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Research Article

Examination Of Generations' Online Shopping Preferences During Covid-19

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ABSTRACT

Covid-19 has permanently changed the economy, trade and social life and the purchasing behaviors of consumers. Especially cohorts, socio-economic characteristics and demographic characteristics make difference in purchasing behaviors. This study analysis the effects of generations, socio-economic and demographic factors on consumers' online purchasing behavior during the Covid-19 period. As a result, it is observed that Covid-19 affected online shopping habits of all generations, however younger generations tend to prefer online shopping much more than the other generations.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the biggest global problems of recent years, Covid-19 is an epidemic that causes the death of approximately 5.3 million people worldwide (WHO, 2021). The World Health Organization declared Covid-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020, and this caused all countries to take precautions in various ways (İnce & Kadioğlu, 2020). The rapid spread of the pandemic has not only caused health problems, but also greatly affected social and economic life and caused great changes in people's lives. Due to the high rate of transmission, governments have taken many measures such as the temporary closure of schools and companies and social isolation. In this direction, many calls were made to prevent people from leaving the house and curfews were implemented. Both the curfews and the desire of people not to enter crowded environments in order to maintain social distance have caused changes in the purchasing behavior of consumers.

With the increasing effect of Covid-19 in 2020, countries increased the measures they took and started to implement mandatory quarantine and curfew. During this time, consumers wanted to meet their needs without interacting with people, and this increased the demand for online shopping. Easier and faster price comparisons from online shopping platforms, easy delivery of the products they want to their doorsteps, and the ability to maintain social distance have had a great impact on consumers' preference for online shopping platforms (Özay, 2021).

After Covid-19 was declared a pandemic, governments decided to temporarily close many companies in order to minimize people's social interaction and encouraged them to work remotely. Many retail stores have been temporarily closed in countries where closure orders have been implemented (Koch, Frommeyer & Schewe, 2020). During this time, people faced economic uncertainty due to increasing unemployment and disruptions in the supply chain. Moreover, the temporary suspension or slowdown of the production activities of some factories caused a decrease in supply (Özay, 2021). This situation has caused the increasing demand not to be met and it has become more difficult for consumers to find what they are looking for in physical stores (Özay, 2021). This has increased the demand for online shopping.

While Covid-19 affects the economy, trade and social life, it also makes permanent changes in the purchasing preferences of consumers. One of these changes is the changes in product demands. For instance, while the demand for hygiene products and food has increased, the demand for makeup products has decreased (Kalyani, 2021). In

addition, changes in purchasing behaviors differ according to generations, socio-economic characteristics and demographic characteristics. The aim of this study is to determine the effects of generations, socio-economic and demographic factors on consumers' online purchasing behavior during the Covid-19 period. Due to the increase in the demand for online shopping during the Covid-19 period, the study on this subject will help the companies to develop their marketing strategies by helping to understand the generations who prefer online shopping.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Consumer Purchasing Behavior in the Covid-19

The purchasing behavior of consumers changes in difficult and stressful times such as the economic crisis. Consumers respond to any economic change or crisis that occurs by changing their consumption and spending. The panic created by Covid-19 and the uncertainty of its consequences caused panic among consumers. The crisis and shock situation experienced by the public affects their purchasing behavior, and consumers tend to stockpile products because they think that a large price increase or raw material shortage will occur (Loxton et al., 2020). Loxton et al. (2020) stated that the reason for this change in purchasing behavior during the Covid-19 period is composed of 4 reasons: consumer perception, fear of the unknown, behavior of coping with fear and social psychology. Consumers show hoarding behavior in order to protect themselves from possible mishaps in the supply chain (Sheth, 2020). However, this stocking and panic buying situation does not increase for every product group. While consumers mostly increased their expenditures for basic living expenses, a decrease was observed in luxury consumption expenditures.

With the development of technology, various innovations are made in product and service areas every day in order to make people's lives easier and more practical. E-commerce, which has entered our lives with the development of Information Technologies and the internet, has covered a large area of our lives in recent years. Santos et al. (2017) stated that e-commerce started in the 1970s, but only large companies used it for financial transactions and fund transfer in this process. E-commerce, the foundations of which were laid in this process, showed a great development towards the end of the 20th century. Today, e-commerce has shown great success due to the comfort it provides to consumers. The convenience of shopping 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, even on holidays, special days and public holidays, is one of the most important factors in consumers' preference. In addition, Covid-19 has greatly affected e-commerce and consumers' purchasing behavior. The demand for online shopping has increased as a result of the mandatory quarantine measures and curfews implemented by the governments. Allegations have been made that all these mandatory measures and restrictions have accelerated digital transformation and that many companies have started to sell their products via e-commerce. For this reason, the effect of Covid-19 on online shopping and consumer behavior has been a matter of great curiosity.

Various important arguments have been put forward that there has been a positive change in the online purchasing behavior of consumers during the Covid-19. Pham et al. (2020) conducted an online survey of 427 people from Vietnam in order to examine the purchasing behavior of consumers during the Covid-19 period and obtained results that support the argument. According to the research, the rate of consumers to prefer physical stores decreased by 50% in March 2020 (Pham, et al., 2020). At the same time, 67% of consumers believe that online shopping opportunities will be used in the future. The desire of consumers not to enter crowded and mass environments in order to protect themselves from Covid-19 is an important driving force that causes them to prefer online shopping. In addition, the fact that companies can easily see the types of products and services they provide on online shopping platforms and make price comparisons increases consumer satisfaction (İnce & Kadioğlu, 2020).

In quarantine, people began to prefer online shopping more than in the pre-covid period. This process has not only increased people's interest in online shopping, but also changed the order of priority in the categories in which consumers buy (Gu et al., 2021). People have shifted their interest from luxury products to inexpensive goods and services. People who started to spend more time at home due to the quarantines during the pandemic also increased their spending to relieve their home and living space. During the economic recession caused by the pandemic, the level of anxiety of consumers about whether they can meet their basic needs such as rent and loan payments, food, goods, and medicine increased expenditures for unmet needs such as food, shelter, and health (Baltacı & Akaydın, 2020).

Similar to previous crisis periods, during the Covid 19 pandemic, consumers prioritized the core layer of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, the consumption of basic needs and non-durable goods (Loxton et al., 2021). The Covid-19 virus, which emerged in March, caused panic buying in people, causing consumers to lose their rational attitude and try to buy more than they needed. Unfounded rumors and news spread from unreliable sources have increased the tendency of consumers to stock up, especially regarding food and hygiene items (Baltacı & Akaydın, 2020). With the increase in the level of fear and anxiety of consumers worldwide, canned foods, dry products such as

pasta and rice, bakery materials such as flour and sugar were purchased by consumers as necessary (Gu et al., 2021). A study conducted in India revealed that consumers were skeptical about eating in restaurants at the beginning of the pandemic and therefore bought food supplies for their homes online (Rao & Moorthy 2020). According to a study conducted on 1242 participants in Germany in March 2020, 14% of the participants stated that they stocked up on high amounts of durable food (pasta, rice, pulses, canned food, etc.) due to the fear and anxiety caused by the pandemic (Gerhold, 2020). Individuals' fear of being close to others due to the risk of contamination and the limitation of physical access to stores have increased the demand for food purchases from online channels (Richards & Rickard, 2020). After the outbreak of the pandemic, it was determined that the rate of online food purchases increased to 9% in Canada towards the end of March. E-commerce data related to the first 6-month period in 2020 revealed that the food and supermarket sector was among the sectors gaining momentum in that period (Özbay & Özcan, 2021). With the restaurants having to suspend their services due to closures, the amount of food consumed at home has increased and retail food sales have increased (Baltacı & Akaydın, 2020).

Security needs, which constitute the second stage in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, can also be applied to the Covid-19 period, as individuals are concerned about their life safety during the pandemic (Loxton et al., 2021). In this process, individuals mostly preferred to buy hand sanitizer, mask, and other sanitary products that could meet their safety needs to ensure their safety. The demand for products with a long shelf life and medical products such as disinfectants, masks and gloves has increased, and orders have been placed online with the thought that not many people have touched it (Yıldız, 2020). Five weeks after America's first officially identified case announced on January 30, 2020, sales of medical products such as disinfectants and masks increased by 53% (Hacıoğlu & Sağlam, 2020). After the announcement that the virus was seen in Turkey, there was a significant increase in purchases in categories such as cologne, vinegar, pasta, and pulses in the first week of March. In a study conducted in Germany in March 2020, about 16% of respondents stated that they purchase large quantities of hygiene products that provide virus protection, such as hand sanitizer and soap (Gerhold, 2020). Consumer consumption has shifted to supplements and medical needs that will strengthen the immune system and protect individuals from viruses. In March 2020, consumption of disposable gloves increased by 670% year-on-year (Loxton et al., 2021). In addition, the consumption of pain relievers increased by 99%, cough medicine by 535% and the use of drugs containing vitamin supplements increased by 166%.

With Covid-19, changes have occurred in the preferences and habits of consumers. The use of houses to serve multiple purposes such as business, education, sports, and entertainment played an important role in these changes. Due to all the shutdowns and quarantines, people around the world started to buy technological devices such as home sports equipment and game consoles to spend their free time at home (Baltacı & Akaydın, 2021). In addition, office equipment was among the products preferred by people working remotely during the covid period. The increase in the time spent at home has caused people to prefer casual clothes instead of formal clothes (Hacıoğlu & Sağlam, 2021). In this process, products containing robots and similar artificial intelligence have been mostly demanded by people to reduce contact with surfaces. Movie theater closures and curfews have doubled the time adults spend on streaming services daily compared to pre-pandemic times (Rahman & Arif, 2021). In the study conducted in November 2020 to examine the consumption behavior of consumers in Turkey, the majority of the participants stated that the time they spend on surfing the Internet, spending time with family members, shopping online and watching visual content at home has increased (Hacıoğlu & Sağlam, 2020). Pandemic also had a positive effect on consumer demand for books toward online shopping. In a study on consumer behavior in Vietnam, it was seen that consumers bought ebooks to protect themselves from the virus because they avoided physical contact during this period (Özbay & Özcan, 2021).

2.2. Effects of Covid-19 on E-Commerce

Although the anxiety of contagion around the world causes people to stay at home, creating bad results for the retail sector, the same is not true for e-commerce. Changing consumer behaviors and lifestyles with the epidemic supported digital transformation and paved the way for the e-commerce industry (Hacıoğlu & Sağlam, 2021). The increase in interest in online shopping has significantly increased the visitor traffic in e-commerce.

Consumers' shopping methods have begun to take shape within the framework of quarantine and isolation practices announced in various countries of the world due to Covid-19. The World Health Organization (WHO) stated that after the declaration of the pandemic, the number of active users in e-commerce increased (Hacıoğlu & Sağlam, 2021). According to the data announced in Turkey, it was stated that e-commerce volume increased by 200% after the first case was announced on March 11th. In a study examining the 11 most visited websites in Turkey, it was seen that the total number of visitors in the first quarter of 2020 was 27 million more than the total number of visitors in the first quarter of 2019 (Zeo Agency, 2020). It was observed that the site-based traffic of 11 websites examined in the marketplaces sector increased between the first quarter of 2019 and the first quarter of 2020. While

Trendyol has the most significant increase among marketplaces, there are also increases in time spent on product-price comparison sites. While the effect of the time increase caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is observed in the increasing traffic volume, it can be said that this traffic also has new formations. In particular, the increase in the time spent on product-price comparison sites can be interpreted as a change in society habits. It is possible to say that smart shopping steps have become more common with the increase in the time to think about a product. This study revealed the fact that the economic difficulties experienced during the pandemic led visitors to make more comparisons about the products they want to buy. In another study conducted to understand the shopping behavior of consumers during the pandemic period in Turkey, 26.8% of the consumers who participated in the study stated that they preferred Trendyol, 23.31% Migros Virtual Market and 7% Hepsiburada for online shopping during the pandemic (İnce & Kadioğlu, 2020). N11.com, Getir, Lcw and idifix's websites are other websites visited by Turkish consumers for online shopping. When the e-commerce period before the Covid-19 pandemic and the pandemic period is compared in Turkey, the data in the 12 weeks after the first week of the Covid-19 case indicates that e-commerce has increased by approximately 160% compared to the same period of the previous year (Hacıalioglu & Sağlam, 2020). In the report published by Statista company, it has been announced that 20.2% growth is expected in Turkey's e-commerce volume between the years 2020-2024.

On the other hand, the skeptical approach of consumers towards online shopping is one of the important obstacles in the e-commerce process (Becan, 2021). In the new generation of shopping, one of the important factors that determine the decisions of consumers to buy or continue to buy is trust. For this reason, most businesses try to personalize their brands on social media and other digital media in order to create an emotional bond with consumers and gain their trust. It has been observed that emotional attachment to brands reduces consumers' insecure approach to online shopping.

2.3. The impact of Covid-19 on Different Generations' Online Purchasing Behaviors

2.3.1. Generations, Their Features and SWOT Analysis, Purchasing Styles

Generations can be defined as groups of people who were born in recent histories, lived in close periods and shared common characteristics (Yıldız, 2021). Although generations live in close periods and share common characteristics, every generation has differences across them. There is a generation cohort theory which was discussed by Karl Mannheim in 1952 firstly, in this theory it is believed that every generation may differ from the other due to a variety of experiences that occur at diverse times (Ignatus & Hecknova, 2014). Theory additionally states that differences in generations are not caused by age of the people, these differences are more likely to occur because of their experiences and shared influences of each specific generation. In this way, a group of people who were born during the same time and grow with equal experiences are going to have parallel beliefs, attitudes, values and expectations that basically create generational identity. Eger et al. (2021) argue that generational identity has an important role in influencing the purchasing and shopping behavior of the generations. In the following paragraphs, each generation and their features will be explained briefly.

2.3.1.1. Baby Boomers (1945-1964)

Baby Boomers are the group of people who were born after World War 2 in the big crisis era, also known as population explosion, between 1946 and 1964 (Yıldız, 2021). Additionally, Eger et al. (2021) report that baby boomers can be described as individualist, competitive, free people who have strong willingness to have self-fulfillment via self-growth. So, these people have job involvement highly that clearly leads to success in career and economic safety. Strengths of Baby Boomers are compatible with teamwork, self-motivated, prescriptive while weaknesses of them are fond of fun and spending money, not very good at technology, egotistical and workaholic. Furthermore, though they have the opportunity of being first in meeting with technology, they have threats of uncontrolled increase in population (Yıldız, 2021). In addition, baby boomers are also called digital immigrants since they were not born in the era of digitalism. Because of that, face to face, by phone or traditional mail are their mostly preferences in communication ways. If the shopping style of these people are investigated, it can be seen that they have less willingness to shop in different places since they prefer to look for near home locations. Also, these people generally prefer the products which are budget-friendly, reliable, and properly priced (Eger et al., 2021). Finally, Yıldız (2021) explains that there are 14,82% baby boomers in Turkey recently.

2.3.1.2. Generation X (1965-1982)

This generation that is at peace with technology and knowledge consists of a group of people who were born between 1965 and 1979. Additionally, Yıldız (2021) reports that their entrepreneurial and independent spirit takes attention that is why they do not prefer to deal with stressed works while they spend a lot of time on adaptation of technological changes. First personal computers aimed for personal usage took from this generations' individuals

so, these rapid changes in technology creates radical changes in these generations. Strengths of this generation are preferring less stressed works, high adaptation skills, high self-confidence, competitiveness while their weakness is dissatisfaction. Furthermore, their opportunities are witnessing the technology revolution, being loyal customers, and using communication tools effectively while their threats are facing some crisis like economic and petroleum and some political issues like left, right ideas. Eger et al. (2021) explain that since generation X grew up with technological innovations such as computers, mobile phones, they have more tendency to have communication with these devices and they do not like face-to-face communication as much as previous generations. Interestingly, they do not care about personal advertisements and tend to reject all of the segmentation and marketing strategies. On the other hand, they care about a more direct and clear communication style which basically affects their purchasing behaviors. They generally prefer to purchase products that are designed differently and uniquely for their interest while this generation does not have high price sensitivity. Finally, in Turkey, there is 19.45% X generation (Yıldız, 2021).

2.3.1.3. Generation Y (1980-2001)

Generation Y also called the millennium generation were born to the world with the existence of digital media. That is why people also know this generation as the Internet generation, for example Yıldız (2021) reports that two-thirds of Generation Y were acquainted with computers before the age of five. So, their strengths are born in the digital era, quick learning, fondness for freedom, willingness to research, aware about environmental issues while their weaknesses are quickly bored, selfishness, rejecting authority, impatient, unsatisfactory. In addition, their opportunities are using technology effectively, open to new experiences, usage of social channels actively whereas their threat is employment problems caused by digitalism and industrial development. Their purchasing behaviors are different from the other two generations since they prefer online shopping because they believe that they will be offered more product type compared to traditional stores and online shopping has benefits of quick and easy delivery, and low prices. In addition, interestingly, if they go to traditional stores, they do not want their parents with them while shopping (Eger et al., 2021). On the other hand, this generation's customers have a tendency to prefer to spend more on personal or digital devices rather than clothes while they suffer because of a higher number of debts and gain less money on average compared to 2 other generations. Social media is a very important communication channel for Generation Y and they have a variety of mobile devices and platforms. Additionally, they prefer quick shopping in many situations on the contrary of Baby Boomers. Finally, Yıldız (2021) reports that 31,19% of the people in Turkey contain Generation Y.

2.3.1.4. Generation Z (2000-...)

Generation Z also called the Internet generation consists of people who were born in and after 2000. Individuals from this generation who will be newly appointed to business life, are predicted to be loyal to brands and companies. Generation Z individuals have the best synchronized motor skills like eye, hand, ear in human history. Furthermore, their strengths are being digital from the born, born in mechanically developed world, highly talented on intelligence and skills whereas Generation Z has the weaknesses of depressiveness, rejection of authority and rules, and restlessness. On the other hand, their opportunities are limitless imagination while their threat is being unfaithful. As it is expected from Gen Z, they also have a tendency to prefer online shopping rather than traditional ones. According to Ayuni (2019), Generation Z looks for high-quality websites because they think that they have more value for them. In addition, their satisfaction and loyalty have a great impact on the industries. According to data collected by Yıldız (2021) there is 30,71% Generation Z in Turkey.

2.3.2. Generation's Respond to Coronavirus in the Concept Of Online Shopping

Since the concept of this study is investigation of behavioral changes on online shopping due to Covid-19, this part of the article will include generation's changes on online shopping as a response to Coronavirus.

Eger et al. (2021) hypothesize that during the period of Coronavirus pandemic, shopping behaviors of different generations as customers are impacted differently. The reason behind these differences can be caused by purchasing factors that affect an individual's purchasing behaviors. Karaboğa and Özsaatçı (2021) claims that these factors can be consumer personalities, psychological factors, marketing factors, physical factors, cultural factors, social factors and crisis periods, pandemics. So, if these factors are considered differently in each generation's period, it is obvious that there should be differences in purchasing habits as also mentioned in each generation's feature's part.

2.3.2.1. Baby Boomers (1945-1964)

Data collected by Puspita et al. (2021) demonstrate that the baby boomer generation does not prefer online shopping for food because of some concerns about the process of food that can cause possible spread of

coronavirus. For instance, according to an interview made by Puspita et al. (2021), a man from the baby boomer generation says that “I was preferring online shopping especially for food before Covid-19 but after the pandemic, I prefer to cook myself”. By contrast, Dailey (2021) reports that customers older than 65 started to prefer online shopping compared to previous years with nearly 50% increase and their rate of purchasing frequency rose to 40%. On the other hand, Jezerc (2021) made a survey in America and found out that Baby Boomer generations did not return to stores for shopping even after the vaccination period. Based on the survey results, Baby Boomer individuals still do not feel safe about trying testers for beauty products or trying dresses in dressing room, new shoes compared to other generations. Furthermore, Jordan (2020) reports that more than 25% Baby Boomer customers have used online delivery channels like Shipt or Amazon Prime minimum once in the 3 months since the beginning of Covid with the start of orders of stay-at-home. Additionally, 61% of these baby boomers say that they started to use these online services more because of Covid-19.

2.3.2.2. Generation X (1965-1982)

Generation X is better than the Baby boomers in the context of technology usage as mentioned in the previous part. According to a recent global survey, though this generation does not deal with internet so much compared to Y and Z generation, 28% of Generation X have used online shopping channels to purchase products after Covid-19 pandemic occurred while only 11% of baby boomers have used these channels (PwC, 2021). In addition to that, this generation will also spend more money on online purchasing in the next months in specific categories like fashion, travel, health and beauty, takeaway food etc. On the other hand, it is also reported that, although Generation X individuals do not frequently make their purchases online, when they shop online, they order so many things. So, 47% of Generation X prefer the big-basket shopping style since they are not able to use the internet so effectively. On the other hand, 40% of Generation X's give importance to convenience as priority, 35% of them have priority of price while 25% of the individuals have quality priority. Furthermore, according to a study done by Awasthi and Mehta (2021), X Generation's individuals are less interested in online shopping compared to Y and Z Generations because they do not have so much information about technology or the internet. That is why Generation X believes that traditional shopping is better and online shopping is risky due to payment. However, though they are not interested and do not want to prefer online shopping, interestingly, in Covid-19 period they experienced online shopping more than Generation Z and Y. Because it is reported that Generation X's perception about online shopping has changed, now they understand that online shopping is useful for them. Even, they think that the best option for shopping during Covid-19 pandemic is online shopping because of safety and health issues.

2.3.2.3. Generation Y (1980-2001)

As the other generations' habits change due to covid-19 in the context of shopping, Millennials or Generation Y's shopping behaviors are also affected. After the coronavirus pandemic, customers generally try to get rid of being in crowded or public areas due to the spread of the virus. Because of that, as other generations Generation Y also started to prefer online shopping websites or channels especially for fashion products in lockdown times (Lim et al, 2021). In addition, Lim et al. (2021) report that Millennials are a big part of the global digital area since they were born in a more digitalized world compared to previous generations. For instance, it is demonstrated that nearly 90% of Generation Y have active social media accounts, which is why their purchasing power is more powerful than Generation X and Baby Boomers. Because social media services have great importance to have information about the products to be purchased. So, Generation Y have a tendency to purchase for enjoyment or they can have impulse purchasing activities. Also, they like to spend many hours researching products and prefer to follow the latest trends from the internet instead of going to traditional stores. According to PwC's 2021 survey, among 3,629 Millennials, 43% of these people used online shopping channels between the periods of 2020 and 2021 for buying products via computer or mobile phones. In contrast to Generation X, most of the Generation Y people about 60% make research about their products very detailly before they purchase.

2.3.2.4. Generation Z (2000-...)

In the period that Generation Z, technology, and the internet are quite developed compared to previous periods. As a result of that, Generation Z actively uses internet and online shopping channels compared to other previous generations. So, this active usage impacts and gives direction to online shopping behaviors of Generation Z (Altun & Karataş, 2021). Statista reports the comparison of Gen Z's online shopping behaviors before and after Covid-19, and it is demonstrated that there is 24% increase in purchasing of Gen Z through social media channels while purchasing from websites increased 13% as shown in Figure 1.

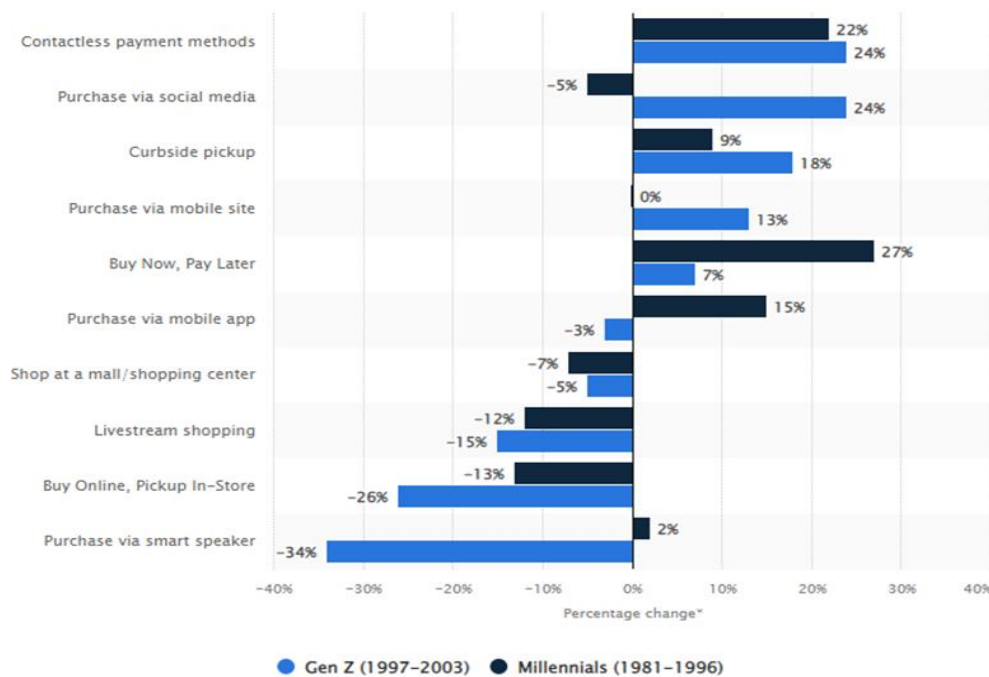


Figure 1: Change in Gen Z and millennial shopping habits after COVID-19 2021 (Statista, 2021)

By contrast, usage of mobile applications by Gen Z while purchasing interestingly decreased 3% while going to the shopping center for purchasing products decreased 7% too. The possible reason behind the decrease of mobile app usage for shopping is increase in usage of social media channels for shopping purposes. It is highlighted that about 65% of Generation Z use Instagram for online shopping purposes, they say that Instagram affects their buying behaviors (Alonso, 2021). Additionally, Generation Z prefer more online shopping websites and e-commerce channels during covid-19 period among baby boomers, X, Y generations (Petković et al., 2020).

2.3.3. Impact of Covid-19 On Online Shopping Behaviors Of People Based On Their Demographic Features

Customers' purchasing behaviors have tendency to change in the periods of crisis or pandemics because of over stress or panic (Özay, 2021). So, the consumer shows her/his reactions to changing actions with changing her/his buying behavior. Since Covid-19 is also a crisis that totally caused a change in humanity's life, purchasing behaviors of customers shaped and affected by this crisis.

On the other hand, due to improvements in technology and electronic devices, customers have already started to use online shopping channels while shopping. After Covid-19, usage of online shopping channels increased too. In the literature, it is supported that there are many factors that shape customer's online shopping behaviors during the coronavirus pandemic (İnce & Kadioğlu, 2020). In this part of the study, how demographic features of customers impacts their online shopping behaviors in the pandemic period.

2.3.3.1. Gender

Gender is an important demographic factor that determines and separates the needs and preferences of humans. That is why, in the Covid-19 pandemic period, gender differences result in different buying behaviors. Data collected by Keskin (2021) shows that although both women customers have more concerns about shopping from traditional stores and find them risky more compared to men consumers, interestingly, it is seen that men prefer and use online shopping more compared to women customers. By contrast, according to a study that includes 55 men online shopping customers and 145 women consumers, women with a rate of 68.3% changed their online shopping preferences more during Covid compared to men shoppers (Danışmaz, 2020).

On the other hand, TÜİK reported a study that demonstrates different types of products purchased in the last 3 months in 2021 by genders (TÜİK, 2021). Based on data shown in Figure 2 below, male customers prefer online shopping more than female consumers in some of the categories whereas in some categories, it's the opposite. For instance, women customers shop their clothes, shoes and accessories online nearly 13% more compared to men shoppers while men customers use online channels for their sport goods about 7% more than females. Moreover, there is a big percentage difference in the category of technological devices like computers, tablets, smartphones and their accessories. Whereas about 25% of males shop these technological devices online, only 11% of females purchase them online. On the other hand, there is more than 30% difference in the cosmetics and beauty products between female and male shoppers.

Mal türleri Type of goods	Toplam Total	Erkek Male	Kadın Female
Giyim (spor giyim dahil), ayakkabı ve aksesuar (çanta, takı vb.) Clothes (including sport clothing), shoes or accessories (e.g. bags, jewellery)	70.7	64.1	77.8
Spor malzemeleri (spor giyim hariç) Sports goods (excluding sport clothing)	13.8	17.0	10.3
Çocuk oyuncakları veya çocuk bakım ürünleri (çocuk bezi, biberon, bebek arabası vb.) Children toys or childcare items (e.g. nappies, bottles, baby strollers)	16.8	15.3	18.5
Mobilya, ev aksesuarları (halı, perde vs.), bahçe malzemeleri (bahçe bitkileri, alet ve edavattlar vb.) Furniture, home accessories (e.g. carpets or curtains) or gardening products (e.g. tools, plants)	21.7	20.6	22.9
Cd, plak gibi müzik ürünleri Music as CDs, vinyls etc	2.4	2.7	2.0
DVD, Blu-ray vb. film izleme ürünleri Films or series as DVDs, Blu-ray etc.	1.8	2.2	1.2
Basılı kitap, dergi, gazete Printed books, magazines or newspapers	27.7	23.9	31.6
Bilgisayar, tablet, cep telefonu veya aksesuarları Computers, tablets, mobile phones or accessories	18.3	24.7	11.5
Elektronik araçlar (kamera, radyo, TV, DVD oynatıcı, video vb.) veya beyaz ev eşyaları (çamaşır makinesi, bulaşık makinesi, buzdolabı vs.) Consumer electronics (e.g. TV-sets, stereos, cameras) or household appliances (e.g. washing machines)	14.5	19.6	9.1
İlaç veya gıda takviyeleri (vitaminler, mineraller, doğal ürünler, probiyotikler vb.) Medicine or dietary supplements such as vitamins (online renewal of prescriptions is not included)	13.3	11.7	15.0
Lokantalar, fast food zincirlerinden, catering şirketlerinden yapılan teslimatlar Deliveries from restaurants, fast-food chains, catering services	40.8	42.7	38.8
Gıda ürünleri (yiyecek ve içecek) (öğün kiti sağlayıcılardan alınanlar da dahildir.) Food or beverages from stores or from meal-kits providers	33.4	33.4	33.4
Kozmetik, güzellik ve sağlık ürünleri Cosmetics, beauty or wellness products	28.7	17.6	40.6
Temizlik ürünleri, kişisel bakım malzemeleri (deterjan, temizlik bezleri, diş fırçası, hijyenik ürünler vb.) Cleaning products or personal hygiene products (e.g. toothbrushes, handkerchiefs, washing detergents, cleaning cloths)	27.6	22.4	33.2
Bisiklet, motosiklet (moped), araba veya diğer araçlar ile bu araçların yedek parçaları Bicycles, mopeds, cars, or other vehicles or their spare parts	5.3	9.0	1.4

Figure 2: Proportion of Internet purchases by individuals in the last 3 months for the private use by type of goods and by sex (TÜİK, 2021)

2.3.3.2. Age

İnce and Kadioğlu (2020) hypothesize that online buying behaviors of customers differ based on their age in the Covid-19 period. Based on the study that researchers made, it is seen that customers whose ages are between 18 and 31 shop online more than other ages.

Furthermore, Danışmaz (2020) confirms the above result such that 75% of people whose age is between 18-24 changed their preferences of online shopping the most. This means that coronavirus leads to an increase of online shopping among young age people because there are many advantages of online shopping and as also mentioned in the generation section of the study, digital literacy level of younger generations much more than of the others.

2.3.3.3. Education level

People who have higher education have more information about purchasing food from online websites or apps and do not find online shopping complex compared to low educated customers (Alaimo et al., 2020). Becan (2021) explains that people who have graduate and undergraduate education level are more motivated to new generation shopping channels compared to other people who have lower education level. The author adds that there is a positive correlation between education level and positive attitude to online shopping platforms. The results of survey conducted by Danışmaz (2020) also found the same relation.

2.3.3.4. Income Level

Deloitte (2021) reports that whereas people who have less income do not change their shopping habits in the Covid-19 pandemic times, people who have higher income show bigger changes in the context of online shopping behaviors. In addition, it is analyzed when income levels of customers increase, the possibility of online shopping usage also increases (Becan, 2021). On the other hand, according to a survey conducted to 200 people who have different income levels, people whose income level is between 6000-10000 TL show huge change and increase in the context of online shopping.

2.3.3.5. Marital Status

It is seen that married people increased their online shopping activities more compared to non-married customers because they give importance to hygiene due to the virus for their kids and decrease the intensity and possibility of going out with the transition to home office work environment (Becan, 2021). Danışmaz (2020) highlights that married customers increased their usage of online shopping with about 65%.

3. CONCLUSION

The Covid-19 pandemic has adversely affected the economic and social life of people from the time it emerged to the present day. Countries have taken many measures such as curfew, remote work, and mandatory quarantine practices in order to reduce the spread of the pandemic. All these measures not only affected social life, but also greatly affected the economy. Situations such as the temporary closure of companies and remote working led to problems such as the inability to meet the supply. Also, people avoided interacting with people in an effort to avoid the pandemic and maintain social isolation. This situation has affected the demand for online shopping. This study was conducted to investigate the effects on consumers' online purchasing behavior during the Covid-19 period. As the information and analyzes gathered from various studies and articles in this study shows, Covid-19 has caused changes in consumers' online purchasing behavior. As a result, it has been observed that online purchasing behaviors differ according to generations, socio-economic and demographic factors.

Due to the virus that is spreading around the world, various measures have been taken to ensure that citizens stay at home, such as the transition to online education and the execution of works in public and private institutions with minimum personnel. This process has greatly affected the lifestyles and habits of individuals who do not go out unless they must and stay away from crowded environments. It has been observed that people try to meet their basic needs by reducing their unnecessary expenditures in this process. When the researches are examined, it is seen that the interest of the consumers in hygiene products such as disinfectant, disposable gloves, masks and soap etc. has increased. For this reason, it can be suggested that cleaning and hygiene companies emphasize words such as disinfectant, hygiene provider, hygiene enhancer during marketing. When the researches were examined, it was concluded that individuals reduced ordering food from restaurants in order to minimize the risk of virus transmission and started to cook at home by purchasing products that will not spoil in the long term with the online shopping method. Consumers have had to meet many of their needs online due to quarantines and closures. For this reason, it will be beneficial for companies to develop applications that will enable consumers to shop online easily. During Covid-19 pandemic, it is found that the shopping behaviors of the generations changed due to virus's causes like lockdowns, social distance etc. Additionally, it is also found that every generation's respond differs from each other since their features or the time period that they live are different. According to researchers' studies, though baby boomers are not good at technology usage, their traditional shopping behavior replaced with online shopping methods because most of them find traditional shopping is riskier than the online shopping. Furthermore, usage of the online shopping channels by baby boomers increased during the pandemic time. On the other hand, since generation X is better in the technology usage than the baby boomers, their usage of online shopping channels after pandemic is seen to be more. However, generation X people is found online payment systems for online shopping channels riskier than the traditional ones. That is why, compared to Y and Z generations, generation X have less change in the context of online shopping behaviors since they do not have so much information about the technology compared to Y and Z generations. Additionally, since generation Y and Z use internet especially social media so much in their daily life, their shopping behaviors tended to be more online. Though both of Y and Z generations use internet and social media actively for online shopping, it is found that generation Z have tendency to use online shopping channels especially through social media channels compared to every other generation. On the other hand, it is found that online shopping behaviors of the people have tendency to be different by their demographic features like age, gender, income and education level, and marital status. According to studies, it is obtained that people who have higher education and income level have tendency to shop online compared to less educated and less income. In addition, it is obtained that there is negative correlation with age and online shopping tendency, when age increases, tendency to shop online decreases. Finally, women's willingness to shop online more than the men's willingness.

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