Research Article

The Impact of Perceived COVID-19 Threat and Death Anxiety on Buying Behavior Among Academics: A Comparison Between Türkiye and Northern European Countries

Algılanan COVID-19 Tehdidi ve Ölüm Anksiyetesinin Akademisyenlerde Satın Alma Davranışına Etkisi: Türkiye-Kuzey Avrupa Ülkeleri Karşılaştırması

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Abstract

Academics, one of the occupational groups exposed to isolation in the COVID-19 epidemic, tried to adapt to the remote working regulations by not being able to maintain the social environment they were accustomed to in universities. This study aimed to examine the impact of perceived COVID-19 threat and death anxiety on revenge buying behavior by comparing academics who work in Türkiye and Northern Europe (the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Norway). "Revenge buying" is a term popularized in the marketing field during the global COVID-19 quarantines. It refers to the surge in shopping desire observed after the lifting of pandemic-related lockdown measures. Data was collected online by using three scales: the "Perceived COVID-19 Threat Scale", "Templer's Death Anxiety Scale" and "Revenge Buying Behavior Scale". The sample consisted of total 327 academics: 163 from Türkiye (TR) and 164 from Northern Europe (NE). Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was adopted for the analyses. The results showed that academics in NE were more prone to revenge buying behavior than TR. As the perceived threat of COVID-19 and death anxiety increased, it was determined that academics working in both TR and NE have tendencies for revenge buying. However, there was insufficient evidence to support the mediating role of death anxiety in the relationship between perceived COVID-19 threat and revenge buying behavior. In this interdisciplinary study, statistically significant differences identified based on the demographic characteristics of academics working in TR and NE have also been indicated.

Keywords: Perceived COVID-19 Threat, Death Anxiety, Revenge Buying Behavior, Türkiye, Northern Europe

Jel codes: I12, I15, I31, M1, M3, M31

Öz

COVİD-19 salgınında izolasyona maruz kalan meslek gruplarından biri olan akademisyenler, üniversitelerde alıştıkları sosyal ortamlarını sürdüremeyerek, uzaktan çalışma düzenlemelerine uyum sağlamaya gayret etmişlerdir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye ile Kuzey Avrupa'da (Birleşik Krallık, Hollanda ve Norveç) görev yapmakta olan akademisyenlerin, ölüm anksiyetesi ve algılanan COVİD-19 tehdidi algısının intikam satın alma

davranışı üzerindeki etkisini incelemektir. "İntikam alışverişi", küresel COVID-19 karantinaları sırasında pazarlama alanında popüler hale gelmiş olan bir terimdir. Pandemiye bağlı kısıtlamaların kaldırılmasının ardından, alışveriş isteğinde gözlenen artışı ifade etmektedir. Araştırma verileri çevrimiçi ortamda üç ölçek kullanılarak toplanmıştır: "Algılanan COVİD-19 Tehdit Ölçeği", "Templer Ölüm Kaygısı Ölçeği" ve "İntikam Satın Alma Davranışı Ölçeği". Çalışmanın örneklemini Türkiye'den 163 ve Kuzey Avrupa'dan 164 olmak üzere toplam 327 akademisyen oluşturmuştur. Analizler için Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesi (YEM) benimsenmiştir. Sonuçlar, Kuzey Avrupa'da çalışan akademisyenlerin intikam alışverişi eğiliminin Türkiye'dekilere kıyasla daha yüksek olduğunu göstermiştir. Hem Türkiye'de hem de Kuzey Avrupa'da çalışan akademisyenlerin, algılanan COVİD-19 tehdidi ve ölüm anksiyetesi arttıkça, intikam alışverişine yönelme eğiliminde artış tespit edilmiştir. Ancak algılanan COVİD-19 tehdidi ile intikam satın alma davranışı arasındaki ilişkide ölüm anksiyetesinin aracılık rolünü destekleyecek yeterli kanıt bulunamamıştır. Disiplinlerarası olan bu çalışmada, Türkiye'de ve Kuzey Avrupa'da çalışan akademisyenlerin demografik özelliklerine göre tespit edilen istatistiksel anlamlı farklılıklar da belirtilmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler*: Algılanan COVID-19 Tehdidi, Ölüm Anksiyetesi, İntikam Satın Alma Davranışı, Türkiye, Kuzey Avrupa*

Jel kodları*: I12, I15, I31, M1, M3, M31*

1. Introduction

Pandemics, from the past to the present, have caused people to experience various psychological symptoms, including the fear of death, depression, anxiety, and stress (Dogan & Duzel, 2020; Usher et al., 2020). These symptoms become more prominent in situations where mortality is salient (Pradhan et al., 2022). The high number of deaths due to the pandemic has alarmed the world. As individuals try to make sense of life's meaning, uncertainties about the future, the meaning of death, the balance between freedom and responsibility, the fear of loneliness, and anxiety arise. They begin to worry about unanswered questions (Gulirmak et al., 2021).

The rapid global spread of COVID-19, caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, has led to a significant number of fatalities worldwide. As of September 2023, the virus has claimed the lives of 6.9 million people. The global case fatality rate decreased from 2.17% in 2020 to 1.21% in 2022 (WHO Dashboard, 2022). Despite precautionary measures, the escalating death toll has caused alarm worldwide. People have been advised to adhere to preventive measures, such as staying at home, wearing masks, and improving personal hygiene (Wang et al., 2020a).

Unforeseen and drastic changes in human life inevitably led to heightened feelings of fear, anxiety, and worry. COVID-19 has emerged as a crisis that profoundly undermines individuals' sense of security, instilling uncertainty and increasing the perception of threat, anxiety, and fear of death (Kavakli et al., 2020). The heightened risk of transmission further amplifies individuals' perception of the threat posed by COVID-19 and their anxiety about death. Human psychology demonstrates that individuals' reactions to risk and threat are contingent upon their perceptions (Lalot et al., 2021). Therefore, understanding individuals' perception levels of the COVID-19 pandemic's threat is crucial in comprehending the stressors they experience concerning their health and their attitudes and behaviors in response to these circumstances (Wnuk et al., 2020).

The perception of a pandemic's threat and the presence of infectious diseases can elicit physical reactions, such as cardiac, digestive, and muscular problems, while also precipitating psychological and social changes. When fear becomes a prevalent emotion during a pandemic, it can have dysfunctional consequences, leading to individual problems such as illness, social anxiety, as well as phenomena like looting, panic shopping, revenge shopping, and xenophobia (Engelhard et al., 2015). Consequently, unplanned changes directly impact consumers' shopping habits (Yuen et al., 2020; Grant et al., 2007; Mansoor & Jalal, 2011).

The phenomenon of increased indulgence in shopping and higher-than-usual purchasing behavior following periods of crisis is known as "revenge shopping". This term has gained popularity in the field of marketing during global COVID-19 quarantines. It refers to a situation where there is a sudden surge in the desire for shopping, which continues for an extended period. It is an economic occurrence observed in various parts of the world shortly after the lifting of lockdown measures related to the pandemic, which was regarded as an economic, health, and environmental disaster like accidents, natural disasters, and wars (Hashmi, 2021).

During the initial stages of the pandemic in 2020, consumers engaged in "panic buying" as a response to potential product shortages. Subsequently, "revenge buying" emerged after the lockdown periods as a compensatory mechanism. This phenomenon was first observed in China in March 2020 when COVID-19 restrictions were lifted (Lins et al., 2021). Revenge buying, a phenomenon observed in consumer behavior, is based on the Duesenberry theory, which proposes that individuals with higher incomes are hesitant to abruptly change their consumption habits because of their desire to maintain social status (Bisset & Tenaw, 2022). This behavior is prominently observed in the luxury industry (Oymen, 2020; Nguyen & Chao, 2021). With the reopening of Europe's economy, consumers have already begun engaging in a "revenge spending" spree in areas such as dining, drinking, travel, and leisure. Moody's Analytics estimates that U.S. personal savings amount to $2.6 trillion, which is higher than it would have been without the pandemic, equivalent to approximately 12% of the Gross Domestic Product (Smith, 2021). Crises often challenge mental health (Lins et al., 2021), and increased spending in certain categories during the pandemic confirms stockpiling behaviors (Hall et al., 2020).

The aim of this study was to explore the influence of the perceived threat of COVID-19 and the death anxiety on a behavior known as "revenge buying" of academics who work in Türkiye and Northern Europe (the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Norway). One of the main reasons for selecting academics as participants in this study is their accessibility; academics' email addresses are published on their research papers and the official web site of the universities making them easier to access and communicate. Academics are familiar with research processes and the importance of surveys, so they can be willing to give accurate answers. Academic environment has a culture of producing and sharing knowledge so academics care about contributing to research. They can easily complete online surveys as they are generally proficient in digital literacy, and they usually are more careful to follow standardized survey guidelines that can help collect quality data. Focusing on a specific group (academics), this paper provides a detailed insight that can be lacking in broader studies.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a unique global event with unprecedented challenges. Any study focusing on its impacts is believed to fill a gap by documenting and analyzing responses to this crisis. This study aims to reflect the psychological outcomes in scenarios where academics might be compelled to provide remote education due to situations such as potential epidemics or disasters in the future. Additionally, it is intended to serve as a guide for academic research on similar topics. In addition, our access to data, stemming from previous collaborations with researchers working in these countries, also influenced the selection. Besides mentioned Northern European countries are considered as developed countries whereas Türkiye is considered as a developing country. Geographically, a small part of Türkiye is in Europe, but most of its land is in Asia. However, culturally, historically, and politically, Türkiye has significant connections to both continents making it a "transcontinental" and "Eurasian" country (Kassen, 2018). According to the "Human Development Index" released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2021), Norway ranks second, the Netherlands tenth, the United Kingdom eighteenth, and Türkiye forty-eighth. Additionally, life expectancy in the mentioned Northern European countries is above eighty, whereas it is below eighty in Türkiye.

This is an interdisciplinary study that offers a wide range of benefits, both to individuals and to the broader academic community. Interdisciplinary works often foster collaboration among researchers from different fields, facilitating the exchange of ideas and promoting a collaborative research culture. Many of today's pressing issues, such as public health crises, and socio-economic disparities, cannot be effectively addressed by one discipline alone. Moreover, it challenges the traditional boundaries between academic disciplines, leading to a more integrated and interconnected academic community. Engaging with various disciplines can also lead to a deeper understanding of diverse cultures, histories, and societal norms (Jones, 2010).

This study examines the behaviors of academics within various cultural and socioeconomic contexts, offering insights into how perceived COVID-19 threat and death anxiety influence revenge buying tendencies. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in millions of individuals facing isolation, including academics who underwent significant lifestyle changes. With the impossibility of maintaining their usual social environments at universities, academics had to adapt to remote work arrangements. These drastic changes in their work methods and lifestyles had physical and psychosocial impacts on them (Holmes et al., 2020). Academics were accustomed to interacting directly with their students. The

transition to distance learning created challenges because it became difficult to combine theoretical knowledge with practical application (Sercemeli & Kurnaz, 2020). Academics also face specific stressors related to their profession, such as publishing pressures and heavy workloads. When they are coupled with the uncertainties caused by the pandemic, they could potentially amplify feelings of threat and fear, leading to different coping mechanisms, such as revenge buying. Additionally, academics often hold influential roles within society; they contribute to shaping opinions and influence policy decisions. By comprehending their responses to threats and their engagement in consumption behaviors, valuable insights can be gained into broader societal patterns. There are many studies in the literature that have been conducted with the academics' emotional intelligence and burnout (Konakay, 2013; Benan and Nilay, 2016; Orhan and Komsu, 2016; Kutanis and Karakiraz, 2013), coping with stress (Goksel and Tomruk, 2016; Akyol and Isik, 2018), subjective well-being (Dogan and Eryilmaz, 2012), work-life balance and remote working (Uysal and Yilmaz, 2020). There are numerous studies on the economic and psychological impacts of COVID-19 on individuals. However, to the best of our knowledge, this is the first paper combining academics' perceived COVID-19 threat, death anxiety, and revenge buying behavior in one study.

2. Literature Review
2.1. Perceived COVID-19 Threat

Extraordinary events such as floods, tsunamis, earthquakes, and pandemics, as well as ordinary situations such as death, illness, and unemployment are recurrent experiences that evoke anxiety in people and have long-lasting effects. The COVID-19 pandemic has compelled people worldwide to confront psychological traumas associated with the fear of getting sick and the reality of mortality. Recent research has indicated a connection between the coronavirus and psychological symptoms like obsessive-compulsive disorder, fatigue, anxiety, and depression (Rogers et al., 2020: 612). Lee et al., (2020) developed The Coronavirus Anxiety Scale (CAS) as a brief mental health screener for COVID-19 related anxiety. Wnuk et al. (2020) utilized an online survey to gather data and assessed participants' perceptions of COVID-19 threat as part of their study and developed a personal threat scale.

Previous studies have found that as age progresses during the COVID-19 pandemic, mental disorders such as obsessive-compulsive and phobic complaints, interpersonal sensitivity, and psychotic symptoms become more common (Tian et al., 2020; Zeybek et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2020). As people age, their susceptibility to infectious diseases increases due to changes in the immune system. Consequently, the probability of experiencing severe illness and the fear of death become more pronounced (Wakiuchi et al., 2020). Another reason for differences in fear of death is the cultural and religious variations in the meaning attributed to the concept of death. For example, positive thinking has been reported to have a positive effect on fear of death from COVID-19 in one culture (Yildirim et al., 2020). In another culture, religion, coping strategies, and spiritual well-being were found to be the most important predictors of death anxiety (Rababa et al., 2021).

Studies conducted by Wang et al. (2020a,b) in China, Choi et al. (2020) in Hong Kong, and Burke et al. (2020) have investigated the psychological symptoms emerging during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their findings revealed prevalent levels of anxiety, depression, and stress, with varying degrees of severity. Anxiety experienced by individuals can manifest as feelings of tension and distress triggered by identifiable or unidentified factors (Lehmann, 2003: 269).

COVID-19 has the potential to heighten anxiety levels in individuals. Previous research suggests that diseases with high mortality rates can evoke anxiety about death (Salehi et al., 2016; Tang et al., 2011), forming the foundation of the fear of dying. The implementation of mandatory quarantine measures, restrictions, remote work arrangements, and reduced social interactions due to the pandemic have posed challenges for individuals in adapting to the new circumstances. This struggle with adaptation has led to increased introversion, feelings of loneliness, and subsequent experiences of depression and fear. The reported cases and deaths resulting from the pandemic have further intensified people's death anxiety.

Numerous studies have shown that genetic susceptibility to COVID-19 affects the course of the disease (Ozkinay & Bal, 2021). Survivors of such losses often experience heightened vulnerability and anxiety (Doka, 1996). People tend to fear the unknown and witnessing the difficult illness period of their relatives diagnosed with COVID-19 may have increased their fear of death. Living with family members

who have any infectious disease, or a sick relative has been shown to have negative psychosocial effects on individuals. Family members who experience major depression and generalized anxiety disorder during the grieving process and the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, including quarantine and death, often struggle to cope effectively (Brooks et al., 2020).

2.2. Death Anxiety

Although death is an undeniable reality for every individual, accepting it emotionally is challenging due to inherent narcissistic tendencies within the psychological structure. As a result, death continues to be a frightening and terrifying phenomenon for people (Bush, 2002). Research in psychology has indicated that the fear of death is a complex fear with multiple dimensions. The most prominent aspects include the fear of the unknown and feeling lonely, the fear of losing loved ones and experiencing suffering during the process of dying, the fear of losing one's personal identity and facing punishment after death, concerns about those who will be left behind, the fear of extinction, and the fear of losing significant individuals. According to Jung, this fear of living stems from an individual's inability to establish a full connection with life. Erich Fromm suggests two distinct characteristics of the fear of death. The first is a normal fear that is experienced by all individuals. The second is a persistent fear that continuously troubles individuals that is often irrational arising from feelings of not achieving success in life. The primary underlying cause of this fear lies in the anxiety of losing one's wealth, physical body, and ultimately facing an end (Li, 2006).

Although individuals may react differently, the death anxiety and the longing for immortality are universal phenomena. The varying responses to this situation are closely linked to the social environment in which individuals were raised, the economic structures they are part of, and the personal interpretations they ascribe to death. The notion that life will ultimately end with death creates emotional and cognitive unease within individuals. They fear the physical disappearance and the potential loss of their social position in society. However, despite these fears, individuals also recognize that death is an inevitable part of life that cannot be separated from their existence, regardless of whether they fear it or hold beliefs in an afterlife. Individuals endeavor to internalize a philosophy of embracing the mystical nature of life to minimize the fear of death. Simultaneously, individuals who are aware of their mortality contemplate the purpose of their existence (Koc, 2002).

As individuals acknowledge that their lives will eventually come to an end, they may occasionally worry about whether they are living in a meaningful way in the present moment. If individuals struggle to find meaning in their lives, they may experience guilt and frequently employ defense mechanisms to avoid confronting this psychological state. This negative attitude towards self-understanding hinders personal growth. Moreover, if individuals perceive death as the ultimate cessation of everything, they cannot escape the negative psychological impact of the fear of death. The fear of death can fluctuate over time, influenced by various factors. Among these factors, those that intensify fear include the depth of an individual's social relationships, the feeling of being abandoned by loved ones during their final moments, the increasing secularization in their lives, their perception of death as a phenomenon, self-imposed isolation from social connections, and the decline in cognitive and physical abilities in older individuals (Hollmann et al., 2007).

The perception of the threat to health is based on two factors: perceived susceptibility to contracting the disease and the severity of its effects on life. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the threat perception and fear of death among individuals (Dryhurst et al., 2020). Analyzing individuals' levels of perceived threat towards the COVID-19 pandemic has been crucial (Wnuk et al., 2020; Usher et al., 2020; Stephan et al., 1999). The relationship between perceived threat of COVID-19 and death anxiety is quite clear (Kavakli et al., 2020). Studies conducted in the last decade have shown that risk perception is a psychological construct influenced by cognitive, emotional, social, cultural, and individual differences, both between individuals and between different countries (Van der Linden, 2015).

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the death anxiety and stress levels around the world as the coronavirus presented a threat to life especially for the vulnerable populations. Harper et al. (2020) investigated the role of fear and anxiety in predicting public health compliance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lee et al. (2020) investigated the concept of "coronaphobia", fear of the coronavirus and its impact on death anxiety and depression. Janssen et al. (2020), Aschwanden et al. (2021), and Rettie and

Daniels (2021) provided insights into the relationship between perceived COVID-19 threat and fear of death, as well as the psychological impact of the pandemic on individuals' well-being. Yildirim and Guler (2021) revealed that perceived risk had a significant direct effect on positivity, death distress, and happiness. Based on these findings, we formulated H1 as follows:

H1: There is a significant direct positive effect of perceived COVID-19 threat on death anxiety.

2.3. Revenge Buying Behavior

Shopping serves to evade negative emotions (Kang & Johnson, 2010). As the COVID-19 pandemic rapidly spread, individuals avoided outdoor activities, which generated feelings of depression, boredom (Chao et al., 2020), anxiety (Mazza et al., 2020), and anger (Trnka & Lorencova, 2020). The uncertainty surrounding the situation led people to stock up on essential items like toilet paper and canned food (Islam et al., 2021; Naeem, 2021; Omar et al., 2021). Furthermore, some individuals turned to revenge spending, engaging in aggressive purchases, without immediate necessity or use to alleviate suppressed emotions. Those who could no longer spend money on travel, dining out, or shopping redirected their expenditures towards revenge spending, driven by a desire for catharsis (Lee, 2021). Hama (2001) observed that the increase in spending primarily stemmed from the desire to alleviate unexpected stress through shopping. Several studies on retail therapy have demonstrated that individuals often engage in shopping to alleviate negative emotions such as depression, anxiety, and sadness (Atalay & Meloy, 2011; Rick et al., 2014) and to experience a sense of well-being. The "terror management theory" (TMT) suggests that individuals cope with their fears by compensating for the perceived threat to their survival (Yuen et al., 2020). Additionally, "retail therapy" proposes that people turn to shopping in unpredictable and uncontrollable situations, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, to alleviate negative emotions.

"Reactance Theory" (Brehm, 1989) can also explain revenge buying behavior that is a motivational state characterized by anxiety and the desire to restore that freedom. Kasser and Sheldon (2000) analyzed how mortality salience can lead individuals to consume more. Kennett-Hensel et al. (2012) reported that life events such as hurricanes and earthquakes can elicit emotional distress, leading survivors to make purchases based on survival needs or for personal pleasure. People tend to stockpile essential supplies during disasters or indulge in the acquisition of expensive items. Therefore, the prolonged duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, combined with the need for social distancing and resulting social isolation, has further contributed to these shopping behaviors. Lins et al. (2021) provided an understanding of the motivations underlying such behavior and its variation based on individual personalities. Park et al. (2022) investigated the motivations for revenge spending among different emotional groups. Tian et al. (2020) examined the correlation between fear of COVID-19 and revenge cognition among Chinese consumers, highlighting that fear-related elements might impact retaliatory actions. Gupta and Mukjerjee (2022) found that psychological reactance positively impacted revenge buying intentions, while perceived stress had a negative impact. Hashmi's study (2021) depicted that there was evidence of revenge buying or purchases made following the COVID-19 lockdown, but most of the purchases were related to necessities. Liu et al. (2023) explored the causes of revenge buying, while Malhotra (2021) developed and validated a revenge buying scale. Based on these insights, we formulated H2 and H3 as follows:

H2: There is a significant direct positive effect of death anxiety on revenge buying.

H3: There is a significant direct positive effect of perceived COVID-19 threat on revenge buying.

Campos and Silva (2022) investigated the moderating effect of loneliness on revenge buying. Building on these studies, our hypothesis suggests that individuals who perceive a higher COVID-19 threat may experience increased death anxiety. Subsequently, this may drive them to engage in revenge buying behaviors as a coping or compensatory response. Thus, we proposed H4 as follows:

H4: Death anxiety plays a mediating role in the significant direct positive effect of perceived COVID-19 threat on revenge buying.

Since our study is conducted with the academics working in Türkiye and Northern Europe, we also proposed H5 as follows to investigate if there is a difference between the respondents' attitudes:

H5: Academics in TR and NE show similar attitudes regarding H1, H2, H3 and H4.

3. Methodology

An online questionnaire was applied to academics working in Türkiye (TR) and Northern Europe (NE) From this point onward, the abbreviations TR and NE will be used for the groups. A pilot study was conducted with a group of 30 academics working in TR to test the suitability of the questionnaire design and the comprehensibility of the expressions. As a result of the feedback, the statements in the online questionnaire were finalized and designed according to a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). The link to the questionnaire form was prepared in Turkish through Google Forms and shared with the academics in TR. The link was sent by e-mail in English to academics working in NE. Due to restrictions such as budget, time, or access to a broader population, convenience sampling method which is one of the non-probability sampling methods was adopted. Convenience sampling allows researchers to collect data quickly from samples that are easily accessible to them (Etikan et al., 2016) such as academics. In our study, three scales were combined into a 5-point Likert Scale (ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree") as shown below:

- "Perceived COVID-19 Threat Scale (PCT)" is a 5-item scale that was developed by Wnuk et al. in 2020.

- "Templer's Death Anxiety Scale (DAS)" is a 15-item scale that was developed by Templer in 1970. It measures the anxiety of the individuals about their own death. We used 9 items that express increased death anxiety (DAS+), and 6 items that alleviated death anxiety (DAS−).

- "Revenge Buying Behavior Scale" a 13-item scale that was developed by Malhotra in 2021. "Added purchasing power (3 items), feel store environment (4 items), feel good factor (3 items), and desire satiation (3 items)" were noted as four factors that form the empirical scale for revenge buying behavior.

A total of 327 questionnaires were reached: 163 academics working in TR and 164 academics working in NE (56 from the United Kingdom, 61 from the Netherlands, and 47 from Norway) in the first quarter of 2022 after the lockdown was lifted. The response rate for academics working in TR is 9%, 6% from the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, and 5% from Norway. A power analysis was conducted to assess the sufficiency of survey respondents for detecting a practical difference of 0.5 points on the Likert scale with a 95% probability (using a 2-sample t-test, with equal sample sizes of at least 151 and a standard deviation of 1.2). Therefore, number of sample size was accepted as sufficient. Data were collected using the personal information form, informed consent form, COVID-19 statements regarding personal threat perception (perceived COVID-19 threat) scale, death anxiety inventory, and revenge shopping scale. The Personal Information Form was created by the researchers by reviewing the relevant literature (Oker et al., 2021; Kavakli et al., 2020; Turkmen et al., 2021). The questionnaire consisted of 6 questions about socio-demographic characteristics (gender, age, marital status, field, academic experience, people they live with) of the respondents and 4 questions related to COVID-19. Considering the hypotheses, the research model was developed as in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Resarch Model
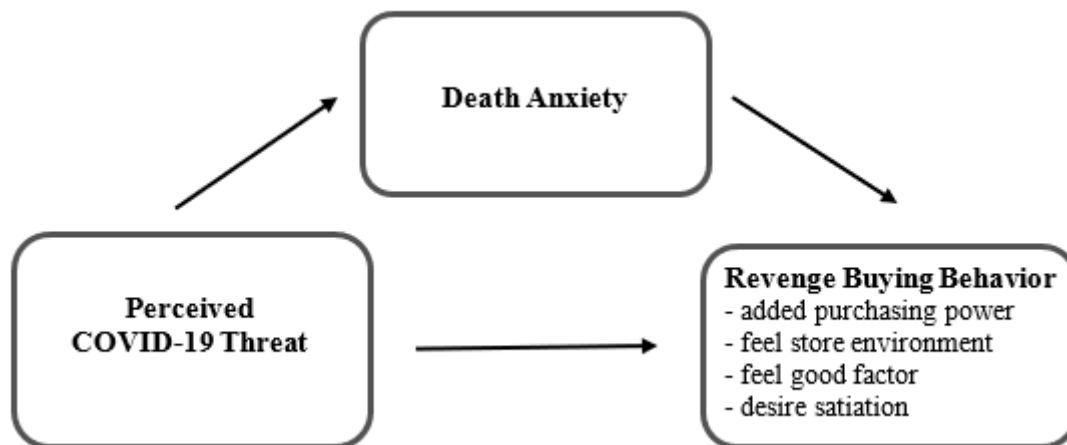
4. Findings

Each part of the survey was checked for internal consistency with Cronbach's Alpha. For the DAS scale, phrases that express increased death anxiety (DAS+), and phrases that express alleviated death anxiety (DAS–) were taken. This is due to the correlations of items within each group being positive while the correlations of the items between two groups being negative (for group means $r= –.31$, $p<.01$). The K-means cluster analysis also revealed that there are two distinct classes for the items. Table 1 presents the relevance of each item to clusters and alpha values if item is deleted.

Table 1: The Item Total Correlations within DAS Groups and Cronbach's Alpha If Item Deleted

	Item	The Item Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted	Final Cluster Centers 1	2
DAS+	DAS1- I am very much afraid to die.	.528	.651	**4**	2
	DAS4- I dread to think about having an operation.	.338	.689	**4**	3
	DAS8- I am often distressed by the way time flies so very rapidly.	.318	.692	**4**	3
	DAS9- I fear of dying a painful death.	.425	.673	**4**	3
	DAS10- The subject of life after death troubles me greatly.	.342	.689	**3**	2
	DAS11- I am really scared of having a heart attack.	.422	.673	**3**	3
	DAS12- I often think about how short life really is.	.444	.671	**4**	3
	DAS13- I shudder when I hear people talking about World War III.	.251	.708	**4**	3
	DAS14- The sight of a dead body is horrifying to me.	.377	.682	**4**	3
DAS–	DAS2- The thought of death seldom enters my mind.	.315	.689	3	**3**
	DAS3- It doesn't make me nervous when people talk about death.	.312	.690	3	**4**
	DAS5- I am not at all afraid to die.	.601	.595	2	**3**
	DAS6- I am not particularly afraid of getting cancer.	.400	.664	2	**3**
	DAS7- The thought of death never bothers me.	.553	.612	2	**3**
	DAS15- I feel the future holds nothing for me to fear.	.385	.670	3	**3**

Table 2 presents the corresponding Cronbach's Alpha, AVE (Average Variance Extracted) and CR (Composite Reliability) statistics with respect to groups.

Table 2: Item Analysis of Survey Parts

Scales	Cronbach's Alpha		Average Variance Extracted (AVE)		Composite Reliability (CR)	
	TR	NE	TR	NE	TR	NE
Perceived COVID-19 Threat (5 items)	0.821	0.918	0.584	0.756	0.875	0.939
DAS–, (6 items) (expressions that mitigate death anxiety)	0.684	0.636	0.574	0.516	0.838	0.76
DAS+, (9 items) (expressions that increase death anxiety)	0.599	0.774	0.508	0.588	0.674	0.74
Revenge Buying Behavior (13 items)	0.853	0.938	0.595	0.509	0.897	0.877

Alpha > .70, AVE > .50, CR > .70

We noted that for DAS– and DAS+ scales, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were slightly less than the general benchmark value of 0.7. This may be due to the low volume of items within each scale. Besides, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was greater than 70% when sample groups were pooled. For the validity of the questionnaire scales, AVE statistics for both regions did not signal any problems (AVE > .50). Hence, we concluded that the questionnaire parts measured the same construct reliably.

When demographics are considered, the major difference between TR and NE countries is the "age". The average age of the participants in TR is 38.2 whereas the average age of the participants in NE is 47.8. The difference of means is -9.7 and the 95% confidence interval for the difference of means was estimated as (-11.9, -7.3). The claim that European academicians are at least seven years older than those in TR can be accepted (p-value=0.027), which can also be assumed as practically significant.

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of the Academics

Demographics		Groups	n	%	χ2 Test	p-value
Gender	Female	TR	79	48%	.150	.698
		NE	83	51%		
	Male	TR	84	52%		
		NE	81	49%		
Marital status	Married	TR	104	64%	2.348	.125
		NE	91	55%		
	Single	TR	59	36%		
		NE	73	45%		
Field	Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences	TR	41	25%	4.355	.113
		NE	26	16%		
	Social Sciences	TR	91	56%		
		NE	102	62%		
	Medical Sciences	TR	31	19%		
		NE	36	22%		
	1-5 years	TR	50	31%	34.194	.000**

Demographics		Groups	n	%	χ2 Test	p-value
Academic experience		NE	16	10%		
	6-10 years	TR	44	27%		
		NE	29	18%		
	11-15 years	TR	29	18%		
		NE	45	27%		
	16 years and more	TR	40	25%		
		NE	74	45%		
People you live with	Alone	TR	43	26%	41.762	.000**
		NE	56	34%		
	With partner	TR	19	12%		
		NE	52	32%		
	With partner and kid(s)	TR	88	54%		
		NE	35	21%		
	Extended family	TR	13	8%		
		NE	21	13%		
Vaccinated against COVID-19	Yes	TR	153	94%	10.378	.001**
		NE	135	82%		
	No	TR	10	6%		
		NE	29	18%		
Had COVID-19	Yes	TR	52	32%	1.013	.314
		NE	61	37%		
	No	TR	111	68%		
		NE	103	63%		
Cohabitants have had COVID-19	Yes	TR	65	40%	.073	.786
		NE	63	38%		
	No	TR	98	60%		
		NE	101	62%		
Losing a loved one due to COVID-19	Yes	TR	43	26%	.001	.974
		NE	43	26%		
	No	TR	120	74%		
		NE	121	74%		

**: significant at $\alpha=0.01$

Table 3 shows the remaining demographic characteristics of the academics. No significant difference was found between the groups in terms of gender, marital status, field of interest, COVID-19 vaccine status, having COVID-19, cohabitants having COVID-19 and loss of a relative due to COVID-19

(p>0.05). There is a significant difference between the groups in terms of academic experience. In accordance with the age statistics, it is seen that academics working in NE are more experienced (p<0.001). There is a significant difference between the groups in terms of the number of people they live with. Many academics working in TR tend to live with a partner and kid(s), whereas the majority of Europeans tend to live alone or with a partner (p<0.001).

Table 4: Comparisons of Means for COVID-19 Personal Threat Perception, Templer's Death Anxiety, and Revenge Shopping Scale Between TR and NE

Scale	Groups	Mean Difference $\hat{\mu}_{TR} - \hat{\mu}_{NE}$	95% CI for Difference	t	p-value
COVID-19 Personal Threat Perception Scale	TR	.190	(-.014, .395)	1.83	.068
	NE				
DAS+	TR	.163	(.030, .296)	2.4	.017*
	NE				
DAS–	TR	-.523	(-.667, -0.380)	-7.18	.000**
	NE				
Revenge Buying Behavior Scale					
Added purchasing power	TR	-1.038	(-1.263, -0.813)	-9.06	.000**
	NE				
Feel store environment	TR	-.312	(-.522, -.103)	-2.93	.004**
	NE				
Feel good factor	TR	-.870	(-1.100, -.639)	-7.41	.000**
	NE				
Desire satiation	TR	-1.336	(-1.585, -1.086)	-10.53	.000**
	NE				

**: significant at α=0.01

Table 4 presents mean differences and 95% confidence intervals for difference of means for groups. There is no significant difference in the mean score of COVID-19 Personal Threat Perception scale between TR and NE (*p*>0.05). The differences in death anxiety scales (DAS+ and DAS−) are both statistically significant. The average DAS+ score of NE is slightly less than TR, and the average DAS− score of NE is moderately greater than TR. When Revenge Shopping Scale is considered, mean differences are both statistically and practically significant. There is a significant difference between TR and NE in terms of added purchasing power, feeling good in the store environment, feeling good, and desire to shop (after the lockdown) on revenge shopping (*p*-value respectively; 0.000, 0.004, 0.000, 0.000). NE's average score is higher than that of TR.

Table 5: Grouping Information Based on Mean Templer's Death Anxiety Score by Sociodemographic Characteristics Using the Tukey Method with 95% Confidence

Sociodemographic Characteristics		Groups	n	DAS+		DAS−	
				Mean	Grouping*	Mean	Grouping*
Gender	Female	TR	81	3.37	A	2.67	B
		NE	83	3.11	B	3.19	A
	Male	TR	82	3.22	A B	2.71	B
		NE	81	3.13	A B	3.18	A
Marital Status	Married	TR	103	3.32	A	2.65	B
		NE	91	3.13	A	3.16	A
	Single	TR	60	3.25	A	2.77	B
		NE	73	3.11	A	3.22	A
Field	Mathematical, Physical, Life Sciences	TR	41	3.15	A B	2.71	B C
		NE	26	3.40	A B	3.16	A B
	Social Sciences	TR	90	3.34	A	2.73	C
		NE	102	3.02	B	3.11	A
	Medical Sciences	TR	32	3.34	A B	2.57	C
		NE	36	3.20	A B	3.43	A
Academic experience	1-5 years	TR	51	3.24	A	2.63	C
		NE	16	2.83	A	2.86	A B C
	6-10 years	TR	42	3.36	A	2.79	B C
		NE	29	3.03	A	3.26	A B
	11-15 years	TR	30	3.36	A	2.79	B C
		NE	45	3.28	A	3.11	A B
	≥16 years	TR	40	3.25	A	2.57	C
		NE	74	3.12	A	3.27	A
People you live with	Alone	TR	45	3.22	A B C	2.80	B C D
		NE	56	3.03	C	3.22	A
	With my partner	TR	19	3.58	A B	2.39	D
		NE	52	3.11	B C	3.23	A
	With my partner and kid(s)	TR	86	3.28	A B C	2.68	C D
		NE	35	2.99	C	3.02	A B C
	With my extended family	TR	13	3.22	A B C	2.81	A B C D
		NE	21	3.59	A	3.26	A B
Vaccinated against COVID-19	Yes	TR	153	3.30	A	2.66	B
		NE	135	3.13	A	3.18	A
	No	TR	10	3.21	A	3.13	A B

Sociodemographic Characteristics		Groups	n	DAS⁺		DAS⁻	
				Mean	Grouping*	Mean	Grouping*
Have you ever had Covid-19?		NE	29	3.05	A	3.21	A
	Yes	TR	53	3.31	A	2.69	B
		NE	61	3.18	A	3.12	A
	No	TR	110	3.29	A	2.69	B
		NE	103	3.09	A	3.23	A
Has anyone you live with ever had COVID-19?	Yes	TR	67	3.34	A	2.72	B
		NE	63	3.19	A B	3.10	A
	No	TR	96	3.26	A B	2.67	B
		NE	101	3.07	B	3.24	A
Losing a loved one due to COVID-19	Yes	TR	46	3.57	A	2.60	B
		NE	43	3.32	A B	3.24	A
	No	TR	117	3.19	B	2.73	B
		NE	121	3.05	B	3.17	A

* Grouping means that if they do not share a letter, they are significantly different.

Table 5 reveals mean Templer's Death Anxiety Scale of groups that were composed of country and other sociodemographic characteristics. Groups sharing a letter are not significantly different. Female academics working in TR tend to feel much death anxiety than those in NE as they classified in different groups in DAS⁺ scale as the differences in DAS⁻ scale statistically and practically significant. No statistically significant differences among the groups including gender, marital status, vaccination, having COVID-19 before, and loss of family member between countries.

The Death Anxiety Scale average value of NE is higher. In terms of marital status, there is a significant difference between the groups in single individuals, and the average value of the Death Anxiety Scale of single academics who work in NE is higher (p=0.005). There is a significant difference between TR and NE who have not had COVID-19 (p=0.014). Academics in NE score is higher. In addition, the death anxiety of academics in NE who lost a loved one (p=0.026) and who did not (p=0.028) due to COVID-19 is significantly higher than that of academics in TR. While there was no significant difference between the groups in terms of people living together (p>0.05), there was a significant difference between the groups in those who had the COVID-19 vaccine (p=0.001). The death anxiety average score of the participants from NE who have been vaccinated is higher than that of the participants from TR.

4.1. Testing the Hypotheses

To test the hypotheses, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was developed with the help of SPSS AMOS 25 as presented in Figure 2. SEM offers some advantages, and it is often used in the social sciences to understand complex relationships and test theoretical hypotheses (Kline, 2015). There are several reasons why we adopted SEM. It had the ability to evaluate the relationships between our multiple dependent and independent variables within the same model. It helped us the direct and indirect effects of our variables on another variable separately. Analyzes were carried out by considering the measurement errors in the model getting more reliable results. SEM also provided the opportunity to evaluate how well our proposed model fit the data which was critical for assessing the validity and reliability of our model. Therefore, we could evaluate multiple hypotheses within the same model.

Figure 2: Mediated SEM showing whether death anxiety mediates the effect of perceived COVID-19 threat on revenge buying with standardized estimates.
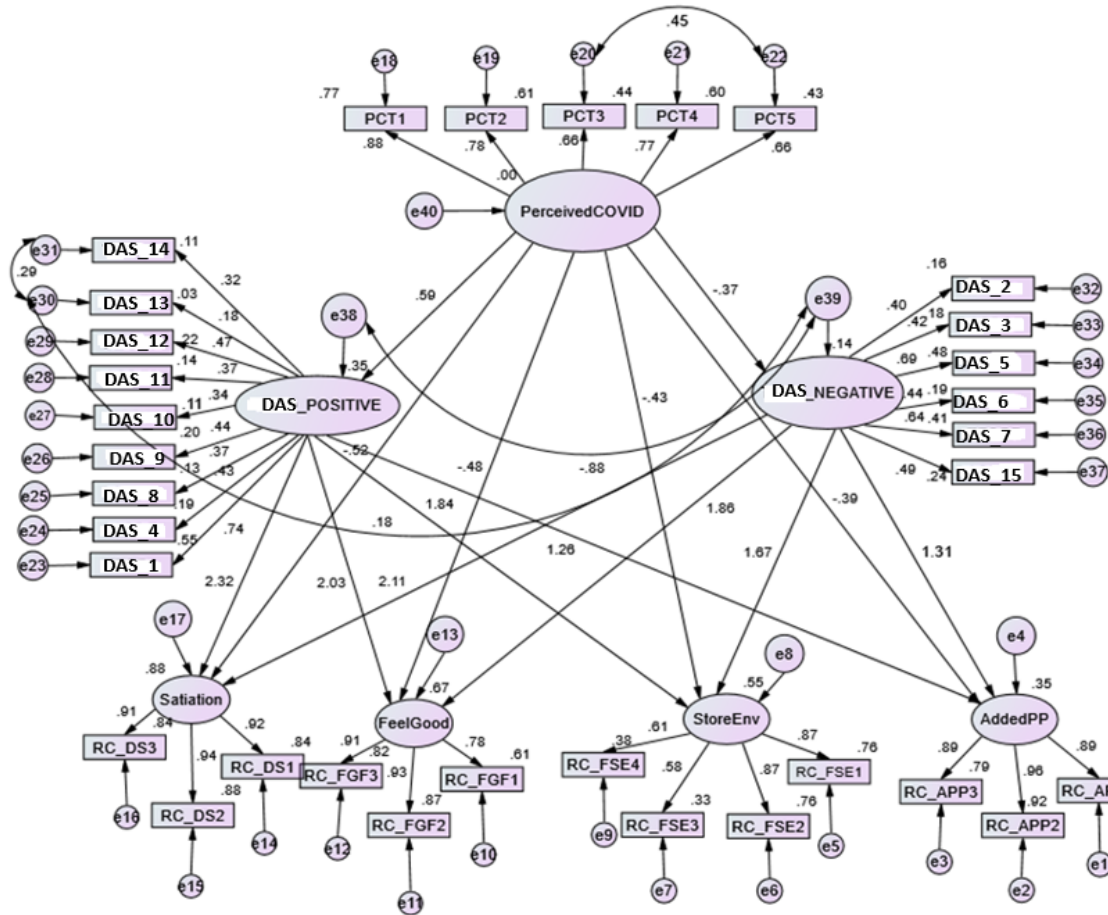

Table 6 presents the goodness of fit statistics for the model with different data sets. When the goodness of fit indices checked (χ^2/df $\leq$ 3, p-value < .05, .03 $\leq$ RMSE $\leq$ .08, CFI $\geq$ .90), the model can be classified as good or at least reasonable for all data sets (Nunnally, 1978).

Table 6: Goodness of Fit Statistics of SEM for Each Group

Goodness of fit indices	TR (n=163)	NE (n=164)	All (n=327)
χ^2	654.43	905.42	1064.01
df	477	477	477
χ^2/df	1.372	1.898	2.23
p-value	.000	.000	.000
RMSEA	.048	.074	.061
CFI	.919	.871	.898

Maximum likelihood estimates of the model coefficients are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Maximum Likelihood Estimates and Corresponding Significance Values of the Structural Model

Hypothesis	Measurement	Regression weights	p-value	Results
H1: There is a significant direct effect of perceived COVID-19 threat on death anxiety.	PCT→DAS$^+$	0.489	***	Supported
	PCT→DAS$^-$	-0.152	***	
H2: There is a significant direct effect of death anxiety on revenge buying.	DAS$^+$ → AddedPP	1.602	***	Supported
	DAS$^+$ → StoreEnv	2.293	***	
	DAS$^+$ → FeelGood	2.154	***	
	DAS$^+$ → Satiation	3.359	***	
	DAS$^-$ → AddedPP	3.374	***	
	DAS$^-$ → StoreEnv	4.208	***	
	DAS$^-$ → FeelGood	3.999	***	
	DAS$^-$ → Satiation	6.173	***	
H3: There is a significant direct effect of perceived COVID-19 threat on revenge buying.	PCT → AddedPP	-0.406	0.001**	Supported
	PCT → StoreEnv	-0.447	0.003**	
	PCT → FeelGood	-0.419	0.002**	
	PCT → Satiation	-0.626	0.002**	

***$p < 0.001$; **$p < 0.01$; *$p < 0.05$ indicate that the regression weights are significantly different than zero

The association between perceived COVID-19 threat and death anxiety was significant with $p < 0.001$, and at the same time, the relationship between death anxiety and all the revenge buying sub-scales was also significant with $p < 0.001$; thus, supporting H1 and H2. Besides, the relationship between perceived COVID-19 threat and revenge buying sub-scales was significant with $p < 0.01$, supporting H3.

Table 8 shows the direct, indirect, and total effects of perceived COVID-19 threat on the latent variables when all groups are combined.

Table 8: Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of Perceived COVID-19 Threat on the Other Latent Variables

	All Groups		
	Direct	**Indirect**	**Total**
DAS$^+$	.591		.591
DAS$^-$	-.372		-.372
Added purchasing power	-.386	.256	-.130
Feel store environment	-.433	.466	.033
Feel good factor	-.476	.505	.029
Desire satiation	-.523	.588	.065

Although the mediator effects were significant, the sign differences in direct and indirect effects for the sub-scales of revenge buying behavior requires questioning the existence of a second mediator other

than death anxiety (Zhao et al., 2010). Therefore, not enough evidence has been found to support H4 (Death anxiety mediates the effect of perceived COVID-19 threat on revenge buying).

To test the H5 (Academics in TR and NE show similar attitude towards H1-H4), the same model applied to the data sets of two groups. Then the equality of the parameters of each model was tested (*z*-test). Table 9 presents the z-scores for the hypothesis.

Table 9: Comparison for Difference of Model Parameters for Türkiye and Northern Europe

Hypothesis	Measurement	Regression weights				z-score for difference of parameters
		TR		NE		
		Estimate	p-value	Estimate	p-value	
H1: There is a significant direct effect of perceived COVID-19 threat on death anxiety.	PCT→DAS$^+$	.639	***	.291	***	2.887**
	PCT→DAS$^-$	-.068	.101	-.114	.016	.723
H2: There is a significant direct effect of death anxiety on revenge buying behavior.	DAS$^+$ → AddedPP	.645	.124	.979	***	-.693
	DAS$^+$ → StoreEnv	2.831	.001	1.462	***	1.479
	DAS$^+$ → FeelGood	2.841	.001	1.328	***	1.669
	DAS$^+$ → Satiation	3.807	***	1.909	***	1.598
	DAS$^-$ → AddedPP	3.137	.260	2.087	***	.371
	DAS$^-$ → StoreEnv	13.315	.128	3.026	***	1.172
	DAS$^-$ → FeelGood	13.682	.125	2.563	***	1.246
	DAS$^-$ → Satiation	18.138	.124	3.272	***	1.259
H3: There is a significant direct effect of perceived COVID-19 threat on revenge buying behavior.	PCT → AddedPP	-.233	.166	-.142	.189	-.458
	PCT → StoreEnv	-.624	.072	-.152	.236	-1.274
	PCT → FeelGood	-.654	.056	-.078	.486	-1.601
	PCT → Satiation	.639	***	-.080	.557	-1.824

** indicate that the difference of regression weights is significantly different than zero (p <0.01)

The claim stating that both models have equal parameters cannot be rejected (at α = 0.05) except the effect of perceived COVID-19 threat on death anxiety (z = 2.887, p = .004). Considering both model's parameters have (+) signs (TR = .639) and (NE = .291), we can conclude that the two populations show similar attitude towards H1-H4. Table 10 gives a summary of our research findings in a nutshell.

Table 10: Summary of All Hypotheses Testing Results

Hypotheses	Result
H1: There is a significant direct effect of perceived COVID-19 threat on death anxiety.	Supported
H2: There is a significant direct effect of death anxiety on revenge buying behavior.	Supported
H3: There is a significant direct effect of perceived COVID-19 threat on revenge buying behavior.	Supported
H4: Death anxiety mediates the effect of perceived COVID-19 threat on revenge buying behavior.	Not Supported
H5: Academics in TR and NE show similar attitude towards H1-H4.	Supported

5. Discussion

"Theory of Social Change" is a sociological approach that studies how societies and individuals change over time and what causes these changes (Coser, 1957). Our study was conducted with the academics working in TR and NE. Academics generally have an important role in social change. Because the attitudes of academics can be passed on to younger generations through education triggering a social change in the long run. Examining the attitudes and behaviors of academics on issues such as the threat perception of COVID-19 and death anxiety may be critical to understand how social change is experienced in society in the face of such global crises and how this change may take shape in the future.

"Socio-Ecological Model" posits that individual behavior is shaped by the interplay of multiple levels of influence: individual, interpersonal, organizational, community, and societal (Russell et al., 2022). We found a significant difference in terms of vaccination rates (p=0.001). In TR, 94% of academics are vaccinated against COVID-19, while in NE, the vaccination rate among academics is 82%. It's possible that structural or societal factors in TR versus NE (e.g., vaccine availability, governmental policies, academic institutional mandates) differ and thus influence the individual vaccination behaviors of academics.

We found a significant difference between groups in terms of added purchasing power, comfort in the store environment, overall satisfaction, and desire for revenge shopping after the lockdown. Academics in NE have higher scores in these aspects compared to academics in TR. "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs" posits that humans have a hierarchy of needs, from basic physiological needs to higher-level self-actualization needs (Gambrel and Cianci, 2003). If academics in NE countries have more of their basic needs met (e.g., due to higher purchasing power), they might be more focused on higher-level needs, such as feeling comfortable in store environments or seeking satisfaction through shopping. Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions might also provide insights into why there are behavioral differences between TR and NE. Since NE score higher in individualism (Hofstede, 2001), academics might prioritize personal comfort and individual shopping satisfaction more than those in TR.

Female academics working in TR tend to experience higher levels of death anxiety than those in NE, as they were classified into different groups on the DAS+ scale. "Social Role Theory" provides a framework to help understand the complexity of gender in the political sphere. It provides an explanation for how the powerful, pervasive, segregated social roles of men and women produce gender stereotypes and gendered behavior. Women in certain cultures, such as in TR, might be seen as the primary caregivers of the family. The potential threat of death could trigger anxieties if they feel that their absence would jeopardize the well-being of their families. In addition, male academics working in TR tend to experience higher levels of death anxiety than those in NE, as they were classified into different groups on the DAS+ scale.

There is a significant difference between TR and NE in terms of DAS- scale among the academics whose academic experience are 16 years or above. Academics in TR seem to have higher death anxiety than NE. One of the most applicable is Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, specifically the dimension of "uncertainty avoidance" (Hofstede, 2001). TR has a higher uncertainty avoidance than NE in our study, it could mean that academics in TR are generally more anxious about uncertain or unknown situations, including death. This could potentially explain the higher death anxiety scores among TR academics compared to NE.

We also found that academics who live alone in TR have higher death anxiety than NE counterparts. That can be explained through the lens of Terror Management Theory (TMT). Academics living alone in TR might be more closely tied to a cultural worldview that places significant emphasis on family, community, and social interconnectedness. In addition, the death anxiety of academics in TR who lost a loved one due to COVID-19 is significantly higher than that of academics in NE. This result can also be related to TMT. The loss of a loved one to a deadly pandemic can act as a powerful reminder of human vulnerability and the unpredictable nature of life. This reminder can trigger existential concerns, as individuals confront the reality of their own mortality.

6. Managerial Implications

Given the supported hypothesis that there is a significant direct effect of the perceived COVID-19 threat on death anxiety, marketers might consider some strategies as follows: Safety measures should be promoted in their marketing campaigns. It should be emphasized that the products or services align with COVID-19 safety measures. Therefore, consumers may tend to make purchases if they believe that doing so will not put their health at risk. Marketing messages should highlight the security and wellness. Strong online presence and e-commerce capabilities is beneficial. Empathetic language in the marketing communication can help build trust for the consumers. Considering the hypotheses suggesting there is a significant direct effect of perceived COVID-19 threat and death anxiety on revenge buying, it is crucial for marketers to understand the emotional drivers behind consumers' behaviors. Marketing messages may highlight how a product or service can enrich people's lives or create memorable experiences. Improving company's e-commerce platforms' user experience can also cater this trend. What's more, healthcare professionals could consider the following approaches: they can provide clear and accurate information about the risks of the pandemic, encourage people to seek help if they are coping with anxiety, depression, or high levels of revenge shopping behavior.

7. Limitations

While this study offers valuable contributions, it also presents some limitations. The findings cannot be generalized to all academics in TR and NE, nor can they be extended to the broader populations of the mentioned nations. The survey was conducted without considering the nationalities of the participants. Another limitation is the grouping of the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Norway under the label of "Northern Europe". This grouping was made because all three are highly developed European countries located in the north with notably high Human Development Index scores and life expectancies above eighty years of age (UNDP, 2021). There was also a time constraint; the results capture the sentiments of academics during the first quarter of 2022, which marked the normalization phase following the lifting of lockdowns in Europe. Despite these limitations, we believe that the data, gathered swiftly in such unique circumstances, holds significant value.

8. Conclusion and Directions for Future Research

This interdisciplinary suggests that there is a relationship between perceived COVID-19 threat, death anxiety, and revenge buying among academics in both TR and NE. As individuals perceive a greater threat from COVID-19 and have a greater death anxiety, they are more likely to engage in revenge shopping behavior. This has the potential to offer broader, in-depth and effective solutions. Therefore, many researchers and academics adopt this method to develop more holistic approaches to complex problems. Psycho-social support provided by professionals, informing the world public opinion clearly and consistently by health authorities, and explaining the seriousness of the disease in every aspect to everyone will help individuals overcome this pandemic and be more productive in their business life. Our findings show that pandemic also caused a dramatic change in consumer behavior. Academics in both TR and NE were found to be willing to pay more after the lockdowns which induced their feelings of isolation, stress, and anxiety due to limited social interactions and disruptions to normal routines.

Cultural norms, values, and coping mechanisms of different nations can be explored. Cultural factors influence the ways individuals process and manage their grief, existential concerns, and thoughts about mortality can be investigated. The role of social support networks and resilience among academics who lost loved ones to COVID-19 can be examined. Future research could expand the scope to include different occupational groups and examine the potential mediating role of relevant factors, such as loneliness, financial well-being, emotional well-being, or self-esteem in this relationship. Factors such as individual personality traits, cultural norms, socioeconomic status, and prior shopping behavior might interact with perceived threat and death anxiety to shape revenge buying tendencies.

Longitudinal studies can be conducted to track the changes in attitudes and behaviors of academics over time, particularly focusing on their perceptions of threats like COVID-19 and death anxiety. This would provide insights into the evolution of attitudes and their potential impact on social change. How attitudes of academics influence younger generations over time can be investigated. Examining this relationship can provide valuable insights into the long-term impact of educational practices. Collaborations with psychologists, anthropologists, and communication scholars to explore the complex interplay between

individual attitudes, societal responses, and potential social change might be helpful. Surveys can be conducted involving both academics and their students to assess the transmission of attitudes across generations. Analyzing how the perspectives of academics align or diverge with the perspectives of younger individuals, can shed a light on potential avenues for social change. Teaching methodologies and approaches used by academics in TR and NE in addressing topics related to COVID-19 and death anxiety can be compared investigating whether different pedagogical strategies lead to varied attitudes and behavioral changes among students.

A detailed socioeconomic analysis can be conducted to understand the disparities in purchasing power between the two groups. Investigate factors such as income levels, inflation rates, and cost of living that might impact purchasing power differently in NE and TR. How perceptions of economic security and stability differ between academics in NE and TR can be studied. The role of media, advertising, and cultural influences in shaping desires for revenge shopping can be investigated. How media portrayals of shopping, promotions, and marketing strategies contribute to academics' attitudes toward shopping can be explored.

Ethical approval (Number: 2021/231/26/10/2021) was obtained from Recep Tayyip Erdogan University, Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee, and this study was conducted in accordance with the Principles of the Declaration of Helsinki.

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Araştırma Makalesi

The Impact of Perceived COVID-19 Threat and Death Anxiety on Buying Behavior Among Academics: A Comparison Between Türkiye and Northern European Countries

Algılanan COVID-19 Tehdidi ve Ölüm Anksiyetesinin Akademisyenlerde Satın Alma Davranışına Etkisi: Türkiye-Kuzey Avrupa Ülkeleri Karşılaştırması

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Araştırmanın Problemi

Beklenmedik ve ani yaşam değişiklikleri kaçınılmaz olarak korku, anksiyete ve endişe duygularını yoğunlaştırmıştır. COVID-19, bireylerin güvenlik hissini derinden sarsan, belirsizlik yaratan ve tehdit algısı, anksiyete ve ölüm korkusunu artıran bir kriz olarak ortaya çıkmıştır (Kavakli ve ark., 2020). Artan bulaş riski, bireylerin COVID-19'un oluşturduğu tehdit ve ölüm hakkındaki endişelerini daha da güçlendirmiştir. İnsan psikolojisi, bireylerin risk ve tehdide tepkilerinin algılarına bağlı olduğunu göstermektedir (Lalot ve ark., 2021). Bu nedenle, COVID-19 pandemisinin tehdit seviyelerine ilişkin bireylerin algı düzeylerini anlamak, sağlıkla ilgili yaşadıkları stres faktörlerini ve bu durumlara karşı tutum ve davranışlarını anlamak açısından kritiktir (Wnuk ve ark., 2020).

Algılanan COVID-19 tehdidi ve ölüm korkusu, pandemi sırasında yaygın hale geldiğinde, hastalık, sosyal anksiyete, yağma, panik alışverişi, intikam alışverişi ve yabancı düşmanlığı gibi bireysel sorunlara ve olgulara yol açabilmektedir (Engelhard ve ark., 2015). Dahası, planlanmamış değişiklikler tüketicilerin alışveriş ve satın alma alışkanlıklarını doğrudan etkilemiştir (Yuen ve ark., 2020; Grant ve ark., 2007; Mansoor & Jalal, 2011). Kriz dönemlerinin ardından alışverişe olan ilginin artması ve normalden daha yüksek satın alma davranışı, "intikam alışverişi" olarak bilinen bir olgudur. Bu terim, küresel COVID-19 karantinaları sırasında pazarlama alanında popülerlik kazanmış, pandemiye ilişkin kısıtlamaların kaldırılmasının hemen ardından dünyanın çeşitli bölgelerinde gözlenen bir ekonomik olaydır (Hashmi, 2021).

Araştırmanın Amacı

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye ve Kuzey Avrupa'da (Birleşik Krallık, Hollanda ve Norveç) görev yapmakta olan akademisyenlerin "intikam satın alma davranışı" olarak bilinen bir davranış üzerindeki iki faktörün (COVİD-19'un algılanan tehdidi ve ölüm anksiyetesi) etkisini incelemektir. Çalışma, çeşitli kültürel ve sosyoekonomik bağlamlardaki akademisyenlerin COVID-19 tehdidini nasıl algıladığını ve ölüm korkusunun intikam satın alma davranışını nasıl etkilediği hakkında içgörüler sunmaktadır. COVID-19 pandemisi, milyonlarca insanın izolasyonla karşı karşıya kalmasına neden olmuştur. Bu izolasyona maruz kalan meslek gruplarından biri olan akademisyenler, üniversitelerdeki alışılmış sosyal ortamlarını sürdürme imkanı olmadan, uzaktan çalışma düzenlemelerine uyum sağlamaya gayret

etmişlerdir. İş yöntemlerinde ve yaşam tarzlarındaki bu dramatik değişiklikler, onların üzerinde fiziksel ve psikososyal etkiler yaratmıştır (Holmes ve ark., 2020; Sercemeli ve Kurnaz, 2020).

Akademisyenlerin bu çalışmada katılımcı olarak seçilmesinin bazı nedenleri vardır. Akademisyenler, topluma birçok konuda öncülük ederler. Akademisyenler ayrıca, yayın üretme stresi ve ağır iş yükleri gibi mesleklerine özgü faktörlerle karşı karşıyadır. Bu stres faktörleri, pandeminin neden olduğu belirsizlikler ve kesintilerle birleştiğinde, tehdit, ansiyete ve korku hislerini artırabilir ve intikam alışverişi gibi farklı başa çıkma mekanizmalarına yol açabilir. Ayrıca, akademisyenler genellikle toplum içinde etkili roller üstlenir; görüşleri şekillendirme ve politika kararlarını etkileme konusunda katkıda bulunurlar. Tehditlere karşı tepkilerini ve tüketim davranışlarına katılımlarını anlayarak, daha geniş toplumsal desenlere dair değerli içgörüler elde edilebilir. Bu çalışma, Türkiye ve Kuzey Avrupa ülkelerindeki akademisyenlerin intikam alışveriş davranışı üzerindeki algılanan COVID-19 tehdidinin ve ölüm korkusunun potansiyel etkisini inceleyerek literatüre katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamıştır. Bahsedilen bölgelerdeki akademisyenlerin deneyimlerini karşılaştırarak, bu çalışma potansiyel kültürlerarası farklılıklar ve benzerlikler hakkında içgörüler sunmayı hedeflemiştir. Ölüm korkusu çeşitli bağlamlarda incelenmiş olmasına rağmen, akademisyenler tarafından yaşanan ölüm korkusuna odaklanan özel bir araştırma boşluğu bulunmaktadır. Bildiğimiz kadarıyla bu çalışma, akademisyenlerin COVID-19 tehdidinin ve ölüm korkusunun algılanması ve intikam alışveriş davranışları arasındaki bağlantıyı inceleyen ilk çalışmadır.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi

Literatür doğrultusunda 5 adet hipotez oluşturulmuştur:

H1: Algılanan COVİD-19 tehdidinin, ölüm anksiyetesi üzerinde anlamlı ve doğrudan pozitif bir etkisi bulunmaktadır.

H2: Ölüm anksiyetesinin, intikam alışverişi üzerinde anlamlı ve doğrudan pozitif bir etkisi bulunmaktadır.

H3: Algılanan COVİD-19 tehdidinin, intikam alışverişi üzerinde anlamlı ve doğrudan pozitif bir etkisi bulunmaktadır.

H4: Ölüm anksiyetesinin; algılanan COVİD-19 tehdidinin, intikam alışverişi üzerindeki anlamlı ve doğrudan pozitif etkisinde aracılık rolü bulunmaktadır.

H5: Türkiye'de ve Kuzey Avrupa'da çalışan akademisyenler, H1-H4'e karşı benzer tutumlar sergilemektedir.

Veriler, "Algılanan COVID-19 Tehdidi Ölçeği" (PCT) (Wnuk ve ark., 2020) "Templer'ın Ölüm Anksiyetesi Ölçeği" (DAS) (Templer, 1970) ve "İntikam Alışveriş Davranışı Ölçeği" (Malhotra, 2021) olmak üzere üç ölçek kullanılarak kolayda örnekleme yöntemi ile çevrimiçi ortamda toplanmıştır. Bu çalışmanın örneklemini 164'ü Kuzey Avrupa'dan ve 163'ü Türkiye'den olmak üzere toplam 327 akademisyen oluşturmaktadır. Anket formunun linki Türkçe olarak Google formlar aracılığıyla hazırlanarak, kolayda örnekleme yöntemiyle Türkiye'deki akademisyenlerle paylaşılmıştır. Link, Birleşik Krallık, Hollanda ve Norveç'te çalışan akademisyenlere İngilizce olarak e-posta yoluyla gönderilmiştir. Güvenilirlik analizlerinden sonra yapısal eşitlik modellemesi ile hipotezler test edilmiştir.

Elde Edilen Sonuçlar

"Sosyal Değişim Teorisi", toplumların ve bireylerin zaman içinde nasıl değiştiğini ve bu değişimlerin nedenlerini inceleyen sosyolojik bir yaklaşımdır (Coser, 1957). Çalışmamız Türkiye (TR) ve Kuzey Avrupa'da (KA) çalışan akademisyenlerle yapılmıştır. Genel olarak akademisyenler, toplumsal değişimde önemli bir role sahiptir. Çünkü akademisyenlerin tutumları, eğitim yoluyla genç nesillere geçebilir ve uzun vadede toplumsal bir değişimin tetikleyicisi olabilir. Akademisyenlerin COVID-19 tehdit algısı ve ölüm kaygısı gibi konulardaki tutum ve davranışlarını incelemek, böyle küresel krizler karşısında toplumda nasıl bir sosyal değişimin deneyimlendiğini anlamak için kritik olabilir ve bu değişimin gelecekte nasıl şekillenebileceğine dair ipuçları sunabilir.

Kısıtlamalar sonrası eklenen alım gücü, mağaza ortamında rahatlık, genel memnuniyet ve kısıtlama sonrası intikam alışverişi isteği açısından gruplar arasında anlamlı bir fark tespit edilmiştir. KA'daki akademisyenler, bu yönlerde daha yüksek puanlar elde etmişlerdir. "Maslow'un İhtiyaçlar Hiyerarşisi", insanların temel fizyolojik ihtiyaçlardan daha yüksek seviye öz-gerçekleşme ihtiyaçlarına kadar değişen bir ihtiyaç hiyerarşisine sahip olduğunu öne sürmektedir (Gambrel ve Cianci, 2003). KA'daki akademisyenler, temel ihtiyaçlarının daha fazla karşılandığı düşünüldüğünde (örneğin daha yüksek alım gücü nedeniyle), mağaza ortamlarında rahat hissetme veya alışveriş yaparak memnuniyet arayışını daha fazla önemseyebilirler. Geert Hofstede'in kültürel boyutları da TR ve KA arasındaki davranış farklılıklarını açıklamada ipuçları sunabilir. Çünkü KA ülkelerinde bireyselcilik daha ön plandadır (Hofstede, 2001), dolayısıyla akademisyenler kişisel konforu ve bireysel alışveriş memnuniyetini TR'dekilere göre daha fazla önemseyebilirler.

TR'de çalışan kadın akademisyenlerin, KA'dekilere göre daha yüksek ölüm kaygısı seviyeleri yaşadığı gözlemlenmiştir. "Toplumsal Rol Teorisi", kadınların ve erkeklerin güçlü, yaygın ve ayrımcı toplumsal rollerinin cinsiyet stereotipleri ve cinsiyete dayalı davranışları nasıl ürettiğini açıklar. Özellikle TR gibi belirli kültürlerdeki kadınlar, ailede başlıca bakıcı olarak görülebilirler. Ölümün potansiyel tehdidi, ailelerinin refahını tehlikeye atmaktan endişe duyarlarsa kaygıları tetikleyebilir. Ek olarak, TR'de çalışan erkek akademisyenlerin de, DAS+ ölçeğinde farklı gruplara ayrıldıkları için KA'dekilere göre daha yüksek ölüm kaygısı seviyeleri yaşadığı görülmüştür.

COVID-19 tehdidinin ölüm kaygısı üzerinde önemli ve doğrudan bir etkisi olduğu düşünülürse, pazarlamacılar aşağıdaki stratejileri göz önünde bulundurabilir: Mal ve hizmetlerin COVID-19 güvenlik önlemleriyle uyumlu olduğu vurgulanmalıdır. Bu şekilde, tüketiciler sağlıklarını riske atmamayı düşündüklerinde satın alma eğiliminde olabilirler. Pazarlama mesajları güvenlik ve sağlık vurgusu yapmalıdır. Güçlü bir online varlık ve e-ticaret yetenekleri faydalı olabilir. Pazarlama iletişiminde empatik bir dil kullanmak, tüketiciler arasında güven oluşturmada yardımcı olabilir. Algılanan COVID-19 tehdidi ve ölüm kaygısı ile intikam alışverişi arasında doğrudan ve önemli bir etki olduğunu öne süren hipotezleri göz önünde bulundurarak, pazarlamacılar tüketicilerin davranışlarının ardındaki duygusal tetikleyicileri anlamak için önem taşır. Pazarlama mesajları, bir ürünün veya hizmetin insanların yaşamlarını zenginleştirebileceğini veya unutulmaz deneyimler yaratabileceğini vurgulayabilir. Şirketin e-ticaret platformlarının kullanıcı deneyimini iyileştirmek de bu trendi karşılayabilir. Dahası, sağlık profesyonelleri şu yaklaşımları değerlendirebilir: Pandeminin riskleri konusunda açık ve doğru bilgi sağlayabilirler, anksiyete, depresyon veya yüksek düzeyde intikam alışverişi davranışıyla başa çıkmak isteyen insanları yardım aramaya teşvik edebilirler.

Bu çalışma önemli katkılar sunsa da, bazı sınırlamaları da içermektedir. Bulgular, TR ve KA'daki tüm akademisyenlere genelleştirilemeyeceği gibi, bahsedilen ülkelerin daha geniş nüfuslarına da genelleştirilemez. Anket, katılımcıların uyruğu dikkate alınmadan yapılmıştır. Bir başka sınırlama ise Birleşik Krallık, Hollanda ve Norveç'in "Kuzey Avrupa" olarak adlandırılmasıdır. Bu gruplandırma, üç ülkenin de kuzeyde yer alan, yüksek İnsani Gelişme Endeksi skorları ve 80 yaşın üzerinde yaşam beklentileri olan gelişmiş Avrupa ülkeleri olmaları (UNDP, 2021) nedeniyle yapılmıştır.. Ayrıca bir zaman sınırlaması bulunmaktadır; sonuçlar 2022'nin ilk çeyreğinde yapılan bir ankette, sadece ankete katılan akademisyenlerin duygularını yansıtmaktadır, bu dönem kısıtlamaların kaldırılmasını takip eden normalleşme dönemini işaret etmektedir. Bu sınırlamalara rağmen, böylesine benzersiz koşullarda hızla toplanan verilerin önemli bir değer taşıdığına inanmaktayız.

H4 hariç bütün hipotezler kabul edilmiştir. Bu disiplinlerarası çalışmada, algılanan COVID-19 tehdidi, ölüm kaygısı ve intikam alışverişi arasında ilişki olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Gelecek çalışmalarda, akademisyenler ve öğrencilerini içeren anketler, tutumların nesiller arasındaki aktarımını değerlendirmek için yapılabilir. Medyanın, reklamın ve kültürel etkilerin intikam alışverişi isteğini şekillendirmedeki rolü araştırılabilir. Gelecekteki araştırmalar, kapsamı farklı meslek gruplarını içerecek şekilde genişletebilir ve bu ilişkide yalnızlık, finansal refah, duygusal refah veya özsaygı gibi ilgili faktörlerin potansiyel aracılık rolünü inceleyebilir. Bireysel kişilik özellikleri, kültürel normlar, sosyoekonomik durum ve önceki alışveriş davranışları gibi faktörler, algılanan tehdit ve ölüm kaygısı ile etkileşime girerek satın alma davranışlarını nasıl etkilediği incelenebilir.