Araştırma Makalesi ● Research Article

Changing Purchasing Behavior in Crises Period (Covid-19 Pandemic) – Price Sensitivity and Perceived Quality *

Kriz Dönemlerinde (Covid-19 Pandemisi) Değişen Satın Alma Davranışı- Fiyat Hassasiyeti ve Algılanan Kalite

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ÖZ

COVID-19 pandemisiyle birlikte getirilen kısıtlamalar; panik satın alma davranışına yol açmış ve böylece online alışverişlerde artış gözlemlenmiştir. Bu dönemde tüketiciler virüsün olumsuz etkilerinden korunmak ve karantina durumlarında ürün ulaşılabilirliğinin kısıtlanacağı düşüncesiyle, belirli gıda ürünlerine yönelmişlerdir. Pandemi döneminde tüketiciler tarafından özellikle talebi artan gıda ürün grupları, meyve-sebze ve bakliyat-makarna olmuştur. Bu çalışmanın temel amacı COVID-19 döneminde tüketicilerin satın alma davranışlarının fiyat duyarlılığı ve algılanan kalite bağlamında iki gıda ürün grubu olan meyve-sebze ve bakliyat-makarna açısından değişim gösterip göstermediğinin tespit etmektedir. Bu kapsamda, çevrimiçi anket yöntemiyle 447 kişiden elde edilen bilgiler üzerinden; geçerlilik ve güvenilirlik analizleri ile normallik dağılımına bakılmış ve korelasyon ve regresyon analizleri uygulanmıştır. Elde edilen bulgulara göre, COVID-19 döneminde tüketici davranışlarının iki gıda ürün grubu için fiyat duyarlılığı ve algılanan kalite bağlamında değiştiği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

ABSTRACT

Due to restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, panic buying behaviour was observed, which led to an increase in online shopping. In this period, consumers have turned to certain food products in the belief that they will be protected from the virus' harmful effects and that the availability of these products may be restricted during quarantine times. Therefore, the pandemic increased their demand for fruit-vegetables, legumes, and pasta, especially for these product groups. This study aims to determine whether consumers' purchasing behaviour has changed concerning price sensitivity and perceived quality within two food product groups, fruit-vegetables, and legumes-pasta, in the COVID-19 period. In this context, through the information obtained from 447 people by the online survey method; validity and reliability analyzes and normality distribution were examined and correlation and regression analyzes were applied. As a result of the findings of this study, it was concluded that consumer behaviour changed in two food product categories for perceived quality and price sensitivity during COVID-19.

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic, which was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) and had a negative impact on all sectors from the moment it broke out, has greatly affected social life. In parallel with this, during

the COVID-19 period, that became a global pandemic, the restriction decisions and quarantines taken by the states led to a major change in consumption habits. With these developments, a transformation has also taken place in terms of consumers' purchasing behavior (Fabius et al., 2020).

In this process, consumers have turned towards certain food product groups and concentrated their spending on these product groups in their purchasing preferences. In the studies performed, it has been observed that the most demanded food product groups in our country and in the world are fruits and vegetables and legumes and pasta (IPSOS, 2020). The reason why these product groups are the most preferred foods is that fruits and vegetables have immune-boosting effects, especially when considered in the context of a health crisis (Neo, 2023). In the context of legumes and pasta, it is known that these food products are preferred due to their long shelf life (Akdemir et al., 2020).

Looking at the past periods, it has been revealed that consumers enter into certain behavioral patterns in crisis situations and a change in purchasing behavior is observed. During an economic crisis, consumers became more sensitive to product prices and tended to prefer more affordable products, while during a health crisis, they shaped their consumption decisions by prioritizing the quality of products over price (Yürük, 2010).

The purpose of the study is to determine the changing consumer behavior in the context of price sensitivity and perceived quality for fruit-vegetable and legumes-pasta groups, whose demand is most increasing in the pandemic period. The study used a questionnaire from quantitative research methods and the data were analyzed with SPSS 24.0. In this context, consumers aged 18-66 and above constitute the main mass of the study.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1. Purchasing Behavior of Consumers

The concepts of consumer and consumer behavior have been a research topic frequently included in scientific studies from past to present. Odabaşı and Barış (2020) defined the concept of consumer as an individual who buys and uses goods and services for the purpose of consumption. The concept of consumer behavior involves the processes by which individuals or groups buy or dispose of products and services, ideas or experiences to satisfy their needs and expectations, whereas the needs and wants to be satisfied range from basic states such as hunger or thirst to love and status (Solomon et al., 2006). These behaviors are actions that are influenced by various factors and performed for a purpose within a certain time interval. (Esener, 2006). According to another definition, it includes the processes by which individuals or groups buy or dispose of products and services, ideas or experiences in order to satisfy their needs and expectations, and the needs and wants to be satisfied range from basic states such as hunger or thirst to love and

status. (Solomon et al., 2006).

2.2. Impact of COVID-19 on Changing Consumer Behavior

From the past to the present, epidemics have been considered one of the biggest disasters that have plagued humanity and have caused hundreds of thousands and even millions of people to lose their lives every time they recur. In the current era, it can be considered that the COVID-19 pandemic has reached a different level beside the pandemic crises of the past and the social effects of the crises', as well as the major changes in the economy. COVID-19, which emerged in the Hubei province of China and was declared as a pandemic by the WHO (World Health Organization) on March 11, 2020, spread all over the world in a short time and became a global epidemic with severe effects (Bingül et al., 2020).

Some of the measures taken by countries during the COVID-19 period to slow down the spread of the pandemic after the pandemic was declared are the closure of workplaces and the transition of many companies to remote working, the suspension of education in schools, universities and courses and the implementation of online education, the closure of borders, air flights, etc. many restrictions have greatly affected the social life of individuals, and the curfews have had a negative impact on the economy in a short period of time. Baygül Özpınar & Aydın, 2020). Unemployment and decreases in household incomes due to these negative effects have caused consumers to change their consumption habits (Torun Kayabaşı, 2020).

Looking at the studies conducted during the COVID-19 process, it was observed that one of the main results of the study conducted in Italy during the pandemic period was that both fruits and vegetables were intensely preferred by consumers in terms of food type, and while 90% of the consumers increased their pasta and fruit consumption, 85.4% increased their vegetable consumption. At the same time, during this period, 28% of consumers started to pay more attention to product labels than they did before (Fanelli, 2021). In the study conducted across Turkey, consumers mostly shopped at discount markets and preferred grocery stores (Günay and Sangün, 2021).

3. Method

The research model was created as a result of the literature review and past studies were examined. There are four hypotheses to this study.

In the results of a study, consumers stated that they experienced an increase in fruit and vegetable consumption especially with pandemic (Dinçer & Kolcu, 2021) With the reason for the pandemic, consumers have also noticed the price increases for this food product group with the increase in fruit and vegetable consumption in our country (Veri Bülteni, 2021). For this reason, one of the hypotheses of the research is as follows:

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive correlation between the price sensitivity of fruits and vegetables and the changing buying behavior.

Since crises involve a social dimension, consumers are more aware of product prices than before the crisis, even if they are indirectly affected by the crisis, and therefore pay much attention to their spending (Hampson & McGoldrick, 2013). The other hypothesis created in connection with this is as follows:

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between the price sensitivity of legume and pasta and the changing buying behavior.

Ethics committee permission was given by Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University Scientific Research And Publication Ethics Committee for the survey application of this study, with the decision no. 44615 dated 16.06.2021.

It is known that consumers increased their fruit and vegetable consumption in order to strengthen their immune systems during the COVID-19 period, a health crisis (Yıldırım, 2021). However, at the time of general consideration, consumers try to keep their immune systems strong by taking the quality to the focus due to their health benefits when the food group is fruits and vegetables (Vlontzos et al., 2017). In a study conducted during this period, it was revealed that the quality factor was at the forefront and seen as the main choice when looking at the purchasing behavior of consumers for food products (Çelik & Dane, 2020). For this reason, the hypothesis has been developed below:

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive correlation between the perceived quality of fruits and vegetables and changing buying behavior.

For consumers, they are a variety of factors that determine quality, such as the appearance or taste of products, and a product is purchased by the consumer to the extent that it meets consumer expectations (Zeithaml, 1988). At this point, the research conducted by NielsenIQ also turned out that consumers will pay attention to quality again during the current pandemic period (NielsenIQ, 2020). As stated in another study, the health aspect and shelf life that can be easily stocked at home during this period have been the most increasing food categories in the period of legumes and pasta pandemics (Üçhisarlı, 2020). In addition, it has been determined that consumers look at the nutritional values of the products and make purchases by checking their content (Uzkesici, 2020). For this reason, the following hypothesis has been developed:

Hypothesis 4: There is a positive correlation between the perceived quality of legume and pasta and changing buying behavior.

4. Data Collection and Sampling Design

The aim of this study is to examine whether the purchasing behavior of consumers for fruits and vegetables and legumes as well as pasta, the two food categories with the highest increase in consumption during the pandemic period, has changed within the context of price sensitivity and perceived quality. In this context, the survey technique, one of the quantitative research methods, was used in the research. The questions in the questionnaire form were obtained from the study carried out by Pärson and Vancic (2020). In order to test the questions in the questionnaire, a pilot survey was conducted with 60 respondents and following the feedback received; it was determined that there were no questions that were not understood or that were complex to the respondents. The main questionnaire basically consists of four parts. The first part of the questionnaire includes questions on two food product categories in the context of price. In the second part, consumers were asked to answer questions about the products in terms of quality. The third part of the questionnaire includes questions assessing consumers' current purchasing behavior and pre-pandemic purchasing behavior. The last section consists of demographic questions such as age and gender. A 5-point Likert scale was used as the measurement tool and the items are respectively 1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Indecisive, 4= Agree and 5= Strongly Agree. Table-1 in the Appendix contains the survey questions used according to the Likert Scale.

In this framework, the questionnaire form was applied to 447 people in total, and in order to prevent incomplete and erroneous responses, attention was paid to ensure that the questionnaire form was answered without leaving any items blank, was organized in such a way that there were no missing or erroneous responses. The survey form was edited and sent on Google Forms.

5. Sample

Within the scope of the demographic factors of the sample participating in the study, firstly, gender, age, educational status and household income were analyzed via frequency distributions. Accordingly, 59.5 percent of the 447 participants were women and 40.5 percent were men. When the age distribution of these participants is analyzed, it is observed that the highest participation rate is in the 26-33 age group with 21.9 percent. Respondents aged 58 years and over constitute 7.2 percent of the total number of respondents and consist of the least participating age group.

Table 1: Descriptive Information of the Participants

Variable	Groups	N	%
Gender	Female	266	59,5
	Male	181	40,4
Age	18-25 years	77	17,2
	26-33 years	98	21,9
	34-41 years	67	15,0
	42-49 years	78	17,4
	50-57 years	95	21,3
	58 years and more	32	7,2
Educational Status	High School	119	26,6
	Associate Degree	43	9,6

	Bachelors Degree	227	50,8
	Post Graduate	58	13,0
	1500 TRY and below	4	0,9
	1501-300 TRY	23	5,1
	3001-4500 TRY	77	17,2
Income Status	4501-6000 TRY	91	20,4
	6001-7500 TRY	57	12,8
	7501-9000 TRY	52	11,6
	9001-10.500 TRY	49	11,0
	10.501 TRY and +	94	21,0

When the participants are analyzed according to their educational status, it is observed that 50.8 percent of the participants have a bachelor's degree. Participants have an educational status of at least a high school diploma and above. When household income levels are analyzed, it is noticeable that 21 percent of the respondents have an income level of 10,501 TRY and above. This income level, which has the highest number of participants among the entire sample, is followed by the income range of 4501-6000 TRY with 20.4 percent.

6. Analysis

In the study in which SPSS 24.0 was used as the statistical package program, descriptive statistics were presented in the evaluation of the data. Whether the data were normally distributed or not was evaluated through skewness and kurtosis values; correlation analysis and regression analysis were used to reveal the relationship between variables and parametric tests were applied.

7. Findings

In this part of the study, the mean and median values of the scales, validity and reliability analysis and normality test are included. Correlation analysis to test the hypotheses and the findings for regression analysis to show the relationship between the variables are mentioned.

Table 2: Findings of the Scale Score Averages for Fruit and Vegetable and Legumes and Pasta

	Fruit and Vegetable Scale Score Averages		Legumes and Pasta Scale Score Averages	
	Mean±SD	Min-Max (Median)	Mean±SD	Min-Max (Median)
Price Sensitivity	3.96±0.83	1-5 (4.17)	3.93±0.81	1-5 (4)
Perceived Quality	4.34±0.72	1-5 (4.50)	4.19±0.74	1-5 (4.33)
Changing Purchasing Behavior	3.17±0.72	1-5 (3.18)	3.18±0.72	1-5 (3.27)
Total	3.68±0.61	1-5 (3.74)	3.64±0.61	1-5 (3.70)

In Table 2, mode and median from central tendency measures and standard deviation values from central distribution measures are given for three scales and two food product groups.

7.1. Descriptive Statistics on Research Variables

Descriptive statistics of the data obtained through the questionnaire method are presented in Table-5. Accordingly, the mean and standard deviation values of the variables related to fruits and vegetables and legumes and pasta scale are presented. In the fruit and vegetable scale, the highest mean was 4.649 for the response "I find the taste of the products in this food category important". The statement with the lowest mean value with 2.378 was "Compared to before the pandemic, I now buy smaller sizes of products in this food category (e.g., 1 kg instead of 2 kg of rice)", followed by "Compared to before the pandemic, I now shop more frequently online/on the internet in this food category" with 2.884. From this point of view, it can be suggested that the taste and content of fruits and vegetables are very important in terms of perceived quality for this product group and that consumers wish to make economic choices and that the price factor is important. Comparing before and after the pandemic, it was concluded with the lowest average that there was no change in the preference for small sizes of products.

When the statements in the legumes and pasta scale are

considered, the statement "I find it important that the food products in this food category do not contain harmful substances" has a mean of 4.597 and is followed by the statement "I find the taste of the products in this food category important" with a mean of 4.474. The statement with the lowest mean for this scale was "Compared to before the pandemic, I now buy smaller sizes of products in this food category (e.g., 1 kg instead of 2 kg of rice)" with a mean of 2.302, as in the fruit and vegetable scale. This reveals that when the legumes and pasta product group is considered, the contents and taste of the products and the health aspect are important. At the same time, like the scale of fruits and vegetables, it is concluded that when price is considered, the consumer wants to prefer more economical products.

When the distribution of the questions related to the Fruit and Vegetable scale is evaluated, it can be observed that the highest rate of the answers given to the statement "I find the taste of the products in this food category important" is 77.0% strongly agree, and the highest percentage of the answers given to the statement "I find it important that there are no harmful substances in the content of food products in this food category" is 77.0% strongly agree. Additionally, the answer with the highest percentage to the statement "I find the health benefits of food products in this food category important (vitamins, proteins, etc.)" was strongly agree with 74.5%.

When the distribution of the questions related to the Legumes and Pasta scale is evaluated, it can be observed that

the highest rate of the answers given to the statement "I find it important that food products in this food category do not contain harmful substances" is 73.8% strongly agree, and the highest percentage of the answers given to the statement "I find the taste of products in this food category important." is 62.9% strongly agree. Additionally, the answer with the highest percentage to the statement "I find the health

benefits of food products in this food category important (vitamins, proteins, etc.)" was strongly agree with 64.0%.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Fruit and Vegetables and Legumes and Pasta Scale Variables

No	Variable	Fruit-Vegetable $\bar{x}$	σ	Pasta-Legume $\bar{x}$	σ
1	I like to get the cheapest offers in this food category.	4.013	1.177	4.087	1.116
2	I find it important that products in this food category are cheap.	4.219	1.051	4.228	0.996
3	I compare prices in this food category.	3.955	1.159	3.888	1.172
4	I can recognize when there is a price increase in this food category.	4.087	1.039	3.96	1.075
5	I feel upset when I miss a discount in this food category.	3.535	1.286	3.485	1.24
6	This food category has a product price that I refer to.(e.g. tomatoes should not cost more than 7 TRY per kilo or 1 kg of rice should not cost more than 20 TRY).	3.98	1.141	3.944	1.154
7	I ensure to buy the best quality product available in this food category.	4.298	1.032	4.051	1.1
8	The appearance of products in this food category is important.	4.309	1.002	3.937	1.082
9	I find the taste of products in this food category important.	4.649	0.823	4.474	0.878
10	I am concerned about the country where products in this food category are produced.	3.539	1.275	3.631	1.253
11	I find it important that food products in this food category do not contain harmful substances.	4.635	0.857	4.597	0.862
12	I find the health benefits of food products in this food category important. (vitamins, proteins, etc.).	4.611	0.839	4.427	0.958
13	Compared to before the pandemic, I am now more likely to plan my grocery shopping for this food category in advance.	3.794	1.206	3.774	1.206
14	Compared to before the pandemic, shopping for this food category now feels like a greater need.	3.743	1.209	3.629	1.213
15	Compared to before the pandemic, I am now less open to trying new or different products in this food category.	3.136	1.268	3.143	1.254
16	Compared to before the pandemic, I now spend more time shopping in this food category.	3.181	1.336	3.076	1.265
17	Compared to before the pandemic, I now go to the market more often to buy this food category.	2.933	1.338	2.763	1.259
18	Compared to before the pandemic, I now go to the market less often to buy this food category.	2.953	1.351	3.11	1.341
19	Compared to before the pandemic, I now shop more frequently in this food category online/online.	2.884	1.439	3	1.438
20	Compared to before the pandemic, I now buy this category of food closer to where I live.	3.937	1.168	3.913	1.182
21	Compared to before the pandemic, I now buy more quantities/items of this food category on a weekly/monthly basis (e.g. two packs instead of one packet of pasta, 2 kg of apples instead of 1 kg of apples).	3.101	1.313	3.213	1.316
22	Compared to before the pandemic, I now buy larger sizes of products in this food category (e.g. 2 kg instead of 1 kg of rice).	2.83	1.31	3.069	1.368
23	Compared to before the pandemic, I now buy smaller sizes of products in this food category (e.g. 1 kg instead of 2 kg of rice).	2.378	1.062	2.302	1.04

Note: x̄ and σ correspond to the mean value and standard deviation, respectively.

7.2. Normality Test

The assumption of normality is one of the most important features sought in the data and one of the most used methods to determine whether the data provide normality is to examine the skewness and kurtosis values (Kayapınar, 2019). Considering the skewness and kurtosis values, the cut-off points of these values should not be higher than 10 for kurtosis and 3 for skewness as absolute values (Kline, 2011) and at this point, normal distribution can be considered for this study.

Table 4: Findings of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Sphericity for Fruit and Vegetable

Fruit and Vegetable		
	Skewness	Kurtosis
Price Sensitivity	-1,189	1.548
Perceived Quality	-2,812	9.531
Changing Purchasing Behavior	-0,536	0.732
Total	1.509	4.538
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.861
Approximate Chi-square		4527.971
Degrees of Freedom		253
Significance		<0.000

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Sphericity test should be considered and at this point, it is accepted that it is possible to apply factor analysis to the data group with a ratio close to 1 (Kaiser & Rice, 1974). Since KMO was

calculated as 0.861 for this study, it was found that it was appropriate to apply the analysis for the data group. The mean values for the fruit and vegetable scale and the legumes and pasta scales are presented in Table-4 and Table-5.

Table 5: Findings of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Sphericity for Legume and Pasta

Legumes and Pasta Scale Score Averages		
	Skewness	Kurtosis
Price Sensitivity	-1,180	1.695
Perceived Quality	-2,070	5.952
Changing Purchasing Behavior	-0,526	0.644
Total	-1,332	3.839
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.866
Approximate Chi-square		4052.264
Degrees of Freedom		253
Significance		<0.000

Considering the values taken into account in measuring the applicability of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Sphericity test, it can be said that the data group with 0.866 in legumes and pasta food product groups is suitable for factor analysis.

7.3. Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a method that allows less variables and interrelated structures to be made more understandable (Kayapınar, 2019). Factor analysis was applied to test the scale validity and this study was also analyzed using the varimax rotation method. When the explanatory factor analysis is considered, the items of the scale consist of 3 factors and are given in Table 6. The total variance explanation ratio was calculated as 48.490% and 46.696%. It is known that the factor structure is equally strong depending on the size of the variance ratios. In the field of social sciences, it is sufficient that this value is between 40% and 60% (Karagöz, 2017).

Table 6: Factor Analysis Results for Fruit and Vegetable Scales and Legumes and Pasta Scales

	Fruit and Vegetable Scale			Legumes and Pasta Scale		
Sizes	Factor Loads	Eigen Value	Variance Explained (%)	Factor Loads	Eigen Value	Variance Explained (%)
Price Sensitivity						
1	0.630			0.637		
2	0.672			0.704		
3	0.619	6.939	30.170	0.654	6.813	29.623
4	0.637			0.659		
5	0.429			0.521		
6	0.542			0.565		
Perceived Quality						
7	0.666			0.598		
8	0.658			0.572		
9	0.814	2.356	10.242	0.742	2.247	9.769
10	0.414			0.403		
11	0.773			0.768		
12	0.777			0.691		
Changing Purchasing Behavior						
13	0.512			0.576		
14	0.703			0.516		
15	0.607			0.613		
16	0.773			0.744		
17	0.832			0.872		
18	0.774	1.858	8.077	0.603	1.680	7.304
19	0.509			0.586		
20	0.383			0.436		
21	0.580			0.641		
22	0.554			0.628		
23	0.496			0.403		

The trueness of the statement that a construct or factor is well measured with the current item depends on the value of the factor loadings and the expected value for factor loadings is 0.30 and above (Stevens, 2002). In the analyses, the explained variance ratios of the factors on the variables, the common factor variance were analyzed along with the factor loadings of the items and all of the factor loadings were found to be within the expected values, as shown in Table 6.

7.4. Reliability

Reliability, refers to how consistent the measurement made with the measurement tool is within itself and is shown with Cronbach Alpha (Can, 2020). A Cronbach Alpha value between 0.70 and 0.99 means that the scale is reliable (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). The values for the scales for the two food product groups are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Findings of the Reliability Analysis for Fruit and Vegetable and Legumes and Pasta

	Fruit and Vegetable Scale	Legumes and Pasta Scale
	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha
Price Sensitivity	*0.815*	*0.815*
Perceived Quality	*0.829*	*0.807*
Changing Purchasing Behavior	*0.783*	*0.791*
Total	*0.877*	*0.880*

When the values are examined, the values of all scales for the two food product groups are within the specified range and it can be said that they are reliable.

7.5. Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is done to determine the relationship between the variables and the correlation coefficient is looked at to determine the direction and degree of the relationship. The most commonly used method is the analysis for the Pearson Correlation Coefficient (Yıldız, 2019). Since the values are parametric in this study, the interpretation was made by looking at the Pearson Correlation Coefficient.

Hypothesis 1: A positive relationship is present between

price sensitivity of fruits and vegetables and changing purchasing behavior.

Table 8: Price Sensitivity of Fruits and Vegetables and Changing Purchasing Behaviour

	Price Sensitivity	
	r	p
Changing Buying Behavior	0.429	0,001**

A statistically significant (p=0.001<0.01) relationship is present between price sensitivity of fruits and vegetables and changing purchasing behavior. According to the calculated correlation coefficient (r=0.429), a positive relationship is present between price sensitivity and changing purchasing behavior. (The hypothesis is accepted).

Hypothesis 2: A positive relationship is present between price sensitivity of legumes and pasta and changing purchasing behavior.

Table 9: Price Sensitivity of Legumes and Pasta and Changing Purchasing Behaviour

	Price Sensitivity	
	r	p
Changing Buying Behavior	0.441	0,001**

A statistically significant (p=0.001<0.01) relationship is present between the price sensitivity of legumes and pasta and changing purchasing behavior. According to the calculated correlation coefficient (r=0.441), a positive relationship is present between the price sensitivity and changing purchasing behavior. (The hypothesis is accepted).

Hypothesis 3: A positive relationship is present between the perceived quality of fruits and vegetables and changing purchasing behavior.

Table 10: Perceived Quality of Fruits and Vegetables and Changing Purchasing Behaviour

	Perceived Quality	
	r	p
Changing Buying Behavior	0.476	0,001**

A statistically significant (p=0.001<0.01) relationship is present between the perceived quality of fruits and vegetables and changing purchasing behavior. According to the calculated correlation coefficient (r=0.476), a positive relationship is present between the perceived quality and changing purchasing behavior. (The hypothesis is accepted).

Hypothesis 4: A positive relationship is present between the perceived quality of legumes and pasta and changing purchasing behavior.

Table 11. Perceived Quality of Legumes and Pasta and Changing Purchasing Behaviour

	Perceived Quality	
	r	p
Changing Buying Behavior	0.483	0,001**

A statistically significant (p=0.001<0.01) relationship is present between the perceived quality of legumes and pasta and changing purchasing behavior. According to the calculated correlation coefficient (r=0.483), a positive relationship is present between the perceived quality and changing purchasing behavior. (The hypothesis is accepted).

7.6. Regression Analysis

In this section, regression analysis is applied to measure the relationship between two or more variables. Regression analyses reflect the relationship between a dependent variable and other independent variables that are assumed to have an effect on this variable through a model and are divided into simple regression and multiple regression dependent on the number of independent variables (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2018). Simple regression analysis was used in this study.

Regression Analysis Results for Fruit and Vegetable Scales and Legume and Pasta Scales

Table 12: Regression Analyses for Changing Purchase Behavior of Fruits and Vegetables (Price Sensitivity)

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Standard Error of Estimate
1	.429[a]	.184	.182	.64800

[a] Predictor: (Constant), Price sensitivity of fruits and vegetables

The explanatory power of the model is 0.184, as revealed in the regression analysis table for the purchasing behavior variable of fruit and fruit acquisition. It is seen that 18.4% of the variable in the purchasing behavior variable of the characteristics of fruits and vegetables can be explained by the Price Sensitivity of Fruit and Vegetable variable.

Table 13: Regression Analyses for Changing Purchase Behavior of Fruits and Vegetables Anova Table (Price Sensitivity)

Regression Analysis Anova Table					
Model	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean of Squares	F	p
	Regression	42.223	1	42.223	100.554	.000[b]
1	Remainder	186.856	445	.420	-	-
	Sum	229.078	446	-	-	-

[a] Dependent Variable: Changing purchasing behavior of fruits and vegetables
[b] Predictor: (Constant), Price sensitivity of fruits and vegetables

It can be stated that the probability of estimating the changing purchasing behavior variable of fruit and vegetables with the Price Sensitivity variable of Fruit and Vegetable arises since the F value is 100,554 and the p value (sig.) is 0.000 in the ANOVA table, as it is seen when the variable of purchasing behavior of fruit and vegetables is examined.

Table 14: Regression Coefficients Table for Changing Purchase Behavior of Fruits and Vegetables (Price Sensitivity)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		p
		B	Standard Error	Beta	T	
1	Constant	1.692	.151	-	11.237	.000
	Price Sensitivity of Fruits and Vegetables	.373	.037	.429	10.028	.000

a Dependent Variable: Changing purchasing behavior of fruits and vegetables

When looking at the regression coefficients table in the context of the variable purchasing behavior of fruits and vegetables, it was decided that two variables would not be excluded from the model, since the t value was determined as p 0.000, the t value for the constant term was 11,237, the p 0.000, and the t value for the Price Sensitivity of Fruit and Vegetable variable was 10.028. The regression model can be set up as follows:

Changing purchasing behavior of fruit and vegetables = 1.692 + (0.373) * Price Sensitivity of fruit and vegetables

Table 15: Regression Analyses for Changing Purchase Behavior of Fruits and Vegetables (Perceived Quality)

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Standard Error of Estimate
1	.476a	.227	.225	.63089

a Predictor: (Constant), Perceived quality of fruits and vegetables

When looking at the regression coefficients table in the context of the variable purchasing behavior of fruits and vegetables, it was decided that two variables would not be excluded from the model, since the t value was determined as p 0.000, the t value for the constant term was 11,237, the p 0.000 and the t value for the Price Sensitivity of Fruit and Vegetable variable was 10.028.

Considering the results of the regression analysis established for the variable purchasing behavior of fruits and vegetables, the explanatory power of the regression model was 0.227; In other words, it is seen that 22.7% of the variation in the changing purchasing behavior variable of fruit and vegetables can be explained by the variable of perceived quality of fruit and vegetables.

Table 16: Regression Analyses for Changing Purchase Behavior of Fruits and Vegetables Anova Table (Perceived Quality)

Model		Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean of Squares	F	p
1	Regression	51.959	1	51.959	130.543	.000b
	Remainder	177.120	445	.398	-	-
	Sum	229.078	446	-	-	-

a Dependent Variable: Changing purchasing behavior of fruit and vegetable

b Predictor: (Constant), Perceived Quality of legumes and pasta

Considering in the context of perceived quality for the variable purchasing behavior of fruit and vegetables, since F 130,543 and the p value (sig.) in the ANOVA table were found to be 0.000, it is possible to predict the variable of purchasing behavior of fruit and vegetables with the variable of perceived quality of fruit and vegetables. can be expressed.

Tablo 17: Regression Coefficients Table for Changing Purchase Behavior of Fruits and Vegetables (Perceived Quality)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		p
		B	Standard Error	Beta	T	
1	Constant	1.121	.182	-	6.165	.000
	Price Sensitivity of Fruits and Vegetables	.472	.041	.476	11.426	.000

a Dependent Variable: Changing purchasing behavior of fruits and vegetables

When looking at the table of regression coefficients in the context of the variable purchasing behavior of fruit and vegetables, it was decided that two variables would not be excluded from the model because the t value was determined as p 0.000, the t value for the constant term was 6,165, and the t value for the Price Sensitivity of Fruit and Vegetable variable was 11,426. The regression model can be set up as follows:

Changing purchasing behavior of fruit and vegetables = 1.121 + (0.472) * Perceived quality of fruit and vegetables

Table 18: Regression Analyses for Changing Purchase Behavior of Legumes and Pasta (Price Sensitivity)

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Standard Error of Estimate
1	.441a	.194	.192	.64679

a Predictor: (Constant), Price sensitivity of legumes and pasta

When the changing purchasing behavior variable of legumes and pasta is examined, the explanatory power of the regression model has emerged as 0.194. It is seen that 19.4% of the variation in the changing purchasing behavior variable of legumes and pasta can be explained by the Price Sensitivity variable of legumes and pasta.

Table 19: Regression Analyses for Changing Purchase Behavior of Legumes and Pasta- Anova Table (Price Sensitivity)

Model		Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean of Squares	F	p
1	Regression	44.881	1	44.881	107.284	.000b
	Remainder	186.160	445	.418	-	-
	Sum	231.041	446	-	-	-

a Dependent Variable: Changing purchasing behavior of legumes

and pasta

[b] Predictor: (Constant), Price sensitivity of legumes and pasta

When the changing purchasing behavior variable of legumes and pasta is examined, F 107,284 and the p value (sig.) are 0.000 as reflected in the ANOVA table, and it can be stated that the changing purchasing behavior variable of legumes and pasta can be predicted with the price sensitivity variable of legumes and pasta.

Table 20: Regression Coefficients Table for Changing Purchase Behavior of Legumes and Pasta (Price Sensitivity)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		p
	B	Standard Error	Beta	T	
Constant	1.648	.151	-	10.900	.000
1 Price sensitivity of legumes and pasta	.390	.039	.441	10.358	.000

[a] Dependent Variable: Changing purchasing behavior of legumes and pasta

When looking at the table of regression coefficients in the context of the changing purchasing behavior variable of legumes and pasta, it was decided that two variables would not be excluded from the model since the t value was determined as p 0.000, the t value for the constant term was 10.900, and the t value for the Price Sensitivity of Fruits and Vegetables variable was 10.358. The regression model can be set up as follows:

Changing purchasing behavior of legumes and pasta = 1.648 + (0.390) * Price sensitivity of legumes and pasta

Table 21: Regression Analyses for Changing Purchase Behavior of Legumes and Pasta (Perceived Quality)

Model	R	R²	Adjusted R²	Standard Error of Estimate
1	.483[a]	.234	.232	.63083

[a] Predictor: (Constant), Perceived quality of legumes and pasta

Considering the results of the regression analysis established for the variable purchasing behavior of legumes and pasta, the explanatory power of the regression model was 0.234; In other words, it is seen that 23.4% of the variation in the changing purchasing behavior variable of legumes and pasta can be explained by the variable of perceived quality of legumes and pasta.

Table 22: Regression Analyses for Changing Purchase Behavior of Legumes and Pasta- Anova Table (Perceived Quality)

Model	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean of Squares	F	p
Regression	53.952	1	53.952	135.575	.000[b]
1 Remainder	177.089	445	.398	-	-
Sum	231.041	446	-	-	-

[a] Dependent Variable: Changing purchasing behavior of legumes and pasta
[b] Predictor: (Constant), Perceived quality of legumes and pasta

Considering in the context of perceived quality for the variable purchasing behavior of legumes and pasta, since the F 135,575 and p value (sig.) in the ANOVA table are found as 0.000, it is possible to predict the variable of purchasing behavior of legumes and pasta with the variable of perceived quality of legumes and pasta. can be expressed.

Table 23: Regression Coefficients Table Regression Analyses for Changing Purchase Behavior of Legumes and Pasta (Perceived Quality)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		p
	B	Standard Error	Beta	T	
Constant	1.203	.172		6.977	.000
1 Perceived quality of legumes and pasta	.472	.041	.483	11.644	.000

[a] Dependent Variable: Changing purchasing behavior of legumes and pasta

When looking at the table of regression coefficients in the context of the variable purchasing behavior of legumes and pasta, it was decided that two variables would not be excluded from the model, since the t value was determined as p 0.000, the t value for the constant term was 6,977, and the t value for the perceived quality of legumes and pasta variable was 11,644. The regression model can be set up as follows:

Changing purchasing behavior of legumes and pasta = 1.203 + (0.472) * Perceived quality of legumes and pasta

8. Conclusion

The aim of this study is to explain the change in purchasing behavior in the context of price sensitivity and perceived quality for fruit-vegetable and legumes-pasta groups, which are among the most demanded food products of consumers during the COVID-19 period, which has affected our country and the world and caused extensive economic negativities along with health aspects. In past economic crises, consumers were more sensitive to prices, and in a health crisis such as BSE, consumers were more sensitive to product quality and changed their consumption habits. For this reason, the independent variables of the study were chosen as price sensitivity and perceived quality.

The sample of the study consists of individuals between the ages of 18 and 66 and the majority of the sample consists of individuals between the ages 26-33 (21.9%). When gender distribution is analyzed, it can be observed that the ratio of male participants is 40.5% and the ratio of female participants is 59.5%. The majority of the participants are bachelor's degree graduates (50.8%) and 21% of the sample responded to the option of 10501 TRY and above in terms of monthly household income level.

As a result of the correlation analysis, it was observed that there is a positive relationship between price sensitivity and perceived quality of fruits-vegetables and legumes-pasta and changing purchasing behaviors during the COVID-19 period, and the four hypotheses of the study were accepted. Therefore, it can be considered that consumers' sensitivity to price and quality perceptions for fruits-vegetables and legumes-pasta have a positive impact on their changing purchasing behavior during this period.

Consumers are sensitive to the prices of fruits and vegetables and legumes and pasta, and their behavior has changed in conjunction with their quality concerns for these product groups. Examples of studies that support these results are as follows; In a study, when the pre-crisis and post-crisis period were compared, it was observed that price is the first of the main features that are considered in consumer purchases for food products (Uzunoz et al., 2010). It has been revealed that the economic crisis in Asia created sensitivity to prices on consumers and products with lower prices were preferred, and the price was the main factor in changing consumer behavior in this period (Ang et al., 2000). At the same time, in another study conducted during the economic crisis, it was revealed that the "money" factor directly and indirectly affects the purchasing behavior in shopping for food consumption, and in connection with this, prices are an important factor for consumers in the event of an economic crisis (Theodoridou et al., 2019).

When we look at the other studies on quality during the crisis periods, findings supporting the current study have emerged. Examples of these studies can be given as follows; In a study conducted when looking at the past crisis periods, it was determined that while the general vegetable consumption for E.Coli, a health crisis thought to be caused by fresh spinach, remained constant, consumers avoided fresh spinach consumption and the quality was important (Arnade et al., 2009). Similarly, in the BSE crisis, another health crisis in France, it was observed that consumers reduced their consumption of fresh beef in order to secure their health before the price (Sans et al., 2008). In this case, consumers took into account perceived quality rather than price and continued to maintain overall meat consumption while approaching beef consumption with caution until the necessary precautions were taken during the crisis (Grunert, 2006).

At the same time, the regression analysis shows that 18.4% of the change in the variable of changing purchasing behavior of fruits and vegetables can be explained by the price sensitivity of fruits and vegetables and 22.7% by the perceived quality of fruits and vegetables. It is supported that 19.4% of the change in the variable of changing purchase behavior of legumes and pasta can be explained by the variable of price sensitivity of legumes and pasta and 23.4% by the variable of perceived quality of legumes and pasta.

When difference tests are considered, it is observed that while there is no difference in price sensitivity for the fruit and vegetable scale in terms of gender, the perceived quality and changing purchasing behavior of men are higher than women, and the same is true for the legumes and pasta scale. Regarding the age variable, there is no significant difference in price sensitivity, perceived quality and changing purchasing behavior for the fruit and vegetable scale, while the perceived quality dimension for the legumes and pasta scale reveals that the perceived quality level of the 18-25 age group participants is lower than the 50-57 age group participants. In the analysis carried out for the education variable, no significant difference was found for both the fruit-vegetable and legumes and pasta scales, and the comparisons made when price sensitivity was examined according to income status concluded that those with an income of 9001-10500 TRY had a higher sensitivity to price than the participants with an income of 10501 TRY and above.

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APPENDIX

Table 24: Dimensions of the Scale

Question	Variable Number	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Indecisive	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Price Sensitivity	I like to get the cheapest offers in this food category.					
		Fruit and Vegetables					
		Legumes and Pasta					
2	Price Sensitivity	I find it important that products in this food category are cheap.					
		Fruit and Vegetables					
		Legumes and Pasta					
3	Price Sensitivity	I compare prices in this food category.					
		Fruit and Vegetables					
		Legumes and Pasta					
4	Price Sensitivity	I can recognize when there is a price increase in this food category.					
		Fruit and Vegetables					
		Legumes and Pasta					
5	Price Sensitivity	I feel upset when I miss a discount in this food category.					
		Fruit and Vegetables					
		Legumes and Pasta					
6	Price Sensitivity	In this food category, I have a reference price (e.g., tomatoes should not cost more than 7 TRY per kilo or 1 kg of rice should not cost more than 20 TRY).					
		Fruit and Vegetables					
		Legumes and Pasta					
7	Perceived Quality	I ensure to buy the best quality product available in this food category.					
		Fruit and Vegetables					
		Legumes and Pasta					
8	Perceived Quality	The appearance of products in this food category is important.					
		Fruit and Vegetables					
		Legumes and Pasta					
9	Perceived Quality	I find the taste of products in this food category important.					
		Fruit and Vegetables					
		Legumes and Pasta					
10	Perceived Quality	I am concerned about the country where products in this food category are produced.					
		Fruit and Vegetables					
		Legumes and Pasta					
11	Perceived Quality	I find it important that food products in this food category do not contain harmful substances.					
		Fruit and Vegetables					
		Legumes and Pasta					
12	Perceived Quality	I consider the health benefits of food products in this food category important (vitamins, proteins, etc.).					
		Fruit and Vegetables					
		Legumes and Pasta					
13	Changing purchasing behavior	Compared to before the pandemic, I am now more likely to plan my grocery shopping for this food category in advance.					
		Fruit and Vegetables					
		Legumes and Pasta					
14	Changing purchasing behavior	Compared to before the pandemic, shopping for this food category now feels like a greater need.					
		Fruit and Vegetables					
		Legumes and Pasta					
15	Changing purchasing behavior	Compared to before the pandemic, I am now less open to trying new or different products in this food category.					
		Fruit and Vegetables					
		Legumes and Pasta					
16	Changing purchasing behavior	Compared to before the pandemic, I now spend more time shopping in this food category.					
		Fruit and Vegetables					

		Legumes and Pasta	
17	Changing purchasing behavior	Compared to before the pandemic, I now go to the market more often to buy this food category.	
		Fruit and Vegetables	
		Legumes and Pasta	
18	Changing purchasing behavior	Compared to before the pandemic, I now go to the market less often to buy this food category.	
		Fruit and Vegetables	
		Legumes and Pasta	
19	Changing purchasing behavior	Compared to before the pandemic, I now shop more frequently in this food category online/on the internet.	
		Fruit and Vegetables	
		Legumes and Pasta	
20	Changing purchasing behavior	Compared to before the pandemic, I now buy this category of food closer to where I live.	
		Fruit and Vegetables	
		Legumes and Pasta	
21	Changing purchasing behavior	Compared to before the pandemic, I now buy more quantities/amounts of this food category on a weekly/monthly basis (e.g. two packs instead of one pack of pasta, 2 kg of apples instead of 1 kg of apples).	
		Fruit and Vegetables	
		Legumes and Pasta	
22	Changing purchasing behavior	Compared to before the pandemic, I now buy larger sizes of products in this food category (e.g. 2 kg instead of 1 kg of rice).	
		Fruit and Vegetables	
		Legumes and Pasta	
23	Changing purchasing behavior	Compared to before the pandemic, I now buy smaller sizes of products in this food category (e.g. 1 kg instead of 2 kg of rice).	
		Fruit and Vegetables	
		Legumes and Pasta	
24	Demographic questions	Your Age	18-25 years
			26-33 years
			34-41 years
			42-49 years
			50-57 years
			58-65 years
			66 years and Older years
		Your Gender	Woman
			Man
		Your Educational Status	Primary school
			High school
			Associate Degree
			Bachelor's Degree
			Postgraduate
		Monthly Income Level of Your Household	1500 TRY and less
			1501- 3000 TRY
			3001- 4500 TRY
			4501- 6000 TRY
			6001- 7500 TRY
			7501- 9000 TRY
			9001- 10500 TRY
			10501 TL and more