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## THE MEDIATING ROLE OF GREEN TRUST IN THE EFFECT OF THE PREFERENCE FOR GREEN PRODUCTS ON THE PURCHASE INTENT OF HEALTH STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose-** Today, sustainability is a very important concept so that future generations can live comfortable life. In this, it is very important to produce products that are compatible with nature, to trust the product or service, and to purchase them. This study was conducted to determine the mediating role of green trust in health education students' green product purchasing preferences.

**Methodology-** The sample of the study consists of 330 students studying in health departments. In the analysis of the data, descriptive, explanatory factor, confirmatory factor, correlation and regression analyzes were performed.

**Findings-** There is a significant relationship between green product preference and all sub-dimensions of green product preference (attitude, environmental concern, environmental knowledge, subjective rules) and green product purchase intention. There is a significant relationship between green product preference and green product trust in all sub-dimensions of green product preference (attitude, environmental concern, environmental knowledge, subjective rules). There is a significant relationship between trust in green products and purchasing green products. In the sub-dimensions of students' green product preferences and green product preferences (attitude, environmental concern, environmental knowledge), the effect on green product purchasing also has a mediating effect on the level of trust in green products. However, subjective rules do not have a mediating effect on green product purchasing, nor does the level of trust in green products.

**Conclusion-** This study aims to increase the awareness of green products and green trust, which is important in sustainability, on purchasing behavior, especially among young people, and to make this a behavior. Thus, a comfortable life can be provided for future generations.

**Keywords:** Sustainability, green product, green trust, purchasing behavior, health students

**JEL Codes:** M30, M31, Q01

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization, the existence of fierce competition conditions, technology, and industrialization have caused the reduction of renewable energy sources and pollution of the environment. Various effects occurring in the World, such as the perforation of the ozone layer, the dropping of the atomic bomb, the Chernobyl disaster, radiation leaks, chemical and biological weapons, wastes of uncontrolled enterprises, urbanization, increase in population, increase in motor vehicles, etc. have caused the deterioration of nature and pollution of the environment. In the face of these problems, individuals have taken various measures in order not to harm nature and to protect nature. Nature is not necessary for humans alone, it is necessary for all living and non-living beings and future generations. For a sustainable World, there is a need for environmentally friendly green products, green marketing, green distribution, green logistics, and green trust.

The problem of global warming, the increase in environmental quality, human activities, and especially the increase of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emission in the air are important environmental problems (Altınöz and Altuntaş, 2020). One of the common goals of the countries of the World is to prevent environmental problems, which have an important place in their economies. In the current century, national and international businesses and all people living on earth have realized the importance of protecting nature and the environment and have put this awareness into their lives. With the awareness of consumers and

increasing environmental awareness, businesses have had to change their products, processes, and systems, and they have started to produce products and services that are compatible with nature and offer them to consumers. The purchasing preferences of today's consumers have also changed and they have started to prefer green products to protect themselves and nature (Akyol and Kılınc, 2014).

Some multinational enterprises that want to increase their profit margins have shifted their investments towards countries with lower environmental standards to reduce their production costs and earn high profits with the effect of globalization. Since a problem that occurs anywhere in the world can affect the whole world in a short time, such businesses should be sensitive to the environment. Some multinational enterprises, on the other hand, prevent environmental pollution because they have more modern and environmentally friendly technologies compared to national companies (Abasov and Üçler, 2022). Global warming, the reduction of scarce resources, and global environmental problems have increased the need for renewable energy types (Karabağ et al., 2021). Especially the energy obtained from fossil sources used in industry is quite high and these sources are not infinite. The widespread use of these scarce resources causes physical and human damage to nature (Polat and Kızıltan, 2022). Therefore, for a sustainable world, the term "Green" has come to the fore (Eşmen et al., 2015). As a result of sustainability studies on social, environmental, and economic issues, approaches such as the green economy, green product, green management, green logistics, green marketing, green trust, greenhouses, etc. have been adopted (Kutlu and Yalçınır Ercoşkun, 2021).

Green products are products that do not harm the environment, do not reduce limited natural resources, are recyclable and do not lose their value (Shamdasani et al., 1993). Different types of behavior can be preferred to protect the environment, and buying green products is one of them. Consumers prefer green products and services to protect their health and the environment, and this sensitivity turns into green product purchasing behavior. In this context, businesses can change their processes with green processes in line with the changing demands of consumers and turn them into a competitive advantage (Alkaya et al., 2016). In addition, businesses highlight environmental details in their product advertising campaigns to emphasize environmental awareness of their products (Pajouh et al., 2013). The most important detail to be considered in advertisements is the over-exaggeration of the product and this causes distrust in the consumer. In previous studies, there is a significant distrust towards green advertising and consumers do not find these environmental claims convincing (Shrum et al., 1995). As individuals' level of knowledge about environmental problems increases, green product purchasing behavior increases. In other words, there is a direct relationship between consumers' green product, purchasing behavior and environmental awareness (Arseculeratne and Yazdanifard, 2014). Even though the prices of green products are more expensive than other products, conscious consumers can prefer green products.

Green Trust is expressed as the belief in the adequacy of the environmental performance of a product or service and the willingness for that product or service (Chen, 2010). Since today's consumers can easily transfer these intentions to the environmentally friendly products of enterprises when purchasing products, manufacturers who want to maintain customer loyalty need to change their product qualities and existing production processes. This study was carried out to reveal the mediating role of green trust in the effect of green product preferences, especially among young people, on the purchase intention, so that all living things on earth can lead a comfortable life and ensure sustainability.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Green Product**

Green products are products that minimize the consumption of natural resources, eliminate environmental pollution, enable recycling, ensure the continuity of natural resources, and do not harm the environment and living things (Shamdasani et al., 1993) The concept of green product can be explained as the English 4S Formula. These are Satisfaction, Sustainability, Social Acceptability, and Safety (Duru and Şua, 2013). Green products are products that do not harm human or animal health, are not dangerous, do not harm the environment while being produced or destroyed, do not consume much energy in production or other processes, do not provide excessive waste, are not used unnecessarily, and do not contain harmful substances (Çabuk et al., 2008). The tendency of today's consumers toward environmentally friendly products has increased research on this subject (Mosavichechaklou and Bozbay, 2018).

### **2.2. Intent to Purchase Green Product**

It has also been observed that the environmental awareness factor positively and significantly affects the intention to purchase green products (Yemez, 2022). Green product purchase intention defines how willing and ready consumers are to buy green products or to what extent they are ready to adopt green alternatives (Paul et al., 2016). Tanrıku (2015) stated in his study that those who are concerned about the environment are more inclined to buy green products and show green product buying behavior. Environmental knowledge, social impact, environmental attitude, environmental concern, consumer activity, the importance of environmental problems, environmental responsibility, environmental image concern, and the desire for a healthy life form the green product purchasing behavior. It is not enough for consumers to be sensitive

to the environment. Businesses should be sensitive to the environment, design their products accordingly, and make them feel environmentally friendly in all processes. Price affects consumers' choice of purchasing green products. Because the cost of producing green and delivering them to the consumer is quite high. Therefore, such businesses should follow strategies that will highlight the benefits of green products to the environment and human health compared to traditional products in their products and services. If consumer truly trusts green product, they will want to pay more for green products.

### **2.3. Green Trust**

Green Trust; is expressed as the desire to depend on a product or service based on belief and expectations about the ability to benevolence, reliability, and environmental performance (Chen and Chang, 2013). Green trust is important in building trust against customers' green demands for the excellence of their products or services, without providing customers with reliable information. The environmental reputation, performance, environmental claims, meeting expectations, and keeping their word to the businesses and brands affect the green trust of the customers towards the brand (Yıldız and Kırmızıbiber, 2019). We can say that there is a negative relationship between risk and trust (Mahmood et al., 2014).

### **2.4. Hypothesis Development**

Global warming, climate changes, pollution of air and water, and health and environmental problems have affected the purchasing behavior of consumers and pushed them to act "green" in their purchasing decisions (Okada and Mais, 2010). These behaviors have also increased the demand for green products (Dangelico and Pontrandolfo, 2010). Today, many consumers prefer green products to protect nature (Juvan and Dolnicar, 2017). While consumers were interested in purchasing and consumption in the past, today's consumption and purchasing tendencies have changed and environmentally sensitive consumers, who are described as "conscious green consumers", have emerged. Young people are more sensitive and sensitive to the environment than other individuals. This is very important for sustainability. Therefore, most of the research on purchasing green products has been conducted for young people (Bernardes et al., 2018; Lu et al., 2013; Erbaş and Şirin, 2022; Yemez, 2022; Ünüvar et al., 2018; Çakıroğlu et al., 2019; Başol et al., 2019; Korkmaz et al., 2017). Even if consumers have high environmental sensitivity and sensitivity, it may not always turn into a behavior. In this context, environmental awareness should be increased with various pieces of training and information and should be transformed into behavior. Environmental attitudes perceived behavioral rules, environmental anxiety, and environmental information purchase intention positively and significantly affect (Ünivar et al., 2018). The research conducted by Yadav and Pathak (2016), on the other hand, showed that consumers' intention to buy green products is predictable by attitude, subjective norm (social pressure), behavioral control perception, environmental concerns, as well as environmental knowledge. In line with the literature, the following hypotheses have been developed.

#### **H1: There is a significant relationship between green product preference and green product purchase intention.**

In the studies on green products and green product purchasing, an important element is an intention to purchase the green product (Shah and Pillai, 2012). Studies have shown that attitude affects intention and intention shapes behavior (Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002; Han et al., 2010; Çıvgın and Kızanıklı, 2022). stated that there is a positive and linear significant relationship between both green purchasing behavior and general green consumption behavior. According to the results of the study carried out by Ünivar et al., (2018), it was determined that the attitudes and behaviors of tourism students towards environmentally friendly products were at a positive level. Alkaya et al., (2016), in their research, determined that the three factors that constitute environmental sensitivity, namely ecological sensitivity, personal sensitivity, and behavioral sensitivity, are associated with green product purchasing behavior. Based on these, the following hypothesis was developed.

#### **H1.1: There is a significant relationship between attitude, which is the sub-dimension of green product preference, and the intention to purchase green products.**

Environmental awareness shows that people are respectful of themselves and the environment in which they live. People with this awareness protect nature, do not harm the environment, and prefer environmentally friendly products in the products they will consume. Some people are more aware of the environment. Awareness; It is the perception that a product, brand, or service creates in the mind of the consumer. Even with the smallest purchase made during the day, the consumer has a perception of that product. It is possible with brands to turn this perception formed in the mind of the consumer in their favor (Çakır, 2017). Hamarat et al. (2014) found in their study that individuals' perception of environmental threats affects their environmental awareness level and environmental behavior and that their environmental awareness also affects their environmental attitudes and environmental behaviors. Huang et al., (2014), on the other hand, found that environmental protection awareness positively affects green consumer behavior. Uyar (2019), revealed that environmental concern positively affects the attitude towards green products, but does not affect the purchase intention positively. There is a significant relationship between environmental concern, which is the sub-dimension of green product preference, and the intention to purchase green products. In line with the literature, the following hypotheses have been developed.

**H1.2: There is a significant relationship between environmental concern, which is the sub-dimension of green product preference, and the intention to purchase green products.**

The demand for green consumption does not only affect production, it also affects marketing, entrepreneurship, technological activities, and culture. In this context, today the industry, consumer products sector, construction sector, hotel sector, and service sector have changed their processes and switched to green strategies (Mohamad, et al., 2014). Environmentally sensitive consumers have changed their consumption habits and started to buy sustainable environmentally friendly products (Shao et al., 2017). Büyükhaz (2012) found in his study that environmental concern, concern, and sensitivity positively affect the behavior of purchasing environmentally friendly products. Uyar (2019) revealed that perceived environmental information positively affects the attitude toward green products and the intention to purchase green products. In line with the literature, the following hypotheses have been developed.

**H1.3: There is a significant relationship between environmental knowledge, which is the sub-dimension of green product preference, and the intention to purchase green products.**

Green consumers exhibit various consumption behaviors to protect the natural environment with different methods such as purchasing green products, recycling, and energy saving (Paço et al., 2013). In their study, Dagher and Itani (2014) revealed that there is a positive relationship between the importance of environmental problems, social responsibility, protecting nature and awareness of environmental problems, the perceived effectiveness of environmentally friendly behavior and self-criticism towards environmental protection behavior. In line with the literature, the following hypotheses have been developed.

**H1.4: There is a significant relationship between the subjective rules, which is the sub-dimension of green product preference, and the intention to purchase green products.**

The green product purchasing preferences of the consumers and the product price are related to each other. Since green products may be priced relative to other products, businesses should indicate the benefits of these products to consumers. In this, advertising, promotion, and promotion should be done (Erciş et al., 2018). Even though the prices of these products are higher than the others, the consumer who trusts the product tries to buy these products by paying more (Kumar et al., 2018). Confidence and risk are opposite, and when risk decreases, confidence increases. Trust is directly related to customer satisfaction and loyalty and affects the level of loyalty (Dolatbadi et al., 2016). Avçılar and Demirgüneş (2017) determined that there is a positive relationship between green trust and green brand value; Chen and Chang (2013) determined in their study that green laundering, green consumer confusion, and green perceived risk have negative effects on green trust. In line with the literature, the following hypotheses have been developed.

**H2: There is a significant relationship between green product preference and trust in green products.**

Today, the production of environmentally sustainable products is of great importance for social benefit. When purchasing products, consumers want to know how and how the products are less harmful to nature before they are produced, during production, during consumption, and after consumption. While marketing green products in businesses, should address the concerns of consumers and make them believe that their products are produced in a way that does not harm nature (Baran et al., 2017). Consumers may worry that the product they are considering buying will not meet their demands and they may think that the green risk they take is harmful to the environment (Chen and Chang, 2012). When the customer believes that the green product he perceives is of low quality and harmful to the environment, he may stop buying (Rizwan et al., 2013). Consumers' attitude is less risk than more benefit (Chen and Chang, 2012).

**H2.1: There is a significant relationship between attitude, which is the sub-dimension of green product preference, and trust in green products.**

Trust is important to both sellers and buyers and is seen as the cornerstone of relationships. It is a powerful builder for businesses and consumers to establish long-term relationships. Many studies confirm the effect of trust on product purchase intention. It also increases market share and profitability (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). Görgülü et al., (2019) study, states that consumer activity and perception are effective in the intention to purchase green products and that environmental concern has a significant effect on the green. Environmentally sensitive consumers, when they trust green products, can prefer these products by paying more even if other products are cheap. The environmental friendliness of a product not only positively affects green confidence, but also indirectly positively affects green satisfaction and perceived green quality (Chen, 2010).

**H2.2: There is a significant relationship between environmental concern, which is the sub-dimension of green product preference, and trust in green products.**

Consumers can collect information about the product they want to buy in various ways. These can be sales points, written and visual media, or certificates (Tayfun and Ölçü, 2016). While informing consumers about the products, emphasis should



be placed on reflecting the truth, perceptions, and trust of the customers should be evaluated to give an environmentalist image, and exaggerations should be avoided. In the study of Delmas and Burbano (2011), it is known that green dyeing negatively affects trust in green products or services and increases suspicion. In their study, Koçer and Delice (2017) revealed that there is a negative relationship between dyeing products green and green trust, and a positive relationship between dyeing green and consumer skepticism and perceived green risk. Akdeniz and Koçer (2022) on green brand image and green advertisements, green trust, and green purchasing intention; stated that green trust has a statistically significant and positive effect on green purchase intention.

**H2.3: There is a significant relationship between environmental knowledge, which is the sub-dimension of green product preference, and trust in green products.**

The green product image of a business depends on the fact that its products or services are not only economical but also affect consumers (Bekk et al., 2016). A successful green brand image of businesses about green products depends on creating a successful green brand value in the eyes of consumers, which can be achieved by triggering environmentally positive emotions (Chen and Chang, 2013). Businesses should embrace green marketing as an effective way to increase green brand image for consumers with ecological concerns (Wu and Lin, 2016). The degree of meeting the environmental expectations of the customers and the degree of satisfaction with the product or service affects the trust in the green product and at the same time, it gains the trust of the relevant customers. In their study, Uygun and Sarıkaya (2022) found that there were positive, medium, and high-level significant relationships between green quality perception, perceived green value, green brand trust, and green brand image, respectively, according to the explanatory level of brand value, and that all of these variables predicted green brand value significantly have expressed.

**H2.4: There is a significant relationship between subjective rules, which is the sub-dimension of green product preference, and trust in green products.**

Green brands are brands that support all kinds of activities to protect the natural balance and natural resources in line with environmentalist understanding (Özsaçmacı, 2018). The green price is the amount of money green consumers pay for green products (Sevgi, 2020). The green product purchasing preferences of the consumers and the product price are related to each other. Since green products may be priced relative to other products, businesses should indicate the benefits of these products to consumers. In this regard, advertising, promotion and promotional activities should be carried out (Erciş et al., 2018). In their study, Lai and Cheng (2016) stated that to persuade consumers to consume green products, it is necessary to emphasize the positive effects that individuals can contribute to certain environmental issues by using strategies such as packaging and advertising. Wang et al. (2016), on the other hand, concluded that individuals' being human-nature oriented or culture-specific elements of solidarity are effective in environmentally friendly purchasing behavior.

**H3: There is a significant relationship between trust in green products and purchasing green products.**

The effect of green product preferences on purchasing green products and the level of trust in green products are affected by various factors. This environmental awareness, collective consciousness, reference groups, exposure to environmental impact, the image of environmentally friendly products, perceived environmental risk, product-related experiences, other experiences, and environmental intention are the determinants in choosing environmentally friendly products. In addition, government policy, training, non-governmental organizations, and positive and negative experiences are effective, and the collective consciousness of the society affects awareness. (Karadirek and Genç, 2017). Richards (2013) determined that consumers are generally hesitant about green advertisements and they encounter clear motivators and barriers when purchasing green products. Accordingly, trust in green products also increases the demand for them. Başgöze and Tektaş (2012) revealed that the factors that affect people when purchasing environmentally friendly products are price, time, confusion, inaccessibility, and trust. Consumers may have doubts about the content of the product or its genuine environmental friendliness. It is also a negative situation that such products are sold at high prices. Therefore, enterprises should not exaggerate their green products and should not undermine consumer confidence.

**H4: The effect of students' green product preferences on green product purchasing also has a mediating effect on the level of trust in green products.**

Green purchase intention is part of the prevailing paradigm that establishes a causal chain in which attitudes lead to intentions and intentions to behaviors. Green consumer behavior is a focus on green purchase intention that reflects the environmental commitment of individuals (Chen and Chang, 2013). Wang et al. (2016) stated that personal attitudes and reference groups such as environmental perception and environmental impact are effective in purchasing green products (Yadav and Pathak, 2017; Sreen et al. 2018; Ahmad and Zhang, 2020; Wang et al., 2020; Çıvgın and Kızanıklı, 2022). Uzundal (2019) revealed a partial mediation role in the effect of green trust.

**H4.1: Attitude, which is the sub-dimension of students' green product preference, has a mediating effect on the effect of green product trust on the purchase.**

Consumers' concerns and awareness about nature are the determinants of green product purchasing behavior. Lee (2017) determined that individuals' solidarity attitudes have a mediating effect between green product purchasing behavior due to common environmental concerns. Uzundal (2019) revealed positive and significant relationships between green product awareness, green product promotion, environmental concern and impact groups and purchase intention. In addition, moderate positive and significant relationships were found between green trust and purchase intention.

**H4.2: Environmental anxiety, which is the sub-dimension of students' green product preference, has a mediating effect on the effect of green product trust on purchasing.**

To create a sustainable world and to successfully implement a pro-environmental change policy, it is important to know what motivates individuals to buy green products. Businesses should analyze this well, and arrange their strategies accordingly, product marketers should know green products well, know all their features and create a sense of trust in customers towards green products. Consumers' lack of information about green products affects their purchasing decisions (Turan, 2014). Aman et al., (2012) concluded in their study that there is a significant relationship between environmental knowledge and environmental concern and green purchase intention and that these variables significantly affect purchase intention (Aman et al., 2012). Indriani et al., (2019) show that environmental information does not have a significant direct effect on consumers' green purchase intention. More importantly, Attitude has been found to have a full mediating effect on the relationship between Environmental Knowledge and green Purchasing Intent.

**H4.3: Environmental knowledge, which is the sub-dimension of students' green product preference, has a mediating effect on the effect of green product trust on purchasing.**

Mishal et al., (2017) found that environmental awareness has an impact on green purchasing attitude and perceived customer effectiveness, green purchase intention has an impact on perceived customer effectiveness and green behavior, and green behavior has an impact on green purchasing behavior. Sancaktar (2019) revealed in his study that these factors are important determinants in all consumers. Baran et al., (2017) show that Environmental Information does not have a significant direct effect on consumers' Green Purchasing Intention. More importantly, it was found that Attitude has a full mediating effect on the relationship between Environmental Knowledge and green Purchasing Intent. Uygun and Sarikaya (2022) Findings; revealed that there are positive, medium, and high-level significant relationships between green brand value and green quality perception, perceived green value, green brand trust, and green brand image, respectively, and that all of these variables predict green brand value significantly. In addition to these direct relationships, "green brand trust" in the relationship between green brand image and green brand value; Findings pointing to the existence of indirect relationships mediated by the "green quality perception" were also found in the relationships between green brand image, green brand trust, perceived green value and green brand value.

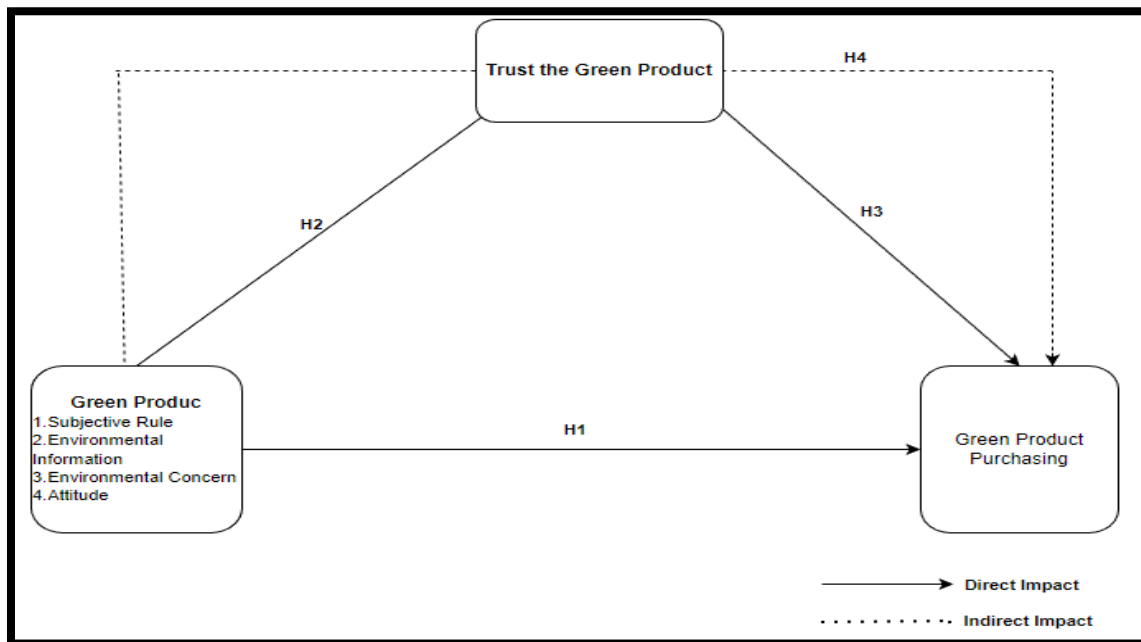
**H4.4: Subjective rules, which is the sub-dimension of students' green product preference, have a mediating effect on the level of trust in green products on the purchase.**

### **3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Model of the Research**

In the literature review conducted for the variables used in the study, it is seen that there is a significant relationship between green product preference, which is the independent variable of the study, and green product purchasing as the dependent variable, the independent variable, and the mediating variable, trust in the green product, and between the mediator variable and the dependent variable. Based on this information in the literature, the following model has been developed. The research model is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Research Model



### 3.2. Universe and Sample

From the definition of the population made by Aloba (1980), it is understood that a community consists of units of the same type and within the scope of the collective event. When evaluated in this context, the population of the research consists of students studying at the Vocational School of Health Services in Turkey. By using the convenience sampling method in the research, students studying at Artvin Coruh University Health Services Vocational School in the fall term of 2022-2023 were included in the research by providing the ability to represent the population in terms of the department they study. According to Bryman and Cramer (2001), it was stated that taking 5 or 10 times the scale questions is sufficient to calculate the sample size. In this study, three scales were used and the total number of questions in the scales was 29. Therefore, the minimum sample size to be collected is  $29 \times 10 = 310$ . A convenience sampling technique was followed in data collection. This technique was preferred because it is easy, low cost, and can be collected in a short time (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2016). 11 questionnaires were not included in the analysis due to reasons such as not answering all the questions in the obtained questionnaires and finding insufficient answers. Therefore, the sample of the study consists of 338 university students who voluntarily participated.

When the demographic characteristics of the students participating in the research are examined, 80.2% of the students are female and 19.8% are male according to gender, and when it is looked at from the department of education, Medical Documentation, Medical Laboratory, Pharmacy Services, Elderly Care, First Emergency and Aid, It has been observed that there are 10 different departments in total, including Child Development, Oral and Dental Health, Opticianry, Physiotherapy, and Occupational Therapy, and the First Emergency Aid department has a relatively higher participation rate of 18.6%. In terms of settlement, 24.9% of the participant students reside in the metropolitan city, 26.9% in the city center, 30.5% in the districts, and 17.8% in villages/hamlets/towns, in terms of class level. 60.4% were in the first class and 39.6% were in the second class, 2.4% had a very bad income level, 13.6% had bad, 67.8% had a medium level, 15% It was stated that 1% were at a good level and 1.2% were at a very good level. Finally, when we look at the residential areas of the families of the participating students, 18.9% of them are in Southeast Anatolia, 27.5% in Eastern Anatolia, 8.3% in the Mediterranean, 34.9% in the Black Sea, 5.9% in Marmara, It was observed that 0.9% of them resided in the Aegean region and 3.6% in the Central Anatolia region.

### 3.3. Data Collection Tools

A quantitative method was used in the research and data were obtained through questionnaires. The questionnaire used consists of four parts and 35 statements. In the first part, the demographic features of the gender, department, class, average income level of the family, the region where the family lives, and the place of residence are included. This part was created by researchers. In the second part, the green product scale was used. This scale was developed by Yadav and Pathak (2016). The scale consists of 21 items. In the scale, attitude questions (6 items) (Kim and Han, 2010), Questions about Subjective

Norm (2 items) (Chan and Lau, 2002), Perceived Behavioral Control questions (3 items) (Kim and Han, 2010), Environmental Anxiety Questions (5 items) (Mostafa, 2009), Environmental Information Questions (5 items) (Mostafa, 2009). The sub-dimension reliability coefficient of the scale, which is in the form of a five-point Likert scale, Ünüvar et al. (2018), was found between 0,723 and 0,930. In the third part, the green product purchase intention scale was used. The scale consists of one dimension and 3 statements. The scale is a five-point Likert scale developed by Yadav and Pathak (2016). The reliability coefficient of the scale by Ünüvar et al. (2018), was found to be 0,912. In the fourth part, the green product confidence scale was used. The scale is one-dimensional and consists of five statements. The scale was developed by Chen (2010) and is in the form of a five-point Likert scale.

The reliability coefficient of the scale in the original study was determined as 0,768. In the study, first of all, factor analysis was performed for the scales. Afterward, the reliability coefficients were calculated. The results obtained are given in Table 1. Accordingly, it was decided that the Cronbach Alpha coefficients of the scales and sub-dimensions ranged between 0,779 and 0,943 and had sufficient reliability.

**Table 1: Reliability Degree of Scale Variables and Sub-Components**

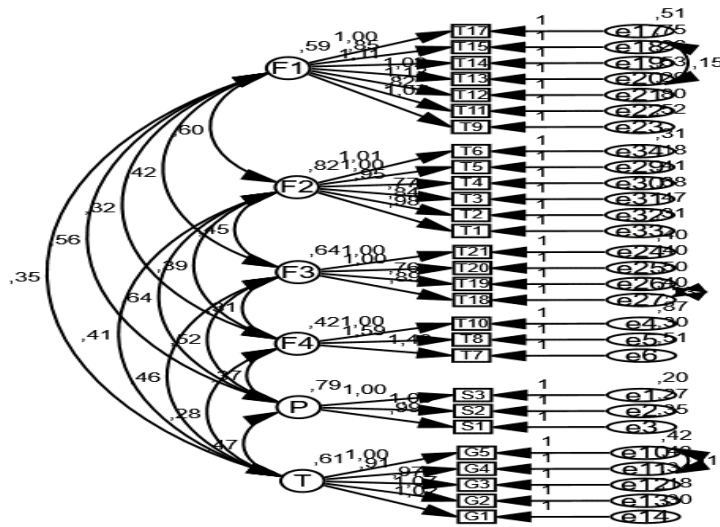
Variables and Subcomponents	Item	Coranbach Alpha
Confidence in Green Product	5	,903
Green Product Purchase Intent	3	,899
Green Product	20	,943
1. Attitude	6	,916
2. Environmental Concern	7	,888
3. Environmental Information	4	,843
4. Subjective Rules	3	,779

#### 4. FINDINGS

After obtaining permission regarding the ethical compatibility of the research management and the scales, the online questionnaire was shared with the Health Services Vocational School students between 0.7.12.2022 and 30.12.2022. For the data obtained, firstly, the missing data was examined and it was seen that there was no missing data. Afterward, descriptive statistics were carried out to reveal the basic characteristics of the participants. Exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis were performed for the green product scale, green product purchasing scale, and green product trust scales used in the study. Afterward, the reliability coefficients of the scales were calculated. Correlation and regression analyzes were performed to determine the relationship direction and effect level of the variables used in the study. Multiple regression was performed for mediation analyses. IBM SPSS 25 and AMOS 23 package programs were used to analyze the data.

According to the factor analysis findings given in Table 2, the KMO value in three scales was very good (>0.600), therefore the sample was sufficient for factor analysis and the result of Bartlett's test for all three scales was significant ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ). It was accepted that the relations were sufficient for factor analysis. Principal components analysis (Principal Components) and the varimax rotation technique were used for factor analysis. The statement "Mankind was created to dominate the rest of nature (16)" in the green product preference scale was removed from the scale because it was distributed under both factors. It was accepted that the remaining expressions were sufficient because their regression coefficients were >0.40, and that the expressions represented the factors. It was decided that the scales were sufficient because the total explained variance rate was 68.445% in the green product scale, 83.378% in green product purchase, 83.378% in green product purchase, and higher than >50% (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2016). Figure 2 shows the output of confirmatory factor analysis for the scales used in the research given.

Figure 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis for the Scales Used in the Study



F1: Attitude, F2: Environmental Anxiety, F3: Environmental Knowledge, F4: Subjective Rules, P: Purchasing, T: Trust

In Figure 2, the output of confirmatory factor analysis for the scales used in the research is given. The goodness of fit index values obtained according to the results of confirmatory factor analysis is given in Appendix 1.

Table 2: The Goodness of Fit Indexes and Acceptance Intervals Obtained in the Study

Compliance Criteria	Acceptable Fit	Perfect Fit	Model Fit Benefits
CMIN	$x^2/df \leq 5$	$x^2/df \leq 3$	2,193
RMR	$0 < RMR \leq 0,08$	$0 < RMR \leq 0,05$	0,055
IFI	$0,90 \leq IFI < 0,95$	$0,95 \leq IFI$	0,941
CFI	$0,90 \leq CFI < 0,95$	$0,95 \leq CFI$	0,941
RMSEA	$0,05 < RMSEA \leq 0,08$	$0,05 \geq RMSEA$	0,060
GFI	$0,85 \leq GFI < 0,90$	$0,90 \leq GFI$	0,864
AGFI	$0,85 \leq AGFI \leq 0,90$	$0,90 < AGFI$	0,834

According to Table 2, the CMIN value, which is one of the model fit values, was found to be in perfect fit, and the RMR, IFI, CFI, RMSEA, GFI, and AGFI values were within acceptable ranges. Accordingly, the model can express how well the determined model (theoretical) explains the obtained data very well.

Appendix 2 shows the data obtained regarding the variables as a result of the first-level confirmatory factor analysis conducted within the scope of the research. When the values are examined, the standardized regression coefficients of the observed variables ( $>0,500$ ), standard error rates, t values at 99% confidence level ( $t > 1,96$ ), and p values ( $p < 0,01$ ) show that they are at acceptable levels. It was found that all t-values were greater than 1.96, that is, the relationships between implicit and observed variables were significant.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis Findings

Variable	Environmental Concern	Attitude	Environmental Information	Subjective Rules	Green Product Purchase Intent	Confidence in Green Product
Environmental Concern	1					
Attitude	,764** ,000	1				
Environmental Information	,596** ,000	,550** ,000	1			
Subjective Rules	,580** ,000	,601** ,000	,538* ,000	1		

<b>Green Product Purchase Intent</b>	,731** ,000	,708** ,001	,629** ,000	,583** ,000	1	
<b>Confidence in Green Product</b>	,544** ,000	,546** ,000	,628** ,000	,528** ,319	,618** ,000	1

According to Table 3, it was seen that all of the relationships between the sub-dimensions were statistical. The correlation coefficients range from 528 to ,764. When the correlation coefficients are evaluated, it can be said that there is no multicollinearity problem since the tolerance values calculated for all variables are not below 0.10 and the VIF values are not above 10 (Pallant, 2005). To prove the role of the mediator variable with regression analysis, four stages need to be provided. First, the effect of the independent variable on the mediating variable, second the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, and third, the effect of the mediating variable on the dependent variable. Fourth, when the mediating variable and the independent variable are included in the analysis together, the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable should decrease or disappear completely. The complete disappearance of the effect of the variable on the dependent variable is expressed as a full mediator, and its decreases as a partial mediator (Baron and Kenny, 1986). Starting from this point, first of all, regression analyzes were performed to test the relationship between the variables. The obtained results are given in Table 4.

**Table 4: Regression Analysis**

Model	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	B	t	F	R <sup>2</sup>	P
1	Environmental Concern	Green Product Purchase Intent	0,854	19,642	385,791*	0,533	0,000
2	Attitude	Green Product Purchase Intent	0,767	18,354	336,871*	0,499	0,000
3	Environmental Information	Green Product Purchase Intent	0,629	14,815	219,486*	0,393	0,000
4	Subjective Rules	Green Product Purchase Intent	0,583	13,163	173,277*	0,338	0,000
5	Environmental Concern	Confidence in Green Product	0,546	11,870	140,887*	0,293	0,000
6	Attitude	Confidence in Green Product	0,509	11,953	142,881*	0,296	0,000
7	Environmental Information	Confidence in Green Product	0,634	14,782	218,500*	0,392	0,000
8	Subjective Rules	Confidence in Green Product	0,447	11,384	129,585*	0,276	0,000
9	Confidence in Green Product	Green Product Purchase Intent	0,719	14,406	207,532*	0,380	0,000
<b>*p&lt;0,05,</b>							

According to Table 4, it was seen that all sub-dimensions of the independent variable green product affected the purchasing level of the dependent variable ( $p>0.05$ ). Again, it was observed that all sub-dimensions of the independent variable green product affected the mediator variable green confidence level ( $p>0.05$ ). Finally, it was observed that the mediating variable green confidence level affected purchasing behavior ( $p>0.05$ ). According to the mediation criterion of Baron and Kenny (1986), mediation analyzes were performed because the first three conditions were met.

In Table 5, the results of the regression analysis for the mediating role of green trust in the effect of green product sub-dimensions on green product purchasing behaviors are shared.

**Table 5: Mediation Analysis**

Model	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	B	T	P1	R <sup>2</sup>	F	P2
1	Environmental Concern	Green Product Purchase Intent	0,656	13,687	0,000	0,601	254,974*	0,000
	Confidence in Green Product		0,364	7,637	0,000			
2	Attitude		0,384	7,775	0,000	0,574	228,463	0,000

	Confidence in Green Product	Green Product Purchase Intent	0,572	12,432	0,000			
3	Environmental Information	Green Product Purchase Intent	0,429	7,264	0,000	0,474	153,035	0,000
	Confidence in Green Product		0,467	7,829	0,000			
4	Subjective Rules	Green Product Purchase Intent	0,500	9,211	0,000	0,470	150,677	0,000
	Confidence in Green Product		0,351	7,641	0,000			

In Table 5, according to model 1, when the independent variable environmental anxiety and mediating variable green trust were included in the analysis together and the green product purchasing behavior was run as the dependent variable, the model was found to be significant ( $p < .05$ ). It was observed that the level of environmental anxiety continued to have a significant effect on purchasing, but the level of effect decreased ( $\beta: .854/.656$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Based on this finding, it was accepted that there was a partial mediation effect. In Model 2, it was observed that the significant effect of attitude level on purchasing continued, but the effect level decreased ( $\beta: .767/.384$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Based on this finding, it was accepted that there was a partial mediation effect. In Model 3, it was observed that the significant effect of environmental knowledge level on purchasing continued, but the effect level decreased ( $\beta: .629/.429$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Based on this finding, it was accepted that there was a partial mediation effect. Finally, in model 4, it was observed that the level of subjective rules continued to have a significant effect on purchasing, and the level of effect increased ( $\beta: .500/.447$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Based on this finding, it was decided that there was no mediation relationship.

In Table 6, the results of the mediation analysis performed by combining the sub-dimensions of the variables in a single factor are given.

**Table 6: Mediation Analysis for the Whole Model**

Model	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	B	t	P	R <sup>2</sup>	F
1	Green Product	Confidence in Green Product	0,731	15,803	0,000	0,425	3249,721*
2	Green Product	Green Product Purchase Intent	1,036	24,069	0,000	0,632	579,339*
3	Confidence in Green Product	Green Product Purchase Intent	0,719	14,406	0,000	0,380	207,532*
4	Green Product	Green Product Purchase Intent	0,890	16,012	0,000	0,648	310,824*

In Table 6, it was seen that the independent variable green product significantly affected the mediating variable green confidence ( $\beta: .731$ ;  $p < .05$ ), and the dependent variable green product purchasing behavior ( $\beta: 1.036$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Green trust significantly affects purchasing behavior ( $\beta: .719$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Finally, to determine the intermediary relationship, the green product preference variable, and the green trust variable were included in the analysis together and the model was found to be significant when the purchasing behavior was examined ( $p < .05$ ). It was determined that the effect of the independent variable green product preference on the dependent variable purchasing behavior continued, but the effect level decreased ( $\beta: .890$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Accordingly, it can be said that green trust has a partial mediating role in the effect of green product preference on purchasing behavior.

Table 7 shows the acceptance and rejection of the hypotheses developed within the scope of the study. Accordingly, 15 of 16 hypotheses were accepted and one was rejected.

**Table7: Acceptance and Rejection of Hypotheses**

No	RESULT	No	RESULT
H1	Accept	H2.3	Accept
H1.1	Accept	H2.4	Accept
H1.2	Accept	H3	Accept
H1.3	Accept	H4	Accept
H1.4	Accept	H4.1	Accept
H2	Accept	H4.2	Accept

H2.1	Accept	H4.3	Accept
H2.2	Accept	H4.4	Rejection

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Sustainability takes place at the global, national, regional, industry and enterprise levels and includes the continuity of activities. In enterprises, this green concept is planned to include the customer, the environment, and society (Praude and Bormane, 2013). Green products are environmentally friendly products and also provide a competitive advantage. There are several problems with consumer purchase of green products (Li et al., 2021; Choi and Johnson, 2019). Therefore, enterprises producing green products should identify the problems with consumers and make improvements for them. Green attitudes and behaviors can differ between cultures. Businesses that detect these differences well can be more successful when they organize their products and processes according to the differences. Today, due to the increasing environmental problems and threatening human health, many national and international studies have been conducted on this subject (Kang et al., 2013; Leary et al., 2014; Yadav and Pathak, 2016; Joshi and Rahman, 2017; Heo and Muralidharan, 2019; Bozpolat, 2021).

This study was conducted to determine the mediating role of green trust in the purchasing tendency of green products so that future generations can lead comfortable life. As the universe of the research, university students were chosen because they are the ones who will rule the countries and the world in the future. It is important to bring environmental awareness to them and to put it into action. In the study, the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between H1 green product preference and all sub-dimensions of green product preference (attitude, environmental concern, environmental knowledge, subjective rules) and the intention to purchase green products, which are the sub-hypotheses of H1, was accepted. This indicates that young people are sensitive to nature and the environment and tend to buy green products. It is similar to the research hypothesis (Ünivar, 2018; Yadav and Pathak, 2016; Bozpolat, 2021; Uygun and Sarıkaya, 2022; Özsaçmacı, 2018).

The hypothesis of research hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between green product preference in H2 and green product preference in all sub-dimensions of green product preference (attitude, environmental concern, environmental knowledge, subjective rules), which are sub-hypotheses of H2, was accepted. When consumers buy green products, they want the products to be environmentally friendly and environmentally friendly, but if they find the product reliable, they tend to buy it. Therefore, businesses should be realistic when promoting products, highlighting their benefits, and providing secure communication between the seller and the buyer. The research findings are in line with previous studies. In the research conducted by Baran et al., (2017), the image, quality and brand value of green products positively affect green trust. Bozbay, et al., (2019), it has been determined that the perceived quality and trust of these products are effective in purchasing environmentally friendly products for consumers.

It was supported that there is a significant relationship between trust in H3 green products and purchasing green products. Bozbay et al., 2019 concluded that perceived quality affects green trust in environmentally friendly products, green trust affects the intention to purchase environmentally friendly products, and purchase intention affects purchasing behavior. Marakanon and Panjakajornsak (2017) stated that trust in environmentally friendly products positively affects individuals' intention to purchase environmentally friendly products. Consumers reveal that the perceived quality of green products has an impact on their intention to purchase environmentally friendly products (Ariffin et al., 2016). Confidence and risk are inverse concepts. As one increases, the other decreases. There is a negative effect between perceived risk and purchase intention (Wu and Lin, 2016; Chen and Chang, 2012). Trust is not an easy thing to come by and it takes time. Once trust is lost, it is difficult to regain. In this context, businesses should know their green products very well and make consumers feel that they are reliable.

The last hypothesis of the research was that the mediating effect of green product preferences on the H4 and green product H4 sub-dimensions (attitude, environmental concern, environmental knowledge) of students' green product preferences on green product purchasing was also examined and the mediation effect was determined. However, the effect of subjective rules on purchasing green products was not found to mediate the level of trust in green products. Baran, et al., (2017) concluded that while green trust has a fully mediating role in the effect of perceived green risk and green brand image on green brand equity, perceived green quality has a partial mediating role. Uzundal (2019), on the other hand, stated that the variables of green product promotion activities and impact groups, which are among the dimensions of green product awareness, play a partial mediation role in increasing trust. While trust affects purchase intention, environmental concern and environmental information variables do not have a mediating role on purchase intention. Yıldırım (2020) found that behavioral beliefs perceived behavioral control and green trust had a positive effect on the willingness to purchase, while personal values did not have a significant effect. Li et al., (2021), in their study, revealed that environmental concern has a partial mediation of environmental values and intention to purchase green products, and green trust has a positive moderator effect on environmental concern and intention to purchase green products.



When the article is evaluated in general, it seems that the students' sensitivity towards green products is positive. For this reason, purchasing green products and green trust is an important concept. As social awareness increases, the importance of their transformation into nature will increase and the green product strategy will gain importance. Considering this situation, it will be decisive for their future for businesses to create green products and attach importance to social responsibility activities. These research results are very important for producers, consumers, R&D, marketers, managers, governments, individuals, and society. It will help develop appropriate new strategies for green products and purchasing. While informing is very important among consumers, there is also a need to raise awareness by labeling environmentally friendly products with green certification and environmental issues that can positively affect their attitudes and intentions towards green products. The limitations of the research are; The research is done with a limited number of university students. In this context, to reach more general results, it can be done with individuals who are active in working life other than university students.

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### Appendix 1: Exploratory Factor Analysis

No	Attitude	Environmental Concern	Environmental Information	Subjective Rules	Green Product Purchasing	Confidence in Green Product
GP1	,668					
GP2	,721					
GP3	,754					
GP4	,720					
GP5	,655					
GP6	,613					
GP9		,628				
GP11		,418				
GP12		,735				
GP13		,717				
GP14		,751				
GP15		,724				
GP17		,570				
GP18			,720			
GP19			,796			
GP20			,730			
GP21			,755			
GP7				,811		
GP8				,780		
GP10				,522		
GPP1					,897	
GPP2					,923	
GPP3					,920	
CG1						,847
CG2						,892
CG3						,836
CG4						,820
CG5						,852

**Extraction Method:** Principal Component Analysis. **Rotation Method:** Varimax

**Green Product:** %68,445 KMO: ,941, Barlet test of sphericity: 4426,030 df:190 p: ,000

**Green Product Purchasing** %83,378 KMO: ,748, Barlet test of sphericity: 632,276 df:3 p: ,000

**Confidence in Green Product:** %72,219 KMO: ,875 Barlet test of sphericity: 1028,694 df:10 p: ,000

## Apendix 2: First Level DFA for Improved Measurement Model

Implicit Variables	Observed Variables	Standardized Regression Coefficients	Standard error	T	P
Environmental Concern (F1)	T9	1,070	,078	13,716	***
	T11	,820	,079	10,372	***
	T12	1,131	,072	15,622	***
	T13	1,021	,077	13,331	***
	T14	1,111	,070	15,769	***
	T15	,850	,078	10,853	***
	T17	1,000			
Attitude (F2)	T1	,976	,044	22,263	***
	T2	,843	,048	17,515	***
	T3	,767	,055	13,955	***
	T4	,849	,047	19,983	***
	T5	1,000			
	T6	1,008	,044	22,836	***
Environmental Information(F3)	T18	,888	,065	13,629	***
	T19	,760	,065	11,624	***
	T20	1,004	,070	14,419	***
	T21	1,000			
Subjective Rules(F4)	T7	1,478	,151	10,296	***
	T8	1,594	,144	10,575	***
	T10	1,000			
Purchase(S)	S1	,995	,049	22,407	***
	S2	1,054	,047	20,431	***
	S3	1,000			
Green Trust (G)	G1	1,021	,064	15,867	***
	G2	1,073	,062	17,335	***
	G3	,967	,064	15,144	***
	G4	,908	,056	16,156	***
	G5	1,000			

## EVALUATING THE EFFECTS OF RETAIL STORE ATTRIBUTES ON CONSUMER COMPLAINT AND SWITCHING BEHAVIORS\*

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose-** This study extends the current researches on retail behavior of consumers by indicating the importance of negative behavioral patterns and the need for strong attributes to avoid undesirable outcomes. The study aims to explore the effects of store attributes as pricing/promotion, atmosphere, personnel, location and ethical problems on consumer complaint behavior and store switching behavior. Survey is conducted to consumers having been visited at and purchased from their current retail stores.

**Methodology-** The sample consists of 384 customers. The data was collected by face-to-face survey method. Multiple regression analysis was used to test some hypotheses of the research and to compare consumer complaint and switching behavior in the context of consumer's perception on retail store attributes.

**Findings-** The results of the study reveal that pricing/promotion, atmosphere and personnel have significant effects on both complaint and switching behaviors. Pricing and promotion are found to have the strongest effect on consumer complaint behavior, whereas pricing/promotion and ethical problems have strong effects on store switching behavior. Besides, complaint behavior has also significant effect on store switching behavior.

**Conclusion-** This study contributes to the literature on consumer behavior by comparing consumers' negative behavioral patterns in terms of different retail store attributes. Besides, its theoretical contributions, this study also contribute retailers to present effective strategies for store attributes. Thus, the current study is expected to offer retailers for appropriate strategies on store attributes. So that, negative behavioral patterns can be avoided.

**Keywords:** Retail store, retail store attributes, consumer complaint behavior, store switching behavior, multiple regression analysis

**JEL Codes:** M31, L11, L81

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Consumers make a hierarchical prioritization of the retail stores and they have tendency to patronize certain stores over others. This can be conceptualized as a process. In this process, store attributes shape consumer perception and this eventually cause a taxonomy of behavioral outcomes defined as approach or avoidance (Thang and Tan, 2003: 194). Examining behavioral outcomes is vitally important for avoiding a negative marketing outcome. Two of these negative outcomes are related to complaining and switching behavior.

It is vitally important for retailers to consider complaints of consumer (Zeithaml et al., 1996), since a complaint can be opportunity for retailers to strengthen loyalty and to have positive word of mouth communication. Many successful companies motivate dissatisfied customers for complaining in order to retain current customers (Tronvoll, 2012: 285). It is also important for retailers to keep or retain customers in a long-term relationship. Keeping current customers necessitates to understand why customers complain and switch. Consumer retention and consumer switching are different behavioral aspects. Nevertheless, studies on consumer switching get more attention among companies, since it directly responds to the issues of why consumers are not retaining (Sivakumaran and Peter, 2020: 1058). Accordingly, consumer complaints and switching behaviors are two important marketing constructs having unique managerial and theoretical implications. They are

\* This study is derived from the PhD thesis titled as *The Effects of Store Attributes and Attitude on Attitude and Behavior towards Retail Store Brand*, prepared by Banu Kulter Demirgunes, Niğde Omer Halisdemir University, Institute of Social Sciences (2010).

vitaly important due to its possible effects on the profitability, survival and growth of companies (Nimako and Kumasi, 2012: 74).

The rapid increase in competition in certain industries and variety of choices in the market force the consumers to switch from the previous one to other. One of the industries that competitive tools have to be hardly used is the retailing industry. Retailers have to reevaluate their store attributes, since the number of organized retailing has increased recently. The retailer needs to enhance the store attributes in terms of changing consumer needs. Most studies in literature focus on the effects of attributes, on store choice (Popkowski and Timmermans, 1997), store image (Wong and Teas, 2001) and store loyalty (Sirohi et al., 1998). Besides, some studies discussed the effects of store attributes on attitude towards retail store (Yoo et al., 1998). Since store attributes are mainly discussed in terms of positive results, (such as satisfaction, loyalty and revisit intention) their effects on negative outcomes can be considered as being neglected in the literature.

The current study tests a theoretical model examining the effects of store attributes on consumer's negative behavioral patterns, as complaint behavior and store switching behavior. Besides, it examines whether consumer complaint behavior affects the behavior on store switching. The study examines store attributes, mostly discussed in literature (Yoo et al., 1998; Pan and Zinkhan, 2006), as price, promotion, atmosphere, personnel, location and ethical problems (Nimako and Kumasi, 2012). The research model specifies a causal relationship between these attributes of retail stores and the complaint and switching behaviors. This study also allows to see the different effects of store attributes between two negative responses of consumer.

This study contributes to the literature on consumer behavior by comparing consumers' negative behavioral patterns in terms of different retail store attributes. While many previous studies focus on positive outcomes (such as loyalty, satisfaction and etc.), little work has been conducted on consumers' negative behavioral outcomes (Morschett et al., 2005; Pan and Zinkhan, 2006). Besides, its theoretical contributions, this study also contribute retailers to present effective strategies for store attributes. The study is also important for understanding consumer switching behavior in retail industry. Thus, the current study is expected to offer retailers for appropriate strategies on store attributes. So that, negative behavioral patterns can be avoided.

The following section presents theoretical background. Retail store attributes, consumer complaint behavior and switching behavior are presented and research hypotheses based on related literature are given. Then, research methodology is defined and research hypotheses are tested in the third part of the study. The results are discussed in the last section and finally, study concludes with implications for future researches.

## **2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1. Retail Store Attributes**

Store attributes are mainly discussed in literature as the factors being effective on store choice and attracting customers (Mulhern, 1997: 106). Most studies define store attributes as price, quality, atmosphere, personnel and location (Popkowski and Timmermans, 1997; Yoo et al., 1998; Morschett et al., 2005) These factors serve as a basis for many studies with different aims. The common point of these studies is that these attributes have been examined with the consumer's point of view and based on consumer perception. In other words, the conceptualization of a consumer's retail behavior is based on a set of information about their perception on store attributes (Thang and Tan, 2003: 193).

Many studies identified the specific attributes of stores and have found that perceptions on these factors can influence outcomes variables of interest to retailers (Yoo et al., 1998). For example, Donovan and Rossiter (1982) indicate that pleasure resulting from these factors affect consumer behaviors as willingness to visit again and amount of time spent in the store. Consumers perception on these factors are especially important, since they are the dynamics nature of the retail environment (Yoo et al., 1998: 253). Previous researches have defined a group of store attributes mentioned above (product variety, value of product given its price, location, atmosphere and facilities) (Yoo et al., 1998), but more recent study has indicated that ethical problems is also an important antecedent that is effective on consumer's perception (Nimako and Kumasi, 2012).

The price levels of the product in retail stores are likely to be associated with high quality. Dodds et al. (1991) indicate the product price and the pricing policies of the store (e.g., frequent promotion, discounting) are so likely to have significant effect on retail behavior of consumers (Sirgy, et al., 2000). Retailers are engaged in promotional activities including incentives as discounts for attracting customers to their stores. The concept of promotion is defined as a competitive tool creating public awareness of the store's activities. Studies have pointed out the importance store atmosphere, identified as physical surrounding of store attributes that trigger the emotional reaction. It is an important attribute because of increasing the desirability of the store to consumers (Thang and Tan, 2003: 195). Location is also indicated to determine store's success or failure, since the accessibility is important. Better accessibility is related to a location and includes parking facilities. Thus, positive perception on location can imply less displeasure to consumers (Thang and Tan, 2003).



Lastly, store personnel influence the consumer behavior by means of certain psychological and internal variables. Certain behaviors of retail store personnel are perceived friendly, or kindly to some degree. Similarly, certain behavior can be considered pleasing or not, because perceptual process on personnel behaviors is highly subjective. Personnel is also one attribute that infers the relation quality (Morschett et al., 2005: 429). Complaints emerging from the lack of contact between personal and customers will cause consumer negative attitude towards personnel (Külter Demirgünes, 2009).

## **2.2. Complaint Behavior**

The concept of Consumer Complaint Behavior (CCB) is believed to be started by emotions or feelings of perceived dissatisfaction (Day, 1980). Generally, CCB responses are classified in two categories as behavioral and non-behavioral. Behavioral responses indicate all actions of consumer that express dissatisfaction. These kinds of responses are not only limited with the seller (e.g., retailers, manufacturers, firms) but involve third parties as legal actions or relatives. For instance, negative word of mouth communication is identified as in the behavioral responses category. Non-behavioral responses are defined as dissatisfying episode that can be evaluated as a silent response (Day, 1980).

CCB is outcome-oriented and it occurs as a post-purchased activity (Day et al., 1981). Most common models of CCB are based on similar definitions. However, a commonly used identification is proposed by Singh (1984). He identifies three dimensions of CCB. That is customer has three options as 1) private response (negative word of mouth), 2) voice response (seeking redress from the seller, 3) third part response (taking legal action or complain to a third party). Phau and Sari (2004) define the concept as a process constituting a set of all possible responses perceived as dissatisfaction after a purchase episode (Halim and Christian, 2013: 18). Commonly, all models of complaints are based on the activities after the purchase (Tronvoll, 2012: 286).

CCB begins when consumer perceives frustration, inequity and primary evaluation of dissatisfaction (Crie, 2003: 67). However, complaints do not always result from dissatisfaction. Simply, dissatisfaction is not only the cause for customers' complaining. So that, the concept of complain is more complex than a reaction to dissatisfaction after purchase (Tronvoll, 2012: 288). CCB does not begin suddenly, but it is the result of an evaluation process of purchasing. In this process, consumers evaluate their purchases and decisions on consumption (Manzoor et al., 2006: 206). For example, consumers visit the retail stores and develop perception on store attributes during an evaluation process. Thus, it is vital for retailers to understand how consumers evaluate retail store and to predict consumer's complaint so as to forecast switching behavior of consumer from one store to another (Wong et al., 2018).

As mentioned above many studies which focus on CCB tend to identify the dissatisfaction factor determining the consumer complaint behavior (Halim and Christian, 2013: 18). However, complaints do not always mean dissatisfaction. Conversely, the absence of complaints does not always allow responses to be drawn about the satisfaction (Meiners et al., 2021; 16). In other words, response of consumer complaints is related to not only dissatisfaction, but to other factors as personal factors, consumer perceptions, evaluations and personal experiences (Halim and Christian, 2013: 18). Differently from previous studies, the current study offers relationships between store attributes and CCB. Thus, the study proposes following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a: Pricing/promotion have significant effect on consumer complaint behavior.

Hypothesis 1b: Atmosphere has significant effect on consumer complaint behavior.

Hypothesis 1c: Personnel has significant effect on consumer complaint behavior.

Hypothesis 1d: Location has significant effect on consumer complaint behavior.

Hypothesis 1e: Ethical problems have significant effect on consumer complaint behavior.

## **2.3. Switching Behavior**

Switching is one of phenomena of consumer behavior where consumers switch their loyalty from one object to other (Suryawardani and Wulandari, 2020: 14). Many studies identified that one of the consequences of dissatisfaction is consumer switching behavior (CSB). Complaint is expressed by a model of complaint process involving the dissatisfaction (Oliver, 1997); whereas CSB identifies a dynamic process developing over a particular period of time and lastly come out in the end of relation. CSB is directly defined as behavioral but not attitudinal disloyalty. When consumers perceive failures in any object (store, product, brand) or attributes (such as store atmosphere, personnel, location), negative feelings present some of the causes that consumers switch (Suryawardani and Wulandari, 2020).

Switching emerges due to some factors as internal or external. Change of consumer desires, preferences, and consumptive lifestyle are identified as internal factors. Various choices among object, promotions, social factors and recommendations from reference group and the changes of technology are described as external factors (Suryawardani and Wulandari, 2020). More recent studies focus on both internal and external factors such as consumers' demographic characteristics, psychographic and socio-economic factors in order to examine complaint and switching status (Xu et al., 2021; Kumar and Kaur, 2022). This study focuses on external factors (such as atmosphere, price, and ethical problems) therefore, the results are expected to help retailers to increase their competitive advantages. To identify external factors of retail stores that are

important on store choices, previous studies have been examined. Based on the store factors, it can be analyzed consumer's decision on switching. Positive perception on these factors is expected to correlate to switching negatively (Suryawardani and Wulandari, 2020). Besides, CSB may occurs not only one brand to another but also across the stores (Wong et al., 2018: 223).

Based on the above literature review, this study offers relationships between store attributes and consumer switching behavior of retail store. Thus, the study proposes following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2a: Pricing/promotion have significant effect on store switching behavior.

Hypothesis 2b: Atmosphere has significant effect on store switching behavior.

Hypothesis 2c: Personnel has significant effect on store switching behavior.

Hypothesis 2d: Location has significant effect on store switching behavior.

Hypothesis 2e: Ethical problems have significant effect on store switching behavior.

The switching concept indicates a function of dissatisfaction. Accordingly, Hirschman (1970) dictates that when consumers experience a problem, they can start complaining and switch to a new store (exit), or stay with the business and hope that things would be better (Sujithamrak and Lam, 2005). Cronin et al. (1992) proposed that as the level of complaints increase, the level of switching behavior increases (Cronin et al., 1992). Besides, negative factors as regret, dissatisfaction and complaining behavior might cause switching (Cho and Song, 2012: 580). Thus, the last hypothesis is presented as following:

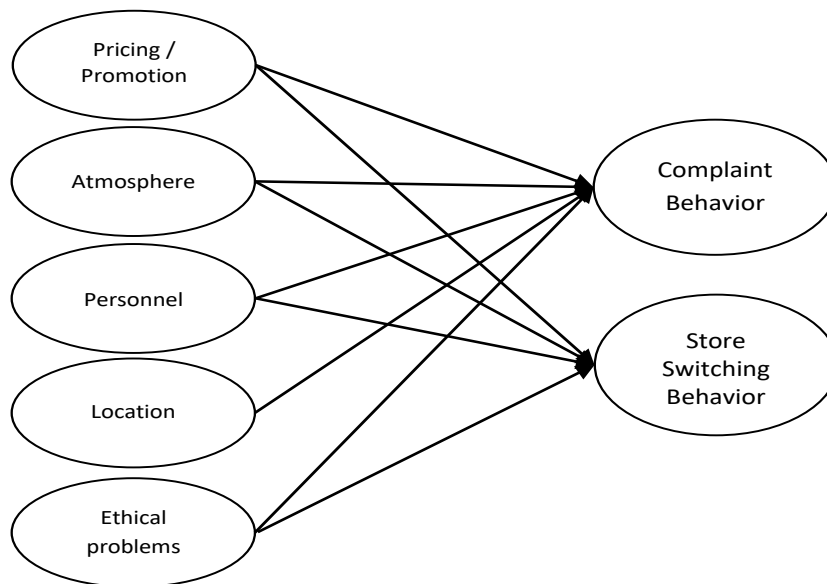
Hypothesis 3: Consumer complaint behavior has significant effect on store switching behavior.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Research Model and Hypotheses

This study tries to answer the question whether the store attributes (pricing and promotion, atmosphere, personnel, location, ethical problems) affect complaint and switching behavior of consumer, or not. Specifically, the study predicts the relationships between five store attributes mentioned above, and complaint and switching behavior. The antecedents of the model are store attributes, and the consequents are behavioral outputs as complaint and switching behaviors. The research model is as in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Research Model



The research hypotheses based on the research model and the purpose of the study are presented below:

Hypothesis 1a: Pricing/promotion have significant effect on consumer complaint behavior.

Hypothesis 1b: Atmosphere has significant effect on consumer complaint behavior.

Hypothesis 1c: Personnel has significant effect on consumer complaint behavior.

Hypothesis 1d: Location has significant effect on consumer complaint behavior.

Hypothesis 1e: Ethical problems have significant effect on consumer complaint behavior.

Hypothesis 2a: Pricing and promotion have significant effect on store switching behavior.

Hypothesis 2b: Atmosphere has significant effect on store switching behavior.

Hypothesis 2c: Personnel has significant effect on store switching behavior.

Hypothesis 2d: Location has significant effect on store switching behavior.

Hypothesis 2e: Ethical problems have significant effect on store switching behavior.

Hypothesis 3: Consumer complaint behavior has significant effect on store switching behavior.

### **3.2. Sampling and Data Collection**

The study focuses on consumers who have been purchasing from retail stores. Retail stores were determined as Migros and Carrefour since they are defined as the same retail types. That is both Migros and Carrefour present the type of chain store. The study does not cover the other different types of retail stores as local markets and discount stores. Besides, the study is not limited with a certain type of product sold in these kinds of retail stores. When the size of population is equal to or bigger than 10.000.000 and the study has 95% confidence interval, 384 sample size is indicated as adequate and the researcher can collect the data from individuals among the sample (Gegez, 2007: 259). Therefore, this study was carried out with sample size of 384.

To have equal distribution of the sample, approximately 200 sample were collected from each store. The data was collected with face-to-face survey method. The sample also is wanted to answer the survey according to the current retail store, recently visited and purchased from. In other words, the study includes consumers having been visited and purchased from retail chain stores, latest 2 months ago. That means sample were selected among consumers who have recently purchased. The reason for this is that negative experience on purchasing and intensity of complaint and switching can decrease after a long (Sweeney et al., 2000). Accordingly, a non-probability sampling method defined as purposive sampling technique, was used in order to cover this precondition.

### **3.3. Questionnaire Design and Measures**

This study used the previous studies' measurement scales to design questionnaire items. To measure store attributes, 24-item measurement scale was adopted from the study of Külter Demirgünes (2009) and Suryawardani and Wulandari (2020). Besides, the variable of ethical problems for retail stores was measured by using Nimako and Kumasi's (2012) scale of ethical problems and including five items. Questionnaire items related with store attributes were measured by a five-point scale from 1 to 5, rating from completely bad to completely good. Accordingly, measurement items for pricing & promotion, atmosphere, personnel and location indicate consumers' positive perception on each store attribute, whereas items for ethical problems cover negative perception on the retail store's ethical issues.

Measurement of consumer complaint behavior includes six items adopted from Singh (1988; Manzoor et al., 2013). Switching behavior of consumer was measured by using four items adopted from Wong et al., (2019). The indicators of all components to measure complaint and switching behavior contain negative feelings after the purchase. Measurement of complaint behavior includes items as; "convince friends and relatives not to use that retail store", "take some legal actions against the store management", "complain to a consumer agency and ask them to take care of the problem", "returned product for rework". Similarly, store switching behavior was measured with four items as "often consider changing the current retail store", "be likely to switch current store to retail store that offer better services", "do not expect to stay with current store for long" and "want to switch another store if there are many problems with the current one" and adopted from Wong et al., (2019). The questionnaire items for complaint and switching behavior were also measured by a five-point Likert scale from 1 to 5, rating from strongly disagreement to strongly agreement.

### **3.4. Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0. Firstly, exploratory factor analysis was conducted so as to determine the factor structure. The Cronbach's alpha values were examined to evaluate internal consistency of each factor. Before applying regression analysis, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated. Lastly, the effects of store attributes on behavioral outcomes were tested via multiple regression analysis. The last hypothesis, indicating the relation between two negative outcomes, was tested by using simple regression analysis.

## **4. FINDINGS**

### **4.1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

A total of 384 respondents participated in the survey. The demographic profile of the respondents is presented in Table 1. Among the respondents, 70% of them were male and 40% were married. About 19% of the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 25, 31% of them were between 26 and 35, 26% of them were between 36 and 45, and 15% of them were between 46 and 55. That is the study included different age groups. Based on the survey, 52% of the sample indicated that they had university education and 26% of them indicated having high school degree, whereas 16% of the respondents

indicated their education level as post graduate. The average monthly income of 26% of the respondents were stated to be between 5501-7500 Turkish Lira, whereas 20% of the respondents stated their income level as between 1-5500 Turkish Lira. The number of the respondents, indicating their income level as less than 1-5500 TL and indicating as more than 12,501 TL is of 20% and 10% respectively. While 40% of the respondents was indicated their occupation as officer, 21% of them indicated their occupation as self-employed, 8% as retired and 10% as employee. Besides, 46% of the participants reported their frequency of shopping at the retail store as several times a week, 26% as every 15-20 days and 27% once a month. Thus, it can be said that respondents' retail shopping is defined as frequent buying. Approximately, 71% of the respondents indicated that they had mostly preferred dry foods in their purchases at the retail stores. Meat products are the least preferred (7%) category. Lastly, the results show that many respondents (88%) preferred a particular retail store.

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents (n=384)**

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Marital status</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Female	119	31.0	Married	152	39.6
Male	265	69.0	Single	232	60.4
<i>Age</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Education level</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
18-25	71	18.5	Primary education	13	3.4
26-35	120	31.3	High school	47	12.2
36-45	98	25.5	Associate degree	63	16.4
46-55	58	15.1	University education	201	52.3
56-65	37	9.6	Post graduate	60	15.7
<i>Average income (monthly, in Turkish Liras)</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
No income	78	20.3	Housewife	13	3.4
1-5,500	75	19.5	Employee	38	9.9
5,501-7,500	99	25.8	Officer	153	39.8
7,501-10,000	38	9.9	Retired	30	7.8
10,001-12,500	55	14.3	Tradesman	16	4.2
More than 12,501	39	10.2	Student	52	13.5
			Self-employed (lawyer, accountant, etc.)	82	21.4
<i>Frequency of shopping at the retail store</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Which product line is your most purchased from a retail store?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Several times a week	178	46.4	Dry food (packaged products, pulses, biscuits, etc.)	271	70.5
Once a week	5	1.3	Delicatessen	59	15.4
Every 15-20 days	98	25.5	Meat products	29	6.5
Once a month	103	26.8	Cleaning equipment	25	7.6
<i>Do you have a particular retail store that you prefer?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>			
Yes	336	87.5			
No	48	12.5			

In the study, exploratory factor analysis was used to define the factor structure of the measure. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was calculated as 0,943 and Bartlett's test of sphericity indicated statistically significant result ( $p=.000$ ). So, it can be said that the data set for this study is suitable for factor analysis. Factor loadings of all items were calculated at the levels of greater than 50%, stated at the required level (Hair et al., 1998). Exploratory factor analysis results revealed a total of 5 factors of store attributes, with eigenvalues greater than 1. Exploratory factor analysis explained 75.126% of total variance, greater than the recommended level of 0.6 (Gerbing and Anderson, 1988). The results of exploratory factor analysis are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis Results**

Items	Factor loadings	Eigen value	Variance explained
<b>Factor 1: Pricing/Promotion</b>		<b>13.381</b>	<b>20.230</b>
Competitive price	0.886		
The coverage of promotion	0.860		
Affordability of price	0.858		
The conformity of price and quality	0.831		
The quantity of promotion airing	0.826		
The conformity of price and benefits	0.825		
The quality of promotion message delivery	0.431		
<b>Factor 2: Atmosphere</b>		<b>3.582</b>	<b>15.632</b>
Modern design	0.743		
Product display	0.726		
Sufficiency of signage and router	0.696		
Lighting	0.680		
Ease of shopping	0.668		
Air quality	0.644		
Cleaning	0.525		
<b>Factor 3: Personnel</b>		<b>2.281</b>	<b>14.451</b>
Kindness	0.831		
Sensitivity	0.818		
Friendship	0.791		
Appropriate knowledge	0.685		
Responsiveness	0.564		
Sufficient explanation	0.532		
<b>Factor 4: Ethical Problems</b>		<b>1.376</b>	<b>12.772</b>
Privacy violation	0.766		
Unsafety	0.759		
Conflict of interest	0.745		
Hard sell	0.708		
Deceptive sales application (deceptive pricing, etc.)	0.616		
<b>Factor 5: Location</b>		<b>1.167</b>	<b>12.042</b>
Location	0.932		
Transportation	0.918		
Facility of location-distance	0.913		
Space for parking	0.875		
Total Variance Explained (%): 75.126; KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy: 0.943; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: Approx. Chi Square: 10,472.158; $d_f$ : 406; $Sig.$ : 0.000			

Besides exploratory factor analysis, reliability analysis is tested to examine the internal reliability of the scale. The internal consistency of the scale in the study was tested by Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Cronbach's alpha values were calculated for pricing/promotion as (0.952); atmosphere (0.903); personnel (0.894); location (0.941); ethical problems (0.931); consumer complaint behavior (0.935) and store switching behavior (0.798). The values for each factor were calculated greater than 0.7. Thus, it can be said that there is a sufficient indicator of reliability (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 1998). The results of reliability analysis are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Results of Reliability Analysis**

Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Pricing/Promotion	0.952
Atmosphere	0.903
Personnel	0.894
Location	0.941
Ethical problems	0.931
Consumer complaint behavior	0.935
Store switching behavior	0.798

Before testing the research hypotheses with regression analysis, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated. The results of Pearson correlation are presented in Table 4. The correlation coefficient between 0.21 and 0.30 defines very weak relationship, while the coefficient between 0.71 and 0.80 defines strong relationship. Besides, the coefficient between 0.91 and 1.00 defines very strong relationship (Nakip, 2003: 322). When the results examined, independent variables in the model are stated to have not strong relations between. In addition, strong relations are stated among dependent and independent variables. Thus, it can be said that there is little or no multicollinearity data set of the study.

**Table 4: Results of Pearson Correlation Analysis**

	Pricing/ Promotion	Atmosphere	Personnel	Location	Ethical problems	Complaint behavior	Switching behavior
Pricing/ Promotion	1.000						
Atmosphere	-0.659** 0.000	1.000					
Personnel	-0.521** 0.000	0.681** 0.000	1.000				
Location	0.313** 0.000	-0.163** 0.001	-0.153** 0.003	1.000			
Ethical problems	-0.644** 0.000	0.731** 0.000	0.677** 0.000	-0.152** 0.003	1.000		
Complaint behavior	-0.917** 0.000	-0.554** 0.000	-0.476** 0.000	-0.257** 0.000	0.570** 0.000	1.000	
Switching behavior	-0.771** 0.000	-0.579** 0.000	-0.546** 0.000	-0.244** 0.000	0.685** 0.000	0.754** 0.000	1.000

Note: \*\* indicates significance level of 0.05.

After conducting correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis is conducted to see the causation. Table 5 summarizes multiple regression models, for both negative behavioral outcomes. One is for complaint behavior (dependent variable) and the other one is for switching behavior (dependent variable). Retail store attributes are the independent variables for both outcomes. Thus, the table presents the comparison of consumer's complaint behavior and his switching behavior for retail store, based on the different store attributes.

For multiple regression analysis, tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) values were calculated as 0.540 and 1.788 respectively. These values are at recommended levels, as >0.1 and >0.2 for tolerance value and as <10 for VIF value. Accordingly, it can be said that collinearity statistics satisfy the required levels (Tonta, 2008). Results of multiple regression analysis, t values, estimate, significance levels and model summaries are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis**

	Complaint Behavior			Switching Behavior		
	Estimate	t value	p	Estimate	t value	p
Pricing/Promotion	-0.984	-33.686	0.000*	-0.578	-13.255	0.000*
Atmosphere	-0.122	-3.637	0.000*	-0.107	-2.137	0.033**
Personnel	-0.057	-1.939	0.053**	-0.098	-2.228	0.026**
Location	-0.039	-1.826	-0.069***	-0.017	-0.541	0.589
Ethical Problems	0.007	0.212	0.832	0.322	6.556	0.000*

<b>Model Summary</b>		
F	422.336	147.913
Sig.	0.000	0.000
R <sup>2</sup>	0.921	0.813
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.848	0.662

Note: \*, \*\* and \*\*\* indicate significance levels of 0.01, 0.05 and 0.10, respectively.

According to the results of model summary, F value was calculated as 422.34 for dependent variable of complaint behavior and 147.91 for switching behavior. These values indicate that each regression model is significant ( $p=0.00$ ). Besides, store attributes as independent variables explain the change on complaint behavior (dependent variable), at the level of ( $R^2$ ) 85%. Similarly, switching behavior as a dependent variable in the model is explained by store attributes at the level of ( $R^2$ ) 66%.

The results of the research hypotheses reveal that four of five hypotheses are supported for complaint behavior and four are supported for store switching behavior. The results indicate that pricing/promotion factor has the strongest effect on both complaint behavior and switching behavior ( $p<0.01$ ). This is one of the main results of the study. Similarly, there is still an important support for earlier studies (Sirgy, et al., 2000), dictating that the price has strong effect on behavioral outcomes.

Atmosphere is one of the store attributes having an important effect ( $p<0.01$ ) on consumer complaint behavior. This effect is found as negative. In other words, consumer's positive perception on store atmosphere negatively affects complaint behavior ( $p<0.01$ ). Store atmosphere is also found to have negative effect on store switching behavior ( $p<0.05$ ). It is found that store switching behavior decreases, as the consumer perceive atmosphere positively. Similarly, as consumer perceives personnel behavior positively, his complaining and switching behaviors decrease. Thus, H1a, H1b, H1c and H2a H2b, H2c hypotheses are supported (see, Table 7). As the location factor has facilities on transportation and ease for parking, it is found that consumer complaint behavior decreases. This indicates H1d hypothesis is accepted ( $p<0.10$ ). However, location is found to have no significant effect on store switching behavior. Thus, H2d hypothesis is not accepted ( $p=0.589$ ). Similarly, ethical problems in retail stores are found to have strong effect on switching behavior ( $p<0.01$ ), whereas it has no statistically significant effect on complaint behavior ( $p=0.832$ ). That is hypothesis of H2e is accepted, while H1e is not.

Given the results of multiple regression analysis above, H1 and H2 hypotheses were tested. In order to see if complaint behavior significantly affect switching behavior, simple regression analysis was used. Results of simple regression analysis, t values, estimates, significance levels and model summaries are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6: Results of Simple Regression Analysis**

	Switching Behavior		
	Estimate	t value	p
Complaint Behavior	0.760	22.846	0.000*

<b>Model Summary</b>		
F	521.960	
Sig.	0.000	
R <sup>2</sup>	0.760	
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.577	

Note: \* indicates significance level of 0.01.

According to the results of model summary, F value was calculated as 521.96 indicating that regression model is significant ( $p=0.00$ ). In addition, consumer complaint behavior as independent variable explains the change on switching behavior (dependent variable), at the level of ( $R^2$ ) %58.

When the simple regression model is examined, it is found that complaining behavior positively affects store switching behavior ( $p<0.01$ ). As the relation is positive, the more a consumer complaint, the more likely he is to switch his current retail store. Thus, consumer complaint behavior has statistically significant effect on store switching behavior, indicating that H3 hypothesis is accepted ( $p<0.01$ ). This is also one of the important findings of this study and supported by previous studies (Sujithamrak and Lam, 2005; Cho and Song, 2012). The results of research hypotheses are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7: Results of Hypotheses Tests**

H1 The Effects of Store Attributes on Consumer Complaint Behavior	
H1a	Pricing/promotion have significant effect on consumer complaint behavior. <i>(Supported)</i>
H1b	Atmosphere has significant effect on consumer complaint behavior. <i>(Supported)</i>
H1c	Personnel has significant effect on consumer complaint behavior. <i>(Supported)</i>
H1d	Location has significant effect on consumer complaint behavior. <i>(Supported)</i>
H1e	Ethical problems have significant effect on consumer complaint behavior. <i>(Not Supported)</i>
H2 The Effects of Store Attributes on Store Switching Behavior	
H2a	Pricing/promotion have significant effect on store switching behavior. <i>(Supported)</i>
H2b	Atmosphere has significant effect on store switching behavior. <i>(Supported)</i>
H2c	Personnel has significant effect on store switching behavior. <i>(Supported)</i>
H2d	Location has significant effect on store switching behavior. <i>(Not Supported)</i>
H2e	Ethical problems have significant effect on store switching behavior. <i>(Supported)</i>
H3 Consumer complaint behavior has significant effect on store switching behavior. <i>(Supported)</i>	

## 5. CONCLUSION

As the number of organized retailing increases, retail store attributes need to be adopted and improved. That is more effort is needed to reduce complaining and switching behaviors. Retailers can use store attributes as competitive tools to avoid these negative behavioral outcomes. Research model in the study infers the possible effects of store attributes on complaints and switching behaviors.

The results show that three store attributes (pricing/promotion, atmosphere and personnel) have significant effects on both consumers complaining behavior and switching behaviors of retail stores. It is so distinct that pricing/promotion has the strongest effect both on complaint and switching behavior. Measurement items related to pricing and promotion cover positive perception on this store attributes. Thus, it is possible that when positive perception on pricing/promotion, the likelihood of consumer to complain about the current store or to switch the store decreases. Positive perception on store atmosphere has also strong effect on two outcomes. When significance levels between two outcomes are compared, atmosphere can be defined as more significantly effective on consumer complaint behavior. Similarly, personnel factor has significant effect on outcomes. That means, positive perception on behavior of store personnel such as kindness, responsiveness and friendship decrease the possibility of complaining and store switching behaviors.

The most effective store attributes on complaining behavior are pricing/promotion, atmosphere, personnel and location respectively. Positive perception on pricing and promotion has desirable influence on complaint behavior as to decrease or avoid complaint behavior. Thus, it is suggested for retail stores to be fair and competitive on pricing and to extend the coverage of promotion. Increasing the quality of promotion message delivery is also another strategy to create a positive perception to dissolve or to reduce complaint behavior. The second store attribute having significant effect on complaint is defined as atmosphere. That is creating a well-designed atmosphere can be a strategy for retail managers to reduce consumer complaint. Lastly, location has no significant effect on switching behavior but it is the least effective store attributes on complaint behavior.

The most effective store attribute on switching behavior of retail store is found to be pricing/promotion. Secondly, ethical problems are defined as importantly effective factor on switching behavior. Since these two attributes are severally important, it is advisable to retail store managers that they should be more competitive on pricing/promotion and should overcome the ethical problems. Managers can decrease the negative perception on ethical issues by inspiring confidence, agreeing fair price and being aware on privacy. Store personnel has also significant effect on consumer's decision on store



switching. For example, sufficient explanation of store personnel about a product/service or his appropriate knowledge can decrease the possibility of the decision on consumer switching of his current store. Lastly, store atmosphere has been found as significantly effective on switching behavior. When significance levels are compared, store atmosphere can be said to have less effect on switching rather than personnel.

Interestingly, ethical problems have no significant effect on complaint behavior. However, it is significantly effective on switching behavior. When its important effect on switching behavior is considered, this result notice that instead of complaining, consumers severally think about switching the current store, when they faced with ethical problems. So that, it is advisable for retailers to avoid negative perception on ethical problems emergently. Ethical problems as privacy violation, deceptive and hard selling applications are the important determinants of store switching behavior. The strong effect of ethical problems on store switching behavior is one of the important findings of the study, supporting the study of Nimako and Kumasi, (2012).

In terms of the simple regression analysis, complaint behavior is found to be importantly effective on store switching behavior. So that, retailers can also evaluate attributes being effective on complaint and they can also improve these factors in order to avoid or reduce switching. When strong effect of complaint on switching behavior is considered, it is advisable for retailers to care about both behavioral patterns. Because it is possible that consumer complaining for his current retail store is more likely to switch that store. This finding is consistent with the research by Cho and Song, (2012) and Manzoor, (2013). So that, the managers are advised to overcome complaints to avoid consumer switching behavior of the retail store. They can set up effective channels allowing to customers' complaining and this increases the controllability and success of store. Lastly, making up for the error can be a way for resolving complaints.

This study consists of sample visiting at and purchasing from retail chain stores as hypermarkets. Future researches can study on the sample involving customers of discount stores, as different retail types. So that, different retail types can be compared, in terms of consumers' negative behavioral patterns. The study also has not define a certain product since it is not based on purchasing behavior. The study mainly focuses on consumers' negative behaviors towards their current retail stores. So that, negative outcomes indicate, not a dissatisfaction towards a certain product, but negative perception towards the retail stores, in terms of store attributes.

One of the limitations of this study is that the sample size is small so that generalizing ability of the research decreases. Future studies are proposed to increase the sample size in order to get more accurate results.

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## BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN THE CONTEXT OF SEVEN ECONOMIC THEORIES

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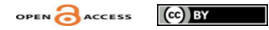
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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose-** There is a research gap in which the most commonly used economic theories in consumer behavior literature are discussed, but conceptual themes are examined together with these theories. For this reason, this study aims to reveal the co-authorships, co-characteristics, co-economic theories, co-other theories, co-constructs, and co-keywords involved in the studies in the field of consumer behavior under seven economic theories.

**Methodology-** This study provides a bibliometric analysis of seven economic theories used in consumer behavior research published in Scopus, ESCI and/or SSCI and other indexes (eg EBSCO, ProQuest) between 2015 and 2021. For this purpose, 52 studies were selected through Google Scholar and analyzed with the VOSviewer program.

**Findings-** The study's findings determined that the number of consumer behavior research based on economic theories was higher in 2020–2021. The authors of the study were not co-authors of any other study. The vast majority of the studies were quantitative, and most of the studies were conducted in China and India. In addition to these results, it has been found that Impulsive Buying and Conspicuous Consumption are the theories used most in consumer behavior research. Also, a construct used in a study title based on any economic theory among the seven economic theories was not used in any working title based on any other economic theory. Finally, impulse buying, hedonic value, and Instagram were co-keywords for some studies based on Impulse Buying (Purchasing) Theory (IBT) or Conspicuous Consumption Theory (CCT).

**Conclusion-** In the discussion part, the study's contributions were included; and the study's limitations and suggestions for future research were given.

**Keywords:** Consumer behaviors, bibliometric analysis, seven economic theories, empirical studies, VOSviewer Program

**JEL Codes:** D11, M30, M31

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Depending on the technological capabilities developed in recent years, research on consumer behavior has taken on a structure that allows the examination of complex characteristics of consumers rather than being descriptive (Blasco-Arcas, 2022:437). Since the effects of consumer behavior change over time along with changes in individual and social power (Reyes-Menendez, 2022:224), the topic of consumer behavior remains important.

There is a relationship between consumer behaviour and marketing due to the factors of pricing system, product quality and service delivery, effective and efficient customer service delivery, customer repurchase, customer reference, and loyalty (Chukwu & Tom, 2020). Since consumer behavior is one of the most important parts of economics, it can be said that marketing and economics are related.

The economic foundations of marketing are worth examining. In the late 19th century, economists discussed marketing in the context of system-environment interactions. In the mid-20th century, the basis of marketing theory was economic theory. Moreover, the role of economists (one of them being Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk) in the mid-21st century's contributions to

marketing theory continues (Dixon, 1999). Between 1955 and 1975, a period characterized as a "paradigm shift" in the development of schools of marketing, several modern schools of thought emerged in the marketing field, including consumer behaviour, with the contribution of Wroe Alderson. From 1975–2000, described as "paradigm expansion" in the development of marketing schools, the boundaries of marketing thought expanded to include consumer behaviour (Shaw & Jones, 2005).

The reason for choosing economics is that consumer behavior is one of the common topics in both marketing theories and economics. Different economic theories have discussed consumer behavior. Economics, which has an important place in shaping consumer behavior, contributes to the marketing discipline with its theories. Here, the economic theories most related to consumer behavior and that have worked the most in recent years have been selected. From an economic perspective, it is clear that researchers have recently evaluated the concept of consumer behavior in terms of bounded rationality (Ashraf, 2021), choice architecture (Kim et al., 2020), conspicuous consumption (Hampson et al., 2021; Kumar and Kumra, 2021; MM et al., 2021), discrete choice (Phillips et al., 2021; Tomlinson & Benson, 2021), impulse buying (Karim et al., 2021; Sarah et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2021; Zafar et al., 2021), and life-cycle (Wijaya et al., 2020). However, no study could be found due to the literature review that systematically reviewed the empirical studies for the consumer behavior literature within the framework of the basic economic theories. It is important to understand how economic theories contribute to the consumer behavior literature. Because it is important to know how the literature on a particular subject is supported by which theories (Wu et al., 2022). This study was conducted to fill a gap in the literature.

This study aims to examine the studies that include the seven economic theories (Bounded Rationality Theory, Choice Architecture Theory, Conspicuous Consumption Theory, Discrete Choice Theory, Impulse Buying Theory, Life-Cycle Theory, Transaction Cost Theory) most commonly used in consumer behavior research in the last seven years, with bibliometric analysis. The study prepared in this context, using bibliometric analysis and visual mapping techniques, addresses these seven economic theory-based consumer behavior pieces of research between 2015 and 2021, covering seven questions.

In this context, answers to the following seven questions were sought in the context of studies published in the last seven years, selected according to seven economic theories that are frequently used in consumer behavior studies in recent years: (1) Are there co-authorships in selected studies based on seven economic theories? (2) Do the selected studies based on seven economic theories have the main co-characteristics? (3) Are there any common countries where studies based on the seven economic theories have been conducted? (4) Which co-economic theory is most used in the studies selected based on the seven economic theories? (5) Are there any other co-theories used with the seven economic theories in the studies selected by considering the seven economic theories? (6) Is there a construct according to the titles of the studies selected based on the seven economic theories? (7) Are co-keywords used in selected studies based on seven economic theories? The rest of this study proceeds to address these seven questions.

Firstly, seven economic theories related to consumer behavior are explained. Secondly, a general framework of the research method is provided. Third, the data obtained was analyzed, and the study findings were presented with the created tables and visual mappings. Then the findings were discussed. In addition, theoretical contributions and implications and future research directions are presented based on the findings. Finally, the study limitations were mentioned.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this section, seven economic theories contained in the study are considered within the consumer behavior.

### **2.1. Bounded Rationality Theory**

The theory of bounded rationality (BRT) was coined by Herbert A. Simon to investigate people's reasoning processes when the rationality conditions predicted by neoclassical economics are not met (Simon, 1989). The theory assumes that the decisions individuals make in conditions of time constraints, cognitive capacity, and incomplete information are "good enough" rather than optimal (Simon, 1957). According to Simon, behavior is a function of cognition and the environment. He uses scissors as a metaphor to explain this issue: "Human rational behavior (and the rational behavior of all physical symbol systems) is shaped by the two blades of a scissor, which are the structure of the task environment and the actor's computational abilities" (Simon, 1990: 7). Examining the decision-making behaviour of at-risk participants (Zhang et al., 2020), purchase intention (Ashraf, 2021) and intrapersonal externalities (Fiedler, 2019) are among the topics examined within the scope of BRT.

### **2.2. Choice Architecture Theory**

Choice architecture (CA), a term coined by Thaler and Sunstein (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008), shows how alternative options are presented as the determinant of choice (Johnson et al., 2012). Since the presentation style of choice is also effective in making choice decisions, the choice environment and the decision context, which are the dimensions of the choice architecture, have an important role in influencing behaviors (Mele et al., 2021:951).

Consumer behavior is discussed in the framework of Choice Architecture Theory (CAT) with the issues of website usage, decision modes, and green behavior. In this context, we talk about how website owners influence users' privacy decisions (Bauer et al., 2021), how customers make financial decisions in different situations (Carpenter et al., 2019), how decision modes (choice and rejection) affect travelers' preferences (Kim et al., 2020), and how AI makes decisions (Mele et al., 2021).

### **2.3. Conspicuous Consumption Theory**

Conspicuous consumption, the embodiment of status motivations, refers to the deliberate use of wealth and prestige to gain social status (Eastman et al., 2022). In other words, people tend to buy luxury brands to display their wealth and status (Purohitand Radia, 2022). So, for conspicuous consumption, material consumption, which means buying goods and services that can be seen and touched, is better than experiential consumption, which means doing things like traveling (Kemper et al., 2022).

There is an expanding research area looking at consumer behavior in the context of Conspicuous Consumption Theory (CCT). It has been investigated online users' behavior (Dantas & Abreu, 2020), the importance of socio-demographic, economic, and psychological features in consumer preferences (Correia et al., 2016; Hampson et al., 2021; Harriger-Lin, 2020; Karunanayake, 2020; Lewis and Moital, 2016; MM et al., 2021), the relation of conspicuous consumption to bandwagon effect (Huang & Wang, 2018), brand and product (Kwon, 2020; McCollough, 2020), and examining the effect of television viewing or mobile usage (Kumar & Kumra, 2021).

### **2.4. Discrete Choice Theory**

The economic foundations of Discrete Choice Theory (DCT) developed by McFadden are based on Lancaster's theory of demand (Lancaster, 1966) and the behavioral choice theory associated with Thurstone (Haghani et al., 2021). DCT is a convenient theory for analyzing consumer preferences and choices (Chorus et al., 2021). According to the theory, individual preferences depend on agents' observable and unobservable properties (Di Guilmiand Galanis, 2021).

It is demonstrated that in the DCT, utility-maximizing agents with heterogeneous preferences learn about products from peers, their stock of product knowledge becomes heterogeneous, fads and fashions emerge, and aggregate preferences lose transitivity. DCT established unambiguous micro-foundations for determining a population's aggregate behavior (Mercurio, 2018).

### **2.5. Impulse Buying (Purchasing) Theory**

Stern (1962) put forward The Impulse Buying Theory (IBT) and defined impulse buying as "a compelling, unplanned, and hedonically complicated purchase-related behavior displayed by consumers." There are four types of impulse purchases: reminder, pure, suggestive, and planned. The term "reminder impulse purchase" refers to a purchase made by a consumer after viewing the product or other similar cues. An unplanned purchase occurs when an individual is exposed to a specific stimulus, also called a "pure impulse purchase". The suggestive impulse indicates a strong need to purchase a product after seeing it for the first time. The situation where there is no plan to buy is called planned impulse buying (Stern, 1962).

Among the theories we used, the IBT is the one that examines customer behavior the most. Among the studies using IBT, there are many studies, especially related to online purchasing (Akram et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2021; Febrilia & Warokka, 2021; Hashmi et al., 2019; Ittaqullah et al., 2020; Karim et al., 2021; Kusmaharani & Halim, 2020; Sarah et al., 2021; Shahpasandi et al., 2020; Wadera & Sharma, 2018; Wiranata & Hananto, 2020; Wu et al., 2021; Zafar et al., 2021).

After this topic, the most studied topic of IBT is the effects of consumers' culture and emotions on their purchasing behaviour (Ahn & Kwon, 2020; Cakanlar & Nguyen, 2019; Hashmi et al., 2020; Naeem, 2020; Sundström et al., 2019; Yi & Jai, 2020; Zheng et al., 2019), brand and product (De Vries & Fennis, 2019; Li et al., 2021). Other studies on this theory look at heterogeneity and socio-demographic factors (Atulkar and Kesari, 2018), the role of brand and product (De Vries and Fennis, 2019; Li et al., 2021), television or mobile usage (Bellini & Aiolfi, 2019), and consumer shopping behavior (Chauhan et al., 2021; Kumar et al., 2021).

### **2.6. (Behavioral) Life-Cycle Theory**

The Life-Cycle Theory (LCT) was developed by Modigliani and Brumberg (1954) to investigate the effect of uncertainty on savings and to explain the increased saving observed in middle age. According to LCT, people's consumption and saving decisions are influenced by the resources available to them over their lifetime as well as their current life stage (Modigliani & Brumberg, 1954). It has been stated that bequests can be included in this model in the following years but that the accumulation does not constitute an important motive for distribution only to the heirs (from a young age to old age) (Modigliani & Brumberg, 1980). Life Cycle Theories (LCT) deal with the effects of the cohort, business cycle, and digital era on

consumption. For example, estimating life cycle consumption profiles (Alexandre et al., 2020), income, savings, and the peculiarities of one's area of residence all impact purchasing decisions (Wijaya et al., 2020).

## **2.7. Transaction Cost Theory**

Coase, who developed the Transaction Cost Theory (TCT), stated that if transaction costs are low, the initial allocation of rights does not affect efficiency. The model's fundamental assumptions are that there are no bargaining costs and that the information is perfect. Inefficiency, according to Coase, arises when there are explicit transaction costs or imperfect information. While the conditions and assumptions mentioned above are correct, the market solves the externality problem (Coase, 1960).

The methodology section is given in the next section to clarify how the above theories are analyzed.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

As shown in Figure 1, the procedures/guidelines in the "Scientific Procedures and Rationales for Systematic Literature Reviews (SPAR-4-SLR) Protocol" were followed for systematic literature review (Paul et al., 2021: 6). First of all, this study aims to construct a general visual mapping of quantitative and qualitative studies. This current study presents a bibliometric analysis of empirical studies on consumer behavior published between 2015 and 2021 in the context of seven economic theories. It was considered important to review the studies conducted in the last seven years to represent the latest developments in the relevant literature (Paul & Mas, 2020). The realization of this study in the context of seven important theories is important in providing a better understanding of the theories discussed by determining the scope of the findings theoretically and supporting future studies by providing gaps in consumer behavior (Wu et al., 2022). In this context, in the last part of the study, the implications and future research directions are provided based on the existing data.

In particular, basic studies were chosen as reference sources for systematically reviewing the literature and formulating future directions. Particular attention was paid to selecting studies with high-impact factors published in journals indexed in leading indexes for quality reasons (Paul & Mas, 2020). As a result, studies indexed in SSCI, Scopus, and ESCI indexes and other indexes such as EBSCO and ProQuest were considered. The use of studies listed in these top indexes is done so as not to lower the quality of the chosen scientific articles and to ensure that this study is unique.

A literature search was conducted using "consumer behavior, consumption, and consumer and economic theories" and combinations of these keywords in the Google Scholar database. Although the Google Scholar database does not provide access to all studies, this decision is necessary to systematize the literature reasonably (Cruz-Cárdenas et al., 2021). A literature review must also be done using keywords directly related to the research topic (Snyder, 2019).

The authors of this study first analyzed the theoretical background of all the studies they had accessed and decided which studies from this analysis could be selected. Studies using the framework of any of the seven economic theories were chosen. As a result of the literature review, 52 studies were selected and evaluated for this study. In particular, some recent studies that considered 50–110 research articles focused on a particular topic have systematically analyzed the relevant literature (Cruz-Cárdenas et al., 2021; Senyo et al., 2019). On the other hand, it is seen that some studies systematically analyze the relevant literature based on 17 articles on a particular topic (Reyes-Menendez et al., 2019).

A content analysis of 52 studies was conducted. In addition to the main characteristics of the selected studies (number of authors, index, type of study, and number of citations), their theoretical foundations, countries, subjects, and keywords were noted. Because it is important to obtain data on the research's identity, organization, method, and outputs and evaluate the study's quality, the analysis highlights the relevance of current studies in exploring economic theories (Littell et al., 2008). As a result, the authors gathered data for each study that needed to be coded. The data obtained separately for each of the 52 studies selected for this study was manually coded into the downloaded EndNote files. Tables for the coded data were built on the word file at the same time. In conclusion, this article presents bibliometric data sources for 52 studies published between 2015 and 2021 and examines the relationships between bibliometric data sources by applying the network analysis technique using VOSviewer. The VOSviewer visual mapping approach can be used to visualize the bibliometric analysis of selected studies (Paul & Bhukya, 2021). VOSviewer was preferred because it allows matching bibliometric data sources and presents these matches with a visual mapping technique (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010). The study's findings are presented in the following pages.

**Figure 1: The SPAR-4-SLR Protocol**

<p><b>1. ASSEMBLING</b></p> <p><b>1a. Identification</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Domain: Consumer behavior</li> <li>➤ Research questions: What empirical studies on consumer behavior were published between 2015 and 2021 in the context of the seven economic theories considered in this study?</li> <li>➤ Source type: Empirical studies</li> <li>➤ Source quality: SSCI, Scopus, and ESCI indexes and other indexes such as EBSCO and ProQuest</li> </ul> <p><b>1b. Acquisition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Search mechanism and material acquisition: Google scholar</li> <li>➤ Search period: 2015 to 2021</li> <li>➤ Search keywords: Consumer behavior, consumption, and consumer and economic theories. Also, combinations of these keywords</li> <li>➤ Total number of articles returned from the search: Studies (n=87)</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. ARRANGING</b></p> <p><b>2a. Organization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Organizing codes: Authorships, indexes, citations, type of study (quantitative, qualitative or mixed), antecedents/constructs, keywords, theories, countries</li> <li>➤ Organizing framework(s): No</li> </ul> <p><b>2b. Purification</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Article type excluded (and total number for each type of exclusion): Studies (n=35)</li> <li>➤ Article type included (and total number of articles included): Studies (n=52)</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. ASSESSING</b></p> <p><b>3a. Evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Analysis method: Bibliometric, content</li> <li>➤ Agenda proposal method: VOSviewer analysis</li> </ul> <p><b>3b. Reporting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Reporting convention(s): Figures, tables, words</li> <li>➤ Limitation(s): Bibliometric data, content analysis as a review type</li> <li>➤ Source(s) of support: No</li> </ul>

Source: (Paul et al., 2021: 6)

#### 4. FINDINGS

Table 1 shows the studies published in the last seven years based on economic theory and selected for this current study.

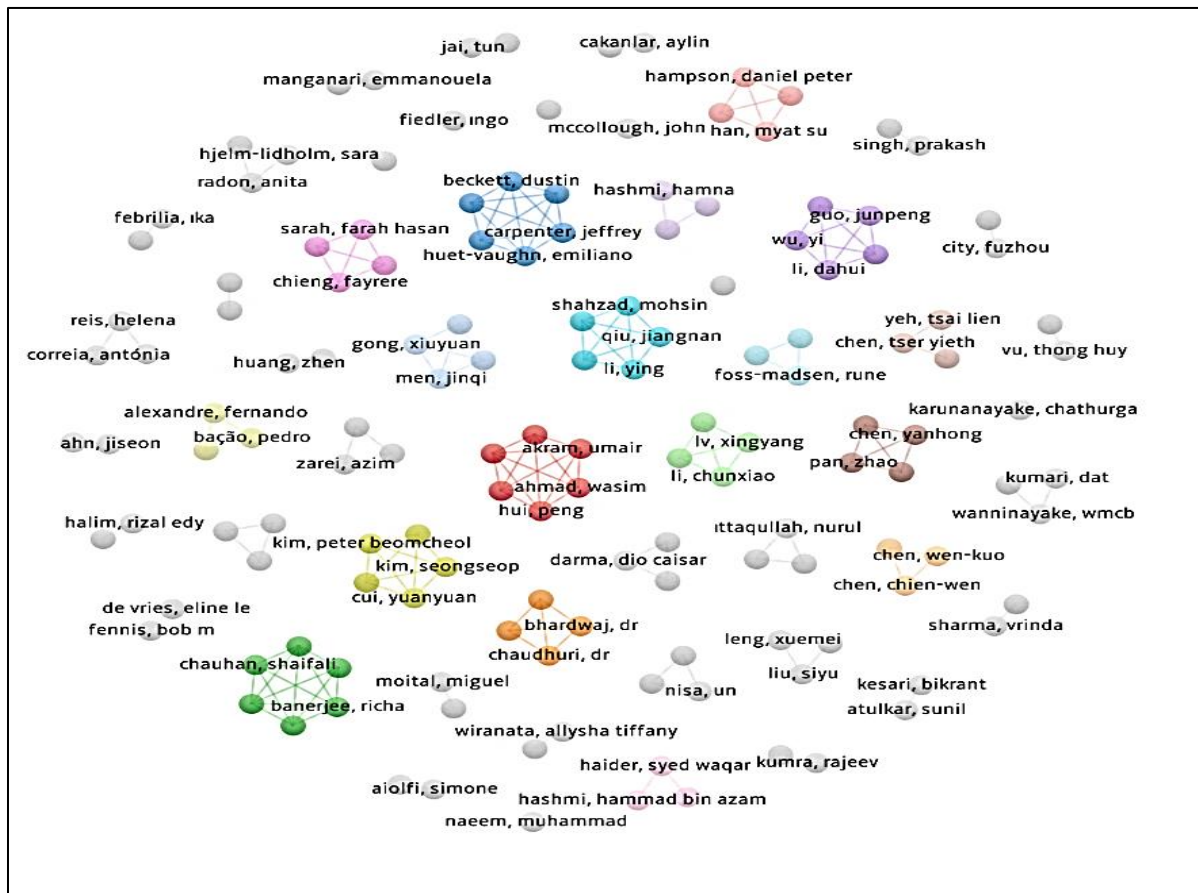
**Table 1: Selected Studies**

Year	Selected Studies	f	%
2015	Theotokis and Manganari (2015)	1	1.92
2016	Correia et al. (2016), Lewis and Moital (2016)	2	3.85
2017	Chen (2017)	1	1.92
2018	Akram et al. (2018), Atulkar and Kesari (2018), Huang and Wang (2018), Mercure (2018), Wadera and Sharma (2018)	5	9.61
2019	Bellini and Aiolfi (2019), Cakanlar and Nguyen (2019), Chen et al. (2019), De Vries and Fennis (2019), Fiedler (2019), Hashmi et al. (2019), Singh and Kapoor (2019), Sundström et al. (2019), Zheng et al. (2019)	9	17.31
2020	Ahn and Kwon (2020), Alexandre et al. (2020), Chen et al. (2020), Dantas and Abreu (2020), Harriger-Lin et al. (2020), Hashmi et al. (2020), Hoang and Vu (2020), Ittaqullah et al. (2020), Karunanayake (2020), Kim et al. (2020), Kusmaharani and Halim (2020), Kwon (2020), McCollough (2020), Naeem (2020), Shahpasandi et al. (2020), Wijaya et al., (2020), Wiranata and Hananto (2020), Yi and Jai (2020), Zhang et al. (2020)	19	36.54
2021	Ashraf (2021), Bauer et al. (2021), Carpenter et al. (2021), Chauhan et al. (2021), Chen et al. (2021), Febrilia and Warokka (2021), Hampson et al. (2021), Karim et al. (2021), Kumar et al. (2021), Kumar and Kumra (2021), Li et al. (2021), MM et al. (2021), Sarah et al. (2021), Wu et al. (2021), Zafar et al. (2021)	15	28.85
<b>Total</b>		<b>52</b>	<b>100</b>

A total of 52 studies published between 2015 and 2021 were selected for this current study (100%; n=52). The number of studies published in 2020 (36.4%; n=19) and 2021(28.85%; n=15) is higher. In this respect, it can be said that in the present study, especially current studies were evaluated. In addition, these findings show that the number of studies evaluating consumer behavior within the scope of economic theories has been intense since 2020. However, it should be noted that 52 studies selected for this study were selected according to certain criteria and limitations.

Figure 2 shows co-authorships in the context of 52 selected studies.

Figure 2: Co-Authorships



Each author has written a study and is only associated with the author(s) of the study they are co-authoring. However, since no author authored more than one study, the author of the single-authored study has no affiliation, i.e., co-authorship, with any of the other authors. Table 2 shows the main characteristics of the 52 selected studies.

Table 2: Main Characteristics of Selected Studies

n=52							
Characteristics	Group	f	%	Characteristics	Group	f	%
Authors	1 author	7	13.46	Index	SSCI/SCI	23	44.23
	2 authors	18	34.62		SCOPUS/ESCI	15	28.85
	3 ≥ authors	27	51.92		Other indexes	14	26.92
Type	Quantitative	41	78.85	Citation	<50 citations	44	84.62
	Qualitative	7	13.46		50-100 citations	4	7.69
	Mixed method	4	7.69		>100 citations	4	7.69

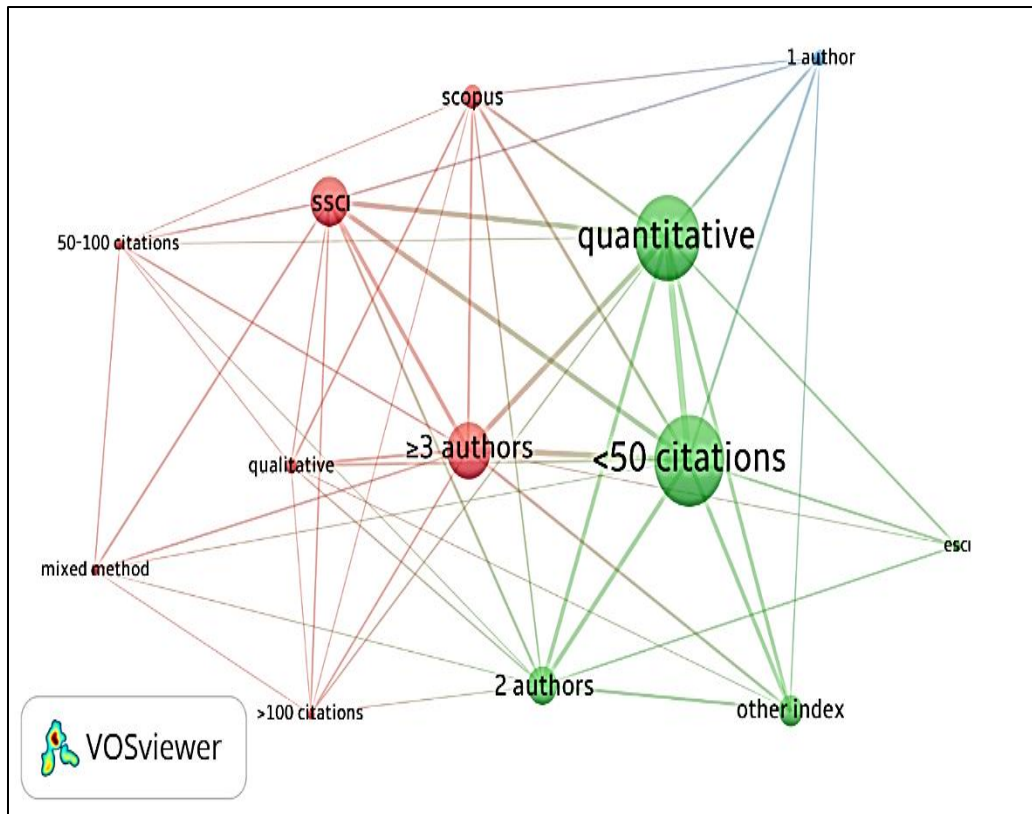
Among the 52 selected studies, the number of studies with at most three or more authors (51.92%; n=27), quantitative (78.85%; n=41), SSCI/SCI indexed (44.23%; n=23), and less than fifty citations (84.62%; n=44) is the highest. The low number



of citations received by most studies can be explained by the fact that most of the studies published between 2020 and 2021 were selected for this current study.

Figure 3 shows the main co-characteristics of the selected studies.

Figure 3: Co-Characteristics



Having three or more authors, SSCI indexing, being a quantitative study, and having fewer than fifty citations are the main co-characteristics of most of the 52 empirical studies on consumer behavior published between 2015–2021 and selected for this study. However, the main common characteristics of some studies (as indicated in green) are that they have two authors, are quantitative studies, have ESCI or other indexing (without SSCI and SCOPUS indexing), and have fewer than fifty citations. On the other hand, the main things other studies have in common (shown in red) are that they have three or more authors, are quantitative or mixed, have a SCOPUS or SSCI index, and have 50 or more citations or more.

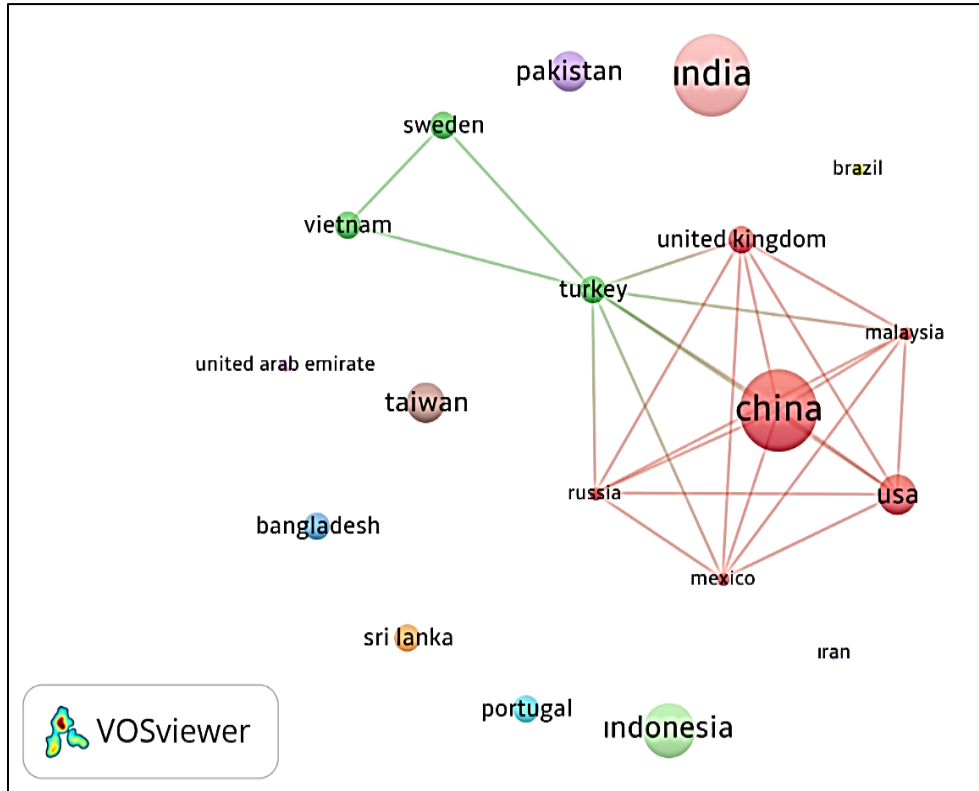
Table 3: Countries of Selected Studies

n=52								
Countries	f	%	Countries	f	%	Countries	f	%
Bangladesh	2	3.85	Mexico	1	1.92	Turkey	2	3.85
Brazil	1	1.92	Pakistan	3	5.77	United Arab Emirates	1	1.92
China	6	11.54	Portugal	2	3.85	United Kingdom	2	3.85
India	6	11.54	Russia	1	1.92	USA	3	5.77
Indonesia	4	7.69	Sri Lanka	2	3.85	Vietnam	2	3.85
Iran	1	1.92	Sweden	2	3.85	Since the country name was not mentioned in the selected studies, no notes were taken.	15	28.85
Malaysia	1	1.92	Taiwan	3	5.77			

Among the 52 selected studies, the most significant number of studies were conducted in China and India, with equal numbers (n=6; 11.54%). However, it should be noted that 15 of 52 selected studies did not specify the country in which the study was conducted (n=15; 28.85%).

Figure 4 shows the co-countries in which the selected studies were conducted.

Figure 4: Co-Countries



Separately, China and India are the co-countries with the largest number of different studies. Since there is no connection between China and India, it is impossible to say that these two countries studies are being carried out simultaneously. Otherwise, Sweden, Turkey, and Vietnam are co-countries where studies are carried out simultaneously. Similarly, China, Malaysia, Mexico, Russia, Turkey, the USA, and the United Kingdom are co-countries where studies are carried out simultaneously. Some studies include people from different countries in the same sample by getting information from people in this country simultaneously.

Table 4 shows the seven economic theories on which the selected studies are based and the origins of these seven economic theories.

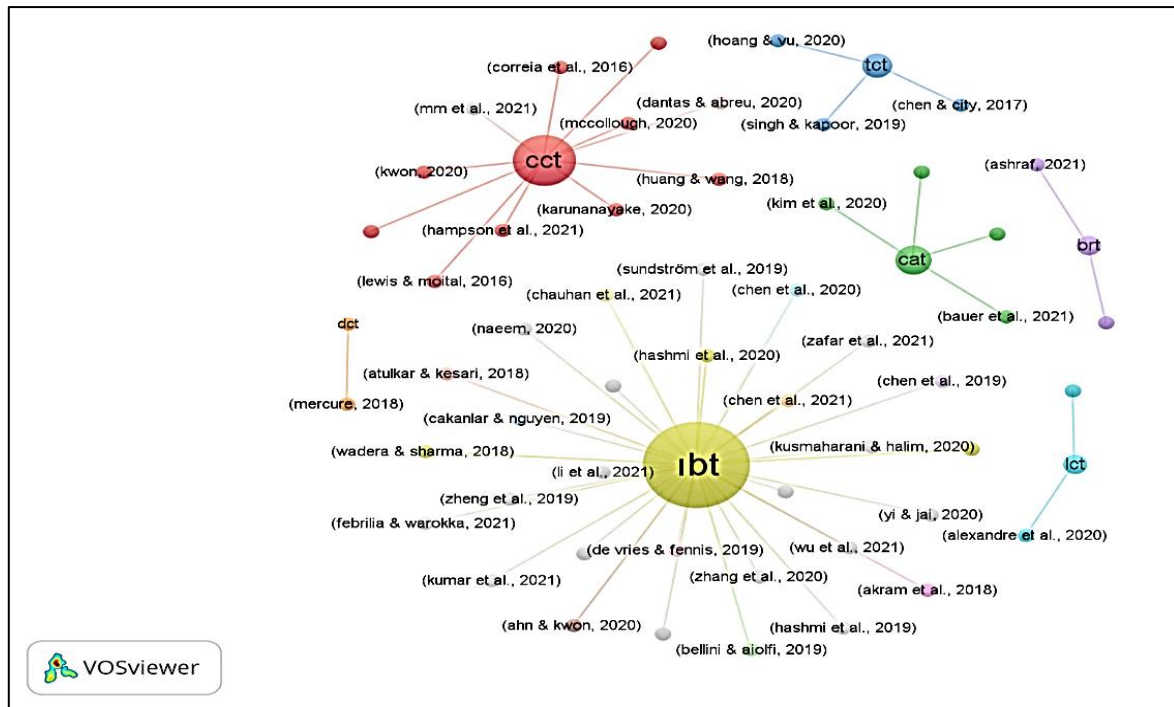
Table 4. Economic Theories Used in Selected Studies

n=52			
Origin of Theory	Economic Theories	f	%
Simon (1957)	Bounded Rationality Theory (BRT)	2	3.85
Thaler and Sunstein (2008)	Choice Architecture Theory (CAT)	4	7.69
Veblen (1899)	Conspicuous Consumption Theory (CCT)	11	21.15
McFadden (1981)	Discrete Choice Theory (DCT)	1	1.92
Modigliani (1966)	(Behavioral) Life-Cycle Theory (LCT)	2	3.85
Stern (1962)	Impulse Buying (Purchasing) Theory (IBT)	29	55.77
Coase (1937)	Transaction Cost Theory (TCT)	3	5.77

Among the selected 52 studies, the highest number of studies are based on the Impulse Buying (Purchasing) Theory (n=29; 55.77% and the Conspicuous Consumption Theory (n=11; 21.15%), respectively. However, the fewest studies among the selected studies were based on the Discrete Choice Theory (n=1; 1.92%).

Figure 5 shows a visual mapping of the co-economic theories on which the studies are based, according to the 52 selected studies.

Figure 5: Co-Economic Theories



According to 52 selected studies, the Impulse Buying (Purchasing) Theory (IBT) is the most co-economic theory among the seven economic theories. Most of the selected studies have a link to this theory. IBT has formed a theoretical basis for studies clustered around it. But, based on the last 52 studies that were chosen, no study is based on two of the seven economic theories at the same time.

Table 5 shows the other theories used in 52 selected studies and the seven economic theories.

Table 5: Other Theories Used in Selected Studies

n=52					
Bounded Rationality Theory (BRT)			Impulse Buying (Purchasing) Theory (IBT)		
Other Theories	f	%	Other Theories	f	%
Theory of Planned Behavior	1	1.92	Attachment Theory	1	1.92
Probability Theory	1	1.92	Attention and Effort	1	1.92
Rational Choice Theory	1	1.92	Belief-Desire Theory of Emotion	1	1.92
Theory of Reasoned Action	1	1.92	Cognitive Learning Theory	1	1.92
<b>Choice Architecture Theory (CAT)</b>			Cognitive Constancy Theory	1	1.92
Other Theories	f	%	Competitive Arousal Theory	1	1.92
Theory of Advance	1	1.92	Dual System Theory	1	1.92
Attribution Theory	1	1.92	Grounded Theory	1	1.92
Behavioral Decision Theory	1	1.92	Hedonic Consumption Theory	1	1.92
Dual Process Theory	1	1.92	Heuristic Information Processing Theory	1	1.92
Theory of Planned Behavior	1	1.92	Individualism and Collectivism Theory	1	1.92
Value Belief Norm Theory	1	1.92	Latent State-Trait Theory	2	3.85
<b>Conspicuous Consumption Theory (CCT)</b>			Motivation Theory	1	1.92
Other Theories	f	%	Optimal Experience Theory	1	1.92
Conservation of Resources Theory	1	1.92	Parasocial Interaction Theory	1	1.92
Cultivation Theory	1	1.92	Self-Congruence Theory	1	1.92
Identity Construction Theory	1	1.92	Shopping Theory	1	1.92
Leisure Class Theory	2	3.85	Signaling Theory	1	1.92
Mind Theory	1	1.92	Stimulus Organism Response Theory	1	1.92
Social Identity Theory	1	1.92	Social Cognitive Theory	1	1.92

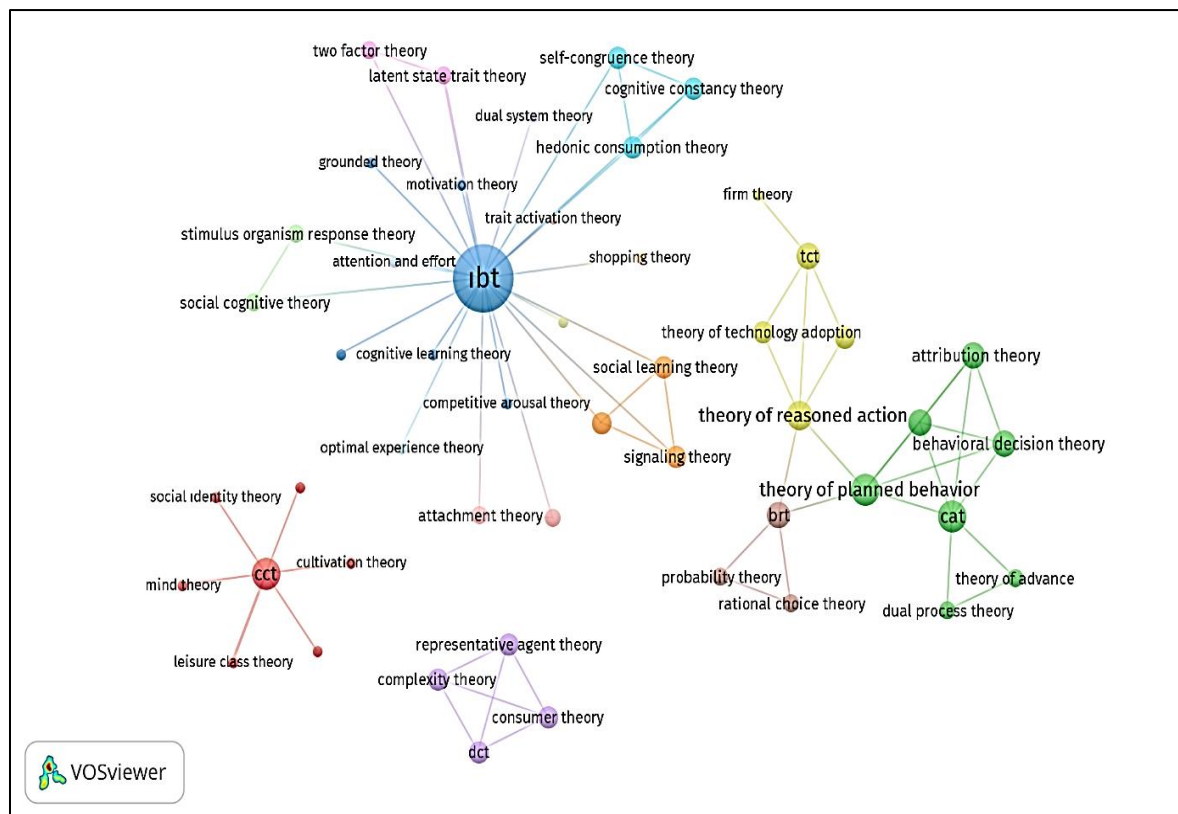
<b>Discrete Choice Theory (DCT)</b>			Social Learning Theory	1	1.92
<b>Other Theories</b>			Trait Activation Theory	1	1.92
Complexity Theory	f	%	Two Factor Theory	1	1.92
Consumer Theory	1	1.92	<b>Transaction Cost Theory (TCT)</b>		
Representative Agent Theory	1	1.92	<b>Other Theories</b>		
<b>(Behavioral) Life-Cycle Theory (LCT)</b>			Theory of Technology Adoption	f	%
<b>Other Theories</b>			Firm Theory	1	1.92
No associated theory was noted in any selected study.			Theory of Reasoned Action	1	1.92
			Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology	1	1.92

Source: Provided by the authors.

According to 52 selected studies, among seven economic theories, Impulse Buying (Purchasing) Theory (with twenty-three theories), Conspicuous Consumption Theory (with six theories), Choice Architecture Theory (with six theories), Bounded Rationality Theory (with four theories), Transaction Cost Theory (with four theories), and Discrete Choice Theory (with three theories) appear to be used jointly with other theories. In contrast, (Behavioral) Life-cycle Theory and other theories were not used in conjunction. In addition, Impulse Buying (Purchasing) Theory was mostly used together with Latent State-Trait Theory (n=2; 3.85%), while Conspicuous Consumption Theory was most used conjointly with Leisure Class Theory (n=2; 3.85%).

Figure 6 is a visual map of the co-theories used with the seven main economic theories in the 52 studies that were chosen.

Figure 6: Other Co-Theories



According to the 52 selected studies, only the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Theory of Reasoned Action are associated with more than one economic theory. Other theories are linked to only one economic theory. In conclusion, the Theory of Planned Behavior is a co-theory for these two economic theories as it is used in selected studies in conjunction with the Bounded Rationality Theory (BRT) and the Choice Architecture Theory (CAT). On the other hand, the Theory of Reasoned Action is a co-theory for the Bounded Rationality Theory (BRT) and the Transaction Cost Theory (TCT). It is used in some studies with the BRT and TCT.

Table 6 shows the constructs used in the selected study titles.

**Table 6: Occurrences in Titles of Selected Studies**

n=52					
Bounded Rationality Theory (BRT)			Impulse Buying (Purchasing) Theory (IBT)		
Constructs	f	%	Constructs	f	%
Bounded Rationality Theory	1	1.92	Apparel websites	1	1.92
Bounded rationality	1	1.92	Atmospheric cues	1	1.92
Compulsive consumption	1	1.92	Attachment	1	1.92
Organic food	1	1.92	Boredom	1	1.92
Purchase intention	1	1.92	Consumers' beliefs	1	1.92
Choice Architecture Theory (CAT)			Consumers' desires	1	1.92
Constructs	f	%	Consumers' emotions	2	3.85
Choice architecture	4	7.69	Consumer traits	3	5.77
Cookie	1	1.92	Cosmetic products	1	1.92
Financial decision making	1	1.92	Culture	1	1.92
Guilt' role	1	1.92	Contextual interactions	1	1.92
Pro-environmental hotel preference	1	1.92	Credit card use	1	1.92
Sharing private online data	1	1.92	Cruise customers	1	1.92
Sustainable consumer behavior	1	1.92	Customer psychology	1	1.92
Users' decisions	1	1.92	Discount	1	1.92
Conspicuous Consumption Theory (CCT)			E-commerce buyers' behavior	1	1.92
Constructs	f	%	E-market	1	1.92
Clothing	1	1.92	Fashion consciousness	1	1.92
Conspicuous consumption	11	21.15	Flow experiences	1	1.92
Consumer confidence	1	1.92	Gender matter	2	3.85
Consumers' psyche	1	1.92	Grocery	1	1.92
Consumers' time constraint	1	1.92	Hedonic browsing	2	3.85
Emerging market	1	1.92	Hedonism	1	1.92
Fast fashion	1	1.92	Impulsive buying	29	55.77
Identity construction	1	1.92	Internet celebrity	1	1.92
Inequality	1	1.92	Lifestyle	1	1.92
Instagram	1	1.92	Local brands	1	1.92
Luxury automobiles	1	1.92	Mobile commerce	1	1.92
Luxury car brands	1	1.92	Mobile marketing	1	1.92
Migrant workers	1	1.92	Mobile revolution	1	1.92
Mobile phone brands	1	1.92	Online market place	1	1.92
Preferences' role	1	1.92	Online shopping	2	3.85
Resources perspective's conservation	1	1.92	Pandemic time	2	3.85
Self congruity	1	1.92	Parasocial interaction	1	1.92
Social congruity	1	1.92	Post-purchase dissonance	1	1.92
Socio-demographic determinants	1	1.92	Post-purchase regret	1	1.92
Status	1	1.92	Product categories	1	1.92
Television viewing	1	1.92	Product recommendations	1	1.92
Throwaway society	1	1.92	Retailers	1	1.92
Tourism choices	1	1.92	Return intention	1	1.92
Discrete Choice Theory (DCT)			Sales promotion	3	5.77
Constructs	f	%	Scarcity promotion	1	1.92
Consumer theory	1	1.92	Self-congruence	1	1.92
Fashion fads choices' popularity	1	1.92	Shopping behavior	2	3.85
(Behavioral) Life-Cycle Theory (LCT)			Situational factors	2	3.85
Constructs	f	%	Social commerce	2	3.85
Consumption	1	1.92	Social influence	1	1.92
Consumption pattern	1	1.92	Social media celebrities' posts	1	1.92
Life-cycle hypothesis	1	1.92	Social networking sites	1	1.92

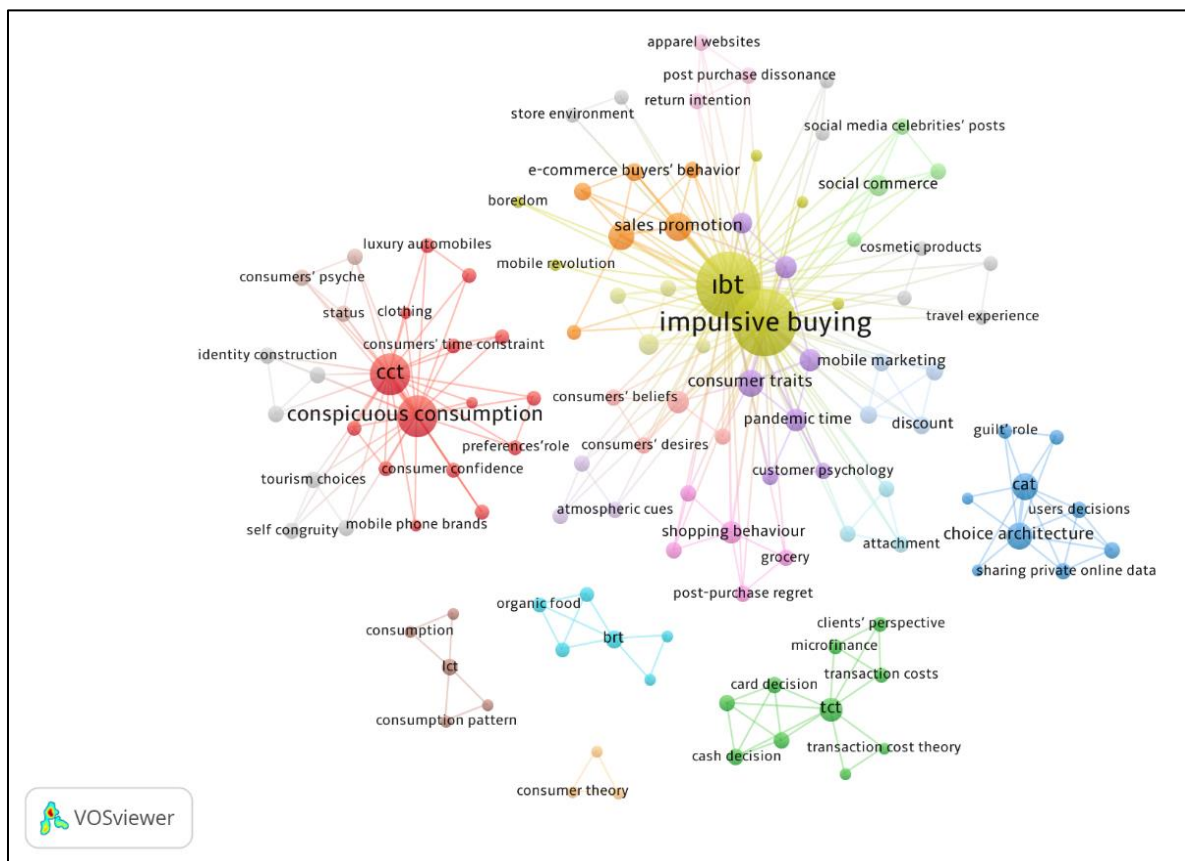
Life-cycle theory	1	1.92	Stimulus organism response	1	1.92
<b>Transaction Cost Theory (TCT)</b>			Store environment	1	1.92
<b>Constructs</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	System users	1	1.92
Cash decision	1	1.92	Time scarcity effect	1	1.92
Card decision	1	1.92	Travel experience	1	1.92
Client's perspective	1	1.92	Website quality	3	5.77
Debit card holders	1	1.92	Utilitarian browsing	1	1.92
Microfinance	1	1.92			
Repurchase intention	1	1.92			
Transaction costs	1	1.92			
Transaction Cost Theory	1	1.92			

Source: Provided by the authors.

Based on 52 selected studies, impulsive buying (n=29; 55.77%), conspicuous consumption (n=11; 21.15%), choice architecture (n=4; 7.69%), consumer traits, sales promotion, website quality (n=3; 5.77%), gender matter, pandemic time, situational factors, hedonic browsing, social commerce, online shopping, shopping behavior, and consumers' emotions (n=2; 3.85%) are the most used constructs in the study titles. However, as can be seen in Table 6, constructs other than these constructs were used once in the study titles selected for this current study (n=1; 1.92%).

Figure 7 shows the co-constructs used in selected study titles based on seven economic theories.

Figure 7: Co-Constructs



Based on 52 selected studies, impulsive buying (n=29; 55.77%), conspicuous consumption (n=11; 21.15%), choice architecture (n=4; 7.69%), consumer traits, sales promotion, website quality (n=3; 5.77%), gender matter, pandemic time, situational factors, hedonic browsing, social commerce, online shopping, shopping behavior, and consumers' emotions (n=2; 3.85%) are the most used constructs in the study titles. However, as can be seen in Table 6, constructs other than these constructs were used once in the study titles selected for this current study (n=1; 1.92%).

According to the 52 selected studies, impulse buying is the most commonly used co-construct in Impulse Buying (Purchasing) Theory (IBT)-based study titles. Conspicuous consumption is the most commonly used co-construct in Conspicuous Consumption Theory (CCT)-based study titles. Choice architecture is the most used co-construct in Choice Architecture Theory (CAT)-based study titles. However, there is no co-construct used in the titles of studies based on Bounded Rationality Theory (BRT), (Behavioral) Life-Cycle Theory (LCT), Transaction Cost Theory (TCT), or Discrete Choice Theory (DCT). In addition, a construct used in a study title based on any economic theory among the seven economic theories was not used in any working title based on any of the other economic theories. Therefore, no co-construct is used in the study titles based on economic theories. As a result, a construct used in a study title based on one economic theory has no connection with a construct used in a study title based on another economic theory.

Table 7 shows the keywords of the selected studies.

**Table 7: Keywords of the Selected Studies**

n=52					
Bounded Rationality Theory (BRT)			Impulse Buying (Purchasing) Theory (IBT)		
Keywords	f	%	Keywords	f	%
Addiction	1	1.92	Affective experience	1	1.92
Bounded rationality	2	3.85	Affective trust	1	1.92
Consumer	1	1.92	Atmospheric cues	2	3.85
Consumer attitude	1	1.92	Attachment	1	1.92
Gambling	1	1.92	Belief desire theory of emotion	1	1.92
Intra-personal externalities	1	1.92	Boredom	1	1.92
Organic food purchase intent	1	1.92	Behavior	2	3.85
Perceived social support	1	1.92	Celebrities post authenticity	1	1.92
Picoeconomics	1	1.92	China	1	1.92
Self-efficacy	1	1.92	Cognitive dissonance	1	1.92
Choice Architecture Theory (CAT)			Cognitive experience	1	1.92
Keywords	f	%	Cognitive trust	1	1.92
Attribute overload	1	1.92	Consumer behavior	3	5.77
Choice architecture	4	7.69	Consumer satisfaction	1	1.92
Consumer finance	1	1.92	Consumer traits	2	3.85
Convex	1	1.92	Credit card use	1	1.92
Dark patterns	1	1.92	Cruise	1	1.92
Default option	1	1.92	Culture	1	1.92
E-bills	1	1.92	Customer psychology	1	1.92
Experiment	1	1.92	Discount	1	1.92
GDPR	1	1.92	Emotional dissonance	1	1.92
Green service	1	1.92	Emotional responses	1	1.92
Guilt	1	1.92	Expertise knowledge	1	1.92
Hotel choice	1	1.92	Fashion	1	1.92
Online data privacy	1	1.92	Fashion apparel	1	1.92
Preference	1	1.92	Fashion consciousness	1	1.92
Prepaid card	1	1.92	Fear of fear	1	1.92
Pro-environment	1	1.92	Flow	1	1.92
Rejection	1	1.92	Gender	1	1.92
Risk preference	1	1.92	Global marketing	1	1.92
Structural estimation	1	1.92	Grocery	2	3.85
Sustainability	1	1.92	Hedonic browsing	1	1.92
Time budget	1	1.92	Hedonic shopping motives	1	1.92
Time preference	1	1.92	Hedonic & utilitarian shopping values	1	1.92
Towel reuse	1	1.92	Hedonic value	1	1.92
Welfare	1	1.92	Hypermarket	1	1.92
Conspicuous Consumption Theory (CCT)			Impulsive buying	26	50.00
Keywords	f	%	Impulsive buying tendency	1	1.92
Auto loan	1	1.92	Individual traits	1	1.92
Automobile	1	1.92	Individualism collectivism	1	1.92

Bottom of the pyramid	1	1.92	Indonesian Indie cosmetic	1	1.92
Brand experience	1	1.92	Inequality	1	1.92
Branding	1	1.92	Instagram	1	1.92
Brand loyalty	1	1.92	Internet celebrity	1	1.92
Clothing	1	1.92	Internet marketing	1	1.92
Compensatory consumption	1	1.92	Latent state-trait theory	1	1.92
Conformity	1	1.92	Lifestyle	1	1.92
Conservation of resources theory	1	1.92	Limited-quantity scarcity	1	1.92
Conspicuousness	1	1.92	Limited-time scarcity	1	1.92
Conspicuous consumption	8	15.38	Marketing	1	1.92
Conspicuous travel	1	1.92	Marketplace	1	1.92
Consumer confidence	1	1.92	Masculinity femininity	1	1.92
Consumer expenditure	1	1.92	Millennial	1	1.92
Cultivation theory	1	1.92	Mobile	1	1.92
Cultural values	1	1.92	Mobile commerce	1	1.92
Degree of conspicuousness	1	1.92	Mobile marketing	1	1.92
Developed markets	1	1.92	Mobile shopping	1	1.92
Emerging markets	2	3.85	Motivation Theory	1	1.92
Expensive	1	1.92	Negative affect	1	1.92
Fashionable	1	1.92	Negative emotions	1	1.92
Fast fashion	1	1.92	Online retail	1	1.92
Emulation	1	1.92	Online shopping	3	5.77
Hedonic value	1	1.92	Overconfidence	1	1.92
Identity construction	1	1.92	Pandemic time	1	1.92
IHDS	1	1.92	Parasocial interaction	1	1.92
Inequality	1	1.92	Perceived arousal	1	1.92
Instagram	1	1.92	Perceived risks	1	1.92
Keeping up with the Joneses	1	1.92	Perceived store environment	1	1.92
Luxury	1	1.92	Personal impulsiveness	1	1.92
Luxury automobiles	1	1.92	Positive affect	1	1.92
Migrant workers	1	1.92	Post-purchase regret	1	1.92
Mobile phone brands	1	1.92	Power distance	1	1.92
New luxury	1	1.92	Product affection	1	1.92
Online social network	1	1.92	Product dissonance	1	1.92
Public exposure	1	1.92	Product recommendations	1	1.92
Q-methods	1	1.92	Restaurant Daily deal	1	1.92
Repair services	1	1.92	Retailers	1	1.92
Replacement goods	1	1.92	Return intention	1	1.92
Show off	1	1.92	Sales promotion	3	5.77
Social contexts	1	1.92	Self-congruence	1	1.92
Social identity	1	1.92	Self-disclosure	1	1.92
Social status	1	1.92	Sentiment polarity	1	1.92
Socio-demographic determinants	1	1.92	Shopper marketing	1	1.92
Socio-economic status	1	1.92	Shopping enjoyment	1	1.92
Sri Lanka	1	1.92	Signaling Theory	1	1.92
Status	2	3.85	Situational factors	2	3.85
Sustainability	1	1.92	Smartphone	1	1.92
Television	1	1.92	Social commerce	1	1.92
Throwaway society	1	1.92	Social influence	1	1.92
Time constraint	1	1.92	Social media	2	3.86
Vehicles	1	1.92	S-O-R paradigm	1	1.92
Young professionals	1	1.92	Stimulus organism response	2	3.85
<b>Discrete Choice Theory (DCT)</b>			Supermarket	1	1.92
<b>Keywords</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	System use	1	1.92
Consumer Theory	1	1.92	Time scarcity	1	1.92



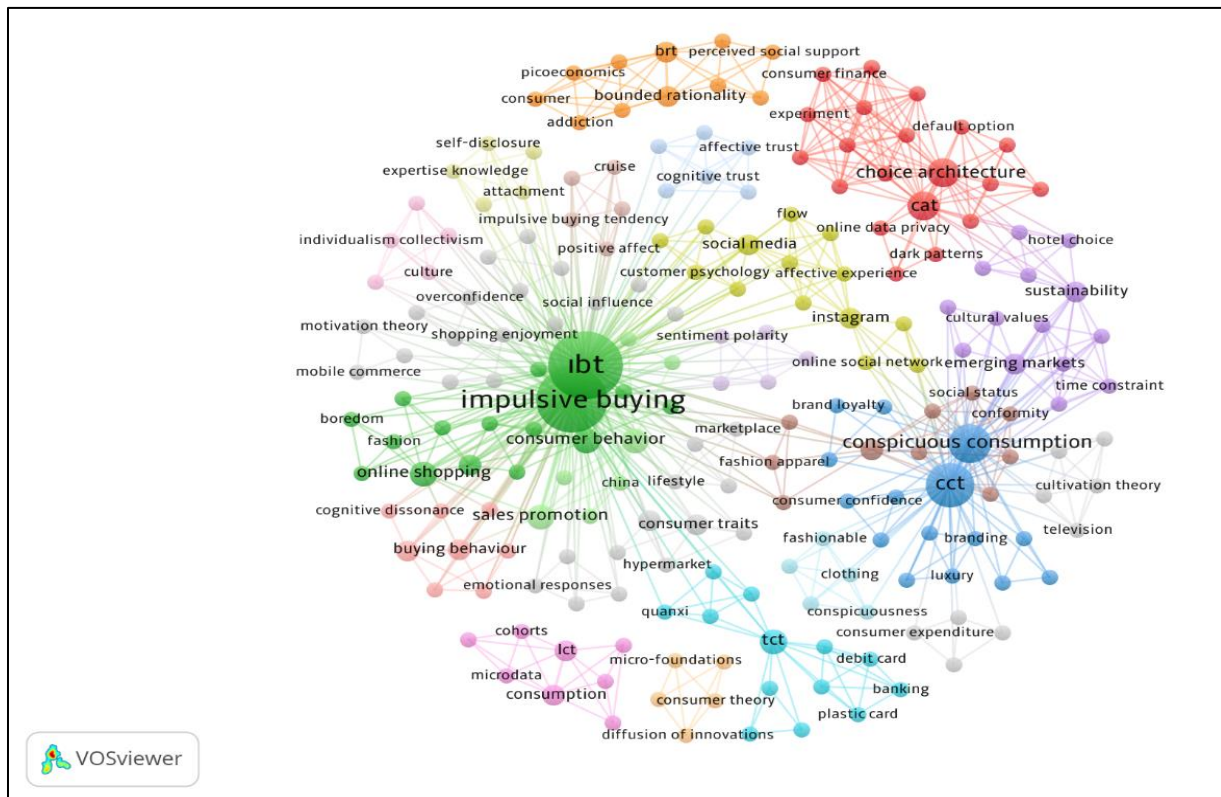
Diffusion of innovations	1	1.92	Trait Activation Theory	1	1.92
Discrete Choice Theory	1	1.92	Travel experience	1	1.92
Micro-foundations	1	1.92	Observational learning	1	1.92
<b>Transaction Cost Theory (TCT)</b>			Uncertainty avoidance	1	1.92
<b>Keywords</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	Urge to buy impulsively	1	1.92
Banking	1	1.92	Website quality	3	5.77
Cashless economy	1	1.92	<b>(Behavioral) Life-Cycle Theory (LCT)</b>		
Debit card	1	1.92	<b>Keywords</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Ethnic resource introduction	1	1.92	Cohorts	1	1.92
Impulsive buying	1	1.92	Consumption	2	3.85
Microfinance	1	1.92	Income	1	1.92
Plastic card	1	1.92	Life-cycle	1	1.92
Quanxi	1	1.92	Life-cycle hypothesis	1	1.92
Repurchase	1	1.92	Microdata	1	1.92
SHG bank linkage	1	1.92	Savings	1	1.92
Transaction costs	1	1.92			
Transaction Cost Economics Theory	1	1.92			
Transaction Cost Theory	1	1.92			

Source: Provided by the authors.

Among the keywords used in 52 studies selected by considering seven economic theories, impulsive buying (n=27; 51.92%), conspicuous consumption (n=8; 15.38%), choice architecture (n=4; 7.69%), online shopping, sales promotion, consumer behavior, website quality (n=3; 5.77%), consumer traits, consumption, buying behavior, social media, grocery, Instagram, atmospheric cues, hedonic value, situational factors, emerging markets, sustainability, bounded rationality (n=2; 3.85%) are the most used keywords. The remaining keywords were used in equal numbers (n=1; 1.92%).

Figure 8 shows the co-keywords of selected studies based on seven economic theories.

**Figure 8: Co-Keywords**



Among the keywords used in 52 studies selected by considering seven economic theories, impulsive buying (n=27; 51.92%), conspicuous consumption (n=8; 15.38%), choice architecture (n=4; 7.69%), online shopping, sales promotion, consumer behavior, website quality (n=3; 5.77%), consumer traits, consumption, buying behavior, social media, grocery, Instagram, atmospheric cues, hedonic value, situational factors, emerging markets, sustainability, bounded rationality (n=2; 3.85%) are the most used keywords. The remaining keywords were used in equal numbers (n=1; 1.92%).

Impulsive buying is the co-keyword for most studies out of the 52 selected studies. Besides, impulse buying, hedonic value, and Instagram are co-keywords for some studies based on Impulse Buying (Purchasing) Theory (IBT) or Conspicuous Consumption Theory (CCT). The keywords of some studies based on CCT or IBT among the seven economic theories have a connection with impulse buying, hedonic value, and Instagram. In contrast, sustainability is the co-keyword of some studies based on Conspicuous Consumption Theory (CCT) or Choice Architecture Theory (CAT). In other words, the keywords of some studies based on CAT or CCT among the seven economic theories are connected with the keyword sustainability.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

An important deficiency in research on consumer behavior is that the theoretical basis of the model is not specified in the process of creating a research model and developing a hypothesis. From this point of view, economic theories constitute an intensive field of study that is comprehensively related to various aspects of marketing, especially consumer behavior. There is a gap in the literature regarding the context in which the most commonly used theories are discussed and which conceptual structures are examined together with these theories. In this study prepared to fill this gap, articles published in the Google Scholar database between 2015 and 2021 were used. Articles are studies published in SSCI, Scopus, ESCI, and other journals (e.g., EBSCO, ProQuest, etc.). For this purpose, 52 empirical studies were analyzed by bibliometric analysis. Our findings revealed that consumer behavior research based on economic theories had attracted the attention of academics. As a result of the study's findings, the latest situation in the consumer behavior literature, including economic theories, was evaluated; the study's contributions were included; and the study's limitations and suggestions for future research were given.

### **5.1. Contributions**

The first contribution of the present study is an overview of the seven economic theories and concepts explored in the studies that have contributed to and will continue to contribute to the development of consumer behavior research as a whole. From the point of view of consumer behavior literature, this article gives a clear picture of new research topics, directions, and emerging trends in consumer behavior within the scope of seven economic theories.

Another important contribution of this study is the involvement of leading academics in the study of consumer behavior using other theories based on economic theories. An interesting addition is that none of the authors participated in collaborative work with other authors. The perspectives of different authors from many countries have provided rich insights into the depth of the research. The reported results allow the identification of important researchers in this field and encourage collaborative development between countries regarding different variables and keywords. Comparative studies should be done by co-authors and partner countries in order to combine future studies with international collaborations.

According to the bibliometric analysis of publication outputs, the increase in theory-based studies in 2020–2021 indicates a rapid growth in the productivity of researchers in this field. This finding can be explained by the rapid changes and developments in consumer behavior, as well as the development of new concepts in the subjects covered in the studies. The number of books and articles about this topic will likely keep going up.

An essential finding of the study is that analytical methods are primarily quantitative in consumer behavior research based on economic theories. Future work should do more complex analyses, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. It has been observed that there are mixed methods while the qualitative research is low. This result also highlights the need to increase the application of the mixed-method approach for research in the field. The methods of neuromarketing and digital marketing are likely to be used in more studies in the future.

The results allow academics to reconsider how theories interface as anchors for research model building. As a result of the study results, it has been determined that economic theories primarily benefit from IBT and then CCT theory in consumer behavior research. In the context of impulse buying and conspicuous consumption theories, it can be inferred that the decision-making process based on an economic basis is shaped, the decision-making time of consumers is shortened, and they exhibit behaviors based on entertainment, pretension, and pleasure. When the age of a theory is taken into account, it has been found that even the oldest theory is still true and is used to study consumer behavior.

It can be said that constructs such as website quality, e-commerce, social commerce, and Instagram are the concepts that are mainly discussed together with technological developments and the effects of social media, especially under the IBT theory. With the developments in communication and internet technologies, it can be said that the basic constructs discussed in theoretical studies have shifted towards constructs such as social media, e-commerce, and sustainability. In other words,

the development of communication, the internet, and information technologies is likely to be a crucial factor in the evolution of future consumer behavior research and the co-constructs that emerge from these theoretical foundations. Because of this, studies on economic theories of consumer behavior have grown and will continue to grow because of these ideas.

The other contribution of this study is what keywords are discussed in the context of the seven theories used and which concepts are discussed within the framework of each theory. From a theoretical point of view, revealing the relations between these concepts is considered an important contribution to the study. Using the ideas in the research model as keywords can help figure out which theory can be looked at in this study.

An important contribution of the study is to learn more about the transitions in consumer behavior in economic theories and to help eliminate duplication in future research. Therefore, this study provides several guidelines for academicians to shape future theory-based consumer behavior research, especially with a research model. It can be used to determine which subject titles are more likely to be similar based on the relationships between common concepts and the most commonly used variables in the study. It can also be used to suggest new study subjects.

Researchers sometimes face significant uncertainty in determining which theory will suffice to express the research model. The present work has increased the possibility of making the theoretically based consumer behavior research literature more accessible and knowing the research related to its application areas. This study shows the relevant variables for new research and under which theory the hypothesis development process can be carried out. By connecting important changes in the world's environmental conditions and these theories, the study will help bring more popular new research topics to the fore.

## **5.2. Future Research Directions**

This study creates an important discussion of the vital role played by economic theories in the growth of consumer behavior research in the marketing field and points to its continuing evolution. The current study's findings provide the basis for future trends and research recommendations for researchers. Uncovering the conceptual constructs/concepts and relationships between keywords, which have been discussed under different theories, has important potential for future research. Based on the keywords and concepts that emerged in the study, it was concluded that the research variables and keywords used in the studies attracted the increasing attention of marketing researchers. Along with these themes, it would be helpful to conduct new research that is different and more thorough and that helps us learn more about how consumers act based on economic theories in the real world.

A potential research area might be to consider studies based on theories such as impulse buying and conspicuous consumption, which are mostly used in the literature, with new variables other than the common constructs obtained in this study, expanding the research models and adding mediators, moderators, and conditional effect variables to the models. Sample research questions include: In the research models developed and in the process of developing hypotheses, which variables from the common constructs and keywords that emerged in this study can be associated with each other, which can have a mediator, and which moderator effect can be examined.

From a marketing and behavioral point of view, it can be stated that due to the emergence of common structures such as e-commerce, social commerce, and websites, more attention should be paid to online behavioral intentions and studies can be conducted in this direction. Based on these theoretical approaches and emerging themes, we can discuss how digitalization changes how consumers interact with products and services. It can be seen that consumer behavior research based on economic theories does not look at brand-related ideas. Within the theory of conspicuous consumption, it is possible to look at how consumers' thoughts and actions about brands are shaped.

Since most of the research included in the study was conducted in China and India, another suggestion would be to conduct research activities in other countries, mostly in the framework of international cooperation and comparatively. Studying samples with international collaborations will provide important findings. This study presents significant challenges in countries with high or low growth potential and unique local cultures and market contexts. More work is needed to generalize this to local markets and across markets.

According to the study findings, it can be said that it would be good to increase collaborations to better explain the effects on consumers since there are no co-authors in the studies. It may be necessary for editors and publishers to make a separate effort to encourage and attract research from non-research countries and to scale up work in this area. Longitudinal research approaches need to be applied to cross-regional and multicultural research. In the first quarter of 2020, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic can be compared with the research models created under economic theories and how consumer behavior has changed.

The overlaps between other constructs and keywords under economic theories indicate that more studies are needed to address these issues and propose extended research models. Some keywords and constructs appear to have been less studied. For this reason, more comprehensive new perspectives can be gained by considering these concepts in future

research. It can be said that some conceptual variables discussed under the theories will play a critical role in future studies. Future research should focus on making new research models by looking at well-known and new ideas.

It is thought that the research will further increase the knowledge about economic theories for future researchers and form a solid basis for developing research models. It is believed that this study will guide the future since examining consumer behaviors within the scope of economic theories is a new structure. Therefore, researchers also need to discover new theories to explain consumer behavior.

### **5.3. Limitations**

Like many other studies, ours has some limitations. The first limitation of the study is the possibility of not including all the studies in Scopus, ESCI, SSCI, and other indexes (e.g., EBSCO, ProQuest). However, the articles are searched using a comprehensive database, Google Scholar. Another limitation of the study is that the selected studies include the last seven years and examine the studies between 2015 and 2021. Even with these problems, this study gives a good overview of this area and is a good place to start for researchers who want to learn more.

As another limitation, it should be noted that the study focused only on journal articles. However, books, conference proceedings, and book chapters are excluded. Therefore, future research can offer more in-depth analysis and broaden the field of study by including the overlooked resources mentioned above. In the future, it would be good to think about more types of publications to give a more complete picture of the relationship between economics, marketing, and consumer behavior.

Researchers must agree that our bibliometric method is accurate since some processes are done by hand based on certain conditions in the data processing step.

Another problem with the study is that the number of articles looked at was limited by the keywords used to do the search.

Although bibliometric analysis is an effective method for examining trends in a particular field, academic research has inherent weaknesses that can overestimate one area and underestimate another due to certain characteristics (Kumar et al., 2020). This is another limitation of the study. Finally, this study's content and visualization analysis was done using VOSviewer, and the results may be different if other programs are used.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

In the bibliometric analysis results examined under seven questions, it has been determined that the studies in the field of consumer behavior, which are considered within the scope of economic theories, are mostly discussed under the Impulse Buying (Purchasing) Theory (IBT) and Conspicuous Consumption Theory (CCT) theories. There are no studies that use both theories simultaneously within seven economic theories. While Impulse Buying (Purchasing) Theory is mostly used with Latent State-Trait Theory, Conspicuous Consumption Theory is mostly used with Leisure Class Theory. While the Theory of Planned Behavior theory is used in conjunction with both the Bounded Rationality Theory (BRT) and the Choice Architecture Theory (CAT), the Theory of Reasoned Action theory is used in conjunction with both the Bounded Rationality Theory (BRT) and the Transaction Cost Theory (TCT).

Between 2015–2021, the number of studies in 2020–2021 was higher, and each author did not take part as a co-author in another study. Quantitative studies are concentrated, and countries such as China and India have more studies in these fields. It has been observed that there are no studies carried out between these two countries and that there is international cooperation between them.

When the co-constructs used in the study titles that emerged in the studies are examined, it is seen that the constructs mostly shaped by Impulse Buying (Purchasing) Theory (IBT) and Conspicuous Consumption Theory (CCT) are impulsive buying, conspicuous consumption, choice architecture, consumer traits, sales promotion, website quality, gender matter, pandemic time, situational factors, hedonic browsing, social commerce, online shopping, shopping behavior, and consumers' emotions. It was concluded that a construct used in a study title based on one economic theory has no connection with a construct used in a study title based on another economic theory.

When the co-keywords in the 52 selected studies are examined, it is seen that most of the keywords are examined under the Impulse Buying (Purchasing) Theory. These keywords are respectively: impulse buying, conspicuous consumption, choice architecture, online shopping, sales promotion, consumer behavior, website quality, consumer traits, consumption, buying behavior, social media, grocery, Instagram, atmospheric cues, hedonic value, situational factors, emerging markets, sustainability, bounded rationality. Impulsive buying is the keyword common in the vast majority of 52 studies. Some studies based on the Impulse Buying (Purchasing) Theory (IBT) or the Conspicuous Consumption Theory (CCT) use the words "impulsive buying," "hedonic value," and "Instagram" as key words. On the other hand, some studies have used Conspicuous Consumption Theory (CCT) or Choice Architecture Theory (CAT) to find that sustainability is a co-keyword.

### **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 authors contributed equally to this article.

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### **Statement of Interest**

This research is not subject to any conflict of interest.

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