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The Influence of Cultural Factors on Consumer Buying Behaviour and an Application in Turkey

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Abstract- Nowadays, consumer behaviouris influenced not only by consumer personalities and motivations, but also by the relationships within families. Family is a social group and it can be considered the cornerstone of consumers so it has a crucial place in the perception of marketing. Marketeers closely interested in this issue to know the family which changed and renewed in course of time. It provides a tremendous advantage for a marketeer to know the family structure and its consumption characteristics (Durmaz and Zengin, 2011: 53).

In this study, the affect of cultural factors on consumer buying behaviour is investigated. A survey was conducted on 1400 people from the different parts of Turkey. The information acquired from the results are analyzed and interpreted by the computer packet programs. Turkey has seven regions. From each region two provinces are selected by random sampling method. A face to face survey was conducted on 100 people from each province and in total 1400 people participated in the survey.

Keywords: consumer, consumer behaviour, cultural factors, cultur, subcultur, social class.

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I. Introduction

The customer is the sole reason organizations exists (Cochran, 2006: 1). In the modern world customer becomes much more important for the firms. The markets become bigger and bigger with the firms selling the same products and the competition among them becomes inevitable. For this reason the study of consumer behaviour takes a great place.

The marketers try to understand the needs of different consumers and having understood his different behaviours which require an in-depth study of their internal and external environment, they formulate their plans for marketing (Khan, 2007: 1). How do people buy and use goods and services? How do they react to prices, advertising and store interiors? What underlying mechanisms operate to produce these responses? If marketers have answers to such questions, they can make better managerial decisions. If regulators have answers, they can form better policy. It is the role of consumer behaviour research to provide these answers (East, Wright and Vanhuele, 2008: 4). In this study the impact of cultural factors on consumer buying behaviour is studied.

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II. Consumer and the Consumer Behaviour

Consumer is a person who desires, needs and requires marketing components in their capacity as buyer1.Typically marketers are defined to have the ability to control the behaviours of customers, but actually they have neither power nor information forthat.. Marketer may influence their buying behavior but not control (Durmaz, Çelik and Oruç, 2011: 109).

Consumer behaviour deals with many other issues. For instance (Pariest, Carter and Statt, 2013: 19):

- How do we get information about products?
- How do we assess alternative products?
- Why do different people choose or use different products?
- How do we decide on value for money?
- How much risk do we take with what products?
- Who influences our buying decisions and our use of the product?
- How are brand loyalties formed, and changed?

Consumer behaviour might be the following: The mental, emotional and physical activities that people engage in when selecting, purchasing, using and disposing of products and services so as to satisfy needs and desires (Wilkie, 1994, Pariest, Carter and Statt, 2013: 19)

III. Cultural Factors Affecting Consumer behaviour

Cultural factors have a significant impact on customer behavior. Cultural Factors, culture, subculture and social class to be examined under three headings (Durmaz and Jablonski, 2012: 56).

a) Culture

Culture is the essential character of a society that distinguishes it from other cultural groups. The underlying elements of every culture are the values, language, myths, customs, rituals, laws, and the artifacts, or products that are transmitted from one generation to the next (Lamb, Hair and Daniel, 2011: 371).

Culture is the most fundamental determinant of a person's wants and behavior. Whereas lower creatures are governed by instinct, human behavior is largely learned. The child growing up in a society leans a basic set of values, perceptions, preferences and

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behaviors through a process of socialization involving the family and other key institution .Thus a child growing up in America is exposed to the following values: Achievement and success, activity, efficiency and practicality, progress, materi all comfort, individualism, freedom, external comfort, humanitarianism, and youthfulness (Pandey and Dixit, 2011: 22). Culture has several important characteristics: (1) Culture is comprehensive. This means that all parts must fit together in some logical fashion. For example, bowing and a strong desire to avoid the loss of face are unified in their manifestation of the importance of respect. (2)Culture is learned rather than being something we are born with. We will consider the mechanics of learning later in the course. (3) Culture is manifested within boundaries of acceptable behavior. For example, in American society, one cannot show up to class naked, but wearing anything from a suit and tie to shorts and a T-shirt would usually be acceptable. Failure to behave within the prescribed norms may lead to sanctions, ranging from being hauled off by the police for indecent exposure to being laughed at by others for wearing a suit at the beach. (4) Conscious awareness of cultural standards is limited. One American spy was intercepted by the Germans during World War II simply because of the way he held his knife and fork while eating.(5)Cultures fall somewhere on a continuum between static and dynamic depending on how quickly they accept change. For example, American culture has changed a great deal since the 1950s, while the culture of Saudi Arabia has changed much less (Perner, 2013: 1).

b) Subculture

The other important concept should be examined in terms of marketing management issubculture. Courses on culture and behavior of individuals with similar values formed smaller groups are called sub-culture (Durmaz, Çelik and Oruç, 2011: 110). Subcultures are relevant units of analysis for market research analysis of subculture enables the marketing manager to focus on sizable and natural market segment. The marketer must determine whether the belief, values and customs shared by member of a specific subgroup make them desirable candidates for special marketing attention (Tyagi and Kumar, 2004: 89). Four types of subculture can be distinguished (Talloo, 2008: 202):

Nationality Groups such as the Irish, Polish, Italians, and Puerto Ricansa re found within large communities and exhibit distinct ethnic tastes and proclivities.

Religious Groups such as the Catholics, Mormons, Presbyterians, and Jews represent subcultures with specific cultural preferences and taboos.

Racial Groups such as the blacks and Orientals have distinct cultural styles and attitudes.

Geographical Areas such as the Deep South, California, and New England are distinct subcultures with characteristic lifestyles.

Subcultures not only influence buying patterns, but can also influence the way marketing messages are received. For example, some research suggests that French-speaking Canadians focus on message source or who is presenting the advertisement, while English speaking Canadians are more concerned with the content of the advertisement (Smith, 2003: 83).

c) Social Class

Every society possesses some form of social class which is important to the marketers because the buying behavior of people in a given social class is similar. In this way marketing activities could be tailored according to different social classes. Here we should note that social class is not only determined by income but there are various other factors as well such as: wealth, education, occupation etc. (Shah, 2010: 1)

W. Lloyd Warner's research identified six classes within the social structures of both small and large U.S. cities: the upper-upper, lower-upper, upper-middle, and lower-middle classes, followed by the working class and lower class. Class rankings are determined by occupation, income, education, family background, and residence location (Boone and Kurz, 2010: 146). Engel et al.(1995) cite a large number of studies which illustrate the application of social class in helping to interpret and predict consumer behaviour – social class has been found to be especially useful in predicting preferences of kind, quality and style of clothing, home furnishings, leisure activities, cars, consumer durables and use of credit cards. Social class has also been shown to be associated with patterns of media usage, language patterns, source credibility and shopping behaviour (Baker, Graham and Harker, 1998: 125).

IV. Application

a) Purpose and Scope of Research

The purpose of this study is by shedding light to the managers of founded and will be set up business and especially to the marketing department, which provides to development of country and which leads that the consumers are better known by them and beter quality goods, services and ideas will be presented In the 1950s, "contemporary (modern) marketing concept" expresses the consumer-oriented businesses. What, when, where and at what price and why wants consumers, these questions were asked firstly about forty years ago. In other words, get to know people has become more important.

b) Methods and Sample

In this study as data collection method questionnaire was preffered to obtain objective data and to interpret the first order, that person is the source or

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first hand. Questionnaire has been prepared according to the 'funnel' technique, that means from general to special. Assumption of this technique, wenn the special questions are asked at first place to the surveys, they will be probably avoided.

Research data, by sampling the group of Turkey consumers, consist of multiple choice questions for the questionnaire.

c) Limiting of İnvestigation

In the survey, from each region two provinces are selected by random sampling method. A face to face survey was conducted on 100 people from each province and in total 1400 people participated in the survey. All thougth it was aimed over 1400 people, reasons like limited time, financial problems and difficulty of doing research in another country are the limits of this survey.

d) Results Analysis and Interpretation

The data obtained were analyzed through computer program package "frequency" and the results were interpreted according to this method.

1) Where do you generally do your shopping?

Table 1: Where Shopping İs Done

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Super market (and Hyper market).	388	28.5
Grocer and greengrocer.	159	11.7
Bazaar.	233	17.1
Related store.	547	40.2
Other;	34	2.5
Total	1361	100.0
Missing	39	
Total	1400	

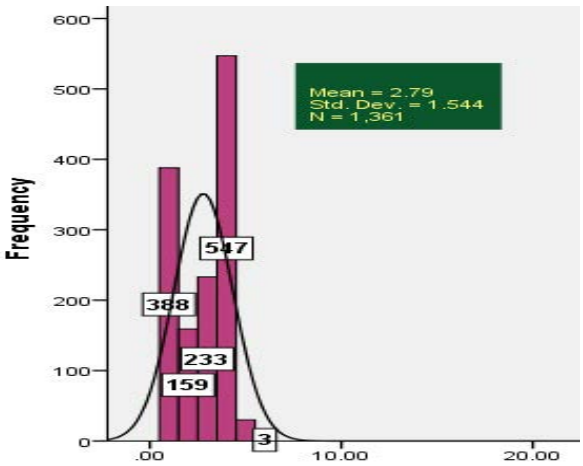

Figure 1 : Where Shopping İs Done

In this question, it's aimed to learn what kind of retailers consumers prefer. As it is seen in Table 1, 1361 people responded to this question and 388 (28.5 %) of them do their shopping from super markets, 547 (40.2 %) people from related store, 159 (11.7 %) people from grocer and greengrocer, 233 (17.1%) people form bazaar, 34 (2.5 %6) people prefer other places to do their shopping.

2) The most important thing for me is approval of my environment or friend on the goods and sevices that I will take.

Table 2 : Effect of Environment and Friends

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Super market (and Hyper market).	388	28.5
Grocer and greengrocer.	159	11.7
Bazaar.	233	17.1
Related store.	547	40.2
Other;	34	2.5
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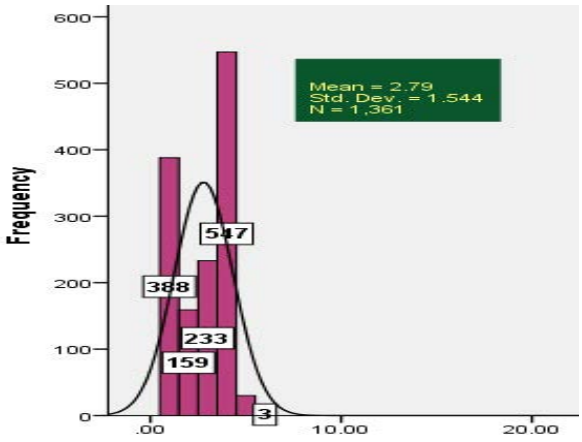

Figure 2 : Effect of Environment and Friends

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The purpose of these question is to learn how important the envirament and friends in buying goods and services of the survey participants. As shown in table and figure 2, for 439 people (32%) enviroment and their friends is the most important criteria in buying goods and services; 190 people (13.9%) enviroment and their friends is certainly the most important criteria; 249 persons (8.2 %) seem not to agreed that and 243 people (% 14.8) seem not to certainly agreed that.

According to these results, it can be said that the majority are believe that the most important factor in buying goods and services are enviroment and friends (about 46%).

3) The most important thing for me is suitability to my culture, belief, tradition and custom on the goods and sevices that I will take.

Table 3 : Effect of Culture

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Certainly no agreed	202	14.7
No agreed	263	19.1
Undecided	88	6.4
Agreed	298	21.7
Certainly agreed	524	38.1
Total	1375	100.0
Missing	25	
General Total	1400	

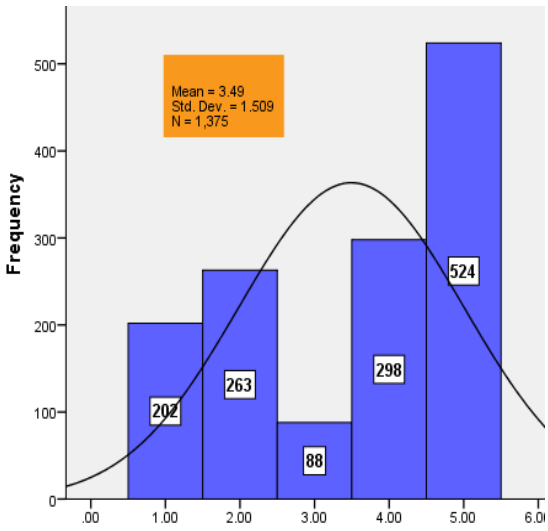

Figure 3 : Effect of Culture

The purpose of this question is to learn if culture, beliefs and traditions are the most important criteria of the survey participants in buying goods and services. As in table and figure 3 shown, for 524 people (38.1 %) faith, culture and tradition are certainly the most important criteria in buying goods and services; That for 298 people (21.7 %) is the most important criteria when you say; for 263 people (19.1.9%) not; 202 persons (14.7%) had mentioned certinly not.

According to these results that can be said that for the majority of survey respondents (approximately 60%), belief, culture and tradition are the most important factor.

4) The most important thing for me is suitability to my jop on the goods and sevices that I will take.

Table 4 : Occupational Social Group Effect

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Illiterate	43	3.1
Primary school	366	26.6
High school	537	39.0
University	411	29.9
Postgradute	18	1.3
Total	1375	100.0
Missing	25	
General Total	1400	

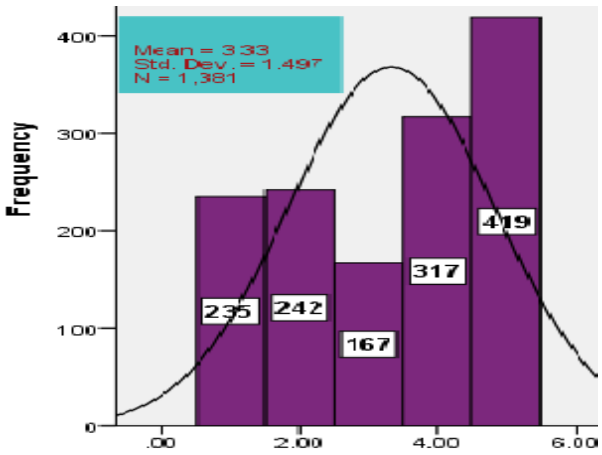

Figure 4: Occupational Social Group Effect

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Our aim is to learn whether the most importanat thing for consumers is suitability for their job. Table and figure 4 shows that 419 (30.3%) people certainly agreed; 317 (23%) people agreed; 242 (17.5 %) people didn't agree and 235 (17 %) people certainly didn't agree.

Majority of the respondents believe that suitablity to their job is the most important thing.

5) Your education level?

*Table 5 :*Training Effect

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Illiterate	43	3.1
Primary school	366	26.6
High school	537	39.0
University	411	29.9
Postgradute	18	1.3
Total	1375	100.0
Missing	25	
General Total	1400	

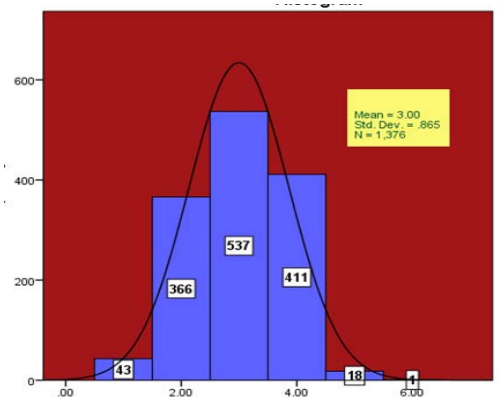

Figure 5: Training Effect

With this question we wanted to learn participants education level. As seen in Table 7; 537 (41,48 %) people are high school; 411 (29,9 %) people are university; 366 (26,6 %) people are primary school; 43(3.1 %) people are illiterate and 18 (1.3 %) people are postgradute.

6) Your occupattion?

Table 6 : Professional İmpact

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Teacher	106	7.7
Officer	198	14.4
Worker	259	18.8
Free occupation	242	17.5
Unemployed	104	7.5
Other	470	34.1
Missing	21	100.0
General Total	1400	

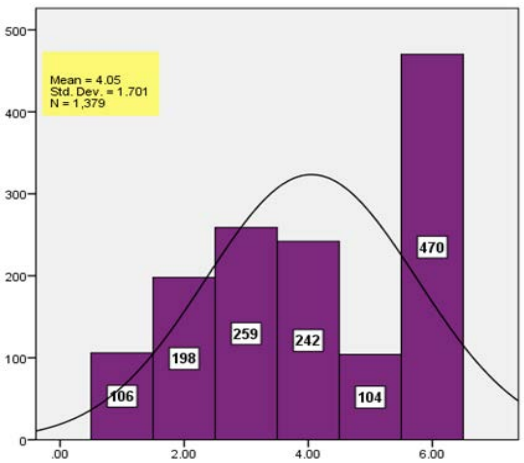

Figure 6 : Professional İmpact

In this question the aim is to learn the occupations of participants. As shown in Table 5;470 (34,1 %) people have other jobs than these, 259 (18.8 %) people are worker; 242 (17.5 %) free occupation ; 198 (14.4 %)

people are officer; 106(7.7%)people are teacher and 104 (7.5 %) people are unemployed.

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7) In which group does your age take place?

Table 7: Effect of Age

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Between 18-25	406	29.5
Between 26-35	420	30.5
Between 36-45	352	25.6
Between 46-55	137	10.0
56 and above	57	4.1
Total	1372	100.0
Missing	28	
General Total	1400	

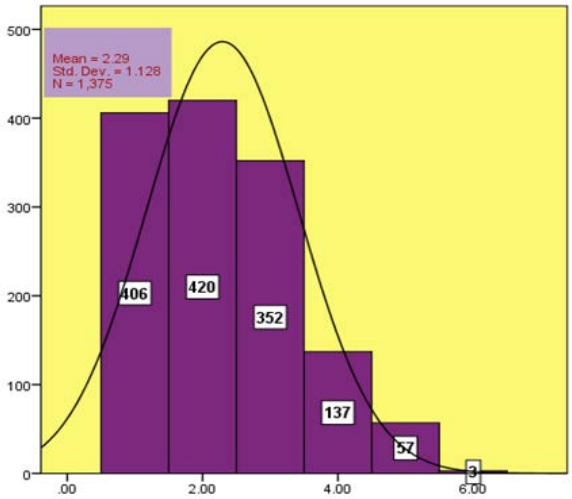

Figure 7 : Effect of Age

The aim of this question is to learn ages of respondents.As seen in Table 9 ; 406 (29.5%) people are between 18-25; 420 (30.5%) people are between 26-35; 352 (25.6%) people are between 36-45; 137 (10 %) people are between 46-55 and 57 (4.1%)) people are 55 and above.

According to this result majority of the respondents are youngs who are between 26-35.

8) Marital satatus?

Table 8: Marital Status

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Single	558	40.6
Married	759	55.3
Widow	56	4.1
Total	1372	100.0
Missing	28	
General Total	1400	

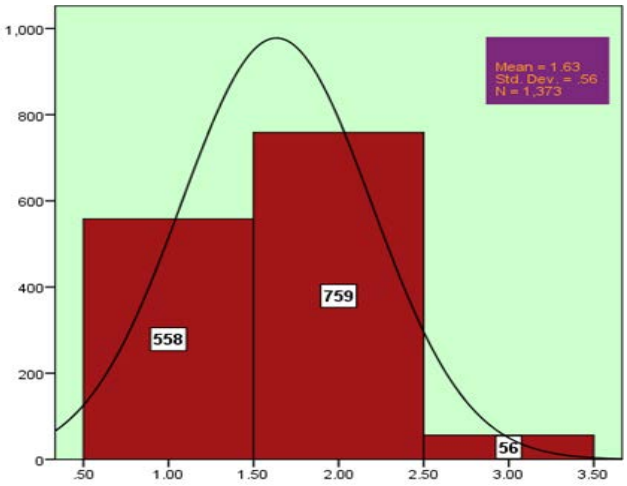

Figure 8: Marital Status

We wanted to learn marital status of respondents with this question. As seen in Table 10; 558 (40.6 %) people are single; 759 (55.3 %) people are married and 56 (4.1 %) people are widow. It can be seen that more than half of the respondents are single.

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9) Gender?

Table 9: Gender Effect

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Female	590	40.6
Male	781	55.3
Other	1	4.1
Total	1372	100.0
Missing	28	
General Total	1400	

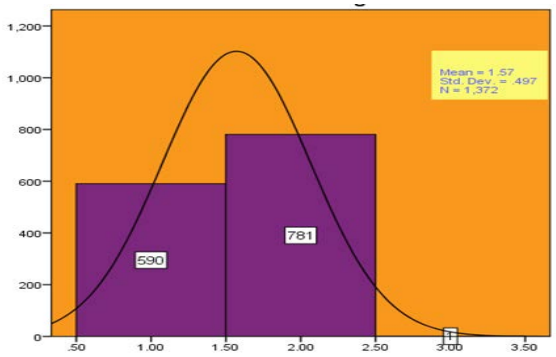

Figure 9: Gender Effect

The aim of this question is to determmine sexes of respondents. As seen in Table 11; 781(55.3%) people are male; 590 (40.6 %) people are female, As a result majority of the respondents are male.

V. Conclusion

We can sum up the results of data analysis of interwievs with 100 people from each 2 cities of 7 regions in Turkey.

- Most of the comsumers in Turkey do shopping from related store (approximately 43 percent),
- Approximately half of the comsumers know that the most important factor in buying goods and services are enviroment and friends (about 46%)
- According to these results that can be said that for the majority of survey respondents belief, culture and tradition are the most important factor(around 60 %).
- About more than half of the comsumers believe that the most important factor in buying goods and services are job and occupational social group effect (about 54 percent)

Here are the demographic structure of the participants;

- Most of the participants are high school graduates (41,48 %),
- Participants have very wide range of occupations.
- Participants who are between 26-35 age range take the fist place (30.5%),
- Most of the participants are married(55.3 %),
- More than half of the participants are male (55.3%).

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