

## YIKICI KRİZ DÖNEMLERİNDE TÜKETİCİ DAVRANIŞI

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### Özet

Rusya-Ukrayna savaşı ve Covid-19 salgını gibi güncel ve beklenmedik krizler; yaşam maliyeti, fiyatlar ve tüketici davranışları üzerinde etkili olmuştur. Dünya, dinamik olarak değişen bir sistemi deneyimlemekte ve tüketici davranışı bu değişikliklere yanıt vermektedir. Bu büyük sorunlar ve ardından sınırların kapatılması ve diğer ticaret kısıtlamaları gibi önlemler, uluslararası ticareti azaltmış ve hükümetlerin korumacılığı bir seçenek, alternatif küreselleşme olarak görmelerine neden olmuştur. Ayrıca kriz nedeniyle enflasyonun artması tedarik zincirinde aksamalara neden olmaktadır. Kriz temelli tüketici davranışları ve yeni alışkanlıklar ortaya çıkmıştır. Salgın nedeniyle zorunlu izolasyon ve hijyen koşulları, tedarik zincirindeki zorluklar ve Rusya-Ukrayna savaşı nedeniyle fiyatların artması tüketicileri Kendin Yap (DIY) davranışlarına yöneltmiştir. Ayrıca daha düşük fiyat ve benzersizlik sunduğu için alıcılar alışkanlıklarını değiştirip ikinci el tüketime yönelmiştir. Son olarak, artan enflasyon ve fiyatlar ile arz ve talep dengesinin bozulması, tüketimin azalmasına neden olmuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Covid-19, Kendin Yap, Salgın, Tüketici Davranışları

## CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN SEVERE TURBULENCE ERA

### Abstract

Recent and unexpected crises such as the Russia-Ukraine war and the Covid-19 pandemic have had an impact on the cost of living, prices, consumption, and consumer behavior. World experiences a dynamic changing world system and consumer behavior responds to these changes. These major issues and then the precautions such as the closure of borders and other trade restrictions reduced the international trade and caused governments to see protectionism as a choice, alternative globalization. Furthermore, the increase in inflation because of the crisis causes a disruption in the supply chain. Crisis-based consumer behaviors have been emerged and new habits emerged. Compulsory isolation and hygiene circumstances due to the pandemic, supply chain challenges and increase in prices because of the Russia-Ukraine war led consumers to involve in Do-It-Yourself (DIY) behaviors. Additionally, because it offers lower pricing and uniqueness, buyers are changing their habits and turning to second-hand consumption. Finally, rising inflation and prices, as well as the breakdown of the supply and demand equilibrium, have resulted in decreased consumption.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, Do-It-Yourself (DIY), Pandemic, Consumer Behavior

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## INTRODUCTION

Global crises do affect countries, their citizens, industries, consumers and patterns of consumption. The recent catastrophic pandemic, Covid-19, has plunged the world into a spiral of crisis from supply shocks to job losses. By spreading across large geographic areas and reducing population immunity, the pandemic has had a negative effect on communities' health, economy, political and social structures (Qiu et.al, 2017). The global Covid-19 outbreak, which moved across continents and countries, resulted in more than 650 million diagnoses and the death of more than 6.6 million individuals (WHO, 2022). However, Covid-19 is not the first documented global pandemic that killed millions of people in human history, nor will it be the last. Twenty-five percent of the population died as a result of the Athenian plague, which began in Ethiopia and spread to Egypt and Greece 16 centuries ago. The Antoninus Plague, Justinian Plague Epidemic, Black Death, Spanish Flu, HIV epidemic, Sars Virus, H1N1, and Ebola are among the epidemic diseases that have killed millions of people throughout history. In addition to the deaths they caused, these illnesses have led to weakness in the military, cultural and economic strength, shortage of basic food supply due to disruptions in trade, and increased rates of hunger and depression (Huremović, 2019). Beside the worldwide crises that occur under the banner of the outbreak, countries also experience economic difficulties occasionally, and they have a very long history like viruses. In the twenty-first century, the Great Depression of 2008 had a detrimental impact on globalization and country trade rates, causing a decline, and this situation highlighted negative assumptions in the global economic growth (Grigorev & Salikhov, 2008). This economic crisis, which began in the United States in 2007, resulted in the worst recession in financial history and expanded to a number of countries. As a result of this worldwide crisis, the unemployment rate increased in December 2007 from 5 percent to 9 percent as of October 2009 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). Furthermore, it has been suggested that global imbalance is caused by some countries' excessive savings and others' excessive consumption. Individual wealth and spending have fallen with the reduction in export rates, and the global economic crisis has once again reached a stalemate (Verick & Islam, 2010).

This pandemic has reduced and shrunk economic growth and exports at macro level, while increased anxiety and stress in the society at micro level. At the beginning of the pandemic, problems such as the imbalance between the demand and the supply for personal protective equipment, as well as a lack of ability to provide medicine for patients with conditions such as cancer and diabetes due to limited mobility and halted manufacturing processes. The tendency of individuals' consumption and purchasing preferences to online purchasing, the increase in home-made and healthy foods were the remarkable changes that occurred in daily life. The loss in the number of tourists, particularly due to the decline in the tourism and travel industries resulted in a reduction in the export income of the countries (Hettiarachchi et.al, 2021). The recent war between Russia and Ukraine has also negatively impacted and devastated consumer markets. Because of the war, stores have been running out of cooking oil and fuel prices have increased and fertilizer supply decreased in the agricultural sector (NPR, 2022). This article aims to shed light on changing consumer behavior in this turmoil. Firstly, consequences of these recent crises are analyzed in a global context. Then corresponding responses of consumers are examined in detail.

## 1. MACRO CHANGES AND THE RESULTING CHANGES IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

### 1.1 Globalization and De-Globalization

Increase in exports produce an increase in the economies of the countries, bringing them face to face with the domestic market and forcing them into a competitive environment. Radical changes,

developments, and frequencies in transportation, technology, communication, and production have resulted in a greater need for information and labor between countries, and as a result, countries have become more connected to one another (İncekara & Savrul, 2012). People, technology, foreign direct investment, and capital movement in the national arena are defined as globalization and it is underlined that globalization is not just about the economics, the global spread of viruses like Covid-19, flu, and aids is also an example of globalization. Although the globalization process is frequently at the center, there are occasions when de-globalization occurs simultaneously with globalization. Indeed, some scholars argue that de-globalization is more important than globalization, and that this leads globalization to disappear (Kornprobst & Paul, 2021). Madhok (2021) argues that three events in the last 20 years have accelerated de-globalization: China's accession to the World Trade Organization in 2001, the 2008 financial crisis, and, finally, the Covid-19 pandemic. According to Sapovadia (2022), some changes do not always occur gradually and perfectly, and they can destroy the globe in a short period of time such as Covid-19. Globalization has been badly damaged in three months thanks to the pandemic, despite 30 years of effort.

In addition to the fact that people survive in hospitals or at home due to the pandemic, our country and the world are facing an intense risk in terms of globalization, trade relations and supply chain and have to struggle them and which brings a new era called as 'de-globalization'. Han (2022) claims that there has been a de-globalization as a result of decreased international trade and supply chain fractures. Due to the virus's rapid spread over the world in 2020, countries have taken business measures such as blocking borders and shutting down industries. However, these policies built a barrier to trade, resulting in a drop in consumption. Hyundai vehicle facilities in South Korea, have been shut down because of supply chain constraints. Furthermore, reduced demand for coal, steel, and petroleum goods has caused global sea shipments to be postponed. Consumption declines and supply chain disruptions both have had an impact on the global value chain. Economic trade, which is the foundation of international communication and contact has slowed as a result of the pandemic, and globalization has also slowed. It is unclear whether the pandemic will have a significant influence on trade and the economy, or whether the economy and trade will be able to recover before the pandemic hits again.

Companies have started to discuss how to get rid of and what to do for current supply chain and economic risks. Moreover, the number of restrictions in the economic fields, such as tariffs and subsidies, are increasing which cause fluctuations in economy every year except for the pandemic based supply chain risks. Stanojevic (2020) points out that the global financial crisis of 2009 created a barrier to international commerce growth and resulted in a decline in trade volume. In commercial domains, several restrictive measures have been implemented as a result of the weakening of economic activity, such as tariff rises and quantity limitations. The trade war between the United States and China, which has a significant impact on international trade, is at the heart of these policies. He claims that the reason for the decline in globalization is not directly related to the decrease in the trade volume or the increase in trade restrictions, but also to the increase in protectionism in the national economy. Looking at Serbia from the Balkan countries, it was stated that the number of restrictions reached 1100 from the global financial crisis to 2018, and they emphasized that this process especially affected the Western Balkan countries.

## 1.2 Protectionism

Because of global health, economic, and political issues, as well as the closure of countries' borders and industries, customs laws have been reorganized and tariffs have been raised, and this provides globalization a new dimension. Global crises led to countries adopting protectionist policies and introducing the concept of protectionism, in addition to turning away from globalization.

Abboussi (2010) defines protectionism as “Protectionism is when the government's trade policies are on the side of and support domestic producers while governments can increase the prices of exported products, reduce the costs of domestically produced goods, or limit foreign producers' to access the local market. Quotas for foreign products, customs duties used in imports, and government support for domestic companies are some of the ways in which countries implement protectionist policies in order to reduce and limit the supply of imported goods. One of the outcome of protectionism is a fall in imports and a decrease in exports and the costs of protectionism, according to the author, outweigh the benefits. Protectionism helps domestic production and labor, but society and consumers cannot benefit. In this situation, it has a detrimental impact on society and consumers, as well as the economy, investment, and employment.

Fu (2021) makes similarities between trade protectionism and trade liberalization and highlights that protectionism's goal is to defend domestic businesses, enhance exports, and reduce imports. In addition to pandemics' effect on being protectionist, financial crises also have an effect on protectionism in trade such as the 2007 US financial crisis which caused countries to adopt their updated policies in response to the crisis. Because of the rise in trade protectionism, the recovery of international trade after both the pandemic and the financial crisis is taking a long and serious time. The purpose of countries to prefer a protectionism policy is to provide their own benefits and at the end of the protectionism process countries get some end results. Some of these results can be explained such as protectionism does not benefit world trade protectionism is an expression that countries use for their own interests, and there is no right or wrong concept for protectionism from their point of view, and protectionism varies historically and periodically.

According to Kiyota (2022), the protectionism movement has risen recently, which depends on the United Kingdom's quitting the EU, the United States' higher customs tariffs on imports, Japan's export restrictions on South Korea, and the Covid-19 outbreak. Protectionism increased after the 2008 financial crisis, according to Wang and Wu (2021), and China was the country with the most protectionist measures. They go on to explain that during the pandemic, countries are likely to strengthen trade restrictions. Furthermore, according to the study, when the GDP before and after the pandemic is compared, a reduction of around 7% will be linked to trade protectionism, and this will mark the beginning of the recession in the economy.

## 1.3 Supply Chain Shocks

The biggest international problem caused by the recent pandemic disease and economic crises is supply chain management. The inability to deliver vaccines to countries during the pandemic and the difficulty of accessing food due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict are some of the problems arising from the disruption of the supply chain.

The Covid-19 pandemic will have an even more terrifying impact on the supply chain than the SARS virus did in 2002. The reason for this effect is because China is a major player in the global economy, and other countries depend on China for their manufacturing centers. Imports from China impacted the greatest purchases of vehicles, equipment, and pharmaceuticals, resulting in a 20% reduction in Chinese product output. There is a possibility that exports from the French port will drop by 30%. Disruptions in the supply chain are almost the same as those caused by natural disasters such as earthquakes or tsunamis, and there are 8-10 days delays in the transportation of products to ports in this process (Abdelhadi & Akkartal, 2020). Furthermore, industries that had to be closed due to the pandemic and the necessity to stay at home have greatly affected the supply chain. The supply chain system, which is defined as a network of organizations connected to each other in the system formed by all parties working together to complete a customer's request, has caused some effects on other systems around the world due to Covid-19. For example, politicians demanded the closure of factories and managers have started to question their dependence on China in the supply chain (Wieland, 2020). George and Schillebeeckx (2022) claim that coordination became difficult during the pandemic process and companies have begun to develop a backup supply chain plan in order to minimize their reliance on other nations as a result of the issues they faced during the pandemic. This situation demonstrates that countries are overly reliant on China for production, and the supply chain can easily be disrupted.

After the economic disruptions due to Covid-19, countries put all their efforts on recovery. However, the Russia-Ukraine crisis at the beginning of 2022, due to the expected disruption in the supply chain, also reduced the countries' hopes for economic recovery. The effects of these wars on the economy were examined. For example, in the Russia-Ukraine crisis in 2014, Russia's import ban on agricultural products caused a great increase in the current food prices in the country and a decrease in consumption. In the 2022 Russia-Ukraine crisis, there will be turmoil in many areas, especially in the supply chain. Russia, which did not allow cargo to use air or sea routes in any way during the war, would also cause disruptions in the global supply chain due to the fact that it limits exports and imports. This situation disrupts the supply-demand balance, causing the supply not to be met and increasing the prices of imported products. The increase in prices is inevitable as a result of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which has the most important and largest position in providing both natural gas and oil to the world. These increases in prices will cause inflation and an increase in living costs (Ozili, 2022).

In this part of the article, it will be mentioned how the de-globalization, protectionism, and the crises in the supply chain have brought about changes in people's consumption behaviors and what new consumption habits they have created.

## **2. CHANGE IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOR**

When there is an economic crisis, consumer behavior changes. When looking at some of the changes in consumer behavior during the Asian crisis, scenarios such as preferring cheaper products, recycling, and buying second-hand things come to mind. Consumers' fears and concerns have been increased as a result of today's Covid-19 outbreak situation, encouraging them to adopt a new shopping habit, and in certain cases, panic stockpiling has begun. (Hartono et.al, 2021). Jo et.al (2020) state that consumers prefer online channels and that online purchases will continue in the post-pandemic period. Due to the

pandemic, there has been a decrease in consumption and expenditures, as well as food and daily necessities.

## **2.1 Do-It-Yourself (DIY)**

Wolf and Mcquitty (2013) define do-it-yourself activity as consumers fixing, replacing, or building something without any expert or professional help. Self-service at gas stations or ATMs has been described as DIY behavior and it has been stated that it saves time. Another reason for implementing DIY behavior is to provide economic benefits. It is known that low and single-income households participate in such events more than others. DIY activities can be done with the desire of consumers to take control due to the lack of product quality as well as economic gain. In a study of German participants, 60% of the participants showed that they thought what they did at home was superior. The last factor in DIY behavior is that consumers cannot find enough products and try to make them on their own. Kirk and Rifkin (2020) add that with this new habit, consumers started to do activities such as cooking, gardening, and bakery at home, and they became attached to the home. Along with the DIY project, Americans reported that they enjoyed cooking more food. Besides protective products or cooking, designing something by themselves is a big help in making consumers feel proud and competent. Due to the pandemic, it has been inevitable for houses to turn into offices, schools, and gyms. However, thanks to the DIY philosophy, as individuals improved their technological skills, they became more creative and innovative and were able to cope with the virus more easily.

Apart from some DIY activities mentioned, during the pandemic crisis, consumers changed their habits in many other areas such as sports at home and turned to online tools and became involved in DIY activities. Nyenhuis et.al. (2020) state that the closure of gyms during the pandemic also led individuals to do sports at home, and even the use of sports products at home has increased recently due to the restrictions caused by the pandemic. Consumers who want to buy equipment or exercise without paying anything prefer YouTube or some other applications. Having similar views to Nyenhuis et.al. (2020), Mutz et.al. (2021) emphasize that gyms were closed first and opened last in order to stop the spread of the virus, and in this situation, consumers began to look for new home-based sports alternatives, and 66% of consumers preferred YouTube from online channels.

Another country where changes in consumer habits by participating in DIY activities are taking place is Turkey. Güngördü Belbağ (2021) states that the frequency of cooking at home among consumers in Turkey is higher than the general average and that they have started to share the food they cook at home with the spread of the pandemic and also with the effect of the social platforms. She adds that consumers in Turkey are more willing to do DIY activities during the pandemic. Consumers have started to consume homemade and fresh foods to strengthen their immune systems, as well as they have started to buy sports equipment, technological tools, and books. In the survey conducted with 78 Turkish consumers, one participant said that they bought some sports equipment to train at home, and another said that they learned to cut hair at home instead of going to the hairdresser. This situation is called both DIY and producer consumers. Due to the fear of contracting the virus, most consumers have become producers by cooking their own meals or painting their own walls.

## **2.2 Second-Hand Consumption**

Customers benefit economically from online second-hand shopping, which is the fastest-growing in the

world and is preferred by consumers for saving and comfort. For example, Because of the growing interest in the used market, Amazon has created a new segment. There are also some multinational enterprises that are set up to sell only second-hand goods, such as Letgo<sup>4</sup>, which has \$4 million in revenue. Changes in lifestyles, becoming more conscious and new trends in consumption lead consumers to seek better and different channels, and this causes second-hand businesses to resort to advanced ways to gain customers. While some consumers prefer offline shopping due to social interaction, some prefer online shopping for second-hand products because there are more product options at a single location, the desired product can be reached at the desired time, and the desired information and the price comparison can be made. Economic necessity and pricing honesty are two variables in second-hand shopping, which refers to purchasing things previously held by others. The economic factor is the fact that people are looking for lower pricing in their second-hand shopping and are more price aware. When asked the reasons for doing second-hand shopping, a focus group of 14 people stated that they could buy more products at more affordable prices that increase their habit of comparing prices, and helped them buy what they wanted from a wide range of products, and it was easier and more understandable (Padmavaty, Swapana & Paul, 2019).

This clothing industry, which has become a part of daily life, is growing and consumers are making more purchases to keep up with the latest trends. However, the recession in the economy caused by coronavirus has influenced stagnation in consumer purchasing power, which has increased the demand for affordable products. Furthermore, people have started to spend more time at home and sell their clothes for economic income as a result of the forced isolation caused by the pandemic. In 2017, the second-hand market grew by 47%, while the number of second-hand stores in Brazil increased by 210 percent in just 5 years. During the pandemic, second-hand shopping increased by around 50%, and this process has continued after the pandemic finished. In addition, consumers have a strong sense of prejudice when purchasing second-hand clothing due to hygiene reasons, but in this case, it is recommended that consumers get rid of their biases because of the tragic economic situation. Consumers have started to buy only what they need, stay away from unnecessary expenditures, turn to online shopping and change their current behaviors. According to statistics collected during the pandemic shows that 33 million consumers purchased used clothing for the first time in 2020, and almost three-quarters of these people said they will continue to buy second-hand (Galante Amaral & Spers, 2022).

In today's society, clothing gets the societal acceptability and has an influence on consumers' self-love, comfort and self-image, which in turn leads consumers to shop more clothes. However, despite these high amounts in global clothing, the maximum sales potential has still not been reached, because of the economic downturn and political issues. Once consumers are in this position, they have begun to value second-hand clothes more, and they use this behavior when consumers do not want to keep their clothes in their hands anymore. Another cause why they take this behavior is their economic situation. Consumers are looking for a new consumption habit in order to overcome their financial challenges. When their low income prevents them from purchasing new clothing, they have to turn to second-hand consumption which helps them to save money (Herjanto, Sampson & Erickson, 2016).

### **2.3 Consumption Shrinkage**

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<sup>4</sup> Letgo is a website and mobile application that allow users to buy and sell second-hand products.

According to Armantier et.al. (2020) increase in inflation expectations have direct influence the consumers' consumption, savings and borrowing decisions. Consumers shift their consumption from the future to the present if the future inflation is forecasted to be strong. The coronavirus, which originated in the sector of health but had a significant impact on the economy, has caused supply chain disruptions and increased government debts, raising expectations of an increase in inflation. Moreover, during the great recession between 2007 and 2009, there were expectations that inflation will increase. Consumers who are not sure about changes in inflation, house prices and salaries behave more carefully in their consumption, investment and borrowing actions. Springer (1977) who has a common view with Armantier et.al. (2020), also notes that an increase in inflation rate changes the purchasing periods and the increase in the price linked to inflation changes the consuming time. He also claims that rising inflation has resulted in a decline in the motivation of consumers and, as a result, a decrease in their expenditures happens. If high inflation expectation creates low-income expectation, consumption will be minimal.

According to Ahmed (2022) the highest levels of global food prices were reached as a result of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and the cost increased by a third compared to the previous year. There were restrictions in the export of wheat because of the war, resulting an increase of approximately 20% in the price of wheat. In addition to wheat, the increasing demand for vegetable oils brought an increase in prices. Furthermore, the fact that both Russia and Ukraine play a significant role in fertilizer exports puts domestic agriculture and food prices at danger. He goes on to say that this condition will very certainly exist, leading to a reduction in stock capacity. Butler (2022) adds that because of both the pandemic and the Ukraine-Russia conflict, non-food inflation increased the fastest compared to a 15-year period. Furthermore, due to increases in wheat and oil production prices, food inflation has reached its highest level since March 2013. Consumers have begun to minimize wasteful expenditures and consumption as a result of rising food and market costs, and they have also begun to stock up thanks to fears of shortages and price increases.

## CONCLUSION

This article has made a contribution to the literature in a variety of ways. First of all, the recent global catastrophes such as pandemics and economic crises have generated changes and advancements in globalization, protectionism, and supply chains. In the second section, it was added to the literature by stating that customers are altering their old and traditional behaviors and adopting new habits as a result of Covid-19 or the economic crisis caused by the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Worldwide crisis based on economic or pandemic caused to have new consumer habits by changing their perspective. The most recent crisis, Corona and Russia-Ukraine War, is not the only influence for new consumer behaviors. There are also intermediate elements between effect of global crises and consumers which we examined under the title of de-globalization, protectionism and supply-chain shock. The conflicts between countries or the preventions taken in pandemic process have put countries on the way to become less global. Furthermore, countries follow the protectionist and de-globalization principles to support the domestic producer and production and decrease the foreign dependency. Finally and most importantly, the closure of borders and difficulties in reaching the suppliers, increased inflation, prices and cost of living because of the war hit the supply-chain that has not happened before.



Covid-19 and Russia's invasion to Ukraine have effected globalization, protectionism and supply-chain first, and then consumption and consumer are effected. At the beginning of the pandemic, hygiene and social distance rules and then the rising in inflation, prices and cost of living thanks to conflict have encouraged consumers to involve in DIY projects. They have started to produce, recycling and innovation with limited budget and resources. Aside from DIY projects, consumers have started to look for second-hand products. Individuals are challenging to purchase first-hand products because of the over increase in prices compared to last years, and this situation grow up second-hand purchases for clothing, car and household appliances. In addition to involving to DIY behaviors and preferring second-hand consumption, people have had to decrease the consumption. Limited access to goods, increase prices based on inflation lefts the over consumption behind and therefore consumers begin just to buy whatever their need is and decrease the unnecessary expenditures, and consumption shrinkage have been experiences as a new consumer behavior.

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