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# YEŞİL TERCİHLER: ÇEVRE BİLİNCİNİN FİYAT DUYARLILIĞI VE SATIN ALMA NİYETLERİ ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ

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# GREEN CHOICES: THE IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS ON PRICE SENSITIVITY AND PURCHASE INTENTIONS

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**MAKALE BİLGİSİ**

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**ÖZET**

Bu çalışma, müşterilerin çevre dostu süreçler için ödeme istekliliğini belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Ayrıca, müşterilerin çevre bilinci düzeylerinin ödemeye istekli oldukları miktar üzerindeki etkisini de incelemektedir. Araştırmacılar 300 anketi analiz etmiş ve müşterilerin çevre bilinci düzeylerinin ağızdan ağıza tavsiyeleri önemli ölçüde etkilemediğini bulmuştur. Bununla birlikte, çevre bilinci düzeyi satın alma niyetlerini etkilemiş, müşteriler çevre dostu ürünler veya süreçler için farklı fiyatlar ödemeye razı olmuşlardır. Düşük çevre bilincine sahip müşterilerin en fazla 4 dolar, yüksek çevre bilincine sahip müşterilerin ise en fazla 8 dolar ödeme niyetlerinin olduğunu ortaya koymuştur.

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to determine customers' willingness to pay for environmentally friendly processes. Additionally, the study examines the impact of customers' environmental consciousness levels on the amount they are willing to pay. The researchers analyzed 300 questionnaires and found that customers' levels of environmental consciousness did not significantly impact word-of-mouth recommendations. However, the level of environmental consciousness did affect purchasing intentions, with customers willing to pay different prices for environmentally friendly products or processes. Customers with low environmental consciousness were willing to pay a maximum of $4, while those with high environmental consciousness were willing to pay up to $8.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The ecological environment is a fundamental determinant of social and economic development and is essential for human life and progress (Ren et al., 2020). However, rapid economic growth and increasing industrialization have brought environmental pollution and related issues (He et al., 2021). In this context, individuals have become more sensitive to environmental problems, showing a tendency towards environmentally friendly approaches in their consumption decisions (Yue et al., 2020). This trend has increased interest in environmentally conscious consumption behaviors among businesses and consumers. In recent years, the consumption of environmentally friendly products has been accepted as a solution to combating environmental problems (Shahsavar et al., 2020). For example, in the United States, the number of consumers willing to pay extra for eco-friendly products increased by 3% in 2017 compared to 2010. Similarly, the demand for environmentally friendly products is rising in Western countries, where 10% of household budgets are allocated to such products (Kucher et al., 2019). However, consumers' willingness to pay for these products is often constrained by factors such as price sensitivity.

Most customers are willing to pay extra for environmentally friendly products at lower amounts. As the amount to be paid increases, the willingness of customers to pay decreases (Kucher et al., 2019: 2). Research conducted in different geographies reveals that the amounts customers are willing to pay are also different. For example, it was stated that this rate was between 22-37% in a study conducted in Spain; this rate was between 8-22% in a study conducted in Japan and 10% in a study conducted in Canada (Wei et al., 2018: 230). In a study conducted in Europe and the USA, more than 70% of customers said they would pay an extra 5% for environmentally friendly products. Also, less than 10% of the customers stated they could pay a maximum of 25% extra (Kucher et al., 2019: 2). These results reveal that customers are price sensitive even regarding environmentally friendly products. In the research, the willingness of customers to pay extra for environmentally friendly products is expressed as a percentage. However, the literature on how much customers can pay extra, considering the actual amount on any product, is limited.

This research aims to determine the amount customers are willing to pay for environmentally friendly processes and examine how this amount varies based on their levels of environmental consciousness. The study reveals that customers with higher levels of environmental consciousness are more willing to pay extra. Additionally, by measuring willingness to pay based on a specific product and price, this study addresses a gap in the literature, providing a new perspective on this topic. Within this framework, the study makes two significant contributions: first, identifying the amounts customers are willing to pay for eco-friendly processes; and second, revealing the impact of environmental consciousness on these attitudes. These findings can guide the development of strategies and practices targeting different customer profiles.

The current study addresses a critical gap in the literature by focusing on consumers' actual willingness to pay for environmentally friendly processes. Unlike previous studies that examined this willingness in terms of percentages, this research uses specific product prices, making the findings more applicable to real-world scenarios. The study aims to explore how environmental consciousness moderates the relationship between price sensitivity and purchasing behavior. This problem is crucial in developing effective strategies to promote sustainable consumption in diverse market segments. This study makes a unique contribution by quantifying consumers' willingness to pay extra for sustainable processes using specific price scenarios. It bridges the gap between theoretical discussions of environmental consciousness and practical consumer behavior, providing actionable insights for marketers and policymakers.

## 2. LİTERATURE REVİEW AND HYPOTHESİS DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1 Purchase intention

The intention is an essential indicator of actual behaviour (Abd Aziz et al., 2015: 220). It proves that people are willing to do it and how hard they put into achieving this behaviour (Arif and Örs, 2019: 11). The Theory of Reasoned Action emphasizes that consumers' behavioural intentions determine their actions. This situation reveals that purchase intention is an essential proxy for purchasing behaviour (Aggarwal et al., 2020: 2). Purchase intention is the possibility of the consumer purchasing any product or service (Abd Aziz et al., 2015: 220). Individual attitudes, such as personal preferences towards others and keeping up with the expectations of others, and unforeseen situations, such as failure to realize price expectations affect the purchase intention (Chi et al., 2009: 137). Since the consumers' perceptions, behaviour and attitudes affect the purchase intention, the purchasing decision is an essential outcome of a complex process (Mirabi et al., 2015: 268). Also, many factors, such as product features, advertisements, customer comments, and consumer information about the product, affect the purchase intention (Aggarwal et al., 2020: 2).

The price is an essential factor affecting today's consumers' purchasing decisions (Abd Aziz et al., 2015: 219). Aliman and Othman (2007) found that price is the most crucial factor affecting the purchasing decision and that customers focus on price before brand and quantity. They consider price an essential consumer purchasing factor, resulting in price sensitivity even against very low-price changes (Abd Aziz et al., 2015: 219). Price sensitivity is the level of customer acceptance in terms of economic and psychological gains when the price of any product or service increases (Bhutto et al., 2020: 7). Although it coincides with the context of this study, it is also seen in the literature that price sensitivity is explained as the "willingness to pay" for environmentally friendly products (Laroche et al., 2001; Hsu et al., 2017; Bhutto et al., 2020). Also, Walser and Nanopoulos (2007) examined customers' attitudes towards the prices of organic products, focusing on the concept of "price sensitivity". They stated that customers with high price sensitivity are less willing to buy organic products. Anderson and Hansen (2004) stated that customers are price sensitive to environmentally friendly products and unwilling to pay high prices. Aman et al. (2012) found that customers' price sensitivity to environmentally friendly products is low, and their tendency to purchase such products is high. Low et al. (2013) noted that even small increases in the prices of such products negatively affect their purchasing intentions, as customers compared the prices of environmentally friendly products. Erdil (2018) stated that price is an essential determinant in the purchasing process of environmentally friendly products and that customers with relatively high price sensitivity have a low intention to purchase such products. Kriwy and Mecking (2012) and Chekima et al. (2019) stated that customers with high price sensitivity do not prefer environmentally friendly products with high prices. Although price sensitivity differs among consumers, it affects their purchasing intentions (Abd Aziz et al., 2015: 219). Hypothesis constructed within the scope of the findings mentioned in the literature is as follows:

$H_1$: When the price sensitivity is high, the purchase intention is low for environmentally friendly products.

### 2.2 Word of mouth (WOM)

WOM is an informal and confirmed source of information that includes the customer's opinions about the product or service they have experienced (Quan et al., 2021: 3). WOM is one of the most effective and fastest communication methods. Customers share their product/service experiences and are aware of other customers' experiences (Meilatinova, 2021: 3). As a result, WOM increases people's awareness and attention to the product or service (Kim and Yoo, 2020: 2) and also affects

customers' behaviour and decision-making process (Quan et al., 2021: 4). The acceleration of technological developments has enabled many people to see the thoughts of individuals with a click. Therefore, WOM has been made more online than before (Verma and Yadav, 2021: 112). Although WOM includes customers' positive or negative opinions about the product or service, it does not guarantee high or low quality because these opinions are subjective (Kim and Yoo, 2020: 2). From the point of view of companies, WOM attracts potential customers, understands consumer preferences with the help of feedback and advertises without any costs (Meilatinova, 2021: 3).

Although the literature on the effect of price sensitivity on WOM is limited, studies emphasize the existence of a relationship between the two variables. For example, Xia et al. (2004) stated that the customers' impressions of whether the price is fair influenced their WOM communication. Özcan (2004) and Milakovic and Mihic (2016) stated that customers with high price sensitivity are likelier to advise others. On the contrary, Zeng et al. (2011) noted that customers with low price sensitivity are more likely to advise others. Petrick (2005) found that tourists are more price sensitive in their WOM behaviour. Choi and Kim (2007) noted that customers with high price awareness tend to advise others about their shopping stores. Matzler et al. (2006) and Varki and Colgate (2001) stated that customers' perception of price directly affects their intention to give advice. Matzler et al. (2019) found that the sensitivity of tourists to the ticket price does not affect WOM behaviour. Additionally, price sensitivity has been identified as a key factor influencing the purchasing decisions for green products, with low sensitivity correlating with higher purchasing intentions (Bhutto et al., 2020). Thus:

$H_2$: When the price sensitivity is high, the WOM is low for environmentally friendly products.

### 2.3 Moderating role of environmental consciousness

Environmental consciousness is a mental state with different behavioural outcomes and determinants at different human levels (Kautish et al., 2019: 1427). It includes concerns about environmental problems and the necessary effort to solve them (Jang et al., 2015: 149). Environmental consciousness encompasses attitudes and behaviors related to the preservation of natural resources and sustainable practices (Kautish et al., 2019). For this reason, environmental consciousness has two dimensions: attitude expressing concern and behaviour expressing action (Taufique et al., 2017: 512). The increase in environmental consciousness and the aim of sustaining life in a better environment and society have caused people to turn to products that are less harmful to the environment (Sakhawat, 2019: 42). Also, environmental consciousness affects customers' decision-making processes when they focus on environmental consumption by considering the interests of society and people (Lin et al., 2015: 149). Recent studies indicate that consumers with higher environmental awareness tend to value sustainable attributes in products, leading to a stronger intention to purchase eco-friendly products (Lin et al., 2022). Ng and Law (2015) stated that highly environmentally conscious customers are more likely to purchase environmentally friendly products. In their study examining consumers ' purchasing intentions for fashion products, Kan et al. (2017) found that environmental consciousness leads to higher purchases. Johansson et al. (2005) stated that people with high environmental consciousness prefer environmentally friendly vehicles. On the contrary, Barbarossa and Pastore (2015) stated that customers' environmental consciousness does not always affect their intention to purchase environmentally friendly products. Tam and Chan (2017) found that the impact of environmental consciousness on purchasing intention differs according to society and culture.

The growing awareness of environmental issues has significantly influenced consumer behavior. Recent studies highlight the role of environmental consciousness in shaping purchasing decisions and price sensitivity (Yue et al., 2023; De Canio, 2023). For instance, Yue et al. (2023) observed that

environmental concerns drive consumers to prefer sustainable products, while De Canio (2023) emphasized the role of familiarity in consumers' willingness to pay for eco-friendly packaging. These findings underline the increasing relevance of understanding consumer behavior in an era of environmental crisis. Customers' environmental concerns and awareness increased, and they began sharing their concerns with others to contribute to environmental sustainability (Salem and Alanadoly, 2021: 30). Han et al. (2011) found that customers who turn to environmentally friendly practices in their daily lives tend to share their thoughts with other people. Shin et al. (2017) stated that customers who are conscious of the effect of businesses on the environment have higher WOM communication. Martinez et al. (2018) found that customers with high environmental consciousness tend to have more WOM communication. Finally, Salem and Alanadoly (2021) found that individuals highly concerned about environmentally friendly behaviours and environmental fashion use WOM communication more. Hypotheses constructed within the scope of the findings mentioned in the literature are as follows:

$H_3$: Although price sensitivity is high if the environmental consciousness level is high, purchase intention is high for environmentally friendly products.

$H_4$: Although price sensitivity is high if the environmental consciousness level is high, WOM is high for environmentally friendly products.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

In this section, firstly, the experimental design method is explained. The following sections explain the research design, the target group's selection criteria, the experimental design scenarios, the scales used, and the pre-test, realism and manipulation checks.

### 3.1. Experimental design method

The experimental design method is increasingly important. It was initially used in fields such as agriculture and biology. Over time, its application has extended to engineering and behavioural analysis in social sciences (Berger et al., 2018: 2). Regarding marketing research, it is mainly aimed at researchers who want to examine the effect of price on behavioural intentions in the short term. Researchers argue that it is possible to isolate price effects in price-related designs (Brunk, 1958: 1242). Using this method, the researcher determines the conditions for the effect he/she wants to measure. The data regarding the variable whose effect is to be measured are obtained by the questionnaire method, including the individuals' daily experiences (Brunk and Federer, 1953: 440).

Independent variables are manipulated in a controlled manner, and dependent variables are under control in the experimental design method. The effect of manipulations on the dependent variable reveals the causal relationship (Malhotra and Birks, 2007: 79). There are four types of experimental design methods: "Pre-experimental", "True experimental", "Quasi-experimental," and "Statistical designs". This study used the factorial design method, one of the statistical design methods (Malhotra and Birks, 2007: 312). This method has two groups: Control and experimental (Malhotra and Birks, 2007: 314). Participants in the control group are presented with non-manipulated scenarios. The date effect was eliminated since the questionnaire was applied to the participants in the same period. Also, the maturity effect was eliminated by ensuring that each group participant completed only one questionnaire.

### 3.2. Research Setting and Sampling

This study examined the effect of customers' price sensitivity regarding environmentally friendly processes on their behavioural intentions (purchase intention, WOM). Young people are determined as the target group. Young people between the ages of 15-24 have the most internet

usage on all platforms. While the number of young people who use the internet daily via computers is 4.4 million, this number is 2.7 million in internet usage via mobile phones (GEMIUS, 2019). Gen Y (ages 22-35) and Gen Z (ages 16-21) in developing countries are the individuals most willing to pay for environmentally friendly products (KEARNEY, 2019). Since the expressions in the scenarios refer to concepts such as logistics sustainability and green logistics, the young people, especially international trade and logistics department students, were focused. Also, the smartwatch was chosen as the product in the scenarios. It was emphasized that seven years ago, smartwatches were not suitable for the needs of millennials and were adopted more by younger individuals (PHYS, 2013). The demands of individuals born between 1997 and 2012 for smart wearable products have increased (EMARKETER, 2020). Smartwatch sales volume has been increasing in recent years, both globally and in Turkey (Marangoz and Aydın, 2018: 5). According to the 2020 TUBISAD report, a smartwatch in Turkey is one of the most sold electronic devices by multi-channel online retailers (NESATILIR, 2020).

This study obtained participants' opinions on environmentally friendly processes using experimental design scenarios. At this stage, the scenario development process is very crucial. Therefore, the events in the scenarios must be realistic and have a logical basis. Environmentally friendly products are more costly than traditional products in terms of production methods (Arif and Örs, 2019: 13) and, generally, the entire process (supply, production, logistics) (Erdil, 2018: 91). The total costs of such products are 10-30% higher than traditional ones (KEARNEY, 2019). Therefore, the prices of such products are higher (Erdil, 2018: 91). Thus, it is possible to offer additional payment options for environmentally friendly processes in relevant scenarios. At this point, the question arises of how to determine the prices to be included in the scenarios. First, the prices of smartwatches sold on amazon.com have been examined. It has been determined that there are 1000 smartwatches on this world-famous platform and the number of these smartwatches with a price between $30 and $50 is 751. As a result of the price analysis, it was concluded that the average price of the smartwatch is $40. Finally, total costs generally vary between 10-30%, 10%, 20%, and 30% of the average price ($40) calculated. Therefore, it was added to the scenarios for the experimental groups in the form of $4, $8 and $12.

The questionnaire was prepared using Google Forms and data was collected online. A between-subject design was employed, where each participant was presented with one scenario out of the four available. Additionally, a convenience sampling method was used to gather responses. A total of 300 valid questionnaires were collected. The first scenario is the control group scenario with no additional payment for environmentally friendly processes. The scenario is "You wanted to order the smartwatch you need online. After detailed research, you finally decided on a smartwatch priced at $40. While ordering, you have encountered an expression such as -Packing and packaging the product in an environmentally friendly way and delivering it to you in a way that is less harmful to the environment; using environmentally friendly vehicles is important for both us and the future generations after us. You can deliver your order in environmentally friendly ways at no additional cost. Imagine yourself in the present case and indicate your degree of participation in the expressions". The remaining three scenarios are for the experimental group. They are aimed at determining the price sensitivity of consumers for different price levels. The experimental scenario is "You wanted to order the smartwatch you need online. After detailed research, you finally decided on a smartwatch priced at $40. While ordering, you have encountered an expression such as -Packing and packaging the product in an environmentally friendly way and delivering it to you in a way that is less harmful to the environment; using environmentally friendly vehicles is important for both us and the future generations after us. By paying an extra $4, you can deliver your order in environmentally friendly ways. Imagine yourself in the present case and indicate your degree of

participation in the expressions". The other two experimental group scenarios involve paying an extra $8 and $12, respectively.

### 3.3. Measures

The scale for measuring purchase intention was adapted from the study by Lu et al. (2016). The scale consists of three items. The WOM scale consisting of three items was adapted from research conducted by Lai (2020). Finally, the scale for measuring environmental consciousness was adapted from the study by Wang et al. (2020). The scale consists of three items. All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale.

### 3.4. Pretest

A pretest is conducted before the main data collection. The main purpose of the pretest is to determine whether the scenario is perceived as realistic and has been successfully manipulated (Liu et al., 2019: 385). Pretest data were obtained by applying online questionnaires. Eighty-four questionnaires were collected, with at least twenty participants from each scenario. Only four respondents failed the manipulation checks. According to Hair et al. (1998), having at least five participants for each scenario is adequate for the validity of the experimental design. Therefore, it is considered that the sample is enough for the pretest. Realism and manipulation check procedures are presented in the following sections.

#### 3.4.1. Realism checks

Experimental realism and mundane realism are two types of realism checks commonly used in literature. Experimental realism aims to determine whether the scenarios are realistic, while mundane realism aims to determine the possibility of the situation in the scenario occurring in real life. Participants were asked one question for each realism check, and their degree of agreement was determined using a 7-point Likert scale (1: strongly disagree, 7: strongly agree) (Liu et al., 2019: 385). The two questions are as follows: “The situation in the scenario is realistic.” and “The situation in the scenario can happen in real life.”. One sample t-test (test value = 4) was performed for all scenarios (Liu et al., 2019: 385). The results are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Results of realism checks**

| Scenario | Experimental realism | | Mundane realism | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | t-value | Mean | t-value |
| No extra payment | 5.10 | 3.24* | 4.75 | 2.68* |
| Extra $4 | 6.00 | 5.74* | 5.80 | 4.90* |
| Extra $8 | 6.35 | 6.86* | 6.25 | 5.77* |
| Extra $12 | 5.25 | 2.51* | 5.65 | 3.94* |

Table 1 indicated that the experimental and mundane realism of the scenarios were confirmed (t-values > 1.96, $p < .05$) (Field, 2009). The participants accepted the scenarios as realistic and described them as situations that could be encountered in real life.

#### 3.4.2. Manipulation checks

The generally accepted view emphasizes manipulation check-in experimental studies (Hauser et al., 2018: 1). A manipulation check is a valuable way of evaluating the robustness of the results of experimental studies (Aronow et al., 2019: 572). This research manipulated the amount participants are willing to pay extra for environmentally friendly products. In order to determine whether this manipulation was carried out successfully, 1 question was asked to the participants, consistent with

the scenario they had read. For the scenario where there is no extra payment for environmentally friendly products, the participants were asked, "You preferred the delivery of products through environmentally friendly processes without paying extra, right?". Also, in the scenario with an extra payment of $4, the question "You preferred the delivery of the products through environmentally friendly processes by paying an additional $4, right?" was asked. A similar question was asked for the other two scenarios (extra $8, extra $12). Participants were asked to answer this question as "yes" or "no" (Liu et al., 2019: 386). As a result, only 4 participants gave responses that did not match their scenario. This shows that the manipulation was done successfully (accuracy rate of 95%). Data were collected for the main study after determining that the manipulation and realism checks were successful and proper. In the next section, the analyzes and their results are mentioned.

## 4. ANALYSİS AND RESULTS

The principal components analysis aims to summarize most variances in a minimum number of factors. This method takes into account the total variance. It creates factors that include small proportions of unique variances and sometimes error variances (Hair et al., 2014: 105). Principal component analysis for dependent variables was applied, and the results are given in Table 2. It is seen that the Cronbach α value for both variables is above 0.70. This situation shows that the participation levels of the individuals regarding the statements are consistent. In addition, factor loadings of two dependent variables are above the value of 0.50, which is assumed to be significant in practice. The KMO test result is above 0.50. This situation shows that the sample size is suitable and sufficient. In addition, Bartlett Tests, which express whether the correlation regarding the items collected under the scales is significant, are also significant (p=0.000). Therefore, convergence and construct validity are provided for one-dimensional factors.

**Table 2: Results of factor analysis**

| Purchase intention | Factor load. |
|---|---|
| I have a very high probability of purchasing this smartwatch. | 0,886 |
| I would consider purchasing this smartwatch in the future. | 0,878 |
| I intend to buy this smartwatch. | 0,859 |
| **Explained variance: %76,5; α: 0,846; KMO: 0,727; Bartlett Test: 185,897*** ** | |
| WOM | Factor load. |
| I recommend my experience to my friends and relatives. | 0,830 |
| I make positive comments about this experience I have had. | 0,915 |
| I share my ideas about this experience I have with others. | 0,893 |
| **Explained variance: %77,5; α: 0,853; KMO: 0,700; Bartlett Test: 211,931*** ** | |

Table 3 shows the averages of each scenario regarding dependent variables. The scenario with the highest average regarding purchase intention is the control group scenario. The scenario with the highest average regarding word-of-mouth communication is the extra $4 payment scenario. Table 3 also gives the results regarding the effects of the scenarios on dependent variables. Price sensitivity scenarios statistically affect purchase intention (F: 48,170; p: 0,000) and word of mouth (F: 98,531; p: 0,000).

**Table 3: Scenario statistics and the effect of scenario types on dependent variables**

| Scenarios | Purchase intention | | | WOM | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | Mean | S.D. | N | Mean | S.D. |
| No extra payment | 75 | 6,42 | 1,27 | 75 | 3,27 | 0,33 |
| Extra $4 | 74 | 6,25 | 1,43 | 74 | 4,03 | 0,34 |
| Extra $8 | 75 | 4,95 | 2,68 | 75 | 2,24 | 1,15 |
| Extra $12 | 76 | 2,94 | 2,30 | 76 | 3,32 | 0,30 |
| Homogeneity Test | F: 56,212 p: 0,000*** | | | F: 61,470 p: 0,000*** | | |
| | | | | | | |
| **Independent Variable** | **F** | **Df** | **p** | **F** | **Df** | **p** |
| Scenarios | 48,170 | 3 | 0,000*** | 98,531 | 3 | 0,000*** |
| | $R^2$: 0,328 and Adj. $R^2$: 0,321 | | | $R^2$: 0,500 and Adj. $R^2$: 0,495 | | |

The averages of the scenario types according to the dependent variables are shown in Figure 1.

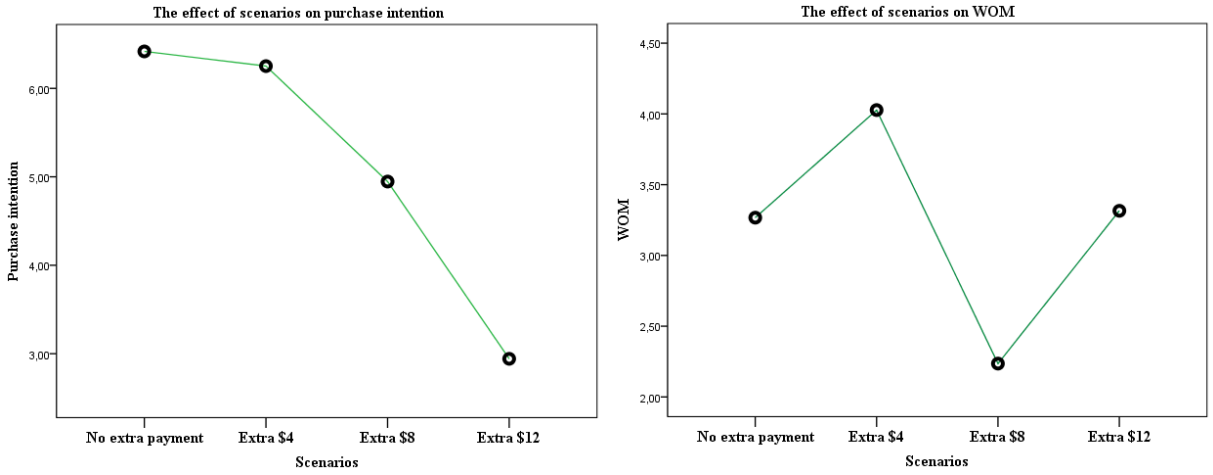


**Figure 1: The averages of the scenario types on dependent variables**

Whether the scenario types differ according to the dependent variables was analyzed, and the results are given in Table 4. Based on the results of the homogeneity analysis, the Dunnett T3 test was used for both dependent variables. Regarding purchase intention, the control group scenario differs statistically significantly with the extra $8 (p: 0,000) and the extra $12 (p: 0,000) payment scenarios. There is no significant difference between the control group scenario and the extra $4 (p: 0,969) payment scenario for the same dependent variable. Regarding WOM, the control group scenario differs statistically significantly with the extra $4 (p: 0,000) and $8 (p: 0,000) payment scenarios. However, there is no significant difference between the control group scenario and the extra $12 (p: 0,974) payment scenario for the same dependent variable. Also, their purchase intentions decrease as the participants' extra payment increases. Similarly, these participants' WOM intentions were also low. Regarding purchase intention, the control group scenario and the extra $12 scenario differ statistically (Mean difference: 3,47; $p<0.05$). However, the control group and the extra $12 scenario did not differ significantly regarding WOM intention. Hence, the H1 hypothesis was accepted in this case, and the $H_2$ hypothesis was rejected.

**Table 4: The comparison test results of the price sensitivity scenarios**

| Control group | Experiment group | Purchase intention | | WOM | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Mean difference | p | Mean difference | p |
| No extra payment | Extra $4 | 0,17 | 0,969 | -0,76*** | 0,000 |
| | Extra $8 | 1,47*** | 0,000 | 1,03*** | 0,000 |
| | Extra $12 | 3,47*** | 0,000 | -0,05 | 0,974 |
| **Experiment group** | **Other experiment group** | | | | |
| Extra $4 | Extra $8 | 1,31*** | 0,002 | 1,79*** | 0,000 |
| | Extra $12 | 3,31*** | 0,000 | 0,71*** | 0,000 |

Descriptive statistics were analysed regarding the effect of price sensitivity scenarios and environmental consciousness interaction on dependent variables. The results are given in Table 5. In order to examine the moderator effect of environmental consciousness, the median split procedure was applied to the whole sample and the environmental consciousness variable was divided into two categories as low (n: 128) and high (n: 172) (Hiramatsu et al., 2016; Brochado et al., 2017; Kautish et al., 2019). In terms of purchase intention, the scenarios in which the averages of the participants with low and high environmental consciousness are highest are the control group scenario and the Extra $4 scenario, respectively. In terms of WOM, the scenario in which the averages of the participants with low and high environmental consciousness are highest is the Extra $4 scenario. Regarding both dependent variables, it was determined that the averages of the participants with high environmental consciousness for all scenarios were higher than those with low environmental consciousness.

**Table 5: The descriptive statistics - the interaction of scenarios and level of environmental consciousness**

| Scenarios | Environmental Consciousness | N | Purchase intention | | WOM | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. |
| No extra payment | Low | 34 | 6,34 | 0,29 | 3,19 | 0,11 |
| | High | 41 | 6,48 | 0,26 | 3,33 | 0,10 |
| Extra $4 | Low | 32 | 6,15 | 0,30 | 4,00 | 0,11 |
| | High | 42 | 6,33 | 0,26 | 4,05 | 0,10 |
| Extra $8 | Low | 32 | 2,40 | 0,30 | 2,08 | 0,11 |
| | High | 43 | 6,85 | 0,26 | 2,35 | 0,10 |
| Extra $12 | Low | 30 | 2,53 | 0,38 | 3,27 | 0,14 |
| | High | 46 | 3,09 | 0,23 | 3,33 | 0,09 |
| Homogeneity Test | | | F: 17,763 p: 0,000*** | | F: 35,084 p: 0,000*** | |

Whether the price sensitivity scenarios and environmental consciousness interaction show a significant difference in purchase intention and WOM has been analyzed. The results are shown in Panel A in Table 6. In Panel B, the analysis results on whether the scenarios differ according to the level of environmental consciousness regarding purchase intention are given.

**Table 6: The interaction of price sensitivity scenarios and environmental consciousness statistics of the dependent variables**

| **Panel A: The analysis results of the interaction of the scenarios and environmental consciousness on dependent variables** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Purchase intention** | | | | **WOM** | |
| | **F** | **Df** | **p** | **F** | **Df** | **p** |
| Scenarios | 64,460 | 3 | 0,000*** | 98,241 | 3 | 0,000*** |
| Environ. Cons. (EC) | 43,382 | 1 | 0,000*** | 2,919 | 1 | 0,089 |
| Scenarios X EC | 27,949 | 3 | 0,000*** | ,424 | 3 | 0,736 |
| Explained Variance | $R^2$: 0,535 and Adj. $R^2$: 0,524 | | | $R^2$: 0,507 and Adj. $R^2$: 0,495 | | |
| **Panel B: The results of the interference of the scenarios and environmental consciousness on purchase intention** | | | | | | |
| **Environ. Cons.** | **Scenarios** | | **Other scenarios** | | **Mean difference** | **p** |
| Low | No extra payment | | Extra $4 | | 0,197 | 1,000 |
| | | | Extra $8 | | 3,947 | 0,000*** |
| | | | Extra $12 | | 3,810 | 0,000*** |
| | Extra $4 | | Extra $8 | | 3,750 | 0,000*** |
| | | | Extra $12 | | 3,613 | 0,000*** |
| | Extra $8 | | Extra $12 | | -0,138 | 1,000 |
| High | No extra payment | | Extra $4 | | 0,146 | 1,000 |
| | | | Extra $8 | | -0,365 | 1,000 |
| | | | Extra $12 | | 3,390 | 0,000*** |
| | Extra $4 | | Extra $8 | | -0,512 | 0,973 |
| | | | Extra $12 | | 3,244 | 0,000*** |
| | Extra $8 | | Extra $12 | | 3,756 | 0,000*** |

Also, the interaction effect on dependent variables is shown in Figure 2.

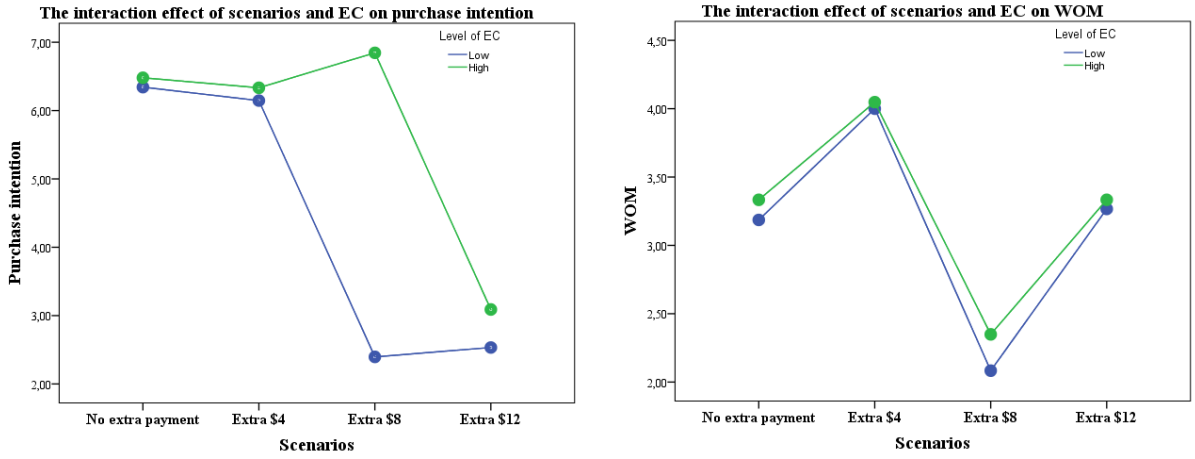


**Figure 2: The interaction effect of scenarios and EC on dependent variables**

Table 6 (panel A) shows that the interference between scenarios and environmental consciousness statistically affects purchase intention (p: 0,000). However, this interaction does not significantly affect WOM (p: 0,736). Therefore, analyses on whether the scenarios differ according to the environmental consciousness level have not been conducted regarding WOM. It is seen that the maximum amount that the participants with high environmental consciousness are willing to pay is an extra $8. Even if the environmental consciousness level of the participants is high, it is understood that their intention to pay an extra $12 is low (Figure 2). Thus, the $H_3$ and $H_4$ hypotheses were rejected. Also, it is thought that environmental consciousness can be an essential variable to

consider in purchasing products and services with environmentally friendly processes (Table 6 panel B). The impact of the scenarios on purchase intention increased by approximately 20% (from 0.321 to 0.524) with the inclusion of the environmental consciousness variable.

## 5. DISCUSSION

Besides determining the effect of price sensitivity on purchasing intention and word of mouth, the present study also examined the moderator effect of environmental consciousness on the relationships between price sensitivity-purchase intention and price sensitivity-word of mouth. The first of the study's findings is that price sensitivity affects purchasing intention and word of mouth. It is understood that the extra $12 payment scenario regarding purchase intention and the extra $8 payment scenario regarding WOM significantly differ from the control group scenario. These results show that customers do not want to pay an extra $12 for environmentally friendly processes. It also shows they do not want to advise others about environmentally friendly processes applicable to all other scenarios, including the control group scenario. However, there are significant differences between the control group scenario and the payment scenarios of over $8 and $12 regarding purchase intention. Regarding WOM, there are significant differences between the control group scenario and the payment scenarios of over $4 and $8.

The study's second and most important finding is about the price sensitivity-environmental consciousness interaction. A moderator analysis was conducted to determine the effects of price sensitivity on purchasing intention and WOM according to the environmental consciousness level of customers. It has been determined that the interaction of price sensitivity and environmental consciousness has no significant effect on WOM. Customers' high or low level of environmental consciousness is not essential regarding WOM. Regarding purchasing intention, the environmental consciousness level of the customers affects the price level they are willing to buy. While the maximum price that customers with low environmental consciousness can pay for environmentally friendly processes is $4, the maximum price that customers with high environmental consciousness can pay is $8. This result reveals that environmental consciousness significantly affects the price customers are willing to pay for environmentally friendly processes. These findings are consistent with the results of some studies in literature. For example, Kang et al. (2012) stated that customers with high environmental concerns are willing to pay higher prices for environmentally friendly products/services. González-Rodríguez et al. (2020) stated that one of the crucial factors affecting customers' intention to purchase environmentally friendly products is environmental concerns.

The maximum price customers with low environmental consciousness express that they can pay corresponds to 10% of the average price of the smartwatch. This rate is 20% for customers with high environmental consciousness. These findings are also consistent with the results of some studies in literature. However, the environmental consciousness level of the customers was not investigated in these studies. For example, Aryal et al. (2009) found that 58% of customers (n: 180) intended to pay 20% more than the price of organic products. They also stated that 40% of customers find it reasonable to overpay for organic products. Asadi et al. (2009) found that the price that most customers agree to pay for organic products is a maximum of 20% of the product price. According to Aguilar and Vlosky (2007), the rate customers can overpay for environmentally friendly wood products is 10% of the product price.

### 5.1. Theoretical implications

This study contributes to the literature by determining whether customers are willing to pay specific amounts for environmentally friendly processes over a product with an average price. The first contribution is that customers' sensitivity to specific prices affects their purchasing intentions and

word of mouth. The second contribution is that customers' prices for environmentally friendly processes differ according to their environmental consciousness level. This study proves that customer environmental consciousness influences their behavioural intentions towards environmentally friendly processes. It suggests that being environmentally friendly results in an intention to pay more for environmentally friendly processes. Thus, this study proves that the higher the environmental consciousness of consumers, the higher their intention to pay for environmentally friendly processes. Furthermore, the research shows that when customers have different levels of environmental consciousness, their green purchasing behaviour will also be different. In this sense, a theoretical contribution has been made to the environmental psychology literature by measuring customers' environmental consciousness and behavioural intentions according to these consciousness levels.

When the adaptation level theory is examined in terms of pricing, it also means that customers develop perceptions and compare price stimuli based on their past and present experiences. Customers are exposed to price stimuli when prices offered are outside a region where customers are indifferent (Kinard et al., 2013: 88-89). When the interaction between the prices offered for extra payment and environmental consciousness is examined, it is thought that the perceptions of paying an extra $8 and an extra $12 for customers with low environmental consciousness are outside the region where customers are mostly indifferent. Also, it is seen that the perceptions of paying an extra $12 for customers with high environmental consciousness are located outside the region where customers are mostly indifferent. When the prospect theory is examined in the context of pricing, customers characterize the price they encounter as a gain or loss, taking into account some reference points. A price above the reference point is a loss, while a price below this point is a gain. In other words, the deviation from the reference point, not the actual price, influences customers' evaluation and final purchasing decisions (Zou and Petrick, 2019: 4). For example, customers with low environmental consciousness consider an overpayment price of more than $4 for a product with a price of $40 as a loss. This price is $12 for customers with high environmental consciousness.

### 5.2. Managerial implications

Is the consumer willing to pay extra for eco-friendly products in this study? If so, what is the amount? Does the amount change according to the environmental consciousness level? Questions have been tried to be answered. This study provides important insights into the impact of specific overpayment amounts on purchase and word-of-mouth intentions for retailers and businesses. Since today's consumers do more e-commerce transactions, businesses should encourage environmental awareness because they can reach more people. In order to inform customers about the environment by choosing green marketing strategies, businesses can give practical information about the increase in adverse effects on the environment from product selection to the payment stage. For example, "The world will face a global water deficit of 40% by 2030." (UNESCO, 2021) expression can be used. Information can be given that packing and packaging products, which are easier to recycle, cause less environmental harm. Also, information can be given about the gains obtained by carrying out environmentally friendly processes. In this way, it will be possible to inform customers with low environmental consciousness and to warn them about the environment. Also, businesses can raise awareness by sharing the ratio of customers paying for environmentally friendly products and processes with potential customers. Businesses may declare that customers who pay extra for eco-friendly products will not be charged a shipping fee. Due to the acceptance of customer payment for environmentally friendly processes, customers may be offered the option to make one or two more instalments in addition to the current instalments. Businesses can present

examples of environmentally friendly practices from their social media accounts. It will be possible to raise awareness of customers about the environment through social media. It is essential for Gen Z, who spends more time on social media. It is thought that these efforts of businesses will positively affect customers' willingness to overpay for environmentally friendly processes.

### 5.3. Policy Implications

The study indicates that consumers with a high level of environmental consciousness are more willing to pay a premium for eco-friendly products. Governments and non-governmental organizations should initiate educational programs and awareness campaigns to enhance consumer environmental consciousness. These campaigns should emphasize the benefits of eco-friendly products and highlight the long-term environmental impacts of expenditure on such products. Consumers with high environmental consciousness are more willing to pay a premium for eco-friendly products, indicating the necessity of reducing the prices of these products. Governments can lower the prices of eco-friendly products by providing incentives and tax reductions for such products and processes, thereby expanding access to a broader consumer base. Additionally, financial incentives should be offered to producers to adopt environmentally friendly production methods.

The study reveals consumers' interest in environmentally friendly products and the amounts they are willing to pay for these products. Governments should promote green certification and labeling programs to ensure that consumers can easily identify environmentally friendly products. Such programs can enhance the credibility of eco-friendly products and facilitate consumers' inclination towards these products. The study demonstrates consumer interest in environmentally friendly products; however, the public sector can also enhance demand for such products. Governments should develop policies that mandate public institutions to procure environmentally friendly products and services. Such policies could contribute to market growth and encourage the private sector to adopt similar practices.

The development of environmentally friendly products and processes is achievable through the adoption of innovative technologies and methods. Governments should provide support for the research and development processes of eco-friendly technologies and products. Sustainable and eco-friendly innovations should be encouraged by promoting collaboration between universities, research institutions, and the private sector. The study also demonstrates that consumers with low environmental consciousness prefer environmentally friendly products at lower prices. Governments should examine the pricing strategies of environmentally friendly products and develop policies that enhance the accessibility of these products for consumers with low environmental consciousness. This can be achieved through subsidies, price support, or the introduction of low-cost environmentally friendly products to the market.

### 5.4. Limitations and future directions

This study has some limitations and suggestions for future studies. In the study, a single product and the selling price were considered. Therefore, the amounts included in the scenarios are specific percentages of the sales price. Researchers can investigate customers' intent to pay different amounts using different products. The product in the scenarios belongs to a single sector. Researchers can use products from different industries. The research was conducted on young people. Further research may be aimed at customers of different age groups. It may even involve comparing age groups (generations). Finally, the effects of price sensitivities on purchase intention and word of mouth were investigated, and environmental consciousness was used as a moderator

variable. Researchers can examine the effect of price sensitivities on other variables and use other moderator variables.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to determine the price customers are willing to pay for environmentally friendly processes and the tendency of customers to communicate word-of-mouth. Also, it was examined whether the price they are willing to pay and WOM communication differ in terms of customers with high and low environmental consciousness. Differences were found between the control group scenario and the two scenarios of the experimental group in terms of both purchasing intention (extra $8, extra $12) and WOM (extra $4, extra $8). The scenario with the lowest average in purchase intention is an extra $12. At the same time, it is an extra $8 scenario regarding WOM.

This study investigates the impact of environmental consciousness and price sensitivity on consumers' purchasing intentions and word-of-mouth behavior, focusing specifically on their willingness to pay for environmentally friendly processes. The findings highlight several important points: While the price sensitivity-environmental consciousness interaction significantly affects purchasing intention, this interaction has no significant effect on word-of-mouth communication. Since no significant effect exists, no further analyses have been made regarding WOM. Regarding purchasing intention, significant differences were found between the control group scenario and the extra $8 and $12 payment scenarios for customers with low environmental consciousness. For customers with a high level of environmental consciousness, a significant difference was found between the control group scenario and only the extra payment scenario of $12. These findings show the price customers are willing to pay according to the level of environmental consciousness. While the maximum price that customers with low environmental consciousness declared that they could pay an extra $4, this price is $8 for customers with high environmental consciousness. Customers with low and high environmental consciousness have declared they do not want to pay an extra $12. Also, these findings show that for a product with an average price of $40, customers intend to pay no more than one-fifth of the product price.

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