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ADVANCES IN GLOBAL SERVICES AND RETAIL MANAGEMENT

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The Effect of Superstitions on Consumer Luck, Horoscope and Evil Eye-Oriented Purchasing Behavior: A Study in Turkey

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Abstract

Superstitions have taken an important place in people's lives since the past. Despite the increase in the educational level of people, superstitions still exist. Superstitions, which have been researched especially by studies in the field of psychology, have not been adequately studied in the field of marketing. However, it is known that superstitions have an effect on the behavior of consumers. In this context, the aim of the research is to determine the effect of the superstitions of consumers on their chance-oriented, horoscope-oriented and evil-eye-oriented purchasing behaviors. Data were collected through an online questionnaire due to the pandemic. The survey form was prepared on Google Forms and the survey link was delivered to consumers through social media channels. During the data collection process, 550 consumers participated in the survey and SPSS and AMOS programs were used in the analysis of the data obtained. As a result of the analysis, all of the research hypotheses were supported. Therefore, it has been determined that the superstitions of consumers have positive and significant effects on their luck-oriented, horoscope-oriented and evil-eye-oriented purchasing behaviors.

Keywords: superstition, consumer behavior, luck, horoscope, evil eye

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Introduction

One of the areas that marketing science deals with is consumer behavior. The determination of consumer behavior has been an issue of concern from the past to the present, and both practical and academic studies have been done and continue to be done. There are many factors such as personal (age, gender), socio-cultural (family, status) and psychological factors (motivation, attitude, belief) that affect consumer behaviour. All of these factors are effective in the purchasing decision process of consumers, and businesses should pay attention to these factors when marketing their products and services.

Among these factors, belief is one of the factors that should be emphasized since it has an effect on consumer behavior. The concept of belief refers to a person's devotion to any religion and thought, the feeling of trust in someone, anything to be believed (Mehmedoğlu, 2013). Another important factor that can be evaluated within the concept of belief, which has not been studied much in the marketing literature but has an effect on consumer behavior, is superstitions. Superstition is the unreasonable belief that an object, behavior or situation affects the outcome

even though it is not related to the realization of an event (Damisch, Stoberock & Mussweiler, 2010). Superstitions, vary from society to society, include situations such as number, color, day, and behavior that are believed to bring luck and bad luck, and are considered important in people's social life (Farooq & Kayani, 2012). Despite the development of technology and education compared to past societies, interest in superstitions still continues (O'Sullivan, 2010). While the concept of superstition is generally considered important in the field of psychology, it is stated that this issue has not been studied sufficiently in terms of consumer behavior (Kramer & Block, 2008; Fluke et al., 2014). Purchasing lottery tickets, license plates, hotel room numbers within the frame of auspicious numbers, not passing under the stairs while walking on the road, performing rituals believed to bring luck while watching a football match, taking exams with the same pen all the time and believing in horoscopes can be given as an example of superstitions (Vaidyanathan & Aggarwal, 2008; Carlson et al., 2009). Although superstition-oriented behaviors are generally used in the field of sports, they also have an impact on consumer behavior. Superstitions do not change culturally, but may differ from country to country. In studies on whether superstitions are taken into account by businesses, it has been determined that numbers that bring good luck are generally used in terms of marketing. For example, in China, the number 8 is believed to bring luck and the number 4 to bring bad luck. For this reason, prices ending with the number 8 are common, while prices ending with the number 4 are not common (Simmons & Schindler, 2003). In addition, some businesses use numbers that will attract consumers' attention while using numbers in their brands for brand management. and in this way, they are more likely to be preferred by consumers (Pavia & Costa, 1993). The belief that the number 13 is unlucky in the United States of America (USA) also affects consumer behavior (Kramer & Block, 2008).

The use of superstitions in marketing science emerges as consumers' purchasing behavior in line with their superstitions or marketing superstitious sacred places (Özgülven, 2012). Also, superstitions is positively associated with luck-oriented purchases (Block & Kramer, 2009; Peng et al., 2012). It is known that superstitions affect purchasing behavior in many Asian countries. For example, because of the lucky number 8 in China, consumers who want to buy property have bought properties on the streets that start or end with 8. (Rehm et al., 2018). It has been determined that automobile sales in Taiwan decreased in the August-September period and the reason for this was the belief that it was accepted as the "ghost moon", which is believed to make human life difficult (Simmons & Schindler, 2003). There are many superstitions in Turkey, one of which is the belief that some stones and objects bring luck. For example, the belief that copper bracelet heals rheumatism increased the bracelet sales (Tanyu, 1976). Similarly, there is the belief that evil eye talisman protect people from the evil eye and amulets protect people from evil. When the studies investigating the relationship between superstitions and consumer behavior and purchasing behavior are examined, it is determined that consumers buy products that contain colors and numbers that they believe bring luck (Kramer & Block, 2007; Hamerman & Johar, 2013), believe that shopping on certain days and times brings luck (Balakrishnan, 2017), consider the numbers they believe bring luck while playing the lottery (Jiang et al., 2009), take into account their beliefs about the figures in their brand logos (Wang et al., 2012) and intend to pay more for products and services that are compatible with their superstitions (Chau et al., 2001; Yang, 2011).

Apart from luck, subjects such as the horoscope and astrology are also considered superstitions. When subjects such as astrology are dealt with in terms of religion, they are interpreted as

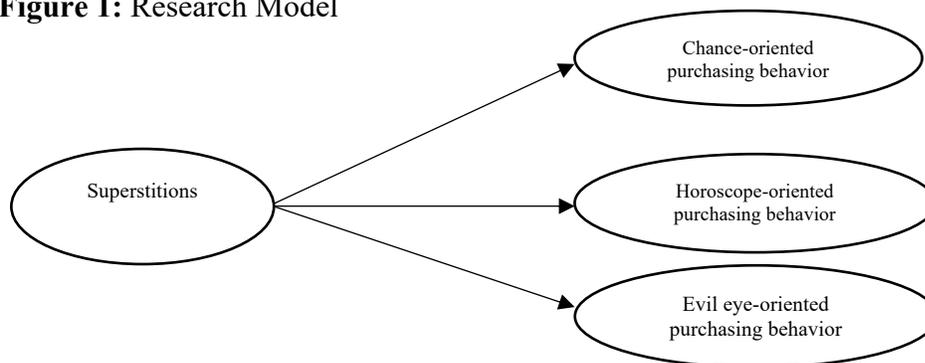
superstitious and their validity is not accepted. The belief about determining a person's character or destiny according to the time of birth or the state of the stars is expressed as superstition (Vyse, 1997; cited in Wang et al., 2012). In the researches conducted in 2003 and 2004, it was determined that more than 30% of the respondents believed in astrology. Financial enterprises in the USA offer stocks to their investors according to their astrological characteristics (Carlson, Mowen & Fang, 2009). Another common superstition is the evil eye belief. In Turkish society, there is a belief that blue-eyed people are hex. For this reason, blue beads are attached to newborn babies against the evil eye. There is a belief that by wearing blue beads, you are protected from negative energy from blue-eyed people. This blue bead, referred to as an evil eye talisman, is also used by adults on belts and keychains. In addition, people hang evil eye talisman on their walls of their homes and workplaces against the evil eye (Çıblak, 2004). Although superstition associated with concepts such as luck, astrology and the evil eye has such an important place in the lives of consumers, it is seen that purchasing behavior made within the framework of superstitions has not been investigated. In this context, the main purpose of the research is to examine whether the superstition of consumers has an effect on their luck-oriented, horoscope-oriented and evil-eye-oriented purchasing behaviours.

Research Methodology

Research Model and Hypothesis

Superstitions have a great importance on the behavior of consumers. However, it is seen that superstition, which is mostly studied in the field of psychology, has not been studied sufficiently, although it has an effect on consumer behavior. It is stated that superstitions such as luck, horoscope and evil eye are particularly influential on the behavior of consumers. In this context, the aim of the research is to examine whether the superstition of consumers has an effect on the luck-oriented, horoscope-oriented and evil-eye-oriented purchasing behaviors. Therefore, as a result of the examination of the literature on superstitions, the following research model and research hypotheses have been developed.

Figure 1: Research Model



- **H1:** Superstition has a significant positive effect on Chance-oriented purchasing behavior.
- **H2:** Superstition has a significant positive effect on Horoscope-oriented purchasing behavior.

- **H3:** Superstition has a significant positive effect on Evil eye-oriented purchasing behavior.

Research Method

The population of the study consisted of all consumers living in Turkey. Because it is difficult to reach the entire population due to cost, time and the covid-19 pandemic, the convenience sampling method was used, in which every consumer in the universe could be included in the sampling. Data were collected via the internet, as it was risky to conduct face-to-face surveys due to the pandemic. It is recommended to use convenience sampling method in studies where data are collected via internet (Altunışık et al., 2005). A questionnaire form was created as a result of the review of the literature on the research subject. The questionnaire form was applied as a pretest on 26 consumers in order to test it in terms of content and meaning, and the questionnaire form was updated with the corrections made after the pretest. Later, because the data will be collected online, the questionnaire was transferred to Google Forms. The link of the research questionnaire prepared on Google Forms was shared through social media channels. The survey link was activated between 03.03.2021-23.03.2021 and it was determined that 550 participants participated in the survey during this period. When the data were examined, it was determined that there was a problem in the data of 7 participants and the data of 543 participants were included in the analysis. In determining the sample size, MacCallum et al. (2011) stated that a sample of 4 times the total expressions in the questionnaire was sufficient, whereas Yazıcıoğlu & Erdoğan (2004) stated that 384 was sufficient for a sample size of 100 million with a sampling error of 0.05. Therefore, it is seen that the number of samples reached in the present study is sufficient. Factor, validity, reliability and hypothesis testing analyzes were performed by using SPSS and AMOS programs in the analysis of the accepted data.

Research Scales

In order to measure the variables used in the study, the literature was searched and the scales suitable for the study were tried to be determined. Therefore, scales that are most suitable for the variables were preferred. The questionnaire form prepared within the scope of the research consists of 3 parts. In the first part, there are descriptive questions to determine the superstitions of the participants, while in the second part there are questions to determine the demographic characteristics of the participants. In the last part of the questionnaire form, there are scale items suitable for the 5-point Likert type scale (Strongly Disagree-Strongly Agree) to measure the independent and dependent variables in the research model. Among the scales used in the study, the superstition scale was measured with 7 items (Carlson et al., 2009), luck-oriented purchasing behavior with 4 items, horoscope-oriented purchasing behavior with 3 items, and luck-oriented purchasing behavior with 4 items (Aghayeva, 2019).

Analysis and Findings

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Frequency analysis was performed in SPSS 21 program with the data obtained in order to determine the demographic characteristics and opinions of the participants about superstitions. The demographic characteristics and superstition views of the participants included in the study

were tried to be determined with the frequency analysis performed. The frequency values for the results are included in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

		n	%			n	%
Gender	Female	345	63,5	Marital Status	Married	180	33,1
	Male	198	36,5		Single	363	66,9
	Total	543	100		Total	543	100
Age	17 years and below	75	13,8	Income	2.500 TL and below	149	27,4
	18-28	313	57,6		2.501 TL-5.000 TL	196	36,1
	29-39	78	14,4		5.001 TL-7.500 TL	101	18,6
	40-50	60	11		7.501 TL-10.000 TL	53	9,8
	51-61	14	2,6		10001 TL and above	44	8,1
	62 years and above	3	0,6		Total	543	100
	Total	543	100		Occupation	State sector	100
Educational Level	Primary	76	14	Private sector		74	13,6
	Secondary	225	41,4	Self-employment		38	7,0
	Associate	103	19	Housewife		54	9,9
	Bachelor	118	21,7	Student		187	34,4
	Postgraduate	14	2,6	Unemployed		51	9,4
	Doctorate	7	1,3	Retired		14	2,6
	Total	543	100	Other		25	4,6
				Total	543	100	

When the table is examined, it is seen that the majority of the participants are female, single, and between the ages of 18-28. When examined in terms of educational status, it is observed that the education level of the majority of the participants is secondary and undergraduate; it is seen that they are in the 2501 TL-5000 TL band in terms of family income and that the majority of them are students in terms of occupation. In addition, the opinions of the participants about superstitions were also investigated. As a result of the research, it was determined that %40.5 of the participants had a superstition; % 91.7 of the participants believed in fate, %30.8 of the participants believed in astrology, %32 of the participants had things that they believed brought them luck or bad luck, %27.1 of the participants believed that the evil eye talisman was good, %13.4 of the participants believed statements such as "Four-leaf clover brings luck", "Mirror brings bad luck to the person who breaks it; %22.5 of the participants had totems such as always taking the exams with the same pen and wearing their uniform while watching the match of the held team.

Factor, Reliability and Validity Analysis

Factor analysis is performed to determine the factor structures of the scales used in the research. However, before performing factor analysis, KMO and Bartlett Sphericity tests should be performed to determine whether factor analysis will be performed or not. The KMO test is used to test whether the research sample is sufficient, and the Bartlett test is used to test whether the sample is suitable for factor analysis. For the adequacy of the sample, the KMO test value should be more than 0.60 (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2017), and the Bartlett test value for factor analysis should be lower than 0.05 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996: 674). As a result of the tests, KMO value of the superstition scale was 0.877, Bartlett value was 1585.002 and $p < 0.000$; KMO value of luck-oriented purchasing behavior scale is 0.752, Bartlett value is 819.516 and $p < 0.000$; KMO value of the horoscope-oriented purchasing behavior scale is 0.744, Bartlett value is 1183.103 and p

<0.000; KMO value of the evil eye-oriented purchasing behavior scale was 0.815, Bartlett value was 1313.570 and $p < 0.000$. When looking at the obtained values, it is seen that the sample is suitable for factor analysis. Therefore, factor analysis, reliability and validity analysis were performed on the research scales. According to Turanlı et al. (2012), in a factor analysis, the factor load values of the scales should be 0.50 and above (Turanlı et al., 2012). Cronbach Alpha is used for reliability analysis. Cronbach Alpha coefficient values should be higher than 0.70 in order to say that the scales used in the research are reliable (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2017). In addition, the Composite Reliability (CR) value is used to measure the reliability of the scales, and the Convergence Validity (AVE) value is used to measure the validity of the scales. The values obtained as a result of the analysis are given in the table below.

Table 2: Factor, Reliability and Validity Analysis Results

Variables	Item	Factor Load	Variance Percentage	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE
Superstition	SU1	0,790	55,306	0,857	0,896	0,553
	SU2	0,690				
	SU3	0,698				
	SU4	0,718				
	SU5	0,801				
	SU6	0,829				
	SU7	0,663				
Chance-Oriented Purchasing Behavior	CO1	0,832	65,001	0,811	0,881	0,650
	CO2	0,859				
	CO3	0,680				
	CO4	0,842				
Horoscope-Oriented Purchasing	HO1	0,899	85,479	0,915	0,946	0,854
	HO2	0,936				
	HO3	0,937				
Evil Eye-Oriented Purchasing	EO1	0,894	75,952	0,891	0,927	0,759
	EO2	0,882				
	EO3	0,881				
	EO4	0,827				

When the table is examined, it is seen that all item factor loads of the research scales are above 0.50, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient value of the research scales is above 0.70, the AVE values are above 0.50, and the CR value is above 0.70. After determining the factor structures of the research and testing their reliability and validity, the Structural Equation Model was used to test the hypotheses. The main purpose of the Structural Equation Model is to analyze the relationships between independent and dependent variables (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2017). Fit index values are used to determine the fit of the research model. The following table shows the good and accepted fit index values that should be in a model and the fit index values of the model obtained after the Structural Equation Model analysis of the research model.

Model fit values show whether the research model is structurally appropriate or not. As seen in the table, some of the fit indices were not within the acceptable fit values, covariance connections were established in line with the proposed modifications and acceptable fit indices were reached. Therefore, it is seen that the obtained model fit values are within the acceptable range. As a result of the structural equation analysis, it was determined that all of the research hypotheses were significant. The obtained hypothesis test results are given in the following Table 4.

Table 3: Structural Equation Model Results

Fit Indices	Good Fit Values	Acceptable Fit Values	Model Value
X2	P > 0,05		474,810
df	-		126
X2/df	< 3	3<(x2/df)<5	3,768
GFI	>0,95	>0,90	0,904
CFI	>0,95	>0,90	0,946
RMSA	<0,05	<0,08	0,071
NFI	>0,95	>0,90	0,925
RFI	>0,95	>0,90	0,913
IFI	>0,95	>0,90	0,946
TLI	>0,95	>0,90	0,934

Table 4: Hypothesis Results

	Hypotheses	R ²	β	S.E.	P	Result
H1	B \bar{I} →SS	0,883	0,940	,076	*	Accepted
H2	B \bar{I} →BS	0,700	0,837	,068	*	Accepted
H3	B \bar{I} →NS	0,805	0,897	,069	*	Accepted

*p < 0,01, **p < 0,05, ***p < 0,10

As seen in table, that all of the research hypotheses are statistically significant at the p < 0.01 significance level. When the results of the hypothesis test in the table are interpreted, according to the H1 hypothesis, it is found that the superstitions of consumers have a positive effect of %94 on chance-oriented purchasing behavior at the significance level of p < 0.01. According to the H2 hypothesis, it is found that the superstition of consumers has a positive effect of %83 on the horoscope-oriented purchasing behavior at the significance level of p < 0.01. According to the H3 hypothesis, it is found that the superstitions of consumers have a positive effect of %89 on evil-eye-oriented purchasing behavior at the level of significance of p < 0.01.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Superstitions of consumers occupy an important place in their lives and these beliefs can have an impact on attitudes, behaviors and consumption habits. Despite the increase in the education level of consumers today, superstitions are still considered important. Especially superstitions researched in the field of psychology have not received the necessary attention in consumer behavior. In this context, the aim of the research is to examine the effect of superstitions, which occupy an important place in the lives of consumers, on lucky-oriented, horoscope-oriented and evil-eye-oriented purchasing behavior. As a result of the analysis of the data collected with the prepared questionnaire, firstly, approximately half of the participants (40.5%) have superstitions, %30.8 of the participants believed in astrology, 32% of the participants have things that they believed brought them luck or bad luck and %27.1 of the participants believed that the evil eye talisman was good.

When the results of the hypothesis test of the study were evaluated, it was determined that according to the H1 hypothesis, the superstitions of consumers had a positive significant effect on their luck-oriented purchasing behavior, which is expressed as purchasing lucky things that bring them luck. Therefore, the more superstitions consumers have, the more they give importance to luck. For this reason, chance-oriented purchasing behaviors are also increasing. For example, consumers prefer lucky numbers that they believe bring luck in the products they will buy, and shop on days they believe to be lucky; on the contrary, they do not prefer the numbers they

consider unlucky and do not shop on the days when they see it as unlucky. Many previous studies (Block & Kramer, 2009; Peng et al., 2012) determined that there is a positive relationship between superstition and chance-oriented purchasing behavior. As an example, consumers in China see the number 8 as lucky and therefore prefer streets that start or end with 8 in property purchases and consumers in Taiwan do not shop during the period they call the ghost month (Simmons & Schindler, 2003; Rehm et al., 2018). Therefore, the H1 hypothesis was supported at a significance level of $p < 0.01$, and this result has parallels with the literature. According to the H2 hypothesis of the study, it was determined that the superstitions of consumers have a positive significant effect on their sign-oriented purchasing behavior, which is expressed as purchasing according to the characteristics of their horoscope. Consumers can buy products with the symbols of their horoscopes or the lucky colors of their horoscopes. Therefore, the more the superstitions of the consumers increase, the more their horoscope-oriented purchasing behaviors increase. In many previous studies (Mitchell & Tate, 1998; Kwak et al., 2000), it has been stated that a person's date of birth has an effect on purchasing behavior. Carlson et al. (2009) stated that financial businesses in the USA offer stocks according to the astrological characteristics of their investors. Therefore, it can be said that the H2 hypothesis, which is supported at a significance level of $p < 0.01$, supports the literature. According to the H3 hypothesis, which is the last hypothesis of the study, it was determined that there is a significant positive effect on the evil eye-oriented purchasing behaviors which is expressed as the look that is believed to cause trouble. Consumers who believe in evil eye can buy products that they believe protect themselves. In general, there is a blue evil eye talisman believed to protect people from the evil eye, and consumers are purchasing items with evil eye talisman figures. Therefore, the more the superstitions of the consumers, the more the evil-eye-oriented purchasing behaviors. Çıblak (2004) stated that evil eye talisman are used on belts and keychains and people buy these products. In addition, people hang evil eye beads in their homes and workplaces against to evil eye. Therefore, the H3 hypothesis, which was supported at a significance level of $p < 0.01$, was also supported.

When the results of the research are evaluated in general, it has been determined that the superstitions of consumers have an important effect on their purchasing behavior. In addition to the important results it provides on superstitions and consumer behavior, the research has a number of limitations. The all research universe could not be reached due to reasons such as time and possibility. In addition, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the questionnaire could not be applied face to face to consumers. Since convenience sampling method was used in the study, the generalizability of the results obtained is limited. Therefore, these are the main constraints of the research. Researchers who will study superstition in the future may be recommended to conduct in-depth interviews or face-to-face surveys with consumers. In addition, it can be suggested that they do research using different sampling methods and samples, and research the subject by making comparisons between different countries.

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