

The Relationships among Frugality, Materialism and Consumer's Need for Uniqueness

Tutumluluk, Materyalizm ve Tüketicilerin Benzersizlik İhtiyacı Arasındaki İlişki

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hülya Bakırtaş

Abstract

Materialism, consumer's need for uniqueness and frugality concepts are very important for companies, their marketing strategies and environmental sustainability. This paper is examined the relationships among materialism, frugality and consumers' need for uniqueness (CNU) concepts. The data was collected by questionnaire and it was carried out for 350 Turkish consumers. Firstly, exploratory factor analysis was made and then, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to analyze the hypothesis. Turkish consumers' need for uniqueness consisted of avoidance similarity and unpopular choice dimensions. Unpopular choice dimension of the consumer's need for uniqueness was positively related to the frugality and statistically significant whereas avoid of similarity dimension of the consumer's need for uniqueness was negatively related to the frugality in addition to not statistically significant. Similarly, materialism was negatively related to frugality, but the relationship was not statistically significant.

Keywords: Materialism, Frugality, Consumers' Need for Uniqueness, SEM, Turkish Consumers

Öz

Materyalizm, tüketicilerin benzersizlik ihtiyacı ve tutumluluk kavramları; şirketler, onların pazarlama stratejileri ve çevresel sürdürülebilirlik için çok önemlidir. Bu çalışmada, tüketicilerin benzersizlik ihtiyacı,

materyalizm ve tutumluluk kavramları arasındaki ilişki incelenmektedir. Veri, anket yöntemiyle toplanmıştır ve anket 350 Türk tüketicisiye yapılmıştır. İlk olarak Açıklayıcı Faktör Analizi yapılmış ve daha sonra hipotezleri analiz etmek için Yapısal Eşitlik Modeli (SEM) kullanılmıştır. Türk tüketicilerinin benzersizlik ihtiyacı, benzerlikten kaçınma ve popüler olmayan tercih boyutlarından oluşmuştur. Tüketicinin benzersizlik ihtiyacının benzersizlikten kaçınma boyutu, tutumlulukla negatif ilişkilidir ve bu ilişki istatistiksel olarak anlamlı değilken, popüler olmayan tercih boyutu tutumlulukla pozitif ilişkilidir ve bu ilişki istatistiksel olarak anlamlıdır. Benzer şekilde materyalizm, tutumlulukla negatif ilişkilidir, ancak bu ilişki istatistiksel olarak anlamlı değildir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Materyalizm, Tutumluluk, Tüketicilerin Benzersizlik İhtiyacı, YEM, Türk Tüketiciler

Introduction

In an era of consumerism, consumers' expectation and consumption sets are largely influenced by the changing economical, social, cultural and environmental factors. Consumers buy more and continuous product lack of consumer's need with effect of changing the factors. The over-consumption of consumers threatens to environment. However, the consumption

is associated with success and happiness and to live better have been drawn more consuming portray by firm strategies. Moreover, individuals consume to signal their wealth and identity to others. The status consumption of consumers provides various psychological rewards as regards self esteem and sense of power (Sivanathan and Pettit, 2010). There is a relationship between status consumption and materialism (Heaney et al. 2005). Sivanathan and Pettit (2003) found that possession to status goods provides important psychological armor. Besides, a research on status consumption has shown more choice for status goods for males rather than females (Chan and Wang, 2015). Consumer's need for uniqueness distinguishes themselves from others within a particular social group while they indicate belongs to social group (Erasmus et al., 2015). If other people resemble themselves, people who have high level uniqueness perceive it as a threat to identity (Tien et al., 2001). Hence, the people are less willing to recommend a product to others. However, the people before purchasing decision are willing to consult other people's opinion (He et al., 2015). Frugality is restraint as voluntary both acquiring and using product and refer to an ideal and a way of attaining high life quality but is not a high level of consumption (Ims and Jakobsen, 2008). Less frugal consumers do not directly concern with conserving resources and taking care of possessions (Todd and Lawson, 2003). The concepts are important in terms of both researchers and practitioners.

The objective of this paper is to examine the relationships concepts such as materialism, frugality and consumers' need for uniqueness. The rest of the paper is structured as follows. First, three concepts, including materialism, frugality and consumers' need of uniqueness are defined, and research model is proposed by their hypothesis. Second, the methodology applied in this study is described and findings are reported. Discussions of the empirical results and suggestions for future research are presented at the end of the paper.

Literature Review

The concept of materialism can be defined as different by researchers. However, all definitions of the concept shall involve the term "secular/earthly goods". If we base our definition on that common term, materialism is the set of values related to se-

cular goods (Belk, 1985; Richins and Dawson, 1992; Browne and Kaldenberg, 1997). Materialism attaches importance to acquiring of objects rather than the benefits of objects (Kilbourne and Pickett, 2008). Belk (1985) scaled materialism in three dimensions; jealousy (bad faith against another's success), the desire to have (the tendency to have control of one's own belongings) and parsimony (unwillingness to share). Materialism according to Richins and Dawson (1992) has three dimensions such as success (defined as the success of having), centralization (center of buying) and happiness (buying as the pursuit of happiness). These are key characteristics of materialism (Hyun and Park, 2015). Troisi et al. (2006) made a research on materialism. They found that materialism and money conservation were predictive of impulsive buying, sensation seeking and openness to experience. Bakırtaş et al. (2013) found that materialism was statistically significant negative impact on ecological behavior while impact on environmental concern of materialism is not statistically significant. Besides, some studies have examined relationships between demographic characters and materialism (Richins and Dawson, 1992; Lundstrom and White, 1999; Doğan, 2010; Aslay et al. 2013).

Consumer's need for uniqueness (CNU) is the need of a consumer to enounce his/her uniqueness from other consumer -to be "different" and "not just other face" in the crowd- (Snyder and Fromkin, 1980; Burns and Warren, 1995). Tian et al. (2001) define CNU as "the trait of pursuing differentness relative to others through the acquisition, utilization, and disposition of consumer goods for the purpose of developing and enhancing one's self-image and social image" (p.52). They scaled CNU in three dimensions; creative choice counter-conformity, unpopular choice counter-conformity and avoid of similarity.

Previous research on consumer's need for uniqueness focuses on factors such as environmental and contextual factors, customer satisfaction, ethnic dining, and brand consciousness, outshopping activity, brand perception and purchase intention, word of mouth, luxury goods and services, perceived firm innovativeness, brand prestige, perceived value, residents' use of interior products, willingness to use innovative products, impulse purchases (Burns and Warren, 1995; Knight and Kim, 2007; He et al. 2010; Wan

et al., 2014; Liu and Mattila, 2015; Chan and Wang, 2015; Moldovan et al., 2015; Hyun and Park, 2015; Erasmus et al. 2015). Based on demographic characters, researches are found that avoiding similarity and unpopular choice are more for Chinese male's scores than Chinese females, but the differences are not statistically significant. However, creative choice for females is a higher tendency (Erasmus et al., 2015).

Frugality is defined as "a unidimensional consumer lifestyle trait characterized by the degree to which consumers are both restrained in acquiring and resourceful in using economic goods and services to achieve longer -terms goals" (Lastovicka et al., 1999, p. 88). Lastovicka et al. (1999) conceptualized to frugality as an eight-item single factor. Their study is depended on three premises. Firstly, frugal consumers are less impulsive. Secondly, frugal consumers reuse product and lastly, they tend to feel more independent. It is a central concept in Buddhist, Christian, Islamic, Jews, Taoists and Hindu tradition (Shoham and Brencic, 2004; Ims and Jakobsen, 2008). Frugality posits as a personality trait, a value and a lifestyle choice. Experts in different discipline agree that values are criteria individuals use to select, justify and evaluate actions (Todd and Lawson, 2003, Bove et al., 2009). Schwartz had developed to value structure. Motivational areas that underlie Schwartz' value system are relation to satisfaction of the individual/collective objectives and interest. Relationship between consumer's value and consumption behavior is examined in marketing field (Todd and Lawson, 2003). Todd and Lawson (2003) found that less frugal people have social power, authority, public image, pleasure, enjoying life, exciting life, varied life, detachment, social recognition and true friendship values while more frugal people have one's own goals, ambition, capability, honesty, politeness, obedience, responsibility, social order, national security, spiritual life, devout, unity with nature, protecting the environment and inner harmony values.

There are a lot of studies examining with different perspective to frugality concept in marketing literature. Shoham and Brencic (2004) examine to relationships between price and value consciousness with frugality. They found that frugality increase Israeli consumer's value and price consciousness. Bove et al. (2009) found that market mavenism shopping anti-

pathy and age have a positive effect while recreational shopping and intrinsic religiosity have no effect on frugal shopping behavior. Muinos et al. (2015) examined the relationship between psychological wellbeing and frugality in terms of restriction behavior and the resourceful use of resources

Although each concept is different with respect, these are two common characteristics that these concepts share: i) a lifestyle, ii) a personality trait. Each concept is important for understanding consumer choice and consumption of products (Todd and Lawson, 2003; Muinos et al. 2015; Hyun and Park, 2015; Belk, 1985). Consumer choice is not only the outcome of rational process, but also individuals' underlying needs (Burns and Warren, 1995). Frugality may be driven by CNU and materialism derived from personal experience (Knight and Kim, 2007). Frugality concept can be evaluated as converse of materialism (Todd and Lawson, 2003; Shoham and Brencic, 2004).

Materialism and CNU are closely related. However, there is uncertainty on whether the relationship between these variables is causal or non-casual (Muncy and Eastman, 1998). Despite this uncertainty, when the other aforementioned information is taken into consideration, both variables are expected to have influence on frugality. Clearly, consumer who values the materialistic behavior and needs of uniqueness should not be more likely to frugality (Lastovicka et al., 1999).

Based on the predominant view in the literature, these are hypothesized that:

H₁: Frugality is affected by consumer's need for uniqueness

H_{1a}: Frugality is positively affected by Unpopular Choice

H_{1b}: Frugality is negatively affected by Avoid of Similarity

H₂: Frugality is negatively affected by materialism.

The conceptual model which integrates the hypothesized relationship (Hypotheses 1_{a,b} and 2) appears Figure 1. The relationships among the three constructs depicted in this model were empirically tested based on consumer data collected in Turkey.

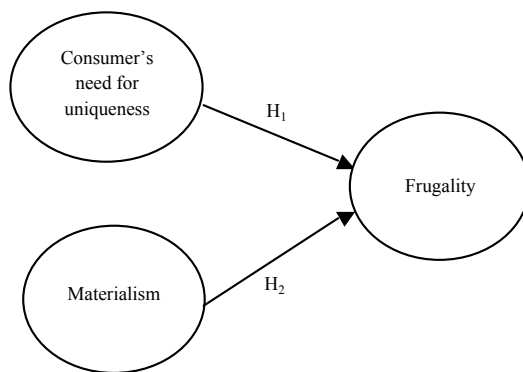


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

Research Method

This study was carried out between dates of September 2014 and February 2015. The data of the study have been collected by questionnaire methods. To test the hypothesis, a sample of 350 Turkish consumers was completed a questionnaire including material values scale (MAT) with eighteen items adapted from Richins and Dawson (1992) for materialism, frugality scale (F) with eight items adapted from Lastovicka et al. (1999) for frugality, consumers' need for uniqueness (CNU) scale with thirty one items adapted from Tian et al. (2001) for consumers' need for

uniqueness. All analyzes were made according to 331 usable data. Demographic features of participants are given in Table 1. Female respondents consisted of 51%, whereas the male respondents consisted of 49%. The rate of married respondents is 59%, while singles represent the rate of 41%. %82 of sample was between 25 and 35 age. With respect to educational background, 3% have primary and secondary school, 23% high school, 62% undergraduate, 12% graduate. Approximately 65% of respondents reported income between 1001 and 4000 TL.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

Sample Characteristic	Categorical Scale	N	%
Gender	Female	169	51
	Male	162	49
Married Status	Single	134	41
	Married	197	59
Age	25/-	153	46
	26-35	120	36
	36-45	40	12
	46-55	14	4
	56/+	4	2
Education	Primary and secondary	9	3
	High school	76	23
	Undergraduate	206	62
	Graduate	40	12
Income	749 TL and under	12	4
	750-1000 TL	40	12
	1001-2000 TL	99	30
	2001-4000 TL	116	35
	4001-6000 TL	53	16
	6001 TL and over	11	3

Analysis and Results

Firstly, exploratory factor analysis was made to determine structural validity of scales and then, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to analyze the hypothesis.

The factor analysis of frugality construct is shown in Table 2. As a result of factor analysis, as regards frugality were obtained one factor solution with Eigen

value > 1. One factor solution obtained explains approximately 60% of the total variance. The principal components and varimax rotation methods were used. Based on the results of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure (0.668) of sampling adequacy and Barlett's sphericity, the variables and data in the study were found to be appropriate for exploratory factor analysis. Besides, Cronbach Alpha was 0.773, thus were supported internal consistency of the scales.

Table 2. Exploratory Factor Analysis Results of Frugality

Factor	Factor Loadings	Variance (%)	α
1. Factor (F)			
F6	0.821	59.713	0.773
F7	0.780		
F5	0.755		
F8	0.732		
<i>Total Variance Explained</i>			59.713
<i>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy</i>			0.668
<i>Barlett's Test Approx Chi-Square of Sphericity</i>			423.518
<i>df</i>			6
<i>Sig.</i>			0.000

Table 3. Exploratory Factor Analysis Results of CNU

Factors	Factor Loadings	Variance (%)	α
1. Factor (CNU1/ Unpopular Choice Counterconformity)			
U18	0.802	27.107	0.80
U17	0.747		
U19	0.724		
U14	0.715		
U13	0.699		
U20	0.694		
U21	0.639		
U15	0.614		
U16	0.615		
2. Factor (CNU2/ Avoid of Similarity)			
U27	0.775	25.420	0.88
U29	0.758		
U26	0.752		
U30	0.746		
U28	0.695		
U25	0.666		
U31	0.664		
U24	0.645		
<i>Total Variance Explained</i>			52.527
<i>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy</i>			0.906
<i>Barlett's Test Approx Chi-Square of Sphericity</i>			2412.593
<i>df</i>			136
<i>Sig.</i>			0.000

The factor analysis of CNU construct is shown in Table 3. As a result of factor analysis, as regards CNU were obtained two factor solutions. Two factor solution obtained (CNU1- nine variables, explained variance 27.1; CNU2- eight variables, explained variance 25.4) explains approximately 53% of the total variance. Based on the results of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure (0.906) of sampling adequacy and Barlett's sphericity, the variables and data in the study were found to be appropriate for exploratory factor analysis. Besides, Cronbach Alpha (α) of all the scales were greater than 0.60.

The factor analysis of materialism construct is shown in Table 4. As a result of factor analysis, as regards materialism were obtained one factor solution. The factor solution obtained (MAT1- three variables, explained variance 59.2) explains approximately 59% of the total variance. Based on the results of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure (0.657) of sampling adequacy and Barlett's sphericity, the variables and data in the study were found to be appropriate for exploratory factor analysis. Besides, Cronbach Alpha (α) of all the scales were greater than 0.60.

Table 4. Exploratory Factor Analysis Results of Materialism

Factors	Factor Loadings	Variance (%)	α
I. Factor (Happiness)			
M17	0.778	59.199	0.66
M18	0.775		
M15	0.755		
Total Variance Explained			59.199
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy			0.657
Barlett's Test Approx Chi-Square of Sphericity			134.155
df			3
Sig.			0.000

Structural equation modeling (SEM) with a maximum likelihood (ML) was used to analyze the hypothesis. Structural model was performed using LISREL 8.7. The measurement model was constructed to estimate relationships between constructs and their indicators before the hypothesized structural models were tested. Measurement model was assessed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and was examined validity and reliability. Validity of measures began with construct validity of each measure and then discriminant validity between constructs. Construct validity are used criteria such as model fit, factor loadings.

The results of measurement model were shown in Table 5. As shown in Table 5, model fit measures of measurement model suggested acceptable fit to data. The coefficient of factor loading on the latent

construct ranged from .42 to .92 and each indicator t-value exceeded 7.21 (recommended t-value 1.96). Composite construct reliability (CR) and Cronbach Alpha (α) of all the scales were greater than 0.60 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988, Hair et al., 1998).

Discriminant validity of constructs was conducted with chi-square difference test. The results are shown in Table 6. The χ^2 values of the constrained and unconstrained models were compared and the χ^2 differences were much larger than the 12.59 threshold, the result showed the existence of discriminant validity between the entire model constructs ($\Delta\chi^2= 1765,45$, $\Delta sd= 6$, $p= 0.05$). As shown in Table 5 and Table 6, the results supported validity and reliability of all of the scales

Table 5. Measurement Model

Constructs	Stand. loading	CR	α
MAT		.66	.66
M17	.66(9.50)		
M15	.57(8.63)		
M18	.64(9.33)		
F		.75	.77
F5	.72(12.33)		
F6	.92(15.24)		
F7	.50(8.73)		
F8	.42(7.21)		
CNU1		.85	.80
U17	.72(13.65)		
U14	.69(13.97)		
U20	.70(11.50)		
U21	.60(12.91)		
U13	.66(10.72)		
U15	.57(9.46)		
U16	.51(17.23)		
U18	.81(14.70)		
U19	.73(14.61)		
CNU2		.88	.88
U24	.65(12.71)		
U25	.65(12.61)		
U26	.76(15.44)		
U27	.76(15.67)		
U28	.69(13.73)		
U29	.72(14.53)		
U30	.66(12.85)		
U31	.57(10.78)		
<i>Model fit statistics</i>			
$\chi^2=$	449.00		
$\chi^2/sd=$	1.83		
NFI=	.93		
NNFI=	.96		
CFI=	.97		
GFI=	.90		
AGFI=	.88		
RMSEA=	.05		

Table 6. Results of Discriminant Validity

Models	χ^2	sd
Constraint model	2214.45	251
Unconstrained model	449.00	245
$\Delta\chi^2$	1765.45	
Δsd		6
$6\chi^2 .05 = 12.5916$		

For testing hypotheses was used structural equation model. Table 7 were showed results of structural equation model. The results indicated an acceptable fit ($\chi^2= 449.00$; $\chi^2/df = 1.83$; RMSEA= .05; NFI= .93; NNFI = .96; CFI = .97; GFI= .90; AGFI= .88). Thus,

the findings provide a good basis for testing hypothesis. H_{1a} was statistically significant while other hypotheses were not statistically significant. Hence, H_{1b} and H_2 were rejected.

Table 7. The Results of Structural Model

Hypotheses	Model			Results
	Standardized coefficient	path	t-values	
H₁				
H _{1a} CNU1→ F	0.16		2.13	Supported
H _{1b} CNU2→ F	-0.02		-0.31	Rejected
H₂ MAT → F	-0.06		-0.84	Rejected

Note: t-values are statistically significant at the * $p < 0.05$ level.

Conclusion

Generally, marketing communication strategy aims to stimulate demand for products. People have to consume to survive and to improve both welfare and well-being. Therefore consumption is not a bad thing. But increasing over consumption threatens environment and life quality of future generations and the situation is a serious problem for everybody (Ims and Jakobsen, 2008). Besides, over-consumption can experience consumers' negative feelings such as distress, frustration, uneasiness. Namely, for future generations should be attracted attention the issues (Bove et al. 2009).

Frugality, materialism and consumers' need for uniqueness issues are important in terms of sustainability and consumer policy as regards both researchers and practitioners. Given the existing literature, researchers say that new product choice of more frugal consumers is less than materialistic consumers. The information provides market opportunities to small and large firms. Each of them should carry out different marketing strategies as regards both product/price offering and advertisement messages. Turkey is important market for multinational firms. Consequently, the firms will know and understand to Turkish consumers better and so they will position their products better. Moreover, if government want to use natural resources efficiently, it should encourage to conservation of resources them and create recognition of firms and consumers to the issues for now and future generations. Government can start to encourage from market mavens. The study has important implication regarding Turkish consumers. We extend research on Turkish consumers and together examining frugality, materialism and consumers' need for uniqueness in marketing literature.

The study has several limitations. First, the study was not applied to a specific sector. Second, the study was implemented only in Turkey and hence, our findings might not be generalized to other country. Third, we did not make an examining on demographic characters. Future research can examine materialism, frugality and consumers' need for uniqueness concepts in relation to not only the sustainability perspective but also product categories/choices and different countries/cities. Besides, they can do a research on consumers who have different demographic characteristics and various lifestyles.

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