

Development of The Attitude Scale Towards Cute Products



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Abstract

Although there are many products with the theme of cuteness, it seems that there are not enough studies on cuteness in the literature. This study aims to develop a “Consumer Attitude Scale Towards Cuteness in Design” to measure the phenomenon of cuteness, which is one of the factors affecting consumer behavior, and to present a cuteness-focused measurement tool for future research. In this context, field studies consisting of three separate pilot studies were conducted using qualitative and quantitative methods (Study 1). Subsequently, the scale in the design phase was tested with fieldwork to increase internal and external validity. While doing this, an inter-subject experimental-based field study on childhood experiences and attitudes towards cuteness (2x2) was conducted and the scale was developed (Study 2). As a result, the attitude scale towards cute products was developed in the design and the importance of positive experience in children’s experiences, which is an important factor in the cute product market, was emphasized.

Keywords: *Cute Product, Consumer Attitude, Positive Children’s Experiences*

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Sevimli Ürünlere Yönelik Tutum Ölçeğinin Geliştirilmesi

Öz

Sevimlilik temalı birçok ürün bulunsa da literatürde sevimlilik üzerine yeterli çalışmanın olmadığı görülmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, tüketici davranışını etkileyen faktörlerden olan sevimlilik olgusunu ölçmek amacıyla “Tasarımda Sevimliliğe Yönelik Tüketici Tutum Ölçeği” geliştirmek ve yapılacak araştırmalar için sevimlilik odaklı bir ölçüm aracı sunmaktır. Bu bağlamda öncelikle nitel ve nicel yöntemler kullanılarak üç ayrı pilot çalışmadan oluşan saha çalışmaları yapılmıştır (Çalışma 1). Devamında tasarım aşamasındaki ölçek, iç ve dış geçerliliği arttırmak için saha çalışması ile test edilmiştir. Bunu yaparken de çocukluk deneyimleri ve sevimliliğe yönelik tutumlar (2x2) denekler arası deney temelli saha çalışması yapılmış ve ölçek geliştirilmiştir (Çalışma 2). Sonuç olarak, tasarımda sevimli ürünlere yönelik tutum ölçeği geliştirilmiş ve sevimli ürün pazarında önemli bir faktör olan çocuk deneyimlerinde olumlu deneyimin önemi vurgulanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Sevimli Ürün, Tüketici Tutumu, Olumlu Çocukluk Deneyimleri*

Introduction

Today’s consumption habits show that while consumers want to have a product, they expect an appeal in that product in terms of emotional aspects as well as the functional benefits of the product (Crilly et al., 2004: 569). For this reason, as a result of changing consumer expectations in business, instead of focusing only on their functional needs and desires, trying to reach their emotions and perceptions will be a method that will support business in terms of competitiveness. Based on this reality, the phenomenon of cuteness becomes even more important when we talk about the emotional impact of products. Cuteness can be defined as a set of desings that aim to provide consumers with emotional benefits as well as functional benefits.

Cuteness is a concept that includes many factors. However, it is possible to say that it is basically included in the concept of entertainment, but it is not enough.

Cuteness includes many meanings ranging from objects that are frequently used in daily life, which create a feeling of sweetness, pleasantness and liking, to playfulness and humor. However, if an object or creature fulfills any of these criteria, it is considered cute (Wang, 2014: 4). Cuteness refers to different things than being cool or beautiful (Aksoy, 2010; Cross, 2004: 125). While concepts such as coolness or beauty are mostly used for young people and adults, cuteness is used for younger children or adults with child spirits (Brougere, 2013: 346-347). To give an example from marketing, Barbie or Superman are examples of coolness, while Bambi or Hello Kitty are examples of cuteness (Yano, 2004: 61; Brougere, 2013: 347). With its origins dating back to the 1970s, cuteness has become a tool that supports marketers in the processes of creating brand awareness and developing brand identity (Dydynski, 2017: 13). Where creativity is used as a marketing strategy, cuteness has a natural psychological appeal for some people. For example, cute mascots can overcome obstacles in emotional ways and create strong bonds with consumers (Soltani et al., 2018: 168). For example, it is seen that cuteness can be used in city marketing, supporting corporate tourism, establishing management systems, and at the same time supporting country development in the cultural dimension by giving importance to local culture (Praet, 2016, Lindström, 2019: 1, Jyan, 2022).

In summary, when the literature was examined, it was seen that cuteness, which has an important effect on the consumer, was addressed with different aspects in different studies (Barutçu and Adigüzel, 2015; Adigüzel and Barutçu, 2017; Adigüzel et al., 2017; Lu et al., 2021; Li et al., 2022; Yoon et al., 2022). However, although cute designed products are quite common in the market, the lack of any measurement tool to measure consumer attitudes towards these products is seen as a serious shortcoming. For this purpose, conducting a study on consumer attitudes towards cuteness in design was deemed appropriate. It is thought

that measuring consumer attitudes towards cute products, especially in terms of design, will benefit both the literature and marketing managers. In this context, the fact that there was no measurement tool that would serve this purpose in the literature research initiated the process of developing a scale. The first part of the study aims to develop a Consumer Attitude Scale Towards Cuteness in Design. In the second part, consumers' attitudes towards cute products and how they are affected by their childhood experiences were examined with a 2x2 inter-subject experimental design as Attitude Towards Cuteness (low/high) x Childhood Experiences (low/high), and the scale developed in this way was subjected to field analysis. The results of the study were evaluated in the results section.

Literature Review

In general, the number of adults consuming products produced for young people in society is increasing day by day. For example, it is seen that clothes produced for young people are used by adults (Adıgüzel, 2023; Kutlu, 2023). The mass of consumers, who are actually adults who demand childish products by acting under their age, has led to the emergence and growth of new markets (Kutlu, 2023). This change in consumer demands leads businesses to reach consumers by emphasizing dynamic, cute, childlike elements in their marketing mix elements (Brown, 2010; Hellén and Sääksjärvi, 2013). Underlying these behaviors of adults are reasons as the desire to revive memories of youth or to experience nostalgia (Bernardini, 2014; Kutlu, 2023).

Many of the theories emerging in psychology the importance of childhood experiences in the development of individuals' personalities and this reality is supported by research (Deniz, 2006; Durmuşoğlu and Yıldırım, 2006; Çelikkaleli et al., 2009; Atak, 2011; Çam et al., 2012; Demir and Kumcağız, 2015; Manap, 2015). In addition, it is accepted that childhood experiences also affect the individual's adolescence and adulthood in the following years (Manap, 2015). In this case, an individual's childhood experiences are also expected to affect his/her behavior as consumer.

Cuteness is a concept that has childhood or childishness at its core. For this reason, based on the view that an individual's childhood experiences affect the attitude towards cute products, the research focuses on testing how effective two products designed as cute and normal are on consumers with low and high childhood experience levels (family experience, school experience, friendship experience).

The following hypotheses were developed for this purpose:

H₁: Consumers' product tastes differ according to cute/normal design and childhood family life level (low/high).

H₂: Consumers' product tastes differ according to cute/normal design and childhood school life level (low/high).

H₃: Consumers' product tastes differ according to cute/normal design and childhood friendship life level (low/high).

Today, cuteness is a marketing tool that can be used not only in children's products but also in adult products (Adigüzel, 2023). A very serious market has been formed due to consumer demands and cuteness is in the middle of this market. Another hypothesis of the research is based on this information. The hypothesis H₄ was developed to determine the effect of products designed as cute and normal on the attitude towards cuteness design:

H₄: Consumer attitudes towards cuteness in design differ according to cute/normal products.

In line with the hypotheses developed, the scale development process was planned to be carried out in the first study, and the field application of the final scale developed in the first study was planned in the second study.

Methodology

Study 1: Scale Development

The main purpose of this study is to develop an attitude scale for products that direct consumer behavior different from the concept of

cuteness in the biological sense. During the scale development process, focus group interviews and expert opinions were consulted. As a result of literature review, focus group discussions and interviews with experts, an item pool of 12 items was obtained.

The first pilot study was conducted to test whether the 12 statements in the obtained item pool were understood correctly and to test the appropriateness of the items. Data were collected by face-to-face questionnaire method. A five-point Likert scale was used in questionnaire form and since no problems were encountered with this method in practice, this method was applied in the rest of the study.

The first pilot study was conducted with 65 participants. The candidate measurement tool was given to the participants and the purpose of the study was explained to the participants. It took approximately 5-8 minutes for the participants to respond to the candidate measurement tool. After the study, the participants were asked whether the statement in the candidate measurement tool were understandable. The opinions of the participants that the statements in the candidate item pool were removed from the candidate scale before the second pilot study. At the same time, it was tested that these items did not have appropriate factor loadings in the exploratory factor analysis. The second pilot study was conducted with the 8 items constituting the candidate scale with the help of online survey platforms. In this study, data were collected from 161 respondents. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the candidate scale was 0.838. In addition, according to the results of the explanatory factor analysis, all items were grouped into a single dimension. In the 8-item-candidate scale, 2 items were removed from the candidate scale because their factor loadings were less than 0.32 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013) and the analyses continued with 6 items. The explained variance of the 6-item candidate scale was 61,739 and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.841 (Table 1).

Table 1: Pilot Study Component Matrix Data

<i>EXPRESSIONS</i>	<i>FACTOR LOADS</i>	<i>Item Level Internal Consistency (α)</i>
1.I like cute products.	.810	
2.Objects with different designs attract my attention.	.712	
3.I am always attracted to vibrant colors.	.730	.841
4.Sympathetic products make me happy.	.818	
5.Using fun designed products makes me feel good.	.826	
6.The more cute the product is, the more I want to use it.	.811	

The third pilot study was conducted with 6 items and 251 respondents with the help of online survey sites. As a result of the exploratory factor analysis, it was seen that the questions were gathered in a single dimension in the third pilot study conducted with a different sample (KMO coefficient 0.857; Bartlett's Sphericity test $p < 0.005$ significance level, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient 0.839). Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted with this data set and AMOS program was used in this analysis. According to the results of the analysis, the second item in the item pool, "*Objects with different designs attract my attention*" was removed from the item pool due to its low factor loading (0.364). After this item was removed, confirmatory factor analysis yielded appropriate goodness of fit values (CFI: 0.969; NFI: 0.962, GFI: 0.960, CR =0.880, AVE= 0.595). The construct reliability and average variance explained values were found to be at the expected level.

As a result of the studies conducted within the scope of this research, the "*Consumer Attitude Scale Towards Cuteness in Design*" consisting of 5 items and a single factor was reached (Table 2):

Table 2: Consumer Attitude Scale Towards Cuteness in Design Items

1. I like cute products.	1.Şirin ürünlerden hoşlanırım.
2. I am always attracted to vibrant colors.	2.Canlı renkler benim her zaman ilgimi çeker.
3. Sympathetic products make me happy.	3.Sempatik ürünler beni mutlu eder
4.Using fun designed products makes me feel good.	4.Eğlenceli dizayn edilmiş ürünleri kullanmak kendimi iyi hissettirir.
5.The more cute the product is, the more I want to use it.	5.Ürün ne kadar sevimli ise benim onu kullanma isteğim o kadar artar.

Study 2. Experimental Design

Within the scope of the hypotheses developed, it was aimed to examine the affect towards cute designed products according to the combination of two different conditions as a) cute designed product-normal designed product and b) low-high childhood experiences in the form of 2x2.

The products have been determined as home slippers, a product group that everyone needs in line with expert opinions.

Data Collection

The scope of the research was limited to consumers with mobile phone numbers over the age of 18. Data was collected through an online survey and visuals on Surveey.com.

Two scales were used as data collection tools in the study. In order to measure consumer attitudes towards cute products, the Consumer Attitude Scale Towards Cuteness in Design, which constitutes the first stage of this study, and the Childhood Experiences Scale (Manap, 2015) were used since it is thought that attitudes towards cuteness are related to childhood experiences.

The Consumer Attitudes Scale Towards Cuteness in Design consists of 5 items in total and one dimension. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and factor loadings of the scale are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Consumer Attitudes Scale Towards Cuteness in Design

<i>EXPRESSIONS</i>	<i>FACTOR LOADS</i>	<i>Item Level Internal Consistency (α)</i>
1.I like cute products.	.818	
2.I am always attracted to vibrant colors.	.767	
3.Sympathetic products make me happy.	.872	.877
4.Using fun designed products makes me feel good.	.829	
5.The more cute the product is, the more I want to use it.	.823	

Confirmatory factor analysis was performed with this data set and appropriate goodness of fit values were obtained (CFI: 0.970; NFI: 0.964, GFI: 0.963, CR=0.881, AVE= 0.598). It was concluded that CFI, NFI and GFI values were in the good fit range. The construct reliability and mean variance explained values were found to be within the expected values.

The Childhood Experiences Scale consists of 12 items and 3 dimensions in total. In this study, the 12 items were divided into 3 dimensions, The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and factor loadings of the scale are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Childhood Experiences Scale

<i>EXPRESSIONS</i>	<i>FACTOR LOADS</i>	<i>Item Level Internal Consistency (α)</i>
FAMILY1	.892	.950
FAMILY2	.888	
FAMILY3	.885	
FAMILY4	.818	
SCHOOL1	.617	.737
SCHOOL2	.679	
SCHOOL3	.651	
SCHOOL4	.566	
FRIEND1	.763	.895
FRIEND2	.795	
FRIEND3	.798	
FRIEND4	.702	

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the Childhood Experiences Scale with this data set and appropriate goodness of fit values were obtained (CFI: 0.954; NFI: 0.936, GFI: 0.910). According to the confirmatory factor analysis results, CFI, NFI and GFI values were found to be within the acceptable range (Wheaton et al., 1977; Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003). The construct reliability and mean explained variance values (CR =0.948, AVE= 0.820 for the family dimension; CR= 0.724, AVE= 0.409 for the school dimension; CR= 0.907, AVE= 0.711 for the friendship sub-dimension) were found to be within the expected values (Fornel and Larcker, 1981; Lam, 2012).

Research Design

Participants were randomly assigned to the experimental group or control group depending on whether the last digit of their phone number was odd or even. Since the product (slippers) used in the experimental design differs according to gender, the visuals of the products presented to the control and experimental groups were determined differently according to gender. It has been proven by t-test that the products used

in the control and experimental groups do not differ according to gender (experimental group t-test $p=0.650$, control group t-test $p=0.837$). Images of the products selected in line with expert opinions are shown in Photo 1 and Photo 2. While the products offered to the experimental group consisted of products with cute designs (Photo 1), the products for the control group were selected from the same product group but with normal designs (Photo 2).

WOMEN'S PRODUCT



MEN'S PRODUCT

**Photograph 1: Experimental Group Visuals**

WOMEN'S PRODUCT



MEN'S PRODUCT

**Photograph 2: Control Group Visuals**

In the questionnaire prepared in accordance with the purpose of the research, people encountered the visual and the items belonging to the visual under it. The research was conducted with a total of 310 participants.

Findings

Subjects' Level of Liking for Photographs According to Their Family Life Experimental Design

H₁: Consumers' product tastes differ according to cute/normal product design and childhood family life level (low/high).

Table 5 shows the results of the experimental design (univariate) for the subjects' liking of the products in the photographs they saw according to their family life levels. In the parallel with the studies (Deniz, 2006; Durmuşoğlu and Yıldırım, 2006; Çelikkaleli et al., 2009; Atak, 2011; Çam et al., 2012; Demir and Kumcağız, 2015; Manap, 2015) on the effects of the events experienced in childhood on the individual and based on the fact that cuteness is directly proportional to happiness, it is expected that individuals with high levels of family life will like the image with cute product photos.

In support of this, the liking for cute products of individuals with high levels of family life (3,86) is higher than that of individuals with low levels of family life (3,56). In other words, individuals with high levels of family life like cute products photos more. Again, individuals with low levels of family life (2,86) like normal product photos more than individuals with high levels of family life (2,71). It is concluded that individuals with different family life levels have different product tastes ($p < .001$). Accordingly, hypothesis H_1 is accepted. As a result, individuals with a high level of family life in childhood like cute designed product photos.

Table 5: Experimental Design (Univariate) Results of Subjects' Level of Liking for Photographs According to Their Family Life

Photo. Type.	Family Life Level	Mean	S. Deviation	N	p
Cute	Low	3,563	,933	71	<0,001
	High	3,860	1,007	79	
	Total	3,720	,981	150	
Normal	Low	2,865	1,182	79	
	High	2,716	1,246	81	
	Total	2,789	1,213	160	
Total	Low	3,195	1,124	150	
	High	3,281	1,268	160	
	Total	3,239	1,199	310	

Subjects' Level of Liking for Photographs According to Their School Experiences Experimental Design

H₂: Consumers' product tastes differ according to cute/normal product design and childhood school experience level (low/high).

Table 6 shows the results of the experimental design (univariate) for the subjects' liking of the products in the photographs they saw according to their school experience levels. School experiences have a very effective place among the events experienced during childhood on individuals. Individuals with high level of school experiences are expected to like the image with cute product photographs. In line with the expectations, the mean liking of cute products of the participants who had positive school experiences in childhood (3,95) was higher than the mean of the low level participants (3,32). Again, it is expected that the mean of individuals with low school experiences (2,79) will be higher than the mean of those with high school experiences (2,78). Although this prediction is correct, it is seen that difference is not too much. In support of the meaning in the matrix, the p value was also significant ($p < .001$).

As a result, individuals with a high level of school experience have positive attitudes towards cute products in design and the level of school experience shows a difference in product tastes. Accordingly, hypothesis H_2 is accepted.

Table 6: Experimental Design (Univariate) Results of Subjects' Level of Liking for Photographs According to Their School Experience

Photo. Type.	School Life Level	Mean	S. Deviation	N	p
Cute	Low	3,321	,980	56	<0,001
	High	3,957	,906	94	
	Total	3,720	,981	150	
Normal	Low	2,793	1,227	71	
	High	2,786	1,209	89	
	Total	2,789	1,213	160	
Total	Low	3,026	1,151	127	
	High	3,388	1,213	183	
	Total	3,239	1,199	310	

Experimental Design of Subjects' Level of Liking for Photographs According to Their Childhood Friend Experiences

H₃: Consumers' product liking differs according to cute/normal product design and childhood friendship level (low/high).

Table 7 shows the results of the experimental design (univariate) for the liking of the products in the photographs according to friendship are expected to like the image with cute product photographs. In line with the expectations, participants who had positive friendship experiences in childhood had higher liking levels for cute products (3,95) than those with low liking levels (3,45). Again, it was expected that individuals with low friendship experiences (2,81) would like photos with normal product images more than individuals with high friendship experiences (2,76). As a result, this prediction was correct. Supporting the meaning in the matrix, the p value was found to be less than 0,001.

As a result, individuals with high levels of friendship experience exhibit positive attitudes towards cute products in design, friendship levels in childhood may cause differentiation in product tastes. H_3 is accepted.

Table 7: Experimental Design (Univariate) Results of Subjects' Level of Liking for Photographs According to Childhood Friend Experiences

Photo. Type.	School Life Level	Mean	S. Deviation	N	p
Cute	Low	3,455	,926	71	<0,001
	High	3,957	,974	79	
	Total	3,720	,981	150	
Normal	Low	2,819	1,203	74	
	High	2,763	1,228	86	
	Total	2,789	1,213	160	
Total	Low	3,131	1,119	145	
	High	3,335	1,261	165	
	Total	3,239	1,199	310	

Experimental Design of Attitude Towards Cute Products According to Subjects' Level of Liking for Photographs

H_4 : *Consumer attitudes towards cute products differ according to cute and normal products.*

Table 8 shows the result of the experimental design (univariate) of the subjects' attitudes towards cute products according to their level of liking the photos they saw. The mean (3,20) of the individuals with low levels of attitude towards cute products and who encountered cute photographs was lower than the mean (4,18) of the individuals with high levels of attitude towards cute products and who encountered cute photographs. On the other hand, it was concluded that the mean of individuals with low levels of attitude towards cute products and normal photographs (2,62) was lower than the mean of individuals with high levels of attitude towards cute products and normal photographs (2,96). P value was found as less than 0,001. As a result, the likes of individuals with

high level attitudes towards cute designed products differ from the likes of individuals with low level attitudes. In line with this result, hypothesis H_4 is accepted. At the end we can say that, the cuteness of the product has a positive effect on consumers' attitudes.

Table 8: Experimental Design (Univariate) Results of Attitudes Towards Cute Products According to Subjects' Level of Liking for Photographs

Photo. Type.	Level of Attitude Towards Cuteness	Mean	S. Deviation	N	p
Cute	Low	3,206	1,005	71	<0,001
	High	4,181	,691	79	
	Total	3,720	,981	150	
Normal	Low	2,627	1,226	84	
	High	2,969	1,181	76	
	Total	2,789	1,213	160	
Total	Low	2,892	1,163	155	
	High	3,587	1,136	155	
	Total	3,239	1,199	310	

Conclusion

In this study, our main aim is to develop a tool to measure the attitude towards cuteness in the literature. However, the effect of childhood experiences, which we think have an effect on the attitude towards cuteness, is another issue that is also aimed to be investigated. In this context, the first study consists of data collection and analyses for scale development.

As a result of the first study, a scale consisting of one size and 5 items was developed to measure the attitudes of consumers towards cute designed products and contributed to the literature.

In the second study, it was aimed to study the scale developed in the first study in the field. For this reason, based on the interaction of the

attitude towards cuteness with personality, it was aimed to examine the childhood period, which is one of the factors affecting personality, and the effect of the childhood period on the product preferences of adults was examined in parallel with family-school-friendship. For this purpose, four hypotheses were created and tested with support from the literature.

When the general results of the hypotheses are evaluated and the impact of childhood experiences on the individual is taken into consideration, when we classify the levels of experience in family life, school life and friendship relationships as high and low on the basis of happiness, it is observed that individuals with high happiness levels exhibit more positive attitudes towards cutely designed products. However, it has also been concluded that relationships between friends and relationships in school life have a greater impact on individuals' attitudes than family life. In other words, it can be said that individuals' level of influence from their peers also affects their attitudes towards cutely designed products.

In addition, it was found that the effect of school life in childhood and friendship experiences in childhood is relatively more effective than family life in childhood. This result has once again revealed the importance of issues such as peer relations and perhaps peer bullying in schools. Perhaps a future study focusing on peer relations in the education system will illuminate another unknown point in the attitude towards cuteness.

Discussion

So where can this result take us? Where can we use this result as marketing? As we all know, happiness indices of countries and even cities are announced every year. According to the result of this, some countries are characterised as happier and some as unhappier. For example, according to 2023 data, the top ten happiest countries are Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Israel, Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Luxemburg, New Zealand (Saunders, 2023). Since we have already mentioned that cuteness is parallel to happiness, we believe that entering the markets of happy countries with cute products will provide an important gain for marketers.

In light of this study, we think that in the future, studies on happiness and cuteness can be conducted by using a happiness scale such as a childhood scale, by using an attitude scale towards happiness and cuteness according to the level of education in different countries, or by gender.

In order to give an idea about future studies that will guide researchers working not only in marketing but also in the field of design, studies on happiness and cuteness can be carried out by using the attitude scale towards happiness and cuteness according to the education level in different countries, or the scale can be used to measure attitudes towards cute designed products in studies to be carried out in the field of design. It is thought that its use may be beneficial.

Limitations and Future Research

Implementation of the study in a single country can be considered as an infertility of the study. However, this also provides an opportunity for future studies. It is thought that the implementation of this study in other countries will be inspiring for future studies.

Statement of Research and Publication Ethics

This research was carried out in accordance with the rules of scientific research and publication ethics.

Authors' Contribution Rates

The research was prepared by a single author.

Statement of Support

This research was not supported by any institution or organization

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Statement of Interest

This research is not subject to any conflict of interest.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Sevimli Ürünlere Yönelik Tutum Ölçeğinin Geliştirilmesi

Sevimlilik temalı birçok ürün bulunsa da literatürde sevimlilik üzerine yeterli çalışmanın olmadığı görülmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, tüketici davranışını etkileyen faktörlerden olan sevimlilik olgusunu ölçmek amacıyla “Tasarımda Sevimliliğe Yönelik Tüketici Tutum Ölçeği” geliştirmek ve yapılacak araştırmalar için sevimlilik odaklı bir ölçüm aracı sunmaktır.

İlk çalışma, ölçek geliştirmeye yönelik veri toplama ve analizlerden oluşmaktadır. Bu bağlamda öncelikle nitel ve nicel yöntemler kullanılarak üç ayrı pilot çalışmadan oluşan saha çalışmaları yapılmıştır (Çalışma 1). Bu çalışmada temel amacımız literatürde sevimliliğe yönelik tutumu ölçmeye yönelik bir araç geliştirmektir.

Ancak sevimliliğe yönelik tutum üzerinde etkisi olduğunu düşündüğümüz çocukluk yaşantılarının etkisi de araştırılması amaçlanan bir diğer konudur. Devamında tasarım aşamasındaki ölçek, iç ve dış geçerliliği arttırmak için saha çalışması ile test edilmiştir. Bunu yaparken de çocukluk deneyimleri ve sevimliliğe yönelik tutumlar (2x2) denekler arası deney temelli saha çalışması yapılmış ve ölçek geliştirilmiştir (Çalışma 2).

İkinci çalışmada ise ilk çalışmada geliştirilen ölçeğin incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu nedenle sevimliliğe yönelik tutumun kişilik ile etkileşiminden yola çıkarak kişiliği etkileyen faktörlerden biri olan çocukluk döneminin incelenmesi amaçlanmış ve çocukluk döneminin aile-okul-arkadaşlık etkileşiminin yetişkinlerin ürün tercihlerine etki ettiği gerçekliğinden yola çıkılmıştır.

Literatürden destek alınarak dört hipotez oluşturulmuş ve test edilmiştir. Sevimlilik, özünde çocukluk ya da çocukluğu barındıran bir kavramdır. Bu nedenle araştırma, bireyin çocukluk deneyimlerinin sevimli ürünlere yönelik tutumu etkilediği görüşünden yola çıkarak, sevimli ve normal olarak tasarlanan iki ürünün çocukluk deneyimi düzeyi (aile deneyimi, okul deneyimi, arkadaşlık deneyimi) düşük ve yüksek olan tüketiciler üzerinde ne kadar etkili olduğunun test edilmesine odaklanmaktadır.

Bu amaç doğrultusunda aşağıdaki hipotezler geliştirilmiştir:

H₁: Tüketicilerin ürün beğenileri sevimli/normal tasarıma ve çocuklukta aile yaşam düzeyine (düşük/yüksek) göre farklılık göstermektedir.

H₂: Tüketicilerin ürün beğenileri sevimli/normal tasarıma ve çocukluktaki okul yaşam düzeyine (düşük/yüksek) göre farklılık göstermektedir.

H₃: Tüketicilerin ürün beğenileri sevimli/normal tasarıma ve çocukluktaki arkadaşlık yaşam düzeyine (düşük/yüksek) göre farklılık göstermektedir.

Günümüzde sevimlilik sadece çocuk ürünlerinde değil yetişkin ürünlerinde de kullanılabilir bir pazarlama aracıdır (Adıgüzel, 2023). Tüketici talepleri nedeniyle çok ciddi bir pazar oluştu ve bu pazarın ortasında sevimlilik yer alıyor. Araştırmanın bir diğer hipotezi de bu bilgilere dayanmaktadır. H4 hipotezi sevimli ve normal olarak tasarlanan ürünlerin sevimlilik tasarımına yönelik tutum üzerindeki etkisini belirlemek amacıyla geliştirilmiştir:

H₄: Tüketicilerin tasarımda sevimliliğe yönelik tutumları sevimli/normal ürünlere göre farklılık göstermektedir.

Geliştirilen hipotezler doğrultusunda ilk çalışmada ölçek geliştirme sürecinin gerçekleştirilmesi planlanmış, ikinci çalışmada ise ilk çalışmada geliştirilen son ölçeğin saha uygulaması planlanmıştır.

Ölçek geliştirme sürecinde odak grup görüşmelerine ve uzman görüşlerine başvurulmuştur. Literatür taraması, odak grup görüşmeleri ve uzmanlarla yapılan görüşmeler sonucunda 12 maddelik bir madde havuzu elde edilmiştir.

Elde edilen madde havuzundaki 12 ifadenin doğru anlaşılıp anlaşılmadığını ve maddelerin uygunluğunu test etmek amacıyla ilk pilot çalışma yapılmıştır. Veriler yüz yüze anket yöntemiyle toplanmıştır. Anket formunda beşli Likert ölçeği kullanılmış ve uygulamada bu yöntemle herhangi bir sorunla karşılaşmadığından çalışmanın geri kalan kısmında bu yöntem uygulanmıştır.

İlk pilot çalışma 65 katılımcıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Katılımcılara aday ölçme aracı verilmiş ve çalışmanın amacı katılımcılara anlatılmıştır. Katılımcıların aday ölçme aracını yanıtlamaları yaklaşık 5-8 dakika sürmüştür. Çalışmanın ardından katılımcılara aday ölçme aracında yer alan ifadelerin anlaşılır olup olmadığı sorulmuştur. Katılımcıların aday madde havuzunda yer alan ifadelerin ikinci pilot çalışma öncesinde aday ölçekten çıkarılıp çıkarılmaması yönündeki görüşleri alınmıştır. Aynı zamanda açıcı faktör analizinde bu maddelerin uygun faktör yüklerine sahip olmadığı test edilmiştir. İkinci pilot çalışma ise aday ölçeği oluşturan 8 madde ile çevrimiçi anket platformları yardımıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu çalışmada 161 katılımcıdan veri toplanmıştır. Aday ölçeğin Cronbach Alfa katsayısı 0,838 olarak bulunmuştur. Ayrıca açıklayıcı faktör analizi sonuçlarına göre tüm maddeler tek bir boyutta gruplandırılmıştır. 8 maddelik aday ölçekte 2 maddenin faktör yükleri 0,32'nin altında olduğu için

(Tabachnick ve Fidell, 2013) aday ölçekten çıkarılmış ve analizler 6 madde ile devam etmiştir.

Üçüncü pilot çalışma, çevrimiçi anket siteleri yardımıyla 6 madde ve 251 katılımcıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Açıklayıcı faktör analizi sonucunda farklı bir örnekleme yapılan üçüncü pilot çalışmada soruların tek boyutta toplandığı görülmüştür. Bu veri seti ile doğrulayıcı faktör analizi yapılmış ve bu analizde AMOS programı kullanılmıştır. Analiz sonuçlarına göre madde havuzunda yer alan ikinci madde olan “Farklı tasarımı olan nesnelere ilgimi çeker” maddesi faktör yükünün düşük olması (0,364) nedeniyle madde havuzundan çıkarılmıştır. Bu madde çıkarıldıktan sonra doğrulayıcı faktör analizi uygun uyum iyiliği değerleri vermiştir. Yapı güvenirliği ve açıklanan ortalama varyans değerlerinin beklenen düzeyde olduğu görülmüştür. Bu araştırma kapsamında yapılan çalışmalar sonucunda 5 maddeden oluşan ve tek faktörden oluşan “Tasarımda Sevimliliğe İlişkin Tüketici Tutum Ölçeği”ne ulaşılmıştır.

Geliştirilen hipotezler kapsamında sevimli tasarımlı ürünlere yönelik etkinin a) sevimli tasarlanmış ürün-normal tasarlanmış ürün ve b) 2x2 şeklinde düşük-yüksek çocukluk deneyimleri şeklinde iki farklı koşulun birleşimine göre incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır.

Ürünler, uzman görüşleri doğrultusunda herkesin ihtiyaç duyduğu bir ürün grubu olan ev terliği olarak belirlenmiştir. Araştırmanın kapsamı 18 yaş üstü cep telefonu numarasına sahip tüketicilerle sınırlı tutulmuştur. Veriler, çevrimiçi anket ve Surveey.com’daki görseller aracılığıyla toplanmıştır.

Katılımcılar telefon numaralarının son rakamının tek veya çift olmasına göre deney veya kontrol grubuna rastgele atanmıştır. Deneysel desende kullanılan ürün (terlik) cinsiyete göre farklılık gösterdiğinden kontrol ve deney gruplarına sunulan ürünlerin görselleri cinsiyete göre farklı şekilde belirlenmiştir. Kontrol ve deney gruplarında kullanılan ürünlerin cinsiyete göre farklılık göstermediği t-testi ile kanıtlanmıştır.

Uzman görüşleri doğrultusunda seçilen ürünlerin görselleri Fotoğraf 1 ve Fotoğraf 2’de gösterilmektedir. Deney grubuna sunulan ürünler sevimli tasarımlara sahip ürünlerden oluşurken (Fotoğraf 1), kontrol grubuna sunulan ürünler aynı grup ama normal tasarımlarla (Fotoğraf 2) tasarlanmış bir üründen seçilmiştir. Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak iki ölçek kullanılmıştır. Tüketicilerin sevimli ürünlere yönelik tutumlarını ölçmek amacıyla bu çalışmanın ilk aşamasını oluşturan “Tasarımda Sevimliliğe Yönelik Tüketici Tutum Ölçeği” ve sevimliliğe yönelik tutumların çocukluk deneyimleri ile ilişkili olduğu düşünüldüğünden “Çocukluk Deneyimleri Ölçeği” (Manap, 2015) kullanılmıştır.

Araştırmanın amacına uygun olarak hazırlanan ankette kişiler görsel ve onun altındaki görsele ait öğelerle karşılaşmıştır. Araştırma toplam 310 katılımcı ile gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Hipotezlerin genel sonuçları değerlendirildiğinde ve çocukluk deneyimlerinin birey üzerindeki etkisi göz önüne alındığında, mutluluk temelinde aile yaşamı, okul yaşamı ve arkadaşlık ilişkilerindeki deneyim düzeylerini yüksek ve düşük olarak sınıflandırdığımızda; Mutluluk düzeyi yüksek bireylerin sevimli tasarımlı ürünlere karşı daha olumlu tutum sergiledikleri görülmektedir. Ancak arkadaşlar arası ilişkiler ve okul yaşamındaki ilişkilerin bireylerin tutumları üzerinde aile yaşamından daha büyük bir etkiye sahip olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Başka bir deyişle bireylerin akranlarından etkilenme düzeylerinin, sevimli tasarımlı ürünlere yönelik tutumlarını da etkilediği söylenebilir.