

Analysing the Ethical Factors Affecting the Purchasing Behaviour of University Youth in the Digital Environment with Extended Planned Behaviour Theory (TPB)



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Abstract

Ethical values, which have become one of the most prominent issues of the digital age, have started to guide consumption behaviour. This situation becomes much more important for businesses in terms of analysing consumer behaviour in a country with a young population like Türkiye. This research aims to examine the ethical factors affecting young consumers' purchasing behaviour in the digital age by extending the TPB theory. In accordance with the purpose of the research, ethical considerations (EC) and trust (TR) were added to TPB. In this way, TPB has gained functionality in terms of explaining ethical consumption behaviour as well as adding depth to the study. The proposed research model was tested using the structural equation modelling technique. The convenience sampling method was benefited for this research and the necessary data for the analyses were collected from 333 young consumers, providing adequate data for the sample size, between the ages of 18-25 with the help of face-to-face surveys. Findings show that the EC has a partial mediating effect on the relationships of attitude (AT), perceived behavioural control (PBC) and trust (TR) with the purchase intention (PI) v. AT, PBC and TR have both

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direct and indirect effects on the formation of purchasing intention. There is no significant effect of the subjective norms (SN) to purchase intention. The R^2 value of the PI is 0.41. This value provides a stronger explanation for purchasing behaviour than the original model. The research not only provides an understanding of the consumption behaviours of young consumers in terms of ethical values in today's digital age but also provides important data to businesses and researchers in this field.

Keywords: Ethical Values, Ethical Consumption, TPB, Purchase Intention

Dijital Ortamda Üniversite Gençliğinin Satın Alma Davranışını Etkileyen Etik Faktörlerin Genişletilmiş Planlı Davranış Teorisi (PDT) ile Analizi

Öz

Etik değerler, dijital çağın en dikkat çeken konularından biri haline gelmiş olup, tüketim davranışlarını yönlendirmeye başlamıştır. Bu durum, özellikle genç nüfusa sahip bir ülke olan Türkiye’de tüketici davranışlarının analiz edilmesi açısından işletmeler için çok daha önemli hale gelmektedir. Bu araştırma, dijital çağda genç tüketicilerin satın alma davranışlarını etkileyen etik faktörleri, Planlı Davranış Teorisi (PDT) genişletilerek incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmanın amacı doğrultusunda, PDT modeline etik kaygılar (EK) ve güven (GV) değişkenleri eklenmiştir. Bu şekilde PDT modeli, etik tüketim davranışlarını açıklama konusunda işlevsellik kazanmış ve çalışmaya derinlik katmıştır. Önerilen araştırma modeli, yapısal eşitlik modelleme (YEM) tekniği kullanılarak test edilmiştir. Araştırmada kolayda örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmış ve analizler için gerekli veriler, 18-25 yaş aralığındaki 333 genç tüketiciden yüz yüze anket yöntemiyle toplanmıştır; bu örneklem sayısı analizler için yeterli görülmektedir. Araştırma bulguları, etik kaygıların (EK), tutum (TT), algılanan davranışsal kontrol (ADK) ve güvenin (GV) satın alma niyeti (SN) ile olan ilişkilerinde kısmi aracılık etkisi bulunduğunu göstermektedir. Ayrıca TT, ADK ve GV değişkenlerinin satın alma niyeti üzerinde

hem doğrudan hem de dolaylı etkileri olduğu ortaya konmuştur. Buna karşılık, öznel normların (ÖN) satın alma niyeti üzerinde anlamlı bir etkisi bulunmamıştır. Satın alma niyetine ilişkin R^2 değeri 0,41 olarak hesaplanmıştır. Bu değer, özgün modele kıyasla satın alma davranışının daha güçlü bir şekilde açıklandığını göstermektedir. Araştırma, dijital çağda genç tüketicilerin etik değerler bağlamında tüketim davranışlarının anlaşılmasına katkı sunmakla kalmayıp, aynı zamanda bu alandaki işletmelere ve araştırmacılara önemli veriler sağlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Etik Değerler, Etik Tüketim, Planlı Davranış Teorisi, Satın Alma Niyeti

Introduction

The main goal of businesses is to deliver the goods and services they produce to consumers in a sustainable manner with the highest profitability. They try to fulfil this goal with the administrative functions they have. In this context, marketing appears as a business function that is tasked with achieving this goal. With marketing, businesses determine the desires and needs of the consumer potential they appeal to and design the right product. In other words, businesses analyse the behaviour of potential customers through marketing and focus on offering them the most suitable products and services at a reasonable price, at the right place and time, with the right information activities (Erdoğan, 2019). However, the rapid change in digital technologies has resulted in technology-oriented consumer behaviour. In order to keep up with this new consumption behaviour, businesses have started to move some activities such as marketing, sale and customer services to the digital environment and carry out their traditional marketing activities with digital tools. This new situation has started to create new ethical problems like never before. The main reason for this is that businesses have increased opportunities to target their desired consumer potential and conduct marketing activity by using the power of digital marketing, without being bound by any legal regulations. On the other hand, marketing ethics deals with how and on which platform the marketing efforts of businesses are conducted (Emennaa and Kaplan, 2021). In this context, it would be appro-

priate to say that ethics came into being with the emergence of societies and played a significant role in determining social relations (Ayrar et al., 2023). In its simplest terms, ethics is keeping human behaviour within moral values (Erciř and Türk, 2016). With sociocultural and technological developments in societies, people have become more aware of their rights in different areas of life. Thus, they began to seek their rights in all areas of life. One of the best examples of this belongs to the post-World War II period. During this period, the main goal of businesses was to sell more to consumers no matter what, and for this purpose they even gave false information to consumers about their products and services. Due to consumers' dissatisfaction with this unethical situation and their demands for rights, governments had to make new regulations (Ağlargöz, 2021). Nowadays, businesses have three basic objectives: "making profit, being useful to society and surviving" (Ayrar et al., 2023, pp.370). When evaluated in this context, businesses are more sensitive about consumer rights in today's harsh competitive environment. This behaviour of businesses in respecting consumer rights is called marketing ethics. In today's competitive environment, complying with the principles of marketing ethics has become a necessity for businesses (Saray and Hazer, 2017). There are three vital reasons for this situation for businesses (Akyıldız, 2017, pp.493):

- *Consumers' increasing demand for sustainable marketing efforts,*
- *Increasing environmental pressures,*
- *Loss of reputation.* "

On the other hand, as just mentioned, technological developments have surrounded every aspect of human life, especially in the last thirty years. As a reflection of this situation, businesses have changed the way they market their products and services and present them to consumers. While this new situation provides significant advantages for consumers, it also has some drawbacks. Businesses use these recent technologies extensively to analyse consumers' behaviour and determine the most suitable product, price, distribution, and promotion options for them. How-

ever, some businesses can sell sensitive data about consumers, which they obtain through smart applications, to other businesses to earn more profit. In addition, most of the time, without the knowledge of consumers, their virtual navigation is determined by applications called cookies and their online behaviour in the virtual environment is modelled (Avcılar et al., 2021). In addition to this situation, due to inadequate security measures of businesses, consumers' payment information or credit card information can be stolen by internet hackers and cause significant financial losses for consumers. These unethical implementations or not being able to provide reliable virtual platforms for companies will lead to a loss of their respect and result in customer loss. To retain consumer potential, companies should behave ethically, just like their competitors. Having safe and reliable online platforms has become crucial for maintaining a positive image in the minds of consumers, particularly the younger generation, who are more accustomed to digital media than the older generation (Sarmah et al., 2023). Particularly in Türkiye, where the proportion of young people surpasses that of the general population (worldometers, 2024), it has become crucial for companies to establish a strong brand reputation in their digital marketing endeavours. This research examines the impact of unethical practices on the online purchasing behaviour of Turkish youth using the extended Theory of Planned Behaviour.

The research will make a unique contribution to the literature by determining which ethical values guide the purchasing decisions of young consumers in the digital environment and having a new research model developed on the basis of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). When examining studies on ethical consumption, it is observed that Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) has been one of the widely used theories but remain limited to the TPB theory itself (Sun, 2019; Liu et. al., 2019; Djafarova and Foots, 2022). However, the TPB primarily focuses on measuring general human behaviour. In the study, new variables were added to the existing functionality of the TPB, and ethical consumption behaviour was examined from the perspective of different variables. Furthermore, some studies (Riemenschneider et. al., 2019; D'souza et. al., 2022) incorporate the ethical considerations into their proposed models, ignoring

the price fairness, while other studies (Dorce et. al., 2021; Sun and Yoon, 2022; Ryoo and Kim, 2023; Niloy et. al., 2023) consider the price fairness, but do not include the ethical considerations within the scope of the research. Also, the relevant literature primarily focuses on the topics like sustainable consumption, agricultural products (non-food), organic food consumption, vegetarian food consumption and fashion consumption (Brandão and Costa, 2021; Berki-Kiss and Mendrad, 2022; D'souza et. al., 2022; Rossi and Rivetti, 2023; Rizzo et. al., 2023). Also, R and Mepurath, (2024) conducted a systematic review toward ethical consumption dimensions and found that the leading topics classified as anti-consumption through boycotts, animal welfare, organic foods, environment, and fairtrade. Kışlalıoğlu (2024) also analysed relevant literature by benefiting from bibliometric analysis and reached almost the same results, which accommodate sustainable consumption differently, probably due to using different databases or date ranges. The available studies unfortunately neglect the ethical considerations and trust levels of consumers in digital consumption environment. In the conducted study, both variables were included in the research model, enriching the TPB and filling an important gap in the literature. This study offers a unique perspective by addressing the identified gap in the existing literature. It was also assumed that the research findings will inspire novel studies and serve as a valuable resource for sectoral experts and researchers seeking data on this subject. The study conducted consists of three parts. Starting with the introduction section, the second section focuses on the concept of ethics and ethical problems arising from technological developments and explains the relationship of these problems with consumers' purchasing behaviour. The last section focuses on the method, findings, and results of the study.

Literature Review

Consumer Behaviour in the Digital Environment

With technological developments, traditional marketing methods found themselves reincarnated in the virtual environment. This current

marketing concept calls itself digital marketing. This development, of course, directly affected the behaviour of consumers and created communities that display purchasing behaviour in the digital environment, individually or industrially. Considering that the main purpose of the science of consumer behaviour is to examine the process of collecting, discriminating, purchasing and disposing information about products and services to meet the desires and needs of consumers (Aksoy, 2015), it is a vital requirement for businesses to analyse changing consumer profiles well in order to survive. When considered in this context, it is seen that the consumers we encounter in the digital age are now called smart consumers (Chapadgaonkar, 2020). The most important reason for this is that thanks to smart applications and devices, we now have a consumer base that collects information about products and services, chooses the best among dozens of product and service options, finds the most reliable one among dozens of sellers, and determines the most reasonable one among dozens of price options (Kruizinga and Lesscher, 2022). From here it can be clearly said that digital technologies have been influencing and changing consumers' preferences for a long time (Rangaswamy et al., 2022). If we examine what effects existing digital technologies have on consumer behaviour today, we will encounter the following changes (Chakravorti, 2022; Lu, 2020; Staffordglobal.org, 2022):

- *“Transition from physical sales store to virtual store,*
- *Commitment to comments and complaints regarding product and service experiences,*
- *Increased commitment to seeking information about products and services,*
- *Increase in impulsive buying behaviour,*
- *Becoming less patient,*
- *More personalized purchasing experience,*
- *Using mobile computers instead of desktop computers.”*

When the changes mentioned above are examined, it will be seen that consumers are using virtual stores with increasing intensity. Especially in America, 46% of consumers prefer virtual stores by 2023 (Tighe, 2023). In addition, the volume of global electronic consumption is expected to increase by 56% and reach eight trillion dollars (Chevalier, 2022). Another important change, getting information about consumer comments and complaints, is an important feature offered by internet technologies. Thanks to this feature, consumers can instantly access positive and negative consumer experiences. In particular, negative comments can negatively affect consumers' opinions about products and services during the purchasing process (Saura et al., 2020). At this point, it can be said that consumers are heavily influenced by influencer marketing tactics and show purchasing behaviour towards brands with a positive digital word-of-mouth marketing image (Staffordglobal.org, 2022). Another important change is that consumers are increasingly researching the products and services they need within the purchasing decision process. Accurately analysing consumers' information search behaviour about products and services is vital for businesses to develop correct communication strategies and reach consumer potential (Akalamkam and Mitra, 2018). In traditional sales stores, products and services can be conveyed to consumers in written and voice form by employees, while they are communicated visually by the relevant sales platforms in the virtual environment (Siddiqua, 2016). This situation puts consumers in need of verifying the different information they obtain from virtual platforms. For this reason, they browse between different virtual platforms in order to access the most accurate information. According to a study conducted by Paul and Hogan (2015), consumers are influenced by 49% of their purchasing decisions when making a purchase decision by searching for information about products and services before purchasing (Paul and Hogan, 2015). The increasing trend in impulsive buying behaviour is one of the important effects of digital technologies on consumer behaviour. Impulses constitute an important part of human behaviour. Every person tends to engage in impulsive buying, although at various levels. However, with the developing technology, people who have the opportunity to shop from home

24/7 as they wish, are increasingly making impulsive purchases (Sahai et al., 2019). In addition, another important change is that consumers are now less patient. According to research (Bizspace, 2015) conducted with 2000 people, consumers want their purchasing processes to end as soon as possible. They state that the reason for this situation is the easy access that digital technologies offer them. In fact, this situation is a result of the increasing number of activities or tasks that can be done simultaneously with technology and the narrowing time scale increasing the expectations of human beings (Bizspace, 2015). Another important change caused by technology in consumer behaviour is the ability to personalize products and services according to consumer wishes and desires. With digital technologies, businesses can offer consumers the option to personalize their products and services. This situation is an important determinant in consumers' purchasing decisions (Gandhi et al., 2013). Another important change in consumer behaviour with technology is the transition of consumers from desktop platforms to mobile platforms. In the first quarter of 2023, the global usage rate of mobile devices was approximately 60% and this rate was only around 30% in 2015 (Bianchi, 2023).

On the other hand, the impact of digital technologies on consumer behaviour undoubtedly affects and transforms businesses. Considered in this context, innovations in the digital age continue unabated. New ones such as artificial intelligence and cloud technology are rapidly being added to existing digital technologies such as smartphones, wearable smart watches, tablets, and portable computers. This situation directly affects both consumer behaviour and businesses, resulting in a constantly developing and changing business and consumer behaviour profile (Akkol-Gök, 2020). In order for their marketing efforts to be successful, businesses are trying to determine what influences consumers' purchasing behaviour in this digital age. They also try to gain more information about their consumer potentials in order to retain them and add new ones to their existing potentials. For this purpose, they benefit from strategies such as electronic word-of-mouth marketing, consumer-generated content, content marketing, influencer marketing, and user experience (Saura et al., 2020).

Ethics (Values) in the Digital Environment

Ethics refers to a situation regarding whether an action is moral or not. Its most common definition is whether a behaviour or an action is correct or not according to social moral norms (Dündar and Göksel, 2006; Doğan et al., 2010). Marketing ethics, on the other hand, deals with taking ethical values into consideration in the process that includes the production of products and services that businesses offer to meet consumer desires and needs, their presentation to the consumer, and even after-sales services (Yildiz, 2020). On the other hand, marketing has a particularly prominent place in terms of ethical values today, as it is the face of businesses that meet consumers (Özdemir and Tokol, 2009). Consumers are very conscious about their consumer rights because information technologies are quite developed and widespread. For this reason, businesses must take ethical values into account in the design, production, presentation to consumers and after-sales services of products and services (Yildiz, 2020). In today's marketing environment, where consumers are more aware than ever about their rights, businesses that attach importance to ethical values will undoubtedly have a competitive advantage in the long term (Koçarslan, 2020).

Transparency and definition of underlying moral values and perspectives is a vital step in implementing and improving the ethical process. In this context, theories related to ethics are examined under three headings. These; meta ethics, normative ethics and applied ethics (Dittmer, 2024). Applied ethics is used in applying ethical values to digital technologies (Vasiliu-Feltes, 2022). In this context, the ethical values that businesses should consider in the digital age are as follows (Schoentgen and Wilkinson, 2021, p.4):

- *“Consent and Privacy,*
- *Security,*
- *Accuracy (Precision),*
- *Inclusion, Justice and Non-discrimination,*

- *Transparency,*
- *Accountability.*”

As a result of advances in information technologies, consumers and businesses met on online platforms. This situation has led to the emergence of mutual online interactions. These online interactions have caused consumer data to be collected, stored, analysed, and shared by businesses’ marketing departments without their consent. Inferences made by businesses based on personal data obtained from consumers cause a violation of privacy because consumers are not aware that their personal data is used (Marghalani and Alqahtani, 2019). For this reason, businesses must inform consumers before collecting their information and obtain their consent for the use of the personal data they obtain (Al-awadhi, 2023).

Developments in information technologies have brought some advantages for consumers, as well as some risks or disadvantages. The most important of these is related to security. The data that consumers provide to businesses may be obtained by cyber hackers through unethical means, and consumers may suffer material and moral damages. Therefore, businesses need to create reliable online platforms that will make consumers always feel safe in their transactions. In this context, security-related measures are basically aimed at ensuring the integrity, functionality, and reliability of businesses’ virtual platforms (swisscy-berinstitute, 2023).

Another prominent issue in shopping behaviour through virtual platforms is related to the accuracy of the information presented through these platforms. Consumers are extremely sensitive to the accuracy of the information provided to them regarding the content, price, payment terms, warranty conditions, and distribution method of the products and services they are interested in. Any misinformation directly negatively affects purchasing decisions (Akseki, 2022).

What is meant by inclusivity, another important ethical value in the digital age, is that virtual platforms are accessible to everyone. More

precisely, the digital assets of businesses are barrier-free platforms or are designed to be easily accessible and usable, regardless of the abilities or disabilities of consumers. Another ethical value that should be considered together with the concept of inclusion is related to non-discrimination. In services offered through digital platforms, an equal approach should be taken towards consumer audiences with different demographic characteristics in marketing efforts (Schoentgen and Wilkinson, 2021; Weaver, 2023).

Transparency is an important ethical value that determines consumers' attitudes towards businesses in the digital age. If businesses are transparent about how the data obtained from consumers is used, they can improve the trust relationship with consumers, which is one of the important determinants of purchasing behaviour. Moreover, the business attitude towards transparency brings with it the phenomenon of accountability. Thus, a reliable and accountable business image can be created in the minds of consumers regarding their privacy (orinstamp, 2023; Weaver, 2023).

Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development

Theory of Planned Behaviour

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) was derived from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by Ajzen (1991) and was developed to explain the behaviour of consumers. The main difference between it and the TRA is that TPB explains consumers' non-voluntary behaviour with the Perceived Behavioural Control (Polat, 2021). TPB is frequently used by researchers to explain the attitude-behaviour relationship (Zollo et al., 2018). With the Theory of Planned Behaviour, it is accepted that an individual's behaviour and his/her intention for that behaviour have an important relationship. It is assumed that three independent variables lead to behavioural intention. These are attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control variables (Ajzen, 1991).

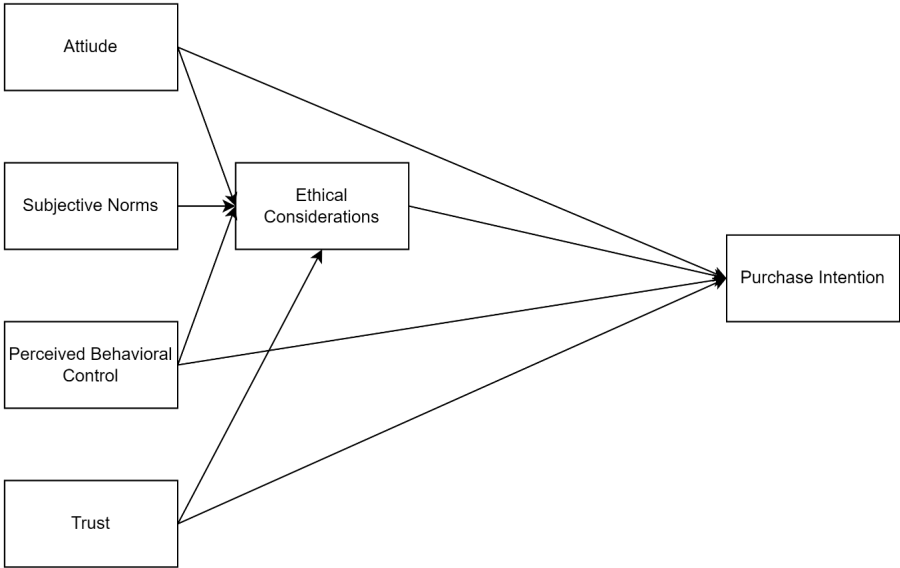


Figure 1: Proposed Research Model

In this study, the relevant literature was examined in depth to create a research model. As a result of scanning the literature, it was seen that the basis of ethical consumption theories developed was TPB (Deng, 2015). For this reason, it was envisaged that it would be appropriate to use TPB to develop a research model and also, TPB was enriched with two new variables by reviewing the relevant literature and in this way, the ethical factors affecting the purchasing behaviour of young consumers in the digital age were examined more comprehensively.

Hypothesis Development

Attitude: It reflects the individual’s total evaluation towards a behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). The attitude an individual develops towards a behaviour actually includes his/her positive or negative evaluation of that behaviour. There is a meaningful relationship between attitude and purchase intention. More precisely, the attitude has a significant effect on purchase intention. The positive attitude that consumers develop towards purchasing any product or service is an important predictor of future

purchase intention (Islam et al., 2022). Moreover, consumers' growing awareness of ethical principles directly influences their attitudes and moulds their ethical consumption behaviours (Bairrada, et. al., 2023). The conducted research supports this inference because the attitude has been used an important predictor of purchase behaviour in terms of ethical consumption (Lee et. al., 2017; Beldad and Hegner, 2018; Sun, 2020; Menegaki et. al., 2024). Also, there has been numerous studies has found it as a significant variable affecting intention to purchase toward ethical consumption (Oh and Yoon, 2014; Berki-Kiss and Mendrad, 2022; Robichaud and Yu, 2022).

Subjective Norm: It refers to the social pressure an individual experiences from his/her environment while performing a behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). In other words, it is the pressure an individual experiences from his/her social environment while performing an action. This social pressure includes the influence of objects or individuals in the individual's social environment. It is predicted that as the severity of social pressure faced by the individual increases, the reflex or motivation to perform a special behaviour will also increase (Mu et al., 2023). However, subjective norm has not been expected to affect intention as much as strongly as expected from attitude and perceived behavioural control because it has the weakest effect on intention compared to other variables (Duarte et. al., 2024). In terms of ethical consumption, subjective norms may emerge from the impact of social circles or cultural movements that advocate ethical purchase behaviour (Menegaki et. al., 2024). Also, studies indicate that consumers expect validation or disapproval from their social networks when they engage in purchasing behaviours related to ethical consumerism (Chen and Thung, 2014 as cited in Menegaki et. al., 2024). Relevant literature supporting that the Subjective Norm has been seen as a one of variables in the formation of purchasing intention for ethical consumption (Alsaad, 2021; Sun; 2019; Duarte et al., 2024).

Perceived Behavioural Control: It refers to the effort an individual makes when performing a behaviour. This variable also reflects the difficulties likely to be encountered and past experiences (Ajzen, 1991).

According to TPB, if the behavioural control that an individual perceives towards himself while performing a behaviour is high, this is an indication that he will produce a higher intention for that behaviour (Chang and Chou, 2018). When faced with challenges such as security of payment systems or personal data storing policy of the required internet platform, a person purchasing a product or service from an online store will have little desire to purchase it because of low control ability over this behaviour (Ghorban Nejad et.al., 2024). In other words, consumers are more likely to engage in a behaviour when they believe that it is simple to accomplish since they have the ability to manage it (Ciprian Marcel, 2017). A high perceived behavioural control indicates a strong level of confidence and belief in the person's capacity to carry out the intended activity, which affects intention (Duarte et. al., 2024). Therefore, people's impression of their influence over the implementation of successful behaviour is what makes this construct directly related to such behaviour (Lira and Costa, 2022). Perceived Behavioural Control structure has been benefited by much research as an important determinant in the formation of intention, together with the Attitude and Subjective Norm structures (Dowd and Burke, 2013; Ekasari and Zaini, 2020; Kumar et al., 2023).

Trust: Mayer et al. (1995:712) defines trust as "it is the tendency of consumers to remain vulnerable to the actions of the service provider, hoping that the service provider will perform a specific action that is important to consumers himself/herself, regardless of the control or observation ability of the service provider business." Although TPB is widely used in many studies on ethical consumption, the main focus of its development is the general behavioural profile of human beings. At this point, there are important gaps in ethical consumption (Sun, 2019). For this reason, it was tried to eliminate the gaps identified by enriching it with new variables determined within the scope of the research and to develop a new research model that will explain ethical consumption from TPB theory. Rationality behind adding trust into research model based on TPB, firstly it is a crucial factor influencing consumers' purchasing decisions in digital shopping, as well as their social interactions, including product or service evaluations and sentiments regarding the

online buying experience within consumer communities. The rapid global rise in its popularity has rendered it increasingly significant due to data storage policies, the stability of payment systems, and the reputation of online platforms (Handayo, 2024). Besides that, worldwide, consumers' apprehensions about ethical principles in online shopping has been escalating. The primary reason for this phenomenon is the escalating rivalry, which prompts consumers to readily transition between online retailers and compels enterprises to resort to unethical practices in their quest for greater market share (Yuniarwati et. al., 2023). In terms of these explanations, it will significantly contribute to the relevant literature experts and marketers to incorporate trust in to developed research model in terms of understanding the relationship between young consumers' trust levels and online shopping behaviours in ethical perspective. Additionally, integrating the trust into the TPB will enhance its ability to comprehend the impact of online trust on the ethical consumption behaviours of youth. Upon reviewing the pertinent literature, various research indicates that the ethical criteria valued by customers in digital shopping are linked to the trust structure (Yang et. al., 2009; Sharma and Lijuan, 2014; Yuniarwati et. al., 2023). In the proposed research model, it is assumed that trust has a relationship in formation of purchasing intention in terms of ethical consumption.

Ethical Considerations: Ethics serves as a mechanism that guides human behaviour in daily life within the scope of right or wrong propositions. More precisely, it is a way of struggling with the difficulties people encounter in daily life within the scope of their ethical values. Ethical considerations are the process by which consumers reconsider the purchasing decisions they make in daily life in terms of ethical values (Lira and Costa, 2022). Ethical considerations are progressively gaining significance in the consumer purchase decision-making process. The growing ethical considerations among consumer environment compels firms to prioritize adherence to ethical values in their products and services while demonstrating enhanced social responsibility (Ryoo et. al., 2020). Consumers' ethical assessments have favoured acquiring products from companies that prioritize ethical considerations in their operations (Shar-

ma, 2022). The conducted studies in the relevant literature consider ethical consideration as a variable affecting purchase intention directly or affecting purchase intention over attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control indirectly (Riquelme et. al., 2012; Deng, 2015, Lira and Costa, 2022; Kim and Lee, 2023). The current study posits that ethical considerations significantly influence the formation of purchasing intentions by serving a mediating role, a phenomenon not previously observed in the examined literature. Consequently, the mediating function of the other variables in the research model about their link with the Purchase Intention was attributed to this variable.

Purchasing Intention: Marketers and business managers frequently use the purchasing intention when making strategic decisions regarding the products and services they will offer to the market. In this context, it would be appropriate to say that it is an important variable used to predict sales. In addition, the purchase intention is vital for managers to understand in which market a new product will be more successful or what improvements will be made regarding the product (Morwitz et al., 2007). The main reason why purchasing intention is of vital importance is that it is the main predictor of actual behaviour (Peña-García et al., 2020). Purchase intention is the individual's desire to purchase any product or service (Arifani and Haryanto, 2018). Research hypotheses developed within the scope of the research model created by the variables mentioned above:

H1: Attitude positively affects Ethical Considerations.

H2: Attitude positively affects Purchasing Intention.

H3: Subjective Norm positively affects Ethical Considerations.

H4: Perceived Behavioural Control positively affects Ethical Considerations.

H5: Perceived Behavioural Control positively affects Purchase Intention.

H6: Trust positively affects Ethical Considerations.

H7: Trust positively affects Purchase Intention.

H8: Ethical Considerations positively affect Purchase Intention.

H9a, b, c, d: Ethical Considerations mediate the relationship between Attitude (a), Subjective Norms (b), Perceived Behavioural Control (c), Trust (d) variables and the Purchase Intention variable.

Method

This research aims to examine the ethical factors that direct the purchasing behaviour of young consumers in the digital age. In this context, a new research model was developed based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour by thoroughly scanning the relevant literature. The data necessary to evaluate the developed research model were obtained from Erzincan Binali Yıldırım University students through face-to-face surveys. The research model was assessed in terms of structural equation modelling technique through the SPSS program Amos extension. In addition, the research model was evaluated from various aspects by performing confirmatory factor analysis, reliability, validity, and path analyses.

Six variables were used in the model created within the scope of the research. These variables are attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, ethical considerations, trust, and purchase intention. The survey created using these variables consists of thirty-two questions prepared on the basis of a 5-point Likert scale.

Sample

The research population consists of consumers between the ages of 15-25, defined as young by UNESCO (hugaum.hacettepe.edu.tr, 2024). (In this study, the age range differs between 18-25, so it is not required to provide additional ethical measures for the participants.) Due to the impossibility of reaching the entire population, Erzincan Binali Yıldırım University students were selected by convenience sampling method and the necessary data for the research were collected. The surveys prepared in this context were collected from the participants by hand, after the

necessary explanations were made during the face-to-face data collection process. In the surveys designed in two parts, questions containing demographic information constitute the first part, while the second part consists of psychographic questions. Participants who did not shop on digital platforms in the last six months, gave incomplete or incorrect answers, and were not between the ages of 18-25 were not subjected to analysis and were eliminated. In this context, 49 surveys were eliminated, and 333 surveys were determined to meet the required conditions. Structural equation modelling technique requires a balance between sample size and variables used in the research model such as 10 variables needing 240 or 200 observations (Wolf et. al., 2013; Kline, 2015). Also, it is a well-known practice that increasing number of observations supports data and model's fit positively (Şen and Yılmaz, 2013; Shi et. al., 2019). 333 participants have provided sufficient data to present the sample size in terms of the number of variables structured in the research model which aligns well with the collected data. This is a true reflection of the data's ability to fit the model effectively. Briefly, the conducted research has supported the sample size and research model's fit in terms of the numbers of variables placed in the research model.

Measures

While the participants were first asked demographic questions, psychographic questions developed within the scope of the research model were then asked. In this context, the scales used in the research model are as follows:

The attitude scale consists of four questions, the subjective norms scale consists of three questions, and the perceived behavioural control scale consists of three questions and was obtained from Liu et al., (2021). The trust consists of three questions and was obtained from Carnevale et al., (2018). The ethical considerations structure consists of four questions and Lira and Costa, (2022) was used. Finally, while the purchase intention was built on three questions, Ding et al., (2022) was taken as a reference.

Data analysis

Validity and Reliability Analysis for the Measurement Model

The findings obtained from the analyses carried out regarding the measurement model within the scope of the research show that the fit of the data and the proposed model is good. In addition, the results obtained within the scope of the reliability and validity analysis of the scales used show that the desired general threshold values are met at a satisfactory level. In this context, average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) values were examined for construct validity. The findings indicate that the desired threshold values ($AVE \geq 0.5$, $CR \geq 0.6$ (Hair et al., 2010; Henseler et al., 2009)) are met within the scope of both criteria.

Table 1: Findings of Construct Validity and Internal Consistency Analysis

| Construct Validity and Internal Consistency | Cronbach Alpha | CR | AVE |
|---|----------------|-------|-------|
| Subjective Norms (SN) | 0,682 | 0,698 | 0,541 |
| Attitude (AT) | 0,914 | 0,918 | 0,737 |
| Purchase Intention (PI) | 0,840 | 0,841 | 0,637 |
| Ethical Considerations (EC) | 0,735 | 0,737 | 0,585 |
| Trust (TR) | 0,817 | 0,834 | 0,630 |
| Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) | 0,783 | 0,783 | 0,546 |

Cronbach Alpha values, which measure the internal consistency of the scales used, are above the 0.7 threshold, except for one variable. The internal consistency coefficient obtained for the Subjective Norms is 0.682, remarkably close to 0.7, and is at an acceptable level (Civelek, 2018).

Table 2: Findings of Discriminant Validity Analysis

| Discriminant Validity Analysis | SN | AT | PI | EC | TR | PBC |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Subjective Norms (SN) | 0,736 | | | | | |
| Attitude (AT) | 0,702 | 0,858 | | | | |
| Purchase Intention (PI) | 0,507 | 0,502 | 0,798 | | | |
| Ethical Considerations (EC) | 0,380 | 0,394 | 0,709 | 0,765 | | |
| Trust (TR) | 0,402 | 0,295 | 0,503 | 0,405 | 0,794 | |
| Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) | 0,563 | 0,582 | 0,520 | 0,458 | 0,389 | 0,739 |

Another analysis conducted regarding the measurement model is related to discriminant validity. Discriminant validity is the degree of independence, or rather separation, of the x variable or structure constructed in any measurement model from other variables or structures (Civelek, 2018). Data analysis conducted in this context show that all variables have discriminant validity.

Normality and Multicollinearity Test

Normality test results show that all skewness and kurtosis values are between ± 3 and ± 10 (Kline, 2011). The table 3 gives all details related to skewness and kurtosis values. The results obtained with the multicollinearity test are between 1.00 and 7.682. This situation shows that all values obtained are below the threshold of 10.00. Based on this, it can be easily said that multicollinearity cannot be considered in this research (Alam et al., 2023).

Table 3: Assessment of Normality

| Variable | skewness | kurtosis |
|-------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Trust | -0,261 | 0,199 |
| Perceived Behavioural Control | -0,808 | 1,097 |
| Subjective Norms | -0,499 | 0,224 |
| Attitude | -1,452 | 2,589 |
| Ethical Considerations | -0,906 | 1,16 |
| Purchase Intention | -0,881 | 1,436 |

Analysis for the Measurement Model

In the first test conducted within the scope of confirmatory factor analysis, latent variables SN3, ED3 and ED4, which had a weak factor loading and negatively affected the fit of the model with the data, were eliminated from the model. The CFA results conducted after this process show that the factor loadings of the scales used and the general fit of the model with the data are good. Additionally, all factor loadings, except for SN2 and TR3 latent variables, have met the necessary cut-off criteria of 0.7 according to Hair et al., (2010). However, there are other studies suggest that cut off criteria for factor loadings should be greater than 0.5 to have optimal results (Hulland, 1999; Truong and McColl, 2011). The values of SN2 and TR3 have provided acceptable values which are remarkably close to cut off criteria of Hair et. al. (2010) while are greater than Hulland, (1999), Truong and McColl's (2011) cut off criteria as 0,621 and 0,681. Also, discriminant validity test results prove that these values are acceptable because allowing these values to be placed in the model have not caused any validity problem. You may find the relevant findings in Table 4 as shown below.

Table 4: Factor Loadings of Variables

| Factor Loadings | | | |
|-----------------|-------|-----|-------|
| AT1 | 0,781 | TR1 | 0,768 |
| AT2 | 0,920 | TR2 | 0,915 |
| AT3 | 0,920 | TR3 | 0,681 |
| AT4 | 0,803 | EC1 | 0,721 |
| SN1 | 0,835 | EC2 | 0,806 |
| SN2 | 0,621 | PI1 | 0,813 |
| PBC1 | 0,741 | PI2 | 0,800 |
| PBC2 | 0,749 | PI3 | 0,782 |
| PBC3 | 0,726 | | |

The CFI value, one of the commonly used general well-being fit indices, was found to be 0.963. While this finding shows that the model

has a high degree of fit with the data, the finding of 2.051 for the CMIN/DF value supports this result regarding the fit of the model with the data. Another important finding that supports these values is the RMSEA value obtained as 0.56. Other goodness-of-fit values showing the fit of the model with the data can be found in Table 5.

Table 5: CFA Findings

| CFA Analysis Findings | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Goodness of Fit Index | Acceptable Fit Thresholds | Good Fit Thresholds | Excellent Fit Thresholds | Obtained Values | Interpretation |
| CMIN/DF | $3 \leq x^2/df \leq 5$ | $2 \leq x^2/df \leq 3$ | $0 < x^2/df \leq 2$ | 2,051 | Good |
| CFI | $0,80 \leq CFI < 0,90$ | $0,90 \leq CFI < 0,95$ | $0,95 \leq CFI \leq 1,00$ | 0,963 | Good |
| GFI | $0,85 \leq GFI < 0,90$ | $0,90 \leq GFI < 0,95$ | $0,95 < GFI \leq 1,00$ | 0,930 | Good |
| RMR | $RMR \leq 0,8$ | $0,5 < RMR \leq 0,8$ | $0 < RMR \leq 0,5$ | 0,43 | Excellent |
| RMSEA | $0,8 \leq RMSEA \leq 1,0$ | $0,5 < RMSEA \leq 0,8$ | $0 < RMSEA \leq 0,5$ | 0,56 | Good |

Source: (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Karagöz, 2016, pp. 975)

Analysis of the structural model

Following the successful results obtained with confirmatory factor analysis, the structural model was assessed. The results obtained are parallel to CFA. The findings indicate that goodness of fit values show acceptable and excellent fit for each threshold value examined. The RMSEA value was found to be 0.090, which is at an acceptable level. The x^2/df value is at an acceptable level at 3.699. CFI, GFI, RMR values are at a perfect level of agreement in terms of the fit of the data and the model (Hu and Bentler, 1999). Table 6 gives all details related to fit values of structural model.

Table 6: Findings of the Analysis of the Structural Model

| Findings of the Analysis of the Structural Model | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Goodness of Fit Index | Acceptable Fit Thresholds | Good Fit Thresholds | Excellent Fit Thresholds | Obtained Values | Interpretation |
| CMIN/DF | $3 \leq \chi^2/df \leq 5$ | $2 \leq \chi^2/df \leq 3$ | $0 < \chi^2/df \leq 2$ | 3,699 | Acceptable |
| CFI | $0,80 \leq CFI < 0,90$ | $0,90 \leq CFI < 0,95$ | $0,95 \leq CFI \leq 1,00$ | 0,995 | Excellent |
| GFI | $0,85 \leq GFI < 0,90$ | $0,90 \leq GFI < 0,95$ | $0,95 < GFI \leq 1,00$ | 0,996 | Excellent |
| RMR | $RMR \leq 0,8$ | $0,5 < RMR \leq 0,8$ | $0 < RMR \leq 0,5$ | 0,008 | Excellent |
| RMSEA | $0,08 \leq RMSEA \leq 0,1$ | $0,05 < RMSEA \leq 0,08$ | $0 < RMSEA \leq 0,05$ | 0,090 | Acceptable |

Source: (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Karagöz, 2016, pp. 975)

Path analysis findings obtained as a result of testing the structural model show that attitude, perceived behavioural control and trust structures have significant effects on both ethical considerations and purchase intention structures.

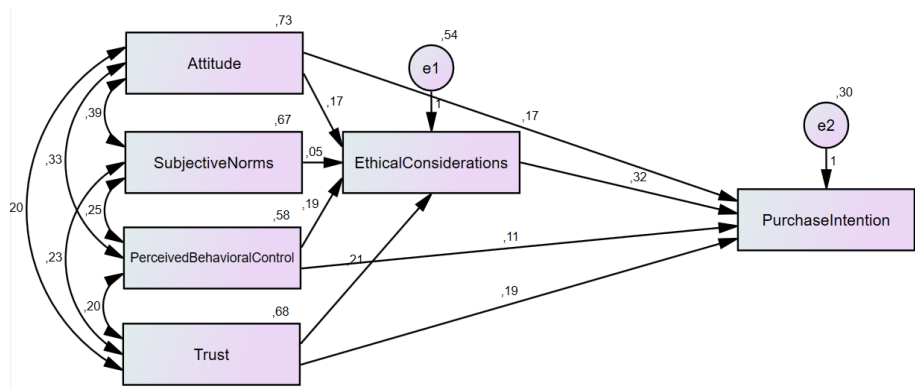


Figure 2: Structural Model Analysis Findings

The attitude has an effect of 17,5% on the ethical considerations structure, as designed in the research model. The perceived behavioural control creates a significant effect of 19% in the ethical considerations structure. On the other hand, the trust structure makes a significant contribution of 21% to these effects. It is not possible to talk about any effect

of the subjective norms structure since it is not within the desired confidence interval according to the findings. It should also be noted that a 1% increase in each of the mentioned variables will cause a change of 18%, 19% and 21% in the ethical considerations, respectively.

Another important stage of the relationships constructed in the research model is to measure the relationships of attitude, perceived behavioural control and trust with purchase intention. In the analysis conducted in this sense, as can be seen in Table 7, attitude, perceived behavioural control and trust structures have 17%, 11% and 19% effects on Purchase Intention, respectively.

Table 7: Path Analysis Findings

| Ethical Considerations | Effecting Variables | β | B | S.E. | p value |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|---------|-------|-------|---------|
| | Attitude | 0,175 | 0,169 | 0,061 | <0,01 |
| | Subjective Norms | 0,049 | 0,049 | 0,061 | 0,05> |
| | Perceived Behavioural Control | 0,178 | 0,192 | 0,063 | <0,01 |
| | Trust | 0,213 | 0,214 | 0,053 | <0,001 |
| Purchase Intention | Effecting Variables | β | B | S.E. | p value |
| | Ethical Consideration | 0,367 | 0,324 | 0,041 | <0,001 |
| | Trust | 0,214 | 0,189 | 0,04 | <0,001 |
| | Perceived Behavioural Control | 0,115 | 0,109 | 0,047 | <0,05 |
| | Attitude | 0,203 | 0,173 | 0,042 | <0,001 |

Correlation Analysis Findings

Correlation analysis measures the direction and link between two variables. A positive correlation signifies that the variables progress in a congruent manner. As the value of one variable ascends, the value of the second variable concurrently ascends (resources.nu.edu, 2024). The correlation analysis findings reveal that exception of attitude <--> trust correlation, all others' estimates show a fair positive strength. Attitude <--> trust correlation is indicating a poor positive strength. You may find all correlation estimates in table 8.

Table 8: Correlation Analysis Findings

| Correlations | | | Estimate | Strength |
|-------------------------------|------|-------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Attitude | <--> | Trust | 0,284 | Poor |
| Subjective Norms | <--> | Perceived Behavioural Control | 0,404 | Fair |
| Attitude | <--> | Subjective Norms | 0,558 | Fair |
| Perceived Behavioural Control | <--> | Trust | 0,319 | Fair |
| Subjective Norms | <--> | Trust | 0,343 | Fair |
| Attitude | <--> | Perceived Behavioural Control | 0,508 | Fair |

Source: Chan et. al., 2003 as cited in Akoğlu, 2018

Mediation Effect Analysis

VAF (The Variance Accounted For) technique was used to analyse the mediating effect of the ethical considerations on the effect of attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and trust on purchase intention (Hair et al., 2016). If the vaf value is below 20%, there is no mediation effect, while if this value is between 20% and 80%, there is partial mediation. If the vaf value is 80% or above, it shows a full mediation effect. The accounted variance value explains the size of the total effect and the indirect effect (Yu et al., 2022).

Table 9: Mediation Effect Analysis Findings

| Findings of Mediation Effect Analysis | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------------|-----|---------------|
| Hypothetical Paths | Direct Effect | Indirect Effect | Total Effect | Result | VAF | Findings |
| AT > EC > PI | 0,203 | 0,064 | 0,268 | Partial Mediation | 32% | H9a Supported |
| SN > EC > PI | 0 | 0,018 | 0,018 | No Mediation Effect | 0% | H9b Rejected |
| PBC > EC > PI | 0,115 | 0,066 | 0,181 | Partial Mediation | 36% | H9c Supported |
| TR > EC > PI | 0,214 | 0,078 | 0,292 | Partial Mediation | 27% | H9d Supported |

As it can be clearly seen from Table 8, the findings obtained show that the Considerations partially mediates the relationship between attitude, perceived behavioural and trust and purchase intention with direct effect (VAF values TU: 32%, AK: 36%, GV: 27%). According to the vaf value obtained, there is no mediating effect of ethical considerations on the relationship between the subjective norms and the purchase intention.

Discussion

This research aimed to examine the ethical factors that determine the purchasing behaviour of young consumers in the digital environment. For this purpose, two new variables have been integrated into the TPB. As a result of the analysis of the designed research model, the R^2 value of the ethical considerations added to TPB is 0.21. The R^2 value obtained with the purchase intention is 0.43. When evaluated specifically for the Purchase Intention, it is seen that a stronger explanatory value emerges than the original TPB model (Si, et al., 2020). In terms of ethical considerations, the value of R^2 with 0.21 is a strong reflection of the power of this mediator variable in the research model.

Analysis results support the positive relationship of attitude, perceived behavioural control and trust with the purchase intention. This finding is aligned with the conducted studies (Yoon, 2011; Riquelme et. al., 2012; Liu, et. al., 2021; Mansouri et. al., 2022; Bae and Yan, 2023; Ghali-Zinoubi, 2023; Mochla and Tsourvakas, 2024). Nonetheless, there exist research in the pertinent literature that yield conflicting results. Lira and Costa, (2022)'s study found that attitude has no effect on purchase intention toward ethical slow fashion consumption. Besides that, Ly et. al. (2017) reached a similar value indicating perceived behavioural control did not affect purchase intention toward consumption of ethical products. No study in the literature review has indicated a non-significant influence of trust on purchase intention. This cannot be generalized to all relevant research as it is confined to the literature review undertaken by the current study. On the other hand, they positively affect purchase intention both directly and indirectly. This provides important data to understand what kind of purchasing behaviour young consumers tend to

display under ethical values, in line with the purpose of the research. The most important of these is that the services offered to young consumers in digital environment meet their ethical expectations. However, such a situation may lead to the emergence of the network of relationships in the research model mentioned above. In this sense, it is possible to say that the research model works functionally. The new variables added not only enriched the TPB theory in terms of content, but also created a more comprehensive research model. Although TPB has been used in many studies on ethical consumption, its content is limited to measuring the general consumer behaviour profile. With this research, it has taken on a structure that explains the variables that direct ethical consumption. In particular, the mediating role of the ethical considerations fulfils an important function in terms of both attitude, perceived behavioural control and trust. With the assumption that consumers' trust, perceived behavioural control levels and attitudes are mediated by their internal ethical considerations, TPB theory has undertaken an important function in explaining ethical consumption. Findings show that the attitude, perceived behavioural control and trust have a significant impact on ethical considerations. Ethical Considerations plays a partial mediator role in the effect between attitude, perceived behavioural control and trust and the purchase intention. As it has occurred mostly, the attitude interacts positively with the intention structure that leads to purchasing behaviour. Young consumers' positive attitude towards shopping, developed within the framework of ethical values in the virtual environment, has a positive effect on their purchase intention. At least as importantly, consumers' ethical considerations of online shopping platforms are developing positively. In the research model, the perceived behavioural control structure expresses the efforts made by consumers towards the use of systems in the virtual environment. In this sense, the usage effort required by the virtual platforms that consumers use for shopping purposes must comply with ethical values. Research findings show that the effort consumers make within the scope of this criterion positively affects their purchasing intentions. This result is also similar with the available studies in relevant literature (Liu et. al., 2020; D'Souza, 2022). Based on the findings,

it can be easily said that the trust plays a vital role in consumers' ethical considerations. As consumers' trust levels in digital platforms increase, their ethical considerations develop positively, which positively affects purchasing behaviour. The ethical considerations do not play a mediating role between the other subjective norms and the purchasing. No significant relationship was found in the mentioned structure. This finding is consistent with other studies (Beldad and Hegner, 2018; Menegaki et. al., 2024; Duarte et. al., 2024). It may have been caused by several reasons. Firstly, it is possible to interpret this as young consumers not being influenced by their environment in terms of ethical factors when making purchasing decisions. Secondly, as stressed by Duarte et. al, (2024), young consumers might place more importance on their own values and views than on ethical principles on consumption. Young consumers may also disregard the ethical standards of their social surroundings in favour of considerations like price, service or product quality, and ease of access to goods and services when making decisions about what to buy. There are also studies reporting subjective norm which is an important predictor of purchase intention. One of them is belonging to Liu et. al., (2021). Unlike the obtained finding of this research on subjective norm, Liu et. al., (2021) found that subjective norm is the most significant predictor of purchase intention in terms of ethical fashion consumption. The same finding about the effect of subjective norms on purchase intention was also reported in the studies by Brandão and Costa (2021); Lira and Costa (2022). The analogous results may alternatively be construed as a consequence of investigating the same subject, namely ethical fashion consumption, across many studies. This precisely reflects consumers' ethical consumption behaviour across several categories driven by specific sociocultural circumstances that generate diverse social pressures.

Conclusion

The aim of this research is to examine the ethical factors affecting young consumers' purchasing behaviour in the digital environment. For this purpose, while TPB theory was enriched with two new variables, it was predicted that the newly added ethical considerations mediates the

relationship between the purchase intention and the attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and trust. The findings also support that the ethical considerations has a partial mediating effect on the relationships of other variables, except the subjective norms, with the purchasing intention structure. In this context, it has been concluded that attitude, perceived behavioural control and trust have a positive effect both directly and indirectly on the formation of purchasing intention.

Limitations and Recommendations

This research has some limitations. Firstly, because the research sample has been limited to certain age groups, it is not possible to observe other age groups and make comparisons among them to understand consumers' ethical concerns more precisely. Secondly, the research has focused on examining ethical values within the context of digital shopping. This provides valuable insight to analyse a special consumption segmentation but limits the research to examining ethical consumption in other aspects.

It is recommended that future studies should target different age groups and observe their ethical consumption behaviours. By doing so, it will highlight the differences and similarities in different generations of the society. This will make a unique contribution to the marketing practices of the companies because they will be able to carry out more precise marketing strategies and also find a chance to develop their on-line platforms. Additionally, the current study assumes that the purchase intention will be highly turned to purchase behaviour so it has not been added to the research model, but it is believed that the rate of purchase intention to turning purchase behaviour will be also valuable output to interpret consumers ethical consumption behaviour.

Managerial Implications

The findings obtained from this research offer important implications. The most important of these is related to the Trust. Within the scope of the research, it was concluded that the purchasing intentions of young

consumers were positively supported by the trust. This situation directly shows that young consumers tend to shop within the scope of the ethical values they perceive in the virtual environment. Businesses and marketers on this subject can directly use this finding to understand the importance of ethical consumption or to develop ethical perceptions about shopping processes, because it seems that the ethical values that young consumers care about in the virtual environment are almost all related to the trust structure. In other words, as perceptions of trust in ethical values increase, purchasing intentions also increase. Another important construct for ethical consumption is Attitude. According to the findings obtained in this research model, the attitude component is one of the most important predictors of purchase intention. In this respect, businesses or marketers should pay attention to the ethical issues that young consumers pay attention to when designing their presence in the digital environment. They need to make efforts to ensure that their evaluations of young consumers' attitudes towards their virtual assets do not contain negative elements in terms of ethical values. Another of these implications is related to the perceived behavioural control. This variable is positively related to purchase intention. If businesses offer consumers a series of ethical transactions that will require less effort in their digital shopping, they will facilitate their access to products and services. Thus, young consumers' intentions to purchase will increase based on the perceived behavioural control. This situation will most likely result in purchasing behaviour.

Theoretical Contribution

First, the proposed research model has confirmed that TPB has ability to explain ethical consumption behaviour. Secondly, with the compatibility of ethical considerations and Trust with the TPB theory and the practical operability determined in the model, enriches the original model in terms of ethical consumption and brings an important explanation to the purchasing behaviour of human beings within the framework of ethical criteria. More precisely, it advances TPB's capacity to explain general human behaviour within the framework of ethical consumption.

In this sense, it can be said that the proposed model is sensitive, sufficient, and comprehensive in explaining ethical consumption-related purchasing behaviour. Thirdly, two new variables were added to TPB theory but more importantly, it was thought that Ethical Considerations variable which mediates the relationship between the purchase intention and the attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and trust. This perspective has enhanced the research model and significantly contributed to the TPB on the functionality of evaluating various dimensions of ethical consumption. In addition, the research model not only helps TPB improve its features, but it also helps TPB share more information about the ethical consumption segmentation with relevant literature, researchers, and marketing experts. Lastly, theoretical contribution is the behavioural pattern obtained by young consumers in terms of ethical consumption on digital platforms. The ethical purchasing pattern identified using the research model based on the TPB indicates that young individuals care about ethical values during online shopping.

Statement on Research and Publication Ethics

For the purposes of research ethics, ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee for Human Research in Social and Human Sciences of Erzincan Binali Yıldırım University, with decision number 11/10 and dated 22/12/2023.

Authors' Contribution Rates to the Article

This article was entirely prepared by the author, Muhammed Polat.

Conflict of Interest

I wish to confirm that there are no known conflicts of interest associated with this publication and there has been no significant financial support for this work that could have influenced its outcome.

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Geniřletilmiř zet

Dijital Ortamda niversite Genlięinin Satın Alma Davranıřını Etkileyen Etik Faktrlerin Geniřletilmiř Planlı Davranıř Teorisi (PDT) ile Analizi

İřletmelerin ana hedefi, rettikleri mal ve hizmetleri srdrlebilir bir řekilde en yksek krlılıkla tketicilere ulařtırmaktır. Bu hedefi, sahip oldukları ynetmel fonksiyonlarla gerekleřtirmeye alıřırlar. Bu baęlamda, pazarlama bu hedefe ulařmakla grevli bir ynetim fonksiyonu olarak ortaya ıkmaktadır. Pazarlama ile iřletmeler, hitap ettikleri potansiyel tketicilerin isteklerini ve ihtiyalarını belirler ve doęru rn tasarlar. Bařka bir deyiřle, iřletmeler potansiyel mřterilerin davranıřlarını pazarlama yoluyla analiz eder ve onlara en uygun rn ve hizmetleri makul bir fiyatla, doęru yer ve zamanda, doęru tutundurma faaliyetleriyle sunmaya odaklanırlar(Erdoęan, 2019). Ancak, dijital teknolojilerdeki hızlı deęiřim, teknoloji odaklı tketiciler davranıřına yol amıřtır. Bu yeni tketiciler davranıřına ayak uydurmak iin iřletmeler, tm varlıklarını dijital ortama tařımaya bařladıkları gibi geleneksel pazarlama faaliyetlerini de dijital aralarla yrtmeye bařladılar. Bu yeni durum, daha nce hi olmadığı gibi yeni etik sorunlar yaratmaya bařladı. Bunun bařlıca nedeni, iřletmelerin dijital pazarlamanın gcn kullanarak istedikleri tketiciler potansiyeline ulařma ve pazarlama faaliyetlerini yrtme konusunda artan fırsatlara sahip olmalarıdır. Etik problemlerin ortaya ıkmasında dijital pazarlamanın iřletmeleri herhangi bir yasal dzenlemeye baęlı kalmaktan kurtarması en nemli faktrdr. te yandan, pazarlama etięi, iřletmelerin pazarlama abalarının nasıl ve hangi platformda gerekleřtirileceęi ile ilgilenir (Emennaa and Kaplan, 2021). Bu baęlamda, etik deęerlerin toplumların ortaya ıkmasıyla birlikte varlık kazandıęını ve sosyal iliřkilerin belirlenmesinde nemli bir rol oynadıęını sylemek uygun olacaktır (Ayrall et al., 2023).

Etik olmayan uygulamalar veya řirketler iin gvenilir sanal platformlar saęlayamamak, iřletmeler aısından prestij kaybına yol aacak ve nihayetinde mřteriler kayıplarıyla sonulanacaktır. Tketiciler potansiyelini korumak iin řirketler, rakipleri gibi etik davranmalıdır. Gvenli ve gvenilir evrimii platformlara sahip olmak, zellikle dijital medyaya daha yatkın olan gen nesil iin, tketicilerin zihinlerinde olumlu bir imajın korunması aısından hayati nem tařımaktadır (Sarmah et al., 2023). zellikle Trkiye’de, gen nfusun genel nfus ierisinde oęunluęu oluřturduęu bir ortamda(worldometers, 2024), řir-

ketlerin dijital pazarlama çabalarında güçlü bir marka itibarı oluşturmaları hayati bir önem kazanmıştır.

Bu kapsamda yürütülen araştırma, genişletilmiş Planlı Davranış Teorisi'ni (PDT) kullanarak Türk gençlerinin çevrimiçi satın alma davranışları üzerinde etik olmayan uygulamaların etkisini incelemektedir. Bu bağlamda, ilgili literatür kapsamlı bir şekilde taranarak Planlı Davranış Teorisi (TPB) temelinde yeni bir araştırma modeli geliştirilmiştir. Geliştirilen araştırma modelini değerlendirmek amacıyla gerekli veriler, Erzincan Binali Yıldırım Üniversitesi öğrencilerinden yüz yüze anket yöntemiyle elde edilmiştir. Araştırma modeli, yapısal eşitlik modelleme tekniği çerçevesinde SPSS programının Amos eklentisi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Ayrıca, doğrulayıcı faktör analizi, güvenirlik, geçerlilik ve yol analizleri gerçekleştirilerek araştırma modeli çeşitli açılardan değerlendirilmiştir. Araştırma kapsamında oluşturulan modelde altı değişkene yer verilmiştir. Bu değişkenler; tutum, öznel normlar, algılanan davranışsal kontrol, etik kaygılar, güven ve satın alma niyetidir. Bu değişkenlere dayalı olarak oluşturulan anket, 5'li Likert ölçeğine göre hazırlanmış otuz iki sorudan oluşmaktadır. Araştırmanın amacına uygun olarak, etik değerlendirmeler ve güven değişkenleri PDT'ye eklenmiştir. Böylece, PDT etik tüketim davranışını açıklama açısından işlevsellik kazanmış ve bu durum çalışmaya derinlik katmıştır.

Araştırma modeli kapsamında yukarıda belirtilen değişkenler doğrultusunda geliştirilen araştırma hipotezleri şu şekildedir:

H1: Tutum, Etik Kaygıları pozitif yönde etkilemektedir.

H2: Tutum, Satın Alma Niyetini pozitif yönde etkilemektedir.

H3: Öznel Norm, Etik Kaygıları pozitif yönde etkilemektedir.

H4: Algılanan Davranışsal Kontrol, Etik Kaygıları pozitif yönde etkilemektedir.

H5: Algılanan Davranışsal Kontrol, Satın Alma Niyetini pozitif yönde etkilemektedir.

H6: Güven, Etik Kaygıları pozitif yönde etkilemektedir.

H7: Güven, Satın Alma Niyetini pozitif yönde etkilemektedir.

H8: Etik Kaygılar, Satın Alma Niyetini pozitif yönde etkilemektedir.

H9a, b, c, d: Etik Kaygılar, Tutum (a), Öznel Normlar (b), Algılanan Davranışsal Kontrol (c) ve Güven (d) değişkenleri ile Satın Alma Niyeti değişkeni arasındaki ilişkide aracılık rolü üstlenmektedir.

Önerilen araştırma modeli, yapısal eşitlik modelleme tekniği kullanılarak test edilmiştir. Analizler için gerekli veriler, 18-25 yaşları arasındaki 333 genç tüketiciden elden teslim edilen anketler aracılığıyla toplandı. Bulgular göstermektedir ki Etik Değerlendirmeler değişkeni tutum, algılanan davranışsal kontrol ve güven değişkenlerinin satın alma niyeti değişkeni ile olan ilişkilerinde kısmi bir aracılık etkisine sahiptir. Tutum, algılanan davranışsal kontrol ve güven değişkenlerinin satın alma niyetinin oluşumu üzerinde hem doğrudan hem de dolaylı etkileri vardır. Sübjektif Normlar değişkeninin satın alma niyeti üzerinde önemli bir etkisi yoktur. Satın alma niyeti değişkeninin R^2 değeri 0.41'dir. Bu değer, satın alma davranışını açıklamak için orijinal modelden daha güçlü bir açıklama sunmaktadır. Araştırma, yalnızca genç tüketicilerin günümüz dijital çağındaki etik değerler açısından tüketim davranışlarını anlamaya yardımcı olmakla kalmamakta, aynı zamanda bu alandaki işletmelere ve araştırmacılara önemli veriler sağlamaktadır.

Bu araştırmanın amacı ifade edildiği üzere dijital ortamda genç tüketicilerin satın alma davranışlarını etkileyen etik faktörleri incelemektir. Bu doğrultuda, Planlı Davranış Teorisi (TPB) iki yeni değişken ile zenginleştirilmiş; ayrıca, yeni eklenen “etik kaygılar” değişkeninin, tutum, öznel normlar, algılanan davranışsal kontrol ve güven ile satın alma niyeti arasındaki ilişkide aracılık rolü üstleneceği öngörülmüştür. Araştırma bulguları, etik kaygılar değişkeninin, öznel normlar dışındaki diğer değişkenlerle satın alma niyeti arasındaki ilişkide kısmi aracılık etkisine sahip olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Bu bağlamda, tutum, algılanan davranışsal kontrol ve güven değişkenlerinin satın alma niyetinin oluşumunda hem doğrudan hem de dolaylı olarak pozitif etkide bulunduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Appendix A-The scales used in the conducted research

Attitude (Liu vd., 2021)

AT1: I think shopping from digital stores that provide services in accordance with ethical values is positive.

AT2: I think shopping from digital stores that provide services in accordance with ethical values is beneficial.

AT3: I think shopping from digital stores that provide services in accordance with ethical values is useful.

AT4: I think it is wise to shop from digital stores that provide services in accordance with ethical values.

Subjective Norms (Liu vd., 2021)

SN1: I believe that my close friends and family think it is a good idea for me to shop from digital stores that adhere to ethical values.

SN2: I feel that the people who are important in my life want me to shop from digital stores that adhere to ethical values.

SN3: The people whose opinions I value can influence me to purchase products and services from digital stores that operate ethically.

Perceived Behavioural Control (Liu vd., 2021)

PBC1: I have the necessary resources, knowledge, and capacity to shop from digital stores that provide services in accordance with ethical values.

PBC2: Shopping from digital stores that provide services in accordance with ethical values is easy for me.

PBC3: I have full control over shopping from digital stores that provide services in accordance with ethical values.

Trust (Carnevale vd., 2018)

TR1: I trust digital stores that provide services in accordance with ethical values.

TR2: Digital stores that provide services in accordance with ethical values are reliable.

TR3: I can always trust digital stores that provide services in accordance with ethical values.

Ethical Considerations (Lira ve Costa, 2022)

EC1: I always purchase products and services from digital platforms that I believe adhere to ethical values.

EC2: I always recommend to my friends that they purchase products and services from digital platforms that they believe align with ethical values.

EC3: I always firmly resist purchasing products and services from digital platforms that I believe are not in line with ethical values.

EC4: I always advise my friends not to purchase products and services from digital platforms that they believe do not adhere to ethical values.

Purchase Intention (Ding vd., 2022)

PI1: I want to purchase products and services from digital stores that operate in accordance with ethical values.

PI2: It will be important for me to purchase products and services from digital stores that operate in accordance with ethical values.

PI3: I would like to recommend digital stores that provide services in accordance with ethical values to the people around me.