

**Research Article**

**Examining Environmentally Conscious Consumption Habits: Preferences for Wet Wipes and Influencing Factors**

*Çevreye Duyarlı Tüketim Alışkanlıklarının İncelenmesi: Islak Mendil Tercihleri ve Etkileyen Faktörler*

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**Abstract**

*This study aims to analyze the effects of altruistic and egoistic motivations on the relationship between consumers' wet wipes usage frequency and habits and the way they dispose of these products. The research was conducted in Türkiye within the framework of a descriptive research design and the data obtained from respondents were analyzed by the PLS-SEM method. The findings reveal that egoistic motivations have a statistically significant and positive effect on consumption habits, while altruistic motivations have little to no effect on both consumption habits and discarding behaviour. Perceived cost and incentive mechanisms also showed minimal direct effects on discarding behaviour, suggesting limited practical impact. Incentives were found to have a very small or negligible effect on wipe discarding behaviour, suggesting that their practical impact is limited. The results indicate the importance of encouraging practices that contribute to environmental sustainability. In addition, raising individual awareness and social responsibility is necessary to develop environmentally sensitive consumption behaviours. This study aims to contribute to the related literature at the theoretical and empirical level by examining the role of egoistic values in environmentally friendly consumption practices. The findings highlight which motivational factors are more influential and provide practical guidance for promoting sustainable consumption. For marketing professionals, these results suggest that eco-friendly products should be positioned by emphasizing personal benefits and convenience, thereby leveraging egoistic motivations to foster more sustainable consumer behaviours.*

**Key Words:** Egoistic motivations, altruistic motivations, sustainable consumption, disposable consumption, environmental motivation

**Öz**

*Bu çalışma, özgeci ve egoist motivasyonların, tüketicilerin ıslak mendil kullanım sıklığı ve alışkanlıkları ile bu ürünleri bertaraf etme biçimleri arasındaki ilişki üzerindeki etkilerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma, Türkiye’de tanımlayıcı bir araştırma tasarımı çerçevesinde yürütülmüş ve katılımcılardan elde edilen veriler PLS-SEM yöntemi ile analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, egoist motivasyonların tüketim alışkanlıkları üzerinde istatistiksel olarak anlamlı ve pozitif bir etkiye sahip olduğunu gösterirken, özgeci motivasyonların hem tüketim alışkanlıkları hem de bertaraf davranışı üzerinde çok az veya hiç etkisi olmadığını ortaya koymaktadır. Algılanan maliyet ve teşvik mekanizmaları da bertaraf davranışı üzerinde sınırlı doğrudan etki göstermiştir; bu durum, pratik etkilerinin sınırlı olduğunu düşündürmektedir. Teşviklerin, mendil bertaraf davranışı üzerindeki etkisinin çok küçük veya ihmal edilebilir düzeyde olduğu bulunmuş ve bu durum pratik etkilerinin sınırlı olduğunu*

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*göstermektedir. Sonuçlar, çevresel sürdürülebilirliğe katkı sağlayan uygulamaların teşvik edilmesinin önemini vurgulamaktadır. Ayrıca, bireysel farkındalık ve toplumsal sorumluluğun artırılması, çevreye duyarlı tüketim davranışlarının geliştirilmesi için gereklidir. Bu çalışma, egoist değerlerin çevre dostu tüketim uygulamalarındaki rolünü inceleyerek ilgili literatüre hem teorik hem de ampirik düzeyde katkı sağlamayı hedeflemektedir. Bulgular, hangi motivasyonel faktörlerin daha etkili olduğunu ortaya koymakta ve sürdürülebilir tüketimi teşvik etmek için pratik rehberlik sunmaktadır. Pazarlama profesyonelleri açısından, bu sonuçlar, çevre dostu ürünlerin kişisel fayda ve pratiklik vurgusu ile konumlandırılması gerektiğini ve böylece egoist motivasyonlardan yararlanarak daha sürdürülebilir tüketici davranışlarının teşvik edilebileceğini önermektedir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Egoist motivasyonlar, özgeci motivasyonlar, sürdürülebilir tüketim, tek kullanımlık tüketim, çevresel motivasyon

## 1. Introduction

Many consumers use wet wipes as a safe and practical method of cleaning the body, baby and home surfaces. As consumers demonstrate a clear preference for disposable, clean and easily accessible wet wipes in their daily life, it has been observed that the use of wet wipes has increased in parallel with the improvement of living standards (Köklü, Ateş, Devci & Sivri, 2022). Moreover, the consumption of wet wipes has been significantly impacted by the global pandemic of Coronavirus (Hu, Shen & Tang, 2021). The impact of the pandemic has led to a significant increase in consumer concern regarding cleaning and disinfection practices. Disposable wet wipes and towels have become a daily necessity for consumers due to their ease of use and accessibility (Hadley et al., 2023; Köklü et al., 2022). In addition to their use for cleaning skin, especially that of babies, wet wipes are also widely used for cleaning hands and faces (Ehretsmann, Schaefer & Adam, 2001; Rodriguez, Cunningham, Foxenberg, Hoffman & Vongsa, 2020). This rise in demand has raised concerns about increasing costs and the opportunities within the disposable wet wipes market. In view of the significant market demand, it appears improbable that consumers will cease to utilise wet wipes, regardless of the mounting environmental concerns.

The rising popularity of wet wipes has emerged as a contributing factor to environmental degradation, underscoring the need for innovative and sustainable solutions (Hadley et al., 2023). The discard of single-use products, particularly wet wipes, is a significant concern, as their use has been shown to be associated with increased plastic consumption and environmental pollution (Chen, Huang, Zhang & Zhu, 2021; Zhang et al., 2021). As with the use of these wipes, incorrect post-use practices also cause problems. Despite clear instructions such as “Do not dispose of in toilets or drains,” some consumers have reportedly continued to discard wipes via drainage systems, which has been observed to cause significant blockages in sewer infrastructure and wastewater treatment facilities. Moreover, the incorrect disposal practices by consumers regarding these materials have been linked to substantial economic impacts (Joksimovic, Khan & Orr, 2020; Hadley et al., 2023; Harter, Bernt, Winkler & Hirn, 2021; Köklü et al., 2022; Mitchell, Thamsen, Gunkel & Waschnewski, 2017; Pantoja Munoz, Gonzalez Baez, McKinney & Pantoja, 2018). This situation has highlighted the environmental impacts associated with consumers' preferences, which are driven by increasing hygiene demands (Dinu, Iordache & Vamanu, 2022) and the desire for convenience (Morris, Kontar & Hicks, 2024). In this context, a range of factors influence consumers' purchasing decisions regarding disposable wet wipes. Such factors include ease of use, hygiene expectations, environmental concerns, and product safety.

In summary, consumers' decisions to purchase disposable wet wipes are influenced by a complex interaction of factors such as convenience, hygiene, environmental concerns, safety, and the impact of external events such as the pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus. To effectively respond to consumer needs and concerns regarding disposable wipes, businesses and policymakers need to have a comprehensive understanding of the key influencing factors. The increased use of wet wipes has given rise to a range of challenges, encompassing environmental degradation, public health risks, and disposal complications. These challenges underscore the urgent need for comprehensive measures addressing the use of wet wipes. From the consumer perspective, guiding disposal behaviours is of critical importance, as the environmental risks associated with wet wipes are closely linked to consumers' waste disposal habits. Changing consumer behaviour represents a challenging yet essential approach to preventing the release of wet wipes into the environment. Environmentally conscious consumers, in particular, tend to adopt more sustainable discarding practices; however, time-related constraints often hinder these efforts. Consequently, promoting environmentally responsible behaviour among consumers requires the

provision of accessible household waste management infrastructure, such as clearly separated waste bins and user-friendly disposal systems (Zhang, Wen, Hu & Zhang, 2022).

The present study aims to examine the influence of altruistic and egoistic motivations on the relationship between the frequency and habits of wet wipe usage and consumers' discarding behaviours. The increasing utilisation of wet wipes necessitates an evaluation of their environmental and social impacts. However, consumers' discarding habits are a significant factor in these impacts. Zhang et al. (2022) were the first to reveal the relationship between usage habits and discarding behaviour in their study. A number of studies have identified the factors that influence environmentally friendly intentions. These studies have demonstrated that such intentions are influenced by underlying egoistic and altruistic values (Aggarwal, Dhanda, Kumar & Arora, 2024; Prakash et al., 2019; Tamar, Wirawan, Arfah & Putri, 2021). However, the interplay between consumers' egoistic and altruistic values and their relationship with environmental protection warrants further in-depth investigation (Aggarwal et al., 2024).

The present study will contribute to the extant literature by distinguishing itself from other studies by examining how individuals' altruistic motivations, such as environmental awareness and desire to contribute to society, and their egoistic motivations, prioritizing their own comfort and practical benefits, shape their wet wipe use and discarding behaviours. Further research is required to explore the impact of egoistic values on environmentally friendly consumption behaviours (Nguyen, Ta, Hong, Nguyen & Thanh, 2025). Accordingly, this study aims to address the research question of how altruistic and egoistic motivations affect both the frequency and habits of wet wipe usage as well as consumers' discarding behaviours, and is expected to contribute theoretically by linking motivational values to environmentally responsible consumption practices. Firstly, the research will be expanded by examining the effect of altruistic and egoistic motivations on the habit of using wet wipes, in addition to the effect on discarding behaviours. In this respect, the study will fill an important gap.

## **2. Usage Patterns and Concerns in Wet Wipe Consumption**

Wet wipes are not made of paper materials and, contrary to popular belief and people's misconception about wet wipes, they do not degrade easily in nature (Köklü et al., 2022). Because they are not biodegradable, these materials persist in the environment for at least 100 years (Lee, Jeong & Chae, 2021). This causes significant pollution of the oceans and water resources in particular. Recent research suggests that wet wipes have been found in the bodies of fish and other marine organisms (Zhang et al., 2022). Previous studies have reported that synthetic fibers are the most dominant microplastics ingested by fish species (Lee et al., 2021). This causes significant negative impacts on the food chain and human health (Rahman, Sarkar, Yadav, Achari & Slobodnik, 2021). However, while these studies reveal the scale of environmental and health risks, they often stop short of linking such findings to consumer behaviour and motivations, leaving a gap in understanding how perceptions of sustainability influence wet wipe consumption.

Waste reduction is seen as the most environmentally sustainable strategy and is therefore one of the most important goals of waste management policies (Nehrenheim, 2013). However, analyses of current economic and consumption models reveal that waste production is closely linked to consumption levels. In general, as consumption increases, the amount of waste generated also tends to rise (Cecere, Mancinelli & Mazzanti, 2014). Prioritising waste reduction helps prevent waste generation while optimising the use of energy and natural resources (Ewijk & Stegemann, 2016). Yet, existing studies tend to emphasise structural or policy dimensions of waste management, while neglecting how individual motivations (egoistic or altruistic) shape waste-reduction practices, especially in the context of disposable consumer goods like wet wipes.

Research raises concerns about the inappropriate discarding of wet wipes, causing sewage system problems and environmental pollution (Joksimovic et al., 2020). In addition, the sustainability and environmental impact of wet wipes have increasingly become a subject of scholarly inquiry. Issues such as consumer segmentation, behavioural patterns in purchasing, usage, and maintenance, as well as disposal practices -previously studied in textile consumption- are also drawing attention with wet wipes (Gwozdz, Nielsen & Müller, 2017; Soyer & Dittrich, 2021). Additionally, an increasing amount of research indicates that wet wipes, including those with antibacterial properties, may not effectively eliminate bacteria and organic material from hands, raising potential hygiene issues (Mihalache et al.,

2021; Rodriguez et al., 2020). Mihalache et al. (2021) found that using wet or antibacterial wipes was the least effective method for cleanliness, as it only decreased bacteria and organic matter by 63.8% and 70.8%, respectively. They can also contribute to skin irritation, potentially resulting in dermatitis (Rodriguez et al., 2020). All of this suggests that wet wipes can raise not only environmental but also health questions. This represents a significant issue in public health. Nevertheless, current research rarely integrates these environmental and health consequences with consumer decision-making frameworks, which limits our ability to explain why consumers continue to prefer wet wipes despite known risks.

In conclusion, the sustainability of wet wipes has important implications for waste management and consumer health and requires a critical examination of their environmental impact. To address these challenges, it is essential to promote environmentally friendly consumption habits and support the adoption of biodegradable alternatives. Increased public awareness of the ecological consequences of wet wipe use, together with the adoption of clearer labelling practices, will enable consumers to make informed and sustainable choices in their purchasing decisions. These measures not only contribute to reducing the negative impacts associated with conventional wet wipes but also encourage a broader commitment to sustainability in consumer behaviour. However, the extent to which such measures are driven by altruistic versus egoistic values remains insufficiently studied, indicating a gap that this study seeks to address.

### 3. Altruistic and Egoistic Motivations

Egoism asserts that all actions, even those that appear altruistic, are driven by self-interest. In contrast, altruism suggests that individuals can act with kindness towards others without seeking personal benefit (Batson, 2018). Altruism is defined as voluntary and conscious behaviour performed to benefit others, without the motivation to avoid extrinsic rewards or punishments (Chou, 1996). Altruistic motivations seem to assume a crucial role in promoting sustainable consumption behaviours among consumers (Ahn, Kim & Kim, 2020; Feng & Guo, 2017). These motivations intertwine with egoistic motives and influence consumer decision-making. Altruistic values have been found to increase consumer motivation and encourage environmentally friendly behaviours that encompass both social responsibility and individual benefit (Çayırtaş, 2022; Kırıl Uçar, 2020; Bakır & Arslan, 2023). Yet, research has mostly addressed these motivations in domains such as recycling or energy use, while their relevance to disposable products like wet wipes is still underexplored.

Knez (2016) studied the effect of egoistic and altruistic value perspectives on environmental behaviours, finding that altruistic individuals perceive greater control and commitment in environmental protection behaviours. De Dominicis, Schultz and Bonaiuto (2017) showed that environmental behaviours can be supported by both egoistic and altruistic motivations and that these motivations can depend on personal utility or environmental benefits. Steg, Dreijerink and Abrahamse (2005) examined to what extent egoistic, altruistic and biospheric value orientations can predict individuals' behaviours and decision-making processes. The study demonstrated that altruistic and biospheric values exhibited significant predictive efficacy for pro-environmental intentions, while egoistic values showed a relatively reduced predictive capacity. Tamar et al. (2021) found that individuals with high levels of egoistic values may weaken the effect of environmental attitudes on environmentally friendly behaviours.

Cecere et al. (2014) examined how waste management behaviours depend on altruistic social attitudes and individual motivations and stated that the perception of environmental responsibility plays an important role in behaviours. This behaviour results from people's inherent motivations and selfless attitudes, showing a sense of personal responsibility for the environment. It is driven by the belief that personal values outweigh external social norms or incentives. As posited by Knez (2016), individuals who embody altruistic tendencies are frequently characterised by a propensity to make personal sacrifices in the interest of environmental preservation, driven by a sense of empathy and a profound concern for the well-being of others. In contrast, those with an egoistic outlook may view waste reduction programs with scepticism, prioritising self-interest and convenience. Brodback, Guenster and Mezger (2019) highlighted that altruistic values significantly influence socially responsible behaviours, including waste reduction, especially when individuals perceive their actions as creating a tangible environmental impact. Ewing (2001) found that when people consider recycling, both the expectations

of their household and friends (subjective norm) and the belief that recycling helps the environment (altruistic belief) are important factors in their decision-making. It shows that altruistic motivations (e.g. protecting the environment) often outweigh egoistic concerns such as inconvenience, but both factors significantly influence recycling participation rates (Ewing, 2001). While empathy-driven altruism is assumed to play a critical role in social actions such as reducing waste, egoistic motivations may emerge in scenarios where personal gains or social recognition are emphasized (Batson, 2018).

Empirical findings based on Value-Belief-Norm theory suggest that egoistic value orientations undermine environmental attitudes and therefore may negatively affect the development of pro-environmental behaviours (De Groot & Steg, 2008; Steg et al., 2005). These findings suggest that people who prioritise their interests are less likely to engage in environmentally friendly behaviours or have positive attitudes toward environmental protection. On the other hand, people who attach importance to collective benefit and environmental sustainability develop positive attitudes towards the environment and engage in environmentally friendly behaviours. De Groot and Steg (2008) emphasise that egoistic motivations can hinder environmental concerns, making it difficult to promote sustainable practices in individuals who priorities selfish interests. People driven by strong egoistic desires frequently disregard the environmental consequences of their actions and prioritize their self-interest over the common good. According to Stern and Dietz (1994), this mindset leads them to overlook the negative impacts of activities such as pollution and resource exploitation, resulting in a diminished willingness to adopt environmentally friendly behaviours. Nevertheless, whether these theoretical insights fully capture consumer choices in the context of disposable hygiene products remains unclear, thereby highlighting an empirical gap that this study aims to address.

#### **4. Research Model and Hypotheses Development**

The Hadley et al. (2023) study examines the environmental, economic and social challenges of disposable wet wipes and assesses the current market situation. The research reveals that people are unlikely to abandon these products due to strong consumer demand. In this context, developing effective and innovative approaches to address the issues caused by wet wipes is of critical importance. According to Gaddekar and Brandão (2025), consumers with a deeper understanding of environmental issues such as plastic pollution are more likely to develop strong eco-friendly beliefs and have higher expectations about the sustainability and ecological responsibility of the products they choose. The study noted that consumers' feelings of closeness to an environmental problem do not always translate into proactive behaviour (Gaddekar & Brandão, 2025). This may also apply to the use of wet wipes: Even though consumers know that plastic-containing wet wipes harm the environment, they may not change their usage habits. However, if brands' environmentally friendly perceptions are strengthened, consumers' discarding behaviour may change positively.

In this context, the fact that consumers continue to use disposable wet wipes despite being aware of the environmental impacts suggests that consumption habits may have a determining effect on discarding behaviour.

H1. Consumption habit has an effect on wet wipe discarding behaviour.

According to Zhang, Wen, Hu and Zhang (2022), previous research has established that wet wipes lead to microplastic leakage, but it has not assessed the current consumption and discarding of wet wipes. In their study conducted in China, the authors revealed the post-use waste stream of wet wipes and the decision-making mechanism for consumers' discarding behaviour. It was stated that the waste flow of wet wipes was documented in depth for the first time with the study. The study highlighted that laws and regulations play an important role in influencing wet wipe disposal behaviour. However, there is a notable lack of awareness among consumers about both the environmental effects of wet wipes and the fact that these products often contain plastic. This lack of awareness contributes to reduced interest in understanding and complying with current regulations. When incentives are increased, it can be assumed that consumers will gravitate towards environmentally friendly discarding methods. According to a study by Hussain, Halim, Chan and Rahman (2021), people, particularly those with egoistic beliefs, often avoid environmentally friendly practices when they perceive the costs to be higher than the benefits. This tendency reinforces their preference for disposable solutions. When the perceived cost increases in terms of time, effort, or financial resources, it may lead people to prioritize their

environmental responsibilities less (Steg & Vlek, 2009). This suggests that people's decisions to adopt environmentally friendly actions are shaped not only by environmental values but also by perceptions of personal costs.

H2. Perceived cost has an effect on wet wipe discarding behaviour.

H3. Incentives have an effect on wet wipe discarding behaviour.

Altruism refers to selfless behaviour such as caring for the environment, while egoistic motivation refers to attending to family welfare (Kumar & Pandey, 2023). From an altruistic perspective, people can reduce their use of wet wipes or choose more environmentally friendly alternatives out of concern for the environment. A person who knows that disposable plastic and chemical wipes harm the environment may choose to change this habit for the good of society and future generations.

Another consideration is that while environmentally friendly choices may bring certain benefits, such as saving money or time, they may also threaten other personal benefits, such as comfort and enjoyment. (Osunmuyiwa, Payne, Ilavarasan, Peacock & Jenkins, 2020). The traditional assumption in economic models is that people try to maximize their utility under the homo economicus model. This is typically understood as behaviour being driven solely by egoistic motivations (Turaga, Howarth & Borsuk, 2010). People who have an egoistic value tendency will first evaluate the costs and benefits that these behaviours will provide to them while engaging in environmentally friendly behaviours. If the perceived benefits exceed the perceived costs, they will perform environmentally friendly behaviours; otherwise, they will avoid these behaviours (De Groot & Steg, 2009). Alternatively, when egoistic motivation is considered from another perspective, individuals may act by prioritising the well-being of their own family or personal health. For example, a parent who thinks that wet wipes may harm their children's skin because of their chemical content may choose not to use this product. Here, the aim of protecting the health of their own family is at the forefront rather than environmental concerns.

Rodriguez et al. (2020) cite a growing public concern about the safety and acceptability of wet wipes used on babies. Similarly, egoistic motivations may be driven by social image concerns. For example, a person may choose a vegetarian meal to appear environmentally friendly. Egoistic motivation is driven by the desire to enhance one's own well-being and often involves influencing others to demonstrate one's environmental sensitivity (Kesenheimer & Greitemeyer, 2021). Thus, in egoistic motivation, individuals prioritize their own social image and personal interests. In this direction, a person who observes the disposable wipe use habits of his/her friends and people around him/her may increase the use of wet wipes by evaluating the positive social approval and status increase that this behaviour will provide him/her as a benefit.

H4. Egoistic motivations have an effect on wet wipes consumption habits.

H5. Altruistic motivations have an effect on wet wipes consumption habits.

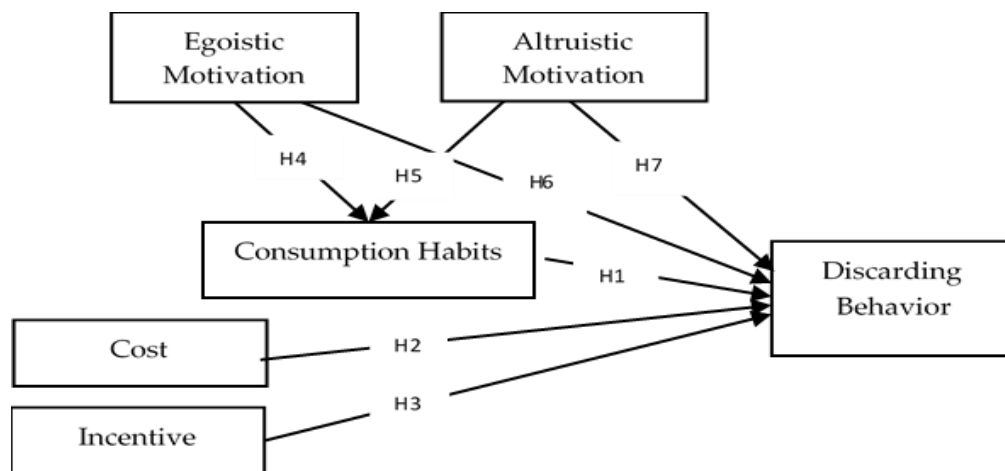
On the other side, altruistic motivations may influence not only individuals' consumption habits but also their discarding behaviours. Research shows that moral identity increases altruistic behaviour, especially when individuals face ethical dilemmas (Du, Ling & Feng, 2014; Sun & Zhang, 2019; ). This suggests that people with strong moral beliefs are more likely to engage in responsible waste management practices, such as refraining from discarding wet wipes in an environmentally damaging way. Environmentally conscious people can avoid discarding wet wipes in the toilet or in the environment, preferring recycling or suitable waste management methods. People with high levels of altruistic motivation are more likely to manage their wet wipe waste responsibly to minimise environmental harm. This may lead to more responsible behaviour in sustainable waste management by people who act with the general welfare of society in mind. The development of a brand identity that is perceived as friendly, while simultaneously emphasising environmental responsibility and sustainability initiatives, can positively influence consumers' propensity to engage in responsible product usage. Consumers are more likely to pay greater attention to waste management when using products from brands they perceive as environmentally friendly (Gadekar & Brandão, 2025). Another study shows that egoistic values, like personal health and quality of life, can drive people to adopt environmentally friendly behaviours, such as anti-littering, when these actions align with their self-interest (Marza, Bangsawan & Mahrinasari, 2022). Therefore, people are more likely to engage in anti-littering practices when they perceive these

behaviours as aligned with their self-interest. In addition, the concept of egoistic motivation can also be linked to the perceived benefits of living in a cleaner and more aesthetically pleasing environment. People with an egoistic value orientation prioritize personal costs and direct benefits when adopting environmentally friendly behaviours. They are more likely to engage in such behaviours when the perceived benefits outweigh the perceived costs, whereas they are likely to refrain from them when the opposite is true (Kim et al., 2012). People with an egoistic value orientation are likely to avoid this behaviour when they perceive that disposing of wet wipes in the environment generates costs rather than personal benefits. However, they may choose to dispose of them when they do not perceive any benefits associated with proper disposal.

H6. Egoistic motivations have an effect on wet wipe discarding behaviour.

H7. Altruistic motivations have an effect on wet wipe discarding behaviour.

The research model suggested within the scope of the research hypotheses is given in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Research Model**

## 5. Methodology

This study examines wet wipes consumption behaviour in Türkiye, focusing on altruistic and egoistic motivations and their impact on usage and disposal. A descriptive survey design was employed, with convenience sampling used to recruit participants with prior wet wipe experience. According to Raifman et al. (2022), this method is suitable when the population is unknown. Participants were screened using the question ‘How often did you use wet wipes/disposable wet cleaning towels last month?’ to include only actual users, while efforts were made to cover diverse age, gender, education, and income groups, allowing timely data collection on current consumption behaviours (Table 1).

All constructs were measured using scales adapted from previous studies. Consumption habit, cost, incentives and discarding behaviour variables were adapted from Zhang et al. (2022), egoistic motivations variable was adapted from Gam, Yu and Yang (2020), and altruistic motivations variable was adapted from Alam et al. (2023). The questionnaire items were translated from English to Turkish using translation and back translation techniques (Beaton, Bombardier, Guillemin & Ferraz, 2000). A total of 407 participants were reached through Google Forms, an online data collection platform widely used by researchers in various disciplines in Türkiye. Of these responses, seven were excluded because of missing data. According to the sample size determination table for large populations provided by Sekaran and Bougie (2016), a sample size of 384 is sufficient to accurately represent a population of one million or more individuals. This finding emphasizes the importance of selecting an efficient sample size in the research to ensure that the results are statistically valid and reflect the wider population. Ethics Committee Approval for this research was granted by the decision of Çankırı Karatekin University Science, Mathematics and Social Sciences Ethics Committee dated 24-05-2024 and numbered 41. Data were collected between June and December 2024. The data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) for Windows 25.0

and SmartPLS 4 software. Descriptive statistical methods (number, percentage, min-max values, mean, standard deviation) were used to evaluate the data. Pearson correlation was applied to test the relationship between numerical variables and structural equation analysis was performed in line with the constructed model.

## 6. Findings

### 6.1. Descriptive Statistics

The demographic characteristics of the participants are given in Table 1.

**Table 1. Demographic Features**

		<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
Gender	Female	248	62.0
	Male	152	38.0
Age	20 and below	90	22.5
	21-30	109	27.3
	31-40	103	25.8
	41-50	68	17.0
	51-60	16	4.0
	61 and above	14	3.5
Marital Status	Single	223	55.8
	Married	177	44.3
Child Ownership	No children	226	56.5
	One child	68	17.0
	Two children	77	19.3
	Three children	25	6.3
	Four and more	4	1.0
Education level	Primary education	3	0.8
	Secondary Education	20	5.0
	Associate Degree	151	37.8
	Bachelor's Degree	105	26.3
	Postgraduate	121	30.3
Income	- 20000	123	30.8
	20001-30000	45	11.3
	30001-40000	31	7.8
	40001-50000	62	15.5
	50001-60000	75	18.8
	60001-	64	16.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It is seen that 62% of the participants are female and 38% are male. When the distribution of the participants according to their ages is analyzed, it is seen that 22.5% of the participants are under the age of 20, 27.3% are between 21-30, 25.8% are between 31-40, 17% are between 41-50, 4% are between 51-60, and 3.5% are 61 and over. It is seen that 55.8% of the participants are single and 44.3% are married. When the distribution of the participants according to the number of children is analyzed, it is



seen that 56.5% have no children, 17% have one child, 19.3% have two children, 6.3% have three children and 1% have four or more children. When the participants' educational backgrounds are analyzed, it is seen that 0.8% of the participants have primary education, 5% have secondary education, 37.8% have associate's degree, 26.3% have Bachelor's degree and 30.3% have Postgraduate degree. When the participants' income status is analyzed, it is seen that 30.8% of the participants have 20000 TL and below, 11.3% have 20001-30000, 7.8% have 30001-40000, 15.5% have 40001-50000, 18.8% have 50001-60000 and 16% have 60001 TL and above.

## 6.2. Measurement Model

In order to determine the validity and reliability of the measurement tools used in the study, the measurement model was first analyzed. In order to test whether validity and reliability are ensured, it is necessary to look at values such as Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability ( $\rho_a$ ), Composite reliability ( $\rho_c$ ) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and determine that they are above the specified value.

The results of cronbach's alpha,  $\rho_a$ , composite reliability and average variance explained for the research variables are given in table 2.

**Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha,  $\rho_a$ , Composite Reliability and AVE**

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability ( $\rho_a$ )	Composite reliability ( $\rho_c$ )	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Altruistic Mot.	0.767	0.766	0.851	0.588
Egoistic Mot.	0.901	0.911	0.922	0.628
Cost	0.512	0.826	0.774	0.642
Consumpt. Habit	0.816	0.866	0.861	0.476
Incentive	0.786	0.809	0.845	0.481

The table 2 presents the CR and AVE values for the factors. CR values should be above 0.70 (Hair, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2011:145). Although some AVE values are slightly below 0.50, according to Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Lam (2012), a CR value greater than 0.60 indicates that the construct demonstrates adequate convergent validity. Upon reviewing the table, it is evident that the CR values exceed 0.70, indicating that the scales possess a satisfactory level of reliability. Additionally, all AVE values for the factors are greater than 0.40, confirming that the scales achieve convergent validity. Cronbach's Alpha and  $\rho_a$  values above 0.50 imply that the scales employed are dependable, reflecting a strong internal consistency for the variables used in the research (Özdamar, 2016).

Factor loadings, Fornell-Larcker criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) were analyzed to assess the discriminant validity of the constructs. The factor loadings of the scales used in the study are given in Table 3. When the factor loadings are analyzed, it is seen that they are above 0.40 and are valid. The “cost” variable questions with low factor loadings (C3 and C4) were removed from the study as they were invalid.

**Table 3. Factor Loadings of the Scales Used in the Study**

	Altruistic Mot.	Egoistic Mot.	Discard	Cost	Consump.	Incentive
C1					0.607	
C2_1					0.819	
C2_2					0.681	
C2_3					0.736	

<b>C2_4</b>					0.656	
<b>C2_5</b>					0.786	
<b>C2_6</b>					0.490	
<b>I1</b>						0.674
<b>I2</b>						0.744
<b>I3</b>						0.713
<b>I4</b>						0.468
<b>I5</b>						0.758
<b>I6</b>						0.761
<b>D1</b>			1.000			
<b>EM1</b>		0.745				
<b>EM2</b>		0.707				
<b>EM3</b>		0.771				
<b>EM4</b>		0.843				
<b>EM5</b>		0.844				
<b>EM6</b>		0.777				
<b>EM7</b>		0.850				
<b>AL1</b>	0.771					
<b>AL2</b>	0.803					
<b>AL3</b>	0.788					
<b>AL4</b>	0.701					
<b>CO1</b>				0.952		
<b>CO2</b>				0.615		

An additional measure used to assess discriminant validity is the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). This ratio compares the average correlations among items across different variables in a model to the geometric mean of the correlations among items within the same variable (Doğan, 2019: 46-47). According to Hair et al. (2019: 9), the HTMT value should ideally be 0.90 or lower.

Table 4 shows the HTMT ratios and all values are below 0.90.

**Table 4. HTMT ratio for Research Variables**

	<b>Altruistic Mot.</b>	<b>Egoistic Mot.</b>	<b>Discard</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Consump.</b>	<b>Incentive</b>
Altruistic Mot.						
Egoistic Mot.	0.353					
Discard	0.150	0.167				
Cost	0.404	0.122	0.184			
Consump.	0.217	0.243	0.064	0.191		
Incentive	0.711	0.263	0.187	0.301	0.173	

Pearson correlation was applied to test the relationship between the variables. Table 5 shows the results of the correlation analysis.

**Table 5. Relationship between Variables**

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1- Consump. Hab.	1	0.048	0.098	0.202*	0.162*	0.017
2- Cost		1	0.497*	0.028	0.209*	-0.037
3- Incentive			1	0.218*	0.556*	-0.165*
4- Egoistic Mot.				1	0.298*	-0.158*
5- Altruistic Mot.					1	-0.133*
6- Discard						1

\*p<0.05

Pearson correlation analysis was applied to test the relationships between the variables. As a result of the analysis, there is a statistically significant and positive relationship between consumption habits and egoistic motivations ( $r=0.202$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and altruistic motivations ( $r=0.162$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). There is a statistically significant and positive relationship between cost and incentives ( $r=0.497$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and altruistic motivations ( $r=0.209$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). There is a statistically significant positive relationship between incentives and egoistic motivations ( $r=0.218$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), a statistically significant positive relationship between altruistic motivations ( $r=0.556$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and a statistically significant negative relationship between wet wipe discarding behaviour ( $r=-0.165$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). There is a statistically significant positive relationship between egoistic motivations and altruistic motivations ( $r=0.298$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and a statistically significant negative relationship between wet wipe discarding behaviour ( $r=-0.158$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

It is seen that there is a statistically significant negative relationship between altruistic motivations and wet wipe discarding behaviour ( $r=-0.133$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

### 6.3. Hypothesis Tests

Since all validity and reliability criteria were obtained at the measurement model stage, the structural model was tested to analyse the research hypotheses. In the structural model, the resampling (bootstrapping) method was used. In the resampling method, the 95% confidence interval and 5000 sample size recommended by Hair, Hult, Ringle and Sarstedt (2017) and Henseler, Ringle and Sarstedt (2016) were preferred.

The results of the structural model analysis were obtained.  $R^2$  coefficient values for the research variables are given in Table 6.

**Table 6.  $R^2$  Coefficients for Research Variables**

	$R^2$	Adjusted $R^2$
Discarding Beh.	0.062	0.050
Consump. Hab.	0.067	0.062

$R^2$  values are the rate of explaining the variables that are dependent in the model. The  $f^2$  coefficients for the research variables are given in Table 7.

**Table 7.  $f^2$  Coefficients for Research Variables**

Relationship between Variables	$f^2$
Altruistic Motivations → Discarding Behaviour	0.000
Egoistic Motivations → Discarding Behaviour	0.017
Cost → Discarding Behaviour	0.012
Consumption Habit → Discarding Behaviour	0.002
Incentive → Discarding Behaviour	0.013
Altruistic Motivations → Consumption Habit	0.013
Egoistic Motivations → Consumption Habit	0.039

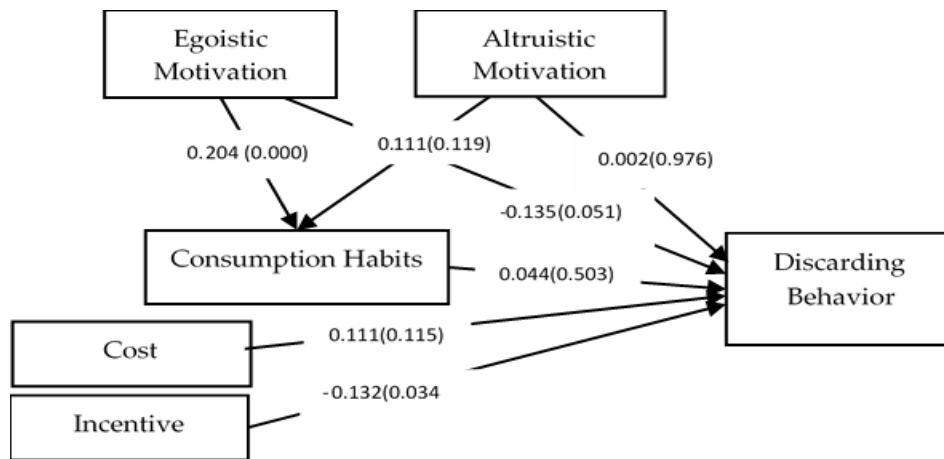
The  $f^2$  value is referred to as the effect size criterion. It reveals to what extent each independent variable is associated with the dependent variable. In this respect,  $f^2$  values between 0.02-0.15 indicate a low level effect,  $f^2$  values between 0.16-0.35 indicate a medium level effect and  $f^2$  values greater than 0.35 indicate a high level effect (Cohen, 1988). Based on the  $f^2$  values presented in the table, the relationship between Altruistic Motivations and Discarding Behaviour ( $f^2 = 0.000$ ) shows no effect, indicating that altruistic motivations do not significantly influence disposal behaviour. Similarly, the effects of Egoistic Motivations ( $f^2 = 0.017$ ), Cost ( $f^2 = 0.012$ ), Consumption Habit ( $f^2 = 0.002$ ), and Incentive ( $f^2 = 0.013$ ) on discarding behaviour are negligible and should not be interpreted as meaningful. Regarding consumption habits, Altruistic Motivations ( $f^2 = 0.013$ ) also show a negligible effect, whereas Egoistic Motivations ( $f^2 = 0.039$ ) demonstrate a small but meaningful effect, suggesting that egoistic motivations positively influence wet wipe usage. Overall, these findings indicate that among the tested relationships, only egoistic motivations significantly affect consumption habits, while other paths, particularly those related to disposal behaviour, have minimal impact.

The path coefficients for the research variables obtained from the research model are given in Table 8 and Figure 2.

**Table 8. Path Coefficients for Research Variables**

Effect	Original Sample (O)	Samp. Mean (M)	Stand. Sapma	t Stat.	p Değ.
Alt. Mot. → Discarding	0.002	0.004	0.078	0.030	0.976
Alt. Mot. → Consump. Hab.	0.111	0.116	0.071	1.560	0.119
Ego. Mot. → Discarding	-0.135	-0.133	0.069	1.955	0.051
Ego. Mot. → Consump. Hab.	0.204	0.212	0.057	3.590	<b>0.000*</b>
Cost → Discarding	0.111	0.118	0.071	1.577	0.115
Consump. Hab. → Discarding	0.044	0.041	0.066	0.670	0.503
Incentive → Discarding	-0.132	-0.151	0.062	2.117	<b>0.034*</b>

According to Table 8, egoistic motivations have a statistically significant and positive effect on consumption habits ( $\beta=0.204$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Incentive has a statistically significant and negative effect on the wet wipe throwing behaviour ( $\beta=-0.132$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).



**Figure 2. Final Model**

## 7. Discussion and Conclusion

This study has revealed the effects of different types of individual motivation and incentives on the consumption and disposal behaviours associated with wet wipes. The research findings indicate that individuals driven by egoistic motivations are more likely to use wet wipes. This suggests that motivation focused on personal interests prioritises factors such as practicality and comfort over environmental considerations. Furthermore, the study observed that external incentive tools, such as rewards or motivational messages, have a negligible effect on wet wipe-discarding behaviour ( $f^2 = 0.013$ ; Indiani et al., 2025), indicating that these factors should not be interpreted as meaningful in influencing disposal practices; according to Cohen (1988),  $f^2$  values below 0.02 are considered negligible. Consequently, the supply of accurate information has the potential to effect a shift in consumers' disposal habits, thereby promoting sustainable consumption practices. This finding underscores the notion that improper disposal behaviours are often rooted in a deficiency of information. The results demonstrate that sustainable consumption habits are influenced by a combination of knowledge and awareness, as well as individual value systems and motivational structures. The findings once again demonstrate the importance of knowledge-based interventions and regulatory policies in promoting sustainable consumption behaviours.

Research findings reveal that egoistic motivations positively influence wet wipe consumption. This indicates that individuals are more likely to use wet wipes for self-interested reasons, such as personal benefit, comfort, and hygiene. In contrast, altruistic motivations—defined as values oriented toward social and environmental well-being—were found to have no significant effect on wet wipe usage or disposal behaviour ( $f^2 = 0.013$  for Consumption Habit,  $f^2 = 0.000$  for Discarding Behaviour; Cohen, 1988). Egoistic motivations lead consumers to prioritise personal convenience over environmental concerns when making purchasing decisions, particularly in the case of disposable products perceived as more practical and easier to use. This claim is supported by several studies, which show that egoistic values are generally not associated with environmentally friendly behaviours, whereas altruistic values tend to encourage such behaviours (Li, Yang, Zhang, Li & Chen, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2025; Steg et al., 2012). Steg, Perlaviciute, van der Werff and Lurvink (2012) stated that, in general, egoistic values hinder environmentally friendly consumption behaviour. The research conducted by Nguyen et al. (2025) emphasizes that egoistic values can act as a barrier to participation in environmentally friendly behaviours, indicating that consumers may be less inclined to consider environmental consequences if they perceive significant personal benefits from their choices and thus rationalize their preferences for single-use products such as wet wipes and other convenience products. A similar finding is reported in the study of Hussain et al. (2021). The authors state that individuals guided by egoistic values generally avoid environmentally friendly practices when the perceived costs outweigh personal gains, thus strengthening the preference for disposable options (Hussain et al., 2021). Among the tested relationships, only egoistic motivations showed a small but meaningful effect on consumption habits ( $f^2 = 0.039$ ; Cohen, 1988), while other paths, particularly those related to disposal behaviour, have

negligible impact, confirming the limited role of altruistic motivations and other factors in disposal behaviour. When consumers strongly endorse altruistic values, they are more likely to prioritise environmental and social benefits when making their choices and actions, thus increasing the likelihood of engaging in environmentally friendly consumption (Nguyen et al., 2025). However, previous studies have indicated that biospheric values are more strongly associated with pro-environmental intentions and behaviours than altruistic values (De Groot & Steg, 2008), which may help explain why altruistic motivations did not significantly influence wet wipe usage in this study. Similarly, Tamar et al. (2021) found that only biospheric values positively affect pro-environmental behaviours. Additionally, environmental knowledge can negatively moderate the relationship between social values and environmental attitudes, while high egoistic values may diminish the impact of environmental attitudes on pro-environmental behaviours. In other words, although environmental knowledge may constrain the positive effects of social values, egoistic orientations can further reduce the translation of pro-environmental attitudes into action. Therefore, the lack of a significant effect of altruistic motivations in the present study may be attributed to the stronger influence of biospheric values, as well as the potential moderating roles of environmental knowledge and egoistic values. Moreover, during the decision-making process, individuals' preference for immediate gains may further hinder the translation of broader altruistic motivations into actual behaviour (Squalli, 2025).

Morris et al. (2024) reached a similar conclusion, noting that while consumers prioritise convenience and hygiene, there is also a growing awareness and concern regarding the environmental consequences of disposable consumption habits. Morris et al. (2024) found that many consumers want convenience but also acknowledge that poor waste management harms the environment, showing conflicting behaviour. This difference emphasises the complicated process of consumer choices during and post-pandemic, where health and sustainability are often in conflict.

Another important result of the research is that environmental incentives (e.g., environmentally friendly campaigns, information activities, and legal regulations) have negligible direct effects on discarding behaviour, as indicated by their small effect size ( $f^2 = 0.013$ ; Cohen, 1988), suggesting a limited real-world impact. This result shows that damaging discarding behaviours can be reduced through friendly attitudes and practices, but their direct effect is minimal. The findings reveal the different effects of individual values and environmental incentives on consumer behaviour. Several studies in the relevant literature have yielded similar results. Pop, Săplăcan and Alt (2020) state that social media benefits personal well-being and enhances these motivations by promoting environmentally friendly products. According to researchers, social media is an important resource as an environmental incentive. A similar study has been jointly conducted by Northumbrian Water Group (NWG) in England and an organization called Behaviour Change, which found that interventions such as distributing waste bins to households and illustrating sewer blockages reduced the rate of wet wipes being thrown in the toilet by more than 60% (Behaviour Change, n.d.). Muñoz, Baez, McKinney and Garelick (2018) characterised a range of commercial wipes and found that sufficient products labelled as “flushable” did not adequately fail in wastewater systems, exacerbating sewer blockage problems. These findings draw attention not only to the physical properties of the product but also to the consumer's perception of the product and post-use behaviour. At this point, environmental incentives are of great importance. Implementing informative labelling, public awareness campaigns, and clear instructions has been shown to be an effective strategy in reducing erroneous disposal behaviours. The absence of regulatory oversight and the dissemination of misleading information, such as the term “flushable”, has the potential to result in an escalation of practices that are detrimental to the environment, rather than fostering environmentally sustainable behaviours. Consequently, environmental incentives should not only be guiding but also be designed to prevent the propagation of misinformation. These findings are consistent with those reported by Hadley et al. (2023), who found that consumer confusion about disposal leads to incorrect disposal of non-flushable wipes and limits the effectiveness of environmental warnings.

As a result, research findings show that environmental incentives have limited or negligible direct effects on discarding behaviour according to  $F^2$  values (Cohen, 1988), but informative interventions remain important. Such interventions can contribute to the prevention of environmental problems by encouraging environmentally friendly behaviour. Gadekar and Brandão (2025) emphasise that retail brands should effectively communicate their environmentally friendly initiatives to consumers. Wet

wipe brands can also increase consumers' environmental awareness by highlighting messages such as "plastic-free," "biodegradable," or "recyclable." Such communication strategies can increase consumers' tendency to dispose of wet wipes in an environmentally friendly manner.

## 8. Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study evaluates the environmental impacts of wet wipes and disposable cleaning products on consumer motivations and environmental incentives. Observations in Türkiye show that the use of these products has increased significantly in recent years and has become widespread by being marketed to consumers with the promise of "practicality" beyond their cleaning function. The proliferation of detergent-added varieties increases both resource consumption and waste production and brings environmental and health-based risks because of their chemical content.

In practical terms, these findings present a picture that requires urgent intervention in the areas of environmental regulations, product labelling standards and consumer awareness. To make these interventions more actionable, producers could implement eco-labelling designs that clearly indicate recycling and environmental information, while targeted awareness campaigns could guide consumers toward more sustainable choices. Although scientific studies have shown that products labeled as "flushable" do not fail in wastewater systems, the absence of public information campaigns or regulatory policies on this issue in Türkiye is concerning. Consumers continue their usage and disposal behaviours without sufficient knowledge of the environmental impact of the products. Community-based workshops and social media initiatives could practically engage users, teaching proper usage and disposal methods and reinforcing environmentally responsible habits. The presentation of high-volume cleaning wipes in detergent forms, in particular, doubles this threat: It both increases the solid waste load and poses the risk of carrying chemical pollutants directly to the environment.

This study aims to fill an important gap in the literature on wet wipe consumption and environmental impacts in Türkiye. But there is still a lack of systematic data in this area. Future research should focus on consumer motivations, environmental risk perception, and disposal behaviour. In addition, the relationship between the product diversification strategies of domestic brands that are prominent in the production of wet wipes and multi-purpose wet surface cleaning towels and environmental responsibility practices is also worth investigating. The lack of official mechanisms for monitoring the environmental impacts of these products in Türkiye causes interdisciplinary studies at the academic and political levels. Such studies will contribute to the development of sustainability policies and the promotion of friendly consumer behaviour.

This study may have limited generalizability due to the use of convenience sampling and online surveys. Additionally, only participants with prior wet wipe experience were included, excluding the perspectives of occasional or non-users. Future research could employ different sampling methods to more comprehensively examine the effects of motivations on consumption and disposal behaviors and could also incorporate emerging factors, such as increased health concerns following the pandemic. In this way, including the perspectives of infrequent or new users could further enhance the overall validity of the findings.

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**Araştırma Makalesi**

**Examining Environmentally Conscious Consumption Habits: Preferences for Wet Wipes and Influencing Factors**

*Çevreye Duyarlı Tüketim Alışkanlıklarının İncelenmesi: Islak Mendil Tercihleri ve Etkileyen Faktörler*

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**Genişletilmiş Özet**

Bu araştırmanın amacı, ıslak mendillerin kullanım sıklığı ve kullanım şekilleri ile tüketicilerin bunları nasıl elden çıkardıkları arasındaki ilişkiyi yakından inceleyerek, egoist (kişinin kendi çıkarlarını ön planda tutması) ve özgeci (başkalarını düşünme) motivasyonların bu süreci nasıl etkilediğini analiz etmektir. Bu nedenle, ıslak mendillerin kullanımı ve imhası ile ilgili olarak tüketici davranışının motivasyonel faktörlerden nasıl etkilendiği ortaya çıkarılmaya çalışılmıştır.

Hadley vd. (2023) tek kullanımlık ıslak mendillerin mevcut pazar durumunu değerlendirdikleri araştırmalarında, güçlü tüketici talebi nedeniyle insanların bu ürünleri terk etme ihtimalinin düşük olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Gadekar ve Brandão (2025) göre çevresel konular (örneğin plastik kirliliği) hakkında daha derin bilgiye sahip olan tüketiciler, çevre dostu ürünlere yönelik daha güçlü inançlara ve sürdürülebilirlik beklentilerine sahiptir. Ancak, bu bilgi ya da farkındalık her zaman eyleme (proaktif, çevre dostu davranışlara) dönüşmez. Yani kişi sorunun farkında olsa bile alışkanlıklarını değiştirmeyebilir. Bu durum ıslak mendiller için de geçerlidir: Tüketiciler, bu ürünlerin çevreye zararlı olduğunu bilseler bile, kullanmaya devam edebilirler. Bulgular, insanların çevreye verdikleri zararın farkında olmalarına rağmen tek kullanımlık ıslak mendil kullanmaya devam ettiklerini ve insanların atık bertaraf etme davranışlarının büyük ölçüde tüketim alışkanlıklarına göre şekillendiğini göstermektedir.

H1. Tüketim alışkanlığının ıslak mendil atma davranışı üzerinde etkisi vardır.

Zhang vd., (2022)'ne göre daha önceki araştırmalar, ıslak mendil pazarının gerçek tüketimini ve atılmasını değerlendirmek yerine, yalnızca ıslak mendillerin mikroplastik sızıntısına neden olabileceğini ortaya koymaktadır. Araştırmacılar Çin'de yürüttükleri çalışmada ıslak mendillerin kullanım sonrası atık akışını ve tüketicilerin atma davranışları için karar verme mekanizmasını ortaya koymuştur. Çalışmanın sonuçları, yasa ve yönetmeliklerin ıslak mendil atma davranışlarını etkileyebileceğini, ancak ıslak mendillerin çevresel etkileri konusunda tüketici farkındalığının düşük olması ve çoğu tüketicinin bu ürünlerin plastik içerdiğinin farkında olmaması nedeniyle etkilerinin sınırlı olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Hussain vd., (2021) ise egoist inançlara sahip bireylerin, algılanan maliyetler faydaları aştığında genellikle çevre dostu eylemlerden kaçındıklarını ve tek kullanımlık seçenekleri tercih ettiklerini vurgulamaktadır. Algılanan maliyetin artışı; zaman, çaba veya maddi kaynak gibi unsurlar bağlamında değerlendirildiğinde, bireylerin çevresel sorumluluklarını ikinci plana atmalarına neden olabilmektedir (Steg & Vlek, 2009). Bu durum, bireylerin çevre dostu eylemleri benimseme kararlarının, yalnızca çevresel değerlerle değil, aynı zamanda kişisel maliyet algılarıyla da şekillendiğini ortaya koymaktadır.

H2. Algılanan maliyetin ıslak mendil atma davranışı üzerinde etkisi vardır.

H3. Özendiricilerin (teşvik edici) ıslak mendil atma davranışı üzerinde etkisi vardır.

Özgecilik, çevre için özverili endişeyi içerirken, egoist motivasyon kişisel veya aile refahına odaklanır (Kumar ve Pandey, 2023). Özgeci bireyler, toplum ve gelecek nesiller için endişe duyduklarından ıslak mendil kullanımını azaltabilir veya çevre dostu alternatifleri tercih edebilir. De Groot ve Steg'e (2009) göre, egoist değerlere sahip bireyler, yalnızca algılanan faydalar maliyetlerden daha ağır basıyorsa çevre dostu davranışlarda bulunurlar; aksi takdirde bu davranışlardan kaçınırlar.

H4. Egoistik motivasyonların ıslak mendil tüketim alışkanlıkları üzerinde etkisi vardır.

H5. Altruistik (özgeci) motivasyonların ıslak mendil tüketim alışkanlığı üzerinde etkisi vardır.

Diğer taraftan, özgeci motivasyonlar bireylerin sadece tüketim alışkanlıklarını değil, aynı zamanda atma davranışlarını da etkileyebilir. Araştırmalar, ahlaki kimliğin özellikle bireyler etik ikilemlerle karşılaştığında özgeci davranışı artırdığını göstermektedir (Sun ve Zhang, 2019; Du vd., 2014). Bu durum, güçlü ahlaki inançlara sahip kişilerin, ıslak mendilleri çevreye zarar verecek şekilde atmaktan kaçınmak gibi sorumlu atık yönetimi uygulamalarına katılma olasılıklarının daha yüksek olduğunu göstermektedir. Çevreye duyarlı kişiler, ıslak mendilleri tuvalete veya çevreye atmaktan kaçınarak geri dönüşümü veya uygun atık yönetimi yöntemlerini tercih edebilir. Yüksek düzeyde özgeci motivasyona sahip kişilerin, çevreye verilen zararı en aza indirmek için ıslak mendil atıklarını sorumlu bir şekilde yönetme olasılığı daha yüksektir. Bununla birlikte çevre dostu olarak algılanan ve aynı zamanda çevresel sorumluluk ve sürdürülebilirlik girişimlerini vurgulayan bir marka kimliğinin geliştirilmesi, tüketicilerin sorumlu ürün kullanımı eğilimini olumlu yönde etkileyebilir (Gadekar & Brandão, 2025). Tüketicilerin, çevre dostu olarak algıladıkları markaların ürünlerini kullanırken atık yönetimine daha fazla dikkat etme olasılıkları daha yüksektir. Bir başka çalışma, kişisel sağlık ve yaşam kalitesi gibi egoist değerlerin, insanların kişisel çıkarlarıyla örtüştüğünde, çöp karşıtlığı gibi çevre dostu davranışları benimsemelerine yol açabileceğini göstermektedir (Marza vd., 2022).

Egoist değer yönelimine sahip kişiler, ıslak mendillerin çevreye atılmasının kişisel faydalardan ziyade maliyet yarattığını algıladıklarında muhtemelen bu davranıştan kaçınacaklardır. Ancak, uygun şekilde bertaraf edilmesiyle ilgili herhangi bir fayda algılamadıklarında bunları bertaraf etmeyi tercih edebilirler.

H6. Egoist motivasyonların ıslak mendil atma davranışı üzerinde etkisi vardır.

H7. Özgeci motivasyonların ıslak mendil atma davranışı üzerinde etkisi vardır.

## Yöntem

Çalışmada daha önce ıslak mendil deneyimi olan bireylerden anket yoluyla toplanan verilerle tanımlayıcı bir araştırma tasarımı kullanılmıştır. Ölçekler önceki çalışmalardan uyarlanmıştır: tüketim alışkanlığı, maliyet, teşvikler ve atma davranışı (Zhang vd., 2022); egoist motivasyonlar (Gam vd., 2020); ve özgeci motivasyonlar (Alam vd., 2023). Veriler Google Formlar aracılığıyla toplanmış, eksik veri içeren yedi tanesi çıkarıldıktan sonra 400 geçerli yanıt muhafaza edilmiştir. Veri toplama Haziran-Aralık 2024 tarihleri arasında gerçekleştirilmiş ve SPSS 25.0 ve SmartPLS 4 kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Analiz için tanımlayıcı istatistikler, Pearson korelasyonu ve yapısal eşitlik modeli kullanılmıştır.

## Bulgular

Faktör yükleri incelendiğinde, 0.40'ın üzerinde olduğu ve geçerli olduğu görülmektedir. Faktör yükü düşük olan maliyet değişkeni sorularından (C3 ve C4) geçersiz olduğu için çalışmadan çıkarılmıştır. Ölçüm modeli aşamasında tüm geçerlilik ve güvenilirlik kriterleri sağlandığı için araştırma hipotezlerini incelemek amacıyla yapısal model test edilmiştir. Kurulan yapısal modelde, yeniden örnekleme (bootstrapping) yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Uygulanan yeniden örnekleme yönteminde, Hair vd. (2017) ile Henseler vd. (2016) tarafından önerilen %95 güven aralığı ve 5000 örneklem sayısı tercih edilmiştir. Yapısal model analizinin sonuçları elde edilmiştir. Egoistik motivasyonların tüketim alışkanlığı üzerinde istatistiksel olarak anlamlı ve pozitif yönlü bir etkisi olduğu görülmektedir ( $\beta=0.204$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Ayrıca Özendirici-teşvikin ıslak mendil atma davranışı üzerinde istatistiksel olarak anlamlı ve negatif yönlü bir etkisi olduğu görülmektedir ( $\beta=-0.132$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

## Sonuç

Bu çalışma, bireylerin ıslak mendil kullanma ve atma davranışlarını etkileyen egoist ve özgeci motivasyonları incelemiştir. Bulgular, egoist motivasyonlara sahip bireylerin ıslak mendilleri daha sık kullandığını, çünkü kişisel fayda, rahatlık ve hijyen gibi unsurlara öncelik verdiklerini göstermiştir. Buna karşılık, özgeci motivasyonların (toplumsal ve çevresel fayda güdüsü) ıslak mendil kullanımı üzerinde anlamlı bir etkisi bulunmamıştır. Araştırmanın bir diğer önemli sonucu bilgi eksikliğinin, yanlış atma davranışlarının temel nedeni olabileceğidir. Çevresel teşviklerin (örneğin, çevre dostu kampanyalar, bilgilendirme faaliyetleri ve yasal düzenlemeler) ıslak mendili doğrudan çevreye atma davranışını negatif yönde etkilediği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu sonuç, zarar verici atma davranışlarının dostça tutumlar ve uygulamalarla azaltılabileceğini göstermektedir. Elde edilen bulgular, çevre dostu tüketim davranışlarının sadece bilgiyle değil, aynı zamanda bireylerin değer sistemleri ve motivasyonlarıyla şekillendiğini göstermektedir. Bu bağlamda, bilgi temelli müdahalelerin, davranış değişikliği sağlamada kritik öneme sahip olduğu ifade edilmiştir. Bu çalışma, bilginin doğru şekilde sağlanmasıyla tüketici atık alışkanlıklarında değişiklik yaratarak sürdürülebilir tüketim uygulamalarını teşvik edebileceğini vurgular. Bulgular, sürdürülebilir tüketim alışkanlıklarının, bilgi, farkındalık, bireysel değer sistemleri ve motivasyonlar tarafından etkilendiğini göstermektedir. Sonuç olarak araştırma sürdürülebilir tüketim davranışlarının teşvik edilmesinde bilgi temelli müdahalelerin ve düzenleyici politikaların önemini vurgulamaktadır.