

Research on the Relationship Between Individual Innovativeness and Conscious Consumerism Levels of the School of Physical Education and Sports Students

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Abstract: This research was conducted to determine the relationship between individual innovativeness and conscious consumerism levels of 370 students. Individual Innovativeness Scale and Conscious Consumerism Scale were used in the research. Individual innovativeness points were calculated and students who received 68 and over were considered as highly innovative while students who received 64 and below were regarded as less innovative. In conclusion, it was determined that students were included in “Early Majority” category of individual innovativeness categories with a point of 62.7 and that there was a significant but low level relationship between individual innovativeness and consumer consciousness, a medium level relationship between conscious consumerism level and quality and budget-price consciousness’s, a strong relationship between conscious consumerism level and consumer responsibility consciousness and a low level relationship between consumer responsibility consciousness and quality and budget-price consciousness’s. No significant difference was found in the relationship between the points of individual innovativeness, conscious consumerism, consumer responsibility, quality consciousness and budget-price analysis in male and female students. It was also determined that there is a significant but low level relationship between conscious consumerism and individual innovativeness levels of students (early majority) and that there is no significant difference between male and female students concerning this relationship.

Key words: Individual Innovativeness • Conscious Consumer • Student

INTRODUCTION

A person who needs different products and/or services to survive and who has opportunities to fulfill such needs is defined as consumer [1]. According to Assael [2] consumer is a person who buys products and services for a certain price and uses them. On the other hand, Bauman [3] defines consumer as a person who consumes. According to him, the term consuming means to consume something by using it, in other words, to satisfy one’s needs or desires in anyway by eating, wearing and using products/services. Purchasing decisions and behaviors of consumers can be sometimes simple and sometimes complex during the consuming process that constitutes a big part of human life because consumer behaviors are displayed in a highly dynamic process. The important factor of marketing strategy success is the correct understanding of consumer’s behavior [4]. In the

era of rapid growth and global demand, the world is becoming more competitive and challenging [5]. Furthermore, high competition day by day in the rapidly growing global marketing and marketing is affected by internal and external environment commented [6].

Every individual in society is a consumer and being a consumer is a lifelong process. The more developed the human beings, the more changed their behaviors and decisions as consumers [7]. One of the important hypotheses of consumer behaviors suggests that people generally buy products for their meanings rather than their basic functions [8]. Today, people buy not only the products and services but also the values created by these products and services and most of all, the images created by brands [9]. It’s necessary being in interaction with the terms consumption, conscious consumption and conscious consumer for consumers to develop their selection skills and create their own decisions [10].

Consumer awareness is a marketing concept that is developed for the products and services consumers face with and that emphasizes the importance of raising the awareness of consumers about product, promotion, distribution and pricing strategies [11]. Consumer education is one of the effective factors in creating consumer awareness [12]. Cohen [13] qualified consumer education as a lifelong process. Makela and Peters [14] also emphasized that the most efficient solution for individuals to increase their life quality and develop their purchasing decision mechanisms is consumer education in today's complex and dynamic market environment. On the other hand, according to Bonner [15] consumer education is a citizenship and social responsibility education. Awareness set is reduced to thinking set and at last choice set for consumers while the analysis progresses [16]. Consumer makes a choice between the alternatives of which number was reduced to two or three in the choice set [17].

Since quality is not only an important element but also a factor determining the price in brand preferences, consumers have the perception that branded products are quality and expensive [18]. Consumers also take into account the innovativeness element when preferring brands. Consumer innovativeness is the tendency of consumers to adopt innovations [19]. According to this definition, consumer innovativeness term defines a person who has the potential to perform an activity rather than a person who performs the very same activity. It's asserted that consumer innovativeness is in relation with consumer behaviors and characteristics [20]. There are two types of innovativeness definition in the literature: cognitive and sensory. Cognitive innovativeness is defined as consumers' tendency for rational thinking, problem solving or other mind exercises; while sensory innovativeness is defined as the encouragement of senses of consumers for new experiences. Sensory innovators do not beware of taking more risk in preferring new things and do not carry out rational evaluation for fulfilling their needs [21].

Regarded as the willingness to try new things, innovativeness is the reaction against anything new and different. These reactions against change are between highly positive and highly negative. It is also evaluated as a concept related to other personal characteristics such as risk taking and openness to experience [22]. Different individuals adopt innovations at different levels [23]. Accordingly, individuals in society differ in their characteristics in terms of innovativeness. Due to such differences, individuals adopt innovations early or

late, are disposed to more or less change and take more or less risk. Moreover, individuals are separated into five different categories in these models according to their characteristics and each category has certain features. These categories are called as Innovators, Early Adopters, Early Majority, Late Majority and Laggards [24]. Innovators are individuals who are eager to try new ideas and to take risk, who have vision and who adopt innovations early. Early adopters inform and lead other individuals about innovations. Members of early majority are deliberate and cautious about innovations. Late majority are skeptical and timid about innovations. And laggards are biased about change and the last to adopt innovations. Lee *et al.* [25] mentioned that personality differences of consumers have the potential to affect their behaviors.

This research was conducted to determine the relationship between individual innovativeness and conscious consumerism levels of 370 students who study in the Departments of Physical Education and Sports Teaching, Sports Management, Coaching Education and Recreation in the School of Physical Education and Sports in MuglaSıtkıKoçman University in the academic year 2013-2014.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sample Group: In the research based on simple random sampling method, when error margin was determined as (α)=0.005, tolerance amount as (d)=0.05 and the number of persons in the population as (N)=700, sample diameter was defined as (n) = 370. The scale was applied to 450 students (241 female and 129 male) aged 18-25 years in the School of Physical Education and Sports in MuğlaSıtkıKoçman University by the researcher and of them, valid 370 questionnaires were assessed. The questionnaire was composed of demographic features, personal information (whether they receive pocket-money regularly etc.), Individual Innovativeness Scale and Conscious Consumerism Scale.

Of the students participated in our research, 38.4% study at the department of sports management, 44.0% at coaching education, 13.0% at physical education and sports teaching and 4.6% at recreation. Average age distribution of the sample group was defined as 21.

Data Collection Tools

Individual Innovativeness Scale: In this study, Individual Innovativeness Scale (IS) developed by H. Thomas Hurt, Katherine Joseph and Chester. D. Cook [26] was

used to determine innovativeness levels of participants and the innovativeness category they belonged. The scale measures innovativeness in general and considers innovativeness as “willingness to try new things” in individual terms. Accordingly, innovativeness is reaction to anything new and different. The scale is considered as one of the best four scales measuring innovativeness in literature: Jackson Personality Inventory, Kirton Adaption-Innovation Inventory, NEO Personality Inventory and Individual Innovativeness Scale [27].

Individual Innovativeness Scale adapted to Turkish by Kilicer and Odabasi [28] was used in our study. It was determined that the scale in Turkish including 20 items of which reliability work is carried out is four factorial, its factor structures are valid, its internal consistency coefficient is.82 and test-retest reliability is.87. It can be said that the adapted 5-point likert type scale is usable in studies on innovativeness and in academic works in Turkish about innovativeness-related issues. Individual innovativeness points were calculated and students who received 68 and over were considered as highly innovative while students who received 64 and below were regarded as less innovative. Individual innovativeness points were calculated in accordance with the below directive.

Individual Innovativeness Point = 42 + (Total points from the items 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 18 and 19) (Total points from the items 4, 6, 7, 10, 13, 15, 1 and 20).

Individuals, who receive 80 points or higher, are classified as Innovators. Individuals, who receive between 69 and 80 points, are classified Early Adopters. Individuals, who receive between 57 and 68 points, are classified Early Majority. Individuals, who receive between 46 and 56 points, are classified Late Majority. Individuals, who receive 46 points or less, are classified as Laggards.

Conscious Consumerism Scale: 4-point Likert type scale including is composed of 19 items and three dimensions as consumer responsibility consciousness, quality consciousness and budget price consciousness and adapted to Turkish by Halil Ibrahim Saglam in 2010 after performing validity and reliability works and finding reliability level as.73 was used in the research [29]. Descriptive statistics of conscious consumerism scale and the features of point distribution of the group to which the scale was applied were included. The correlations were examined to analyze the relationship between the factors such as consumer responsibility consciousness, quality consciousness and budget price consciousness.

Relationship Between the Scales: Pearson Correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between individual innovativeness, conscious consumerism, consumer responsibility, quality consciousness and budget price analysis. In interpreting Pearson Correlation coefficients, relationship values were regarded as very weak for 0,00-0,25, weak for 0,26-0,49, medium for 0,50-0,69, high for 0,70-0,89 and very high for 0,90-1,00. As the number of students was not distributed homogenously in different departments, Mann Whitney U Test was used to analyze whether there was a difference between male and female students. The data was analyzed in SPSS 18.0 software package program. As reliability coefficient was determined as.77 for Individual Innovativeness Scale and.82 for Conscious Consumerism Scale, it can be said that the scales were reliable and the sample size in the research was sufficient.

RESULTS

As the result of the analysis concerning the individual innovativeness questionnaire, it was seen that the participants are included in *Early Majority* group in accordance with their answers ($\bar{x} = 62,73 \pm 8,51$).

It is seen that there is no statistically significant difference between the male and female participants in the received points concerning individual innovativeness, conscious consumer, consumer responsibility consciousness, quality consciousness and budget-price consciousness ($p > 0,05$).

Considering the relationship between the points, it was determined that there is a positive relationship between individual innovativeness and conscious consumerism point ($r = ,323, p < 0.01$), consumer responsibility point ($r = ,184, p < 0.01$), quality consciousness point ($r = ,220, p < 0.01$) and budget-price analysis point ($r = ,345, p < 0.01$). A significant relationship

Table 1: Individual innovativeness value of participants

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Innovative	7	1,9
	Early Adopter	90	24,3
	Early Majority	185	50,0
	Late Majority	78	21,1
	Laggard	10	2,7
	Total	370	100,0
		x	SD
Individual Innovativeness Value		62,73 ±	8,51

Table 2: The relationship between the received points and gender

The test on whether there is a difference between the received points and gender					
	Gender	Point	Average	Standard Deviation (SD)	p
Individual Innovator	Male	241	62,2	8,776	0,15*
	Female	129	63,7	7,942	
Conscious Consumer	Male	241	54,0	7,354	0,925**
	Female	129	54,0	7,711	
Consumer Responsibility Consciousness	Male	241	20,5	3,757	0,65**
	Female	129	20,6	3,942	
Quality Consciousness	Male	241	15,7	2,974	0,97**
	Female	129	15,7	2,894	
Budget-Price Consciousness	Male	241	17,8	2,996	0,82**
	Female	129	17,7	3,227	

**Mann-Whitney U (MWU) Test, *T Test

Table 3: The relationship between the received points

		Individual Innovativeness Point	Conscious Consumerism Point	Consumer Responsibility Point	Quality Consciousness Point	Budget-Price Consciousness Point
Individual Innovativeness Point	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	370				
Conscious Consumerism Point	Pearson Correlation	,323**				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000				
	N	370	370			
Consumer Responsibility Point	Pearson Correlation	,184**	,801**			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000			
	N	370	370	370		
Quality Consciousness Point	Pearson Correlation	,220**	,702**	,311**		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000		
	N	370	370	370	370	
Budget-Price Consciousness Point	Pearson Correlation	,345**	,762**	,407**	,362**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	
	N	370	370	370	370	370

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

was found between conscious consumerism point ($r = ,801$, $p < 0.01$), quality consciousness point ($r = ,702$, $p < 0.01$) and budget-price analysis point ($r = ,762$, $p < 0.01$). Also a positive significant relationship was found between conscious consumerism point and quality consciousness point ($r = ,311$ $p < 0.01$) and budget-price analysis point ($r = ,407$ $p < 0.01$). And it was determined that there is a positive significant relationship between quality consciousness and budget-price consciousness ($r = ,362$, $p < 0.01$).

DISCUSSION

As the result of the analysis carried out concerning the individual innovativeness questionnaire, it was determined in accordance with the answers that the

participants are included in “Early Majority” category of individual innovativeness with an average point of 62.7. Also, it was determined as the result of research findings that there is a significant but low level relationship between conscious consumerism and individual innovativeness points of students. The members of Early Majority are defined as consumers who are deliberate and cautious about innovations, do not hurry, minimize the risks, have consumer experience and rely on other’s recommendations. They are not opinion leaders in general and the reason for them to late for innovations compared to Innovators and Early Adopters is that they focus on collecting information about the product. Accordingly, they represent the group which purchases the new goods and services consciously. The early adopters consist of technology enthusiasts and

visionaries [30]. It's mentioned that Early Majority constitutes 34% of the society [31]. According to the research of Pliner *et al.* [32], it was determined that children who receive pocket-money regularly are assumed more responsible about money, thus their knowledge and skills of using money are better, they have more information about diversity and prices of products and thus they display a better consumer behavior. In this perspective, it's parallel with the study of Pliner *et al.* [32] that our sample group was composed of students who receive pocket-money regularly and they were found in the Early Majority category as the result of the research. In accordance with the findings, it can be said that the participants in our sample group are not in hurry when spending money, evaluate the alternatives and consume the goods and products about which they received recommendation. Also it can be mentioned that the existence of a significant relationship between conscious consumer and consumer responsibility consciousness points in conscious consumerism questionnaire is in support of this thesis.

In heuristic studies, it was determined that both innovators and opinion leaders are mainly females, youth and people with a high educational and income level [33, 34]. Schumpeter [35] asserted that economic and social resources transit to efficient fields from inefficient ones thanks to innovations. Innovativeness also constitutes the key point of economic growth and sustainable development. Today, efficiency and competition power for individuals, countries and companies depend on innovativeness. Hence, first of all society must be educated about innovativeness and their beliefs must be changed. In addition, especially entrepreneurs, employees, academicians and students must be convinced about innovations and educated as individuals who need new ideas. Consumer innovativeness will continue to be a research topic as long as business firms continue to present innovations to the market. And as long as the failure costs of presenting innovations increase, its importance will raise evenly. Although innovations mostly play an important role for facilitating consumers' life, all innovations are not necessary or desired by consumers. Hence, consumer resistance can be existed for some innovations. Moreover, it's observed that certain consumer groups sometimes do not adopt innovations [36]. Measuring innovativeness is important in several aspects. First of all, if business firms know who are in tendency to consume innovations, it will be a significant guide for them to make marketing decisions; because this information could find an answer

for several questions such as what innovation should include, how it will be located, distributed and priced, how media planning will be made and whether customer should be educated to use the innovations or not [37].

As the result of the obtained findings, it was determined that there is no statistical difference between male and female participants in terms of individual innovativeness, conscious consumerism, consumer responsibility consciousness, quality consciousness and budget-price consciousness ($p > 0,05$). Hirschman [38] mentioned that if it's considered in an individual level, all individuals are innovative to a certain extent and they adopt things and ideas they perceive as new throughout their life. Individuals do not display a fixed innovativeness during their life; rather they can exhibit different innovativeness ways in different times depending on their social status. This means different researches carried out on the same sample group in different times of their life could have different results. In the research carried out by Ersoy and Nazik [39] concerning the consumerism consciousness levels of adolescents, it was determined that female students has a higher consumerism consciousness level than the males. In the researches, it was mentioned that female children's attitudes of consumerism are developed at a younger age by experience. In the research of Foxman [40] it was found that half of 1079 young girls take on weekly market shopping task of their family and that 24% of them mainly make the brand decisions. As the result of our findings, it is thought that variable differences between the female and male participants depend on different variables and that the new consumer concepts result from crises, war and similar unfavorable events in the world also constitute another factor. Two internet researches that were carried out on 3000 consumers in 2009 and that included consumers older than 18 and six countries (United Kingdom, France, Germany, Netherlands, Italy and Poland) showed that consumer behaviors have undergone such a prominent change for the first time since the Second World War. The term and type "New Consumer" was existed who spends money in a controlled manner and places emphasis on family budget management and more savings. A consumption structure inclining to reason- and conscious-oriented assessments rather than greediness, incautious and profuse consumption and extravagancy lies at the bottom of new consumption understanding and new consumer concept. The primary reason for such a huge change in spending and saving behaviors in such a short time was the economic and social conditions and concerns resulted

from global crisis. Even if the effects of the crisis are expected to decrease in time; the new consumption understanding and culture of consumers will be conscious, selective, simple and benefit-oriented [41, 42]. Since the most promising solution for consumer protection is consumer education, it can be said that informing and protecting efforts may create more meaningful results in the long-term only through education.

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