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Research Article

Online Sales in B2C E-Commerce Platforms: A Qualitative Study

B2C E-Ticaret Platformlarında Online Satış: Nitel Bir Çalışma

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Abstract
This study examines online shopping behavior during the pandemic in the emerging market, Turkey. The current research benefits from the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework and innovation resistance theory. We analyzed the qualitative data with thematic analysis. We carried out thirty in-depth interviews to collect qualitative data. Our findings show that environmental stimuli (crowding, product category, usefulness, past experiences, the perceived threat of COVID-19) and the organism (perceived benefits, tradition barrier, risk barrier) affect the response (shopping from online stores during the pandemic).
Keywords: *online sales, e-commerce, qualitative study, stimulus-organism-response framework, innovation resistance.*
JEL Classification codes: *M31*
Öz
Bu çalışma, yükselen bir pazar olan Türkiye'de pandemi sırasında online alışveriş davranışlarını incelemektedir. Mevcut çalışma, uyarıcı-organizma-tepki çerçevesinden ve yenilik direnci teorisinden faydalanmaktadır. Nitel veriler, tematik analizle analiz edilmiştir. Nitel verilerin toplanması amacıyla 30 derinlemesine görüşme yapılmıştır. Bulgular, uyarıcılar (kalabalık, ürün kategorisi, kullanışlılık, geçmiş deneyimler, algılanan COVID-19 tehdidi) ve organizmanın (algılanan faydalar, gelenek engeli, risk engeli), pandemi sırasında online alışverişi (tepki) etkilediğini göstermektedir.
Anahtar kelimeler: *online satış, e-ticaret, nitel çalışma, uyarıcı-organizma-tepki çerçevesi, yenilik direnci.*

1.Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected the global retail sector (Beckers *et al.*, 2021). At first, global consumers reacted this new uncertainty in ways like hoarding. After that, consumers demanded "no-touch" retailing, which offers contactless purchasing (Forbes Magazine, 2020). Online shopping has increased primarily in emerging markets like Korea,

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China, and Turkey, unlike advanced markets like Switzerland and Germany (UNCTAD, 2020). Among the emerging markets, China is ahead of developed markets by adjusting e-commerce tactics during the pandemic to lower perceived risks, such as deliverymen providing their body temperature to customers (Business Insider Australia, 2020). Young Chinese consumers have been buying more food online since COVID-19-related cases increased (Gao *et al.*, 2020). Online shopping in Turkey grew by 85% in 2020 (Anatolian Agency, 2021). Korean consumers adapted to a more contactless World (Moon *et al.*, 2021). Taiwanese consumers increased their online food shopping, especially for grain products, because of increased production of bread and bakery at home (Chang and Meyerhoefer, 2021). Overall, the pandemic positively affected the online shopping behavior of consumers (Belk, 2020; Moon *et al.*, 2021; Chang and Meyerhoefer, 2021).

This study contributes to the literature as follows. *First*, the current research examines the environmental stimuli and organism factors affecting online shopping during the pandemic. It also includes the barriers to online shopping. This is the first study that integrates the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework and Innovation Resistance Theory in the context of online shopping during the pandemic.

Second, qualitative research is highly beneficial in times of high uncertainty (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic) as it is suited to focus on what and how individuals react to uncertainty (Teti *et al.*, 2020). As most studies quantitatively examined online shopping during the pandemic (e.g., Akram *et al.*, 2021; Li *et al.*, 2022), this qualitative study provides valuable insights.

The current study addresses the following questions:

RQ1. What factors affected consumers' online purchases during the pandemic?

RQ2. How did barriers affect consumers' online purchases during the pandemic?

RQ3. How did environmental stimuli and organism factors affect online consumer purchases during the pandemic?

Therefore, this study aims to examine online shopping behavior during the pandemic in the emerging market, Turkey. *Section 2* defines the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework and Innovation Resistance Theory. Section 2 also discusses the related literature on online shopping and the COVID-19 pandemic. *Section 3* covers the qualitative method. *Section 4* presents the findings. *Section 5* concludes with a discussion.

2.Theoretical Background

2.1.Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Framework

The Stimulus-Organism-Response framework covers the external and internal factors that affect behavioral responses (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). Stimulus reflects the external environmental cues (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). Stimulus refers to the environment, including sense modality variables, information rate, and characteristic emotions associated with personality (Djafarova and Bowes, 2021). Organism represents the internal states of individuals, like pleasure and arousal, that activate cognitive and affective mechanisms and shape decision-making processes (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974; Lavuri, 2021; Djafarova and Bowes, 2021). Response defines behavioral responses like approach and avoidance (Djafarova

and Bowes, 2021). Stimulus-Organism-Response framework is a theory based on context that does not rely on specific variables, unlike technology adoption theories such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), etc. (Kapoor *et al.*, 2022).

Studies that use the S-O-R framework focused on examining online impulsive shopping (Lavuri, 2021), Instagram's effect on online impulsive clothing buying (Djafarova and Bowes, 2021), online repurchase intention (Zhu *et al.*, 2020; Peng and Kim, 2014), and impulse buying in live streaming (Li *et al.*, 2022) (see *Table 1*).

Table 1: S-O-R Framework and B2C e-commerce

Factors	**Author(s), Year**
Stimulus	
Perceived utilitarian value	Lavuri, 2021; Peng and Kim, 2014
Perceived hedonic value	Lavuri, 2021; Peng and Kim, 2014
Materialism	Lavuri, 2021
Fashion interest	Lavuri, 2021
Perceived enjoyment	Lavuri, 2021
Advertisements	Djafarova and Bowes, 2021
Micro-celebrities	Djafarova and Bowes, 2021
User-generated content	Djafarova and Bowes, 2021
Website appearance	Zhu *et al.*, 2020
Security	Zhu *et al.*, 2020
Online promotions	Zhu *et al.*, 2020
The social presence of the broadcaster	Li *et al.*, 2022
The social presence of viewers	Li *et al*., 2022
The social presence of live-streaming	Li *et al.*, 2022
Environmental stimuli	Peng and Kim, 2014
Organism	
Perceived trust	Lavuri, 2021

Online shopping attitude	Lavuri, 2021; Peng and Kim, 2014
Pleasure	Djafarova and Bowes, 2021; Li *et al.*, 2022
Arousal	Djafarova and Bowes, 2021; Li *et al.*, 2022
Online trust	Zhu *et al.*, 2020
Emotional purchase	Peng and Kim, 2014
Response	
Online impulsive shopping	Lavuri, 2021; Djafarova and Bowes, 2021
Online repurchase intention	Zhu *et al.*, 2020; Peng and Kim, 2014
Impulse buying in live-streaming	Li *et al.*, 2022

2.2.Innovation Resistance Theory

Digital innovations include products and services like mobile banking, online shopping, etc. (Talwar *et al.*, 2020a). Limited studies examined consumer resistance and the barriers to online shopping (Lian and Yen, 2013, 2014; Lian, 2015; Soh *et al.*, 2020; Talwar *et al.*, 2020b). Consumer resistance is critical as it identifies the reasons behind the adoption and non-adoption of digital innovations (Talwar *et al.*, 2020a). Innovation resistance may occur for various reasons, such as changing a current habit or a conflict with the consumer's belief system (e.g., consumer ethnocentrism, beliefs about goods from 3rd World countries having inferior quality) (Ram and Sheth, 1989).

Innovation Resistance Theory reveals important insights regarding consumers' reactions to innovations (Talwar *et al.*, 2020a). Studies using Innovation Resistance Theory focused on intention to buy online experience goods (Lian and Yen, 2013), older adults' shopping channel selection toward online shopping (Lian, 2015), online shopping intention (Lian and Yen, 2014), purchasing from online travel agencies (Talwar *et al.*, 2020b), older adults' perceptions, acceptance, and willingness towards online shopping (Soh *et al.*, 2020). Innovation Resistance Theory states that consumers resist innovations and change due to functional (e.g., usage, value, and risk) and psychological (e.g., tradition and image) barriers (Ram and Sheth, 1989).

The usage barrier conflicts with consumers' habits, routines, and experiences and refers to the usability of a service (Ram and Sheth, 1989; Talwar *et al.*, 2020a). The usage barrier represents that online shopping is not easy to use, convenient, fast to use, and clear (Lian and Yen, 2013). Lian and Yen (2013) found no significant relationship between the usage barrier and the intention to buy online experience goods. Lian and Yen (2014) found no significant relationship between the usage barrier and online shopping intention. Soh *et al.* (2020) found that the usage

barrier negatively affects older adults' perceptions, acceptance, and willingness towards online shopping. Lian (2015) found that the usage barrier affects older adults' shopping channel selection toward online shopping.

Another barrier is the value barrier, resulting from the need for a robust performance-to-price value (Ram and Sheth, 1989). The value barrier includes the benefits barrier (Talwar *et al.*, 2020b). The value barrier states that online shopping is economical (Lian and Yen, 2013). The value barrier negatively affects consumers' intention to buy online experience goods (Lian and Yen, 2013) and online shopping intention (Lian and Yen, 2014). Talwar *et al.* (2020b) found that the value barrier negatively affects online travel agency purchases. Soh *et al.* (2020) found that the value barrier negatively affects older adults' perceptions, acceptance, and willingness toward online shopping. Lian (2015) found that the value barrier affects older adults' shopping channel selection toward online shopping.

There is also a risk barrier, including physical, economic, functional, and social risks (Ram and Sheth, 1989). The risk barrier includes possible risks of lost connections, tapping out the wrong product information, and security concerns about passwords or usernames for online shopping (Lian and Yen, 2013). The risk barrier includes privacy, security, and vulnerability barriers (Talwar *et al.*, 2020b). Lian and Yen (2013) found no significant relationship between the risk barrier and the intention to buy online experience goods. Lian and Yen (2014) found that the risk barrier negatively affects online shopping intention only for older adults compared to younger adults. Talwar *et al.* (2020b) found that the risk barrier negatively affects online travel agency purchases. Soh *et al.* (2020) found that the risk barrier negatively affects older adults' perceptions, acceptance, and willingness toward online shopping.

The tradition barrier represents the resistance to a cultural change and includes traditions and societal norms (Ram and Sheth, 1989). For instance, previous habits in physical channels, such as enjoying services provided by staff in physical stores or disliking online self-services, can create a tradition barrier to online shopping (Lian and Yen, 2013). Tradition barrier negatively affects consumers' intention to buy online experience goods (Lian and Yen, 2013). Lian and Yen (2014) found that the tradition barrier negatively affects online shopping intention only for older adults compared to younger adults. Soh *et al.* (2020) found that the tradition barrier negatively affects older adults' perceptions, acceptance, and willingness toward online shopping.

The image barrier represents the unfavorable image of the product (Ram and Sheth, 1989). For instance, the image barrier towards online shopping includes the complexity of usefulness and difficulty to use (Lian and Yen, 2013). Lian and Yen (2013) could not find a significant relationship between the image barrier and the intention to buy online experience goods. Lian and Yen (2014) found no significant relationship between the image barrier and online shopping intention. Soh *et al.* (2020) found no significant relationship between the image barrier and older adults' perceptions, acceptance, and willingness toward online shopping.

2.3.Online shopping and the pandemic

Empirical studies on consumer behavior toward e-commerce during the COVID-19 pandemic mainly examined online grocery or food shopping (East, 2022; Chang and Meyerhoefer, 2020; Baarsma and Groenewegen, 2021; Bridges and Fowler, 2022). For instance, East (2022) assumes that online grocery sales will continue to grow post-pandemic. Chang and Meyerhoefer (2020) state that the demand for grains, fresh fruit and vegetables, and frozen foods increased the most during the pandemic. Baarsma and Groenewegen (2021) note that additional hospital admissions increased app traffic and sales. Moreover, hoarding behavior is driven by the general perception and impact of the virus rather than local conditions. Bridges and Fowler (2022) note that consumers were most worried about food and safety during the pandemic.

In the context of the pandemic, studies focused on online impulsive shopping (Lavuri, 2021), impulse buying in live streaming (Li *et al.*, 2022), online purchase intention (Koch *et al.*, 2020), online clothing buying (Milakovićand Miocevic, 2022), intention to use online channels (Moon *et al.*, 2021), sustainable consumption from e-commerce platforms (Tran, 2021), intention to use mobile commerce (Akram *et al.*, 2021), and consumers' responses to online service failures (Ozuem *et al.*, 2021) (see *Table 2*).

Table 2: Empirical studies on online shopping during the pandemic

Author(s), Year	**Theory**	**Sample**	**Method**	**Key Findings**
Lavuri, 2021	S-O-R framework, Dual Factor Theory	443 Indian respondents	Quantitative, Structural equation modeling	Perceived trust → Online impulsive shopping Online shopping attitude → Online impulsive shopping
Li *et al.*, 2022	S-O-R framework, Social Presence Theory	189 Chinese respondents	Quantitative, Structural equation modeling	Arousal → Impulse buying in live streaming Pleasure → Impulse buying in live streaming
Koch *et al.*, 2020	-	451 German consumers	Quantitative, Structural equation modeling	Hedonic motivation → online purchase intention Perceived usefulness → online purchase intention

				External subjective norms → online purchase intention
Milaković and Miocevic, 2022	Protection Motivation Theory	363 Croatian consumers	Quantitative, Structural equation modeling	Coping appraisal → intention to purchase online
Moon *et al.*, 2021	Protection Motivation Theory, the Theory of Planned Behavior	251 Korean consumers	Quantitative, Ordered logit model analysis	Severity, vulnerability → intention to use online channels Response efficacy, self-efficacy → intention to use online channels Knowledge of COVID-19, recognition of government policy → intention to use online channels
Tran, 2021	Environmentally Uses and Gratification Theory	617 Vietnamese online consumers	Quantitative, Structural equation modeling	Economic benefits → sustainable consumption from e-commerce platforms
Akram *et al.*, 2021	Technology Acceptance Model	151 consumers	Quantitative, Structural equation modeling	Ease of use → intention to use mobile commerce Trust→ intention to use mobile commerce Mobility→ intention to use mobile commerce Customer involvement→ intention to use mobile commerce
Ozuem *et al.*, 2021	Phenomenological, Constructivist, and Hermeneutical approaches, Actor-	70 millennials (Italy, France, UK)	Qualitative	Customer experience → consumers' responses to online service failures Emotional response → consumers' responses to

	Network Theory perspective			online service failures Technology as resilience → consumers' responses to online service failures Social isolation → consumers' responses to online service failures

3.Method

3.1.Sample

The current study benefited from the snowball sampling method for data collection. First, we contacted initial participants and they referred us to other participants (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981). We reached theoretical saturation when there was enough data to tell a rich story (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Our final sample consisted of 30 consumers (all university students from Gen Z) living in Turkey.

3.2.Procedure

The current study uses the qualitative research method. Qualitative studies uncover unexplored insights into the subject that quantitative studies overlook (Djafarova and Bowes, 2021). Qualitative studies provide a deeper understanding of human nature and are flexible compared to quantitative studies (Charmaz, 2006). Qualitative research is highly beneficial in times of high uncertainty (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic) as it is suited to focus on what and how individuals react to uncertainty (Teti *et al.*, 2020). Our semi-structured guide included the following open-ended questions: "*What* factors affected your online purchases during the pandemic?", "Could you *tell me* your experiences of online shopping during the pandemic?" and "*How* have your preferences related to online or in-store purchases changed during the pandemic?". Participants shared their real-life stories regarding their purchase preference towards online sales during the pandemic. In-depth interviews were conducted online. An average interview lasted for 35 minutes. We transferred all codes to an Excel file. We obtained the ethics committee's permission for the study.

3.3.Analysis

To analyze the qualitative data, we benefit from the *reflexive thematic analysis* (Braun and Clarke, 2021) method, which can be used within most theoretical frameworks (Terry *et al.*, 2017). The thematic analysis involves six phases: Data familiarization, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report (Braun and Clarke, 2006). We began familiarizing ourselves with the qualitative data during data collection. After collecting the data, we deeply engaged with it. Then, we moved through the dataset and read and reread the data several times. The second phase involved generating preliminary codes. An example of a preliminary code is "since the beginning of the COVID-19 process, we have avoided crowded environments". The third phase addressed constructing the initial themes, such as "crowded areas", and "negative experiences". The fourth phase was

developing and reviewing potential themes. The fourth phase involved revising the theme of price discounts and combining it with perceived benefits. The fifth phase was refining, defining, and naming themes. We classified the themes under the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework. The current study showed that environmental stimuli affecting online sales during the pandemic are crowding, product category, usefulness, past experiences, and the perceived threat of COVID-19. This study also unraveled that the organism consisted of perceived benefits, the tradition barrier, and the risk barrier. The response represented shopping from online stores during the pandemic. The sixth phase involved producing the report, which meant writing it up. *Table 3* illustrates the initial and final themes.

Table 3: Themes derived from the reflexive thematic analysis

	Final Themes	Initial themes
Stimulus	Crowding	Crowded areas, contacting fewer people
	Product category	Grocery shopping, clothing shopping
	Usefulness	Favorable infrastructure conditions, being easy to use
	Past experiences	Negative past experiences
	Perceived threat of COVID-19	Infection with the virus
Organism	Perceived benefits	Economic benefits, security benefits, service-related benefits
	Tradition barrier	The habit of a need for touch, the habit of going to physical stores
	Risk barrier	Reliability concerns, problems with logistics companies, health risks
Respons e	Shopping from online stores	Online shopping

4.Findings

This section presents the environmental stimuli and organism factors that affect the response by using the S-O-R framework. Furthermore, we include the "barriers" in Innovation Resistance Theory into the "organism" following Chakraborty *et al.* (2022)'s study. *Figure 1* represents the conceptual model of online shopping during the pandemic.

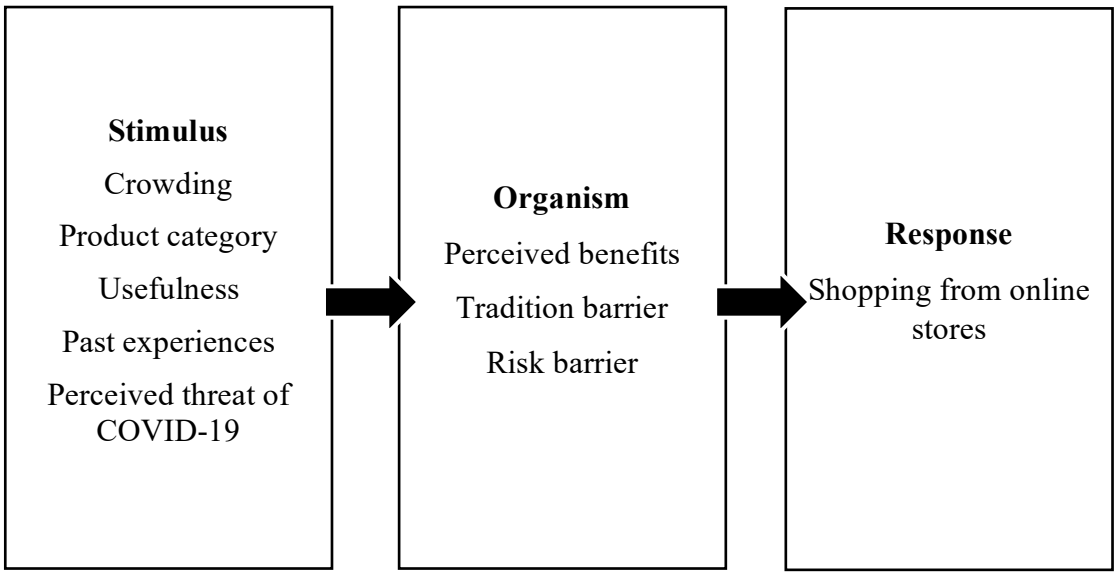

Figure 1: Conceptual model of online shopping during the pandemic

4.1.Environmental Stimuli

Our findings show that the environmental stimuli consist of crowding, product category, usefulness, past experiences, and the perceived threat of COVID-19. Crowding includes crowded areas and contacting fewer people. Product category includes grocery and clothing shopping. Usefulness consists of favorable infrastructure conditions and being easy to use. Past experiences consist of negative experiences. The perceived threat of COVID-19 includes infection with the virus.

4.2. Crowding

Prior research (Güngördü Belbağ, 2022) noted that crowding is important in consumers' shopping behavior during the pandemic. Crowding is a theme in environmental stimuli. Crowding includes crowded areas and contacting fewer people. Participants reported that they refrain from overcrowded areas during the pandemic. Some examples are:

> "Since the beginning of the COVID-19 process, we have avoided crowded environments … We prefer places where circulation is low. For this reason, we avoid shopping in crowded areas such as shopping malls. We generally avoid physical shopping as much as possible…"
>
> "Today, we use closed and crowded areas such as supermarkets for only urgent needs. At first, of course, like everyone else, I used to go to the supermarket frequently, not paying much attention to crowded areas, then when I realized the seriousness of the situation, we started to order many things from various shopping sites, be it food or clothing."
>
> "It makes me happy to contact fewer people by online purchasing…"

4.3. Product category

Product category is another theme in environmental stimuli. Product category includes grocery and clothing shopping. Some participants still went to supermarkets for essential needs. For instance, participants noted:

> "… We make our shopping contactless at the maximum level, including payment, by using online shopping sites, especially for non-mandatory needs such as technological products and clothing accessories. Even though we must go to the grocery store for our essential needs, we try to meet them primarily through ordering, such as takeaway and home delivery."
>
> "… Since the pandemic started, we have been shopping online from the phone or computer instead of going to the stores for clothing and shoe shopping. We even ordered an oven online and started using it."
>
> "… still, grocery shopping continues. Especially food, beverages, tobacco products, and necessary materials for repairs in case of any malfunction, we preferred to go and buy from the nearest supermarket rather than online."
>
> "… I bought many technological and decorative products online … I tried to do my clothing shopping, especially from the store…"

4.3.1. Usefulness

Usefulness refers to a belief in a positive use-performance relationship for innovations (Davis, 1989). Participants said online shopping is useful because of favorable infrastructure conditions and is easy to use. They reported changes in their view of online shopping, and their ability to use it has increased. Participants noted:

> "….During the pandemic, I started actively using online shopping. Because online shopping in our country has developed much more with the pandemic, we can easily order anything we want from where we sit."
>
> "I used to find online shopping websites unsafe as I never liked them. I always sensed that there was a fraud, but I did not even think that I would be wrong, but I did… I am happy that I was wrong… Even if the pandemic continues or ends, online shopping will be a part of my life now. The reason is that it is very easy... "

4.3.2. Past experiences

Participants stated that their past experiences affected their online shopping. They only reported negative experiences. One participant said:

> "I wanted to buy a present for my mom's birthday. My mother also had to buy a dress from an American clothing site on social media. I got it at the end. I waited more than 45 days for two dresses. When they got home, I was not at all satisfied with those products. Our enthusiasm did not come as in the site, so we were deceived. I wanted to complain, but it did not work. Now we are considering whether we should use it as a floor cloth or evaluate it in another way."

4.3.3.Perceived threat of COVID-19

The health belief model (HBM) (Rosenstock *et al.*, 1988) states that a health-related action depends on a health concern, a perceived threat, and a belief that will reduce the perceived threat. The perceived threat of COVID-19 includes infection with the virus. Some examples are:

> "The pandemic forced us to shop online due to the risk of infection with the virus in shopping centers…"
>
> "… I did more online shopping with the pandemic. As a matter of fact, there aren't any differences between purchasing from a [brick-and-mortar retail] store and online shopping. If you ask me which one to choose, I'd prefer online shopping because lots of people touch the same clothes in [brick-and-mortar retail] stores…"
>
> "… The most important factors [for online purchasing] are hygiene, the use of contactless cards… One of the changing habits during the pandemic is the use of contactless cards. It is more hygienic; we can shop without touching the money… The reasons that led me to online shopping are crowding in stores, fitting rooms, irresponsible people who still will not wear masks…"
>
> "Like everyone else, my shopping habits also changed compulsorily with the pandemic. I used to go to grocery stores in peace. I mean, I didn't have questions such as "I wonder, is something going to happen to me?" or "Am I going to catch the virus?" in my head…People shop online rather than shopping face-to-face. After a while, online shopping became an addiction."

4.2.Organism

The *organism* consists of the perceived benefits, tradition barrier, and risk barrier. Perceived benefits include economic, security, and service-related benefits. The tradition barrier consists of the habit of a need for touch and the habit of going to physical stores. The risk barrier includes reliability concerns, problems with logistics companies, and health risks.

4.2.1.Perceived benefits

Previous research noted that perceived benefits of online shopping during the pandemic include easy-to-use awareness, awareness of price and cost, and affection of society (Pham *et al.*, 2020). Participants reported that perceived benefits include economic, security, and service-related benefits. Economic benefits consist of price discounts, and price-to-performance. For instance, one participant noted:

> "…prices are reasonable. I pay the shipping fee which is equal to the fare of visiting a retail store, so I do not have any extra losses."

Another participant said:

> "There are also price increases in stores due to the pandemic. For example, while a product I wanted to buy was affordable in the online store, I encountered twice the price when I went to the [brick-and-mortar] store."

As for security benefits, one participant noted:

"…The choice is huge, most importantly, completely safe. If you sense distrust, you can go to court. It is very reassuring in that respect."

Participants stated that service-related benefits include promotions, variety, and speed delivery. Some examples are:

"…Before the pandemic, I was looking for products by visiting each store. Now, I easily choose the product among thousands of products with one click and have what I want at most in four days. Lots of options..."

"E-commerce sites also attracted people by making many campaigns to attract more people …I choose what I want from the phone and come to my feet, the prices and campaigns on e-commerce sites…"

"…to reach everything I want online instantly..."

4.2.2.Tradition barrier

Previous research (Güngördü Belbağ, 2022) noted that before the pandemic, consumers were seeing and trying products, but they started to use more online shopping with the pandemic. Our participants reported a habit of going to physical stores resulting from a need for touch, especially for grocery shopping like fruits and vegetables, and clothing. Yet, for some participants, the need for touch changed during the pandemic. Moreover, Soh *et al.* (2020) stated that tradition barriers only existed for older adults, which conflicts with our findings as our sample consists of young consumers. Participants noted:

"…despite the online shopping opportunity, people living in big cities visit shopping centers at every chance they find, regardless of the COVID pandemic, due to their touch-and-buy habits…"

"…. Turkish people have a habit of choosing fruits and vegetables by touching and seeing. Even though, they have started to do their food shopping through online shopping [with the pandemic]..."

"… It is hard to buy a product without seeing it. Why is that? If it does not come as I expected, if the product I bought is a textile product, there are questions about whether I will have a size problem. The return process and the delivery process may take longer..."

".. buying clothes and accessories online can cause problems since there is no chance to try, so I can say that online shopping lacks in such cases."

"Frankly, I can say that I still prefer store shopping for my clothing shopping. I must touch the product I will buy and try it on me at least once. During this pandemic period, even I made clothing-related online shopping for mandatory reasons, and I can say that my distrust of clothing shopping online has partially disappeared…"

Participants consider their habit of going to physical stores as a leisure activity. Participants noted:

"Before the pandemic, I rarely used online shopping, it was my preference to see and buy, especially for clothes shopping. I was [only] using the e-commerce sites actively

during the campaign periods, and I was doing my shopping by going to the store. I was going to the store not only for shopping but also for spending some time."

4.2.3.Risk barrier

The theory of risk-taking (Taylor, 1974) states that risks comprise uncertainties about decision-making processes. Previous research (Talwar *et al.*, 2020b, Soh *et al.*, 2020) found that risk barrier negatively affects online shopping behavior. The risk barrier includes reliability concerns, problems with logistics companies, and health risks. Participants stated that they were getting the wrong orders. Some examples are:

"…especially because of the problems of sending wrong models and sizes of clothes in online shopping."

"Shopping from brick-and-mortar stores obviously excels in terms of reliability. Because there is a tangible product that you see with your own eyes and touch. For example, you know that an M size T-shirt is your size, but when it arrives [when you buy it online], it may not have anything to do with the M size, and we can definitely add shoes to this example."

Problems with logistics companies were another risk barrier. Participants reported a slower process of logistics companies similar to the study of Güngördü Belbağ (2022). One participant noted:

"While shopping online, I saw a shoe that I liked while surfing the internet to buy a shoe that I like and need, and I ordered by marking my own shoe size that is available in stock. The time was increased to 10 days, then to 15 days, by presenting the shoes, which were predicted to be delivered within 1 week, as the reason for the densities experienced due to the pandemic. I received the shoes on the 17th day, but this time I noticed that the shoe was 1 size bigger, not the size I ordered. After calling the seller company and reporting the situation, they said that there was a lot of intensity due to the pandemic and they apologized for this confusion and they would happily change the shoes. I stated that I wanted to send the vehicle I bought the shoes from again through the application, but that I did not want them to come and pick up the cargo from home due to the pandemic, but they said that this was not possible and asked me to deliver the cargo. Finally, I was able to deliver the cargo and receive the shoes with my own foot size after 2 weeks."

Another risk barrier resulted from health concerns. Prior research (Güngördü Belbağ, 2022) stated that consumers postponed their nonessential shopping or preferred online shopping due to high infection risk during the pandemic. Similarly, participants stated:

"…I no longer intend to purchase from stores as it's not hygienic to try clothes in fitting rooms…"

"… When we purchase online, products come to our door, and we do not get tired. In that way, we will not risk our and our loved ones' lives because of going out in public."

4.3.Response: Shopping from online stores

The response is shopping from online stores during the pandemic. Some participants were purchasing online before the pandemic, and others stated that even those who were suspicious of online shopping started to use it during the pandemic. Some examples are:

> "… I was using it a lot before the epidemic. Since there are more varieties on online sites, I can find the product style I am looking for exactly. For now, we can say proportionally, I prefer to go to the stores in one of my five purchases."
>
> "… My relatives, who do not have much confidence in the internet and technology, placed an order online for the first time in this period and lost this distrust [positively]."
>
> "Being able to reach everything we want online, pushed me to make this [online] shopping even more. For example, we have started to buy many products that we have tried and smelled before without testing them now. But our shopping preferences were limited to certain stores or brands. Because we are more satisfied with buying products we know rather than products we do not know."

5.Discussion

The increase and adoption of online shopping during the pandemic modified existing habits (UNCTAD, 2020; NPD, 2021). Past research (UNCTAD, 2020; NPD, 2021) predicted that the increase and adoption of online shopping could become permanent after the pandemic. Moreover, examining consumer resistance is essential for the fast adoption of digital innovations (Talwar *et al.*, 2020a). The current study aimed to examine online shopping behavior during the pandemic in the emerging market, Turkey. The qualitative study sought to explore underlying mechanisms in online purchases during the pandemic. We benefited from the Stimulus-Organism-Response Framework and Innovation Resistance Theory.

The environmental stimuli consist of crowding, product category, usefulness, past experiences, and the perceived threat of COVID-19. Crowding includes crowded areas and contacting fewer people. This finding is consistent with Güngördü Belbağ (2022)'s study. Product category includes grocery and clothing shopping. Usefulness consists of favorable infrastructure conditions and being easy to use. Past experiences consist of negative experiences. The perceived threat of COVID-19 includes infection with the virus. The *organism* consists of the perceived benefits, tradition barrier, and risk barrier. Consistent with Pham *et al.* (2020)'s study, perceived benefits affect online shopping during the pandemic. Our findings showed that perceived benefits include economic, security, and service-related benefits. The tradition barrier consists of the habit of a need for touch and the habit of going to physical stores. This finding is consistent with Güngördü Belbağ (2022)'s study. Moreover, the finding of the tradition barrier toward online shopping contrasts previous research (Soh *et al.*, 2020), which found that the tradition barrier only exists for older adults. The risk barrier includes reliability concerns, problems with logistics companies, and health risks. This finding is consistent with previous research (Talwar *et al.*, 2020b; Soh *et al.*, 2020; Güngördü Belbağ, 2022).

Stimulus factors affect the organism, and the organism affects the response (shopping from online stores). Some participants were purchasing online before the pandemic, and some others stated that even those who were suspicious of online shopping started to use it during the pandemic.

Our study has some limitations. First, the sample of this study consists of university students. Future studies examining health-related crises can focus on the middle classes or compare younger and older adults. The second limitation is that this study is carried out in one emerging market, Turkey. Future studies can conduct the study in multiple emerging markets. Furthermore, future studies can conduct mixed-method studies involving qualitative and quantitative studies. Moreover, future studies can deeply explore the tradition barrier toward digital innovations.

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Araştırma Makalesi

Online Sales in B2C E-Commerce Platforms: A Qualitative Study

B2C E-Ticaret Platformlarında Online Satış: Nitel Bir Çalışma

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Genişletilmiş özet

Bu çalışmanın amacı, yükselen bir pazar olan Türkiye'de pandemi sırasında online alışveriş davranışlarını incelemektir. Mevcut çalışma Uyarıcı-Organizma-Tepki çerçevesinden ve Yenilik Direnci Teorisinden yararlanmaktadır. Uyarıcı-Organizma-Tepki çerçevesi, davranışsal tepkileri etkileyen dış ve iç faktörleri kapsar (Mehrabian ve Russell, 1974). Bireyi etkileyen dış çevresel ipuçları uyarıcıyı oluşturur (Mehrabian ve Russell, 1974). Organizma, bireyin bilişsel ve duygusal mekanizmalarını harekete geçiren ve karar verme süreçlerini şekillendiren zevk ve uyarılma gibi içsel durumlarını ifade eder (Mehrabian ve Russell, 1974; Lavuri, 2021; Djafarova ve Bowes, 2021). Tepki, yaklaşma ve kaçınma gibi davranışsal tepkileri tanımlar (Djafarova ve Bowes, 2021). Yenilik Direnci Teorisi, tüketicilerin işlevsel (örneğin, kullanım, değer ve risk) ve psikolojik (örneğin, gelenek ve imaj) engeller nedeniyle yeniliklere ve değişime direndiğini belirtmektedir (Ram ve Sheth, 1989). Yenilik Direnci Teorisindeki "engeller", Uyarıcı-Organizma-Tepki modelindeki "organizma"nın içine dahil edilebildiğinden (Chakraborty vd., 2022), bu çalışmada da dahil edilmektedir. Uyarıcı-Organizma-Tepki çerçevesi, teknoloji benimseme teorileri (TAM, TPB, UTAUT vb.) ile karşılaştırıldığında belirli değişkenlere dayanmayan bağlamsal bir teoridir (Kapoor vd., 2022). Bu çalışmada nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanılmaktadır. Nitel çalışmalar, nicel çalışmaların gözden kaçırdığı konuyla ilgili keşfedilmemiş, yeni anlayışları ortaya çıkarır (Djafarova ve Bowes, 2021). Nitel araştırmalar, insan doğasının daha derin anlaşılmasını sağlar ve nicel çalışmalara göre daha esnektir (Charmaz, 2006). Nitel araştırma, bireylerin belirsizlik sırasında neye ve nasıl tepki verdiğine odaklanmaya uygun olduğundan belirsizliğin yüksek olduğu zamanlarda (örneğin, COVID-19 salgını) oldukça faydalıdır (Teti vd., 2020). Çalışmada, yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşme rehberi kullanılmıştır. Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme rehberleri, bir soru listesinden oluşur ancak katılımcıların araştırmacının öngörmediği konuları gündeme getirmelerine de yer vardır (Braun ve Clarke, 2013). Yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşme formu şu

soruları içermektedir: “Pandemi sürecinde online alışverişlerinizi hangi faktörler etkilemişti?”, “Pandemi sırasında online alışveriş deneyimlerinizi anlatır mısınız?”, “Pandemi sürecinde internetten veya mağazadan alışverişlere ilişkin tercihleriniz nasıl değişmişti?”. Çalışma için etik kurul izni alınmıştır.

Nitel verilerin toplanması amacıyla 30 tüketiciyle (tamamı üniversite öğrencisi ve Z jenerasyonundan) derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Nitel verileri analiz etmede, tematik analizden (Braun ve Clarke, 2021) yararlanılmaktadır. Tematik analiz, nitel verileri analiz etmede çoğu teorik çerçevede kullanılabilir (Terry vd., 2017). Tematik analiz, altı aşamayı içermektedir: Veriyi tanıma, başlangıç kodlarını oluşturma, temaları arama, temaları gözden geçirme, temaları tanımlama ve adlandırma ve raporu üretme (Braun ve Clarke, 2006).

Çalışmanın bulguları, pandemi sırasında online alışverişin (tepki) uyarıcılardan (kalabalık, ürün kategorisi, kullanışlılık, geçmiş deneyimler, algılanan COVID-19 tehdidi) ve organizmadan (algılanan faydalar, gelenek engeli, risk engeli) etkilendiğini göstermektedir. Kalabalık, alanların kalabalık olmasını ve daha az kişiyle temasa geçilmesini içermektedir. Bu bulgu Güngördü Belbağ (2022)’ın çalışmasıyla tutarlıdır. Ürün kategorisi, market ve giyim alışverişlerini içermektedir. Kullanışlılık, uygun altyapı koşulları ve kullanım kolaylığından oluşur. Geçmiş deneyimler, olumsuz deneyimlerden oluşur. Algılanan COVID-19 tehdidi, virüse bulaşmayı içermektedir. Pham vd.. (2020)'nin çalışmasıyla tutarlı olarak, algılanan faydalar, pandemi sırasında online alışverişi etkilemektedir. Çalışmanın bulguları, algılanan faydaların ekonomik, güvenlik ve hizmetle ilgili faydaları içerdiğini göstermiştir. Gelenek engeli, dokunma ihtiyacı alışkanlığı ve fiziksel mağazalara gitme alışkanlığından oluşmaktadır. Bu bulgu, Güngördü Belbağ (2022)’ın çalışmasıyla benzerdir. Dahası, mevcut çalışmada online alışverişe yönelik gelenek engelinin bulunması, gelenek engelinin yalnızca yaşlı yetişkinler için mevcut olduğunu bulan önceki araştırmalarla (Soh vd., 2020) çelişmektedir. Çünkü mevcut çalışmadaki örneklem, gençlerden oluşmaktadır. Risk engeli, güvenilirlik endişelerini, lojistik şirketleriyle ilgili sorunları ve sağlık risklerini içerir. Bu bulgu daha önce yapılan araştırmalarla tutarlıdır (Talwar vd., 2020b, Soh vd., 2020; Güngördü Belbağ, 2022). Mevcut çalışmada uyarıcı faktörler organizmayı etkilemekte ve organizma tepkiyi (online alışveriş) etkilemektedir. Bazı katılımcılar, pandemi öncesinde internetten alışveriş yaptığını, bazıları ise online alışverişe şüpheyle yaklaşanların bile pandemi döneminde online alışverişi kullanmaya başladığını ifade etmiştir.