

A Qualitative Study on Changing Consumer Behaviors After The Earthquake (Clothes Shopping)

Deprem Sonrasında Değişen Tüketici Davranışlarına Yönelik Nitel Bir Araştırma (Giysi Alışverişi)

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ABSTRACT

Natural disasters are among the extraordinary negative events that negatively affect human life. Floods, earthquakes and fires are among the most common disasters and these events also affect people's consumption behaviors. In this study, it is aimed to examine the effects of earthquakes from natural disasters on certain consumption behaviors in clothes shopping. With the qualitative data collection method, after the earthquake that occurred in Turkey on February 6, 2023 and was described as the "Disaster of the Century", data were collected about the clothing shopping of earthquake victims and adult women who felt the earthquake and the data obtained were subjected to content analysis. As a result of the research, it has been determined that women who were exposed to the earthquake and felt the earthquake tried to meet their own and their family's clothing needs cheaper by taking various vocational courses/training to produce their own clothes instead of buying them due to the increasing prices in the clothing sector as in many sectors after the earthquake, increased or decreased their unplanned purchases, and made unnecessary or more clothing shopping than they needed before the earthquake. It has been seen that people's interest in vocational courses / trainings has increased after disasters such as earthquakes, and suggestions have been given to the relevant institutions. As a result of the research, it has been observed that people's interest in vocational courses/trainings has increased after the earthquake disaster, and suggestions have been made for the relevant institutions and people exposed to/feeling the earthquake.

Keywords: Business Statistics, Consumer Behavior, Earthquake, Clothes Shopping

Öz

İnsan hayatını olumsuz etkileyen sıra dışı olumsuz olaylar arasında doğal afetler de bulunmaktadır. Deprem, sel, yangın gibi bu olaylar insanların tüketim davranışlarını da etkilemektedir. Bu araştırmada, doğal afetlerden depremin giysi alışverişinde tüketim davranışlarına etkilerinin incelenmesi hedeflenmiştir. Nitel veri toplama yöntemiyle 6 Şubat 2023'te Türkiye'de yaşanan ve "Asrın Felaketi" olarak isimlendirilen depremden sonra, depremlerde ve depremi hisseden yetişkin kadınların giysi alışverişleri hakkında veri toplanmış, elde edilen verilere içerik analizi yapılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda depreme maruz kalan ve depremi hisseden kadınların deprem sonrasında birçok sektörde olduğu gibi giyim sektöründe de özellikle artan fiyatlara bağlı olarak kendisinin ve ailesinin giysi ihtiyacını satın almak yerine kendi üretebilmek için çeşitli mesleki kurs/egitim alarak daha ucuza gidermeye çalıştığı, plansız satın almalarını artırabildiği veya azaltabildiği deprem öncesinde çok gereksiz veya ihtiyacından fazla giysi alışverişi yaptığı gibi sonuçlar tespit edilmiştir. Deprem gibi afet sonrasında insanların mesleki kurs/egitimlere ilgisinin arttığı görülmüş ilgili kurumlara önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İşletme İstatistiği, Tüketici Davranışları, Deprem, Giysi Alışverişi

Introduction

With the changes taking place in every sector, the products purchased by consumers have been among the topics that have been intensively researched by both the business world and the academic world since the beginning of humanity. Studies conducted in this field and the results obtained have revealed some models and approaches to understand how consumers' behavioral dimensions (5W1H, that is, what, when, why, where, who, how) affect the purchasing process. Classical purchasing models focus on enhancing purchasing efficiency and addressing disruptions in purchasing decisions. In contrast, modern models prioritize maintaining the continuity of the purchasing process. (İslamoğlu and Altunışık, 2010). Certain factors such as current circumstances, timing, psychological states, or individuals' appearances can influence customers' purchasing behavior. Consumers make purchasing decisions for their daily survival and make them according to their wishes.

Natural disasters; these are natural, technological and man-made events that cause physical, economic and social losses, especially loss of life, and affect communities by disrupting or interrupting normal life and human activities. Natural disasters occur in two ways. The first is earthquake, fire, flood, volcano eruption, storm, etc., it is not known exactly on what day and time they will occur. The second one is natural disasters that occur suddenly such as environmental pollution, erosion, drought which are natural disasters that develop slowly (Uzunçibuk, 2009:18-27; Yürük, 2010:67).

Natural disasters are among the extraordinary negative events that negatively affect human life. These events such as earthquakes, floods and fires also affect people's consumption behavior. This qualitative research aims to determine the effects of earthquakes, one of the natural disasters, on certain consumption behaviors. In the literature, we have not yet found a similar study like this one conducted on consumers who were affected by earthquakes due to natural disasters that lead to traumatic consequences. It is expected that this study will be able to contribute to the literature.

Literature

It is most important for people to survive extraordinary events such as natural disasters, historical events, various crises, and wars. He wanted to collect and analyze

enterprises of such activities in different regions. One of these areas is that consumers tend to purchase urgent and basic features that they may need during the crisis, rather than purchasing unnecessary things that are not needed in such crises (Aydınlioğlu & Gencer, 2020). However, it has been proven that people's survival psychology and behavior change after major events such as natural disasters and the flow of life, which can disrupt social life and even take risks. This type of change of course is stated as panic buying performance, which occurs during/after a disaster, in the event of a perceived disaster, with a large price increase/shortage and purchasing a significant volume of products (Yuen et al., 2020).

In their study, İnce & Kadioğlu (2020) obtained important findings from interviews with consumers who went through a period in which the epidemic spread widely in Turkey and quarantined themselves at home. The results of the research showed that in the event of an epidemic, consumers purchased more online and were more in demand for some retail products (İnce and Kadioğlu, 2020).

Erciş et al. in their studies (2016), death anxiety; examined its impact on consumer attitudes towards country-origin products, conspicuous consumption, label information, and non-profit organizations. This study also aims to identify and rank the attitudes most affected by death anxiety and present offers to the market (Erciş et al., 2016).

Nokay (2011) examined the association of intertemporal consumption preference with death anxiety. This study results showed that as death anxiety increases, the desire to consume today increases. In the study Kasser & Sheldon (2000) found it that, in the face of death certainty, consumers aim for a fuller salary for themselves in the future and hope to spend more on pleasurable things e.g. clothing and entertainment (Quoted in: Marchlewski, 2006, Mandel & Smeesters, 2008).

As a result of their study in 2020, Karakaya et al. found that traumatic events can cause consumers to start using cigarettes and alcohol, increase or decrease unplanned purchases, increase relaxing consumption and compulsive shopping, and increase or decrease price sensitivity (Karakaya et al., 2020).

"Hama (2001) states that approximately half of people go shopping when they feel stressed and diversion buying is used as a method to reduce stress. The study concludes that women shop more for stress reduction purposes (women are 61.5%, men are 32.5%). Additionally, consumers engage

in these behaviors more immediately after a stressful situation. (Hama, 2001).”

“Şengül (2018) examined the purchasing behavior patterns of families regarding housing in the central district of Düzce after the 1999 earthquake (Şengül, 2018).”

“Erkan et al. (2023) in their study researched the changes in consumers' purchasing behavior during the Covid-19 epidemic, which is one of the epidemic diseases among the types of crises. They found that perceived scarcity has an impact on anxiety and panic buying behavior. In this study, it was also seen that anxiety in consumers had an impact on panic buying behavior (Erkan et al., 2023).”

A consumer who feels negativity in the general structure of the economy is concerned about the future and may want to stock up by purchasing more of a food product that he believes will increase in price (Özden, 2007:28). In another study conducted with 2933 people in England, America, Germany and China, it was determined that consumers' food and beverage expenditures increased by 43% in China, 22% in Germany, 27% in England and 27% in America (Statista, Consumption Report, 2020). In this research, consumers' online purchasing behavior as well as their stocking tendencies were investigated.

Material and Methods

In this study, it is aimed to examine the effects of earthquakes from natural disasters on certain consumption behaviors. In this context, firstly, secondary data on the effects of the earthquake on individuals and consumers are examined. Then, with the qualitative data collection method, after the earthquake that occurred in Turkey on February 6, 2023 and was described as the “Disaster of the Century”, data were collected about the clothing purchases of earthquake victims and adult women who felt the earthquake and the data obtained were subjected to content analysis. For this purpose, some statistical analyzes were made at the end of the semi-structured research conducted for 48 adult women who came to the vocational courses of the Multidisciplinary Practices for Disadvantaged Women, Scientific Research Project” conducted by the Women's Solidarity and Support Association supported by the Turkish Ministry of Interior, which started on May 20, 2023 in the Kırıkkale Province Center. The study with 48 adult women was conducted in Kırıkkale due to its vulnerability to seismic activity, and the sample selection was based on convenience sampling to ensure accessibility and representation of the local population.

Importance and Method of Research

In this study, it was aimed to qualitatively examine the effects of traumatic events on the consumer, which are given importance in the literature about earthquakes, with primary data. In line with these aims, in qualitative research, an answer to the question “How does earthquake from traumatic events affect clothes shopping from consumer behavior?” is sought. It is thought that the research is unique and important in terms of drawing attention to the traumatic events that concern the society in general and the possible effects of the earthquake on female consumers in clothes shopping for the clothing needs of female consumers who have personally experienced and been exposed to the earthquake. Studying consumer behavior is crucial for business statistics. The success of businesses relies on understanding customer needs and providing products and services that meet those needs. Understanding consumer behavior helps businesses develop

The open-ended questions prepared to answer in accordance with the subject of the qualitative research are as follows:

“How did you feel the earthquake that affected you extremely negatively, how much did you feel? When did it happen?”

“After the earthquake, did you change your planned/unplanned clothing purchases? How?”

“After the earthquake, were there any clothes that you started to use and buy (cardigans, outerwear, underwear, certain brands)? What are they?”

“After the earthquake, did your sensitivity to the prices of the clothing products you buy change? How?”

“After the earthquake, did you ever shop because you felt compelled to shop for clothes? How?”

“After the earthquake, did you ever shop for clothes to change your mood/relax? How?”. The findings were obtained through a qualitative analysis method, specifically thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involves systematically identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within qualitative data. In this case, researchers read and coded responses to open-ended questions, identifying recurring themes related to the impact of the earthquake on clothing purchases. Through iterative coding and discussion among researchers, subcategories were created to organize the data and facilitate deeper analysis. Any differences of opinion among researchers were discussed and resolved through collaborative dialogue, ensuring the reliability and validity of the findings. This method allowed researchers to gain insights

into how individuals' clothing purchasing behavior was influenced by the earthquake and to draw meaningful conclusions from the data.

When the literature is examined, it is seen that although there are disadvantages in the form of ignoring some questions for semi-structured data collection tools and requiring a separate explanation to the participant, it is seen that it is a widely used method in terms of obtaining in-depth information on a certain subject, reaching more participants and providing a certain level of standardization and flexibility benefits (Yılmaz, 2011). In this study, non-probability methods were used to collect data, since it is not possible to determine people who have experienced traumatic events by random sampling methods. In addition, in this research, data were collected from a small number of people that would not allow detailed statistical analysis in the research, due to reasons such as being exploratory, aiming to reveal examples related to a unique subject, and examining a subject that is difficult to get answers to. In this respect, it was decided that the research sample was sufficient. In the collection of data, the participant's desire to participate in the research was confirmed and it was committed that the researcher's personal information would not be revealed. In this context, the traumatic event was explained to the individuals selected from the social and professional environment of the researchers and information about the research was given. In this context, 48 women participated in the study. The responses of the participants were transferred to the computer environment and the content of the data was analyzed. In the analysis of the data; first of all, the texts were read by the researchers, subcategories were created, and the differences and differences of opinion among the researchers were discussed and resolved. The findings were obtained through thematic analysis, a qualitative analysis method, where researchers read and coded the texts to identify recurring patterns and themes, and resolved any differences or disagreements through collaborative discussion.

Results

46.0% of the women (22 people) who participated in the study were those who lived in one of the 11 provinces where the earthquake was severe and resided in Kirikkale at the time of the qualitative research. These women will be named as earthquake survivors in the study. 41.0% (18 people) of earthquake victims have no income. In the study, women living in Kirikkale, one of the provinces that felt the earthquake moderately, will be named as women who felt the earthquake.

54.0% (26 people) of the women who felt the earthquake were those who had no income and whose income was less than the minimum wage. All of the women participating in this study are married and have more than 1+ children. 75% (36 people) of the women in the study stated that they experienced various traumas such as fear of death after an earthquake, fear of experiencing an earthquake at any time, and fear of losing a relative.

After the earthquake, it has determined that 12 (25.0%) of the earthquake victims shopped more, 10 (21.0%) shopped less, 23 (48.0%) of the women who felt the earthquake shopped more, 3 (6.0%) were more careful in shopping for clothes and shopped less (See Table 1). Especially earthquake survivor women are 4 out of every 5 people who say that they can easily survive with the few clothes in their wardrobes after the earthquake compared to before the earthquake. These women stated that they bought the clothes they wanted now due to the negative consequences such as death, disability, and the possibility of an earthquake happening again in the earthquake, and thus they thought that they would not have the opportunity to buy/wear these clothes again. 21 (43.8%) of the women participating in the study stated that the reason for the increase in clothes shopping was to meet the clothing needs of other earthquake victims within the scope of social responsibility.

Table 1.
Being More Careful When Shopping for Clothes After the Earthquake

Variables	Yes		No		
	n	%	n	%	
Shopping for clothes more after the earthquake	Earthquake victim	12	25	10	21
		Feeling the earthquake	23	48	3

Looking at the answers given to the question "Has your sensitivity to the prices of the clothing products you purchased changed after the earthquake?", 20 (14.6%) of the earthquake survivors answered "Yes", while 10 (14.6%) of the women who felt the earthquake stated that they did not pay much attention (See Table 2). Women who shopped from earthquake victims without paying attention to the prices of clothes after the earthquake explained the reason for this by saying, "I buy clothes without paying attention to the price so that they do not stay in me", especially because of the thought of not being able to wear the clothes they want again due to the fear of death due to the aftershocks.

Women who shopped from earthquake victims without paying attention to the prices of clothes after the earthquake explained the reason for this by saying, "I buy clothes without paying attention to the price so that they do not stay in me", especially because of the thought of not being able to wear the clothes they want again due to the fear of death due to the aftershocks. After the earthquake, did your sensitivity to the amount of clothing products you purchased change?, 22 (46.0%) of the earthquake survivor women answered "Yes", while 10 (21.0%) of the women who felt the earthquake stated that they did not pay much attention (See Table 2). It was determined that there was an increase in the amount of clothing in the unplanned shopping of the same group in 1 out of 4 earthquake victims and regular income, and in 2 out of 3 people who felt the earthquake. On the other hand, 25% of these women (12 people) in the clothing sector, as in many sectors after the earthquake, instead of buying their own and their family's clothing needs, especially due to the increasing prices and the change such as the decrease in their income; it has been determined that it is trying to solve it cheaper by taking various vocational courses/training in order to produce itself / reduce the cost.

Table 2.
Sensitivity in the prices and quantities of clothing products purchased after the earthquake

Variables			Yes		No	
			n	%	n	%
Sensitivity in clothing products purchased after the earthquake	Earthquake victim	For prices	20	42	2	4
	Feeling the earthquake		16	33	10	21
	Earthquake victim	For quantities	22	46	0	0
	Feeling the earthquake		10	21	12	25

To the question "Were there any clothes that you started to use/buy after the earthquake?", it was observed that 48 women (100.0%) of the earthquake victims and women who felt the earthquake thought that it was most necessary, especially when sleeping at night, due to the trauma they experienced during the aftershocks, and that they had underwear and outerwear products such as spare thick cardigans, tracksuits, socks with them as a precautionary measure. In addition, 43 women (90.0%) stated that they paid more attention to dressing in accordance with their own life philosophy in order to be seen by others in appropriate clothes in case they were under the dent in the earthquake. It stated that they were affected by the images

of the earthquake victims in the rescue operations in different media tools especially after the February 6 earthquake, and that the appearance and clothing of the earthquake victims when they were caught in the earthquake were effective in these thoughts. In addition, 43 women (90.0%) stated that they paid more attention to dressing in accordance with their own life philosophy in order to be seen by others in appropriate clothes in case they were under the dent in the earthquake. It has stated that they were affected by the images of the earthquake victims in the rescue operations in different media tools especially after the February 6 earthquake, and that the appearance and clothing of the earthquake victims when they were caught in the earthquake were effective in these thoughts. These women expressed these thoughts by saying, "It doesn't matter what kind of clothes people find me in or what I wear, such as dying or being injured in an earthquake when there is a possibility that something bad will happen to me."

Discussion

After the earthquake, it has determined that one-third of the earthquake victims and half of the women who felt the earthquake were more careful in shopping for clothes and shopped less. Among these women, the rate of those who stated that they had shopped for clothes more before the earthquake is close to half. In particular, there are those who say that these women can easily survive with the few clothes in their wardrobes after the earthquake compared to before the earthquake. In addition, about one-fifth of women stated that they shopped for clothes more than before the earthquake. These women stated that they bought the clothes they wanted now due to the negative consequences of the earthquake such as death, disability, and the possibility of the earthquake happening again, and thus they thought that they would not have the opportunity to buy/wear these clothes again (See Table 1). It has been determined that the reason for the increase in clothes shopping of approximately half of these women is to meet the clothing needs of other earthquake victims within the scope of social responsibility. It can be said that this result is due to the increase in the sensitivity of other earthquake victims and earthquake feeling women and children towards earthquake victims and children. In this study, it has been determined that women who were exposed to the earthquake and felt the earthquake tried to meet their and their family's clothing needs at a cheaper price by taking various vocational courses/trainings in order to produce their own clothes instead of purchasing them, especially due to the increasing prices in the clothing sector after the earthquake, as in many sectors, and that they could increase

or decrease their unplanned purchases, and that they shopped for unnecessary or more clothing than needed before the earthquake.

To the question “Were there any clothes that you started to use/buy after the earthquake?”, it was observed that all of the earthquake victims and women who felt the earthquake kept underwear and outerwear products such as spare thick cardigans, tracksuits, socks with them as a precaution, especially when they slept at night, due to the trauma they experienced during the aftershocks. It has been determined that they were affected by the images of earthquake victims in rescue operations in different media tools after the February 6 earthquake in Turkey, and that the appearance and clothing conditions of the earthquake victims when they were caught in the earthquake were effective in these thoughts. Although there are very few of them, the women stated that there was not much change only in their clothing styles in the research, and stated the reason for this by saying, “It does not matter what kind of clothes people find me or what I wear, such as dying or being injured in an earthquake when there is a possibility that something bad will happen to me.” From these data, it can be said that the participants in the study, women who are afraid of death, and consumers show consumer group behavior that shops and consumes in order to relax themselves and forget their stress. The results in the study are similar as the results of research showing that traumatic events affect consumer behavior at a general level (Jakupcak et al., 2010; Amstadter et al., 2009; Somer & Ruvio, 2014; Sneath et al., 2009; Karakaya et al.). In the wider region, it would be appropriate to conduct studies with wide participation, including both the number and the characteristics other than the demographic characteristics in this study.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Awareness activities should be carried out in a way that there is a minimum number of lives, property and other losses by raising awareness of the public before, during and after the disaster, both in Turkey and all over the world, not after being exposed to all disasters, especially earthquakes. It has been seen that people's interest in vocational courses / trainings has increased after disasters such as earthquakes, and suggestions have been made to the relevant institutions that this course/training should be increased as it will support both the social integration and economic empowerment of people exposed to / feel the earthquake. As in this study, necessary arrangements should be made to strengthen NGOs and voluntary organizations, whose support is very important in addition to the state, and to

encourage people to participate in these institutions. The fact that the women participating in the study are in only one province, and that they are married and have children are among the limitations of this research.

By examining consumer behavior, businesses can predict which products and services will be in demand, set pricing policies, optimize distribution channels, and enhance marketing communication. Additionally, analyzing consumer behavior to gain a competitive advantage provides businesses with opportunities to differentiate themselves from competitors and increase customer satisfaction in the competitive environment. Therefore, studying consumer behavior for business statistics is of vital importance for businesses to succeed and attain sustainable competitive advantages.

The research draws attention to an under-researched aspect of consumer behavior, revealing disasters that have a cause that can be important in changing the tendency to relax, unplanned and compulsive purchases and to start the consumption of certain products. In addition, the results of the research give an idea about the fact that consumers who experience traumatic events can easily make wrong consumption decisions or become more vulnerable, especially due to the increase in unplanned and compulsive consumption. At this point, it is thought that it would be beneficial for public institutions to take measures to reduce the negative effects of traumatic events on consumption (preparing social support programs by identifying risk groups, etc.). In addition, it is thought that examining the effect of a certain traumatic event on certain consumption behavior or purchasing style with quantitative research methods will contribute to understanding consumer behavior for business statistics.

Bildirim/Teşekkür

Bu çalışmada Kadın Dayanışma ve Destekleme Derneği tarafından yürütülen 2023/M-110 sayılı İçişleri Bakanlığı tarafından desteklenen Dezavantajlı Kadınlara Yönelik Multidisipliner Uygulamalar-Bilimsel Araştırma projesinde 25/5/2023 tarih ve 13 sayılı karar ile Kırıkkale Merkez'deki proje çalışmasında kursiyerlere izin verdiği için Kadın Dayanışma ve Destekleme Derneği'ne teşekkür ederim. Bu proje kapsamında bu yayının ortaya çıkmasıdır.

Gönüllülük Onamı: Çalışmaya katılan tüm katılımcılardan projede kursiyerler olarak yer aldıklarından Proje yürütücüsü tarafından bilgilendirme yapılmıştır.

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Yazar Katkıları: Fikir; Tasarım; Denetleme; Kaynaklar; Veri Toplanması ve/veya İşlemesi; Analiz ve/ veya Yorum; Literatür Taraması; Yazıyı Yazan

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Informed Consent: All participants who participated in the study were informed by the project coordinator as they took part in the project as trainees.

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed.

Author Contributions: Concept ; Design; Supervision; Resources; Data Collection and/or Processing; Analysis and/or Interpretation; Literature Search; Writing Manuscript

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