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ADVANCES IN GLOBAL SERVICES AND RETAIL MANAGEMENT

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The Impact of Consumers' Price Level Perception on Emotions Towards Supermarkets

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Abstract

Although cognition and emotion have been regarded as opposing concepts, recent studies have shown that they are closely connected to each other. Consumers' purchasing decisions depend on the emotions evoked by their price perceptions rather than the actual price of the products or services. Thus, the purpose of this study is to find out the effects of price perception level on emotions towards supermarkets. Based on the literature review, Cognitive Appraisal Theory was adapted including price level perceptions- perceived expensiveness and perceived cheapness- and emotions- negative and positive- towards supermarkets. Data were collected through a questionnaire in Mersin's (Turkey) central counties, and were analyzed using exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses and structural equation model. The sample included 513 participants whose ages were 20-69. Results showed both perceived cheapness and expensiveness affect positive emotions towards supermarkets while only perceived expensiveness influences negative emotions towards supermarkets. The study has significant implications theoretically and practically. From a managerial perspective, the importance of the price level perception and its effects on emotions in the retailing field has been highlighted. A theoretical construct in determining and understanding consumers' emotional responses towards supermarkets depending on their price perceptions has been illustrated.

Keywords: price level perception, perceived cheapness, perceived expensiveness, emotions towards supermarkets, positive emotions towards supermarkets

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Introduction

Emotions are so powerful on human behavior that can lead people to behave in a way they generally avoid. To understand how and why consumers behave as they do, it is important to determine what causes them to have emotions (Cherry, 2020). Cognitive process is required in order to reveal emotional responses. Recent studies have shown that cognition and emotion are closely connected to each other although they have been regarded as opposing concepts. Besides, emotional responses lead cognition to ensure adaptive behaviors to the environment. Most of the previous studies examined cognitive functions - attention, perception, memory, and decision-making - without considering emotional responses. Emotions are revealed while people evaluate

events, objects and situations depending on their own needs, values, general well-being and goals (Brosch et al., 2013). In the academic fields, the nature of emotional responses provides a continuous study resource of controversy and separation (Malc et al., 2020). Different studies (Watson & Spence, 2007; Walsh vd., 2011; Ali et al., 2016) reveal factors affecting consumers' emotions. Marketing mix variables and other environmental inputs such as atmosphere, visual appeal, social cues, information, accessibility and customer services (Vergura et al., 2020) influence consumers' emotions (Mowen, 2002; Zhu et al., 2015).

There are various different theories proposed by psychologists, philosophers and researchers to explain how emotions occur. One of these theories is Cognitive Appraisal Theory (CAT), pioneers of which were Lazarus and Folkman (1984). According to this theory, first thinking occurs, and then emotions arise. In other words, a stimulus followed by appraisal causes an experience of a physiological response and emotion (Cherry, 2020). It is an appropriate framework to understand emotion in consumer research. It provides an insight to explain the reasons of consumers' different emotions at the same situations, events and products. Recently, some researchers have relied on this theory in their own study context (Kang, 2007). Although there have been studies (Nyer, 1997; Bagozzi et al., 1999; MacNeil & MacIntyre, 2009; Litwic-Kaminska, 2020) based on this theory, further studies are needed to expand results. Thus, guided by CAT and consumer behavior literature, this study includes price level perception (PLP) as the independent variable (appraisal) and emotions toward supermarkets (ETS) as the dependent variable (emotion).

Emotion is defined as a subjective conscious mental reaction towards a specific object, which is accompanied by psychological and behavioral changes (Sieb, 2013). Emotions arise from cognitive appraisals of thoughts and they are the basis of consumers' behaviors. In marketing, they function as moderators, mediators, causes and effects (Bagozzi et al., 1999). According to Malc et al. (2020), there are not enough researches providing a comprehensive view on the constructs leading to customers' emotional responses in retailing. Price or price level is the key element in shopping decisions. Price level reflects the amount of money paid to buy goods or services (Zielke, 2006), but the PLP reflects how cheap or expensive the store is according to consumers' point of view (Zielke, 2010). Consumers' purchasing decisions depend on the emotions evoked by their price perceptions rather than the actual price (Aalto University, 2012), because they don't always know or remember the actual price, but can encode the meaningful prices as cheap or expensive (Zeithaml, 1988). Consumption emotions can be developed depending on the perceptions of a service performance or product (Dube & Menon, 2000). Consumers may have positive and negative emotions triggered by price level perceptions (Zielke, 2009; Kim et al., 2016; Graciola et al., 2018). Consumers' PLP includes consumer beliefs (price evaluations and price justice), and consumer behavior (store selection, selection delay and purchase amount) (Hamilton & Chernev, 2013). Thus, it is assumed that consumers appraise price level as cheap or expensive and these appraisals affect their positive and negative emotions towards supermarkets.

In short, the present study aims to bring the impact of PLP on the emotions towards supermarkets. If managers have more information about consumers' reviews and their reaction to prices, they find effective ways to appeal to certain consumers and become more successful in increasing profitability rates (Ramirez & Goldsmith, 2009). Therefore, it intends to make some contributions both theoretically and practically to the understanding of the factors related to PLP and emotions within the scope of supermarkets.

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Literature Review

The market-driven society depends on the customers' needs, wants and expectations and additionally feelings, experiences and motivation gained as a result of marketers' value-added interactive sales (Kapoor & Kulshrestha, 2009). In the retailing sector, the importance of creating positive shopping experiences has increased since it helps to have a competitive advantage and meets consumers' wants and needs. Through knowing, designing and applying these experiences and in this way, meeting consumers' wants and needs, retailers can encourage consumers to engage in and spend more time there (Cachero-Martinez & Vá zquez-Casielles, 2018). Most of the consumers' engagement with the retailers is due to the rational reasons such as gaining value or having comfort. Because of the consumers' engagement with the retailers, their frequency of visits increase and thus, their emotions begin to arise (Homburg et al., 2017). Understanding how marketing stimuli influences consumers' emotions can provide various practical implications for the retailers (Alfaro, 2012).

Emotions are persuasive, effective, predictable and beneficial, but sometimes harmful indicators of decision-making. Recently, a major revolution has occurred in the study of emotions due to its potential to cause a paradigm shift in decision-making theories. In different fields of study, significant regularities emerge in the mechanisms that allow emotions to affect choices and decisions (Lerner et al., 2015).

Emotion can be defined as the transient response to specific experiences (Lazarus, 1994). It is also an effective reaction to a perceived situation (Ortony et al., 1988). Emotions emerge from the cognitive appraisals of external circumstances (Morris, 1992) and thoughts (Bagozzi et al., 1999). Shortly, emotion is 'a complex reaction pattern, involving experiential, behavioral, and physiological elements, by which an individual attempts to deal with a personally significant matter or event' (American Psychological Association [APA], 2020). Psychological appraisal theories of emotion define the evaluation process under the revealing of emotions (Brosch vd, 2013). In short, it can be stated that emotion and cognition are closely connected to each other and how they interact in order to influence consumers' behavior has been an active research field (Shukla et al., 2019). An association between consumers' perceptions and emotions is assumed depending on CAT, which states emotions arise after thinking occurs (Cherry, 2020), and consumer behavior literature.

What consumers understand about retail facilities doesn't always correspond to what the retailers actually offer. Store price image depends on consumers' perception rather than the actual prices. Depending on this fact, it can be concluded that creating store price image is not a statistic process, yet, a dynamic process. Thorough knowledge of various different aspects behind the marketing management is required in order to present an effective, proper and desirable price store image (Bondos, 2016). Examining causes and effects of price perception enable retailers provide an effective store characteristic. Thus, consumers' PLP is examined as the driver of emotions toward supermarkets in the present study.

Consumers' emotions are evoked by their price perceptions (Aalto University, 2012). Price perception shows consumers' beliefs related to retailers' prices. In other words, it is the evaluation of a specific price comparing with a reference price (Hamilton and Chernev, 2013). PLP is a complex concept formed by different elements such as product quality, consumers' price-

consciousness, promotion and psychological factors. Price perception shows the way consumers perceive price level at a specific store. The significant issue determining the essence of PLP is subjectivity. It means that what consumers perceive may not be matched with the actual price level (Kuchkanov, 2020). Besides, PLP may differ from consumer to consumer. Since some of the consumers can evaluate a market's price level comparing it with the other markets, they reach a judgment about whether the price level of that market is high or low. Other consumers, who make an assessment of the sacrifices made and the benefits obtained, have a perception about whether the price-performance ratio of the market is reasonable (Zielke, 2011).

Price, as well as the quality of goods and services, is an important factor affecting consumers' supermarket preferences (Leal, 2014) and determining consumers' commitment to supermarkets (Afande & John, 2015). For consumers, the price may be cheap or expensive, it may be a value for a product, or it may be reasonable for the quality to be paid (Zhou & Nakamoto, 2001). When the consumers don't have enough knowledge about a product, they tend to make decisions depending on heuristics. Many consumers assume that higher price is a sign of higher quality or low price is an indicator of low quality. Offering high prices can be effective if consumers associate price with the quality. Besides, consumers can make judgement related to prices through gains and losses. Many consumers can evaluate prices based on the thresholds above or below products' prices at which price differences are ignored or noticed. In other words, price perceptions depend on the proportion between price differences and products. Businesses can change negative responses by managing the price differences and perceptions (Tran, 2017).

PLP can trigger consumers' positive and negative emotions (Zielke, 2009; Kim et al., 2016; Graciola et al., 2018). While positive emotions are considered as pleasant responses to the world, negative emotions are assumed as unpleasant responses to the world. Some common positive emotions are happiness, joy, love, satisfaction, amusement, serenity, awe and interest. Some common negative emotions are anger, disgust, annoyance, rage, loneliness, sadness and melancholy (Ackerman, 2021). It takes time to form emotions, which are structurally complex and self-generated internal explicit states. They are directed to a particular object and causes physiological and behavioral changes (Sieb, 2013).

Store characteristics such as product assortment, value (price/quality), salesperson's service, after sale service and facilities (such as store size, arrangement of products corners and availability of new information) influence consumers' emotional responses. These store characteristics have a critical mediating role on the relationship between store characteristics and attitude toward store. While product assortment is effective on negative emotions, others influence both positive and negative emotions. Perceived value (price/quality) of products affects consumers' positive emotional responses such as pride, satisfaction and contentment. Consumers feel anxious when they are offered low prices for a product perceived to be high quality (Yoo et al., 1998). When consumers suppose that they are shopping at more affordable prices than the ones in other supermarkets, they are satisfied with the price advantages offered, perceived value, continuous shopping intentions, service quality and perceived high product. Besides, they may assume expensiveness of supermarkets as an indicator of perceived quality of goods and services (Duman & Yağcı, 2006). Store price level perception affects price-related emotions such as interest, enjoyment, anger, distress, guilt, fear, contempt and shame. Price consciousness and price-quality inferences have a moderating role on the relationship between store PLP and price-related emotions. Besides, they influence emotions directly (Zielke, 2009).

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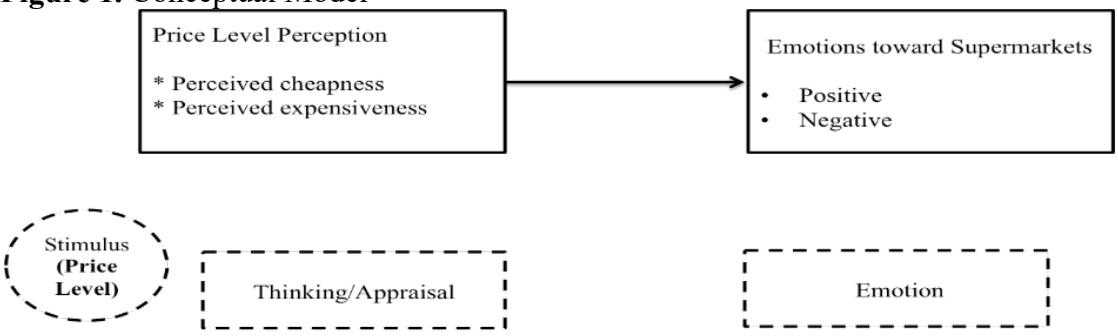
When stores are associated with low prices, they can be considered more negative compared to stores with high prices. It might be due to the fact that the level of cheapness is related to low quality (Hamilton & Cherney, 2013). High price is a positive factor affecting attitudes for some of the consumers and for some others it is effective in the development of consumers' negative attitudes, especially when economic resources are not sufficient (Lichtenstein et al., 1993). Income inequalities and living conditions cause consumers to look for cheap and quality products (Ceylan et al., 2016). Therefore, it can be assumed that perceived cheapness (PC) may decrease consumers' negative emotions (NEE) towards supermarkets and develop their positive emotions (POE) while perceived expensiveness (PE) can enable them to develop POE towards supermarkets. However, PE can affect the positive feelings about the market adversely. Therefore, the hypotheses created by synthesizing this conceptual knowledge in the literature are as follows:

- **H1:** Perceived cheapness of supermarkets affects positive emotions towards supermarkets.
- **H2:** Perceived cheapness of supermarkets affects negative emotions towards supermarkets.
- **H3:** Perceived expensiveness of supermarkets affects positive emotions towards supermarkets.
- **H4**: Perceived expensiveness of supermarkets affects negative emotions towards supermarkets.

4 hypotheses developed through synthesizing the literature have been tested. Figure 1 shows the conceptual model of the research developed on the basis of the theoretical background and literature.

Figure 1. Conceptual Model



Methods

Instrument

In this paper, a part of a study (A study was conducted to determine the effects of price sensitivity on purchase intention together with price level perceptions and emotions within the scope of supermarkets.) will be brought to your attention. A questionnaire developed based on the literature was used for data collection. The questionnaire was consisted of a scale with 6 items determining the PLP, a scale with 11 items identifying the emotions and questions about consumers' demographic such as age, sex, income and level of education. In the PLP scale, four items were determining consumers' PC and the other two were identifying PE. In emotions scale, seven items

were for NEE and four items were for POE. Two scales- PLP (AVE: 0.622, Cronbach's alpha: 0.878, CR: 0.908) and emotions (PE- AVE: 0.748, Cronbach's alpha: 0.888, CR: 0.922; NE- AVE: 0.738, Cronbach's alpha: 0.941, CR: 0.952) adopted by Graciola et al. (2018) were used since their reliability and validity were verified (Hair et al., 2014). Response categories of all items were subjected to the 5-point Likert rating.

Sample

The research population was defined as the consumers being in 20-69 years old, and a sampling framework was utilized from the people living in Mersin in Turkey. Study population was composed of consumers whose ages were 20-69, living in the central counties- Yenisehir, Akdeniz, Toroslar and Mezitli- of Mersin. There are many national and international supermarket chains as well as local supermarket chains.

Quota sampling was used to create a representative sample within the sampling framework. There were 312266 men and 321622 women in 20-69 age groups lived in Mersin's selected central counties through the end of December 2017 (Turkish Statistical Institute, [TurkStat], 2017). Since the study's population was N>10000, a sample size of 384 was assessed to be sufficient. However, the sample size was extended to 500 to create a sample including more or less 250 participants for each sex, and at least 30 for five age groups. Quotas were determined based on the sex and age groups making calculations and rounding in the fractions (Table 1). The questionnaire was administered in October and December 2018. After deleting multivariate outliers of 520 questionnaires obtained, 513 were used in the analysis.

Table 1. Quotas Based on Sex and Age Groups

Age groups	20-29		30-39		40-49		50-59		60-69		Total	
Gender	Quota	n	Quota	n	Quota	n	Quota	n	Quota	n	Quota	n
Male	62	66	64	67	56	55	45	53	29	35	255	276
Female	59	48	62	60	54	51	43	43	28	35	247	237
Total	121	114	126	127	110	106	88	96	57	70	502	513

%53.8 of the study sample was women, and %46.2 of it was men. Approximately, half of the participants were 20–39-year-olds; the other half was 40–69-year-olds. Whereas %40 of participants in the sample graduated from high school and below, almost half of them had a bachelor's degree. Participants' monthly income was converted to US$, depending on the exchange rate of Turkish Lira on 1st of July 2018. A quarter of the sample's monthly income was about the minimum wage-600 $. Nearly, half of the participants' monthly income was between 401 $ and 850 $ (Table 2).

Table 2. Participants' Demographic Profile (n: 513)

Variables	n	%	Variables	n	%
Gender			**Level of education**		
Female	276	53.8	High school and below	210	40.9
Male	237	46.2	Undergraduate	268	52.2
			Postgraduate	35	6.8
Income groups			**Age groups**		
1 $: 4,10 TL (July 1, 2018)					
400 $ and less	128	25.0	20-29	114	22.2
401-600 $	138	26.9	30-39	127	24.8
601-850 $	106	20.7	40-49	106	20.7
851-1200 $	94	18.3	50-59	96	18.7
1201 $ and more	47	9.2	60-69	70	13.6

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Measurement Model

Reliability: Reliability analysis was carried out for both scales. For this purpose, minimum and maximum corrected item-total correlations (CITC), squared multiple correlations (SMC), and Cronbach's Alpha values (Table 3) were assessed. There was one item in PLP, SMC of which was lower than 0.300 and one item also in the scale of emotions, CITC of which was lower than 0.300 (Hair et al., 2014). Therefore, one item from each scales were excluded in the reliability analysis. Analyses showed that minimum CITC and SMC were 0.506 and 0.412 respectively, and yielded Alpha coefficients 0.797 for the PLP and 0.913 for the emotions scale. Therefore, it may easily be accepted that two scales were highly reliable (Hair et al., 2014).

For the reliability, it was also assessed average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) values (Table 4 & 5). It was detected that all CR were greater than 0.700 (Hair, et al. 2014), and they were found to be greater than the shared correlation coefficients of the factors. Thus, these findings provided additional evidences that reliabilities were ensured (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988).

Table 3. Reliability Statistics of the Scales

Scales Coefficients	PC	PE	POE	NEE
Number of items	3	2	3	7
Alpha coefficient	0.85	0.90	0.94	0.93
Composite reliability (CR)	0.86	0.91	0.90	0.96
Min. & max. item-total correlations	0.63-0.79	0.82-0.82	0.77-0.83	0.71-0.83
Negative sign on item-total correlations	None	None	None	None
Min. & max. squared multiple correlation	0.41-0.66	0.68-0.68	0.59-0.70	0.53-0.76
Min. & max. Alpha if item deleted	0.72-0.87	-	0.82-0.88	0.91-0.93

PC: Perceived cheapness, PE: Perceived expensiveness,
POE: Positive emotions, NEE: Negative emotions

Construct Validity: At first, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was done. In PLP, two dimension were extracted (KMO: 66.5%; Bartlett's test for sphericity x^2:1379.280; df: 10; p<0.001); one is PC (eigenvalue: 2.305; explained variance: 46.094%) and the other is PE (eigenvalue: 1.8385; explained variance: 36.754%). For the second scale, EFA resulted in two dimensions again (KMO: 90.2%; Bartlett's test for sphericity x^2:3775.548; df: 45; p<0.001); one is POE towards supermarkets (eigenvalue: 4.825; explained variance: 48.252%) and the other is NEE towards supermarkets (eigenvalue: 2.628; explained variance: 26.280%). Thus, it can be said that EFA provided evidences for construct validity.

Confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) followed the EFA, and acceptable model fit statistics were obtained (x^2:271.43; df:84; $\chi 2$/df: 3.23 < 5; RMSEA: 0.066; CFI: 0.98; GFI: 0.93; AGFI: 0.91; IFI: 0.98; RFI: 0.97; NFI: 0.97; NNFI: 0.98; RMR: 0.051; SRMR: 0.036; Model CAIC < Saturated CAIC: 532.08 < 868.83). It was found that all of the standardized loadings were greater than 0.50, and all t-values were statistically significant at 5% significance level.

Convergent Validity: The AVE values calculated for PC, PE, POE and NEE were 0.67, 0.82, 0.75 and 0.66 respectively. Significant loadings, model-fit-statistics, and AVE values showed sufficient evidence for the convergent validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 4. The Results of CFA

Variables	St.values	t-values	Error
PERCEIVED CHEAPNESS (PC)	**AVE: 0.67; CR:0.86**		
The price of this supermarket is very low.	0.85	22.42	0.27
This is a cheap supermarket.	0.91	24.51	0.17
The price of this supermarket is lower compared to other supermarkets.	0.68	16.70	0.54
PERCEIVED EXPENSIVENES (PE)	**AVE: 0.82; CR:0.90**		
The price of this supermarket is very high.	0.87	22.06	0.24
The price of this supermarket is expensive.	0.94	24.38	0.11
POSITIVE EMOTION (POE)	**AVE: 0.75; CR:0.90**		
The price of this supermarket makes me feel happy.	0.82	21.96	0.33
I am very satisfied with the price of supermarket.	0.92	26.02	0.16
I like the price of this supermarket.	0.85	22.98	0.28
NEGATIVE EMOTION (NEE)	**AVE: 0.66; CR:0.96**		
The price of this supermarket makes me feel sad.	0.75	19.66	0.43
I feel depressed when I think about the price of supermarket.	0.73	19.03	0.46
I feel sad when I think about the price of supermarket.	0.85	23.60	0.28
I feel angry when I think about the price of this supermarket.	0.84	23.17	0.30
I am afraid to pay too much for the price of this supermarket.	0.74	19.28	0.45
The price of this supermarket makes me feel unhappy.	0.89	25.41	0.21
The price of this supermarket makes me angry.	0.87	24.37	0.25

Note: χ^2 :271.43; d.f.:84; χ^2/df: 3.23 < 5; RMSEA: 0.066; CFI: 0.98;
GFI: 0.93; AGFI: 0.91; IFI: 0.98; RFI: 0.97; NFI: 0.97; NNFI: 0.98; RMR: 0.051; SRMR: 0.036;
Model CAIC < Saturated CAIC: 532.08 < 868.83

Discriminant Validity: Maximum shared variances (MSV), and average shared variances (ASV) for all dimensions were less than their respective AVE values. It was also assessed if the square roots of the AVE values were greater than shared coefficients of correlations (Table 5). Therefore, discriminant validity was provided (Hair, et al., 2014).

Table 5. Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations of the Factors

	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	MSV	ASV	CR	PC	PE	POE	NEE
PC	2.68	0.99	0.14	0.10	0.86	(0.93)			
PE	3.33	1.10	0.24	0.15	0.90	0.32**	(0.91)		
POE	2.95	1.05	0.18	0.14	0.90	0.38**	0.31**	(0.87)	
NEE	3.59	1.04	0.24	0.15	0.96	0.21**	0.49**	0.43**	(0.81)

PC: Perception of cheapness, PE: Perception of expensiveness,
POE: Positive emotions, NEE: Negative emotions,
SD: Standard Deviation. The numbers in the cells of diagonal line are squared root of AVE
***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Model Testing

In this paper, four hypotheses were tested via structural equation modeling (SEM), and acceptable fit statistics were obtained (x^2: 325.59; df: 85; χ2/df: 3.83 < 5; RMSEA: 0.074; CFI: 0.98: GFI: 0.92; AGFI: 0.89; IFI: 0.98; RFI: 0.96; NFI: 0.97; NNFI: 0.97; RMR: 0.11; SRMR: 0.081; Model CAIC < Saturated CAIC: 579.00 < 868.83). Although RMR and SRMR values were slightly greater than the common cut-off points, the model had an acceptable fit by taking the value of x^2/df, CFI, IFI, RFI, NFI, and NNFI into account.

Findings

Three of the four hypotheses were supported by the data (Table 6 & Figure 2). As it was seen from Table 6 and Figure 2, PC of supermarkets predicted POE (β: 0.37) toward supermarkets while it had no statistically significant impact on NEE (β: 0.09) towards the supermarkets. Additionally, the third and fourth hypotheses that PE of supermarkets predicted both POE (β: 0.24) and NEE (β: 0.52) towards the supermarkets.

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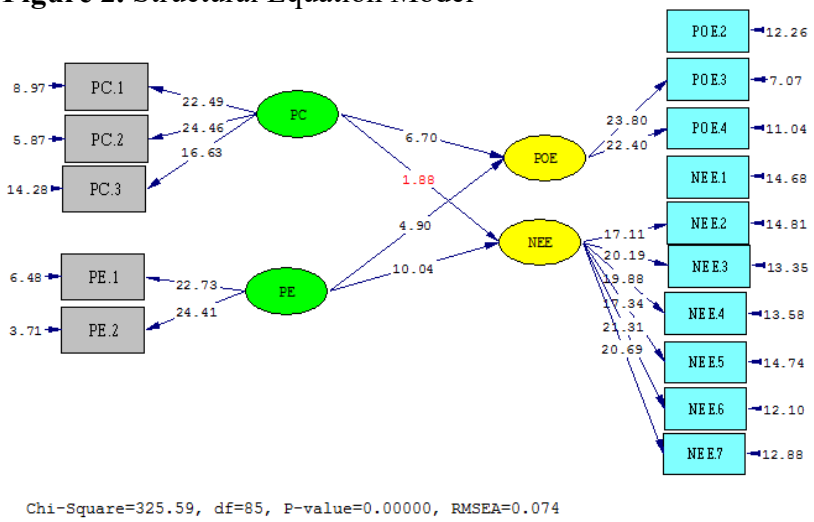
Figure 2. Structural Equation Model



Regression formulas for POE and NEE can be written as follows. The model for POE had a determination coefficient of 23% of the variation in POE, and 30% for NEE. R^2 having minimum 0.04, it might be interpreted from the practical life; if it has minimum 0.25 it may be accepted as the moderate effect (Ferguson, 2009). Both models may be accepted that they had moderate effect.

$$POE = 0.340*PC + 0.24*PE \ (R^2: 0.23)$$

$$NEE = 0.086*PC + 0.52*PE \ (R^2: 0.30)$$

Table 6. Path Estimates of Structural Models

#	Relationship	Standardized path coefficients	t-values	Result
H_1	PC→POE	0.34	6.70	Supported
H_2	PC→NEE	0.09	1.88	Not supported
H_3	PE→POE	0.24	4.90	Supported
H_4	PE→NEE	0.52	10.04	Supported

χ^2: 325.59; df: 85; χ^2/df: 3.83 < 5; RMSEA: 0.074; CFI: 0.98: GFI: 0.92; AGFI: 0.89; IFI: 0.98; RFI: 0.96; NFI: 0.97; NNFI: 0.97; RMR: 0.11; SRMR: 0.081; Model CAIC < Saturated CAIC: 579.00 < 868.83
PC: Perceived cheapness, PE: Perceived expensiveness,
POE: Positive emotions, NEE: Negative emotions

Conclusions

The effects of consumers' PLP on their emotions towards supermarkets were examined. The results are stated considering scales, model and hypotheses. In terms of scales, it was identified that ETS was loaded to the ideal dimensions – POE and NEE- as in the original scales (Graciola et al., 2018). But, PLP was not loaded to the one dimension. Oppose to the original scale, it was divided into two dimensions as PC and PE.

In terms of model, it can be stated that the present study based on CAT provides an adequate conceptual framework by including PLP- both PC and PE- as appraisals and POE and NEE as emotion in the model.

In terms of hypotheses, it can be stated that one of the hypotheses is not supported whereas the others are supported. PE affects both consumers' NEE and POE towards supermarkets. However, PC affects only consumers' POE towards supermarkets. The findings of Lichtenstein et al. (1993),

Yoo et al., (1998), Duman & Yağcı (2006), Zielke (2009), and Hamilton & Chernev (2013) indicate that as PE affects both NEE and POE, and PC does. Therefore, it can be concluded that the current study confirms the previous studies in terms of the impacts of PE on POE and NEE and the impacts of PC on POE. Yet, the current study is opposed to the previous ones with the finding that PC doesn't affect consumers' NEE towards supermarkets. Consumers assume price level as an indicator of the quality of supermarkets and their goods and services. Thus, when they think they buy affordable good-quality goods, they are satisfied and express POE. However, some consumers assume that it's not possible to purchase a good-quality product at a low price their NEE towards supermarket don't change. In conclusion, it can be said that consumers' PLP regarding supermarkets affects their emotions towards supermarkets positively.

Theoretical Implications

Firstly, the theoretical importance of this study lies in the application of CAT. There are various researches based on this theory, but the results are not consistent and further studies are required. PLP is an important antecedent of emotions (Zielke, 2009). Depending on the CAT, the present study includes PLP and POE and NEE. Therefore, the present study provides an adequate model and extends the prior studies on differences in PLP, retail price image and emotions.

The second contribution of this study is related to dimensionality of PLP scale. In Graciola et al. (2018), it was reported that the scale was one-dimensional, but in our study two dimensions were explored, one was PC and the other was PE. From a theoretical viewpoint, it was found that consumers had different perceptions based on the PLP. Based on PLP, consumers may attach the supermarket as cheap or expensive. PC or PE may result in supermarket preference, and satisfaction and loyalty, when the other things were kept constant such as product quality, product mix, and attitude of supermarket personnel.

Thirdly, the aim of this study is to find out the effects of PLP, both PC and PE, on consumers' POE and NEE towards supermarkets. In the literature, previous studies (Lichtenstein et al., 1993; Yoo et al., 1998; Duman & Yağcı, 2006; Zielke, 2009; Hamilton & Chernev, 2013) stated that both PE and PC affect both NEE and POE. Oppose to the previous studies, the present study found out PC doesn't affect consumers' NEE towards supermarkets. Thus, it can be stated that this study makes a major contribution to the literature. This result can be supported by similar findings obtained by other future researches. The reasons why both POE and NEE are influenced by PE, but not by PC can be investigated. Besides, it can be examined whether there are mediating effects of other variables such as store brand image, store loyalty, pricing strategies and issues related to the atmosphere of the market. In short, the present study contributes to the knowledge of consumer behavior in the retailing environment by providing insight into PLP and emotional responses.

Practical Implications

From a managerial perspective, the present study indicates the necessity to understand the underlying causes of emotions in the retailing field by determining the relationship between the consumers' PLP and consumers' emotions towards supermarkets. The importance of PLP has been highlighted. Learning more on what causes changes on consumers' emotional responses help retailers to create and keep positive shopping experiences for customers by providing appropriate marketing strategies.

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Since consumers' price perceptions and emotions evoked by their perceptions influence purchase decisions rather than the actual price (Aalto University, 2012), retailers should give more importance to the price level that can change and develop consumers' emotions leading purchase intention. Affordable prices can be offered to attract more consumers to supermarkets and raise their shopping frequency and quantity. Besides, pricing strategies such as psychological pricing, promotional pricing, discount pricing, segmented pricing and fixed pricing can be used depending on the product and its properties in order to affect consumers' perceptions, attitudes and emotions.

Understanding and determining different groups of consumers in terms of price perceptions and emotions can generate useful insights for marketing managers while deciding strategic, tactical and operational activities. Emotional responses to prices may rely on customer segments having different PLP and price-quality inferences. They can form segmentation approaches considering these variables. Appropriate marketing communication messages can be developed for these different segments. For the ones, whose POE is triggered by high prices, more prestige and quality can be emphasized. On the other hand, the ones, whose NEE are triggered by high prices, can be motivated by most profitable and highest quality-buying concept. In short, in order to be preferred over others and create loyal and satisfied customers, retailers can benefit these practical evidences.

Limitations and Future Research

One limitation of the study is sampling method. Quota sampling was used depending on sex and age group ratios. If the quotas were determined depending on income status, different findings might be obtained. In the future studies, other sampling methods can be used. Another limitation is only price level perception was examined as a predictor of emotions. In future studies, other factors such as visual appeal, atmosphere, sales promotion, product line and frequency of advertisements may be investigated.

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