged to establish a significant advantage in new product development (Peterson, Handfield, & Ragatz, 2003; Tessarolo, 2007). In addition to opportunities that it provides to manufacturers to learn, transfer and apply external knowledge, supplier integration also benefits the manufacturers in lowering costs through economies of scale and scope through volume consolidation (Das, Narashiman, & Talluri, 2006) and lower product and process development and administrative costs (Handield & Ragatz, 1999), which results in improved new product performance (Flynn et al., 2010; Koufteros et al., 2005).

To improve new product performance, manufacturers may choose to engage in idiosyncratic investments that are specialized in their relationship with their suppliers. These relationship / supplier-specific investments, which are not easily recoverable (Ganesan, 1994), are exclusively devoted to a particular supplier and do not carry much worth out of this relationship (Bensaou & Anderson, 1999). The rationale behind these investments is that they indicate dedication and intent to invest in an extended relationship, which encourages the supplier to pledge to the affiliation and return the buyer's investment as the investment may stimulate the supplier to prioritize the investing manufacturer over the others. Considering that the performance of a firm is chiefly reliant on its suppliers' performance, knowledge-sharing procedures and supplier development systems are customary (Dyer & Hatch, 2006; Mesquita, Anand, & Brush, 2008). As a result, suppliers compare the relational value of buyers using supplier-specific investment as a criterion to assess the value acquired in alternate relationships (Steensma & Lyles, 2000). In such circumstances, the investing manufacturer is perceived as preferable and therefore prioritized by the supplier. As a result, the supplier-specific investment may improve supplier resource allocation and ensure performance benefits which would not be possible at lower supplier-specific investment levels (Pulles, Ellegaard & Veldman, 2022).

Supplier-specific investments act as incentives to have suppliers' priority and underline the positive performance consequences of relational/supplier-specific investments (Dyer & Singh, 1998). For instance, long-term-oriented buyers that invest in their specific suppliers to keep a close relationship may receive the supplier's newest technologies, efforts, and ideas, which are critical for a successful collaboration and increased new product performance (Dyer, 1997). Nevertheless, the relational view also alludes to possible adverse implications of supplier-specific investment (Dyer, Singh, & Hesterly, 2018). For instance, a contrasting dark-side view of supplier-specific investment suggests that such investments may lead to an embeddedness problem which may impair knowledge sharing for innovation (Noordhoff et al., 2011). That is because such partnerships may lead to increased competition in the form of a learning race as their resources and thinking converge (Anderson & Jap, 2005; Moorman, Zaltman & Deshpande, 1992; Dyer et al., 2018) due to the nearness trap that the parties in collaboration may find themselves in at high levels of supplier-specific investment (Ahuja & Morris Lampert, 2001). Also, we believe that a high level of supplier-specific investment may have a detrimental effect on both buyer's and supplier's connection with the market in general. That is because both parties will search for ideas for innovation in the locality of the knowledge, skills and resources they already have (Zahra, Yavuz, & Ucbasaran, 2006), limiting their market orientation, which is an essential factor of new product success (Wei & Morgan, 2004). Accordingly, we hypothesize the following:

H3: *Supplier-specific investment negatively moderates the relationship between supplier integration and new product performance.*

2.6. Mediating role of supplier integration

Integrating with important suppliers gives businesses access to outside talent and resources, which they can use to gain a significant competitive advantage in new product development (Peterson, Handfield, & Ragatz, 2003; Tessarolo, 2007). Nevertheless, this makes it increasing difficulty for manufacturers to reinstate the implicit expertise and social capital developed in partnership (Monczka et al., 2000; Peteresen, Handfield & Ragatz, 2003), since the supplier would have been "designed into" the product, which enhances the comparative reliance of the buyer on the supplier (Petersen, Handfield, Lawson & Cousins, 2008). In such situations, the buyer will seek a closer relationship with the supplier and ideally incorporate them into the company to safeguard stability. Nevertheless, the more powerful supplier will often feel under-compensated or short-changed (Kumar et al., 1995) and will use less cooperative means (Williamson, 1985).

RDT states that limitations imposed on an organization by its environment can be reduced by making the environment steady when one actor (i.e., buyer/manufacturer) cannot fully control all the conditions (i.e., dependency of the buyer) required for the accomplishment of an action or a preferred result (i.e., supplier integration) (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978; Pfeffer 1981). In an attempt to achieve the desired outcome, the manufacturer will work closely with the supplier forming formal strategic partnerships (Peterson et al., 2008) while simultaneously engaging in the development of mutual trust, information sharing, and respect (Peterson et al., 2008). The extant literature suggests that to control any potential deviations and opportunistic actions that may occur during integration efforts (Williamson, 1985), buyers can use relational and/or contractual governance. To that end, prior research used social exchange, relational exchange, and transactional cost theories as distinct and/or matching theories to scrutinize the antecedents and success of supplier integration (e.g., Poppo & Zenger, 2002; Reuer & Arino, 2007; Lumineau & Henderson, 2012; Cao & Lumineau, 2015).

To add to the extant literature on managing supplier relationships via relational and contractual governance, we introduce supplier dependence as the intervening variable that moderates the relationship between relational and contractual governance and integration, as shown in the conceptual model depicted in Figure 1. In H1, we argue a positive moderation effect of supplier dependence on the relationship between contractual governance and supplier integration. In H2, we projected a negative moderation effect of supplier dependence on the relationship between relational governance and supplier integration. In addition, in H3, we argue that supplier-specific investment negatively moderates the relationship between supplier integration and new product performance. The conceptual framework and the hypotheses that we develop in this study points toward a conditional mediating effect of supplier integration. That is, the indirect effect of supplier dependence on new product performance will be dependent on relational governance, contractual governance, and supplier-specific investment. Accordingly, we offer the following hypothesis:

H4: *The indirect effect of supplier dependence on new product performance will be conditional on relational governance, contractual governance, and supplier-specific investment.*

3. Methods

3.1. Sample

To examine the previously illustrated conceptual model in Figure 1, we used a dyadic research design to capture both the manufacturer and the supplier perspectives. One dyad consists of one logistics manager in a manufacturing firm and one product manager in the main supplier matched by a numerical code in the respective questionnaire. To collect this matched, multi-source, and multi-respondent data set; first, we randomly chose 3420 manufacturing SMEs in Turkey from a list of manufacturers prepared by the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey. The list included the email and telephone information of all listed SMEs in the country. Second, we contacted 842 of all listed manufacturing firms and had 132 companies opt to take part in our study. Next, to prevent any potential single-source bias problems, we asked the manufacturing firms that opted in to identify their main suppliers and asked those suppliers to take part in our study. As a result, we obtained 125 usable dyads, which consist of a manufacturing firm and its main supplier. The data collection was approved by the internal review board of the American University of Sharjah in the 24th of May, 2018, and with the document number EFRG18-AAB-SBA-80.[3]

The size of the companies varied from 25 to 250 fulltime employees with an average size of 60. Out of 125 suppliers, 50 supplied consumer goods parts and materials, while 75 supplied parts and materials of industrial goods. The average supplier age was around 12 years, with the youngest supplier as young as one year and the oldest supplier was 20 years. In addition, the suppliers worked with an average number of 9 manufacturers, with a maximum of 15 and a minimum of 5. The manufacturer-supplier dyads worked on an average number of 14 products, with a maximum of 21 and a minimum of 1. The statistics are provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Correlation matrix and summary statistics

Variable	Rel-gov	Supplier-dep	Sup-pIntr	Supin-vest	NewP-erf	Cont-gov	Firm size	Firm age	# of prod
Relgov	1.00								
Suppdep	0.66*	1.00							
SuppIntr	0.65*	0.68*	1.00						
Supin-vest	-0.34*	-0.40*	-0.40*	1.00					
NewPerf	0.68*	0.77*	0.73*	-0.39*	1.00				
Contgov	0.65*	0.73*	0.69*	-0.36*	0.80*	1.00			

3 EFRG18-AAB-SBA-80: Internal review board, American University of Sharjah, 24/05/2018

Firm size	0.66*	0.66*	0.66*	-0.40*	0.73*	0.76*	1.00		
Fir-maAge	0.68*	0.72*	0.69*	-0.38*	0.77*	0.77*	0.79*	1.00	
# of prod	-0.33*	-0.30*	-0.29*	0.09	-0.27*	-0.32*	-0.31*	-0.39*	1.00
Mean	3.98	4.36	4.09	3.77	3.66	3.69	3.04	2.19	3.66
Std. Dev.	.973	.647	.876	1.08	.861	.800	1.15	1.52	1.62

* shows significance at the .05 level
Relcont: Relational governance; Suppdep: supplier dependence; SuppIntr: Supplier integration; Supinvest: Supplier-specific investment; NewPerf: New product performance; Contgov: Contractual governance; # of prod: Number of products comanaged.

By contacting the companies that consented to contribute in the study, we were able to determine if the responders were part of the desired target group. The survey instruments were then administered. The survey tools were translated from English to Turkish by a native Turkish speaker who is also a fluent English speaker. The survey was then translated into English by a separate bilingual speaker. Following that, we made the appropriate revisions based on previous domain research (Yeniaras, Di Benedetto & Dayan, 2021). First, as part of the pre-tests, we had nine randomly selected managers to assess the survey items' substance and meaning. Following that, we communicated with four specialists in relevant fields to confirm the appropriateness of the scale items used in our investigation. We made changes to the items based on comments from both practitioners and scholars.

3.2. Measures

In this study, we employed the previously used scale in the relevant literature. We assessed all measures with a five-point Likert scale. We measured new product performance by asking the participants to assess their firm's new product performance compared to their main competitors' performance with respect to sales, market share, profitability, and ROI during the past three years (1=much worse and 5=much better) (Joshi & Sharma, 2004; Yeniaras & Unver, 2016). This enabled us to capture the efficiency and effectiveness dimensions simultaneously in the assessment of new product performance (Im & Workman, 2004).

We measured relational governance, which refers to regulating partner behavior through information sharing, joint problem solving, and participatory decision making (Uzzi, 1997; Xie, Liang & Zhou, 2016) via a 4-item 5-point Likert type scale adopted from (Wuyts & Geyskens, 2005; Xie et al. 2016). To measure contractual governance, which refers to regulating partner behavior through thorough agreements and specified clauses (Williamson, 1985), we used a 4-item, 5-point Likert-type scale adopted from (Jap & Ganesan, 2000; Wuyts & Geyskens, 2005; Xie et al. 2016). Supplier dependence, which refers to the unavailability of equivalent or better supplier alternatives (Jap & Ganesan, 2000), was measured via a 4-item, 5-point Likert type scale (1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree) (Carr, Kaynak, Hartley & Ross, 2008). Supplier integration was measured via a 4-item, 5-point Likert-type scale (1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree) (Flynn, Huo & Zhao, 2010; Wong, Boon, Itt & Wong, 2011). We assessed supplier-specific investment relates to the dedicated specific investment of the manufacturer via a 4-item, 5-point Likert scale adopted from Rokkan, Heide & Wathne (2003). Finally, in our measure of new product performance, we used the effectiveness and efficiency dimensions from t (Joshi & Sharma, 2004).

3.3. Control variables

Several organizational characteristics have been identified as correlates of new product performance and supplier integration in the relevant literature (i.e., firm size, firm age, number of co-manufactured products, and industry effects). We controlled supplier integration and new product performance for firm size. This allowed us to minimize any potential presence of economies and diseconomies of sale (Bain, 1968). Similarly, we controlled supplier integration and new product performance for firm age. To partial out the industry effects (Lee, 2006), we asked the manufacturer to identify the product type that they procure (i.e., industrial vs. consumer) and controlled supplier integration and new product performance for it.

3.4. Measurement mode

We evaluated the validity and reliability via confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for all multi-item constructs. The results did not provide any empirical evidence regarding the need to remove any items because of low factor loadings (<.40) (except one item in contractual governance, one item in relational governance, one item in supplier dependence, one item in supplier-specific investment and one item in supplier integration), high residuals (normalized residuals >2.58) or modification indices (>3.84). Overall, CFA provided acceptable fir for the sample [χ^2 (155) = 1455, goodness of fit index (GFI) = .854, comparative index fit (CFI) = .928, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .061, PCLOSE = .158]. Also, we provide additional evidence for the validity of the scales that were used in this study (t>2.0). The evidence of convergent validity was assured via the calculation of composite reliability score (CR>0.60) and average variance extracted (AVE>0.40) as depicted in Table 2. The square of the intercorrelations between two constructs, ϕ, was smaller than AVE estimates of the two constructs for all pairs of constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), providing evidence of discriminant validity.

Table 2. Factor loadings, validity and reliability statistics

Constructs	Factor Loadings
Relational governance (CR = .81; AVE = .59)	
Reliance on the partner to keep promises	.593
Participatory decision-making	.955
Joint problem-solving	.711
Fine-grained information exchange	*Deleted*
Contractual governance (CR = .86; AVE = .68)	
A detailed defined work standard in the contract	.786
A clear statement of responsibility and role in the contract	.990
Adherence to formal contracts	.653
Formal monitoring	*Deleted*
Supplier dependence (CR = .80; AVE = .58)	
If our relationship with this supplier had been discontinued, we would have had difficulty achieving our goals	.775
It would have been difficult for us to replace this supplier	.853
We were quite dependent on this supplier	.635
We did not have a good alternative to this supplier	*Deleted*
Supplier integration (CR = .85; AVE = .42)	
Share information to our major suppliers through information technologies	.510
Have a high degree of strategic partnership with suppliers	.663
Have a high degree of joint planning to obtain rapid response ordering process (inbound) with suppliers	.662
Our suppliers provide information to us in the production and procurement processes	.685
Our suppliers are involved in our product development processes	*Deleted*
Supplier specific investment (CR = .85; AVE = .65)	
We have made significant investments in equipment dedicated to our relationship with this supplier	.683
We have made extensive internal adjustments in order to deal effectively with this supplier	.904
Training our people to deal with this supplier has involved substantial commitments of time and money	.841
Our logistics systems have been tailored to meet the requirements of dealing with this supplier	*Deleted*
New product performance (CR = .85; AVE = .55)	
Financial performance of new product development	.743
Speed of new product development	.896
Creativity of new product development	.788
Satisfaction of new product development	.669
Quality of new product development	.552

3.5. Method of analysis

We tested our hypotheses via moderate hierarchical regression analysis. To reduce the risk of multicollinearity, we mean-cantered the variables where the interactions were used (Aiken & West, 1991). We examined the collinearity by evaluating the variance inflation factor (VIF) for each of the regression coefficients. To estimate the indirect relation of relational and contractual governance to new product performance through supplier integration conditional to supplier dependence and supplier-specific investment, we used Preacher & Hayes' (2004) bootstrapping method. This strategy, which is used to get around the power problems caused by asymmetries and other types of nonnormality in the sample distribution (Shrout and Bolger, 2002), requires no assumptions on the shape of the distribution of the variables (Efron and Tibshirani, 1994).

4. Results

Table 3 (Model 4) shows that contractual governance ($b = .217, p < .01$), relational governance ($b = .247, p < .05$), and supplier dependence ($b = .247, p <$ .05) positively relate to supplier integration. In H1, we hypothesized that supplier dependence would positively moderate the relationship between contractual governance and supplier integration. In that vein, empirical evidence indicates that the interaction effect between contractual governance and supplier dependence on supplier integration is positive ($b = .527, p < .01$), supporting H1. In H2, we hypothesized a negative moderation effect of supplier dependence on the relationship between relational governance and supplier integration. Results show that the interaction effect between relational governance and supplier dependence on supplier integration is negative ($b = -.511, p < .01$) as hypothesized, providing empirical evidence to support H2. These results showed that in buyer-seller (i.e., manufacturer-supplier) relationships where the manufacturer is dependent on the supplier for the procurement of vital resources, contractual governance appears to be a better dependence-coping mechanism and helps manufacturers to better integrate with their main suppliers.

Next, we examine the interaction effect of supplier dependence on the relationship between relational/contractual governance and supplier integration. The results show that both relational and contractual governance positively and significantly relates to supplier integration and low and medium levels of supplier dependence. One important finding is that the magnitude of the positive effect in contractual governance – supplier integration and relational governance – supplier integration relationships is that the relationship between contractual governance and supplier integration is stronger at all levels of supplier dependence. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 3. Hypothesis testing-H1&H2

Dependent variable: Supplier Integration	Model 1 *b*	Model 1 *SE*	Model 2 *b*	Model 2 *SE*	Model 3 *b*	Model 3 *SE*	Model 4 *b*	Model 4 *SE*
Constant	3.374**	.280	3.338**	.263	3.382**	.266	3.496**	262
Control variables								
Firm age	.047	.052	.002	.048	.009	.048	.029	.047
Firm size	.166*	.068	.155*	.063	.142*	.064	.106	.063
No. of products	.027	.048	.066	.045	.061	.045	.043	.044
Industry control 1	.080	.289	.336	.269	.337	.268	.387	.259
Industry control 2	.475	.514	.590	.467	.583	.467	.517	.451
Main effects								
Relational governance (RG)			.195**	.083	.189*	.083	.247 **	.083
Contractual governance (CG)			.338**	.099	.325**	.099	.217*	.101
Moderators								
Supplier dependence (SD)					.131	.112	.247*	.115
Interaction effects								
RGxSD							-.511**	.159
CGxSD							.527**	.198
R^2	.076		.251		.259		.325	
F-model	1.944*		5.590**		5.075**		5.494**	
Δ F-model			13.669**		1.356		5.572**	
ΔR^2	-		.175		.009		.066	

Table 4. Effects of relational/contractual governance on supplier integration

IV: RG		**DV: SIntr**			**IV: CG**		**DV: SIntr**		
IV	**Level**	**SD**	***Effect***	***SE***	***IV***	**Level**	**SD**	***Effect***	***SE***
RG	**High**	-.647	.600**	.140	CG	**High**	-.647	.665**	.140
RG	Medium	.000	.250**	.084	CG	Medium	.000	.428**	.095
RG	**Low**	.647	-.096	.123	CG	**Low**	.647	.190	.118

As part of our study, we also examine the relationship between supplier integration and new product performance as well as the moderating effect of supplier-specific investment on the said relationship. For that, in H3, we hypothesized a negative moderation effect of supplier-specific investment on the relationship between supplier integration and new product performance. The results depicted in Table 5 (Model 4) show that the relationship between supplier integration and new product performance is significant and positive (*b = .476, p< .01*). We also find a negative, though insignificant, the relationship between supplier-specific investment and new product performance (*b = .086, p> .05*). In H3, we hypothesize a negative moderation effect of supplier-specific investment (*b = -.198, p< .01*) on the relationship between supplier integration and new product performance, providing empirical support for H3.

Table 5. Hypothesis testing, H3

Dependent variable:	**Model 1**		**Model 2**		**Model 3**		**Model 4**	
New product performance	***b***	***SE***	***b***	***SE***	***b***	***SE***	**b**	***SE***
Constant	2.964**	.277	3.279**	.255	3.392 **	.262	3.415 **	.256
Control variables								
Firm age	.074	.051	.053	.046	.056	.046	.074	.045
Firm size	.112	.069	.041	.063	.015	.065	-.020	.065
No. of products	.050	.048	.037	.043	.026	.043	.025	.042
Industry control 1	.049	.285	.012	.256	.017	.254	.004	.248
Industry control 2	.479	.626	.180	.564	.285	.563	.404	.552
Main effects								
Supplier integration (SIntr)			.445**	.081	.419**	.082	.476**	.083
Moderators								
Supplier investment (SI)					-.112	.067	-.086	.067
Interaction effects								
SIntr x SI							-.198 **	.077
R^2	.066		.257		.274		.313	
F-model	1.672**		6.735**		6.251**		6.556**	
Δ F-model			29.999**		2.741*		.039**	
ΔR^2	-		.191**		.017*		.039**	

Next, we assess the indirect effects of contractual and relational governance on new product performance through supplier integration at different levels of supplier dependence and supplier-specific investment, as shown in Table 6. Findings provide empirical evidence to support H4, which hypothesized indirect relations of relational/contractual governance to new product performance. Nevertheless, there exist differences in conditional indirect relationships. For instance, the indirect relation of contractual governance to new product performance through supplier integration conditional to supplier dependence and supplier-specific investment is at its highest when supplier dependence is at high levels of supplier dependence and low levels of supplier-specific investment (*b = .343, p< .01*). The indirect relation of relational governance to new product performance through supplier integration conditional to supplier dependence and supplier-specific investment, however, is at its highest at low levels of supplier dependence and supplier-specific investment (*b = .408, p< .01*). These results, while providing empirical evidence to support H4, also act as indicators to suggest that contractual governance may be a better dependence-coping mechanism.

Table 6. Indirect effects of relational (RG) and contractual governance (CG) to new product performance through supplier integration (SIntr) at different levels of supplier dependence (SD) and supplier-specific investments (SI)

IV: RG		***DV: NPP***		***M: SIntr***			***IV: CG***		***DV: NPP***		***M: SIntr***		
IV	**Levels**	**SD**	**Levels**	**SI**	***Effect***	***SE***	***IV***	**Levels**	**SD**	**Levels**	**SI**	***Effect***	***SE***
RG	Low	-.647	Low	-1.093	.408**	.13	CG	Low	-.647	Low	-1.093	-.015	.13
RG	Low	-.647	Med	.000	.261**	.08	CG	Low	-.647	Med	.000	-.009	.08
RG	Low	-.647	High	1.093	.114	.07	CG	Low	-.647	High	1.093	-.004	.04
RG	Med	.000	Low	-1.093	.170**	.07	CG	Med	.000	Low	-1.093	.164**	.08
RG	Med	.000	Med	.000	.109**	.04	CG	Med	.000	Med	.000	.106**	.05
RG	Med	.000	High	1.093	.047	.03	CG	Med	.000	High	1.093	.047	.03
RG	High	.647	Low	-1.093	-.065	.08	CG	High	.647	Low	-1.093	343**	.12
RG	High	.647	Med	.000	-.042	.05	CG	High	.647	Med	.000	.220**	.07
RG	High	.647	High	1.093	-.018	.02	CG	High	.647	High	1.093	.098	.06

supplier-specific investments (SI)

5. Discussion and conclusions

5.1. Theoretical implications

Our study validates the present literature, which identifies supplier integration as a dependence-coping mechanism (e.g., Carey et al., 2011; Kull & Ellis, 2016; Lumineau & Quelin, 2012; Tangpong et al., 2010) that enhances new product performance (e.g., Flynn et al., 2010; Koufteros et al., 2005). We also offer empirical support to the important role that governance may play in promoting cooperation and mitigating risks in buyer-supplier relationships as underlined in the literature (e.g., Griffith & Myers, 2005; Heide & John, 1992; Poppo & Zenger, 2002; Reuer & Arino, 2007; Zhang et al., 2003). Nevertheless, the dissected role that contractual and relational governance may play in relationships where the buyer is dependent on the supplier remains an underexplored study area with mixed results. With the empirical scrutiny of the model depicted in Figure 1, we aim to explore the dissected role of contractual and relational governance mechanisms in the buyer's pursuit of supplier integration in relationships where the suppliers are not equally willing to integrate due to their advantage in the power dynamics of the exchange. Accordingly, our study's main contribution lies in examining the mediating effect of supplier integration conditional to relational/contractual governance and supplier-specific investments.

We identify relational governance as an inhibiting factor in the relationship between supplier dependence and supplier integration. That is, the results show that buyers that depend on their suppliers for crucial supplies and that pursue a supplier integration strategy to create suppliers that simultaneously rely on the buyer for performance improvement may reconsider exerting relational governance. Conversely, we offer empirical support to suggest that contractual governance may result in stronger supplier integration in situations where the buyer is dependent on the supplier. Considering that SMEs have inadequate internal, and external capital equity (Schiffer & Weder, 2001; Yeniaras et al., 2021) and managerial talent (Hitt, Li & Worthington IV, 2005), they most often need to rely on interfirm integration (Yeniaras et al., 2020) to access external capital (Yildirim, Akci & Eksi, 2011). Our results, which underlie relational governance as an inhibitor and contractual governance as a catalyzer of supplier integration in conditions where the buyer is dependent on its main supplier, provide a toolbox to managers in their attempts to integrate with suppliers that they are dependent on.

Regarding the relationship between supplier integration and new product performance, our results align with the extant literature, which points towards the need to integrate externally with suppliers (Hartley et al., 1997; Petersen et al., 2003). Our contribution, however, lies in examining the moderating effect that supplier-specific investments have on the supplier integration – new product performance relationship. The literature is fragmented in the scrutiny of the said relationship, with some studies suggesting a positive (e.g., Dyer, 1997; Dyer & Singh, 1998) and some providing evidence of a negative (e.g., Anderson & Jap, 2005; Dyer et al., 2018; Moorman et al., 1992) relationship. The contradictory findings on the relationship between supplier-specific investments and firm performance indicated a theoretical gap in the said relationship where there may be more than a straightforward association. Our findings show that supplier-specific investments reverse the positive relationship between supplier integration and new product performance to a negative one. This provides empirical evidence to support previous studies, which argue that such investments may create an embeddedness problem (Dyer et al., 2018; Noordhoff et al., 2011), decreasing firm performance.

The starkest impact of this study concerns the conditional mediating effect of supplier integration on the relational governance – new product performance and contractual governance – new product performance relationships. We fill the gap in the literature by drawing from transaction cost, relational exchange, and resource dependence theories (Kwon & Suh, 2004; Kingshott, 2006; Hawkins et al., 2008; Tangpong et al., 2010) and introduce contractual and relational governance and supplier-specific investments that the supplier dependence – supplier integration – new product performance relationships are dependent on. In that respect, we find that the indirect relationship between relational governance and new product performance is at its highest at low levels of supplier dependence. Also, we did not discover any significant indirect relationship between relational governance and new product performance at high levels of supplier dependence. This shows that relational governance does not enhance new product performance when the balance of power within the exchange is skewed toward the supplier. However, conversely, we find that the indirect relationship between contractual governance and new product performance is at its highest when supplier dependence is at its highest. This finding shows that buyers dependent on their main suppliers should rely on formal and legal contracts (Cao & Lumineau, 2015) to minimize opportunism and ascertain long-term collaborations (Williamson, 1985) to enhance new product performance. Contractual governance mechanisms only result in higher new product performance when supplier dependence is relatively low.

5.2. Managerial implications

This finding also has noteworthy organizational consequences. First, although previous research highlights the importance of governance mechanisms in supplier integration efforts (e.g., Lumineau & Quélin, 2012; Tangpong et al., 2010), the results are mixed. Our study shows that new product performance via the adoption of a supplier integration strategy of supplier-dependent emerging economy manufacturing SMEs may be more effective if the buyer uses a contractual governance approach with low to medium levels of supplier-specific investments. More importantly, supplier integration seems to be a strategy that may only be adopted via contractual governance in situations where supplier dependence exists. Therefore, we advise those managers to manage inter-organizational relationships with their suppliers that they depend on for vital resources using contractual governance. These results show that the right combination of contractual governance and supplier-specific investments are of critical importance for SME buyers in an emerging economy context. Accordingly, we suggest that these said firms should limit their resource allocations to relational governance and work on developing better legal contracts, which specify responsibilities, requirements, and expectations (Cao & Lumineau, 2015) to minimize opportunism and ascertain long-term collaborations (Williamson, 1985) in their efforts of supplier integration to foster their new product performances.

6. Limitations and further research

The findings presented in this research should be evaluated and interpreted with caution because it has several limitations. First, in this study, we identify contractual and relational governance as strategic tools that may link supplier dependence, supplier integration, and new product performance. Nevertheless, other resources/capabilities/tools may link supplier dependence to new product performance. Second, the moderating effects of contractual/relational governance and supplier-specific investment on the relationships between supplier dependence, supplier integration, and new product performance may be delayed. Third, the use of objective performance measures may improve empirical robustness. Fourth, while emerging economies are similar in terms of market and institutional backgrounds (Peng, 2000; Yeniaras, Di Benedetto & Dayan, 2021), the distinct cultural factors in Turkey could vary and result in different pros and cons of contractual and relational governance. An industry analysis of the effect of contractual governance, relational governance, and supplier dependence on supplier integration and new product performance is critical. In this study, because of resource and data limitations, we were not able to come to such conclusions. Non-response bias is also an issue. We were unable to follow up with employees who did not answer right away due to resource limitations. Nevertheless, our study offers chances for subsequent research to re-test and enhance our conclusions. Finally, even though emerging economies have similar institutional and market characteristics (Peng, 2000), individual cultural factors may have had a different impact on the connections between contractual governance, relational governance, supplier dependence, supplier integration, supplier-specific investment, and new product performance. Accordingly, we advise further studies to be mindful of such factors and treat them as control variables.

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(Araştırma)

THE ROLE OF PRESTIGIOUS AND FUNCTIONAL BRAND CONCEPTS AND PRODUCT FIT IN CONSUMERS' EVALUATIONS OF CO-BRANDED PARTNERSHIPS

Ceren HAYRAN[1]

ABSTRACT

Co-branding is an extensively employed brand marketing strategy as well as a broadly investigated topic in academic research. Extant co-branding research has emphasized the importance of perceived fit between the partnering brands and product categories in evaluations of a co-branded partnership. The current work seeks to advance this research stream by exploring the interplay of partnering brands' prestige and functional brand concept fit with their product fit. Specifically, it shows that when two prestigious brands collaborate, they induce favorable consumer attitudes and purchase intentions even in the absence of product fit. Due to the ease of finding superordinate common links between the prestige brand concepts, brand fit overrides product fit in evaluations of prestigious brand collaborations. However, because functional brands are evaluated predominantly on their concrete functional attributes, categorical associations become more important. Therefore, the presence of product fit is crucial in inducing favorable attitudes and purchase intentions in co-branded partnerships that include functional brands. Theoretical and practical implications of the results are discussed, and potential future research avenues are proposed.

Keywords: Co-branding, brand alliances, brand management, prestigious brands, functional brands

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TÜKETİCİLERİN ORTAK MARKALARI DEĞERLENDİRMELERİNDE PRESTİJLİ VE İŞLEVSEL MARKALARIN VE ÜRÜN KATEGORİLERİ ARASINDAKİ UYUMUN ROLÜ

ÖZ

Ortak markalama, yaygın olarak kullanılan bir marka pazarlama stratejisi ve akademik araştırmalarda genişçe incelenmiş bir konudur. Ortak markalama araştırmaları, marka ortaklıklarının tüketiciler tarafından değerlendirilmesinde biraraya gelen markalar ve ürün kategorileri arasındaki algılanan uyumun önemini vurgulamıştır. Mevcut çalışma, ortak markalama stratejisinde bir araya gelen markaların prestij ve işlevsel marka konseptleri ile ürün kategorileri uyumunun etkileşimini araştırır. Bulgular, iki prestijli markanın bir araya geldiğinde, aralarında kategori uyumu olmasa bile, bu işbirliğinin olumlu tüketici tutumları ve satın alma niyetleri oluşturduğunu gösterir. Prestijli marka kavramları arasında ortak bağlantılar bulmanın kolay olması nedeniyle, prestijli marka işbirliklerinde marka kavramı uyumu, kategori uyumunun önüne geçer. Ancak, işlevsel markalar somut ve fonksiyonel özellikleri üzerinden değerlendirildikleri için, kategorik uyumlar işlevsel marka işbirliklerinde daha önemlidir. Bu nedenle, işlevsel marka içeren marka ortaklıklarında, olumlu tüketici tutum ve satın alma niyetlerinin oluşması için markalar arasında kategori uyumu olması önemlidir. Bulguların teorik ve pratik çıkarımları tartışılmış, mevcut çalışmayı takip edebilecek potansiyel araştırma soruları önerilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ortak markalama, marka işbirlikleri, marka yönetimi, prestijli marka, işlevsel marka

1. Introduction

Companies often use well-established brand names in creating new product offers. One way of doing this is through line extensions, in which an existing brand name is used to introduce a new item in the existing product category (e.g., Coca-Cola Zero). Another way is through brand extensions, in which an existing brand name is used to enter an entirely new product category (e.g., Starbucks ice cream). Yet, another brand marketing strategy that is the focus of this article is co-branding, where two or a higher number of brands are presented to consumers together in the form of a new offer (e.g., Betty Crocker cake mix with Hershey's chocolate).

Used interchangeably with the term brand alliance, co-branding refers to an agreement between companies that combine two or more brands, products, or other properties (Simonin and Ruth, 1998). A co-branding strategy aims to transmit the partnering brands' positive attributes to the co-branded product (Dacin and Smith, 1994; Spethman and Benezra, 1994). From a brand equity perspective, brands are valuable assets. They form a synergistic alliance upon collaborating with other brands (Ruekert and Rao, 1994). Co-branding can help marketers promote their brands more effectively or bring new skills and ideas to a project. It provides a competitive advantage, and the constituent brands can benefit from each other in achieving their objectives. In broader terms, co-branding activities may take different forms, such as bundled products (e.g., bundling a variety of cereal packs), true product combinations (e.g., a branded vodka/cola product), component products (e.g., a brand used as an ingredient of another branded product), composite brand extensions (e.g., using two brand names as the header and modifier in naming a new product), or joint sales promotions (e.g., getting a free brand upon buying another one), (Simonin and Ruth, 1998).

Research has revealed several factors which influence consumer attitudes toward co-branded offers. Previous studies have highlighted perceived product and brand fit between the partnering brands (Aaker and Keller, 1990; Dickinson and Heath, 2008; Helmig et al., 2007; James, 2006; Simonin and Ruth, 1998) and consumers' pre-existing perceptions of constituent brands (Dickinson and Heath, 2006; Helmig et al., 2007; James, 2006; Washburn et al., 2004) as key influencers in the success of a co-branding activity. Product fit refers to the perceived congruency, or match, of the partnering brands' product categories (e.g., chocolate and cake mix); brand fit refers to the perceived congruency of the partnering brands' images (e.g., two authentic brands). Brand extension literature has also conveyed substantial findings that help us understand the determinants of co-branding success (Bouten et al., 2011; Dickinson and Heath, 2006; Helmig et al., 2007; James, 2006).

The current work investigates an unexplored factor that is likely to influence consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions toward a co-branded offer. Extending previous findings regarding the effects of perceived brand and product fit between partnering brands in the success of a co-brand, we explore how prestigious and functional brand concepts of the partnering brands influence the evaluations of a co-branded offer. Specifically, we show that consumers tend to favourably evaluate partnerships composed of prestigious brands, regardless of whether there is product fit among the partners (e.g., Porsche Rolex watch). We argue that the perceived prestige compatibility of the partnering brands overrides the necessity of product fit (i.e., the categorical fit of the partnering brands) due to the ease of finding superordinate links between the brands' luxury and high-status image appeals. However, consumers look for product fit in co-branded offers of functional brands, such as prestigious-functional (e.g., Porsche Casio watch) and functional-functional (Honda Casio watch) brand partnerships. In other words, we predict that when both brands are prestigious, the dominant view that product fit is needed for co-branding success will no longer prevail. However, a functional brand will still necessitate product fit among partners to be evaluated positively.

While previous co-branding research has highlighted the importance of both product and brand fit, it did not examine the specific effect of prestige and functional congruence of partnering brands in evaluations of a co-branded product. Theoretically, we extend the brand fit concept by exploring the more specific prestige and functionality attributes of the partnering brands and their interaction with product fit. In doing so, we apply brand extension literature findings, which show that prestigious brands are able to extend to unrelated product categories due to assessing superordinate broader links among the categories (Park et al., 1991) to the co-branding context. Managerially, our results suggest that prestigious (vs. functional) brands are more advantageous in terms of pursuing partnerships with brands from different product categories as long as there is a prestige concept fit among the partners and hence can more easily pursue diverse partnership opportunities in the marketplace.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1. Perceived Product and Brand Fit

One key assumption determining the success of a co-branding activity is that consumers should be able to perceive a fit, in other words, a meaningful connection between the partnering brands. This notion of fit can pertain to partnering brands' product categories (i.e., product fit) or brand images (i.e., brand fit). Specifically, if consumers perceive partnering brands' product categories or the partnering brands' images as matching, the co-branded offer will likely induce favorable consumer evaluations.

The importance of fit has been broadly studied in the brand extension domain and applied to the co-branding context. When a brand enters into a new product category through a brand extension strategy, the aim is that the focal brand's positive associations that exist in consumers' memory will be transmitted to the extension. Aaker and Keller's (1990) brand extension framework has shown that a higher fit between the parent brand and the extended product category leads to more favorable evaluations of the brand extension. The necessity of fit in the success of brand extensions has been supported by many researchers (Bottomley and Holden, 2001; Dacin and Smith, 1994; Park et al., 1991)

In a similar vein, co-branding literature has revealed that a higher fit between the partner brands, both in terms of product category and brand image consistency, leads to more positive evaluations of the co-branded offer. James (2006) and Dickinson and Heath (2006) applied Aaker and Keller's (1990) brand extension framework to co-brands. When the constituent partners in a co-branding activity were perceived to fit well together, customers were more likely to buy the resultant offer. The presence of fit, whether related to a product category (e.g., chocolate and cake mix) or brand meaning (e.g., two authentic brands), enhanced positive evaluations of the co-branded offer. Simonin and Ruth's (1998) study supported that both product and brand fit considerably influence attitudes toward a co-branded product, the latter having more impact. According to Helmig et al. (2007), product fit has a higher effect on consumers' co-branded product evaluations. Extending Simonin and Ruth's (1998) work, Bouten et al. (2011) showed that consumers evaluate a co-branded product more positively when one of the brands fits the co-branded product more than its partner, because consumers prefer an unbalanced contribution of the partner brands. Dickinson and Heath (2008) further showed that parent brand attitudes could be transmitted to the co-branded product only when the collaborating brands have a high perceived fit. Both parent brands may receive high-quality ratings individually. However, the co-branded product will rate relatively low if the brand fit is not present. In sum, extant findings in co-branding literature reveal that product and brand fit influence how consumers evaluate a co-branding offer. However, there is no consensus on whether, and in what circumstances, product or brand fit is more effective in consumers' evaluations of a co-branded partnership.

2.2. Pre-existing Brand Attitudes

An individual's pre-existing brand attitudes are another critical factor influencing evaluations of co-branded products (Simonin and Ruth, 1998). In a co-branding activity, individual brands bring associations to the new offer and create a new set of associations. Brands with favorable associations and strong quality perceptions help the partnership be more successful. High product quality signals of the partnering brands increase the potential success of the co-branded product

(Ruekert and Rao, 1994). Hence, partnering brands should each possess high brand equity to induce favorable evaluations (Helmig et al., 2007).

Zeithaml (1988) describes perceived brand quality as “the consumer’s judgment about a product’s overall excellence or superiority.” Perceived quality allows brands to stand out and gives consumers a reason to purchase a brand (Pappu et al., 2005). Dickinson and Heath’s (2006) findings support that consumers make evaluations based on the original brand attitudes based on perceived quality. This enables brands with high quality to form co-brands with less risk. In line with Dickinson and Heath’s (2006) findings, James’s (2006) review of Aaker and Keller’s (1990) model indicated that high-quality perceptions of partner brands are transferred to the co-branded product. However, the role of quality is of lesser importance than perceived fit among the partnering brands in co-branding evaluations.

Inferred beliefs about partnering brands may enhance and harm a co-branded product’s evaluations. When one of the brands incurs brand image or quality problems, this may spill over to the partnership (e.g., NutraSweet–Diet Coke partnership suffering from NutraSweet’s association with brain cancer; Helmig et al., 2007). Further negative consequences may arise when partnering brands’ images are perceived as inconsistent (e.g., the co-branded offer of a high share, a high-quality McDonald’s brand with a low share, a low-quality brand of soda drink; Simonin and Ruth, 1998).

Summing up previous findings, both product and brand fit, as well as one’s pre-existing brand attitudes regarding the brand image and quality, are viewed as significant determinants of the success of a co-branded product. Unlike prior work, we focus on a specific type of brand fit; the effect of partnering brands’ prestige and functionality concepts in co-branding success. Although there are divergent views on which type of fit (whether product or brand) is more important, to our knowledge, no research has explored the interacting effect of product fit with brand concept fit (prestigious vs. functional brand concept). Next, we elaborate on why a brand being prestigious or functional may influence the evaluations of a co-branded product.

2.3. Prestigious and Functional Brands

According to Park, et al.’s (1986) brand concept management framework, brands are based on either symbolic or functional brand concepts. Functional brands satisfy practical and immediate needs. For example, Casio would be perceived as a functional watch brand since it is mainly used for its function of telling the time. Symbolic brands satisfy needs like prestige, social identification, and self-expression. Rolex would be perceived as a symbolic brand because it is used mainly for its status and luxury appeal rather than its functional value. As consumers’ needs can be functional or symbolic in choosing products, brands can be positioned accordingly to fulfill these needs. Bhat and Reddy (1998) state that functionality and symbolism are different concepts, yet they do not have opposite meanings. Some brands may convey both functional and symbolic meanings. For example, although Nike and Converse would be rated as symbolic and functional, respectively, they may convey both evaluations. The literature on hedonic vs. utilitarian products similarly posits that consumers make meaning of hedonic and utilitarian products in different ways. People often have functionality-related goals in choosing utilitarian products (e.g., textbooks) and pleasure-related goals in choosing hedonic products (e.g., designer clothes) (Chemev, 2004; Chitturi et al., 2008).

Park et al. (1991) showed that consumers had more positive evaluations toward brand extensions that had high brand concept congruency and product attribute similarity (i.e., prestigious extensions of prestigious brands and functional extensions of functional brands). However, prestigious brands were more extendible to unrelated product categories than functional brands when the two product categories shared common prestige concepts. For example, Ralph Lauren, a brand signifying a prestigious lifestyle, is successful in extending into different product categories like sunglasses, fragrances, and furniture. However, the beer brand Heineken is less extendible to unrelated product categories due to its strong association with the beer category. Also, when consumers encountered prestige brand names with dissimilar products (e.g., Mercedes and Lenox), they perceived connections between these brand names around status, quality, and luxury concepts. When consumers encountered functional brand names with dissimilar products (e.g., Sony and Honda), they were less likely to perceive connections between them. Supporting this notion, previous research has also revealed that more superordinate abstract associations can fit into a higher number of product categories more easily than tangible associations (e.g., entertainment versus television sets; Johnson, 1984; Rosch et al., 1976).

We argue that Park et al. (1991)'s important finding that concept consistency is more important than the effects of categorization for brands with prestige positioning can be applied to co-branding. A brand with a high-prestige concept (e.g., Armani) has the potential to extend into unrelated product categories more easily (e.g., clothing, fragrances, luxury hotels, and home furniture). By the same logic, when a prestigious brand collaborates with another prestigious brand from an unrelated product category (i.e., forms a co-brand with low product fit), the resultant offer should induce positive evaluations and purchase intentions due to ease of finding superordinate links between partnering brands' luxury and status appeals. In other words, when both brands are prestigious, the dominant view that product fit is needed for co-branding success will lose ground. Nevertheless, because functional brands are evaluated mainly on their functional and concrete associations, co-branded partnerships of functional brands will necessitate product fit among partners for the co-branded offer to be evaluated positively.

Hypothetically, the Porsche car brand may successfully co-brand with the Cartier jewelry brand to introduce the Porsche Cartier watch. Although cars and jewelry represent distinct product categories with low product fit, consumers will likely have positive attitudes and purchase intentions toward the co-branded offer due to constituent brands' congruent prestige images. However, a prestigious-functional (e.g., Versace H&M clothing line) or a functional-functional brand collaboration (e.g., Milka Oreo chocolate bar) will still necessitate product fit to derive favorable evaluations. This prediction suggests that prestigious brands have the chance to involve in diverse co-branding activities and widen their product portfolio through co-branding strategies as long as they unite with other prestigious brands. Prestigious brands can benefit from each other and increase overall sales through collaborations, even when they belong to unrelated product categories.

In sum, we expect that consumers will pay more attention to abstract symbolic cues in evaluating co-branded offers of prestigious brands and expect prestige congruence between the allied partners. Thus, co-branded products composed of prestigious brand partners (prestigious-prestigious partnerships) will derive favorable attitudes and purchase intentions even when product fit is low. On the other hand, consumers will pay more attention to concrete functional attributes of the products while evaluating collaborations of functional brands. Product fit will outweigh brand concept consistency in forming attitudes and purchase intentions toward co-branded offers that include functional brands. Therefore, when product fit is high, attitudes and purchase intentions toward co-branded products of functional brands (i.e., functional-functional, functional-prestigious, or prestigious-functional partnerships) will not differ. More formally, we hypothesize that;

H1: *When there is low product fit, co-branded offers of prestigious-prestigious brand partners will generate more favorable attitudes and purchase intentions than co-branded offers of prestigious-functional, functional-prestigious and functional-functional brand partners. Brand concept fit overrides product fit in evaluations of prestigious brand partnerships.*

H2: *When there is high product fit, co-branded offers of prestigious-functional, functional-prestigious and functional-functional brand partners will generate similarly favorable attitudes and purchase intentions.*

These hypotheses are tested with an experimental study preceded by two pre-tests.

3. Methodology

The reported studies were created by using Qualtrics online survey tool and conducted on Prolific crowdsourcing platform for scientific research. Respondents from the USA and the UK who had a minimum approval rate of 96% on Prolific were recruited. Participation was voluntary, and participants were assured that their responses were kept confidential. All participants received financial compensation for their involvement. Ethical approval dated 10.02.2022 and numbered 2022/02/04 was obtained from Ozyegin University Ethics Committee.

Two pre-tests were conducted to select the brands and the high and low-fitting product categories to be used in the main study. We used real rather than fictitious brand names to obtain participants' genuine brand evaluations and increase our findings' external validity. We also tested our hypotheses with multiple brand combinations to strengthen the results and to be able to generalize the findings across different product categories. Scale items from prior co-branding studies with proven validity and reliability were used.

3.1. Pre-test 1

3.1.1. Method

The aim of the first pre-test was to determine the brands to be used in the main study. We recruited 66 individuals on the Prolific online panel (*M*age = 38.68, SD = 13.58, 51% women, one person indicated as non-binary), who were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. In order to prevent the presumably functional and prestigious brands from affecting each other's perceived functionality and prestige attributes, the study was designed as a between-subjects experiment. Half of the participants evaluated five functional brands (Honda, Casio, Pilot, Gap, Puma), and the other half evaluated five prestigious brands (Porsche, Rolex, MontBlanc, Louis Vuitton, Gucci) on a set of attributes in random order. Specifically, the participants indicated their familiarity ('I am familiar with this brand'; Simonin and Ruth, 1998), prior brand attitudes ('I am favorable toward this brand'; Simonin and Ruth, 1998), and to what extent they found the brand to be functional and prestigious ('This is a functional brand' and 'This is a prestigious brand') all on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = not at all, 7 = very much).

3.1.2. Results

Results of the first pre-test revealed that the prestige and functionality aspects of the selected brands were in line with our expectations. ANOVA results revealed that Porsche was perceived as more prestigious than Honda ($M_{Porsche} = 6.30$ vs. $M_{\mathrm{Honda}} = 4.42$; $F(1, 98) = 72.96$, $p < .05$); whereas Honda was perceived as more functional than Porsche ($M_{\mathrm{Honda}} = 6.08$ vs. $M_{Porsche} = 4.90$; $F(1, 98) = 24.69$, $p < .05$). Familiarity ($M_{Porsche} = 4.96$ vs. $M_{\mathrm{Honda}} = 5.52$; $F(1, 98) = 3.17$, $p = .08$) and prior brand attitudes ($M_{Porsche} = 4.48$ vs. $M_{\mathrm{Honda}} = 4.68$; $F(1, 98) = .38$, $p > .05$) of the two brands did not significantly differ.

Rolex was perceived more prestigious than Casio ($M_{Rolex} = 6.32$ vs. $M_{\mathrm{Casio}} = 3.84$; $F(1, 98) = 92.11$, $p < .05$); whereas Casio was perceived more functional than Rolex ($M_{\mathrm{Casio}} = 5.70$ vs. $M_{Rolex} = 4.62$; $F(1, 98) = 14.27$, $p < .05$). Familiarity ($M_{Rolex} = 4.76$ vs. $M_{\mathrm{Casio}} = 4.84$; $F(1, 98) = .05$, $p > .05$) and prior brand attitudes ($M_{Rolex} = 4.34$ vs. $M_{\mathrm{Casio}} = 4.28$; $F(1, 98) = 3.82$, $p > .05$) of the two brands did not significantly differ.

MontBlanc was perceived more prestigious than Pilot ($M_{\text{MontBlanc}} = 5.44$ vs. $M_{\text{Pilot}} = 3.54$; $F(1, 98) = 58.67$, $p < .05$); whereas Pilot was perceived more functional than MontBlanc ($M_{\text{Pilot}} = 4.78$ vs. $M_{\text{MontBlanc}} = 4.14$; $F(1, 98) = 7.14$, $p < .05$). Familiarity ($M_{\text{MontBlanc}} = 3.34$ vs. $M_{\text{Pilot}} = 3.62$; $F(1, 98) = .58$, $p > .05$) and prior brand attitudes ($M_{\text{MontBlanc}} = 4.14$ vs. $M_{\text{Pilot}} = 3.82$; $F(1, 98) = 1.41$, $p > .05$) of the two brands did not significantly differ.

LV was perceived more prestigious than Gap ($M_{\text{LV}} = 6.24$ vs. $M_{\text{Gap}} = 3.62$; $F(1, 98) = 111.45$, $p < .05$); whereas Gap was perceived more functional than LV ($M_{\text{Gap}} = 5.62$ vs. $M_{\text{LV}} = 4.82$; $F(1, 98) = 8.72$, $p < .05$). Familiarity ($M_{\text{LV}} = 4.72$ vs. $M_{\text{Gap}} = 5.28$; $F(1, 98) = 2.82$, $p = .10$) and prior brand attitudes ($M_{\text{LV}} = 4.10$ vs. $M_{\text{Gap}} = 3.96$; $F(1, 98) = .19$, $p > .05$) of the two brands did not significantly differ.

Gucci was perceived more prestigious than Puma ($M_{\text{Gucci}} = 6.18$ vs. $M_{\text{Puma}} = 4.14$; $F(1, 98) = 60.19$, $p < .05$); whereas Puma was perceived more functional than Gucci ($M_{\text{Puma}} = 5.62$ vs. $M_{\text{Gucci}} = 4.92$; $F(1, 98) = 6.02$, $p < .05$). Familiarity ($M_{\text{Gucci}} = 4.74$ vs. $M_{\text{Puma}} = 5.26$; $F(1, 98) = 2.48$, $p > .05$) and prior brand attitudes ($M_{\text{Gucci}} = 4.06$ vs. $M_{\text{Puma}} = 4.32$; $F(1, 98) = .58$, $p > .05$) of the two brands did not significantly differ.

These findings support that Honda, Casio, Pilot, Gap and Puma are perceived predominantly as functional brands, whereas Porsche, Rolex, MontBlanc, Louis Vuitton and Gucci are perceived mainly as prestigious brands. Based on the results, this set of pre-tested brands were used in the main study.

3.2. Pre-test 2

3.2.1. Method

The aim of the second pre-test was to determine the high and low-fitting product categories to be used in the main study. We recruited 80 individuals on the Prolific online panel (*M*age = 33.79, SD = 10.77, 45% women). Participants were presented with four product pairs and indicated whether they thought a connection between the two product categories was plausible ('I think these products fit each other' and 'I think these products are consistent'; Bhat and Reddy, 2001; Simonin and Ruth, 1998), (1 = strongly agree, 7 = strongly disagree).

Cars were selected as the stimulus product category due to the pervasiveness of real-life automobile co-branding practices in the marketplace. Cars collaborating with clothing manufacturers to introduce special edition designed models (e.g., Maserati GranCabrio with Fendi car seat design, Peugeot Lacoste edition; Ashdown, 2017) and driving shoes (Adidas Porsche design, Puma Ferrari shoes; Kalvapalle, 2014) are prevalent practices in the marketplace. Based on these real-life examples, two co-branded combinations were predicted to have high product fit: 1) cars and car seat clothing, 2) cars and driving shoes. Two co-branded combinations were predicted to have low product fit: 1) cars and pens, 2) cars and wristwatches.

3.2.2. Results

As expected, cars had a high fit with car seat clothing (M = 5.87, SD = 1.21) and driving shoes (M = 4.66, SD = 1.56) with mean values above the mid-point on a 7-point Likert scale. We compared the mean values (M = 5.87 and M = 4.66) with the mid-point of the scale (M = 4.00). A one-sample t-test revealed that the mean values were significantly greater than the mid-point of the scale (t = 13.83, p < .05 and t = 3.75, p < .05, respectively), supporting that cars had high fit with car seat clothing and driving shoes. On the contrary, cars had a low fit with pens (M = 2.38, SD = 1.65) and wristwatches (M = 3.01, SD = 1.77) with mean values below the mid-point on a 7-point Likert scale. A one-sample t-test revealed that the mean values were significantly lower than the mid-point of the scale (t = -8.83, p < .05 and t = -5.01, p < .05, respectively), supporting that cars had a low fit with pens and wristwatches. In conclusion, cars - car seat clothing and cars-driving shoes were selected as product categories with the high fit, whereas cars - pens and cars - wristwatches were selected as product categories with the low fit.

Based on the results of the two pre-tests, we created sixteen different co-branded products composed of prestigious and functional brand alternatives to be used in the main study (please see Table 1). Since the co-branded offers of car and clothing companies are generally indicated as "special edition models" or "designs" in common practice (e.g., Maserati GranCabrio with Fendi car seat design), we used the term "design car" in naming the new co-branded offer in the main study.

Table 1. Co-branded products to be used in the main study

New product	Product fit	Brand type
Porsche Louis Vuitton design car	High	Prestigious-Prestigious
Porsche GAP design car	High	Prestigious-Functional
Porsche Gucci driving shoes	High	Prestigious-Prestigious
Porsche Puma driving shoes	High	Prestigious-Functional
Porsche MontBlanc pens	Low	Prestigious-Prestigious
Porsche Pilot pens	Low	Prestigious-Functional
Porsche Rolex watches	Low	Prestigious-Prestigious
Porsche Casio watches	Low	Prestigious-Functional
Honda Louis Vuitton design car	High	Functional-Prestigious
Honda GAP design car	High	Functional-Functional
Honda Gucci driving shoes	High	Functional-Prestigious
Honda Puma driving shoes	High	Functional-Functional
Honda MontBlanc pens	Low	Functional-Prestigious
Honda Pilot pens	Low	Functional-Functional
Honda Rolex watches	Low	Functional-Prestigious
Honda Casio watches	Low	Functional-Functional

3.3.Main Study

3.3.1.Method

For the main study, we recruited 110 individuals on the Prolific online panel (*M*age = 35.74, SD = 12.66, 46% women). Participants evaluated co-branded products of either the prestigious or the functional focal brand. Specifically, half of the participants evaluated the eight co-branded offers of Porsche (the prestigious focal brand); the other half evaluated the eight co-branded offers of Honda (the functional focal brand). All products were indicated to be newly launched. Attitudes toward the new co-branded products were measured with five items ('I think this is a good product', I think this is a pleasant product', 'I am positive toward this product', 'I think this product is nice' and 'I am favorable toward this product'; Samu et al., 1999; Simonin and Ruth, 1998) on a 7-point likert scale (1 = not at all, 7 = very much). Since these products are expensive and may be difficult to afford for many individuals, participants were asked to assume that they had the resources to buy the products. Accordingly, purchase likelihood was measured with one item 'Assuming that you have the resources, how likely would you be to buy this product?'; Miniard et al. (1990), (1 = not at all, 7 = very much).

3.3.2.Results

To understand participants' attitudes toward the co-branded offers, we took the average of the five attitude item scores. Cronbach's alpha for these five items was above 0.95 for each co-branded product, which indicates a good internal consistency for the measurement of attitudes toward the co-branded products.

First, we tested H1, which proposed that when there is low product fit, co-branded offers of prestigious-prestigious brand partners generate more favorable attitudes and higher purchase intentions than co-branded offers of prestigious-functional, functional-prestigious and functional-functional brand partners. Participants' attitudes and purchase intention scores are provided in Table 2.

We had two prestigious-prestigious co-branded products in low product fit condition: Porsche MontBlanc pens and Porsche Rolex watches. Comparisons of attitudes and purchase intentions of Porsche MontBlanc pen with the respected co-brands were as follows. A repeated measures ANOVA showed that Porsche MontBlanc pen was evaluated more favorably (M = 4.48, SD = 1.89) than Porsche Pilot pen (prestigious-functional co-brand with low product fit) (M = 3.53, SD = 1.76; $F(1, 54) = 19.79$, $p < .05$). A one-way ANOVA showed that Porsche MontBlanc pen was evaluated more favorably than Honda Pilot pen (functional-functional co-brand with low product fit) (M = 4.48, SD = 1.89 vs. M = 3.26, SD = 1.81; $F(1, 108) = 12.00$, $p < .05$). Also, a one-way ANOVA showed that Porsche MontBlanc pen was evaluated more favorably than Honda MontBlanc pen (functional-prestigious co-brand with low product fit) (M = 4.48, SD = 1.89 vs. M = 3.27, SD = 1.98; $F(1, 108) = 10.71$, $p < .05$) In parallel to attitude scores, purchase intentions for Porsche MontBlanc pen was higher than purchase intentions for Porsche Pilot pen (M = 4.16, SD = 2.06 vs. M = 3.33, SD = 1.99; $F(1, 54) = 10.21$, $p < .05$), Honda Pilot pen (M = 4.16, SD = 2.06 vs. M = 3.09, SD = 2.08; $F(1, 108) = 7.37$, < .05) and Honda MontBlanc pen (M = 4.16, SD = 2.06 vs. M = 3.11, SD = 2.09; $F(1, 108) = 7.11$, $p < .05$).

Comparisons of attitudes and purchase intentions of Porsche Rolex watch with the respected co-brands were as follows. A repeated measures ANOVA showed that Porsche Rolex watch was evaluated more favorably (M = 4.87, SD = 2.05) than Porsche Casio watch (prestigious-functional co-brand with low product fit) (M = 3.35, SD = 1.69; $F(1, 54) = 39.45$, $p < .05$). A one-way ANOVA showed that Porsche Rolex watch was evaluated more favorably than Honda Casio watch (functional-functional co-brand with low product fit) (M = 4.87, SD = 2.05 vs. M = 3.41, SD = 1.59; $F(1, 108) = 17.22$, $p < .05$). Also, a one-way ANOVA showed that Porsche Rolex watch was evaluated more favorably than Honda Rolex watch (functional-prestigious co-brand with low product fit) (M = 4.87, SD = 2.05 vs. M = 3.58, SD = 1.86; $F(1, 108) = 17.22$, $p < .05$). In parallel to attitude scores, purchase intentions for Porsche Rolex watch was higher than purchase intentions for Porsche Casio watch (M = 4.76, SD = 2.22 vs. M = 3.16, SD = 1.78; $F(1, 54) = 37.05$, $p < .05$), Honda Casio watch (M = 4.76, SD = 2.22 vs. M = 3.25, SD = 1.81; $F(1, 108) = 15.29$, $p < .05$) and Honda Rolex watch (M = 4.76, SD = 2.22 vs. M = 3.38, SD = 2.14; $F(1, 108) = 11.06$, $p < .05$)

Next, we tested H2, which proposed that when there is high product fit, co-branded offers of prestigious-functional, functional-prestigious and functional-functional brand partners generate similarly favorable attitudes and purchase intentions. We compared the attitude and purchase intention scores for the high-fitting car-car seat clothing and car-driving shoe partnerships. A repeated measures ANOVA showed that Honda Louis Vuitton (functional-prestigious co-brand with high product fit) and Honda Gap car design (functional-functional co-brand with high product fit) were evaluated equally favorably (M = 4.27, SD = 1.53 vs. M = 4.09, SD = 1.56; $F(1, 54) = .51$, $p > .05$). Also, a one-way ANOVA showed that Porsche Gap car design (prestigious-functional co-brand with high product fit) was evaluated equally favorably with Honda Gap car design (M = 4.19, SD = 1.61 vs. M = 4.09, SD = 1.56; $F(1, 108) = .11$, $p > .05$) and Honda Louis Vuitton car design (M = 4.19, SD = 1.61 vs. M = 4.27, SD = 1.53; $F(1, 108) = .07$, $p > .05$). In parallel to attitude scores, purchase intentions for Honda Louis Vuitton and Honda Gap car design were not significantly different (M = 3.78, SD = 1.91 vs. M = 3.45, SD = 1.85; $F(1, 54) = 1.28$, $p > .05$). Also, a one-way ANOVA showed that purchase intentions for Porsche Gap car design did not significantly differ from Honda Gap car design (M = 3.87, SD = 1.75 vs. M = 3.45, SD = 1.85; $F(1, 108) = 1.48$, $p > .05$) and Honda Louis Vuitton car design (M = 3.87, SD = 1.75 vs. M = 3.78, SD = 1.91; $F(1, 108) = .07$, $p > .05$).

A repeated measures ANOVA showed that Honda Gucci (functional-prestigious co-brand with high product fit) and Honda Puma driving shoes (functional-functional co-brand with high product fit) were evaluated equally favorably (M = 4.05, SD = 1.75 vs. M = 3.96, SD = 1.56; $F(1, 54) = .10$, $p > .05$). Also, a one-way ANOVA showed that Porsche Puma driving shoes (prestigious-functional co-brand with high product fit) were evaluated equally favorably with Honda Puma shoes (M = 4.15, SD = 1.76 vs. M = 3.96, SD = 1.56; $F(1, 108) = .34$, $p > .05$) and Honda Gucci shoes (M = 4.15, SD = 1.76 vs. M = 4.05, SD = 1.75; $F(1, 108) = .09$, $p > .05$). In parallel to attitude scores, purchase intentions for Honda Gucci and Honda Puma driving shoes were not significantly different (M = 3.75, SD = 1.91 vs. M = 3.64, SD = 1.75; $F(1, 54) = .17$, $p > .05$). Also, a one-way ANOVA showed that purchase intentions for Porsche Puma driving shoes did not significantly differ from Honda Puma shoes (M = 3.85, SD = 1.75 vs. M = 3.64, SD = 1.75; $F(1, 108) = .43$, $p > .05$) and Honda Gucci shoes (M = 3.85, SD = 1.75 vs. M = 3.75, SD = 1.91; $F(1, 108) = .10$, $p > .05$).

In aggregate, these results support our hypotheses. As predicted by H1, prestigious-prestigious partnerships (Porsche Mont Blanc pen and Porsche Rolex watch) induced more favorable attitudes and purchase intentions than prestigious-functional (Porsche Pilot pen and Honda Rolex watch), functional-prestigious (Honda MontBlanc pen and Honda Rolex watch) and functional-functional co-brands (Honda Pilot pen and Honda Casio watch) when product fit was low.

Regarding H2, co-branded partnerships composed of functional brands (either functional-prestigious, prestigious-functional or functional-functional partnerships) necessitated product fit. Therefore, in the presence of high product fit, co-branded offers of functional products induced equally favorable evaluations. Importantly, the brand concept consistency, i.e., partnering brands both being functional (Honda Gap car design and Honda Puma driving shoes), did not generate more favorable evaluations than functional-prestigious partnerships (Honda Louis Vuitton car design and Honda Gucci driving shoes) or prestigious-functional partnerships (Porsche GAP car design and Porsche Puma driving shoes). The effect of brand concept consistency outweighed the effect of product fit only when both brands had prestige concepts.

Table 2. Attitudes and purchase intentions_Main study

New product	Product fit	Brand type	Attitudes		Purchase intentions	
			Mean	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**
Porsche Louis Vuitton design car	High	Prestigious-Prestigious	4.87	1.63	4.56	1.85
Porsche GAP design car	High	Prestigious-Functional	4.19	1.61	3.87	1.75
Porsche Gucci driving shoes	High	Prestigious-Prestigious	4.56	1.86	4.35	2.00
Porsche Puma driving shoes	High	Prestigious-Functional	4.15	1.76	3.85	1.75
Porsche MontBlanc pens	Low	Prestigious-Prestigious	4.48	1.89	4.16	2.06
Porsche Pilot pens	Low	Prestigious-Functional	3.53	1.76	3.33	1.99
Porsche Rolex watches	Low	Prestigious-Prestigious	4.87	2.05	4.76	2.22
Porsche Casio watches	Low	Prestigious-Functional	3.35	1.69	3.16	1.78
Honda Louis Vuitton design car	High	Functional-Prestigious	4.27	1.53	3.78	1.91
Honda GAP design car	High	Functional-Functional	4.09	1.56	3.45	1.85
Honda Gucci driving shoes	High	Functional-Prestigious	4.05	1.75	3.75	1.91
Honda Puma driving shoes	High	Functional-Functional	3.96	1.56	3.64	1.75
Honda MontBlanc pens	Low	Functional-Prestigious	3.27	1.98	3.11	2.09
Honda Pilot pens	Low	Functional-Functional	3.26	1.81	3.09	2.08
Honda Rolex watches	Low	Functional-Prestigious	3.58	1.86	3.38	2.14
Honda Casio watches	Low	Functional-Functional	3.41	1.59	3.25	1.81

4.Discussion and Implications

Co-branding, the association of two brands in a product or service, has been a widely employed brand marketing strategy as well as a broadly investigated topic in academic research with increasing importance (Pinello et al., 2022). While several factors have been shown to influence the performance of a co-branded partnership, extant research has put particular focus on the role of "fit" between the partnering brands and product categories. The accepted notion is that the higher the perceived fit between the partnering brand images and product categories in an alliance, the higher the success of a co-branded partnership is. The current work advances this particular research stream by exploring the interplay of partnering brands' prestige, and functional brand concept fit with their product fit. Specifically, we show that when two prestigious brands collaborate, they induce favorable evaluations and purchase intentions even in the absence of product fit. Due to the ease of finding superordinate common links between the prestige brand concepts, brand fit overrides product fit in evaluations of prestigious brand collaborations. However, because functional brands are evaluated predominantly on their concrete functional attributes, categorical associations become more important in evaluations of co-branded products that include functional brands. Therefore, the presence of product fit is crucial in inducing favorable attitudes and purchase intentions in co-branded partnerships that include functional brands.

To our knowledge, this is the first study in the literature that focuses on the evaluations of prestigious and functional brand partnerships by examining their interaction with product fit. While previous research has examined the role of brand fit in general, it did not examine the specific effect of prestige and functional congruence of partnering brands in the presence and lack of product fit among the partners. Therefore, theoretically, we extend the brand fit concept by exploring the prestige and functionality attributes of the partnering brands in a co-branded partnership from a consumer behavior perspective. Our findings also support previous findings in brand extensions literature, which suggest that prestigious brands are more extendible to unrelated product categories than functional brands (e.g., Ralph Lauren extending into different product categories such as sunglasses, fragrances and furniture) due to perceiving superordinate broader links among categories (Park et al., 1991). We apply the extendibility advantage of the prestige brand concept to the co-branding context and show that perceived prestige fit overrides the necessity of categorical fit in co-branded partnerships that are composed of prestigious brands.

As co-branding is a relatively practical and cost-effective way of introducing new products to the market, our findings provide important implications, especially in managing prestigious brands. Any brand alliance aims to benefit from the partner brand and enhance the value of the brands involved in the partnership. An unsuccessful co-branding strategy may create significant consequences such as negative spillover effects to the partnering brands, hurt the brand image, or result in negative returns on investment (Pinello et al., 2022). Therefore, partner selection is a key issue with risks. Importantly, co-branding activities are becoming increasingly ubiquitous and popular among luxury and fashion brands that are highly competitive and difficult to grow (Romagnoli, 2020). Supporting this real-life practice, our findings suggest that prestigious brands are advantageous in the sense that they can collaborate with other prestigious brands even from unrelated product categories (e.g., Porsche car co-branding with Rolex watch). Consumers will be able to find common links between the partners due to their prestige congruence and hence make meaning of the partnership. This will translate into positive consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. In other words, it is less risky for prestigious brands to be involved in co-branding activities with similar other brands. Two or a higher number of prestigious brands can benefit from each other and increase overall sales through collaborations, even when they belong to unrelated product categories. This provides an opportunity to be involved in diverse co-branding activities and widen their product portfolio through co-branding strategies more easily than functional brands. However, our results suggest that managers should look for categorical fit among the partnering brands when a functional brand (e.g., Honda) is involved in a co-branding activity. Functional brands are evaluated predominantly on their concrete functional attributes. Hence, the presence of product fit becomes important in evaluations of functional-functional (e.g., Honda car co-branding with Casio watch), prestigious-functional (e.g., Porsche car co-branding with Casio watch) or functional-prestigious partnerships (e.g., Honda car co-branding with Rolex watch).

4.1. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Our work is not without limitations. To increase the external validity of our findings, we used real brands rather than fictitious brands in our studies. However, given that the intention-behaviour gap is quite prevalent in consumer research, it would be ideal to replicate the results with individuals' real-world experiences by conducting a field study. It would be especially helpful in validating the findings concerning consumers' purchase intentions, which are difficult to understand via self-administered questions. Relatedly, we used the Prolific online panel to recruit native English-speaking participants from USA and UK. While Prolific is widely used in academic research, conducting studies in other contexts (e.g., with student samples or in different geographic locations) would help increase the generalizability of our results by validating them with a more diverse participant group.

In our work, we adopted a consumer behavior perspective and focused on understanding consumers' general attitudes and purchase intentions, which are individual-level outcomes. Further research may look into firm-level outcomes, such as the effects of different partnership strategies on company revenue and market share figures, by using secondary data. Given that co-branding activities are becoming increasingly popular, especially among luxury fashion brands, it would be valuable to have a firm perspective and assess whether prestigious brand partnerships translate into positive financial outcomes for companies.

We specifically focused on two-brand partnerships in our research. In real practice, however, brands may involve in multiple different co-branding activities (e.g., Cadbury Oreo Chocolates, Milka Oreo Chocolates, Wall's Oreo ice cream or H&M collaborating with a different high-end fashion brand each year such as Versace for H&M and Kenzo H&M). In the brand extension context, Dacin and Smith (1994) showed that extending a brand into multiple categories does not weaken the focal brand when quality consistency is kept among the extensions.

Accordingly, we hypothesize that a prestigious brand may involve in multiple partnerships as long as brand concept consistency among the partners is assured. Arguably, each additional prestigious partner may strengthen the matching prestige appeal of the focal brand. Future research may adopt a portfolio perspective and explore whether our results will be valid as the number of co-branding activities that a prestigious brand undertakes increases.

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(Araştırma)

THE EFFECTS OF ONLINE SECOND-HAND PRODUCT PURCHASE MOTIVATIONS ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOR AND ONLINE REPURCHASE INTENTION IN CONSUMER-TO-CONSUMER ELECTRONIC COMMERCE (C2C) AND THE MEDIATING ROLE OF ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH MARKETING[1]

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ABSTRACT

Second-hand trade, which has a long history, has grown in popularity in recent years and is increasingly being purchased by consumers. Initially, second-hand products were physically purchased from physical locations such as flea markets, spot markets, and auction shops, but they have recently begun to be purchased on electronic platforms. There are many motivations for second-hand shopping, which occurs in the form of C2C, and consumers turn to second-hand products within the context of sustainable consumption, such as economic, convenience, and ideological. This study aims to determine the effects of online second-hand shopping motivations on sustainable consumption behavior and online repurchase intention, as well as the role of E-Womm in mediating these effects. The convenience sampling method was used in the research for this purpose, and data were collected from 551 online second-hand customers using an online questionnaire created by Google Forms. According to the findings, only economic and ideological motivations positively impact sustainable consumption and E-Wom behavior. All online second-hand shopping motivations have been found to have a positive effect on online repurchase intention, while E-Wom behavior has a positive effect on both sustainable consumption behavior and online repurchase intention. Furthermore, mediation relationships yielded significant results.

Keywords: Second-Hand product, motivations, sustainable consumption behavior, repurchase intention, electronic word-of-mouth marketing

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TÜKETİCİDEN TÜKETİCİYE ELEKTRONİK TİCARETTE (C2C) ÇEVRİMİÇİ İKİNCİ EL ÜRÜN SATIN ALMA MOTİVASYONLARININ SÜRDÜRÜLEBİLİR TÜKETİM DAVRANIŞI VE ÇEVRİMİÇİ TEKRAR SATIN ALMA NİYETİ ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİLERİ VE ELEKTRONİK AĞIZDAN AĞIZA PAZARLAMANIN ARACILIK ROLÜ

ÖZ

Uzun bir geçmişe sahip olan ikinci el ticaret, son yıllarda daha popüler hale gelmiş ve tüketiciler tarafından daha çok satın alınmaya başlanmıştır. İlk başlarda fiziki olarak bit pazarları, spotçu çarşıları, açık arttırma dükkanları gibi fiziki mekanlardan satın alınan ikinci el ürünler, elektronik platformlarda da satın alınmaya başlanmıştır. Tüketiciden tüketiciye elektronik ticaret (C2C) şeklinde gerçekleşen ikinci el ürün alışverişin temelinde ekonomik, uygunluk ve fikirsel gibi birçok motivasyonlar yer almakta ve tüketiciler sürdürülebilir tüketim kapsamında da ikinci el ürünlere yönelmektedirler. Araştırmanın amacı çevrimiçi ikinci el ürün satın alma motivasyonlarının sürdürülebilir tüketim davranışı ve çevrimiçi tekrar satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkilerini belirlemek ve bu etkilerde E-Womm'un aracılık rolünü ortaya çıkarmaktır. Bu amaçla araştırmada örnekleme yöntemlerinden kolayda örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmış ve araştırma kapsamında Google Forms üzerinden hazırlanan çevrimiçi anket formu ile 551 çevrimiçi ikinci el müşterisinden veriler toplanmıştır. Elde edilen bulgulara göre, yalnızca ekonomik ve ideolojik motivasyonlar sürdürülebilir tüketim ve E-Womm davranışı üzerinde olumlu bir etkiye sahiptir. Tüm çevrimiçi ikinci el alışveriş motivasyonlarının, çevrimiçi yeniden satın alma niyeti üzerinde olumlu bir etkiye sahip olduğu, E-Womm davranışının ise hem sürdürülebilir tüketim davranışı hem de çevrimiçi yeniden satın alma niyeti üzerinde olumlu bir etkiye sahip olduğu bulunmuştur. Ayrıca aracılık ilişkileri önemli sonuçlar vermiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: İkinci el ürün, motivasyonlar, sürdürülebilir tüketim davranışı, tekrar satın alma niyeti, elektronik ağızdan ağıza pazarlama

1. Introduction

In recent years, the concept of second-hand consumption has grown in popularity all over the world. Initially, lower-income consumers who could not afford to buy new products preferred the increased demand for second-hand products caused by factors such as famine, war, and crisis. However, the value of second-hand products has recently risen, and the concept of "poverty" second-hand has begun to emerge as a new style, a new fashion (Grasso et al., 2000). Until recently, second-hand product shopping took place in physical locations such as auction houses, spot markets, and flea markets and was referred to as traditional shopping. However, the development of e-commerce sites, as well as advancements in internet technology, have had an impact on second-hand shopping. In this type of electronic commerce, known as consumer-to-consumer electronic commerce (C2C), a consumer who no longer uses a product can sell it to another consumer in need at a reasonable price via a website, reintroducing idle products into use. Consumers purchase second-hand products through online C2C electronic commerce for a variety of reasons. When the literature is examined, the motivations for online second-hand shopping are generally economic (price orientation, critical orientation, and bargaining power); convenience (ease of use and usefulness); and ideological (need to be unique, trust, nostalgia, and assurance) (Williams and Paddock, 2003; Guiot and Roux, 2010; Padmavathy et al., 2019; Telli et al., 2021). Furthermore, according to some studies (Cherrier, 2012; Khurana and Tadesse, 2019; Kurtulus et al., 2021), sustainable consumption is an effective factor in consumers' propensity to consume second-hand products.

Sustainable consumption is gaining popularity on a national and international scale. Sustainable consumption refers to the use of products that meet the basic needs for a better life while reducing the use of natural resources, waste, toxic substances, and pollutant emissions without jeopardizing the needs of future generations. When shopping, consumers who are aware of sustainability tend to gravitate toward products that do not pollute the environment or nature. Consumers tend to reduce the production of new products, avoid excessive consumption, and consume second-hand products because of the environmental damage caused by waste from production and consumption. Consumers prefer second-hand products for reasons such as waste reduction and recycling. The consumption of second-hand products reduces the consumption of new products, and the reuse of old products reduces environmental damage. Environmentally conscious consumers consider environmental aspects when purchasing, using, or after using a product. Second-hand consumption promotes sustainability as an alternative mode of consumption. As a result, the relationship between second-hand and sustainable consumption serves as the study's foundation. Although many previous studies have indicated a link between sustainable consumption and second-hand consumption (Kuning et al., 2018), this link has not been investigated within the scope of the research model. As a result, the primary goal of the current study is to determine the relationship between consumers' online second-hand shopping motivations and their long-term consumption behavior. The importance of the research is revealed by both the approach to the subject within the scope of a model and the narrow scope and limitation of the studies that approach second-hand consumption in terms of sustainability in local studies.

For this purpose, the research model incorporates online second-hand shopping motivations and sustainable consumption behavior. Furthermore, the model now incorporates online repurchase intent as well as electronic word-of-mouth marketing behavior. The first goal of the study is to define the effects of consumers' online second-hand shopping motivations (economic, convenience, and ideological motivations) on electronic word-of-mouth marketing, online repurchase intention, and sustainable consumer behavior, as well as the effects of electronic word of mouth marketing on online repurchase intention and sustainable consumption behavior, within the scope of the study's final model. The study's second goal is to investigate the role of electronic word-of-mouth marketing in mediating the effects of online second-hand shopping motivations on online repurchase intention and long-term consumption behavior.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Online Second-Hand Shopping Motivations

Second-hand products, which were previously purchased physically in stores, have begun to be purchased over the Internet with the development of electronic commerce and, in particular, C2C. As a result, speculation has centered on what drives consumers to buy second-hand products online. Previous research (Williams and Paddock, 2003; Prieto and Caemmerer, 2013) found that consumers preferred second-hand products for economic reasons, whereas others (Bardhi and Arnould, 2005; Yan et al., 2015) found that they preferred second-hand products for environmental and personal reasons. The three broad categories of online second-hand shopping motivations are economical, convenient, and ideological (Padmavathy et al., 2019).

2.1.1. Economic Motivations

Economic motivations are one of the reasons people buy second-hand items online. When the history of second-hand products is examined, it is clear that consumers buy second-hand products for financial reasons (Guiot and Roux, 2010). Because second-hand products are less expensive than new products, they are perceived as more appealing (Williams and Paddock, 2003). Padmavathy et al. (2019) investigated the economic motivation factors influencing the purchase of second-hand products on online platforms and discovered price orientation, critical orientation, and bargaining power to be the economic motivation factors. Consumers' intention to look at product prices before purchasing them is referred to as price orientation (as cited in McCracken, 1980, Korgaonkar, 1984). One of the primary reasons why consumers buy second-hand products is that their prices are lower than those of new products. Customers' critical orientation reflects their interactions with the main channels to purchase products at a lower cost and their environmental/ecological concerns (as cited in Kapferer and Laurent 1992, Roux and Guiot, 2008). Consumers who buy second-hand products avoid the first-hand market because they want to get branded, high-quality products at a lower price and are environmentally conscious (Edbring et al., 2016). The difficulty of obtaining desired or required products at appealing and distinctive prices and the personal pleasure that results from this situation is referred to as bargaining power. Customers who bargain for lower prices are said to want to gain bargaining power (Wagner and Rudolph, 2010). Williams and Paddock (2003) discuss the issue of gaining bargaining power through the purchase of used goods. The following hypothesis was developed;

H_1**:** *Economic motivations have a positive effect on online repurchase intention.*

2.1.2. Convenience Motivations

The second motivation for online second-hand shopping is convenience. According to Wagner and Rudolph (2010), one of the motivations for purchasing second-hand products online is convenience. Convenience motivates consumers to buy second-hand products from online platforms rather than physical stores because they can search for, find, and order the desired product at any time (Kollmann et al., 2012). Convenience motivations include dimensions of ease of use and usefulness. The ease of use of any application or system refers to a person's perception of it being simple/easy to use, whereas usefulness is expressed as a person's perception that using new technology will increase and improve their performance (Davis, 1989). According to Gefen et al. (2003), convenience motivates consumers who want to shop at online second-hand stores. A consumer has a behaviorally positive intention if he or she gains or perceives benefit from using a system, website, or application (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh and Davis, 2000). The hypothesis below was developed.

H_2**:** *Convenience motivations have a positive effect on online repurchase intention.*

2.1.3. Ideological Motivations

The third type of online second-hand shopping motivation is ideological. The ideological motivations are classified into four groups: the need to be unique, trust, nostalgia, and assurance (Padmavathy et al., 2019). The need to be unique is defined by Tian et al. (2001) as distinguishing oneself from others through the purchase of goods in order to improve people's personal and social images. Many studies have found that consumers seek out second-hand products to satisfy their desire for uniqueness (Roux and Guiot, 2008; Padmavathy et al., 2019). Baker and Kennedy (1994) define nostalgia as consumers' desire for authentic products that evoke past memories. The fact that second-hand products evoke memories of the past, according to studies, increases the likelihood of purchasing second-hand goods (Guiot and Roux, 2010). Trust implies that a customer who buys a product or service evaluates it based on its safety, dependability, and fulfillment/non-fulfillment of promises. Consumers who shop on platforms such as C2C can develop trust by returning to a familiar website (Lu et al., 2010). Trust in second-hand products influences purchase intention and seller trust (Lee and Lee, 2005). When shopping on the Internet, the term “assurance” referred to the security of the transaction process and shared information (Cheng et al., 2014). According to Citera et al. (2005), face-to-face commerce has more unethical practices. Kim (2005) stated that individuals or businesses engaged in C2C activities should include clear security and privacy information on their websites. The hypothesis below was developed.

***H_3*: Ideological motivations have a positive effect on online repurchase intention.**

2.2. Sustainable Consumption Behavior

The Sustainable Action Plan, also known as “Agenda 21 at the Earth Summit” and held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, was the first to appear in the literature (Seyfang, 2009). Sustainable consumption is a field that reveals its distinguishing features in changing consumer behavior through complex system relations. Paavola (2001) defined sustainable consumption as the consumption behavior required to minimize negative environmental effects, which has gained prominence in recent years regarding the international environment. Environmentally conscious consumers have recently changed their purchasing habits to include products that do not harm the environment or nature. As a result, when consumers need a product, they increasingly prefer second-hand products over new products. The new generation’s social awareness of bios, the environment, and natural resources is expected to increase second-hand consumption (Roux and Korchia, 2006). Modern consumers are also more environmentally conscious and work to protect the environment by supporting second-hand consumption (Grasso et al., 2000). As a result, second-hand consumption is critical for sustainability, protecting the environment and nature from society’s excessive consumption and leaving a more beautiful and livable world for future generations. Environmentally conscious consumers are willing to buy used cars, furniture, clothing, and books (Craig-Lees and Hill, 2002). According to Yan et al. (2015), university students who shop at second-hand stores are more environmentally conscious than those who do not, and their purchase of second-hand products is motivated not only by their financial situation but also by their love of vintage items. Second-hand purchases reduce overall product consumption, and reusing old items reduces environmental damage. Second-hand consumer behavior influences reuse and sustainability (Kuning et al., 2018). Consumers who follow the sustainable consumption ideology take environmental factors into account when purchasing, using, and disposing of a product. As a result, as an alternative form of consumption, second-hand consumption promotes sustainability (as cited in Belz and Peattie, 2009, Cherrier, 2012). Consumers who subscribe to this ideology prefer and are willing to purchase products from stores that they perceive to be environmentally friendly. Consumers' growing environmental and sustainability concerns lead them to purchase second-hand products, which are a better option for the environment. Sustainable consumption behavior is an effective motivator for second-hand consumption (Khurana and Tadesse, 2019). The hypotheses listed below were developed.

H_4*: *Economic motivations have a positive effect on sustainable consumption behavior.

H_5*: *Convenience motivations have a positive effect on sustainable consumption behavior.

H_6*: *Ideological motivations have a positive effect on sustainable consumption behavior.

2.3. Electronic Word-of-Mouth Marketing

Electronic word-of-mouth marketing (E-Womm) is defined as negative and positive assessments of products, services, and businesses made by existing, current, and potential customers (via the Internet) (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). E-Womm can be found in a variety of contexts. For example, on product review websites, blogs, social networking sites, and discussion forums, a consumer can share his or her thoughts and experiences with any product or service (Cheung and Thadani, 2012). As a result, E-Womm influences consumers' preferences for products, services, and brands, as well as their purchasing decisions (Goldsmith and Horowitz, 2006). According to some studies (Dolen et al., 2007; Gupta and Haris, 2010), consumers exposed to positive E-Womm spend more time shopping, whereas negative E-Womm negatively affects and reduces purchasing behavior (East et al., 2008). Similarly, Arnold and Reynolds (2003) stated that consumers shop with hedonic feelings, such as purchasing the best product at the best price, searching for discounted products, and bargain hunting; it has also been determined that as consumers' tendencies toward hedonic shopping motivations increase, so does their proclivity to share their experiences via E-Womm. The hypotheses listed below were developed.

H_7*: *Economic motivations have a positive effect on E-Womm

H_8*: *Convenience motivations have a positive effect on E-Womm

H_9*: *Ideological motivations have a positive effect on E-Womm

Long-term consumption and purchase intent are also linked to E-Womm behavior. Many studies have concluded that Internet sharing influences purchase intent (Luo et al., 2013; Lee and Shin, 2014). E-Womm behavior has a significant effect on repurchase intention, according to Heryana and Yasa (2020). In their studies, Sethi et al. (2018) discovered that online reviews and shares on electronic platforms affect repurchase intention. According to Shrivastava et al. (2021), who research sustainable consumption and E-Womm, Instagram influencers encourage consumers to embrace circular fashion and sustainability. Mohammad et al. (2020) discovered in their study that E-Womm behavior regarding second-hand products affects sensitive consumption behavior in the context of sustainability. The hypotheses listed below were developed.

***H_{10}*: E-Womm behavior related to second-hand products has a positive effect on online repurchase intention.*

***H_{11}*: E-Womm behavior related to second-hand products has a positive effect on sustainable consumption behavior.*

2.4. Mediation Relationship

The study also looked at E-Womm behavior as a moderator in the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Many previous mediation studies have discovered that E-Womm has a mediating effect on consumer purchasing behavior (Barlas et al., 2020; Öztürk and Nart, 2021). According to Jalilvand et al. (2011), electronic word-of-mouth marketing behavior is the precursor to consumers' online purchasing behavior. E-Womm behavior, according to Kuo et al. (2013), has a mediating effect on online purchase intention. E-Womm behavior has a mediating effect on green purchasing behavior, according to Jaini et al. (2019), and consumers who are responsible for environmental issues are influenced by the information they learn through E-Womm and tend to purchase green cosmetic products. According to Junejo et al. (2020), E-Womm behavior mediates the relationship between website content and purchasing behavior. As a result, numerous studies (Sharif et al., 2016; Tien et al., 2019) have discovered that E-Womm mediates purchase intention. The hypotheses listed below were developed.

***H_{12}*: E-Womm has a mediating role in the relationship between economic motivations and online repurchase intention.*

***H_{13}*: E-Womm has a mediating role in the relationship between convenience motivations and online repurchase intention.*

***H_{14}*: E-Womm has a mediating role in the relationship between ideological motivations and online repurchase intention.*

***H_{15}*: E-Womm marketing has a mediating role in the relationship between economic motivations and sustainable consumption behavior.*

***H_{16}*: E-Womm marketing has a mediating role in the relationship between convenience motivations and sustainable consumption behavior.*

H_{17}*: *E-Womm has a mediating role in the relationship between ideological motivations and sustainable consumption behavior.

3. Methodology

3.1. Sampling and Data Collection

The population of the study includes all Turkish consumers who buy used goods on the Internet. However, the convenience sampling method was used because reaching the entire universe is impossible. The convenience sampling method is preferred over the universe method because it collects data more easily, quickly, and cheaply. It was attempted to reach consumers with a variety of social, economic, and cultural characteristics in order for the sample to be as representative of the universe as possible. Furthermore, the Gümüşhane University Ethics Committee granted permission for the research to be carried out in a decision dated 06.01.2021 and numbered 2020/02.

Because some of the scales used in the research were in English, these scales were first translated into Turkish before being used in the questionnaire form. Two different translations were made into Turkish by a translator who is an expert in both English and Turkish languages and an academician who is an expert in the field, using translation and reverse translation methods. After reviewing the translations, it was determined that they were close to each other, and the questionnaire was created. The questionnaire was first reviewed by four academicians in order to assess the clarity, reliability, and validity of the statements in the questionnaire. As a result of the academicians' feedback, the questionnaire was created, and it was decided to test it on participants to determine the clarity of the expressions in the questionnaire. Because the data will be collected online, the survey form was transferred to Google Forms, and the survey link was distributed to 50 people at random for the pretest. Following the pretest period, it was determined that 44 participants completed the questionnaire, and factor and reliability analyses were performed on these data. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the scales' validity and reliability levels were adequate. Following that, the data collection procedure was initiated.

To include only consumers who purchase second-hand products online, a filter question (Have you previously purchased second-hand products online?) was added to the beginning of the survey form. Participants who said "Yes" to this filter question finished the survey, while those who said "No" exited it. Between 25.10.2020 and 12.12.2020, the Google Forms survey link was activated to increase consumer participation, and the survey link was shared on social networking sites such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. It was discovered during the data collection that 1248 people completed the questionnaire, but 636 answered "No" to the filter question. As a result of removing 61 missing and incorrect questionnaires from the 612 people who answered "Yes" to the filter question, the study's sample size was set at 551 participants. The SPSS 21 and AMOS 24 programs were used to analyze the data.

3.2. Measurement Instruments

In the first section of the questionnaire, which is divided into two sections, there are scale items for the variables. Participants were asked to rate each statement on these scales on a 5-point Likert scale. The second section of the questionnaire includes demographic questions about the participants' gender, age, occupation, income, and educational status.

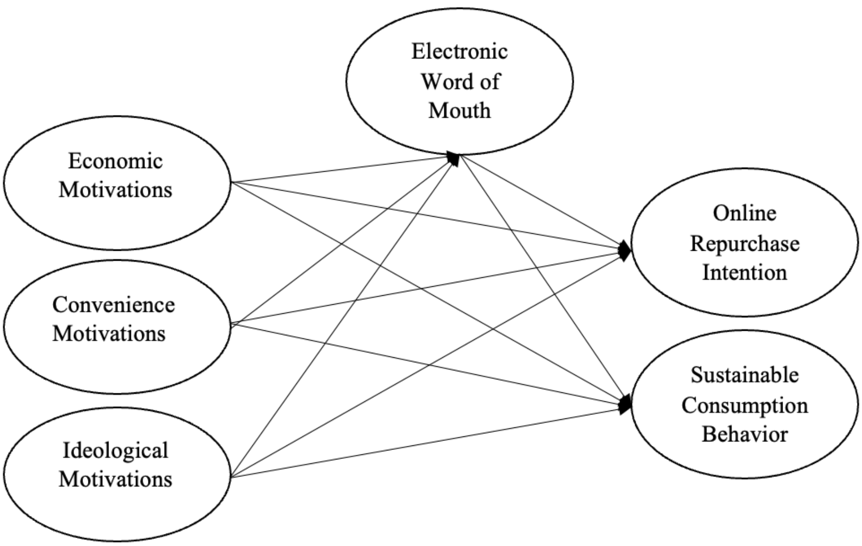

Figure 1. Proposed Model

Online second-hand purchase motivations, sustainable consumption behavior, e-womm behavior, and repurchase intention scales were used in the study. Padmavathy et al. (2019) developed an online second-hand buying motivation scale consisting of 33 statements to measure consumers' online second-hand purchase motivation; Dogan et al. (2015) developed a sustainable consumption behavior scale consisting of 17 statements to measure sustainable consumption behaviors; Ha (2002) and Chu and Kim (2011) used an e-womm scale consisting of 5 statements to measure e-womm behaviors; and Pappas et al. (2014) and Hsu et al. (2017) repurchase intention scales with 5 statements were used in their studies.

4. Results

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The table below shows the frequency and percentage results for the demographic information of the consumers included in the study.

Table 1. Demographic Information

Gender	F	%	Marital Status	F	%
Female	270	49	Married	263	47.7
Male	281	51	Single	288	52.3
Total	551	100	Total	551	100
Age	**F**	**%**	**Income (TRY)**	**F**	**%**
17 and under	9	1.6	2,500 and below	196	35.6
18-28	230	41.7	2,501-5,000	131	23.8
29-39	244	44.3	5,001-7,500	126	22.9
40-50	57	10.3	7,501-10,000	69	12.5
51-61	9	1.6	10,001 and above	29	5.3
62 and older	2	0.4	Total	551	100
Total	551	100			
			Occupation	**F**	**%**
Graduation	**F**	**%**	Self-Employment	31	5.6
Elementary	9	1.6	State Sector	200	36.3
Secondary	14	2.5	Private Sector	93	16.9
High School	113	20.5	Retired	4	0.7
Associate	85	15.4	Housewife	21	3.8
Bachelor	175	31.8	Student	148	26.9
Master	117	21.2	Unemployed	32	5.8
Phd	38	6.9	Other	22	4
Total	551	100	Total	551	100

According to Table 1, the majority of participants are females between the ages of 18 and 39, have a bachelor's degree, work in the public sector, and have a monthly family income of 2,500 TRY or less. The results of the websites or applications where the participants in the study purchased second-hand products are shown in the table below.

Table 2. Participants' Use of Second-hand Sites

Which websites or applications did you use the most to buy second-hand products on the Internet?	F	%
Letgo.com	270	49
Sahibinden.com	101	18.3
Social media	66	11.9
Dolap.com	43	7.8
ModaCruz.com	5	0.9
Gardrops.com	3	0.5
Gittigidiyor.com	34	6.1
Zebramo	3	0.5
BebeCruz	17	3.4
Other	9	1.6
Total	**551**	**100**

Table 2 shows that nearly half of the participants (49%) buy second-hand products on Letgo.com, 18.3% on Sahibinden.com, and 11.9% on social media tools. Furthermore, it has been observed that the discriminating participants purchase second-hand products on websites that sell second-hand clothing (such as Dolap.com and BebeCruz). The table below shows which second-hand products participants buy the most on the Internet.

Table 3. Participants' Purchases of Second-hand Goods

Which second-hand products do you most frequently purchase on the Internet?	F	%
Electronic products (Phone, computer, etc.)	154	27.9
Book	28	3.2
Clothes	79	14.3
Household goods	68	12.3
Vehicle (Car, Bicycle, etc.)	61	11.5
Sporting goods	28	5.1
Baby's things	39	7.1
Musical instruments	4	0.7
Toys	36	6.5
Antique products	11	1.9
White appliances	23	4.1
Other	30	5.4
Total	**551**	**100**

Participants bought electronic products (27.9%), clothing (14.3%), household goods (12.3%), and vehicles (11.5%), according to Table 3. Furthermore, it was discovered that musical instruments (0.6%) and antique products (1.9%) were the least purchased products on the Internet.

4.2. Validity and Reliability Tests

Scale validity and reliability analyses were carried out to determine whether the proposed model structure was appropriate for the sample data. The SPSS 21 package program was used for validity and reliability analysis. The CR and AVE values were computed using Microsoft Excel formulas. The first analysis to be performed is factor analysis, and as a result of factor analysis, it is stated that the factor loads of the scale items should be 0.50 and above in some studies and 0.40 and above in other studies (Child, 2006). The Cronbach Alpha test is used to determine a factor's reliability, and a Cronbach alpha coefficient value greater than 0.70 indicates that the measurement tool used in a study is reliable (Kalaycı, 2006). Prior to testing the research hypotheses, the structural validity of each scale and its sub-dimensions was determined. The study employs convergent validity (CR) and discriminant validity (AVE) values to determine the construct validity of the scales. The CR value should be greater than 0.70 and the AVE value should be greater than 0.50 to ensure the scale's validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Table 4. Validity and Reliability Result

Factor	Subdimension	Item	Factor Load	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Economic Motivations	Critical Orientation	CO1	0.760	0.876	0.870	0.625
		CO2	0.799			
		CO3	0.798			
		CO4	0.805			
	Price Orientation	PO1	0.804	0.859	0.860	0.607
		PO2	0.804			
		PO3	0.807			
		PO4	0.696			
	Bargaining Power	BP1	0.823	0.893	0.889	0.728
		BP2	0.881			
		BP3	0.854			
Convenience Motivations	Ease of Use	EU1	0.767	0.872	0.876	0.638
		EU2	0.846			
		EU3	0.805			
		EU4	0.774			
	Usefullnes	US1	0.746	0.861	0.870	0.626
		US2	0.848			
		US3	0.802			
		US4	0.765			
Ideological Motivations	Need to be Unique	NU1	0.861	0.957	0.939	0.794
		NU2	0.919			
		NU3	0.907			
		NU4	0.877			
	Assurance	AS1	0.754	0.880	0.837	0.632
		AS2	0.874			
		AS3	0.879			
		AS4	0.869			
	Nostalgia	NO1	0.818	0.906	0.892	0.735
		NO2	0.877			
		NO3	0.875			
	Trust	T21	0.796	0.935	0.909	0.715
		TR2	0.847			
		TR3	0.738			

Sustainable Consumption Behavior	Environmental Awareness	EA1	0.757	0.854	0.876	0.587
		EA2	0.791			
		EA3	0.820			
		EA4	0.764			
		EA5	0.694			
	Unnecessary Purchasing	UP1	0.730	0.858	0.896	0.634
		UP2	0.853			
		UP3	0.768			
		UP4	0.846			
		UP5	0.776			
	Saving	SA1	0.820	0.886	0.884	0.657
		SA2	0.852			
		SA2	0.827			
		SA4	0.739			
	Reusability	RE1	0.770	0.804	0.845	0.645
		RE2	0.844			
		RE3	0.793			
Electronic Word of Mouth Marketing		EW1	0.761	0.874	0.917	0.649
		EW2	0.842			
		EW3	0.846			
		EW4	0.838			
		EW5	0.793			
Repurchase Intention		RI1	0.808	0.894	0.922	0.703
		RI2	0.856			
		RI3	0.823			
		RI4	0.865			
		RI5	0.840			

Table 4 clearly shows that the reliability levels of all research scales are greater than 0.70, indicating that all scales are reliable. Furthermore, all the CR values are greater than 0.70, and the AVE values are greater than 0.50. All factors' convergent and discriminant validity values are at the appropriate level, ensuring validity. When the number of scale sub-dimensions in a study exceeds one, the "item parceling technique" is used, which was also preferred in the research. As a result, the economic motivations scale was reduced to three items by using the item parceling technique on multidimensional scales, the convenience motivations scale was reduced to two items, the ideological motivations scale was reduced to four items, and the sustainable consumption behavior scale was reduced to four items. In the item parceling technique, the parcel is signed as the sum or average of two or more statements, responses, or behaviors. The parceling technique entails adding the sum and averages of this expression, response, or behavior to calculate the parcel values, which are then used in the Structural Equation Model (SEM) (Little et al., 2002). According to Bandalos (2002), the item parceling technique produced better results, especially when analyzing multi-item scales.

4.3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

After using explanatory factor analysis to discover the factor structures of the scales in a study, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with AMOS is used to validate the factor structures. Fit index values are used in CFA to determine whether the structural model's results are meaningful. Generally, the fit indices most commonly used in the literature are X2/df, GFI, AGFI, CFI, and RMSEA (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1984). While some of the scales used in the study have only one dimension, others have multiple dimensions. As a result, the study used both first-level and second-level CFA models.

Table 5. CFA Index Values

Variables	X^2/df	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA
Economic Motivations	2.202	0.972	0.954	0.987	0.047
Convenience Motivations	4.248	0.966	0.936	0.975	0.077
Ideological Motivations	4.408	0.920	0.885	0.966	0.079
Sustainable Consumption Behavior	2.153	0.950	0.933	0.970	0.046
Electronic Word of Mouth Marketing	3.177	0.995	0.966	0.997	0.063
Repurchase Intention	4.657	0.967	0.916	0.973	0.078
Fit Index	X^2/df	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA
Good	≤ 3	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.97	≤ 0.05

When the CFA results for the scales were examined, it was discovered that all of the obtained values were within the range of good and acceptable fit index values, and the factor structures of the scales were confirmed.

4.4. Testing Research Hypotheses

The effects of independent variables on dependent variables are investigated in SEM analyses. In addition, an additional variable can be introduced into the SEM analyses, altering the relationship between the variables in the research model and the direction of the effect. If the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable decreases, partial mediation can be mentioned; full mediation can be mentioned if the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable becomes meaningless (Rucker et al., 2011). The latent variable in an SEM-based research model should have at least two or more observed variables. As a result, the observed variables used within the model's scope are satisfactory. Figure 2 depicts the SEM-tested research model.

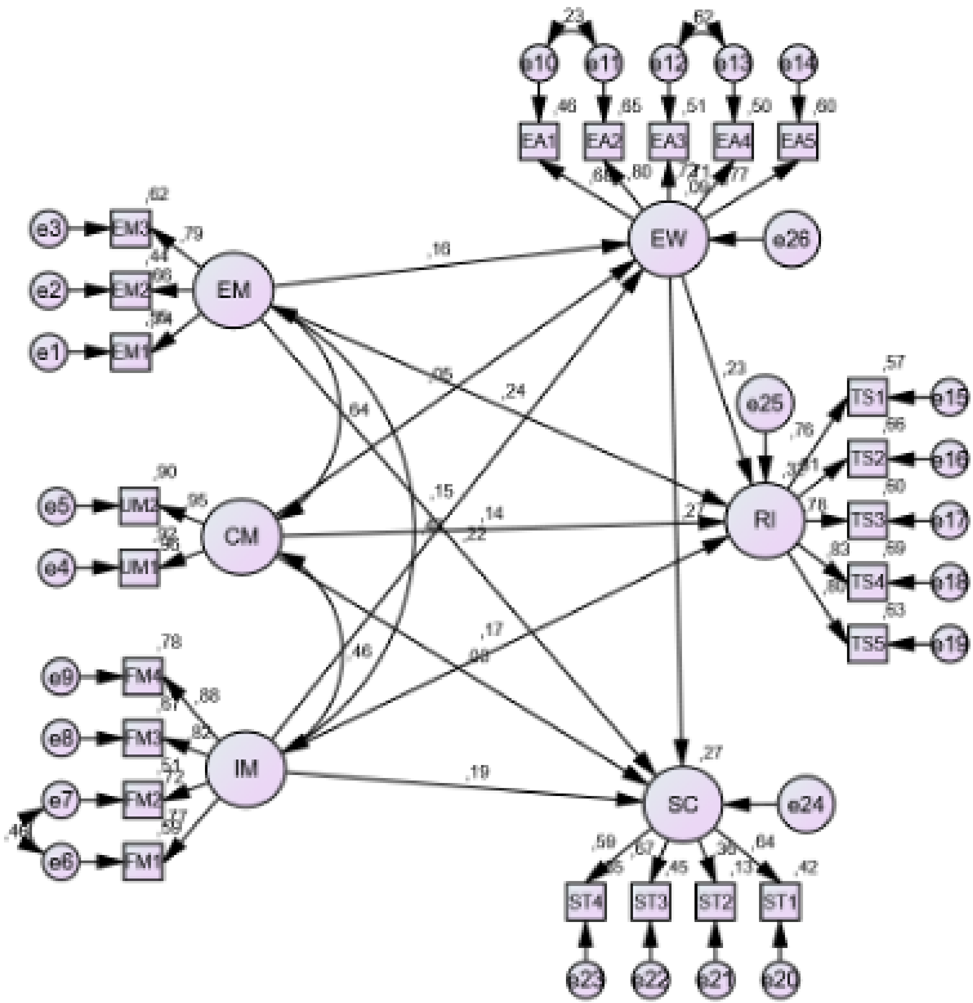

Figure 2. SEM Results

Changes are visible, as shown in Figure 2. First, covariance connections between the research's independent variables were established in accordance with the proposed modifications. The covariance between e12-e13, one of the E-Womm behavior scale error terms, was then calculated. In accordance with the second modification proposed following the analysis, covariance was formed between e6-e7, one of the error terms of the ideological motivations scale. The analysis produced the covariance between e10-e11, which is one of the error terms of the E-Womm behavior scale. Examining the covariance connections formed as a result of the proposed changes reveals that all covariance connections are formed between the error terms of the same factor's items. Table 6 shows the fit index values (a result of the modifications).

Table 6. Model Goodness of Fit Statistics

Model Fit Indices	Good Fit Value	Acceptable Fit Value	Model Fit Value
X^2	P>0.05 (unsignificant)		447.265
df			213
X^2/df	X^2/df <3	3<X^2/df <5	2.100
RMSEA	RMSEA<0.05	0.05<RMSEA<0.08	0.045
CFI	CFI>0.95	0.95>CFI>0.90	0.966
GFI	GFI>0.95	0.95>GFI>0.90	0.932
NFI	NFI>0.95	0.95>NFI>0.90	0.937
TLI	TLI>0.95	0.95>TLI>0.90	0.960
IFI	IFI>0.95	0.95>IFI>0.90	0.966
AGFI	AGFI>0.90	0.90>AGFI>0.85	0.912

When the model fit indices are analyzed in aggregate, it is possible to conclude that the model has acceptable and good fit values, resulting in a high level of fit for the research model. The SEM was used to examine the research hypotheses, and the results of the hypothesis tests are shown in the table below. The table also contains the direct and indirect effect values that will be used to evaluate the hypotheses. The p values were calculated to determine whether or not the research hypotheses were significant. As a result, the $p<0.05$ significance level was used, and hypotheses with p values less than 0.05 were accepted as significant, while hypotheses with p values greater than 0.05 were rejected. The findings in relation to the research hypotheses are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7. Hypothesis Test Results

Hypotheses	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Mediator Effect	Boot-strap Lower Bounds	Boot-strap Upper Bounds	p	Result
H1: EM→RI	0.238					*	Supported
H2: CM→RI	0.142					0.015	Supported
H3: IM→RI	0.166					0.001	Supported
H4: EM→SC	0.218					0.007	Supported
H5: CM→SC	0.033					0.638	Rejected
H6: IM→SC	0.193					0.002	Supported
H7: EM→EW	0.163					0.034	Supported
H8: CM→EW	0.054					0.426	Rejected
H9: IM→EW	0.151					0.011	Supported
H10: EW→RI	0.228					*	Supported
H11: EW→SC	0.267					*	Supported
H12: EM→EW →RI		0.037	Partial	0.008	0.068	0.030	Supported

H13: CM→EW→RI	0.012	No Mediation	-0.017	0.038	0.587	Rejected
H14: IM→EW→RI	0.034	Partial	0.014	0.068	0.010	Supported
H15: EM→EW→SC	0.043	Partial	0.011	0.075	0.041	Supported
H16: CM→EW→SC	0.014	No Mediation	-0.018	0.047	0.552	Rejected
H17: IM→EW→SC	0.040	Partial	0.014	0.079	0.016	Supported

When Table 7 is examined, the H5, H8, H13, and H16 hypotheses are rejected, while the other hypotheses are accepted at the $p<0.05$ significance level. It is determined that economic motivations have a 16.3% effect on E-Womm behavior, ideological motivations have a 15.1% effect, and convenience motivations have no effect. Economic motivations had a 23.8% effect, convenience motivations had a 14.2% effect, and ideological motivations had a 16.6% effect on online repurchase intention. Economic motivations had a 21.8% effect on sustainable consumption behavior, ideological motivations had a 19.3% effect, and convenience motivations had no effect. Furthermore, it was determined that E-Womm behavior has a 22.8% effect on online repurchase intention and a 26.7% effect on sustainable consumption behavior. When E-Womm behavior is added as a mediator variable between economic motivations and online repurchase intention, the effect between the variables decreases (03%) and there is a partial mediator effect in this relationship; when added as a mediator variable between ideological motivations and online repurchase intention, the effect between the variables decreased (03%) and there was a partial mediator effect in this relationship; when it is added as a mediator variable between economic motivations and sustainable consumption behavior, the effect between the variables decreases (04%) and there is a partial mediator effect in this relationship; when added as a mediator variable between ideological motivations and sustainable consumption behavior, it was appointed that the effect between the variables decreased (03%) and there was a partial mediator effect in this relationship. It has been determined that when E-Womm behavior is added as a mediating variable between convenience motivations and online repurchase intention and between convenience motivations and sustainable consumer behavior, there is no mediating effect in both relationships. The degree of mediating effect is determined using the bootstrap confidence interval values (Reutter and Bigatti, 2014). The upper and lower limit values of the Bootstrap confidence interval must be less than or greater than zero in order to say that the mediating effect between the two variables is significant (Preacher and Hayes, 2008). When the table is examined, it is clear that the upper and lower bounds of the Bootstrap confidence intervals for the hypotheses with partial mediation are greater than zero. The lower and upper limit values of the Bootstrap confidence interval are smaller and larger than zero in the hypotheses that conclude there is no mediation.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

When the impact of online second-hand shopping motivations on online repurchase intentions is examined, it is determined that all online second-hand shopping motivations positively and significantly impact online repurchase intention. It has been determined that the economic, convenience, and ideological motivations of internet buyers of second-hand products positively and significantly impact their intention to repurchase second-hand products online. Many studies (Kim and Lennon, 2013; Bashir et al., 2016) have found that price is one of the most important factors influencing a product's repurchase. Economic satisfaction influences online repurchase intention among customers of popular C2C e-commerce sites in China, according to Chen et al. (2017). Numerous studies in various fields have concluded that convenience motivations influence purchase intention (Zhang and Chen, 2018; Shrivastava et al., 2021; Telli et al., 2021). Padmavalty et al. (2019) concluded that all economic, convenience and ideological motivations positively and significantly affect online second-hand product repurchase intention. As a result, the findings are consistent with numerous studies published in peer-reviewed journals.

When the effects of online second-hand shopping motivations on sustainable consumption behavior are investigated, it is concluded that economic and ideological motivations have a positive and significant effect, whereas convenience motivations do not. According to the study on the relationship between second-hand consumption and sustainability (Çetin and Gül, 2018), second-hand consumption is one of the factors influencing consumers' sustainable consumption behavior. According to Waight (2013), sustainable consumption is achieved by avoiding using additional resources. Many studies have found that environmentally conscious consumers prefer to buy used goods (Parguel et al., 2017; Laitala, 2018). On the other hand, Clausen et al. (2010) found no correlation between consumer second-hand product shopping on eBay and environmental protection. As a result, the ease of use or benefits of second-hand product purchasing sites does not affect sustainable consumption behavior. The findings of the study also lend support to the literature.

When the effects of online second-hand shopping motivations on E-Womm behavior were investigated, economic and ideological motivations were found to have a positive and significant effect, whereas convenience motivations had no significant effect. Consumers who buy second-hand products at low prices on the Internet or gain bargaining power in this manner are more likely to share these benefits with others because economic motivations include bargaining power, price, and critical orientations. Consumers engage in E-Womm behavior to gain economic benefit, improve their self-image, and gain social status, according to Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004). (perceived as an expert by others). According to Arnold and Reynolds (2003), consumers shop with hedonic emotions, such as buying the best product at the best price, searching for discounted products, and bargain hunting, and it has been determined that as consumers' inclinations toward hedonic shopping motivations increase, so does their proclivity to share their experiences via E-Womm. The usefulness and ease of use provided by a website or application where consumers buy second-hand products have been determined to have no effect on E-Womm behavior. The convenience motivation, which allows consumers to shop on social media whenever and however they want, has no effect on E-Womm behavior, according to Köysüren and Külter Demirgüneş (2019). Furthermore, ideological motivations such as uniqueness and nostalgia have been shown to positively and significantly impact E-Womm behavior. According to research (Triantafillidou and Siomkos, 2014; Ford et al., 2018), nostalgically positioned brands increase consumers' purchase intentions and E-Womm behaviors. When the results are taken together, it is clear that the hypothesis results support the literature.

When the effects of E-Womm behavior on online repurchase intention and sustainable consumption behavior were investigated, it was discovered that E-Womm behavior had a positive and significant effect on both of these outcomes. Many studies on E-Womm behavior and purchase intent have concluded that Internet sharing influences purchase intent (Luo et al., 2013; Lee and Shin, 2014). In their studies, Sethi et al. (2018) discovered that online reviews and shares on electronic platforms have an effect on repurchase intention. Furthermore, consumers who see or read positive posts about second-hand products on electronic platforms are more likely to consume second-hand products in the context of sustainable consumption. According to Srivastava et al. (2021), Instagram influencer referrals encourage consumers to embrace circular fashion and sustainability. In contrast, Mohammad et al. (2020) discovered that the E-Womm behavior of second-hand products influences sensitive consumption behavior in sustainability. As a result, the finding that E-Womm behavior influences online repurchase intention and sustainable consumption behavior are consistent with previous research.

Significant results were obtained when the results of the mediating role of E-Womm behavior in the relationship between online second-hand shopping motivations, online repurchase intention, and sustainable consumption behavior were examined. Many previous studies have found that E-Womm has a mediating effect on consumer purchasing behavior (Barlas et al., 2020; Oztürk and Nart, 2021). According to the study's findings, E-Womm mediates the effect of economic and ideological motivations on online repurchase intention, but it has no effect on convenience motivations. As a result, the impact of economic and ideological motivations on online repurchase intention is influenced by E-Womm behavior. Jalilvand et al. (2011) discovered that E-Womm behavior is a precursor to online purchasing behavior among consumers. E-Womm behavior has a mediating effect on green purchasing behavior, according to Jaini et al. (2019), and consumers who are responsible for environmental issues are influenced by the information they learn through E-Womm and tend to buy green cosmetic products.

E-Womm behavior was discovered to partially mediate the relationship between economic and ideological motivations and sustainable consumption behavior, whereas convenience motivations have no role. As a result, E-Wom behavior reflects some of the impacts of economic and ideological motivations on long-term consumption. It has been determined that participation in electronic media media media moderates the effects of economic and ideological motivations on consumers' long-term consumption behavior. According to these percentages, consumers buy second-hand products to engage in sustainable consumption. Furthermore, E-Womm has no moderating effect on the effect of the usefulness and ease of use of sites where consumers can buy second-hand products on long-term consumption behavior.

When the findings are considered collectively, it is clear that second-hand consumption is important in terms of sustainable consumption, and economic motivations such as price and bargaining power are the driving forces behind consumers purchasing second-hand products over the Internet. Furthermore, it is understood that consumers turn to second-hand products as a result of nostalgia for the past, a desire to be unique in order to distinguish themselves from others, and the confidence and assurance motivations provided by C2C electronic commerce sites or applications. The usefulness and ease of use provided by the electronic commerce site or mobile applications where the second-hand product is purchased lead consumers to purchase second-hand products from the Internet again, but there is no relationship between sustainable consumption and sustainable consumption behavior. Furthermore, it has been established that electronic platforms, which are widely used today, mediate sustainable consumption behavior with the purchase of second-hand products and that consumers repurchase second-hand products from the Internet and engage in sustainable consumption behavior as a result of sharing the benefits of purchasing second-hand products from the Internet in electronic media. As a result, E-Womm is an important factor in instilling sustainable consumption awareness in consumers, preventing excessive consumption in this direction, and ensuring second-hand consumption.

6. Limitations, Future Research and Managerial Implications

Aside from the important findings of the study, there are some limitations. The findings are limited to the participants who completed the questionnaire and cannot be generalized. The study attempted to be conducted on consumers who purchased second-hand products on the Internet in Turkey, but due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which affected the entire world, a face-to-face survey was unable to be conducted. Another significant limitation is the use of the questionnaire technique rather than other data collection methods, such as interviewing or observing experts in the field. Future research can look at the second-hand issue through the eyes of the sellers, and the motivations of the sellers to sell second-hand products can be investigated and examined in terms of sustainable consumption behavior. Furthermore, because the survey method was used in this study, future researchers may want to conduct in-depth interviews with consumers who buy second-hand products on the Internet. Furthermore, because this study included consumers who purchased a variety of goods online, future researchers may be advised to focus on customers of a specific product line. Differences in sustainable consumption behaviors can also be investigated based on consumer demographic characteristics.

The findings are expected to be useful to e-commerce site managers, marketers, and government officials. The research findings can be used by those in charge of marketing electronic commerce sites to develop marketing strategies, policies, and messages. The important relationship that emerges from evaluating second-hand consumption within the context of sustainable consumption, in particular, can significantly contribute to the promotion of second-hand consumption in determining future government sustainability policies. Government officials or non-governmental organizations can also create projects and hold events about sustainable and second-hand consumption and train consumers about second-hand use and adopting sustainable consumption behaviors. Furthermore, the importance of E-Womm, one of the research's key findings, should be considered by both businesses and governments. E-Womm strategies are important in raising consumer sustainability awareness, encouraging them to engage in sustainable consumption behavior, and recommending second-hand consumption in this context. It is suggested that new startups planning to operate in the C2C space understand online second-hand shopping motivations correctly, develop their product, sales, and communication policies within the framework of these motivations, and operate by emphasizing sustainable consumption in their marketing messages.

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(Araştırma)

THE EFFECT OF COUNTRY IMAGE ON BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS: PARALLEL MEDIATION EFFECTS OF PRODUCT AND SERVICE QUALITY[1]

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ABSTRACT

Consumers use the country image as not only heuristics to predict the quality of the products but also as a symbol of the self by which they affiliate themselves with certain groups and differentiate from others. This study intents to understand the effects of COI on product and service quality perceptions and a set of behavioral intentions through a holistic perspective in the automobile industry. Moreover, as a complementary element, some insights into the conceptualization and the measurement of the country image are meant to be gained. The findings of this study verify the assertions in the current literature on the two-dimensional country image construct, which consists of cognition and affect. The cognition-oriented country image scales threaten the validity of studies conducted in this area because the results obtained with cognition-oriented scales are inadvertently attributed to the (general) country image construct consisting of both cognitive and affective elements. In line with the service dominant logic, it is identified that a holistic approach is required predicting the effects of the country image on quality perceptions. Even in such a pure product category as automobiles, strong associations were identified between country image and perceived service quality. Therefore, regardless of the content of the market offering, it is important that quality must be evaluated under two separate dimensions as (physical) product quality and service quality. With the help of this two-dimensional conceptualization of country image and quality perceptions, country of origin element attached to the market offering can be transformed into actual behaviors.

Keywords: Country image, cognitive dimension, affective dimension, quality perception, behavioral intentions

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ÜLKE İMAJININ DAVRANIŞSAL NİYETLER ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ: ÜRÜN VE HİZMET KALİTESİNİN PARALEL ARACI ETKİLERİ

ÖZ

Tüketiciler, ülke imajını yalnızca ürünlerin kalitesini tahmin etmek için değil, aynı zamanda kendilerini belirli gruplarla ilişkilendirdikleri ve diğerlerinden farklılaştırdıkları bir benlik sembolü olarak da kullanırlar. Bu çalışma, otomobil endüstrisinde bütünsel bir bakış açısıyla ülke imajının ürün ve hizmet kalitesi algıları ve bir dizi davranışsal niyet üzerindeki etkilerini anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Ayrıca, tamamlayıcı bir unsur olarak, ülke imajının kavramsallaştırılmasına ve ölçülmesine ilişkin bazı iç görülerin kazanılması amaçlanmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, mevcut literatürün biliş ve duyuştan oluşan iki boyutlu ülke imajı yapısı üzerindeki iddialarını doğrulamaktadır. Biliş yönelimli ülke imajı ölçekleri bu alanda yürütülen çalışmaların geçerliliğini tehdit etmektedir, çünkü biliş yönelimli ölçeklerle elde edilen sonuçlar farkında olmadan bilişsel ve duyuşsal unsurlardan oluşan (genel) ülke imajı yapısına atfedilmektedir. Hizmet baskın mantık doğrultusunda ülke imajının kalite algıları üzerindeki etkilerini tahminlemede bütüncül bir yaklaşımın gerekli olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Otomobil gibi saf bir ürün kategorisinde bile, ülke imajı ile algılanan hizmet kalitesi arasında güçlü ilişkiler tespit edilmiştir. Bu nedenle, pazar sunumunun içeriği ne olursa olsun, kalitenin (fiziksel) ürün kalitesi ve hizmet kalitesi olarak iki ayrı boyutta değerlendirilmesi önemlidir. Ülke imajı ve kalite algılarının bu iki boyut altında kavramsallaştırılması sayesinde, pazar sunumuna eklenen menşe ülke unsuru gerçek davranışlara dönüştürülebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ülke imajı, bilişsel boyut, duyuşsal boyut, kalite algısı, davranışsal niyetler

1. Introduction

The increasing consumer demand for customization has been shaping the market structure. Goods and services have varied to the specific needs and want of the consumers' (Izmir, 2016a). This demand driven by the consumers paved the way for new categories and product ranges in these categories. The increased number of brands providing very similar products in the same product category created a huge problem for consumers in making an optimum purchase decision (Izmir, 2016b). Therefore, they started relying upon certain heuristics to predict the quality of the products. Country image (COI) is one of the tools that consumers consider when making a purchase decision to cope with the chaos resulting from both the convergence and increased number of brands offering very similar products. Although COI effects have been evaluated by cognitive theories such as the Theory of Reasoned Action, Theory of Planned Behavior (Han, 1989; 1990), Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Cakici and Shukla, 2017), Stereotype Content Model, and BIAS Map (Chattalas et al., 2008; Maher and Carter, 2011), COI cannot be only molded into pure cognitive oriented approaches because it also comprises of emotional connotations of the consumers to the products originating from certain countries.

In the literature, the effect of COI on product quality and purchase intention has been discussed for a long time. There is an agreement in the literature that the effect of COI on attitudes is stronger than on behaviors (Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999; Izmir, 2017). Depending on the involvement level, consumers try to reach as much information as possible to assess a brand to make a purchase decision among alternatives. As an extrinsic cue, COI is used as a sign of quality (Nebenzahl et al., 1997) even though consumers sometimes do not accept that they use country of origin (COO) information to evaluate the brands (Herz and Diamantopoulos, 2017).

According to Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2011), the association between COI and behaviors is weak because COI is linked to behaviors through product/brand evaluations and quality perceptions. Moreover, behaviors and/or behavioral intentions toward a product/brand are formed by more antecedents than only product evaluations and quality perceptions. Many other vital extrinsic and intrinsic cues arouse purchase behavior (Ahmed et al., 2004; Ahmed and d'Astous, 2008; Garrett et at., 2017). Another issue in the COI literature is the fact that studies mostly focused on the consumer goods market rather than the service market (Javalgi et al., 2001; Dedeoglu, 2019). Izmir (2021a) states that the line between goods and services is becoming more blurred and what consumers seek in their exchange behaviors is not the core benefits of the goods or services but the value attached to them. Convergence of the goods and services markets requires a new perspective to increase the value of the market offering (Gummeson, 2007). Studies in the COI literature have mostly focused on either services or goods. A holistic approach is required, especially in industries where services and goods are inseparable elements of the market offering. Furthermore, the measurement of COI stands as another important issue to be carefully addressed in the design of every study. Roth and Diamantopoulos (2009) emphasized that COI should have been conceptualized as a two-dimensional construct composed of cognitive and affective dimensions.

This study intends to understand COI's effects on quality perceptions and a set of behavioral intentions through a holistic perspective in the automobile industry in which goods (physical) and service quality are of utmost importance. Considering that a market offering cannot only consist of either pure goods or pure services, which can be only a degree, not an absolute state (Gummeson, 2007), the effect of COI on quality perception should be measured based on the balance between pure goods and pure services. Hence, this study considers after-sales service quality with physical quality to set the goods and services balance. Moreover, as a secondary purpose, this study intents to test the construct validity of the two-dimensional COI composed of cognition and affect to make a theoretical contribution to the literature. Four leading countries in the automobile industry, Germany, Japan, France, and the USA, were selected to examine the consistency of the results.

The study continues with the literature review part, in which the hypotheses of the research model are developed. Then, the method of the study is mentioned. The results and discussion part presents the study's major findings discussed with the relevant literature. Afterward, the study's conclusion is drawn, and the whole study is summarized based on the contributions made to theory and practice.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1 The Effect of COI on Quality Perception and A Set of Behavioral Intentions

The first studies in the COI literature go as far back as the 1960s when the COO effect was determined as an element of success in the international market (Dichter, 1962; Schooler, 1965; Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999). In this study, the concept of country image is defined as "an attitude that has cognitive and affective characteristics and is shaped by the positive, neutral, or negative experiences of a person with a certain country gained either directly (visits, business relations, family relations, friends etc.) or indirectly (conventional and social media, brands, movies, TV series, etc.). Country image based on indirect experiences is more symbolic and perceptual, while country image perception based on direct experiences is more concrete and solid." The first COO studies have identified consumer stereotypes, a set of attitudes and behaviors toward certain countries and their products. This phenomenon was initially explained by "made-in" labels (Nagashima 1970, 1977), and positive perceptions toward the products of certain countries were associated with their development in economy, technology, industry, and culture (Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999; Izmir, 2017). Later, made-in effects which drive consumer behaviors in the international market have been explained by a more complex concept, the COI. Early COO studies tended to identify the differences in consumer behaviors toward certain countries, but with the COI concept's development, the reason behind the differences became clearer (Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2009). Consumer perceptions of made-in labels were not as comprehensive and generic as well-established attitudes (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen, 1991) like COI, which consists of complex cognitive and affective processes. COI construct successfully explains the differences in attitudes and behaviors better than the overall beliefs, perceptions, and stereotypes toward certain countries.

When the country-of-origin literature is examined, it can be identified that there are studies examining the effects of the country image on quality perception and purchase intention through either multi-cue or single-cue approaches. In the multiple cue approach, a set of variables that are effective in consumers' purchasing decisions are added into the model (Johanson et al., 1985; Ahmed et al., 2004), and then COI and their relative effects on attitudes and behaviors are examined. On the other hand, the single cue approach only considers the effect of the COO/COI (Nagashima, 1970; Izmir, 2016b). The relative effect of COI on attitudes and behaviors is smaller in the multi-cue studies than in the single-cue studies. Country image as a single independent variable has a greater effect on attitudes (Han, 1990; Paswan and Sharma, 2004). However, it has been observed that the relative effects of the country image decrease when different variables such as price, brand perception, store image, and product characteristics are included in the model (Dodds et al., 1991; Ahmed et al., 2004).

COO/COI has been mainly studied in the goods market (Bilkey and Nes, 1982; Han, 1989, 1990; Ahmed and d'Astous, 2008; Chattalas et al., 2008; Costa et al., 2016). The role and impact of COI in the service market remains a much less studied area than in the goods market. In the literature review of Javalgi et al. (2001) covering the last twenty years on the country image, only nineteen studies using service market themes were found. While only six of them were within the scope of basic services (ski vacation, export consultancy (B2B), legal services for foreigners, retailer services, eye care services, and airline services), the majority of the studies were conducted on the complementary services (guarantee, loan terms, customer support). Javalgi et al. (2001) concluded that the effect of country of origin on consumer attitudes and behaviors is valid in the services market as well as in the goods market. Cheng et al. (2014) support the view of Javalgi et al. (2001) in that COI literature has kept giving more weight to the research on the goods market rather than services. Cheng et al. (2014) found a positive effect of COI on the evaluations of intangible services in the airline sector. Zang et al. (2016) emphasized the vitality of the inclusion of the service element in COI studies, especially in the tourism industry. Dedeoglu (2019) mentioned that COI studies have not paid sufficient attention to the services industry and supported the view that COI does not only have physical and service quality effects.

Fakhrai Rad and Izmir (2013) found that Swedish consumers perceive the COI of Germany more strongly than the COI of America and Japan due to perceived psychic distance. Hence, Swedish consumers evaluate the physical quality and service quality of German cars better than the others and develop a set of positive behaviors toward German cars. It can be said that country image shapes the quality perception of goods (Elliot and Cameron, 1994; Nebenzahl et al., 1997; Ahmed et al., 2004) and services (Javalgi et al., 2001; McCleary et al., 2006; Thelen et al., 2010), and has a significant impact on the process of purchasing decisions (Izmir et al., 2022). Considering all these studies, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H_1: *Country image positively affects product (physical) quality perception in the automobile industry.*

H_2: *Country image positively affects (after sales) service quality perception in the automobile industry.*

H_3: *Country image positively affects a set of behavioral intentions in the automobile industry.*

Country image affects the cognitive processes of the consumers and enables them to make inferences about the quality of the product (Bilkey and Nes, 1982; Izmir, 2016b). Consumers tend to believe that developed countries are technologically and technically more advanced, producing better quality products. Therefore, consumers who make cognitive evaluations believe that certain countries, especially in certain industries, can produce superior products than their counterparts (Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999). While evaluating the theoretical foundations of the concept of country image, Buhmann and Ingenhoff (2015a; 2015b) determined that there are gaps in this construct's definition, scope, and conceptualization. According to Buhmann (2016), the theoretical foundations of the dimensionality of the country image and the results of the empirical tests are still not satisfactory. Just as some other authors in the country image literature (Chattalas et al., 2008; Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2009; Maher and Carter, 2011, Izmir et al., 2022), Buhmann also mentioned in his studies that the affective dimension is waiting to be completed as a missing part in the measurement and conceptualization of country image, and he and his colleagues argued that country image had only been considered as a cognitive concept in many research models (Buhmann and Ingenhoff 2015a; 2015b; Buhmann, 2016).

Roth and Diamantopoulos (2009), Maher and Carter (2011), and Izmir et al. (2022) state that the concept of the country image consists of two dimensions, which are cognitive and affective, and this two-dimensional country image construct is an antecedent of behavior. Maher and Carter (2011) argue that the cognitive dimension measures consumers' beliefs toward other countries, while the affective dimension measures consumers' emotional reactions and feelings toward other countries. Maher and Carter (2011) explain how the cognitive and affective dimensions work with the following example: Although the French do not regard the Portuguese as very competent (cognition), they can develop a feeling of love (affect) towards them due to the Portuguese being polite (cognitive attitude). This indicates that the concept of country image includes not only cognition but also affect. Furthermore, it can be said that studies ignoring the effect in the measurement and conceptualization of COI fall into a serious study artifact.

2.2. The Effect of Goods and Service Quality on Behavioral Intentions

According to the quality approach in Japanese philosophy, quality is zero defect; that is, doing the right thing at the first time (Crosby, 1979). Perceived quality is the general perception of consumers about the excellence or superiority of the offerings of a particular business. (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Most of the studies on the definition and measurement of the concept of quality have been carried out in the context of the goods market (Parasuraman et al., 1985). According to Parasuraman et al. (1988), perceived quality and actual (objective) quality are two different concepts. Perceived quality is a type of attitude that emerges from comparing perceived performance with expectations.

According to Parasuraman et al. (1988), quality is generally accepted judgment about the superiority of a particular good or service. Perceived service quality emerges by comparing the expectations of consumers from the service offering of a particular business with their perceived performance (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Therefore, perceived service quality is shaped by the degree and direction of the gap between consumers' perceptions and expectations regarding the service provided. If the perceived service exceeds the consumers' expectations, the service quality is perceived positively; otherwise, it is perceived as negative (Izmir and Oypan, 2022).

Zeithaml et al. (1996) mention that when the service quality is positive, consumers can engage in positive behaviors such as positive word of mouth, loyalty, recommending the business, spending/shopping more from the business, and bearing high prices. Avcı and Yıldız (2021) state that perceived quality, price, and product properties are three essential elements that strongly impact consumers' purchase decisions. On the other hand, when the service quality is negative, consumers may engage in negative behaviors such as negative word of mouth, tending to purchase from other brands, making complaints, and stopping the purchase behavior.

The Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) are two important and complementary theories used to explain the attitudes and behaviors of individuals. According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), behavioral and normative beliefs form attitudes towards behavior and subjective norms of individuals. Thus, through subjective norms and attitudes towards behavior, beliefs shape behavioral intentions and then final behaviors. Consumers' behavioral intentions are important for businesses because they indicate the consumer's tendency to purchase (Zeithaml et al., 1996). Quality is also an attitude and, therefore, closely related to behavior (Parasuraman et al., 1985; 1988). Ozer et al. (2018) regard purchase intention as a planning phase before purchasing a product/service, and intentions are different from attitudes in being a conscious effort to act in a certain way.

In the COI studies conducted in the goods market, it has been argued that country image affects quality perception, and quality perception leads to purchase intention (Nebenzahl et al., 1997; Ahmed et al., 2004; Javalgi et al., 2001). Moreover, it has been discussed in many studies that perceived service quality affects a set of behavioral intentions (Boulding et al., 1993; Cronin et al., 2000; Dagger and Sweeney, 2006; Aliman and Mohamad, 2016). Based on the literature above on goods and service quality, the following hypotheses are developed, and the research model is illustrated in Figure 1:

H_4: *Perceived product (physical) quality affects behavioral intentions in the automobile industry.*

H_5: *Perceived service quality affects behavioral intentions in the automobile industry.*

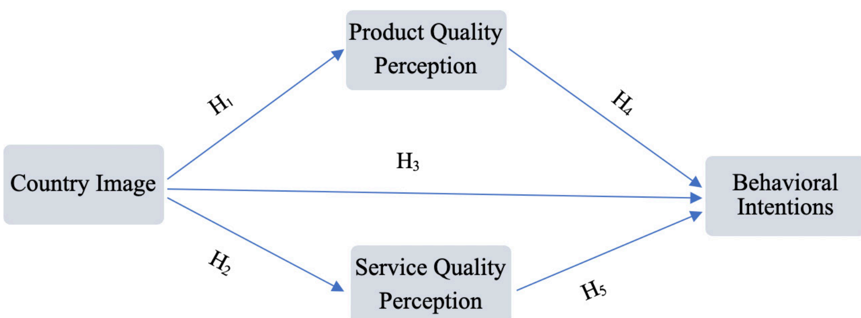

Figure 1: Research Model of the Study

Parasurman et al. (1988) emphasize that the retailers, at first sight, seem as if they provide pure goods, but almost all of them also market services. Most retailers provide facilitating services such as sales assistance or delivery when selling their products. On the other hand, companies in sectors such as consultancy, airline, and communication only market services. In this respect, Parasurman et al. (1988) emphasize that the service element exists in almost every sector, and therefore the issue of service quality is very important.

According to Izmir (2021a), from the perspective of exchange in marketing, a consumer either decides to purchase a market offering, which is expected to satisfy a need, want, and desire, by paying a certain price or not. The content of this market offer may consist of goods and/or services. However, the consumer actually buys the added value to this market offering. Kotler and Armstrong (2010) consider the product at three levels: core, actual and augmented product. The core product is the most basic version of a particular product and offers basic benefits such as the camera taking pictures. When the core product becomes available to the market, its brand, package, price, etc., turn into an actual or expected product. The product's perceived value increases, and it gets augmented with added benefits such as warranty, delivery, and consultancy services to differentiate it from the competitors. Therefore, Izmir (2021a) emphasizes that it is quite difficult to distinguish between goods and services since a certain product consists of a combination of goods and services as content.

3. Method of The Study

3.1. Context of The Research

This study investigates the roles of product quality and (after-sales) service quality in the impact of country image on consumers' behavioral intentions towards specific brands in the automobile industry. The effects of the country image on quality perception and purchase intention have been studied in the literature for a long time (Wang and Lamb, 1980; Bilkey and Nes, 1982; Han, 1990; Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999; Ahmed et al., 2004; Yunus and Rashid, 2016; Vijaranakorn and Shannon, 2017). This study differs from its counterparts because, in this study, (1) country image is conceptualized as a two-dimensional construct composed of cognition and affect, (2) product quality and service quality are evaluated together in the research model to provide a holistic perspective, (3) the research model is tested across four countries/brands to check the consistency of the results and compare the findings.

In this context, country images of Germany, Japan, France, and the USA are determined, and the effect of COI on quality and behavioral intentions toward Volkswagen-Jetta (Germany), Toyota-Corolla (Japan), Renault-Megane (France), and Ford-Focus (the USA), which are four leading brands in the automobile industry, are discussed. The research model illustrated in Figure 1 is tested across four countries and brands considering the country-brand matches. For instance, the effect of Germany's COI on quality perception and behavioral intentions toward Volkswagen are investigated. In this way, the research model was tested four times.

3.2. Sample and Data Collection

Data were collected from 228 participants selected by convenience sampling. After excluding four observations out of the sample that disturbs the normal distribution assumption, analyses were run with 224 observations. As a result of the statistical power analysis using the Gpower program, it was determined that the sample size was sufficient enough for the analysis. For 224 observations, the calculated power was more than 95% across four country-brand pairs. Robust results in evaluating the (measurement) model fit, presented in Appendix 2, support this conclusion.

Due to pandemic conditions, an online survey method was utilized. The online survey method is deemed appropriate because the contact with the participants might have made them uncomfortable due to the risk of coronavirus transmission. Initially, the link to the questionnaire was delivered face-to-face to the participants through a QR code. When the participants scanned the QR code, it directly linked them to the online questionnaire. While conducting the survey face-to-face, participants were told to fill it out at their convenient time and also asked to share the link with their social surroundings if possible. Face-to-face delivery of the link failed to produce the anticipated outcome. To increase the number of participants and ensure a sufficient level of representativeness in the sample, the link of the questionnaire was also delivered on various social media platforms. In general, linking the questionnaire available to the participants at their convenient time is expected to increase the results' reliability because participants did not make haste to fill out the questionnaire. Moreover, the online survey method also eliminated the missing data problem because participants cannot send their answers without fully completing the questionnaire when a constraint is added to settings.

Since this study was carried out with a quantitative approach that requires data collection from the participants through a questionnaire, it is among the studies that require ethics committee approval. Accordingly, at the beginning of the research, it was approved by Anadolu University Ethics Committee with the decision document dated 03.11.2020 and numbered 54674 Protocol.

3.3. Analysis

Firstly, the improvement of the data has been achieved through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 21.0. Having completed the improvement of the data, confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) of the latent variables were run. The assessment of the construct validity in which discriminant validity and convergent validity of the scales were evaluated was made using the Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) 20.0. Afterward, the extent of the validity of the hypotheses was tested through the Process macro of Hayes (2017) using SPSS 21.0.

Before starting to check the validity of the hypotheses, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed for the scales used in this study. The scales in the model were tested for four countries/brands separately. EFA of the scales was made considering Hair et al.'s (2006) suggestions. EFA procedures were applied to the scales because especially COI scale is quite new. Therefore, factorial distributions and the reliability issues of this scale should be handled before starting the hypotheses tests. The details on EFA and reliability analyses were not mentioned here in detail because of the space limitations6. The lowest KMO value is found to be greater than .50, and Bartlett's test is significant at the .001 level. The lowest factorial loading is greater than .40. In the rotation procedure, the Varimax method is used. Cronbach's Alpha level for the lowest scale is found to be greater than .70. The item-to-total correlations exceed .50, and inter-item correlations are greater than .30.

For the CFA process, the literature fails to agree on a golden rule to evaluate the model fit (Marsh et al., 2004; Markland, 2007). According to Kline (2016), and Hair et al. (2014), the most widely used indices in the evaluation of the model fit are x2/df<3; CFI>.90; SRMR<.08; RMSEA<.07. These fit measures evaluate the model fit of the measurement model. The Process is used to analyze the hypothesized model's validity because most of the popular covariance-based SEM programs like AMOS cannot calculate the significance level of the parallel mediation effect for each mediator. However, the significance level of each mediator could have been determined by the normal theory approach by using Sobel test, but this test is very sensitive to normal distribution assumption and might result in type II error if the distributions of the indirect effects are non-normal (Hayes, 2017).

The construct validity of the measurement model is ensured by convergent validity and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2014). Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is determined as .50 and above, and Composite Reliability (CR) is .70 and higher for each construct in the model. Therefore, the convergent validity criterion is met for each construct in the model. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), if AVE is greater than the squared correlations between each construct in the measurement model, the discriminant validity criterion is also met. Measurement models for each country/brand satisfied the requirements of discriminant validity. The measurement models separately applied the same procedures for the first-order and second-order constructs. Details on the validity of the measurement model are illustrated in Appendix 2. Having completed the procedures for construct validity, paths in the proposed model were tested by the Process macro of SPSS 21.0.

3.4. Measures

Country image is measured by CIscale (Izmir, 2021b). CIscale is a specific and robust scale developed for measuring the cognitive and affective dimensions of the concept of country image. The Product quality scale for automobiles is based on the studies of Chao (1993; 1988) and Pappu and Quester (2006), while (after-sales) service quality is measured by Gonzales (2015). Studies of Jang and Namkung (2009) and Cakici and Shukla (2017) are used in the measurement of a set of behavioral intentions in which willingness to purchase for oneself and others, word of mouth, and the suggestion was evaluated. Five-point Likert scale is used in the measurement of the scales. Items of the scales are illustrated in Appendix 1.

4. Results and Discussion

Significant direct and indirect effects of the country image on attitudes and behavioral intentions are identified in the automobile industry across four different countries and brands. The results of the hypotheses tests are shown in Table 1. Country image significantly affects product quality perceptions of the consumers, and hence H_1 is supported. The strongest link between country image and product quality is observed for Japan-Toyota and the lowest for France-Renault pairs. The association between country image and consumer perceptions of products has been emphasized in the literature and goes as far back as the first studies on the country of origin (Nagashima 1970; 1977; Han, 1989; Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999; Izmir, 2016b). However, in the literature, it is criticized that the country image, and quality perception link has been mostly studied in the goods industry than services (Javalgi et al., 2001). This study not only focuses on the country image-product quality link but also considers the effect of country image on service quality perception.

Strong effects on the country image are also identified on perceived service quality. Therefore, H_2 is supported. Country image and service quality association are the strongest for the Germany-Volkswagen pair and the lowest for France-Renault. Although the magnitude of the effects of the country image on product quality and service quality seems very similar, it can be said that this effect is relatively stronger on product quality than on service quality. The effect of country image on the development of a set of attitudes toward brands has been supported in the literature (Bilkey and Nes, 1982; Laroche et al., 2005; Costa et al., 2016; Izmir, 2016b; 2017). According to Parasuraman (1985; 1988, 1994), perceived service quality is something very similar to attitudes, and hence country image-service quality association is a natural outcome. Furthermore, Javalgi et al. (2001) state that the relationship between country image and product quality perception is also a widespread phenomenon in the service industry, and this study presented supporting results to the assertions of Javalgi et al. (2001). Thelen et al. (2010) claim that country of (service) origin and service quality are strongly associated especially in the pure service domain, and consumers depend on communication, security, and reliability aspects of service quality when buying an off-shored service.

Country image is not directly associated with behavioral intentions in any given country and brand pair. Therefore, H_3 cannot be supported. Non-significant country image and behavioral intentions link has been detected in the literature in the past (Wang et al., 2012; Izmir, 2017), and there are also other studies emphasizing the weakness of this link (Peterson and Jolibert, 1995; Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999). According to Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2011) and Izmir et al. (2022), country image and behaviors link is usually mediated by consumer perceptions of products. The non-significant direct effect of country image on behavioral intentions suggests that there might be indirect effects of country image through product quality and service quality elements. There are studies in the literature supporting the mediator effect of quality on the link between country image and behavioral intentions (Izmir, 2016b; Rahimnia and Sarvari, 2019; Dedeoglu, 2019; Hien et al., 2020). Han (1989; 1990) explains the effect of quality (beliefs) as a mediator in his halo effect model. Based on these, indirect effects of the country image on behavioral intentions are tested through a parallel mediation effect model by two mediators, and results are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 1. Hypotheses Testing

Relationships			Unstandardized Effects				Hypotheses
			Germany	Japan	France	The USA	
Country Image	→	Product Quality	. 509***	.564***	.228**	.462***	H_1- Supported
Country Image	→	Service Quality	.519***	.520***	.308***	.447***	H_2- Supported
Country Image	→	Behavioral Intentions	-.039	.055	.104	-.020	H_3- *Not Supported*
Product Quality	→	Behavioral Intentions	.693***	.654***	.762***	.696***	H_4- Supported
Service Quality	→	Behavioral Intentions	.285***	.281***	.230**	.338***	H_5- Supported

** p<.01

*** p<.001

Product quality positively affects a set of behavioral intentions in the automobile industry across four countries. Based on this, H_4 is supported. It is determined that the product quality of the Renault brand has the strongest effect on the formation of a set of behavioral intentions. The magnitude of the product quality and behavioral intentions association seems quite similar for other brands. Past studies also support the product quality and behavioral intentions relationship (Han, 1990; JinKyo et al., 2019). When the quality of a product is favored, consumers become more prone to develop positive behaviors toward it. Especially product quality gains more importance in such high-involvement products as cars (Ahmed et al., 2004; Izmir, 2016).

The Service quality also showed significant effects on behavioral intentions for each brand in the research model, and hence H_5 is supported. The service quality of Ford has the strongest effect on behavioral intentions, and the magnitude of the effect of service quality is quite similar for other brands. However, the relative effects of service quality on behavioral intentions across four country-brand pairs are determined as much lower than those of product quality. This finding implies that product quality is rendered more important than service quality in the development of behavioral intentions in the automobile industry. Nonetheless, service quality perception succeeded in arousing behavioral intentions toward brands, even in the automobile industry, in which the market offer can be categorized as a purely physical product. Gummeson (2007) and Izmir (2021a) support this view by emphasizing that the line between goods and services has become blurred in today's market structure. Even products categorized as pure goods have a service element embedded in and the service quality in the automobile industry can only be considered as an element attached to the offer to enrich the final product. In accordance with Kotler and Armstrong's (2010) framework on the levels of a product, it makes sense that consumers are prone to attach more relevance to product quality than service quality in the automobile industry.

Table 2. Mediation Effects

Relationships	Unstandardized Indirect Effects			
	Germany	Japan	France	The USA
Country Image→Product Quality→Behavioral Intentions	.360 (.192; .559)	.369 (.221; .545)	.173 (.037; .325)	.322 (.208; .466)
Country Image→Service Quality→ Behavioral Intentions	.145 (.049; .317)	.146 (.042; .301)	.071 (.021; .151)	.151 (.065; .269)

Note: The Significance level of the indirect effects is calculated by lower and upper limit bootstrap confidence intervals (LLCI; ULCI).

Using the bootstrap method with 5000 samples, mediation effects of product quality and service quality in the relationship between country image and behavioral intentions are investigated across four country-brand pairs, and significant indirect effects of country image are identified. Significance levels of the mediation effects of product quality and service quality are determined by lower limit bootstrap confidence interval (BootLLCI) and upper limit bootstrap confidence interval (BootULCI). According to Hayes (2017), if LLCI and ULCI do not include zero, the indirect effect calculated by Process macro is signed by a 95% BC bootstrap confidence interval.

Mediation effects of product quality are found to be significantly different from zero for each country-brand pair. The product quality of Renault has the lowest mediation effect, and the mediation effects for other brands are determined as very similar compared to one another. The mediation effects of service quality are also found as significantly different from zero for each country-brand pair. Although the mediation effect of service quality in France is so small, it is yet significant on a 95% confidence interval. In general, service quality has shown much smaller mediation effects compared to those of product quality because physical elements might outweigh service characteristics in automobiles. Other studies support the mediation effect of the perceived quality, but these studies have mostly focused on the goods industry (Liefeld, 1993; Wang et al., 2012; JinKyo et al., 2019). Bautista et al. (2020) claim that country image affects purchase intention through the mediation of perceived product quality and has no direct effect on purchase intention. In addition to the mediation effect of product quality, this study has also reached supporting evidence on the mediation of service quality in the automobile industry through a holistic quality perspective.

As a result of the parallel mediation effect model, although the total indirect effects of country image on behavioral intentions seem similar in the automobile industry across three countries, it is identified that country image of France has the lowest indirect effects through both product and service quality.

Non-significant (Wang et al., 2012; Izmir, 2017) or relatively lower effects of country image (Peterson and Jolibert, 1995; Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999; Balabanis and Diamantopoulos, 2011) on behavioral intentions point out the possibility that indirect effects of other variables decisive in the consumer decision-making process such as product and service quality develop this link.

5. Conclusion

This study aims to understand the effect of country image, composed of cognitive and affective dimensions, on a set of attitudes and behavioral intentions in the automobile industry. Country image has significant effects on perceived product quality and service quality. Positive perceptions of the quality of physical products and services shape a set of behavioral intentions in the automobile industry. These behavioral intentions include being willing to purchase for oneself and others, word of mouth, and suggestions. No direct effect of country image has been identified on behavioral intentions for any of the four country-brand pairs. Although the effects of country image on the perceived quality of both product and service are very identical, the strongest indirect effects of country image on behavioral intentions have been reached through the mediation of product quality. Mediation effects of service quality, as well as its direct effects on behavioral intentions, are found to be much lower than those of product quality. Although product quality and service quality perceptions work in harmony with relation to country image, product quality seems to be the dominant factor in this study because an automobile, in its nature, is more of a physical product than a service. This conclusion supports the findings of the overwhelming majority of the country image studies (Liefeld, 1993; Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999; Wang et al., 2012; Izmir, 2016b) and also compliments the need for studies in the service industry (Javalgi et al., 2001; Izmir et al., 2022).

Strong associations of service quality with country image in the goods market imply that country image studies need to consider service-dominant logic. The fact that the direct and mediation effects of service quality on behavioral intentions are weaker than those of product quality is thought to be context-dependent, and much stronger effects are expected for the studies to be conducted in the service industry. Future studies utilizing the extensions of the Halo Effect Model of Han

(1989; 1990) can benefit from a Parallel Mediation Effect Model in this study in which product quality and service quality are used as mediators in the model with a holistic perspective.

Because the cognitive country image is strongly associated with quality perceptions, it may not mean these positive perceptions and attitudes will transform into actual behavior. Country image perception can be described as a two-faced coin. On the one side is cognition, and on the other is affect. The general perception of a country is developed in harmony or conflict with the multitude of both cognition and affect. For instance, the cognitive country image of the USA might be perceived as high in Iraq because the USA has a good education, good standard of living, strong army, developed economy, high product quality, high technology, a workforce with high technical skills so on so forth, which are the items by which country image is measured (Papadopoulos et al., 1990; Martin and Eroglu, 1993; Parameswaran and Pisharodi, 1994; Knight et al., 2003). These are a set of facts about a country and do not produce extreme differences among people. On the contrary, Iraqi people might perceive the affective country image of the USA unfavorably because of the destructions and sufferings caused in Iraq. In that, Iraqi people might acknowledge the superiority of the USA, and this superiority may also be attributed to the products that originated there, yet they might simply decline to buy the USA-based product and boycott them. Although both the USA and its products can be perceived positively in terms of cognition, they might be perceived unfavorably in terms of affect. Therefore, country image perceptions of the consumers are formed by the summation of the cognitive and the affective dimensions. In addition to the cognitive dimension, the affective dimension of country image implies that consumers use the country image as not only heuristics to predict the quality of the products but also a symbol of the self by which they affiliate themselves with certain groups and differentiate from others.

5.1. Theoretical Contribution

Literature review (Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2009; Maher and Carter, 2011; Wang et al., 2012; Izmir et al., 2022) and construct validity procedures of this study support the view that country image is composed of both cognitive and affective dimensions. There is an immense need for future studies that focus on the conceptualization and measurement of country image so that this concept can be grounded on a more accurate theoretical framework. Therefore, this study intends to place a strong emphasis on the vitality of the affects in the conceptualization and measurement of country image because the literature explicitly reveals that country image studies are developed around a cognitive-dominant view. This chronic and overlooked cognitive dominance in the country image literature creates a huge study artifact and threatens the validity of the findings. Country image concept measured through cognitive perspective can only provide implications on the effects of cognitive country image. The results derived from cognitive dominant country image scales would not comprise of affective dimension and hence cannot be generalized as if they belong to (general) country image concept, which should consist of cognitive and affective dimensions.

Gummesson (2007) and Vargo and Lush (2014) assert that goods and services are intertwined in today's market structure. In line with the assertions of Gummesson (2007) and Vargo and Lush (2014), this study did not only focus on product quality but also took service quality into consideration. When a market offer is evaluated on an axis between pure goods on the one continuum and pure services on the other continuum, it can be said that the market offer in the automobile industry approximates much closer to pure goods than services. The results of this study support service-dominant logic because product quality and service quality showed both strong direct and mediation effects on the development of a set of behavioral intentions, even in a product category that can be classified under pure goods on the goods-services dichotomy. Therefore, country image studies should cast their perspective from product-dominant approaches to service-dominant view because some studies in the literature have criticized the evaluation of the concept of country image around goods market (Javalgi et al., 2001; Thelen et al., 2010, Izmir et al., 2022).

5.2. Marketing Implications

Country image shapes consumer perceptions of (product and service) quality and behavioral intentions. Therefore, marketing managers should emphasize the country-of-origin information to develop positive quality perceptions and behaviors toward brands if the country is perceived positively in that market. Due care should be given if there is any cognition and affect conflict for that country. In order to reduce the uncertainties in the service industry resulting from the intangible nature of the services, brands can utilize cognitive and affective elements of country image so that the foundations of a strong bond between service brand and consumer can be established. In that, country image can help brands make their services relatively more tangible. However, marketing managers should be cautious in the use of country-of-origin information. At first sight, a country might seem to be perceived positively from cognitive aspects, which could be sufficient enough for the development of positive quality perceptions and a set of attitudes, but this seemingly positive country image might not turn into actual behaviors due to the strong negative affect. Marketing managers should ensure that there is no cognition and affect conflict in the market the company intends to serve. Moreover, due care should be given to country-of-origin misclassifications of the consumers and the information related to the country of manufacture, country of assembly, country of design, and brand origin.

5.3. Limitations and Directions for Future Studies

The findings of this study cannot be generalized and are only limited to the sample used. The limitation with the representability of the sample is mostly rooted in the obstacles experienced in the data collection under pandemic conditions. The study's results might be context dependent and show differences in other industries and brands. Future studies should focus more on the service elements and utilize a holistic quality approach. Although country image is an old concept dating back to the 1960s, there is still potential for the improvement of this concept and its measurement. Therefore, conceptual studies with a quantitative perspective can provide stronger insights into the nature of this concept and help the development of the theory of COI. More valid and robust measurement tools for COI could be generated by understanding the vital elements that form the COI construct.

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Appendix 1

Behavioral Intentions (Jang and Namkung, 2009; Cakici and Shukla, 2017**)**

1. I would like to purchase this brand for myself.
2. I would tell people positive things about this brand.
3- I would like to purchase this brand for my family members, as well.
4. I would recommend this brand to the people around me.

(After-Sales) Service Quality (Gonzales, 2015**)**

1- The technical personnel in the service center of this brand are reliable.
2- The service provided in the service center of this brand is of high quality.
3- The service consultants at the service center reception of this brand are experienced and knowledgeable.
4- The behaviors of the service center employees of this brand are friendly.
5- The waiting area in the service center of this brand is comfortable.

Product Quality (Chao, 1993; 1988; Pappu and Quester, 2006**)**

1- The cars of this brand have very good workmanship.
2- The cars of this brand are very durable.
3- The cars of this brand are very reliable.
4- The cars of this brand are of excellent quality.
5- The cars of this brand have high-end features.

Country of origin image (CIscale) (Izmir, 2021b**)**

Cognitive COI

1- (Country X) is a technologically advanced country.
2- (Country X) has strong brands.
3- (Country X) is a developed country.
4- (Country X) has a strong position in the global economy.
5- (Country X) can protect its own rights and interests.
6- (Country X) can produce/market quality goods/services.

Affective COI

7- (Country X) reminds me of the pleasant things.
8- I love (Country X).
9- I like the culture of (Country X).
10- I think I would be happy in (Country X).
11- (Country X) makes me feel excited.

Appendix 2

GERMANY	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	Service Quality	Country Image	Product Quality	Behavioral Intentions
Service Quality	.914	.683	.457	.932	**.827**			
Country Image	.947	.621	.314	.954	.560	**.788**		
Product Quality	0,927	0,718	0,642	.940	.676	0,552	**.848**	
Behavioral Intentions	.962	.862	.642	.966	.653	.456	.801	**.929**

x2/df=1,750; CFI=.959; SRMR=.0505; RMSEA=.058

JAPAN	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	Service Quality	Country Image	Product Quality	Behavioral Intentions
Service Quality	.919	.697	.476	.952	**.835**			
Country Image	.943	.602	.314	.945	.517	**.776**		
Product Quality	.926	.715	.624	.938	.690	.560	**.846**	
Behavioral Intentions	.959	.855	.624	.966	.688	.461	.790	**.925**

x2/df=1,797; CFI=.956; SRMR=.0854; RMSEA=.060

FRANCE	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	Service Quality	Country Image	Product Quality	Behavioral Intentions
Service Quality	.892	.631	.332	.950	**.794**			
Country Image	.938	.580	.172	.942	.415	**.762**		
Product Quality	.925	.711	.651	.931	.545	.290	**.843**	
Behavioral Intentions	.946	.815	.651	.958	.576	.379	.807	**.903**

x2/df=1,761; CFI=.952; SRMR=.0635; RMSEA=.058

The USA	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	Service Quality	Country Image	Product Quality	Behavioral Intentions
Service Quality	.895	.635	.542	0,934	**.797**			
Country Image	.948	.622	.376	0,950	.613	**.789**		
Product Quality	.918	.693	.687	0,930	.736	.517	**.832**	
Behavioral Intentions	.953	.835	.687	0,959	.718	.433	.829	**.914**

x2/df=1,880; CFI=.951; SRMR=.0635; RMSEA=.063

(Araştırma)

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF COVID ANXIETY: AN EXPLANATORY STUDY FROM A CONSUMER PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the psychological effects of Covid anxiety on individuals from a consumer standpoint. Specifically, the current research looks at the impact of Covid anxiety on future orientation, hopelessness, and compulsive buying, as well as the influence of hopelessness and future orientation on compulsive buying. The link between future orientation and hopelessness is also being investigated. In this context, 350 individuals are surveyed online, and the structural equation modeling technique is utilized to analyze the data. It is confirmed that Covid anxiety increases hopelessness and compulsive buying tendency and reduces future orientation. The results also demonstrate that hopelessness boosts compulsive buying, whereas future orientation declines this tendency. Finally, there is evidence of a negative link between hopelessness and future orientation. This study gives insight into the interactions among psychological factors that resulted in considerable cognitive changes and compulsive buying during the pandemic. Further, the current study is a pioneer one that integrates Covid anxiety, hopelessness, future orientation, and compulsive buying into a conceptual model.

Keywords: Covid anxiety, hopelessness, future orientation, compulsive buying, pandemic, consumers

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KOVİD-19 KAYGISININ PSİKOLOJİK SONUÇLARI: TÜKETİCİ BAKIŞ AÇISINDAN AÇIKLAYICI BİR ÇALIŞMA

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, Kovid kaygısının bireyler üzerindeki psikolojik etkilerini tüketici bakış açısından incelemektedir. Spesifik olarak, mevcut araştırma, Kovid kaygısının gelecek yönelimi, umutsuzluk ve kompulsif satın alma üzerindeki etkisiyle birlikte umutsuzluk ve gelecek yöneliminin kompulsif satın alma üzerindeki etkilerini incelemektedir. Bunların yanı sıra gelecek yönelimi ve umutsuzluk arasındaki ilişki de araştırılmaktadır. Bu kapsamda 350 kişiye çevrimiçi anket uygulanmış ve verilerin analizinde yapısal eşitlik modellemesi tekniğinden yararlanılmıştır. Kovid kaygısının, umutsuzluğu ve kompulsif satın alma eğilimini artırdığı ve gelecek yönelimini azalttığı doğrulanmıştır. Ayrıca sonuçlar umutsuzluğun kompulsif satın alma eğilimini yükselttiğini, ancak gelecek yöneliminin bu eğilimi düşürdüğünü göstermektedir. Son olarak, umutsuzluk ile gelecek yönelimi arasında negatif bir ilişki olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bu çalışma, pandemi sırasında önemli bilişsel değişikliklere neden olan ve kompulsif satın alma ile sonuçlanan çeşitli psikolojik faktörler arasındaki etkileşimlere yönelik bir iç görü sağlamaktadır. Ayrıca mevcut çalışma, Kovid kaygısını, umutsuzluğu, gelecek yönelimini ve kompulsif satın alma değişkenlerini kavramsal bir modelde ele alan öncü bir çalışmadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kovid kaygısı, umutsuzluk, gelecek yönelimi, kompulsif satın alma, pandemi, tüketiciler

1. Introduction

One of the worst catastrophes of the twenty-first century, the Covid 19 pandemic has infected over 470 million people and killed around 6 million in 200 nations (Worldometers, 2022). During the pandemic, people's daily lives have changed dramatically with social distancing, quarantine, and lockdowns (Burzyńska et al., 2020)a real-time social media monitoring is needed to know the scale of this phenomenon. We have reported the frequency, reach and impact of online mentions about the COVID-19 illness taken from social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, blogs, forums, and news portals to highlight and better understand the scope of coronavirus discussion in Poland. We used SentiOne social listening tool to gather the data and perform the monitoring between 24 February 2020 to 25 March 2020. We found a total of 1,415,750 mentions related to COVID-19 which gives the average 47,192 mentions per day. 95.36% (1,350,059. In addition, the cancellation or postponement of many events such as concerts, festivals, and shows and the closure of many places such as hotels, restaurants, gymnasiums, and cinemas have affected economies and social life (Haleem et al., 2020).

Anxiety and depression have climbed by a whopping 25% globally, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The primary cause of this surge is the acute stress induced by the pandemic's social isolation (WHO, 2022). Working, seeking assistance from family, and being active in the communities were all restricted for many people. Several contributors to anxiety and depression have been discovered, including loneliness, dread of the infection, suffering or death of oneself or loved ones, and financial difficulties (WHO, 2022). Furthermore, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) surveyed 8,444 people aged between 13 and 29. The results revealed that 27% of the subjects were anxious, and 15% had depressive symptoms (UNICEF, 2020). According to the same survey results, 46% of participants have less drive to accomplish what they like, and 36% have less motivation to perform their daily duties. In addition, participants claimed that their future vision was negatively impacted, with 43% of women and 31% of men expressing pessimism about the future (UNICEF, 2020). Additionally, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) revealed that Covid 19 pandemic had dramatically changed buying habits and behavior (UNCTAD, 2020).

Covid 19 had severe social, economic, and psychological impacts, and each individual experiences a portion of them. It produced worry, anxiety, and uncertainty among the people. Individuals vary in their tolerance for unforeseen problems. Their psychological responses to Covid 19 also varied, with some experiencing a very high degree of Covid anxiety and others a meager amount. Therefore, Covid had varying psychological effects on individuals depending on their anxiety levels. The previous studies have addressed the impacts of Covid anxiety, for instance, on hopelessness (e.g., Lee, 2020; Saricali et al., 2020), depression (e.g., Lee, Jobe, & Mathis, 2020; Sakib et al., 2021), and stress (e.g., Bakioğlu et al., 2021; Siddique et al., 2021), which led to inverse behavioral tendencies (e.g., shopping disorders) and changed people's time perceptions and future expectations. Although the influences of Covid anxiety on psychological well-being have been investigated, its effect on individuals' future orientation has been overlooked by recent studies. Nevertheless, how people consider the future (i.e., their evaluations and prospects about it) shape their current mental state and behavioral tendencies. Thus, addressing the future orientation and its role on people's psychological and behavioral responses to Covid anxiety is a significant attempt to bring a novel perspective to the current knowledge.

Furthermore, as mentioned above, Covid anxiety leads to adverse behavioral consequences, one of which is shopping disorders. For instance, covid anxiety's influence on compulsive buying has been addressed by previous studies (e.g., Çelik & Köse, 2021; Lopes et al., 2020). However, first, these are very rare; second, they focus on the direct link between Covid anxiety and compulsive buying without including the triggering psychological mechanisms that engender this relationship. Hence, focusing on the factors which are affected by Covid 19 and, in turn, lead to compulsive buying among people helps expand the current knowledge on the results of the Covid 19 pandemic.

In this context, this explanatory study investigates the psychological consequences of Covid anxiety, such as its effects on hopelessness, future orientation, and compulsive buying. Furthermore, the impact of hopelessness and future orientation on compulsive buying and future orientation on hopelessness have been revealed. In addition, the findings shed light on psychological processes triggered by Covid anxiety and their reflection on daily life. These contributions to the literature may form bases for new approaches regarding the impacts of the Covid 19 outbreak on human psychology and give an idea to find ways of preventing such consequences of Covid anxiety. Moreover, marketing professionals can better understand the impact of Covid anxiety on consumers and formulate new strategies to support their customers in overcoming these issues. Another contribution of the study is to reveal the changes made by a pandemic in individuals' psychology and cognitive processes and their consequences on individuals' behavioral tendencies. The findings may play an essential role in understanding how people will be affected by a similar global epidemic in the future and how they will reflect these effects in their daily lives. Therefore, the study's findings may help understand possible changes in human reactions during similar future pandemics.

In this perspective, the research is organized as follows: First, the theoretical basis of the key constructs is discussed. The estimated correlations between these constructs are then explored, followed by a detailed explanation of the research design and methodologies. Then, the findings and contributions of the study are addressed together with its theoretical and practical implications. Last, the limits of the study and its implications for future research are discussed.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Covid Anxiety

Individual and societal psychological well-being, emotional stability, and relationships have all been negatively impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic (Dejonckheere et al., 2021; Philpot et al., 2021). The disease has caused a severe threat to both individuals and communities, and as a result, it has generated many negative consequences, such as fear, anxiety, and stress (Bendau et al., 2021; Fountoulakis et al., 2021). Multiple studies (e.g., Batra et al., 2021; Grover et al., 2020; Passavanti et al., 2021; Roy et al., 2020; Tee et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020) have revealed that the implementation of restrictive measures in response to Covid 19 dramatically increased the prevalence of stress, sadness, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Numerous scholars (e.g., Aguglia et al., 2021; Kaplan Serin & Doğan, 2021) have also discovered that home quarantine, which is used all over the world, is highly associated with undesirable consequences such as feelings of loneliness, pessimism, difficulty sleeping, low mood, and decreased happiness.

2.2. Future Orientation

The degree to which an individual pays importance to the future repercussions of today's events and subsequently adjusts his current behavior to his future aspirations is characterized as future orientation. Future-oriented individuals shape their actions in accordance with their objectives; that is, they manage their everyday lives to fulfill their plans and goals (Ginevra et al., 2021; Mazibuko & Tlale, 2014). Additionally, they are more willing to consider possible negative consequences in the future than positive ones, which means they are pessimistic (Kees, 2011). Moreover, future-oriented individuals are risk-averse (Jochemczyk et al., 2016; Li et al., 2021; Zimbardo et al., 1997), less impulsive (Gouveia-Pereira et al., 2017), and tend to keep their funds for the future because of their belief in time being continuous (Kaynak et al., 2013; Spears et al., 2000).

In this study, the future orientation variable was included in the structural model instead of the long-term orientation variable. Although being similar, these two terms are not identical. While long-term orientation is simply based on preferring future rewards to today's earnings, future orientation focuses on planning for future goals and therefore designing today's actions in accordance with those goals (Venaik et al., 2013). In this context, the study aims to reveal the interaction between the individuals' tendency to plan and behave according to their future goals and variables such as Covid anxiety, hopelessness, and compulsive buying.

2.3. Hopelessness

Hopelessness is an essential component and a diagnostic factor of mental ill-health (Ejdemyr et al., 2021). It was first defined as an individual's negative future-related expectations, thoughts, and emotions (Abramson et al., 1989; Beck, 1974). Furthermore, hopelessness is considered a symptom of depression (American Psychiatric Association (APA) 2013). In addition, some authors (e.g., Baryshnikov et al., 2018; Mitchell et al., 2018) believe it plays a critical role in developing anxiety, suicide risk, and decreased psychosocial functionality. Some studies have also examined the link between hopelessness and the Covid 19 pandemic (e.g., Kaplan Serin & Doğan, 2021; Rossi et al., 2021). For instance, Rossi et al. (2021) revealed the positive effect of fear of Covid 19 on hopelessness. Additionally, it has been found that individuals who are afraid of the pandemic and its economic consequences have higher levels of hopelessness (Kaplan Serin & Doğan, 2021).

2.4. Compulsive Buying

Compulsions are repetitious and ostensibly planned acts carried out in a predefined pattern or according to specific criteria (Bellack & Morrison, 2012). These are overabundant and ritualistic actions that are supposed to help alleviate emotions of stress, anxiety, and discomfort (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989). The concepts "compulsive purchasing," "addictive purchasing," and "pathological purchasing" are regarded as interchangeable (Hubert et al., 2014), and chronic, repetitive shopping that is a substantial response to negative events or emotions is referred to as compulsive buying (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989). In compulsive buying, the person has an excessive, uncontrolled, persistent, and recurring urge to buy and spend (Somasiri & Chandralal, 2018). Further, it is most commonly used to relieve negative tension and anxiety symptoms (Edwards, 1993). Numerous studies have been conducted to study the causes of compulsive purchasing (e.g., Le, 2021; Olsen et al., 2022; Owusu et al., 2021; Shemeis et al., 2021; Tarka & Harnish, 2021). Neuroticism, extraversion, and conscientiousness, for example, were shown to substantially influence compulsive buying among the big five personality dimensions (Shemeis et al., 2021). Furthermore, Tarka and Harnish (2021) argued that human values such as self-improvement, openness to change, self-transcendence, and conservation were associated with a proclivity for compulsive buying. However, Covid 19 pandemic's effect on compulsive buying has been examined only a few times (e.g., Huang et al., 2022; KüçükkambaK & Süler, 2022), so its influence needs to be explored by additional studies.

3. Hypothesis Development

Covid 19 has devastating social, economic, and psychological impacts, and every individual receives their share of those to a certain extent. Since it is a novel type of disease spreading recklessly and embodying many unforeseen consequences, it causes fear, anxiety, and uncertainty among the public. As individuals differ in their tolerance to unanticipated issues, their psychological reactions to Covid 19 vary. On the one hand, some individuals can feel a very high level of Covid anxiety. On the other hand, some can do a shallow level of it.

Recent studies have discovered a positive association between anxiety and shopping disorders. Gallagher et al. (2017), for example, found that compared to depression and stress, anxiety is the most potent factor leading to compulsive buying among participants. Another study (Black et al., 2016) conducted 5-year follow-up interviews with the same individuals and unveiled that people diagnosed with compulsive shopping also experience anxiety disorders. Besides, many subjects specified that they returned to compulsive shopping to relieve their anxieties. Furthermore, the literature review of Weinstein et al. (2016) asserted that compulsive buying has a psychological concurrency with anxiety. Further, Zheng et al.'s (2019) study on young women demonstrated that state anxiety directly influences online compulsive buying.

A group of studies has claimed that the Covid-19 pandemic has an anti-consumption effect (e.g., Cambefort, 2020; Khatib, 2020; H.-J. Lee & Cha, 2022; K.-T. Lee, 2022; Maseeh et al., 2022)provocada pela Pandemia do novo coronavírus (COVID-19. For instance, according to Cambefort (2020), the lockdown gave individuals a chance to experiment with a simpler lifestyle by lowering their level of consumption after realizing that excessive spending does not gladden them and raising concerns about its detrimental effects on the environment. On the other hand, recent studies have also addressed the link between anxiety due to Covid 19 and compulsive buying. One of these studies, Çelik and Köse (2021), confirmed that anxiety during Covid 19 positively influences the helpless stress coping style, increasing compulsive buying among Turkish people. Furthermore, according to another study (Şahin & Karahan, 2022) conducted in Turkey, Covid 19 anxiety has a positive impact on consumers' compulsive buying tendencies by increasing their anxiety levels. Besides, Shabahang et al. (2021)including anxiety and depression, in addition to compulsive behaviors. Clarifying the psychosocial antecedents and consequences of COVID-19 anxiety can inform successful psychological support and treatment. This study investigated psychological predictors and consequences of COVID-19 anxiety during the outbreak of COVID-19 in Iran. University students (N = 398 indicated that Covid anxiety is related to false safety behaviors such as compulsive buying. In this context, the first hypothesis of the study is developed as below:

***H_1*: Covid anxiety has a positive impact on compulsive buying tendency in the Covid era.**

According to some authors (e.g., Baryshnikov et al., 2018; Mitchell et al., 2018), hopelessness and some unpleasant psychological changes are related. They argued that hopelessness contributes significantly to the emergence of anxiety, the danger of suicide, and reduced psychosocial functioning. Similarly, research has unveiled that those who fear and worry about Covid 19 are also prone to have unpleasant feelings. For instance, Covid anxiety was found to have a substantial association with depression and generalized anxiety (S. A. Lee, Jobe, & Mathis, 2020; S. A. Lee, Jobe, Mathis, et al., 2020), death anxiety (S. A. Lee, Jobe, Mathis, et al., 2020), and suicidal ideation (S. A. Lee, Jobe, & Mathis, 2020; S. A. Lee, 2020;

S. A. Lee, Mathis, Jobe, et al., 2020)which is a brief mental health screener to identify probable cases of dysfunctional anxiety associated with the COVID-19 crisis. This 5-item scale, which was based on 775 adults with anxiety over the coronavirus, demonstrated solid reliability and validity. Elevated CAS scores were found to be associated with coronavirus diagnosis, impairment, alcohol/drug coping, negative religious coping, extreme hopelessness, suicidal ideation, as well as attitudes toward President Trump and Chinese products. The CAS discriminates well between persons with and without dysfunctional anxiety using an optimized cut score of ! 9 (90% sensitivity and 85% specificity. Besides, some studies indicated that Covid anxiety and hopelessness are two closely related constructs. For instance, Lee (2020) observed a significant positive correlation between Covid anxiety and hopelessness. Another study (Saricali et al., 2020) revealed that fear of Covid, an essential predictor of hopelessness, increases individuals' hopelessness levels. Lee et al. (2020) also demonstrated extreme hopelessness in individuals with high Covid anxiety. Hence, based on these previous studies, we built our second hypothesis as follows:

H_2*: *Covid anxiety has a positive impact on hopelessness.

In addition to its effect on how individuals feel, it is expected that Covid anxiety will influence how people consider future consequences. The coronavirus pandemic has turned into a chronic social trauma, resulting in a period of uncertainty, and it has challenged individuals' ability to cope with an unknown threat, transforming the way of life and raising questions about what the near and far future may bring (Holman & Grisham, 2020). When people experience trauma, their perception of time changes (Holman & Silver, 1998)Vietnam War veterans, and residents of 2 southern California communities devastated by fire. Results indicated that a past temporal orientation—focusing attention on prior life experiences—was associated with elevated levels of distress long after the trauma had passed, even when controlling for the degree of rumination reported. Temporal disintegration at the time of the trauma whereby the present moment becomes isolated from the continuity of past and future time—was associated with a high degree of past temporal orientation over time and subsequent distress. Temporal disintegration was highest among individuals who had experienced the most severe loss, had previously experienced chronic trauma, and had had their identities threatened by their traumatic experience. (PsycINFO Database Record (c as trauma can force individuals to live in the present, leading to a conscious awareness of the current situation (Holman, 2015; Holman & Zimbardo, 2009). Based on this perspective, it would not be incorrect to assert that the coronavirus pandemic causes individuals to prioritize the present above the future. In this way, people can be consciously aware of what is currently happening and changing in the environment, which helps them respond and adapt quickly. Besides, the future has become ambiguous more than ever before due to the Covid pandemic; focusing on the immediate world would enable people to avoid future uncertainties that may be intolerable.

The reason is that:

… uncertainty can be a source of concerns for anxiety-prone individuals, whose predictions of potential outcomes are more negative than positive. This means they anticipate negative events, outcomes or experiences concerning their country, their surroundings, or themselves personally. (Zaleski, 2006, p. 130).

Thus, the recent negative experiences owing to the Covid pandemic can lead people to expect similar events to happen (i.e., negative effect). This expectation may be intense for individuals with high levels of Corona anxiety, making them focus on the present rather than the future. Furthermore, Papastamatelou et al. (2015) found that those with a future-focused time view do not suffer from a generalized anxiety disorder. Hence, there appears to be a negative relationship between future orientation and anxiety. Based on these, the third hypothesis of the study is proposed below:

***H_3*: Covid anxiety has a negative impact on future orientation.**

It is suggested that compulsive buying is connected with considerable emotional, societal, job-related, and financial problems, including incapacitating debt, familial trouble, workplace difficulties, and psychological hardships such as shame, guilt, depression, and hopelessness (Benson & Gengler, 2004). Accordingly, previous research found that individuals who feel hopeless are likely to shop compulsively. For instance, Grant et al. (2011) demonstrated that adolescents with problem shopping behavior were nearly 3–6 times more likely to feel sad or hopeless than those without problem shopping. Besides, it was demonstrated that compulsive buyers are inclined toward hopelessness (Mendelson & Mello, 1986), and they see compulsive buying as a short-term coping strategy for releasing this profound sense of hopelessness (Dickie, 2011). Similarly, Roberts et al. (2015) confirmed that people who evaluate themselves as hopeless tend to shop compulsively. Based on these studies, individuals' hopelessness level is expected to influence their compulsive buying tendency in the Covid era positively. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis of the study is established as follows:

H_4*: *Hopelessness has a positive impact on compulsive buying tendency in the Covid era.

The intention to exhibit certain behaviors is associated with a consumer's propensity toward a present or future orientation (Finke & Huston, 2003). Present-oriented consumers, for example, tend to participate in risky behaviors such as smoking, drinking, and unprotected sex. Future-oriented consumers, on the other hand, are inclined to participate in risk-averse behaviors such as exercising, wearing a seat belt, or building good credit (Norum, 2008). In their study, Norum (2008) demonstrated that the compulsive buying tendency is positively related to the behaviors (i.e., smoking, drinking, and unprotected sex) reflecting present orientation and is negatively related to the behaviors (i.e., exercising and establishing credit) reflecting future orientation. Another study (Joireman et al., 2010) focusing on a university student sample confirmed a negative relationship between consideration of future consequences and compulsive buying tendency. Further, the compulsive buying tendency-future orientation link was examined cross-culturally and provided consistent results. For instance, a recent study (Unger et al., 2018) focusing on Germany, Ukraine, and China found that future time perspective negatively influences compulsive buying among Ukrainian and Chinese consumers. The current study also estimates that a decrease in future orientation will lead to a tendency for compulsive buying in the Covid era. Therefore, the fifth hypothesis of the study is built as below:

H_5**:** *Future orientation has a negative impact on compulsive buying tendency in the Covid era.*

Last, studies have shown that future orientation is a mechanism for protecting people from the feeling of hopelessness. For example, Hamilton et al. (2015) revealed that greater levels of future orientation mitigate the influence of emotional trauma on the emergence of despair. Another study (Mac Giollabhui et al., 2018), which encompassed a five-year annual assessment of the connection between future orientation and hopelessness, provided evidence that the increase in future orientation leads to a faster drop in hopelessness in years. It was also confirmed that individuals with positive future expectations are unlikely to feel hopeless (Ogurlu, 2016). Likewise, Allwood et al. (2012) discovered a robust connection between a lack of future orientation and hopelessness. As a result, past research findings imply that future orientation is adversely related to hopelessness. In this context, the last hypothesis is:

H_6**:** *Future orientation has a negative impact on hopelessness.*

Depending on the proposed relationships among variables, the current study posits the research model with relevant hypotheses below (Figure 1).

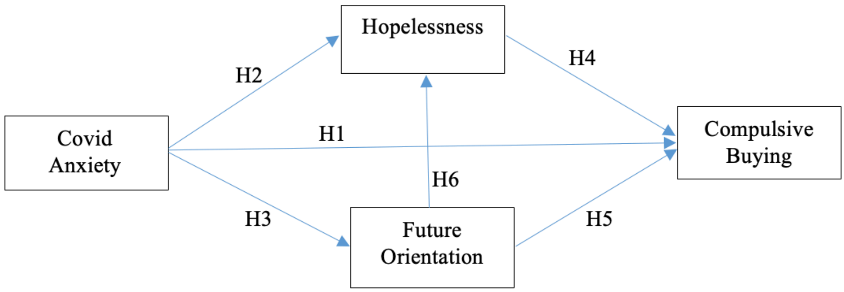

Figure 1. Research Model

4. Methodology

4.1.Participants and Procedures

The research is approved by the University of Turkish Aeronautical Association Senate Ethics Committee (approval number: E-82735415-619-16624, date: 09.05.2022). All individual participants are requested to sign written informed consent forms.

The data was collected between September 2020-March 2021. This period was chosen carefully since at those times, the new reported cases, Covid patients in hospitals, test positivity rates, and new reported deaths increased sharply in the USA (The New York Times, 2020). Therefore, people were deeply feeling the psychological effects of Covid 19 Pandemic, which made it meaningful to address the relationships between the variables selected in this study. Furthermore, in order to select the participants, Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) was used, and the respondents were paid .75 cents for their time and effort. The first reason for using this platform for data collecting is that MTurk allows for a wide range of study design options, including experimental, quasi-experimental, passive observation, cross-sectional, longitudinal studies, and even content analysis (Aguinis et al., 2021). In addition, the platform provides a demographically diversified, broad, and stable participant pool that is easily accessible, collects data rapidly, and enables inexpensive online research (Bader et al., 2021; Buhrmester et al., 2018; Levay et al., 2016; Mason & Suri, 2012)trust, and reciprocity, we evaluate (1. Furthermore, because of the platform's large and diversified user base, the generated data are intended to be valid and applicable to a broader population (Bader et al., 2021; Mellis & Bickel, 2020). Moreover, MTurk data are viewed as equally credible as conventional data sources (Bentley et al., 2017; Buhrmester et al., 2011)it is often desirable to quickly obtain information about current user behaviors for topics that cannot be obtained through existing data or instrumentation. Perhaps we would like to understand the use of products we do not have access to or perhaps the action we would like to know about (such as using a coupon. The participants were randomly recruited from the platform among the individuals aged 18+ residing in the USA. Finally, the data were gathered from 350 participants, whose demographics are given in Table 1.

As seen in Table 1, approximately half of the participants were male (54.3%), and half were female (45.7%). About 67% of the participants were between the ages of 25-44, 4.3% were between the ages of 18-24, and the rest were older than 45. Nearly half of the participants (55.7%) were university graduates, 22.3% had graduate degrees, and 18% were high school graduates. The annual income distribution of the participants was quite balanced, with each group accounting for 10-20% of the total.

Table 1. Demographics of the Participants

N=350	
Gender	Female: 160 (45.7%)
	Male: 190 (54.3%)
Age	18-24: 15 (4.3%)
	25-34: 132 (37.7%)
	35-44: 108 (30.9%)
	45-54: 47 (13.4%)
	55-64: 33 (9.4%)
	65+: 15 (4.3%)
Education	Elementary and secondary school: 3 (0.9%)
	High school: 63 (18%)
	College/University: 195 (55.7%)
	Master degree: 78 (22.3%)
	Doctoral degree: 11 (3.1%)
Annual Income	Under $15,000: 68 (19.4%)
	Between $15,000 and $29,999: 65 (18.6%)
	Between $30,000 and $49,999: 65 (18.6%)
	Between $50,000 and $74,999: 72 (20.6%)
	Between $75,000 and $99,999: 38 (10.9%)
	Between $100,000 and $150,000: 30 (8.6%)
	Over $150,000: 12 (3.4%)

4.2.Measures

The measurement tools used for the data collection were derived from existing scales, and all were prepared in a 5-point Likert-type format. In order to measure Covid anxiety, Roy et al.'s (2020) scale was used. Since state hopelessness was measured in this study, the state part of the State-Trait Hopelessness Scale (Dunn et al., 2014) was adapted. In addition, future orientation (i.e., consideration of future consequences) was measured by Strathman et al.'s (1994) scale and compulsive buying by Faber and Q'Guinn's (1992) scale.

Before the commencement of data collection, the content and understandability of the measurement items were discussed with three marketing academicians. Spelling corrections and other adjustments were made based on their feedback. Following that, a pilot study with 50 respondents was applied to evaluate the measures' factor structure and internal reliability. After determining that the analysis findings were satisfactory, the data collection was maintained.

5. Analysis and Findings

In order to test the measurement and structural models, AMOS 22 program was used. As the covariance-based structural equation modeling has the assumptions of the normality of the data and the homogeneity of the variances, they were checked prior to the analysis using SPSS 22 software. The results confirmed that the skewness and kurtosis values of all the scale items were between -2 and +2, demonstrating that the data met the assumption of normal distribution (Hair et al., 2010; Kline, 2011). Besides, the homogeneity of variances (for gender, age, education, and income) were evaluated through Levene's test (Levene, 1960) and insignificant results ($p>.05$) were obtained except for age; as a result, the premise of variance homogeneity was accepted. In addition, VIF values were calculated to reveal whether there is a multicollinearity problem among independent variables. As a result, it was concluded that there is no multicollinearity since all the calculated VIF values are around 1, that is, much smaller than the accepted cut-off value of 10. Following this initial analysis, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was applied to test the measurement model to ensure that the measurement items and latent variables were compatible. The findings of the analysis are presented in the following section.

5.1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The goodness of fit indices of the research model, as well as the reliability and validity values of the scales, were assessed in this step. According to the results of CFA (see Table 2), the calculated goodness of fit indices were compatible with the suggested values in the literature (e.g., Hair et al., 2010; Hooper et al., 2007), confirming the overall fit of the model with the data. After this, reliability and validity issues were checked. First, it was verified that standardized factor loadings of all items in the scales were higher than .50 ($p<.05$), which supported the validity of the measurement constructs (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Chau, 1997; Hair et al., 2010; Magal, 1991). When it comes to the reliability of the scales, first, Cronbach's alpha (α), and Composite Reliability (CR) values were calculated. Additionally, maximal reliability, which is a scale-size-independent and more robust measure of reliability, was also computed. The results demonstrated that for all scales, α and CR values surpassed .70, indicating that the reliabilities of measurement instruments are satisfactory (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010). Compatible with these findings, all MaxR (H) values were higher than .80 that, which confirmed the maximal reliability (Hancock & Mueller, 2001).

In addition to the reliability, convergent and discriminant validities were checked. For this, average variance extracted (AVE) and maximum shared variance (MSV) for each variable were calculated. As it is seen in Table 2, AVE values are higher than .50, demonstrating the convergent validity of the scales. Besides, the square roots of AVE scores (diagonals) are greater than the inter-construct correlations (below AVEs) and MSV values, which meet the standards for discriminant validity of the measurement instruments (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010).

Table 2: CFA Results (Goodness of Fit Indices, Reliability and Validity Indicators)

	α	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	Hopeless-ness	Covid anxiety	Com-pulsive buying	Future orienta-tion
Hopelessness	.912	.913	.637	.433	.917	.798			
Covid anxiety	.833	.842	.644	.632	.949	.502	.802		
Compulsive buying	.934	.938	.717	.632	.973	.649	.795	.847	
Future orien-tation	.893	.895	.682	.497	.979	-.658	-.529	-.705	.826

χ^2/df = 1.574, p = .000, CFI = .983, GFI = .937, AGFI = .918, NFI = .956, TLI = .981, RFI = .948, IFI = .983, RMSEA = .041, Standardized RMR = .035

Furthermore, due to the use of self-reported questionnaires to collect data, the presence of common method bias (CMB) was explored. To begin with, the single factor retrieved by Harman's test (Harman, 1976) explained less than half of the total variance, showing the lack of CMB (Harman, 1976). Besides, to diagnose CMB, the common latent factor method was also utilized. As a result, the common variance calculated was less than 10%, which is also a strong indicator of the absence of CMB (Conway & Lance, 2010; MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012).

5.2. Structural Relationships and Hypothesis Testing

Following the evaluations of validity and reliability, the structural model and hypotheses were tested. Table 3 displays the model's goodness-of-fit metrics, standardized route estimates, and hypothesis test results. The derived goodness of fit metrics are well inside the allowed range, suggesting that the model is overall well-fit (Hair et al., 2010; Hooper et al., 2007).

Table 3. Model Parameter Estimations and Goodness-of-fit Indices

Paths			Hypothesis	Std. Estimates	Std. Error	t-Value
Covid anxiety	→	Compulsive buying	H1	.548	.087	9.269*
Covid anxiety	→	Hopelessness	H2	.214	.077	3.617*
Covid anxiety	→	Future orientation	H3	-.529	.086	-8.144*
Hopelessness	→	Compulsive buying	H4	.178	.056	3.608*
Future orientation	→	Compulsive buying	H5	-.298	.057	-5.789*
Future orientation	→	Hopelessness	H6	-.545	.061	-8.769*

χ^2 = 229.77 df=146 *p*=0.000 χ^2/df=1.574 CFI=0.983 GFI=0.937 AGFI=0.918 IFI=0.983 TLI=0.981

Standardized RMR=0.035 RMSEA=0.041

**p*<.05

As clearly seen in Table 3, the hypothesized impacts of Covid anxiety on compulsive buying (H1), hopelessness (H2) and future orientation (H3); hopelessness on compulsive buying (H4), and future orientation on compulsive buying and hopelessness (H5 and H6) are all significant at 95 % confidence level (H1: $\beta=.548, p<.05;$ H2: $\beta=.214, p<.05;$ H3: $\beta=-.529, p<.05;$ H4: $\beta=.178, p<.05;$ H5: $\beta=-.298, p<.05;$ H6: $\beta=-.545, p<.05$). Among those, the effects of Covid anxiety on future orientation (H3) and future orientation on compulsive buying (H5) and hopelessness (H6) are negative, whereas others are positive.

Furthermore, the findings show that hopelessness and future orientation partially mediate the link between Covid anxiety and compulsive buying. The standardized indirect impact of Covid anxiety on compulsive buying through hopelessness (β=.038, $p<.05$) and future orientation (β=.158, $p<.05$) is positive. Additionally, it is also confirmed that future orientation mediates the relationship between Covid anxiety and hopelessness. The standardized indirect impact of Covid anxiety on hopelessness through future orientation is also positive (β=.288, $p<.05$).

Finally, the proportion of the variance explained (R^2) for each endogenous variable was calculated. The findings presented R^2 values as .280 for future orientation, .466 for hopelessness, and .760 for compulsive buying. The threshold values of R^2 (.25, .5, and .7) respectively represent a weak, moderate, and strong explanatory power of the model (Hair Jr. et al., 2017)Jr., G. Tomas M. Hult, Christian Ringle, and Marko Sarstedt is a practical guide that provides concise instructions on how to use partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM. Thus, for our main dependent variable, compulsive buying, the structural model has high explanatory power.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study corroborate those of the present literature in multiple aspects. For instance, the positive impact of Covid anxiety on compulsive buying is coherent with the results of recent studies (e.g., Çelik & Köse, 2021; Jaspal et al., 2020; Lopes et al., 2020) addressing this particular effect. It can be stated that individuals could have seen shopping as a way of releasing their Covid-related anxiety, which led them to make purchases compulsively. The previous research (e.g., Hacimusalar et al., 2020; S. A. Lee, 2020) also confirmed a positive correlation between Covid anxiety and hopelessness, as the current study did. The uncertainty surrounding the disease's progress, severity, duration, the lack of a specific treatment approach, and the possibility of high mortality all contributed to a sense of dread. People who felt more fearful due to these alarming issues experienced a more intense sense of despair during the pandemic. Furthermore, this study revealed, for the first time, the mediating roles of future orientation and hopelessness on the relationship between Covid anxiety and compulsive buying. According to the results, Covid anxiety lessens future orientation, which decreases the tendency for compulsive buying. In contrast, findings demonstrated that Covid anxiety increases the hopelessness of individuals, which also boosts the compulsive buying tendency of individuals.

In addition, supporting the finding of Roberts et al. (2015), this study found evidence that hopeless individuals were inclined to compulsive buying. This result underlines the assumption that compulsive buying generally brings temporary relief and impairs emotional distress and negative feelings (Tarka & Kukar-Kinney, 2022; Unger et al., 2018). Hence, consumers may purchase products compulsively to escape their state of hopelessness. Regarding the link between future orientation and compulsive buying, the study corroborates the findings of Joireman et al. (2010) and Unger et al. (2018), which also showed the future orientation's negative influence on compulsive buying. Future-oriented people are likely to envision and make plans for their future, think about how their present actions will affect their future life, and avoid risky behaviors (e.g., compulsive buying) (Brougham et al., 2011; Norum, 2008).

Further, the evidence for the negative correlation between future orientation and hopelessness supports the results from some previous research (e.g., Hamilton et al., 2015; Mac Giollabhui et al., 2018; Ogurlu, 2016). Higher future orientation is associated with various favorable outcomes, including increased resistance to depressive symptoms (Zheng et al., 2019) and suicidal attempts (Chang et al., 2020). The fact that stronger future orientation lowers the likelihood of these outcomes is noteworthy because these are consequences for which hopelessness raises the risk of occurring. Therefore, the negative link between future orientation and hopelessness is not surprising.

Last, Covid anxiety was revealed to be a negative antecedent of future orientation. Although there is no empirical finding supporting this particular impact in the current literature, it can be inferred that Covid has been a collective trauma and a period with many uncertainties that have made it difficult to estimate what the future will bring (Holman & Grisham, 2020). Hence, this situation may have pushed people to focus on the present instead of tomorrow. Besides, anxiety can lead individuals to expect negative future outcomes (Zaleski, 2006). Therefore, people with high Covid worries may tend to pay attention to their immediate concerns for moving away from future-related anxieties and coping with current events and situations (e.g., pandemics).

In several ways, the current study adds substantially to the literature. First, this study is of the very few that comprehensively investigated the psychological consequences of Covid anxiety from a consumer perspective. Specifically, this study sheds light on the interactions among variables that led to significant cognitive alterations resulting in compulsive buying during the pandemic. Second, the current study brings Covid anxiety, hopelessness, future orientation, and compulsive buying together in a conceptual model for the first time. Third, it introduces Covid anxiety as a significant negative antecedent of future orientation, which eventually influences compulsive buying. These findings form a unique contribution to the current knowledge. Fourth, earlier studies (e.g., Grant et al., 2011; Joireman et al., 2010) examined the effects of hopelessness and future orientation on compulsive buying, but the effects in question during the Covid period were gaps in the existing literature that this study aimed to fill. Last, the previous research (e.g., Brougham et al., 2011; Joireman et al., 2010; Unger et al., 2018) explored the impact of future orientation on compulsive buying in student samples. Unlike those, the current study investigated this effect in the context of a demographically diverse sample. As mentioned before, the participants were randomly selected through the Mturk platform, from the ones over the age of 18 residing in the USA to diversify the sample as much as possible. As shown in Table 1, the participants in this study ranged from 18 to 65+ years of age and included participants of different genders, education, and income levels. However, all the data was gathered from a developed country with western culture, and some variables in the conceptual model of this study may also be affected by cultural factors. For instance, future orientation and risk tolerance (Jochemczyk et al., 2016; Li et al., 2021; Zimbardo et al., 1997) are related, and despite varying at the individual level, individuals grown in western cultures are accepted to be more risk tolerant (Hofstede, 1984). Since this study did not aim to examine the revealed relationships in terms of cultural differences, data on the cultural background of the participants were not collected. However, investigating the effects of cultural factors on the relationships demonstrated in this study may provide a deeper understanding. Thus, it may be a potential area of research for future studies.

The findings of this study present practical implications as well. As it is confirmed that Covid anxiety has negative psychological impacts on individuals, companies should develop some strategies to reduce their Covid anxiety levels. For instance, they can ensure consumers that all necessary precautions are taken to prevent the spread of the disease. Firms can prepare marketing communication content using both emotional and informational messages to emphasize their efforts in taking those measures. In addition, firms should guide consumers on how they can protect themselves from Covid 19 disease. If consumers believe that they are taking precautions to protect themselves, they feel safe, and thus, their Covid anxiety levels diminish. Further, Covid anxiety increases hopelessness and reduces future orientation, resulting in compulsive buying. Therefore, marketers should create hopeful communication messages and make consumers think and plan for a brighter future, which would help them relieve their negative feelings and thoughts and, in turn, increase their future focus. This will attenuate consumers' tendency for compulsive buying, which is a coping strategy for releasing negative psychological consequences of Covid anxiety. Besides, companies can establish education campaigns to motivate consumers to think about the post-Covid era and make their purchasing decisions accordingly, which will help consumers make rational buying decisions. Besides, this can contribute to the companies' positive image and long-term brand loyalty. Last but not least, by drawing important lessons from the study's findings, companies and policymakers can get an idea about how they can deal with similar future incidents, such as epidemics, disasters, and wars that create anxiety, trauma, and crisis. This can help companies and decision-makers take faster and more accurate actions in similar situations.

7. Limitations and Future Research

There are certain limitations of the current study that future studies could address. First, the data of this study were gathered from people residing in the USA, a developed country with western culture. Testing whether the findings are valid for developing countries or eastern cultures can contribute significantly to the generalizability of the findings. Second, as the roles of demographics in the proposed relationships were not examined in this study, the effects of those variables may be addressed by future research. Third, the current study's findings are based on participants' self-reported data. Thus, future studies can test the effects of the antecedents in the present study's conceptual model focusing on consumers' actual compulsive buying behaviors. Fourth, the impacts of other variables such as personality traits (Otero-López et al., 2021; Tarka et al., 2022) and values (Tarka & Harnish, 2021), social media use (Pahlevan Sharif et al., 2021; She et al., 2021), and intolerance of uncertainty (Çelik & Köse, 2021) can be examined. Finally, further studies can test the current study's research model by collecting data in the post-pandemic period, and comparing its findings with the present results to see if the Covid anxiety has completely gone and its effects have returned to normal.

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Appendix

Measurement items and Standardized Loadings

Items	Standardized Loadings
Covid Anxiety (Roy et al., 2020)	
How often you feel affected by the posts on social media about corona Virus infection?	.64
How often does the Idea of Novel Corona Viral Infection freak you out leading to inappropriate behaviours with anyone?	.83
How often does the Idea of Novel Corona Viral Infection freak you out post on social media?	.91
Hopelessness (Dunn et al., (2014)	
Today, it is difficult for me to imagine my future.	.79
Today, I believe I cannot make a difference.	.78
Today, I believe I am powerless to change my future.	.86
Today, I see my future as gloomy.	.83
Today, I feel giving up would be easier.	.75
Today, things do not work out as I would like.	.77
Future Orientation (Strathman et al., 1994)	
I only act to satisfy immediate concerns, figuring the future will take care of itself.	.87
My behavior is only influenced by the immediate (i.e., a matter of days or weeks) outcomes of my actions.	.86
I only act to satisfy immediate concerns, figuring that I will take care of future problems that may occur at a later date.	.87
Since my day-to-day work has specific outcomes, it is more important to me than behavior that has distant outcomes.	.70
Compulsive Buying (Faber and Q'Guinn, 1992)	
During Novel Coronavirus Pandemic, I bought things even though I couldn't afford them.	.85
During Novel Coronavirus Pandemic, I felt others would be horrified if they knew of my spending habits.	.91
During Novel Coronavirus Pandemic, I borrowed money to do shopping even if I knew that I cannot pay it back.	.88
During Novel Coronavirus Pandemic, if I have any money left at the end of the pay period, I just have to spend it.	.87
During Novel Coronavirus Pandemic, I made only the minimum payments on my credit cards.	.69
During Novel Coronavirus Pandemic, I felt anxious or nervous on days I didn't do shopping.	.87

*Reverse coded items

(Derleme)

THE ROLE OF COVID-19 ON SUSTAINABILITY IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY THROUGH GREEN MARKETING PERSPECTIVE AND A CONCEPTUAL MODEL PROPOSAL ON VIRTUAL REALITY TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

Environmental issues, recently, have become one of the most pressing problems of the world that require immediate attention. Due to the growing awareness of the threats posed by environmental issues, there has been a shift in consumer focus toward environmental concerns. As an emerging alternative to support environmental sustainability, virtual reality tourism has shown signs of increased activity, according to recent research on sustainability and green tourism. The aim of the paper is to examine the link between sustainability and virtual reality tourism. While contributing to the literature on virtual reality tourism for sustainability, the concept of sustainability and green marketing is discussed in the paper with reference to the tourism industry and virtual reality (VR). In this context, the ability of virtual experiences to be seen as a substitute for traditional tourism and the impact of crisis situations such as COVID-19 on that potential is examined, and a conceptual model is demonstrated. Two tendencies getting attention during the pandemic: 'Environmental Awareness' and 'Immersive Technology Usage' are proposed in the conceptual model as the drivers of 'Perceived Usefulness' and 'Behavioral Intent' of VR tourism as a sustainable option. The paper is important and contributes to literature both in theory and practice by focusing on VR at the interface of tourism, marketing, and sustainability by its environment and technology focus.

Keywords: Green marketing, green tourism, sustainability, virtual reality tourism, COVID-19, tourism industry

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YEŞİL PAZARLAMA BAĞLAMINDA COVID-19'UN TURİZM ENDÜSTRİSİNDE SÜRDÜRÜLEBİLİRLİK ÜZERİNDEKİ ROLÜ VE SANAL GERÇEKLİK TURİZMİNE YÖNELİK KAVRAMSAL BİR MODEL ÖNERİSİ

ÖZ

Çevre sorunları, günümüzün en önemli sorunlardan biri haline gelmiştir. Bu sorunların oluşturduğu tehditlere ilişkin artan farkındalık nedeniyle, tüketici odağında çevresel kaygılara doğru bir eğilim görülmektedir. Bu bağlamda, yakın zamanda gerçekleştirilen sürdürülebilirlik ve yeşil turizm alanlarındaki araştırmalara göre, sanal gerçeklik turizmi çevreye duyarlı bir alternatif olarak artan bir ilgiyle karşılanmaktadır. Bu makalede, sürdürülebilirlik ve yeşil pazarlama kavramları sanal gerçeklik ve turizm endüstrisi temelinde ele alınarak, tüketicilerin sürdürülebilirlik için sanal gerçeklik turizmine yönelik niyetlerine ilişkin literatürün genişletilmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu bağlamda, sanal deneyimlerin geleneksel turizmin yerini alma potansiyeli ve COVID-19 gibi kriz durumlarının bu potansiyel üzerindeki etkisine değinilerek kavramsal bir model ortaya konulmuştur. Kavramsal modelde, sanal gerçeklik kullanımın artmasında, "Tüketicilerin Çevresel Farkındalığı" ile "Sanal Teknolojinin Kullanıcılarca Kabulü" iki önemli faktör olarak önerilmiştir. Pandemi ile dikkat çeken iki eğilim, sürdürülebilir bir seçenek olarak VR turizmine ilişkin "Algılanan Yararlılık" ve "Davranışsal Niyet" değişkenlerinin itici güçleri olarak kavramsal modelde yer almıştır. Bu çerçevede, çalışma sanal gerçeklik turizmine odaklanarak turizm, pazarlama ve sürdürülebilirlik arakesitinde literatüre teorik ve pratik katkılar sunması bakımından önemlidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yeşil pazarlama, yeşil turizm, sürdürülebilirlik, sanal gerçeklik turizmi, COVID-19, turizm sektörü

1. Introduction

While technology advances to further surround human life in numerous areas, it becomes a prime suspect in issues that threaten the ecology by contributing to global warming and the release of greenhouse gases. In order to provide a solution along with a sustainable lifestyle, there is an ongoing attempt to create awareness with an expectation to trigger a behavioral change on both supply and demand side. As sustainability is mentioned in all disciplines, marketing literature discusses the issue at the individual, organizational and environmental levels. The paper focuses on green marketing in terms of sustainable tourism and the role of technology (Virtual Reality). In the intersection of tourism, sustainability, and virtual reality, Covid-19 is mentioned as an important fact that affects both technology usage and the environmental awareness of individuals.

From this point of view, sustainability is one of the main issues of the tourism industry. Tourism, as a part of the service industry, has had far-reaching effects on the environment as a result of its rapid growth in recent years. According to Zhao and Li (2018), the environmental impacts of tourism are widespread and include pollution derived from transportation, destruction of the original landscape, and excessive energy use by tourism facilities. To reduce the tourism industry's detrimental impact on the environment, tourists must adopt more environmentally friendly practices (Gossling et al., 2021).

With the emergence of the COVID-19 outbreak and the significant advancements in technology, people's perceptions of Virtual Reality in tourism have transformed from a gimmick to a legitimate form of alternative travel option (Debusmann, 2020). According to Zhang et al. (2022), the extant literature agrees with the general public's optimistic view of virtual tourism during times of crisis like COVID-19, and it confirms that visitors' sentiments toward virtual tourism decrease when it coexists with traditional tourism. Despite this decrease, virtual reality still has great potential in the tourism industry from the perspective of green tourism and sustainability (Rousseau and Deschacht, 2020; Bhattacharya and Stern, 2020). The environmental awareness and sensitivity (Monteiro et al., 2021) of the consumers and the user acceptance of virtual technology (Godovykh et al., 2022) are two important drivers for the increase of VR tourism usage as a sustainable option.

This paper aims to expand the literature on VR tourism usage for sustainability. Through a comprehensive, holistic view, it is also aimed to underline the importance of VR tourism for sustainability by emphasizing the role of the pandemic in the adoption of VR in the tourism industry. This attempt is valuable for tourism, marketing, innovation, and sustainability disciplines both in theory and practice. Besides, the study highlights the effects of COVID-19 on the perceived usefulness of VR tourism within the framework of sustainable tourism through two drivers: 'environmental awareness' and 'immersive technology usage.' The paper contributes to sustainable tourism through the integration of environment and technology-based dimensions of VR Tourism that is driven by COVID-19.

Firstly, the concept of sustainability and green marketing is discussed in the scope of the tourism industry. In the following part, immersive technologies and the concepts of VR, AR, and metaverse are examined. Finally, virtual tourism as an emerging industry within the framework of sustainability is discussed. Considering the perspectives of previous studies, a conceptual model is proposed, and the paper is concluded with the implications for the sustainable tourism industry.

2. Sustainability and Green Marketing

United Nations defines sustainability as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (United Nations Academic Impact, 2022). This definition offers a suitable starting point for a comprehensive grasp of this abstract concept. While many countries are looking for ways to meet their development needs, responsible actions must be taken to make sure that development today doesn't affect future generations in a negative way. According to Portney (2015), sustainability can be achieved only by simultaneously protecting the environment, preserving economic growth and development, and promoting equity.

Within the perspective of environmental sustainability, the American Marketing Association (AMA) (2022) defines green marketing as the organizational efforts to produce, promote, package, and reclaim products with ecological considerations. Similarly, according to Groening et al. (2018), "green marketing" includes a range of marketing activities (like price, planning, process, production, promotion, and people) that highlight the company's goal to make its products and services less harmful to the environment. Bukhari (2011) also mentions that "green marketing", which refers to the marketing practices that have a smaller negative impact on the natural environment, has emerged as a topic of conversation in recent years, and businesses are working actively to discover the most effective ways to communicate their green values to consumers.

Parallel to sustainability and green marketing trends, today, individuals care more about saving the environment and are changing their behavior to reflect this care by taking action. Due to the growing awareness of the threats posed by environmental issues, there has been a shift in consumer focus toward environmental concerns, and people are starting to think more about the potential global influence of their purchasing behavior (Jones et al., 2014; Bukhari, 2011; García-Salirrosas and Rondon-Eusebio, 2022).

While there is a growing market for green, sustainable, and socially responsible products and services, green marketing literature (Kinoti, 2011; Chan, 2013; Sharma, 2021; Sugandini et al., 2020) is also growing in the scope of "sustainable purchasing" as a realized action of this trend. In recent literature, "purchasing behavior" has been defined from two different angles (García-Salirrosas and Rondon-Eusebio, 2022). One school of thought holds that consumers should give preference to "green" products, meaning those that aren't harmful to the environment and are made, used, and discarded in accordance with regulations. Second, as part of what is known as "purchasing ethics", consumers should consider their own level of self-awareness and sense of social responsibility. Consumers that share this goal are looking for options that will allow them to meet their needs while having as little of an effect on the planet as possible.

On the business side, Papadas et al. (2019) underline the role of green marketing in gaining a competitive advantage by operating green. Being green in operations also improves the company's image, which can result in higher revenues and more devoted customers. In addition to these advantages, by releasing environmentally friendly products and services, businesses may not only meet the demands of customers who are already concerned about the environment but also provide others the chance to develop that concern and awareness (Lu et al., 2013). Thanks to the ongoing environment-friendly trend in consumer behavior, more and more businesses recognize their obligation to protect the environment. In order to achieve sustainable development, organizations should take measures to reduce the amount of damage they do to the environment through their operations (García-Salirrosas and Rondon-Eusebio, 2022).

Along with the ongoing trends, some sudden realities such as COVID-19 were voiced as a critical fact that created a mindset change as rethinking and awareness of the environment and sustainability issues (Tauber and Bausch, 2022). In that manner following part of the paper examines COVID-19 and sustainability in tourism through a specific perspective on green marketing: "green tourism".

3. COVID-19 and Sustainability in Tourism Industry

3.1. Tourism Industry and COVID-19

Tourism is one of the biggest contributors to the global economy and employment, and many countries in the world also rely on tourism for their economic growth and sustenance (Mohanty et al., 2020). It is extremely sensitive to both external and internal shocks, as demonstrated by the fact such as COVID-19 outbreak (Gürsoy et al., 2022; Saseanu et al., 2020), which led to shutdowns of several activities and facilities such as accommodation, establishments, restaurants, airlines, malls, shops, sports events, concerts. As a result of the travel restrictions applied all around the world during the pandemic, tourism activities have been damaged severely due to the dramatic decrease in tourism revenues. For instance, because of the pandemic, the number of international passengers decreased by 60% in comparison to 2019, and the aviation sector has lost approximately 370 billion dollars due to the decrease in the number of passenger transportation via airlines (Monteiro et al., 2021).

Therefore, economic difficulties, worldwide experienced environmental catastrophes, and climate change issues are increasingly being taken into account, making the creation of sustainable tourism increasingly important, especially following the COVID-19 outbreak (Jones and Comfort, 2020). Tourism has had far-reaching consequences on the environment due to its rapid growth in recent years and an increased demand following the COVID-19 lockdown. Despite having a wide-ranging impact on the natural world, the tourism industry is beyond other sectors when it comes to sustainability measures (Orîndaru et al., 2021). Kışla et al. (2022) state that some research findings and current developments point to the tourism recovery being at the forefront of global efforts in the post-COVID age, and as a result, new discourses have been arising. *Health and hygiene, demand evolution, innovation and digitalization, and sustainability* are the four primary topics highlighted by World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC) (2022).

3.2. Green Tourism As A Sustainable Way of Tourism

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2022) defines sustainable tourism as "*tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities*." Here, UNWTO places a strong emphasis on the economic, social, and environmental factors of sustainability. Sustainability in tourism has been the subject of heated debate in the literature (Saseanu et al., 2020) and examined by a variety of disciplines in 14 different subject areas listed by Zolfani et al. (2015): paradigm, sustainable business development, market research and economics, policy-making, infrastructure, modeling and planning, rural tourism, environment and crisis management, ecosystem and eco-tourism, climate change, ecology, culture and heritage, human resource management, energy and material savings, and waste reduction.

Meler and Ham (2012) state that there is a growing consensus that countries looking to grow their tourism industry must prioritize sustainability, and "green tourism" is mentioned as another concept in the literature. While the term "green tourism" is often used by businesses to refer to holidays that are friendly to the environment, international organizations adopt a meaning that is more in line with sustainable tourism. UNWTO (2022) describes "green tourism" as a form of sustainable tourism that safeguards the natural environment, makes use of the resources provided by the local community, and reduces the amount of damage done to the environment. The discussions on the negative effects of tourism on the environment have raised awareness of the issue and prompted people to make greener purchasing decisions (Gossling et al., 2021; Srivastava et al., 2021). Recent research has demonstrated that carbon dioxide emissions from transportation have a considerable impact on the overall level of pollution in the environment (Gossling et al., 2021).

The ongoing discussions about the detrimental effects that tourism has on the natural world have caused an increasing number of people to make purchases that are considered environmentally friendly. In this way, due to the intense interactions of tourism with the natural environment, the actors in the tourism industry need to demonstrate a high interest in ensuring a sustainable way of tourism that minimizes its detrimental influence on the natural environment (Chen, 2020; Schiopu et al., 2021). People's pro-environmental actions are driven by their awareness of personal actions that contribute to environmental degradation (Tam, 2019). This understanding then motivates people to take action that is just as careful with the environment (Han et al., 2015; Shin et al., 2018).

In the COVID-19 pandemic, both the lack of options for physical tourism and customers' awareness of nature and the environment appear as an increasing number of people are opting for virtual reality (VR) tourism instead of in-situ travel. In fact, consumers that are still worried about the impact of the pandemic consider virtual reality tourism as an eco-friendly alternative to traditional vacations (Saseanu et al., 2020). The following part of the paper gives detailed information about technology and VR and its usage in tourism.

4. Diverse Immersive Technologies and Virtual Tourism

4.1. Immersive Technology, VR, AR, and Metaverse

Technology is reshaping the tourism industry as well as all other fields and offers some opportunities to breed in the future, such as immersive media, which can be defined as innovative media that evoke the user's sense of being there (Perkis et al., 2020; Verma et al., 2022). Immersive technology is defined as the technology that blurs the boundary between the physical and virtual worlds and enables users to experience a sense of immersion (Lee et al., 2013). In other words, users are emplaced in a technology-driven environment with the possibility to actively partake and participate in the information and experiences dispensed by the generated world (Perkis, et.al, 2020). As the pinnacle of the virtual world, "immersive media" places the user in the center of the digital experience. Immersive technology is distinguished by its ability to provide a convincing illusion of physical presence (Rosenberg, 2022). In its pure spirit, virtual tourism facilitates a tourism experience without traveling (Neuburger et al., 2018; Wei, 2019). Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) are the cornerstones of immersive media. The terms virtual reality and augmented reality have been used since the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, respectively.

Virtual Reality

The term "Virtual Reality" (VR) describes a computer-simulated, immersive, interactive, and first-person environment that gives the viewer a powerful sense of being there. The participants' visual, auditory, tactile, aromatic, and gustatory senses are all aroused in such an environment. Virtual reality is defined by Helsel and Roth (1991) as a reality or a real event that is essentially like this but is not in reality. Virtual reality software generates an artificial setting that mimics the real world to a significant level in many respects (including sight, sound, touch, etc.). VR technology allows users to create an immersive experience that fools their senses into thinking they're in the real world. Spectators get the impression that they are actually there, and users can interact with virtual environments and carry on discussions as if they were in the same place (Li, 2017).

Augmented Reality

"Augmented reality" (AR) is a word for a technology that uses computer-generated material to overlay the real world and enables real-time interaction. Real-world remains central, but virtual elements are added for variety (Rosenberg, 2022). The difference between VR and AR is whether or not the user has a sense of being physically there. In virtual reality, the user is entirely immersed in a simulated environment; in augmented reality, the user is immersed in a world that combines real and simulated elements (Yung and Khoo-Lattimore, 2019; Mohanty et al., 2020; Verma et al., 2022).

Metaverse

On the other hand, the metaverse is another immersive technology that became wildly popular, largely due to Facebook changing its name to Meta (Gürsoy et al., 2022). The term metaverse is the combination of the prefix "meta" (beyond) and the suffix "verse" (shorthand for the universe), and it refers to a computer-generated world, while "metaverse tourism" is a new type of virtual tourism that offers a service or experience of shared spatial contexts that is augmented by multisensory information processing at the convergence of real and digital worlds. Interacting with metaverse environments might enhance tourists' experiences with a tourism destination or product (Go and Kang, 2022).

4.2. Virtual Tourism As An Emerging Value in Tourism Industry

Despite the fact that the concept of sustainable tourism has been extensively covered in the literature (Zolfani, 2015), it is noted that the effects of technology on the growth of sustainable tourism have been ignored. Therefore, the implementation of augmented reality and virtual reality within the context of sustainable development of tourism has received little attention. In fact, the proliferation of digital technologies profoundly impacts people's ways of living, working, traveling, and conducting business. The tourism industry has made great use of virtual tourist activities as a result of the proliferation of internet usage and the advancements in related technology. As a direct result of people's participation in virtual experiences, their preconceptions regarding the foreseeable future of technology and the possible reactions of the hospitality and tourism industries have undergone a significant transformation (Buhalis and Karatay, 2022). In this paper, VR is considered an emerging value in the market both as a new experience and as a new way to support the environment for sustainability for the sake of individuals and the other actors in the tourism industry. As a promise to sustainable tourism, these two sakes for VR Tourism are the focus of the paper, and they are reflected in the conceptual model. Some critics in the literature are mentioned in the following lines.

VR Tourism As A New Value for New Experience

Although virtual reality (VR) is not a new topic due to the rapid change in technology in recent years, it is rapidly gaining ground in the tourism industry as well as other fields (Kim et al., 2021; Makransky et al., 2019). So, virtual reality is fast being exploited not merely as a vehicle for the promotion of tourism but also as a tourist destination itself. When framed in this way, VR becomes a travel option that actively encourages exploration. One could easily assume that in the not-too-distant future, virtual tourism will evolve and eventually fulfill the aspirations of some vacationers for unique experiences. As well as recent research (Kim et al., 2021; Lu et al., 2022) in early researches, virtual tourism, according to some academics, has given rise to a new kind of travel that provides many advantages (Cho et al., 2002; Guttentag, 2010). It has been discussed and assumed that the experience that tourists will have in the future will increasingly be a combination of reality and virtual reality, which will allow it to better comply with sustainability criteria (Dewailly, 1999). Virtual tourism is considered a time saver and provides a cheaper experience while preserving the natural environment, as well as giving the opportunity to access to closed or inaccessible destinations of the past and even the future (Sussmann and Vanhegan, 2000). Enhancing 'virtual accessibility' is stressed as another new experience and value of VR Tourism, especially for the elderly and disabled with limited mobility (Lue et al., 2022).

VR Tourism As A New Value for Environment

Virtual tourism is an important tool when it comes to the protection of the natural world. Bin et al. (2021) state that virtual tourism helps reduce emissions by lowering travel frequency and preserving nature by reducing ecological footprints. Besides, on the issue of virtual tourism and its advantages for heritage sites, Hobson and Williams (1995) state that VR potentially could function to preserve heritage by providing an alternative form of access to threatened sites. In parallel, today, virtual tourism is considered as the possibility of restoring a destination to its original historical look, safeguarding cultural heritage, and easing of travel for people with special needs and disabled tourists (Yung and Khoo-Lattimore, 2019). Similarly, Lu et al. (2022) mentioned the advantages of virtual tourism in reducing unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions from transportation and enhancing 'virtual accessibility,' especially for the elderly and disabled with limited mobility.

Critics on VR Tourism

Despite the advantages listed above, some skeptics claim that tourists can't have a satisfying virtual trip since they need to interact with the real world (Kim et al., 2020). It is also a concern of some heritage destination administrators that the virtual experience may water down the destination's objective authenticity, so they refuse to implement this strategy (Dueholm and Smed, 2014). Besides, Onciou and Priescu (2022) state that this emerging technology is mostly preferred by generation Z, and most people are not used to these new technology tools. However, even for this group of people, one of the most important things for VR to reach its full potential is also to incorporate things that can be touched or felt. Furthermore, according to Polcar and Horejsi (2015), highly immersive virtual reality applications are known to cause motion sickness symptoms.

While discussions are going on about the positive and negative effects of virtual reality as an emerging product in the market, the following part of the paper highlights the role of VR in the recovery of nature and its direct contribution to the environment and sustainable tourism.

5. Virtual Reality for Recovery of Nature and Sustainable Tourism

Due to its nature, the tourism industry has contributed to the decrease of natural and protected places, as Spenceley et al. (2017) pointed out. It has either directly caused habitat loss and land-use change or indirectly caused a cumulative change and contributed to climate change through the introduction of alien species (Hall, 2022). Referring to the tourism industry's growing carbon footprint, which has become a significant contributor to ecological imbalances, Wolf et al. (2021) argue that policymakers should prioritize adopting green practices to boost resilience and ensure the long-term sustainability of the evolving tourism sector. Digital solutions that help reduce emissions by lowering travel frequency are increasingly being accepted as a replacement for unsustainable physical activities (Bin et al. 2021). In this manner, virtual reality (VR) technology is considered to promote ecological sustainability and benefit sustainable tourism (Srivastava et al. 2021). While the importance of environmentally responsible behavior (ERB) for the long-term success of tourist destinations and sustainability is mentioned in the literature (Su et al., 2020), there is an attempt in order to decrease the negative effects of tourism on nature and there is growing interest in studying how virtual reality might be used not just as a promotional tool (An et al., 2021) but also as an alternative to physically visiting highly delicate ecosystems (Filter et al., 2020, Glenn, 2021).

From this perspective, virtual reality tourism is a viable and environmentally friendly option (Yung and Khoo-Lattimore, 2017). Go and Kang (2022) suggest a new approach to sustainable tourism in which metaverse/VR tourism products and experiences are used in line with sustainable development goals. In another research (Talwar et al., 2022), individuals' pro-environmental acts are motivated by their understanding of the consequences of their actions that promote ecological damage. By understanding the link between their actions and the environmental impacts they cause, people are more likely to take precautions to safeguard the planet. Talwar et al. (2022) argue that consumers' concern for the environment is correlated positively with their attitude toward virtual reality tourism. Moreover, customers' shifting perspectives on environmental issues may even entice them to enjoy the hospitality and tourism industry's offerings in virtual reality or the metaverse while decreasing their impact on the environment and saving resources. These potential shifts in consumer behavior underline the need for industry efforts to produce and offer genuine hospitality and tourism experiences in virtual reality when the required technology becomes available and user acceptance grows (Gürsoy et al., 2022).

In parallel to VR and sustainable tourism research, the effects of COVID-19 on tourism and the "post-pandemic" tourist system have examined the extent to which digital and virtual tourism may play a significant role in addressing the difficulties and its ability to result in a sustainable transition (Akhtar et al., 2021; Lu et al., 2022). When the pandemic is considered as a recovery of nature, it is seen that without visitors during the COVID-19 lockdown, cities like Venice and Los Angeles were able to quickly restore their water and air quality (Clifford, 2020; Hewitt, 2021). While previous sustainable tourism measures in these regions may not have been adequate to mitigate negative environmental consequences, this extreme case may demonstrate how a substantially reduced number of tourists might help filthy tourism hotspots recover. Referring to that recovery in a different part of the world, it is possible to say that tourists are more concerned with "short-term self-related benefits" than they are with "long-term oriented sustainability concerns" (Tasci, 2017). It may not be enough to rely on the goodwill of visitors to mitigate the effects of over-tourism when it persists and threatens sustainable tourism. According to Go and Kang (2022), the global pandemic has provided a once-in-a-generation chance to examine how heavily reduced travel has affected polluting tourist hotspots and to reevaluate pressing sustainable development concerns.

Additional to that recovery process, the worry experienced due to the COVID-19 is expected to influence the mentality of tourists and their future decision-making (Crossley, 2020; Tauber and Bausch, 2022). The recent literature shows that environment-related awareness of the public is increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic since individuals had the chance to experience how the reduced mobility positively affected the environment (Rousseau and Deschacht, 2020; Acungil and Acungil, 2022; Go and Kang, 2022). Besides, according to Oncioiu and Priescu (2022), the pandemic has provided a one-of-a-kind opportunity to evaluate the impact of extremely low travel on polluted tourist destinations and to reconsider existing sustainable development concerns. Another recent study (O'Connor and Assaker, 2021) has verified the indirect effect of COVID-19 risk perception on pro-environmental travel behavior via a willingness to make financial sacrifices for environmental protection, environmental duty, environmental moral obligation, and environmental concerns. Besides the increased environmental sensitivity, with the technological developments in virtual tourism, people are more willing to forego the hedonic pleasure and happiness that can only be gained through traveling to these locations in person (Talwar et al., 2022).

6. Conceptual Model: The Role of COVID-19 on VR Tourism

As mentioned in the paper, travelers' outlooks, priorities, and decisions in the tourism industry have all been impacted by the COVID-19 public health catastrophe. Due to the limits on travel, many individuals stayed at home throughout the outbreak, and the growing popularity of digital technology and the development of immersive technologies such as metaverse and VR offered a viable replacement for traditional tourism. People took advantage of virtual tourism technologies to either digitally visit previously visited locations or to explore new locations without creating direct damage to the environment.

In light of the literature on the link between COVID-19, virtual reality tourism, and sustainability, a conceptual model is proposed. The relation model represents the link between COVID-19 and its effects on environmental awareness and new technology usage, which are seen as the main determiner of VR Tourism. As discussed in the previous part of the paper, lack of mobility due to COVID-19 has two important effects. The first one realizes the importance of nature and the environment and the second one is the requirement to use more technology than before the pandemic. These two essential outcomes of COVID-19 are proposed as the antecedent of VR tourism acceptance. VR Tourism acceptance is demonstrated by referring to Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) using the variables perception (Perceived Usefulness) and intent (Behavioral Intent).

Figure. 1 shows the proposed conceptual model and the research propositions are explained in the following paragraphs.

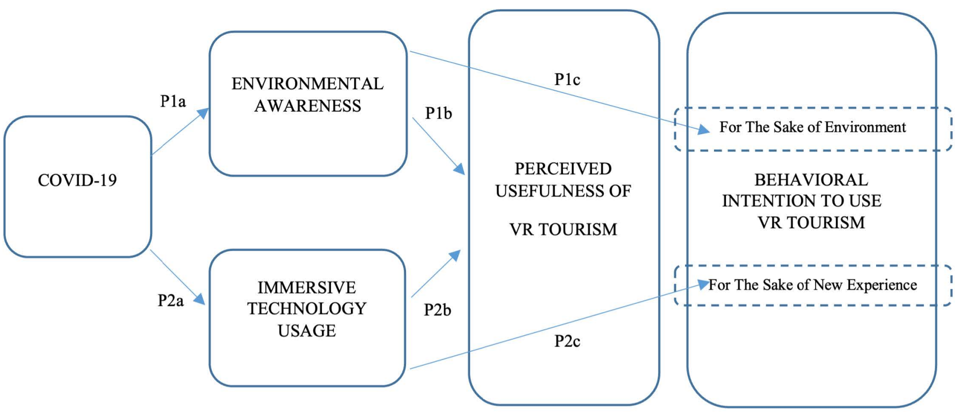

Figure 1. The Conceptual Model: The Role of COVID-19 on Acceptance of VR Tourism

6.1. Perceived Usefulness of VR Tourism and Behavioral Intention

As discussed in the paper, VR tourism is stressed as a way of sustainable tourism, considering VR Tourism as a new technology-based experience and referring to the Technology Acceptance Model: TAM (Davis, 1989). In the conceptual model that is proposed in this paper, perceived usefulness (PU) is defined as a significant factor in behavioral intentions (BI), as mentioned by other researchers (Davis, 1989; Hart and Porter, 2004; Fagan et al., 2012; Kemp et al., 2022).

6.2. Environmental Awareness

As stated before, Go and Kang (2022) believe that the global pandemic presents a once-in-a-generation chance to reevaluate sustainable development concerns and assess the impact of traffic on polluting tourist destinations. Virtual tourism contributes to the sustainability of tourism by expanding tourism experiences without increasing direct contact or the human footprint in preserved habitats and resources. COVID-19 helped to improve the sustainability of the world in terms of the environment (increased health, lower pollution, less harmful production processes, lower harmful touristic activities, etc.). With COVID-19 restrictions on the environment, the consumers' environmental sensitivity and the pandemic's impacts on future travel choices of potential visitors, with a particular emphasis on the environmentally sustainable dimension, have increased (Monteiro et al., 2021). Consumers who worry about the environmental damage generated by their travel see virtual reality (VR) tourism favorably as an environmentally-friendly alternative to conventional tourism that takes place in situ. It is believed that customers' concern for the environment is associated positively with their attitude toward virtual reality tourism. Due to the increased awareness of environmental issues, environmentally sensitive customers are ready to give up the pleasure and delight provided by traditional tourism and keep on using virtual reality tourism opportunities to sate their cravings even after the COVID-19 outbreak has ended (Talwar et al., 2022).

Based on research into the relationship among virtual reality tourism, environmental sustainability and the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on consumer behavior, it can be concluded that restrictions imposed during the pandemic prompted people to reflect on and take action regarding environmental issues and sustainability with a growing sense of eco-guilt after they realize that many significant locations make environmental recoveries during the restrictions of the pandemic period (Crossley, 2020; Talwar et al., 2022). In other word pandemic affected the environmental awareness and sensitivity of travelers positively. Talwar et al. (2022) confirm the relationship that the concern for the environment arouses a positive attitude toward VR, which translates into a willingness to make personal sacrifices to engage in pro-environmental behavior even after the pandemic is over.

Proposition 1a: Restrictions of COVID-19 positively affected the environmental awareness of individuals

Proposition 1b: Environmental awareness positively affects the perceived usefulness of VR Tourism

Proposition 1c: Environmental awareness positively affects behavioral intention to use VR Tourism

6.3. Immersive Technology Usage

From this perspective, we can say that with COVID-19 restrictions, more people started to use and became more and more interested in alternative immersive technologies (Filter et al., 2020; Gürsoy et al., 2022), which increased the user acceptance of VR technologies. Besides VR technologies, other immersive technology usage has increased during the pandemic. New technologies (immersive) increase people's sensation of presence in virtual environments. Immersed users feel more connected to the virtual than the real world. Sagnier et al. (2020) state that the sensation of presence has a positive effect on the intention to use virtual reality. Thus, as the sensation of presence increases with technological developments, many people turn to previously unexplored virtual-reality tools to satisfy their wanderlust to travel, and this shift in user behavior has contributed to a rise in the popularity of cutting-edge immersive technologies.

Due to COVID-19, the general public's opinion of virtual tourism appears to be trending in a positive direction, as reported by Sarkady et al. (2021) and Zhang et al. (2022). Since COVID-19 caused many tourist attractions to go down in an attempt to control the outbreak, visitors had much less to do in remote areas. Although the demand for tourism was high, virtual tourism initiatives were able to satisfy it by providing a novel experience, which was well received by visitors (Cho et al., 2002). Supporting the perspective of Hobson and Williams (1995) that virtual tourism provides an effective alternative when an on-site destination is inaccessible, it can replace on-site tourism during times of crisis. Elkhwesky et al. (2022) state that virtual tourism enables tourists to have an immersive experience by exploring and engaging with the envisioned environment while providing a risk-free option to travel safely and comfortably.

Proposition 2a: Restrictions of COVID-19 positively affected the usage of immersive technologies

Proposition 2b: The usage of immersive technologies positively affects the perceived usefulness and acceptance of VR Tourism

Proposition 2c: The usage of immersive technologies positively affects behavioral intention to use VR Tourism

6.4. Future Research Agenda for Proposed Model

While the paper proposed a model based on the current literature, measuring the role of environmental awareness and immersive technology usage in VR acceptance has the potential to contribute to the literature in terms of motivations for VR Tourism. In order to understand the role of COVID-19 on the factors demonstrated as the antecedent of acceptance of VR, future researchers may generate a questionnaire to demonstrate the difference between the perception of the users on environmental awareness and immersive technology usage before and after COVID-19. Additionally, future researchers could develop the model in order to understand the motivations of VR Tourism usage in terms of two perspectives and sake: "VR Tourism for a new experience", and "VR Tourism for the environment" and their relationship with hedonic and utilitarian behaviors. Besides, when VR Tourism is considered an emerging value and linked with innovative consumption, individual innovativeness could be added to the model. Also, the following research can extend the model by adding demographic factors as well as cultural factors.

7. Conclusion and Implications

This paper aims to expand the literature on VR tourism for sustainability while the concept of sustainability and green marketing is discussed, referring to the tourism industry and virtual reality. In this context, the ability of virtual experiences to be seen as a substitute for traditional tourism, the impact of crisis situations such as COVID-19 on that potential is examined, and a conceptual model is demonstrated. In the model, two tendencies getting attention of the pandemic: 'Environmental Awareness' and 'Immersive Technology Usage' is proposed in the conceptual model as the drivers of 'Perceived Usefulness' and 'Behavioral Intent' of VR tourism as a sustainable option.

Through its comprehensive, holistic perspective, the paper underlines the importance of VR tourism for sustainability and emphasizes the role of the pandemic in the adoption of VR in the tourism industry. Based on the paper, some practical and theoretical future potentials and contributions are listed for: Tourism, Marketing, Innovation, and Sustainability:

1. The tourism industry, as a leading industry actively using VR by the masses, has the potential to expand acceptance of VR in other industries as well as expanding its own industry.

2. Production and consumption practices of VR Tourism in different concepts appear as emerging subjects in marketing and tourism literature, such as new markets created by the pandemic, traces of the pandemic in consumer behavior, and adoption of innovation.

3. In the scope of adoption of innovation, VR Tourism is a special case that gained acceptance during the pandemic, and it is still on the agenda post-pandemic. The role of extraordinary facts on the acceptance of innovation can be considered for other industries and products as well. The role of environmental awareness in the acceptance of innovation can be another issue that can be searched in the

scope of innovation and its legitimacy in the market.

4. Acceptance of VR Tourism has an environmental sustainability promise in other industries as well as tourism. Since as a locomotive industry, tourism practices have a close link with other industries that cause carbon footprint due to the transportation activities such as education, sports, art, and cultural events. Tourism has the potential to be a model to other industries in VR usage and contribute to sustainability.

Referring to these four areas, it is believed that VR will be discussed more in the future, and this paper is valuable to contribute to the literature by highlighting the role of VR Tourism in a holistic and comprehensive view.

In terms of the practical side, as it is stressed in the previous parts of the paper, in the tourism industry, travelers' outlooks, priorities, and decisions have all been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the limits on travel, many individuals stayed at home throughout the outbreak, and the growing popularity of digital technology and the development of new immersive technologies such as metaverse and wearable gadgets offered a viable replacement for traditional vacationing. People took advantage of virtual tourism technologies to digitally visit previously visited places or explore new places without directly harming the environment. Recent papers (Chen, 2020; Schiopu et al., 2021) indicate that VR tourism is a viable, sustainable alternative to traditional tourism that is swiftly gaining market popularity. Besides being an alternative during the outbreak, in some papers (Talwar et al., 2022), it is argued as a first option for some customers, referring to the willingness to experience VR tourism as a new way of tourism. The desire of consumers to use virtual reality tourism in post-pandemic as well as the pandemic is interpreted as a call to invest in VR and transfer this desire into actual behavior.

It can be suggested that governments and travel organizations should seek to capitalize on these continued VR tourism ambitions in order to reduce the environmental effects of in-situ tourism. Additionally, virtual reality tourism can be used to ensure the long-term viability of cultural and historical sites, which often crumble in the face of excessive visitor numbers (Frey and Briviba, 2021). Increasing the satisfaction of VR users is a step in this direction, as it will likely lead to loyalty, continued interest, and the use of virtual tourism.

The pandemic made people more interested in VR tourism and created an emerging market, which gives VR tourism businesses a chance to expand their network of loyal customers long after the pandemic has ended. Managers can make the most of this opportunity by firmly promoting VR tourism to groups of people who would benefit most from it (those who cannot afford in-situ travel, those who are physically unable to travel, and those who are highly motivated by concerns about their eco-footprints) (Fennell, 2021). To achieve these goals, messages promoting virtual reality tourism should highlight its usefulness as a new experience and its positive effects on the environment. As a result, virtual reality businesses would have a reliable customer base on which to build and maintain their commercial success as a part of a sustainable environment.

Expanding tourism experiences without increasing direct contact or the human footprint in preserved ecosystems and resources is one method by which virtual tourism could help the sustainability of tourism and strengthen the resilience of tourist locations. Destinations could see a rise in revenue if they take measures to protect their natural resources and capitalize on the growing market for virtual tourism products and experiences that can be enjoyed from afar. For future generations of vacationers, especially, the use of virtual reality at tourist hotspots and cultural monuments may pave the way for really altering travel experiences (Buhalis and Karatay, 2022).

In the scope of practical perspective, there are simultaneous benefits of VR in pandemic and post-pandemic both for individuals, organizers, destinations, and nature. For further studies, surveys can be conducted to analyze and test the proposed model on the perception of virtual tourism as a sustainable option. Additional research on other levels of analysis, such as the meso level (for example, organizational level - tourism service providers) or the macro level (according to different countries) is necessary to fully understand the effect of COVID-19 on the perception of VR tourism as a sustainable alternative and strengthen the literature around this important topic.

By means of the proposed model and future implications listed above, the paper is important and contributes literature both in theory and practice by focusing on VR at the interface of tourism, marketing, and sustainability.

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Yazarlara Not

I. Genel Kurallar

1- Pazarlama ve Pazarlama Araştırmaları Dergisi yılda iki sayı (Ocak ve Temmuz) olarak yayımlanmaktadır.

2- Pazarlama ve Pazarlama Araştırmaları Dergisi'ne yazı gönderimi http://pazarlama.org.tr/dergi/ sitesinden Makale Yönetim Sistemi'nden yapılacaktır.

3- Ulusal ve Uluslararası araştırma ve yayın etiği kurallarına uyulmalıdır. Dergiye gönderilen yazılar başka bir yerde yayımlanmamış ya da yayımlanmak üzere gönderilmemiş olmalıdır. Ulusal Pazarlama Kongrelerinde ve diğer konferanslarda sunulan bildiriler dipnotta belirtilmek suretiyle veya geliştirilmiş halleriyle yayın için dergiye gönderilebilir. Bu yazılar tekrar hakem değerlendirilmesine sunulur.

4- Yazıların uzunluğu dergi formatında tablo ve şekiller dahil, kaynakça hariç olmak üzere 25 sayfayı ve 10.000 sözcüğü geçmemelidir.

5- Yazılar yayımlanmak üzere kabul edildiğinde Pazarlama ve Pazarlama Araştırmaları Dergisi, bütün yayın haklarına sahip olacaktır.

6- Yazarların, unvanlarını, öğrenci ya da çalışan oldukları kurumlarını (Üniversite/Kurum ismi; varsa Fakülte/Enstitü ve Bölüm olarak), haberleşme adresleri ile telefon numaralarını ve e-posta adreslerini Makale Yönetim Sistemi'ne girmeleri gerekmektedir. Ancak, Makale Yönetim Sistemi'ne yüklenen çalışmalarda yazar isimlerine yer verilmemelidir. İletişin kurulacak yazarın adı ve e-posta adresi dipnotta belirtilmelidir.

7- Dergiye verilecek yazılar Yayın Kurulu'nca ilk değerlendirilme yapıldıktan sonra iki hakeme gönderilecek, hakemlerden gelecek rapor doğrultusunda yazının basılmasına, rapor çerçevesinde düzeltilmesine, yazının geri çevrilmesine ya da üçüncü bir hakeme gönderilmesine karar verilecek ve durum yazara en kısa sürede bildirilecektir. Yayımlanmayan yazılar yazara geri gönderilmeyecektir.

8- Yazardan düzeltme istenmesi durumunda, düzeltmenin en geç 3 ay içerisinde yapılarak Makale Yönetim Sistemi'ne yüklenmesi gerekmektedir. Üç ay içinde hakemler tarafından önerilen/istenilen düzeltmelerin yapılmaması durumunda, yazının değerlendirme süreci baştan başlatılacaktır.

9- Pazarlama ve Pazarlama Araştırmaları Dergisi'nin yazı dili Türkçe olmakla birlikte, İngilizce olarak yazılmış çalışmalar da yayımlanmaktadır. Yazı bu dillerden hangisinde yazılmış olursa olsun, en çok 200 sözcükten oluşan Türkçe Öz ve İngilizce Abstract ayrı bir sayfa olarak yazılmalıdır. Aynı şekilde, hangi dilde yazılmış olursa olsun yazının başlığının Türkçe ve İngilizce olarak yazıya eklenmesi, ayrıca yine Türkçe ve İngilizce olarak en az 3 anahtar sözcüğün belirtilmesi gerekmektedir.

10- Yayımlanan yazının 5 adet tıpkıbasımı ve bir adet dergi yazara ücretsiz olarak gönderilecektir.

II. Yazım Kuralları

1- Yazı, Word formatında, 1.5 satır aralığında, ana bölümlerinde 11 punto harf büyüklüğünde ve Times New Roman karakterinde yazılmalıdır.

2- Öz ve Abstract 10 punto harf büyüklüğünde ve Times New Roman karakterinde yazılmalıdır.

3- Kaynakça 11 punto harf büyüklüğünde ve Times New Roman karakterinde tek satır aralığında yazılmalıdır.

4- Tablo içindeki yazılar 9 punto harf büyüklüğünde ve Times New Roman olarak yazılmalıdır. Tablo ve Şekiller metin içine ortalanarak yerleştirilmedir. Tablo başlıkları tablo üstüne, Şekil başlıkları şekil altına yazılmalıdır. Tablo başlıkları Times New Roman ve 11 punto olmalı ve kalın formatta yazılmalı, numaradan sonra nokta konularak başlığa devam edilmeli (**Tablo 1.**); başlık da yine Times New Roman ve kalın olmayan formatta kelimelerin ilk harfleri büyük olacak şekilde yazılmalıdır.

5- Makale başlığı tüm harfleri büyük olacak şekilde Times New Roman, 11 punto, kalın formatta ve metni ortalayarak yazılmalıdır. Yazının giriş ve sonuç bölümleri dahil olmak üzere tüm bölüm başlıkları, tüm kelimelerin yalnızca ilk harfleri büyük olacak şekilde kalın punto ile yazılmalı ve 1.; 1.1.; 1.1.1.; 1.1.1.1. şeklinde numaralandırılmalıdır. Bunların dışındaki başlıklar italik olarak yazılmalıdır.

6- Ondalık kesirler ayrılırken makalenin yazıldığı dildeki kurallar uygulanmalıdır. Türkçe için örneğin; ',05'; İngilizce için '.05' şeklinde yazılmalıdır. Sayıların ayrımı ise Türkçe için örneğin 9.900 (dokuz bin dokuz yüz); İngilizce için 9,900 (dokuz bin dokuz yüz) şeklinde olacaktır. Denklemler, sıra numaraları parantez içinde sayfanın sağında yer alacak şekilde ortalanmış olarak metin içinde yer almalıdır.

III. Yollamalar ve Kaynakça

Yollamalar ve kaynakça APA (American Psychological Association) kurallarına uygun olacaktır. Metin içinde yapılacak yollamalar ayraç içinde gösterilecektir. Kaynakça da bu yollama sistemine uygun olarak hazırlanacaktır. Aşağıda farklı nitelikteki kaynakların metin içindeki yollamalarda ve kaynakçadaki yazılış biçimleri örneklerle gösterilmiştir:

1. Yollama

Tek yazarlı kitaplar ve makaleler:

(Baker, 2000); (Baker, 2000: 375).

Aynı yazarın, aynı yıl birden fazla eserine yollama yapılması durumunda:

(Hunt, 2002a: 35); (Hunt, 2002b: 40).

İki yazarlı kitaplar ve makaleler:

(Hunt ve Morgan, 1996); (Hunt ve Morgan, 1996: 107).

İkiden çok yazarlı kitaplar ve makaleler:

(Lusch vd., 2007); (Lusch vd., 2007: 6).

Kurum yayınları:

(TUİK, 2015: 145).

2. Kaynakça

Kaynakçada Kitaplar

Tek yazarlı kitaplar:

Aaker, D. A. (2008). *Strategic Market Management.* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

İki yazarlı kitaplar:

Cravens, D. ve Piercy, N. F. (2008). *Strategic Marketing.* London: McGraw-Hill Irwin.

İkiden çok yazarlı kitaplar:

Peter, J. P., Olson, J. C. ve Grunert, K. G. (1999). *Consumer Behavior and Marketing*. London: McGraw-Hill.

Kaynakçada Makaleler

Tek yazarlı makaleler:

Baker, M. J. (2000). Selecting a Research Methodology. *The Marketing Review*, 1(3): 373-397.

İki yazarlı makaleler:

Hunt, S. D. ve Morgan, R. M. (1996). The Resource-Advantage Theory of Competition: Dynamics, Path Dependencies, and Evolutionary Dimensions. *The Journal of Marketing*, 60(4): 107-114.

İkiden çok yazarlı makaleler:

Lusch, R. F., Vargo, S. L. ve O'Brien, M. (2007). Competing Through Service: Insights from Service-Dominant Logic. *Journal of Retailing,* 83(1): 5-18.

Kaynakçada Konferans Bildirileri

Pleck, J. (1979). Work-Family Conflict: A National Assessment. *Annual Meeting of the Society for the Study of Social Problems*, Boston, Mass., May 14-18.

Eryiğit, C. (2015). Yeniliğin Benimsenme Süreci. *21. Ulusal Pazarlama Kongresi*, Eskişehir, Haziran 6-8.

Kaynakçada Derleme Yayınlar

Kaslow, W. ve Kaslow, S. (1992). The Family that Works Together: Special Problems of Family Businesses. Zedeck, S. (Der): *Work, Families, and Organizations*. San Francisco, Jossey Bass: 312-361.

Kaynakçada Kurum Yayınları

DPT (2006), *Sekizinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı*, 2001-2005 (Ankara).

Kaynakçada İnternet Kaynakları

Çubukçu, M. (2009). Bu Kimin Zaferi? http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/473346.asp (15.06.2010).

Kaynakçada Tezler

Simic, J. (1993). A Comparison of SMEs in Greenland and the Fiji Islands. Doktora Tezi, University of Fjord