TÜRKİYE CUMHURİYETİ
ADANA ALPARSLAN TÜRKEŞ SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL
INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND FINANCE DEPARTMENT

SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOR AMONG YOUNG CONSUMERS: A GENDER-BASED PERSPECTIVE

KÜBRA TOPCUOĞLU ONAT

M.Sc.

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THESIS ADVISOR
ASSOC. PROF. DR. CEYDA TANRIKULU

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DECLARATION OF CONFORMITY

In this thesis study, which was prepared following the thesis writing rules of Adana Alparslan Türkeş Science and Technology University Institute of Graduate School, I declare that I provide all the information, documents, evaluations and results in accordance with scientific ethics and moral codes without resorting to any means or assistance that would be contrary to scientific ethics and traditions. I also declare that I refer to all of the articles I used in this study with appropriate references and accept all moral and legal consequences if a situation is found contrary to my statement regarding my work.

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[Signature]

Kübra TOPCUOĞLU ONAT

ÖZET

GENÇ TÜKETİCİLERDE SÜRDÜRÜLEBİLİR TÜKETİM DAVRANIŞI: CİNSİYET TEMELLİ BAKIŞ

Kübra TOPCUOĞLU ONAT
Yüksek Lisans, Uluslararası Ticaret ve Finans Anabilim Dalı
Danışman: Doç. Dr. Ceyda TANRIKULU
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Bu tez çalışmasının amacı, sürdürülebilir tüketim davranışı ve boyutları açısından kadın ve erkek tüketiciler arasında farklılıklar olup olmadığını incelemektir. Veriler, Türkiye'deki 18-29 yaş arası genç tüketicilerden çevrimiçi anket yoluyla elde edilmiştir. Tez çalışmasında elde edilen temel bulgular, sürdürülebilir tüketim açısından kadın ve erkek arasındaki davranışsal benzerlikleri ve farklılıkları ortaya koymuştur. Daha spesifik olarak, gereksiz tüketim ve yeniden kullanım davranışı bağlamında cinsiyete özgü farklılıklar bulunmuştur. Bu tez çalışmasında tüketicilerin sürdürülebilir tüketimde cinsiyete özgü davranışlar sergileyip sergilemediğinin daha net ve doğru bir şekilde anlaşılabilmesi için sürdürülebilir tüketimin alt boyutları ile incelenmesinin önemli olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır. Bu tez çalışmasının, gelişmekte olan pazarlarda sürdürülebilirlik, küresel pazarlama ve genç tüketicilerin tüketimi ile ilgilenenlere faydalı olması umulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: tüketici davranışı, cinsiyet, sürdürülebilirlik, sürdürülebilir tüketim davranışı ve genç tüketiciler

ABSTRACT

SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOR AMONG YOUNG CONSUMERS: A GENDER-BASED PERSPECTIVE

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Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ceyda TANRIKULU
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The aim of this thesis study was to examine whether there are similarities/differences between males and female consumers in terms of sustainable consumption behavior and its dimensions. The data were obtained from young consumers aged 18-29 in Türkiye through an online survey. The main findings obtained in the thesis study revealed the behavioral similarities and differences between men and women in terms of sustainable consumption. More specifically, gender-specific differences were found in the context of unneeded consumption and reuse behavior. In this thesis, it was concluded that it is important to examine sustainable consumption with its sub-dimensions in order to understand more clearly and accurately whether consumers exhibit gender-specific behaviors in sustainable consumption. It is hoped to be useful to those interested in sustainability, global marketing and consumption of young consumers in emerging markets.

Keywords: consumer behaviour, gender, sustainability, sustainable consumption behaviour, and young consumers

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Environmental Sensitivity: ES

Unneeded Consumption: UnCon

Saving: Sav

Reuse: Reu

Sustainable Consumption Behaviour: SCB

1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of sustainable consumption is highlighted for sustainable development (Barrera-Verdugo and Villarroel-Villarroel, 2022; Margaca, Sanchez and Garcia, 2022; Anh, Lan, Hanh, Huy and Loan, 2020; Sesini, Castiglioni and Lozza, 2020; Fisher, Stanszus, Geiger, Grossman and Schrader, 2017; Abeliotis, Koniari, and Sardianou, 2010), which depends on achieving long-term economic growth that meets the environmental and social needs of both present and future generations (Sesini, Castiglioni and Lozza, 2020).

There is a global concern about sustainable consumption, while it is argued that there are significant gaps between sustainable consumption practices in developed countries and sustainable consumption practices in developing countries. In addition, it is stated that adapting and implementing sustainable consumption in developing countries lags behind developed countries (Quoquab and Mohammad, 2020).

Emerging markets are seen as the most essential actors of responsible consumption and production in the field of sustainability, as well as being an important economic power in the near future. Although the consumers in these markets are claimed to be more interested in sustainable consumption as the consumers in the developed countries, it is claimed that there are still many issues that need to be revealed about these consumers (Dermondy, Lewis, Zhao and Lyoyd, 2018; Yarimoglu and Binboga, 2019). Moreover, according to a systematic literature review, research on sustainable consumption is mostly done in developed countries. However, the sustainable consumption patterns of emerging market consumers are different and understanding them is crucial for sustainability. Therefore, examining the behavior of these consumers is recommended as an important research agenda for future research (Sesini et al., 2020).

Young consumers and gender issues have been popular topics in recent years, while many studies in recent years point to research gap in sustainable consumption (Barrera-Verdugo and Villarroel-Villarroel, 2022; Anh et al., 2020; Gazzola, Pavione, Pezzetti and Grechi, 2020; Joshi, Sangroya, Srivastava and Yadav, 2019; Bulut et al., 2017; Lee, 2014; Vicente-Molina, Fernández-Sáinz and Izagirre-Olaizola, 2013). Moreover, population growth in emerging markets offers opportunities for sustainability, but research results regarding the relationships between sustainability and demographics are conflicting.

Although demographic variables such as gender can be used effectively in market segmentation, consumer market segmentation is frequently compelling in these markets (Nyugen, Greenland, Lobo and Nguyen, 2019).

It is claimed that sustainable development and friendship with the environment can be realized at a young age and with social awareness that can be gained through education (Saribas, Komurcu and Guler, 2016). The young consumer market is considered important for marketing because it is growing continuously and at the rate of population growth, and younger consumers will form the middle and older age group markets in the future (Oral, 2020). The fact that young people have high consumption rates and their important role in transferring existing natural resources to future generations has been emphasized in sustainable consumption studies conducted in recent years (Bulut, Cimrin and Dogan, 2017). It is also considered valuable to examine young consumers in terms of sustainability due to their characteristics such as being more open to innovative ideas, being more sensitive to environmental protection, and sensitive to urban and political issues (Lee, 2014). Moreover, the current consumption patterns of them can affect their consumption patterns in their old age and the consumption patterns of their children (Fien, Neil and Bentley, 2008).

In recent years, many studies have focused on the sustainable consumption behavior (SCB) of young consumers in emerging markets (Barrera-Verdugo and Villarroel-Villarroel, 2022; Margaca et al., 2022; Anh, Lan, Hanh, Huy, and Loan; 2020; Oral, 2020; Joshi et al., 2019; Kautish and Sharma, 2019; Nyugen et al., 2019; Vicente-Molina, Fernández-Sáinz and Izagirre-Olaizola, 2013; Sahin, Ertepinar and Teksoz, 2012). Differences are observed in the environmentally friendly behavior of young people in developed and emerging countries, and it is argued that these differences are caused by external factors such as cultural, environmental infrastructure and services (Vicente-Molina, Fernández-Sáinz and Izagirre-Olaizola, 2013).

The literature review in this thesis clearly have showed that consumer behavior research in emerging markets does not reach a uniform results in terms of sustainable consumption among gender groups. Sener and Hazer (2008), who are among the pioneers of sustainable consumption studies in Türkiye, point out the importance of identifying gender differences and gender differences in young people in SCB studies. Sahin et al. (2012), in their study examining the sustainability-related behaviors of young people in Türkiye, clearly reveals that the gender of individuals should be seen as a strong factor in explaining their sustainability-related characteristics. Additionally, in a recent bibliographic study (Khalikova, Jin and Chopra, 2021), gender is stated as an important topic of interest in many sustainability studies, such as environmental behavior, social responsibility, and education. However, considering the traditional gender roles of women, it is mentioned that gender is associated with women in the same study. It is also suggested that a more theoretical perspective can be gained by considering the critical role of gender in sustainability together with individual demographic characteristics such as age (Khalikova, Jin and Chopra, 2021).

Gender is claimed to have a prominent role in marketing strategies (Tung, Koening, Chen, 2017), market segmentation (Kanwali Burki, Ali and Dahlstrom, 2022; Mehta, 2020; Unal and Ercis, 2008), market targeting (Mehta, 2020), positing and promotion strategies (Unal and Ercis, 2008), and estimation the impact of marketing tactics (Kovacheva, Nikolova and Lamberton, 2021). Moreover, segmenting the market according to demographics in emerging markets is considered to be more accessible and identifiable than other types (behavioral and psychographic, etc.) (Nyugen et al, 2019).

Gender is proposed as a term that expresses some characteristics that distinguish a male from a female (Natarajan,Balasubramanian and Kasilingam, 2017; Kanwal et al., 2022), as well as expressing that a person is male or female according to their genetic and biological characteristics (Shaouf et al., 2016). Thus, gender and sex are considered as interchangeable terms in this thesis such a recent gender study (Kanwal et al., 2022; Meyers-Levy and Loken, 2015). The gender perspective is concerned with attitudinal and behavioral similarities and differences as well as interaction between male and female (Koc, 2002). Khalikova et al. (2021:909) argue that "*although gender is socially constructed, sex-related differences are often exaggerated and reinforced since a young age, resulting in gender specific behavior: social expectations of a"realman"anda"realwoman"can be driving factors in people's consumption of food, technology, cosmetics, and energy…*"

As for sustainability, gender is considered crucial for sustainability and the development of future policy and practice (Fortnam, Brown, Chaigneau, Crona, Daw, Goncalves, Hicks, Revmatas, Sandbrook and Schulte-Herbruggen, 2019). Gender groups are also important in promoting sustainable consumption (Sahin, Ertepinar and Teksoz, 2012; White, Habib and Hardisty, 2019; Lazaric, Guel, Belin, Oltra, Lavaud, & Douai, 2020), determining the profile of green customers (Yarimoglu and Gunay, 2020), and both in terms of quantity and types of sustainable consumption, while gender stereotypes can shape individuals' views on sustainability issues and the necessity of sustainability (Bloodhart and Swim, 2020). Furthermore, it is stated that taking into account individual differences such as gender in order to direct consumers to more SCB and using these differences in creating messages and content will be beneficial for them to be more interested in more environmentally friendly behaviors (White, Habib and Hardisty, 2019).

Gender in sustainability has been the subject of many studies, which conducted in developed, developing and emerging market. Behavior patterns of individuals may change depending on the expectations of cultural norms from genders (Hunter, Hatch, and Johnson, 2004). In addition to culture, change in external forces such as the economic and political spheres can change gender-differentiation over time, and these changes may even be for better or worse (Fortnam et al, 2019).

Gender roles and behaviors are also claimed to be dependent on cultural and historical conditions, so analyzes that take these conditions into account can yield efficient and accurate results for sustainability. Moreover, gender-related behaviors transform rapidly, and these behaviors can also vary between time and geographies. Therefore, the contribution of gender groups to sustainability is changing and it is recommended that this variability be taken into account in research (Khalikova et al., 2021).

From this point of view, it would be appropriate to consider the issue of gender and sustainable consumption in terms of the current culture and other environmental conditions. The dynamic nature of gendered behaviors, the effects of age on gender, cultural and temporal differences make the examination of genders still an interesting subject in terms of SCB.

Although age, gender and sustainable consumption studies are a remarkable research topic, the change of gender with the effect of culture, time and place and the importance of young consumers in sustainability cause the examination SCB in terms of gender and young consumers to be kept as a current research topic. Therefore, examining young consumers in Türkiye by gender can be helpful to understand sustainability and sustainable consumption of young consumers, to deepen current understandings, differences and similarities regarding gender, and to enrich knowledge on sustainability in emerging markets. Thus, the main purpose of the thesis is to make a comparison between males and females regarding the sustainable consumption in young consumers.

The research questions of the thesis were:

1. Are there any differences or similarities between the gender groups in young consumers regarding the sustainable consumption behaviour and its dimensions?
2. What are these differences and similarities?

In this thesis, gender comparisons of sustainable consumption among young consumers were examined. Therefore, it can contribute to present specific and up-to-date insights to amplify existing literature on gender, youth and consumption behaviors in sustainable consumption in emerging markets. The results of this thesis had implications for academic research and marketing management. It can also contribute to determining whether a gender-specific market segment is possible in terms of sustainable consumption among young consumers in Türkiye,which is an emerging market.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Sustainable Marketing

Sustainability is defined by Nkamnebe (2011: 222) as "*a global approach towards securing lasting welfare for entire human race*". The concept of sustainability emerged primarily from environmental or ecological aspects, followed by economic, social and political aspects. Therefore, sustainability is seen as an important issue that should be examined by various disciplines in a wide range from marketing to environmental sciences (Ozkaya, Durak, Dogan, Bulut and Haas, 2021). The fact that customers are more conscious and questioning than before paves the way for the development of sustainable marketing. In this regard, sustainable marketing is a customer-oriented, environment-friendly, solution-oriented marketing approach that takes into account social value judgments and attaches great importance to providing value to the customer (Kayıkcı, Armagan and Dal, 2019).

Basis on the current definition proposed by Kotler and Armstrong (2021:582) "*Sustainable marketing is socially and environmentally responsible marketing that meets the present needs of consumers and businesses while also preserving or enhancing the ability of future generations to meet their needs*." The authors (2021:582) suggest five principles: *consumer-oriented marketing, customer value marketing, innovative marketing, sense of mission marketing, and societal marketing*. They argue that sustainable marketing is not just about businesses and governments, but consumers also have a crucial role in sustainability.

From the 1970s to the present, the use of marketing tools based on persuasion and understanding of customers is recommended and encouraged to increase sustainable consumption and adoption of environmentally friendly products (Olson, 2022). Consumption is considered as a primary research area in relation to sustainable development. Moreover, promoting more sustainable consumer behavior is seen as a very important issue, given the significant impact of different consumption areas such as food and nutrition, mobility, shelter, clothing related consumption in terms of sustainability (Fischer et al., 2017).

2.2. Sustainable Consumption Behaviour

Consumption has two main effects on the natural environment, which are the consumption of non-renewable natural resources and pollution (Abeliotis et al., 2010). Additionally, the reasons such as the increase in the world population and per capita consumption, the decrease in natural resources, the increase in environmental pollution, the emergence of climatic changes and the extinction of species necessitate significant alteration of human behavior (Glavič, 2021). In order to ensure sustainable consumption, it is necessary to increase efficiency in consumption and change consumption patterns. Therefore, knowing customer perception is important in terms of reducing resource consumption, sustainable consumption and evaluating the need for changes in related infrastructures (Tseng, Tan, Geng, and Govindan, 2016).

Sustainable consumption is related to the consumption of sustainable products as well as various activities in different processes from production to final consumption (Liu, Oosterveer and Spaargaren, 2016). Sustainable consumption activities cover purchasing environmentally friendly and fair products, reducing travel, buying and consuming organic foods, and recycling (Isenhour and Ardenfors, 2009). Many different definitions have been developed for sustainable consumption. This is because researchers have highlighted different aspects of this consumption (Quoquab and Mohammad, 2020).

After a literature review, some current definitions were presented in this thesis. Sustainable consumption is defined by Glavič (2021:7) "*the use of products and services that have a minimal impact on the environment and enable future generations to meet their needs*". Quoquab and Mohammad (2020) defines this term as "*Sustainable consumption refers to the continued act of controlling desire by avoiding extravagant purchases and rationalized use of goods and services that satisfy the basic needs. It concerns thequality of life over material standards of living, suggests satisfying basic human needs (not the desire for"wants"and luxuries), demonstratescare for protecting and preserving the naturalresources (e.g. minimizing resource use, waste andpollution) and keeping the natural resources usefulfor future generations.*"

Although there are various definitions of sustainable consumption in the literature, it is seen that three basic aspects are stressed in these definitions. Accordingly, for this consumption, the necessity of protecting the environment, taking into account the needs of future generations and fulfilling the basic needs in a rational way is emphasized (Ozkaya et al., 2021). In addition to the lack of a uniform harmony as in the conceptual definition of sustainable consumption, there is no consensus among researchers in terms of its structuring. There are one-dimensional and multi-dimensional configurations for sustainable consumption. Additionally, this consumption is mostly considered from a behavioral point of view, and it is claimed that the attitudinal and cognitive aspect of this consumption are neglected (Quoquab and Mohammad, 2020). Bulut et al. (2017) and Dogan et al. (2015) have examined sustainable consumption at a multi-dimensional level and defined the dimensions of sustainable consumption as environmental sensitivity, unnecessary consumption, saving, and reuse.

Sustainable consumption patterns encompass consumptions that can fulfill human needs, boost life quality, and reduce the presence of pollutants throughout the product-life-cycle stages (Wang, Xue, Wang, Song, Li, Daziano, Wang, Ma, Chen, Li, and Zhang, 2019). On the other hand, unsustainable consumption is declared as the main reason of several global environmental problems, especially global warming, pollution of air and water, and decrease in biodiversity (Liu et al, 2016).

Young people are argued that to be highly influential in achieving the achievement of sustainable consumption globally. In this regard, it is proposed that young people should be considered as a separate consumer group and a specific approach should be taken towards them. Young consumers have an important role in family consumption. They are open to change, and their current consumption can affect not only their consumption patterns in their old age but also their children's consumption patterns (Fien, Neil and Bentley, 2008). In this context, in the literature review conducted within the scope of this thesis, it is clearly seen that it is the focus of many studies examining the SCB of young consumers (Salehi, Telesiene, and Pazokinejad, 2021; Ianole-Călin, Rădulescu, and Druică, 2020; Joshi et al., 2019; Sahin et al., 2012).

Unlike consumers in developed countries, consumers in emerging markets have begun to adapt to SCB with a delay. Awareness level of these consumers increases in terms of sustainable consumption and besides being aware of the importance of this consumption; they also attach great importance to protecting the environment (Yarimoglu and Binboga, 2019). On the other hand, consumer purchasing behavior, market growth, and sustainability are compelling issues for (emerging) these markets. The potential conflict in these markets is defined as the conflict between the desire for an ecologically more sustainable economy that values human and environmental health, and the priority of economic well-being and increased luxury consumption for affluent consumers (Dermody et al., 2018).

Several studies conducted in Türkiye as an emerging market show that there is an interest in sustainable consumption (Kiraci and Kayabasi, 2010). These studies point to many striking results in consumer behavior. In a study with students, it was determined that although SCB was performed at a moderate level, sustainability behaviors such as energy saving and product repair were actually realized in terms of economic benefits (Kiraci and Kayabasi, 2010). Similarly, in a consumer behavior research on reuse, it is stated that the most important reason for choosing usable packaging is saving (Kuru and Boyraz, 2020). In the recent study examining sustainable food consumption, it is seen that ecological, social, economic and health-related issues come to the fore in this consumption (Ozkaya et al., 2021). In a study on sustainability in the COVID19 pandemic, it is claimed that, consumers prefer to buy environmentally friendly products and not to buy products that are harmful to the environment during the pandemic (Ozel, Inal, and Nart, 2021).

2.3. Gender Differences

Gender and gender-based behaviors are considered very essential in terms of marketing. It finds very important usage areas especially in marketing communication and segmentation of markets. The fact that gender can be determined easily, gender segments are accessible and these segments are large enough to provide profitability facilitates the use of gender in marketing segmentation (Koc, 2002). Biological, psychological and socio-cultural background knowledge is considered important in order to understand gender differences and similarities in human behaviours (Wood and Eagly, 2012).

Socio-cultural theories, evolutionary theory, hormonal exposure and brain, selectivity hypothesis are used in examining gender differences in consumer behavior literature. When the theoretical background of gender differences in the consumer behavior literature and the findings of previous studies are examined, some fundamental differences emerge. These differences Meyers-Levy and Loken (2015:129) identified about men and women are as follows: "*Males are more self-oriented, while females are more other-oriented; females are more cautious responders; females are more responsive to negative data; males process data more selectively and females more comprehensively; and females are more sensitive to differentiating conditions and factors*."

Socio-cultural theories consider the sources of gender differences as social, cultural, psychological and environmental factors. The socio-cultural perspective states that gender roles and behaviors will change over time and from culture to culture (Meyers-Levy and Loken, 2015). More specifically, Wood and Eagly (2012: 101) have argued that "*By this confluence of biosocial processes, individuals within a society dynamically construct and share gender roles tailored to their time, culture, and situation.*"

Based on social role theory, the differences and similarities between males and females are primarily due to their distribution in terms of their social roles in their societies. This theory considers the interaction of nature and nurture to work together in eliciting socially constructed behaviors that take into account the current sociocultural environment in the study of male and female behaviors (Eagly and Wood, 2016).

According to this theory, communal behavior is encourged by female gender role, while agentic behavior is supported by male gender role(Eagly, 1997). Role theory also postulates that gender differences can be explained in part by people's tendencies to behave consistent with their gender roles. Gender roles expected from men and women stem from the different social role distributions determined for them. In this context, it is asserted that women are expected to exhibit communal characteristics such as friendly, selfless and altruistic, whereas males are expected agentic characteristics like independent, talented, and qualified (Eagly and Wood, 1988).

Moreover, Eagly and Wood (2016:1) propose that "*sex-typed roles arise from an interaction between (1) the sex differences represented by each sex's physical attributes and related behaviors, especially women's childbearing and nursing of infants and men's greater size, speed, and upper-body strength, and (2) the variable factors represented by the social, economic, technological, and ecological forces present in a society*." Eagly and Wood (1991) have also examined the differences in social behavior of men and women with a meta-analytic perspective. It is claimed that some expectations are formed for males and females by taking into account gender stereotypes. Eagly and Wood (1991:309) have asserted that "*women are expected to possess high level of communal attributes, including being friendly, unselfish, concerned with others, and emotionally expressive. Men are expected to possess high level of agentic qualities, including being independent, masterful, assertive, and instrumentally competent*".

In addition, Wood and Eagly, (2012) suggest "*biosocial construction model*" to explain gender differences in behavior. Wood and Eagly, (2012:59) claim in their model that "*sex differences and similarities in behavior emerge from the division of labor in a society, which itself is a product of social and cultural forces in interaction with the biological features characteristic of each sex*". Based on this model, situational conditions, culture and historical periods significantly affect the behavior of women and men. Ecological and socioeconomic demands play an important role in the division of labor attributed to women and men (Wood and Eagly, 2012).

Accordingly, sociocultural theorical background put forward that gender differences are due to physical differences and sociocultural factors (Meyers-Levy and Loken, 2015). Gender role expectations are culturally compatible and have effects on behaviors via social, psychological, and biological processes. In this way, the gender-specific behaviors of the individual can be encouraged by others and individuals can adapt to their own gender identities. Additionally, masculine/feminine behaviors are made possible by hormonal, rewarding and cardiovascular mechanisms. (Wood and Eagly, 2012). In other words, gender roles affect the behavior of individuals through hormonal processes, social expectations and individual tendencies (Eagly, 2009).

Evolutionary theory takes a close look at the influence of human biology and the advanced mechanisms that previous humans used to overcome environmental challenges. In evolutionary studies, it is claimed that males are more aggressive and tend to take risks, whereas females are advantageous in detecting positive/negative emotions, and that women's superiority stems from their responsibilities in raising children (Meyers-Levy and Loken, 2015). Additionally, Schmitt, Long, McPhearson, O'Brien, Remmert, and Shah (2017:45) claim that "*Evolutionary theories regarding ecologically-evoked gender differences are described that may prove more useful in explaining global variation in human personality.*" In the Big Five Inventory study with individuals in 55 cultures, Schmitt, Realo, Voracek, and Allik (2008:168) suggest the following gender differences that "*women reported higher levels of neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness than did men across most nations… Changes in men's personality traits appeared to be the primary cause of sex difference variation across cultures.*" In the light of evolutionary and role theories, it is stated that benevolence and universalism are more valuable than men because of their feminine nature. It is also claimed that men, by their nature, attach more importance to power and success than women (Schwartz and Rubel-Lifschitz, 2009).

Hormonal exposure and brain-related differences pave the way for behavioral and cognitive differences between genders. For example, a higher level of testosterone, typically found in males, has been noted to lead to gender differences. Which hemisphere of the brain is used reveals some gender differences. The source of some gender differences is also which hemisphere of the brain is used. (Meyers-Levy and Loken, 2015). For instance, it is stated in the given literature that different brain regions are activated in men and women during the evaluation process (Tanrikulu, 2019).

Selectivity theory claims that men and women use non-identical (with each other) strategies and do not have the same threshold levels when their information processing processes are taken into account. The main principles of this theory are related to agentic/communal sex roles, socio-cultural approach, hormonal and brain-related activities, and some aspects of evolutionary perspective. (Meyers-Levy and Loken, 2015; Meyers-Levy andMaheswaran,1991).

It is noted that two arguments of this theory need to be taken into account. Accordingly, based on this theory, Meyers-Levy and Loken (2015:134) propose that "*First, the theory implies that gender differences are conditional and will not always occur. Rather, because gender differences stem from females' relatively lower threshold for detecting and using target data, gender differences should obtain only when access to such data is above females' but below males' threshold….Second, these gender differences in comprehensiveness and the use of heuristics are not valueladen. While more thorough processing of data might seem to be an advantage for females, it also can be less efficient, foster resource depletion that can lead to negative downstream consequences (e.g., in consumer contexts containing vacuous, hyperbolic, and misleading data), and produce psychological costs (e.g., prompt anxiety or indecision)*". Research has shown that men are selective in processing information. Compare to females, males process a narrower range of data than women and give selective responses. On the other hand, females pay more attention to details or subtle clues and process a larger set of data and produce comprehensive answers. It is claimed that female's inclusive approaches make them more efficient at processing data. Moreover, females are claimed to be more sensitive to difficult data and their responses to them contain deeper insight (Meyers-Levy and Zhu, 2010).

There are many studies that point out the differences/similarities between male and female in terms of consumer behavior (Mehta, 2020; Kovacheva et al., 2021). Some differences have been detected in the purchasing decision-making processes between males and females, and it has been observed that they consider different features and benefits of products in pre-purchase processes (González, Meyer, and Toldos, 2021).

Gender specific differences have observed in many current areas, such as sustainable consumption (Nwanzu and Babalola, 2023), the perception about Covid19 crisis (Belot, Müller, Rau and Schwieren, 2022), and reaction to coronavirus pandemic (Huttel and Balderjahn, 2022), attitude toward service robots (Ayyildiz et al., 2022), predictors of happiness (Brakus, Chen, Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2022), response to a promotional gift (Kovacheva et al., 2021), online shopping behaviours (González, Meyer, and Toldos, 2021), motivational regulation (Gilal, Zhang, Gilal and Gilal, 2020), decision making (Yeniceri and Senel, 2021; Mehta, 2020; Unal and Ercis, 2008), imagination on product evaluation (Mann and Liu-Thompkins, 2019), values affecting consumption of luxury products (Roux, Tafani and Vigneron, 2017).

2.4. Gender in Sustainable Consumption

Sustainability and gender have been among the important topics of the development agenda since 1980s (Meizen-Dick, Kovarik, and Quisumbing, 2014). Recently, several studies examining the sustainable consumption behaviors of young consumers focus on gender variable (Barrera-Verdugo and Villarroel-Villarroel, 2022; Salehi et al. 2021; Anh et al., 2020; Ianole-Călin et al , 2020).

SCB is recognized as motivated behavior and behavior that is influenced by social/environmental concerns and attention is drawn to the strong effect of gender on the antecedents of these consumer behaviors (Luchs and Mooradian, 2012). Similarities and differences between males and females are suggested in terms of prosocial behavior, which is defined as behaviors that take care of the benefit of others, such as helping others, sharing, being a savior and defending. It is claimed that males and females have similarities in terms of extensive prosocial behavior, whereas they differ in specific classes of this behavior. In terms of prosocial behaviors, females are skilled in behaviors with a more social and relational content, while males are skilled in behaviors that are more intermediary, collectively-oriented and power-intensive. On the basis of this behavior, it is claimed that gender differences stem from the individual's gender role belief. The source of these beliefs is argued to be the division of labor in the axis of bio-social interaction (Eagly, 2009).

According to pioneering studies in the literature, expectations from genders in cultural norms direct the behavior of individuals (Hunter et al., 2004). Additionally, the behavior of men and women is also influenced by the social expectations developed for them. In the explanation of women's environmentally sensitive behaviors, the roles of being compassionate, making sacrifices and caring, which are attributed to women, come to the fore. Socio-biologically based theories also explain women's environmental friendly attitudes with their intrinsic biological roles. In this context, they have a natural connection with future generations and with their reproduction there is an increase in their attachment to nature. For this reason, it is claimed that they care more about environmental issues and are concerned about this issue (Tung et al., 2017).

Males and females are found to draw attention to the differences in using, experiencing and benefiting from ecosystem services and having ecological knowledge. It is also stated that the availability and quality of these services have different consequences for gender groups and therefore these services have a gendered nature (Fortnam et al., 2019). Moreover, it is attributed to the different levels of altruism that male and female consumers have on the basis of their differences in environmentalism. It is also argued that altruism is higher in females and the difference in altruism among the gender is due to the different socialization and life experiences that men and women have. (Dietz, Kalof and Stern, 2002). In addition, a claim used to explain gender differences in environmentalism is that females exhibit more socialization for social responsibility and otherness than males (Zelezny, Chua and Aldrich, 2000).

Ecofeminism proposes that gender differences arise because women experience the injustice of marginalization and are therefore more likely to reject hierarchical values (Bloodhart and Swim, 2020). Moreover, there is a claim in the literature that the gender gap in sustainable consumption may be partially caused by the widespread relationship between green behavior and femininity, and the stereotype that green consumers are more feminine (Brough, Wilkie, Ma, Isaac, and Gal, 2016). It is also revealed that the tendency of females to socialize to work for the welfare of both their relatives and future generations affects their participation in green and sustainable consumption (Godin and Langlois, 2021). In addition, it is claimed that female's environmental concerns and their orientation towards sustainable consumption are due to the social structure of gender and its effect on sustainability practices (Bloodhart and Swim, 2020).

Females often have a desire to participate in environmental practices because of traditional values, financial situations, and structural factors. They are generally described as caregivers by the society they live in and by themselves. Thanks to this qualification, they generally feel compelled to take into account the consequences of climate change and to fulfill environmentalist practices if they provide energy savings and economic benefits (Wang, 2016). The results of a recent study on sustainability show that the relationship between moral identity and dimensions of sustainable consumption is stronger for males than for females (Salciuviene, Banytė, Vilkas, Dovalienė and Gravelines, 2022).

In general, it is emphasized that income inequality, gender roles and related practices, social patterns and norms are the basis of the differences between male and female in terms of sustainable consumption (Bloodhart and Swim, 2020). According to a study performed in Taiwan, it is stated that even if women are willing to consume sustainable, temporal, spatial and financial constraints can prevent them. More specifically, responsibilities, workloads at home and work make time a scarce resource for females (Wang, 2016). Consistent with this study, a research carried out in Sweden claims that despite social equality, women experience difficulties in terms of sustainable consumption and lifestyle due to their responsibilities at home and in the family and the time pressure they are exposed to (Isenhour and Ardenfors, 2009). Furthermore, the findings of a study performed in China also indicate that gender gaps in financial power, lack of time, and political representation constitute significant constraints in females' choices regarding sustainability (Fan and Joffre, 2020). For example, in another study operated in this country has revealed that households with high gender inequality use less efficient electrical products and are less willing to conserve energy (Li, Zhang, Zhang and Ji, 2019).

A recent cross-cultural study performed in Japan and Iran has demonstrated that the gender variable moderates the effects of the predictive variables of sustainable consumption on sustainable consumption (Salehi et al., 2021). Another recent study examining gender as a moderator variable has found that green consumption values and sustainable resale behaviors in female consumers were more negatively affected by egoistic values than in males. It is argued that this may mean that female experience higher degrees of positive and negative values in their responses to these sustainability-related activities (Tan, Makkonen, Kaur, and Salo, 2022).

The number of findings in favor of men lags behind those in favor of females when the literature on sustainable consumption behaviors is examined. The main information in favor of males in the literature regarding sustainability are as follows. Males have been found to have a higher sustainability attitude (Nguyen et al., 2019). In a previous study that focused on the environmental behavior of Chinese consumers in terms of gender, males are asserted to have a considerably higher level of environmental knowledge and are more interested in environmental problems than females (Xiao and Hong, 2010). Moreover, in the study, which examines the environmental purchasing behavior of consumers in Egypt in the context of gender, some results are also stated in favor of male. It is emphasized that men's knowledge of environmental issues is higher, they are more environmentally sensitive and they have more positive attitudes about exhibiting environmentally friendly purchasing behavior in this given study (Mostafa, 2007). In addition, Newman and Trump (2023) argue that if males feel empowered and believe that sustainability-related behaviors can contribute positively to society, positive reactions to companies engaged in sustainability activities occur in men. For this reason, the feeling of empowerment and positive social gain in increasing and supporting sustainable consumption in men are among the issues that need to be emphasized (Newman and Trump, 2023).

It is clearly seen that there are many scientific findings in favor of more female consumers in terms of SCB, when the literature is examined. It is reported in a study examining the gender differences in the environmentally friendly behaviors of young people in developed and developing countries that female consumers are more likely to exhibit environmentally friendly consumption behaviors in both country types (Vicente-Molina, Fernández-Sáinz and Izagirre-Olaizola, 2013). It is stated that the level of sustainable consumption of females is higher when compared to men, both at home and at work (Banytė, Šalčiuvienė, Dovalienė, Piligrimienė and Sroka, 2020). A study of French consumers has showed the positive effect of being a female on the likelihood of adjusting to SCB (Lazaric et al., 2020). Additionally, it is stated that females have higher scores in coping with unused/undesirable clothing in a study conducted with young people in Romania (Ianole-Călin et al, 2020). In a sustainability consumption research in the Z generation, it is pointed out that female consumers are in a more sustainable trend in fashion compared to male consumers, and the results in favor of females in sectoral fashion sustainability (Gazzola, Pavione, Pezzetti and Grechi, 2020).

The study investigating the similarities and differences in terms of gender groups in China reports gender variations and indicates that females have a high level of social preference and actions to protect the environment in the context of sustainable consumption (Fan and Joffre, 2020). A sustainable consumption study conducted in the United Arab Emirates informs that there are differences between men and women in terms of efficient use of resources, reduction of waste, optimization of scarce resources and claims that females have a higher level of SCB (Khan and Trivedi, 2015).

A previous study indicates that females are more likely than males to prefer sustainable products than high-performance products. The reason for this is thought to be the higher level of social and environmental responsibility of them (Luchs and Mooradian, 2012). In a study conducted with Swedish families, it is claimed that females are more prone to sustainable consumption than males, their level of interest in sustainable living, and the time they spend searching for information about sustainable consumption and alternatives related to sustainability (Isenhour and Ardenfors, 2009).

The effect of gender on SCB is also seen in issues related to sustainable clothing. Accordingly, in the selection of clothing products within the scope of sustainability, the effect of product features on purchasing frequency and post-purchase behavior may differ between male and female consumers in Chile (Barrera-Verdugo and Villarroel-Villarroel, 2022). Additionally, there are findings in the literature that different motives in the consumption of eco-apparel are effective for males and females. In the consumption of environmentally friendly clothing, it is seen that female's intentions are affected by green self-identity, and cognitive participation is prominent in males (Tung et al., 2017). As to organic food consumption, there is information in the literature that female consumers consider the opinions of other users on the internet about this product more when they decide to buy organic products (Maciaszczyk and Kocot, 2021).

Another common situation in the literature is mixed results for gender groups in the same study. For instance, according to the results of a previous study, although Chinese female consumers are more interested in environmental behaviors related to their private lives and environmentally friendly behaviors in general than male consumers, the two gender groups are equivalent when it comes to public environmentally friendly behaviors (Xiao and Hong,2010).

Likewise, according to the results of a previous study of consumers in 22 countries, females in many countries tend to engage in more environmental behavior, especially when it concerns their private lives. However, it is stated that both males and females tend to engage in more private environmental behavior rather than public (Hunter, Hatch and Johnson, 2004). Another previous study states that females exhibit higher levels of sustainable consumption compared to males when personal identity is prominent. On the other hand, according to the same study, males and females are similar in terms of sustainable consumption intention when social identity is at the forefront (Costa Pinto, Herter, Rossi and Borges, 2014).

Moreover, female are stated to be more interested in energy saving than men in a previous study. On the other hand, females are willing to pay more for energy-efficient products, while males and females are shown indifferent to purchasing these products in the same study (Lee, Park and Han, 2013). Based on a consumer behavior in sustainability study conducted in Poland during the Covid-19 pandemic, gender affects the attitudes of consumers towards their food purchasing behavior, but it also points to the similarity between males and females in terms of some attitudes (Walaszczyk, Koszewska, and Staniec, 2022).

The Covid 19 pandemic has been a force that can drive sustainable consumption practices between males and females and promote gender variations in sustainable consumption. It is stated in a consumer research related to Covid-19 pandemic that young and educated females have a more responsible attitude in terms of sustainable consumption (Degli Esposti, Mortara and Roberti, 2021). The study examining panic buying during the Covid19 pandemic era in Romania has also found that panic has different behavioral consequences in terms of sustainable consumption in male and female (Coman, Coman, Repanovici, Baritz, Kovacs, Tomozeiu, Barbu and Toderici, 2022). In addition, in a recent study in Germany, it is declared that while males and females were similar in terms of ecologically sustainable consumption in the first wave of the Covid19 pandemic, these behaviors of males were significantly weakened in the second wave (Huttel and Balderjahn, 2022). Moreover, it has been found that the attitudes towards choosing local products and ordering groceries online differed significantly among gender groups at the time of the pandemic. Accordingly, although males' attitudes on this issue did not change before and during COVID-19, females did (Walaszczyk, Koszewska, and Staniec, 2022).

The results of studies on gender in sustainable consumption conducted in Türkiye do not indicate a uniform result in terms of gender similarities and differences. The studies conducted in Türkiye states that female engage in more recycling behavior (Arslan and Kurtoglu, 2021) and demonstrate more conscious recycling behavior (Eryilmaz and Kilic, 2021). On the other hand, in another study, the level of SCB based on economic benefits is stated to be higher in female students (Kiracı and Kayabası, 2010). Kuru and Boyraz (2020) states that they reached mixed results in their study, which examined gender groups with both qualitative and quantitative research methods in the same study. Although the attitudes of males and females towards reusable packaging are similar according to their quantitative research, it is understood that this attitude is much higher in females according to their qualitative research (Kuru and Boyraz, 2020).

According to a study examining sustainable consumption in terms of gender and generations, it is stated that this consumption differs in terms of gender among individuals in the Z generation, and that men also exhibit a higher level of non-need purchase behavior (Aktas and Cicek, 2019). In a study employed throughout Turkiye, females are also found to pay more attention to the organic nature of the products they buy, and they prefer non-genetically modified products and foods with sustainability features (Gurler, 2018). Bulut et al. claim (2017) that female exhibit more overall SCB and that females have a higher level of reuse behavior in particular. However, it has been suggested by the authors that no significant difference between male and female in terms of other SCB's sub-dimensions. Sahin et al. (2012), in their study with university students, emphasize the importance of gender in sustainable consumption and point out some gender differences.

In this context, it is stated that male students are more intertwined with nature through activities such as trekking and camping, while female students engage in more sustainable actions thanks to their positive environmentalist attitudes and values. In their study examining the females' SCB in Türkiye, Sener and Hazer (2008) claim that female have high social and group interests and that they pay great attention to economic costs in their consumption behaviors.

Some studies in the literature have findings that there is no variance between genders, but the number of these studies is less than the number of studies that draw attention to the differences. The findings of these studies plainly claim that male and female consumers are similar in terms of sustainable consumption practices. For instance, a study conducted in Hanoi, Vietnam, claims that young male and female consumers are similar in behavior with sustainable consumption in food and beverage (Anh et al., 2020). Similarly, in a sustainable consumption study with Greek consumers, the findings are also presented that gender is not important in terms of reuse or recycling-related activities, electricity and water consumption, and more specifically, there is no difference between genders (Abeliotis et al, 2010). Nguyen et al. (2019) characterize gender as a weak predictor of sustainability. It has been determined by the authors that there is no statistical difference between gender groups in terms of purchasing behaviours.

Moreover, Bulut et al. (2017) report that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female in terms of SCB's sub-dimensions such as environmentalist SCB, unneeded consumption and savings. Similarly, it is emphasized that there is no gender difference between males and females in terms of sustainable consumption (in general), environmental awareness, saving and reuse in a research with Turkish consumers (Aktas and Cicek, 2019). The some of studies conducted in Türkiye reveal that there are no gender differences in environmentally sensitive consumption (Gul, 2013; Ay and Ecevit, 2005) and green purchasing (Tanrikulu, 2014).

According to the literature review, it was seen that the findings of differences between males and females in terms of sustainable consumption were more common and dominant. Within the scope of this thesis, based on these dominant results and socio-cultural theories, the socio-cultural, biological and situational differences between men and women were expected to be reflected in sustainable consumption.

Depending on the dominant results in the literature, gender theories and the purpose of the thesis study, the following hypotheses were developed that show the differences between gender groups in terms of SCB and its dimensions. Thus,

H1: There is a statistically significant difference in gender groups regarding the means of environmental sensitivity (as a dimension of SCB).

H2: There is a statistically significant difference in gender groups regarding the means of unneeded consumption (as a dimension of SCB).

H3: There is a statistically significant difference in gender groups regarding the means of saving (as a dimension of SCB).

H4: There is a statistically significant difference in gender groups regarding the means of reuse (as a dimension of SCB).

H5: There is a statistically significant difference in gender groups regarding the means of SCB (overall).

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The literature and the purpose of the research were taken into consideration in determining the research method used in the thesis. In this part of this thesis; the type of research, population and sample, sampling method, data collection tools, data collection method, how the data were analyzed were included. The quantitative research method was preferred in order to achieve the purpose of the thesis like many previous research in both domestic (Bulut et al., 2017; Karaca, 2018; Aktas and Cicek, 2019; Kucukyoruk and Kurtuldu, 2022; Avcı and Yildiz, 2023; Ozdemir and Sunaoglu, 2023) and foreign marketing literature (Joshi et al., 2019).

3.1. Sampling and Data Collection

The population of this thesis was young consumers in Türkiye as an emerging market. Population growth rate in emerging markets provides opportunities in sustainable consumption (Nyugen et al., 2019). Young educated consumers are more likely to engage in environmentally friendly behaviors in emerging economies and are aware of the importance of these behaviors. Furthermore, the segment formed by young consumers is evaluated as relatively homogeneous, and their consumption habits are pointed out as being uniform. Understanding their consumption behavior promises useful insights into their future consumption patterns ((Barrera-Verdugo and Villarroel-Villarroel, 2022; Salehi, S., Telešienė and Pazokinejad,2021;Joshi et al., 2019).

According to Euorstat (2022), "*Young is defined as people between the ages of 15 and 29*". This age range has also been used in Turkish Statistical Institute studies to examine young people in Türkiye (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2022). Therefore, the age range was determined as 18-29 years to determine young consumers in this thesis study. (The age limit was determined as a minimum of 18 years in order not to obtain legal permission.) The data used to test the hypotheses were collected from young consumers aged 18-29 in Türkiye.

While preparing the data collection process, the time and cost limitations of the thesis were taken into consideration. By using online survey, it was hoped to receive free and accurate opinions from the participants and to collect a large number of questionnaire form in a short time. The data collected was obtained through an online questionnaire form by using not only convenience but also snowball sampling in January 2023. The questionnaire, as a research material, includes a series of questions to determine individuals' living conditions, attitudes and beliefs. Compared with other data collection techniques, one of the most important advantages of this technique is that it allows to reach individuals from different regions in a short time and at low cost (Buyukozturk, 2005).The participants were asked to fill out the questionnaire form and share it with their 18-29-year-old witnesses, whom they believed would fill appropriately, if possible. Thanks to these efforts, data were obtained from various provinces of Türkiye in a relatively short time and at relatively low cost. At the end of data collecting process, 322 questionnaire forms were obtained.

It is suggested for estimating the minimum sample size required that at least 5-10 responses should be given for each observed indicator (item) (Joshi et al., 2019) or the sample size preferably 10 times the number of variables in the study, or should be more in a multivariate study (Altınısık et al., 2022; Buyukozturk et al., 2012). Also, if there are sub-samples (female/male) to be interpreted in the sampling, at least 30 elements from each category should be selected for sampling (Buyukozturk et al., 2019: 97). Accordingly, in this thesis study, a total of 17 observed variables were used and the number 170 (17x10) was taken into account for the required sample size. Another approach when determining the sample size is to base the sample sizes used in similar studies (Altınısık et al., 2022). By considering past research related to sustainable consumption of young consumers in an emerging market (Joshi et al., 2019 sample size: 325; Ozgul, 2010 sample size: 317; Lee et al: sample size303), a sample of 322 young consumers was found sufficient for this study.

The ethical permission required for the survey application was obtained from Adana Alparslan Türkeş Science and Technology University Publication Ethics Committee (Decision dated 06.09.2022 and numbered 07/4).

3.2. Measurement

After the literature review, it was decided to use a scale developed in Türkiye for the SCB scale, taking into account the culture, socio-economic structure, and environmental characteristics of the country, and facilitating measurement of the research variables. The sustainable consumption behavior scale used in this thesis is a scale whose validity and reliability have been proven as a result of a scale research conducted in Türkiye. Before starting the data collecting process with the questionnaire, a pre-test was conducted with 20 participants in order to evaluate the intelligibility of the statements in the scale and to eliminate possible misunderstandings, if any. Thanks to the pretest, the suitability of the scale for this thesis study was confirmed.

The "*sustainable consumption behaviour scale*" developed by Dogan et al. (2015) was applied to measure the sustainable consumption behavior of young consumers in Türkiye. (Before using the scale, permission was obtained from the authors who developed the scale.) The preferred scale has been used in many studies conducted in Türkiye and its validity and reliability have been proven (Bulut et al., 2017; Karaca, 2018; Aktas and Cicek, 2019; Kucukyoruk and Kurtuldu, 2022; Avcı and Yildiz, 2023; Ozdemir and Sunaoglu, 2023). This scale included four sub-dimensions of SCB: environmental sensitivity (5 items), unneeded consumption (5 items), saving (4 items), and reuse (3 items). To measure the variables, the 5-point Likert type scales were employed, with '1: never', and '5: always. The "unneeded consumption" dimension was reverse-coded. Thus, the questionnaire form included 17 items to measure SCB and demographic questions (gender, marital status etc).

According to Dogan et al. (2015), who are the scale authors, considering the OECD's classification, the environmental sensitivity and reusability dimensions of this scale are related to the ecological dimension of sustainable consumption, while the savings and unneeded consumption dimensions are related to the economic dimension. In addition, when the dimensions are evaluated in terms of the 3R concept, it is stated by the authors that the reusability dimension of this scale meets the reusability dimension in the 3R concept, the saving and unneeded consumption dimensions refers to the reduction dimension, and the environmental sensitivity dimension can be evaluated together with recycling (Dogan et al., 2015).

3.4. Analysis

The independent samples t-test was employed to find out whether there is a difference between gender groups regarding sustainable consumption and its dimensions like several previous gender studies in sustainability (Nwanzu and Babalola, 2023; Banyte et al., 2020; Kuru and Boyraz, 2020; Nyugen et al., 2019; Gurler, 2018; Lee et al., 2013). The t-test is used to investigate whether there is a difference between the two sample groups in terms of means, and the independent two-sample t-test compares the means of two different sample groups. The t test is especially preferred when the sample size is not very large, the standard deviation of the population from which the sample is taken is not known and the parameters of the population are not used in hypothesis testing (Ak, 2014:74). Additionally, Hedges' g value, which are appropriate for comparison of groups with different sample sizes, was used to calculate the effect size. In order to interpretion of this value, the following classification was used which is suggested by Guo, Kong and Zhang (2019:3): "*The magnitude of Hedges' g was then classified as being either a small, medium, or large effect (small effect = 0.2, medium effect=0.5, large effect = 0.8)*". If the sample size is over 20, the difference between Cohen's d and Hedges's g is very small (Lakens, 2013). Thus, the results for the effect size can also be evaluated on the basis of Cohen's d criteria. This criterion means that the values of 0.2, 0.5 and 0.8 mean small, medium and large effects, respectively (Cohen, 1992). The Cohen d value is interpreted regardless of its sign (Nergis, Baykose and Yildiz, 2015).

Gender (male/female) was the grouping variable, while SCB and its dimensions (environmental sensitivity, unneeded consumption, saving, and reusability) were test variables. In this study, it was accepted that the normality assumption was met based on the central limit theorem. This theorem, which is used if the sample size is greater than 30 or 50 (Kurtulus, 2004), claims that the samples means demonstrate a normal distribution as the sample size rises (Nakip, 2003).

3.5. Limitation

This thesis has some limitations. Firstly, the young consumers 15, 16 and 17 years old were not examined in this thesis. It is recommended that future studies should cover these age groups in order to achieve more holistic results in sustainable consumption related to young consumers. Secondly, the generalizability of the results in this study is limited due to the sample size and sampling method used. It is suggested to increase the generalization capabilities of future studies by using random sampling methods and larger sample sizes.

Thirdly, the data was obtained young consumers in Türkiye as an emerging market. As the differences/similarities between gender groups can be influenced by socio-economic and cultural conditions, it is likely to be beneficial to test the hypotheses in young consumers from different emerging markets to gain a deeper understanding. Fourtly, in future research, gender identity groups should be considered to gain deeper insights into gender issues in sustainable consumption. Finally, this thesis is a cross-sectional study due to time and cost limitation. Longitudinal studies are recommended for future research to obtain comprehensive information on the variation of similarities and differences between gender groups over time.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Statistical analysis results were presented in the analysis section and the findings were evaluated in the discussion section of this section of the thesis.

4.1. Analysis

In this part of the thesis, descriptive statistics and analysis results used to test hypotheses were given.

4.1.1. Descriptive statistics

Table 1 presented the demographic information of the participants who participated in the survey. Accordingly, 57.8 percent of the respondents were women, and the rate of single people according to marital status was at the highest level with 88.6 percent. Looking at the age group, the 21-23 age group was the group that responds the most with 41%. In addition, 34.9 percent of the respondents had a personal income of over 7500 Turkish Liras.

Table 4.1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

Demographics	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
males	140	42.2
females	192	57.8
Age		
18-20 ages	40	12
21-23 ages	136	41
24-26 ages	78	23.5
27-29 ages	78	23.5
Marital status		
single	294	88.6
married	38	11.4
Education level		
secondary education	3	0.9
high school	27	8.1
associate degree	52	15.7
bachelor's degree	219	66
master's degree	31	9.3
personal income (Turkish lira)		
less than 1000	89	26.8
1001-2000	56	16.9
2001-3000	25	7.5
3001-4000	8	2.4
4001-5500	18	5.4
5500-7500	20	6
7501-10000	44	13.3
10001-15000	40	12
15001-20000	26	7.8
20001-25000	4	1.2
over 25000	2	0.6

For the scale used in the thesis study, factor analysis was used to determine its validity and the Cronbach α coefficient was calculated to examine the reliability. The results of the analysis for the validity and reliability of the scale were given in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. The Results of Factor Analysis and Cronbach α

Research Variables		**Factor Analysis**	**Cronbach α**
SCB		KMO:0.817, Chi-square: 2003.424, df:136, p<0.01; % Variance: 60.308	0.813
		Factor Loading	
ES	**ES1**	0.762	0.836
	ES2	0.770	
	ES3	0.828	
	ES4	0.708	
	ES5	0.716	
UnCon	**UnCon1**	0.593	0.771
	UnCon2	0.808	
	UnCon3	0.736	
	UnCon4	0.809	
	UnCon5	0.656	
Sav	**Sav1**	0.804	0.848
	Sav2	0.870	
	Sav3	0.824	
	Sav4	0.683	
Reu	**Reu1**	0.663	0.605
	Reu2	0.650	
	Reu3	0.773	

Environmental sensitivity: ES, Unneeded consumption: UnCon, Saving: Sav, Reuse: Reu, sustainable consumption behaviour: SCB.

According to the results of the KMO-Barlett Test, the KMO value was found to be 0.817 and this value exceeds 0.70, and the Barlett Test value was also determined to be significant. As can be seen from the table, all factor loading values meet the condition of at least 0.5; for this reason, no item was excluded (Hair, Babin, Anderson, and Black, 2019). In addition, in accordance with the original SCB scale (Dogan et al., 2015), four dimensions of SCB were determined according to the analysis results. These dimensions were named as environmental sensitivity, unneeded consumption, saving, and reuse, similar to the original scale. Moreover, Cronbach's α value were found to be above 0.7 for SCB, unneeded consumption, and savings, while it was seen that each value met the requirement for a valid scale (Hair, Celsi, Money, Samouel and Page, 2011). On the other hand, Cronbach's α value for reuse was calculated as 0.605. In case the number of items is low, if this value is 0.60 and above, the scale is considered reliable (Sipahi, Yurtkoru, and Çinko, 2010). Because reuse had 3 items, it was accepted that the reliability condition was met in the light of this information. As a result, it was seen that sufficient validity and reliability conditions were met.

Table 4.3. Means and Standart Deviation of Research Variables

Research Variables	Items	Mean	Stand dev.
Environmental sensitivity	5	3.069	0.924
Unneeded consumption	5	3.445	0.929
Saving	4	3.689	1.037
Reuse	3	3.317	0.916
Sustainable consumption behaviour	17	3.369	0.621

As seen in the table, the mean of the research variables ranged from 3.069 to 3.689.When the participants were examined considering the research variables, it was understood that the participants have a low level of environmental sensitivity, show unnecessary spending, saving and reuse behaviors, and also exhibit a low level SCB.

4.1.2. Hypothesis Testing

The independent sample t-test results used to test the hypotheses were presented in Table 4.5. The results revealed that no statistically significant difference existed among gender groups in environmental sensitivity ($t=-1.710$; $p>0.05$), saving ($t=-0.825$; $p>0.05$), and sustainable consumption behaviour ($t=-0.257$; $p>0.05$). In addition, the calculated Hedges's g value (95% confidence coefficient) showed very small effect for environmental sensitivity (0.190), saving (0.093), and SCB (0.031). These calculated values supported the results claimed that there was no significant difference between the environmental sensitivity, saving and overall SCB means of the groups. Therefore, H1, H3, and H5 were not supported. The results showed that males and females had equal means in terms of environmental sensitivity, saving and SCB.

Table 4.4. The independent sample t-test results

Variables		Mean	Std. dev.	Levene sig.	t	Sig.
Environmental sensitivity						
				0.057	-1.710	0.088
	male	2.968	0.993			
	female	3.143	0.865			
Unneeded consumption						
				0.508	3.109	0.002
	male	3.628	0.945			
	female	3.311	0.896			
Saving						
	male	3.633	1.059	0.763	-0.825	0.410
	female	3.729	1.022			
Reuse						
	male	3.192	1.012	0.006	-2.059	0.040
	female	3.408	0.831			
Sustainable consumption behaviour						
	male	3.358	0.727	0.001	-0.257	0.797
	female	3.377	0.533			

The t-test results demonstrated significant difference for unneeded consumption ($t=3.109$; $p<0.05$) and reuse ($t=-2.059$; $p<0.05$). Additionally, the Hedges' g value (95% confidence coefficient) calculated for the effect size was determined as -0.346 for unneeded consumption and 0.237 for reuse, which showed small effect size. Although the calculated effect size revealed small differences in unneeded consumption and reuse between males and females, these differences were statistically significant. Therefore, H2 and H4 were supported. Moreover, means of males and females were considered in order to determine which gender groups were higher in these research variables. The mean of male respondents was higher for unneeded consumption (3.628), while the mean of female respondents was higher for reuse (3.408).

4.2. Discussion

Considering the literature, the results of studies examining consumer behavior in foreign countries and in Türkiye are not uniform among gender groups in terms of sustainable consumption. The dynamic nature of gender-based behaviors, the effects of age on gender, cultural and temporal differences, and the importance of young consumers (especially in emerging market) ensure that gender-focused examination of sustainable consumption behavior in these consumers remains as a significant research gap.

This thesis study aimed to examine whether there is any difference or similarity between males and females in terms of overallSCB and its dimensions in young consumers. The thesis study is in the type of quantitative research and the analysis results are based on the primary data provided within the scope of the thesis. In this regard, primary data were obtained from young consumers between the ages of 18-29 in Türkiye through an online survey. The hypotheses developed in the thesis were tested with the independent sample t-test.

The main findings of the thesis study revealed some similarities and differences between males and females in the context of sustainable consumption. Thus, in this thesis study, mixed results were obtained in terms of sustainable consumption between genders, similar to many previous studies (Walaszczyket al., 2022; Aktaş and Cicek, 2019; Bulut et al., 2017; Costa Pinto et al., 2014; Sahin et al., 2012; Xiao and Hong, 2010).

The main findings of this study demonstrated that there is no difference between males and females in terms of overallSCB and its some dimensions. This finding means that gender does not make a difference among consumers in terms of overallSCB as well as environmental sensitivity and saving as sub-dimensions of SCB. These findings promote previous findings in the literature claiming gender similarities in sustainable consumption (Anh et al., 2020; Nguyen et al. 2019; Abeliotis et al, 2010). In addition, these findings obtained in the thesis are consistent with the findings of studies claiming that there is no gender difference in over allSCB (Aktas and Cicek, 2019), environmental sensitivity (Aktas and Cicek, 2019; Bulut et al., 2017; Gul, 2013; Ay and Ecevit, 2005) and savings (Aktas and Cicek, 2019; Bulut et al., 2017).

Contrary to the stereotypical findings in favor of females on sustainability, the findings in this study pointed to gender invariance in some behaviors related to sustainable consumption. These findings demonstrated gender similarities in overallSCB, environmental sensivity and saving, which supports that gender-based roles/behaviors change over time (Tanrikulu, 2022). It is argued in the consumer behavior literature that while social-agent roles continue, stereotypes attributed to males and females are changing. For example, females are becoming assertive, while males are more preoccupied with social influence than before (Meyers-Levy and Loken, 2015).

In this thesis, gender variance were determined regarding unneeded consumption and reuse. Although the effect sizes of the differences detected are small, it should not be ignored that they are still statistically significant. It was determined that the mean of male respondents was higher for the dimension of unneeded consumption. Due to the reverse coding, this finding means that male participants are more pro-sustainability than female participants in terms of unnecessary consumption as a dimensions of SCB. Female respondents showed more unnecessary consumption behavior than males. This finding is in line with the findings of previous studies, which are few in the literature and highlight men in terms of sustainability (Nguyen et al., 2019; Xiao and Hong, 2010; Mostafa, 2007).

According to research conducted in Türkiye, compare to males, females tend to consume more fun and hedonistic consumption (Akboz and Komsu, 2019) and they have more hedonistic motivations for shopping and higher emotional shopping behavior (Turgut, 2023). A recent study of young consumers in Türkiye draws attention to gender differences in decision-making styles. Based on the research, fun/novelty seeking, variety seeking and satisfaction factors were added to decision-making style factors for women, while time saving, store loyalty, low price seeking and shopping aversion factors were added to males' style. In the same study, it is also stated that females can make sudden purchase decisions, the appearance of the store and effective presentations greatly affect the decision-making process of females, and they shop impulsively (Şıker, 2019). It is also claimed that female consumers are more materialistic than male consumers and that females' influence from the store environment and attractive retail store environment leads to impulsive buying behavior (Atulkar and Kesari, 2018).

According to studies conducted in Türkiye, females do more unplanned shopping than males in their shopping (Şıker, 2019) and specifically in grocery shopping (Tayfun, 2015). It is claimed that the level of involvement of females in fashion clothing products is higher than that of males (Cabuk and Arac, 2016). Females may also show a higher compulsive buying tendency in certain product categories that are purchased frequently. In this context, it is stated that females have a higher compulsive purchasing tendency than males in fashion, cosmetics, supermarket, household and hobby products (Baltaci and Eser, 2021).

Based on another study, young females do more unplanned online shopping than males and are more sensitive to discounts (Purutoglu and Cubukcu, 2022). It is also pointed out that young females spend more time shopping than males (Karahan and Adak, 2019). Moreover, recent studies of young consumers in Türkiye suggest that female consumers enjoy shopping more than males (Ocak, 2022; Şıker, 2019). Therefore, relevant findings of previous studies in Türkiye support that females may exhibit needless purchasing behavior at a higher level than males. On the other hand, it contradicts the previous study conducted in Izmir, Türkiye finding that there is no gender difference in terms of unnecessary consumption (Bulut et al., 2017). The previous study mentioned is a study in which various generation groups were examined together. However, only young consumers were examined in this thesis.

In this study, females were found to be more engaged in reuse, which supports the previous research conducted in Türkiye (Kuru and Boyraz, 2020; Bulut et al., 2017). This finding confirmed the previous research claiming that females tend to reuse products at a higher rate than males (Bulut et al., 2017). This finding also underpins previous findings that females have positive attitudes towards reusable packaging compared to males and that they can reuse the packaging of products for other purposes (Kuru and Boyraz, 2020). Reuse of products provides positive contributions in terms of savings. Sener and Hazer (2008), in their study examining the sustainable behaviors of Turkish females, argue that the economic cost is very important in their purchasing behavior.

In this context, females are able to reduce economic costs and save money by reusing products. On the other hand, this finding is inconsistent with previous study that found no gender difference in reusability (Aktaş and Cicek, 2019). The aforementioned study was conducted before the corona virus pandemic and in only one province of Türkiye. The data of this thesis study belonged to the year 2023 and was carried out throughout Türkiye. Reuse behavior in females may have been encouraged, as previous research has suggested that the pandemic has promoted sustainability in females (Walaszczyk et al, 2022; Degli Espostiet al., 2021).

A study of young consumers in Türkiye claims that scarcity messages are more likely to affect females than males (Ocak, 2022). The restrictions experienced in pandemic conditions may have encouraged reuse behavior in women and these effects may continue. Also, traditionally Turkish women are interested in storing, reusing, borrowing, preparing and sharing new or old items, packaging, clothes, kitchen utensils (glass jars). They can reuse reusable packaging instead of throwing it away. Among these, it is common to share and borrow clothes with close friends, relatives and siblings, and to rent clothes for some special events (graduation, wedding, etc.). In a study conducted in Türkiye, the most important motivation for women to rent clothes is stated as ecological importance (Narın and Cegindir, 2022). Additionally, Turkish females may show an interest in preparing dowry and items belonging to their mothers, mothers and elders for reuse. It is also common among Turkish females to be interested in reusing their mother's and elder's belongings.

5. CONCLUSION

There are some similarities and differences between males and females in terms of sustainable consumption. From a behavioral point of view, there are still significant differences in sustainable consumption between young males and females, but these differences are weak. A clear identification and understanding of the similarities and differences between gender groups can be achieved by examining sustainable consumption with a multi-dimensional structure.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is hoped that this thesis can provide important insights for sustainable marketing practitioners and global marketers in understanding the sustainable consumption behaviors of young consumers in emerging markets. In this thesis, gender-specific differences in young consumers have been observed in the field of non-need consumption and reuse of sustainable consumption behavior. It indicated the importance of considering gender in marketing practices related to non-need consumption and reuse. It is claimed that segmenting the market by demographics in emerging markets is more accessible and identifiable than other types(Nyugen et al., 2019). Segmentation of consumer markets in emerging markets by gender is recommended for successful marketing strategy for goods, services and ideas related to reuse and non-consumption. Gender-specific targeting, differenation and positing can also be useful in terms of them. Additionally, given that SCB is considered motivated behavior (Luchs and Mooradian, 2012), it is recommended to develop gender-specific marketing practices for young consumers to be successful in promoting reuse and reducing unnecessary consumption. On the other hand, the findings obtained in this thesis indicated that young males and females are more likely to be are similar in terms of both sustainable consumption behavior and the sub-dimensions of saving and environmental sensivity. Therefore, rather than gender-specific marketing practices in these field, similar marketing offerings that will cover both genders are recommended for more efficient and effective marketing practices.

Theoretically, it is hoped that this thesis will contribute to the existing literature by reaffirming the importance of gender-specific differences and highlighting some similarities in SCB of young consumers. The findings of the thesis demonstrated that the gender gap in terms of overall SCB, environmental sensitivity and savings decreased. In this context, these findings indicated that the common findings in favor of females on sustainability and environment may change over time, and that male consumers also exhibit similar behavior with female consumers in some areas related to sustainable consumption. The findings also revealed that some significant gender-specific behavioral differences still exist in sustainable consumption. Therefore, this thesis confirmed the importance of a multi-dimensional approach in examining the behavioral dimension of sustainable consumption according to the gender of the consumers. It is suggested that studies focusing on gender comparisons in terms of SCB examine this behavior as a multidimensional construct.

This thesis has some limitations. Firstly, the young consumers 15, 16 and 17 years old were not examined in this thesis. It is recommended that future studies should cover these age groups in order to achieve more holistic results in sustainable consumption related to young consumers. Secondly, the generalizability of the results in this study is limited due to the sample size and sampling method used. It is suggested to increase the generalization capabilities of future studies by using random sampling methods and larger sample sizes. Thirdly, the data was obtained young consumers in Türkiye as an emerging market. As the differences/similarities between gender groups can be influenced by socio-economic and cultural conditions, it is likely to be beneficial to test the hypotheses in young consumers from different emerging markets to gain a deeper understanding. Fourtly, in future research, gender identity groups should be considered to gain deeper insights into gender issues in sustainable consumption. Finally, this thesis is a cross-sectional study due to time and cost limitation. Based on the socio-cultural perspective in gender literature, which claims that gender roles and behaviors will change over time and from culture to culture (Meyers-Levy and Loken, 2015). Therefore, longitudinal studies are recommended for future research to obtain comprehensive information on the variation of similarities and differences between gender groups over time and from culture to culture.

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APPENDIX

Sayın Katılımcı,
Ankete vereceğiniz doğru ve sizi yansıtan cevaplar, çalışmanın geçerli ve güvenilir sonuçlara ulaşmasında önemli katkı sağlayacaktır. **Gösterdiğiniz İlgiye Teşekkür Ederiz.**
Sürdürülebilir tüketim davranışı **ile ilgili aşağıdaki ifadelere katılma derecenizi belirtiniz, lütfen.**
1: Kesinlikle katılmıyorum; …4: Kararsızım…..7: Kesinlikle katılıyorum.

İfadeler		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Deterjan, şampuan gibi temizlik ürünlerinden çevreye daha az zarar verenleri satın alırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	Doğal materyaller kullanılarak üretilmiş giysileri satın alırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	Çevresel sorumluluğu destekleyen firmaların ürünlerini alırım	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	Doğada çözülebilir ambalajlı ürünleri satın alırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	Aile bireylerimi ve arkadaşlarımı çevreye zarar verecek ürünleri almamaları için ikna ederim	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	Cep telefonu vb. teknolojik aletleri ihtiyaç duymadığım halde yenileri ile değiştiririm.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	İhtiyacım olmasa da yeni giysiler alırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	Alışveriş yaparken listemde/aklımda olmayan ürünleri de satın alırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	Yeni çıkan bir ürünü, benzer bir ürünüm olsa da satın alırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	Yiyecek içecek ürünlerinden ihtiyacım olmayanları da satın olduğum olur.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	Enerji tasarrufu sağlayan beyaz eşyaları satın alırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	Diğerlerine göre daha az elektrik harcayan elektronik cihazları satın alırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	Elektronik ürünler satın alırken elektrik tüketim miktarlarına dikkat ederim	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	Evde tasarruflu ampuller kullanırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15	Karton, teneke ve cam gibi ürünlerin ambalajlarını atmak yerine tekrar değerlendiririm.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16	İhtiyacım olduğunda az kullanılmış ürünleri kiralar ya da ödünç alırım (DVD, kitap, vb)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17	Kullanılmış kâğıtları not tutma vb. işlerde yeniden değerlendiririm.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Cinsiyet: kadın () erkek ()
Yaş:….
Kişisel Gelir (TL): ()1000den az ()1001- 2000 () 2001-3000 () 3001-4000
() 4001- 5500 () 5501-7500 () 7501-10000 ()10001-15000
() 15001-15000 ()15001-20000 ()20001-25000 ()25000üstü
Medeni durum: () evli () bekar
Eğitim: () ortaöğretim () lise () on lisans () lisans () lisansüstü

Gösterdiğiniz İlgiye Teşekkür Ederiz