

EFFECTS OF MORTALITY SALIENCE ON TURKISH PEOPLE’S DECISIONS  
TO HOW MUCH, FOR WHOM AND WHAT TO CONSUME

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **EFFECTS OF MORTALITY SALIENCE ON TURKISH PEOPLE’S DECISION TO HOW MUCH, FOR WHOM AND WHAT TO CONSUME**

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The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of mortality salience on Turkish consumers’ decisions on how to allocate their money between saving and spending, how much to spend for materials and experiences, for whom to make purchases, and which product designs to choose. Terror Management Theory constitutes the theoretical framework of the study. It is hypothesized that the participants who were made to think about death would spend more money than the participants who were made to think about dental pain would do. Besides, mortality salience (MS) participants are expected to spend meaningfully more money on materialistic consumption than dental pain (DP) participants. Also, it is thought that compared to DP participants, MS participants will spend significantly more money on others and show a higher preference for a product with a local abstract symbol design. However, the results of this study revealed that mortality salience affects consumer decisions mainly in terms of the cash amount that people would like to keep, the money

amount that they would use for materialistic consumption, and the share of the spending on others in the total spending budget.

Keywords: Terror Management Theory, Consumer Behavior, Spending on Others, Turkey.

## ÖZ

### ÖLÜM BELİRGİNLİĞİNİN TÜRKİYE’DEKİ TÜKETİCİLERİN NEYİ, NE KADAR VE KİMİN İÇİN TÜKETECEKLERİ KARARLARINA ETKİLERİ

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Bu çalışmada Dehşet Yönetimi Kuramı çerçevesinde, ölüm belirginliğinin Türkiye’deki tüketicilerin neyi, ne kadar ve kimin için tüketeceğine dair kararlarına olan etkisinin araştırılması amaçlanmaktadır. Tüketicinin günlük hayatlarımızın ayrılmaz bir parçası olduğu göz önünde bulundurulurularak, tüketicinin aynı zamanda varoluşsal kaygı karşısında ortaya çıkan bilinçdışı savunmalarda da rol alacağı düşünülmüştür. Ölüm hakkında düşünen katılımcıların dış ağrısı hakkında düşünen katılımcılara kıyasla daha fazla para harcaması beklenmekte; fakat, biriktirecekleri para miktarının bu iki gruptan katılımcılar arasında önemli bir farklılık göstermesi beklenmemektedir. Ayrıca, dış ağrısı hatırlatılan katılımcılara kıyasla, ölümün hatırlatıldığı katılımcıların materyal tüketimi için ve kendinden başkaları için daha fazla para harcaması, ayrıca yerel soyut sembol içeren ürün tasarımını diğer ürün tasarımına kıyasla daha çok tercih etmesi beklenmektedir.



Fakat, alıřma sonuları, lm belirginliĐinin temel olarak tketicilerin ne kadar miktarda nakit para bulundurmak istedikleri, materyalistik tketim iin ne kadar harcayacakları ve bařkası iin harcayacakları para miktarının toplam harcama btelerine oranı stnde anlamlı etkisi olduĐu gstermiřtir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dehřet Ynetimi Kuramı, Tketiciler Davranıřları, Bařkaları iin Harcama, Trkiye.

To my lovely husband, my mother and my brother  
&  
My father who made me intensely think about death too early

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## CHAPTER I

### TERROR MANAGEMENT THEORY AND SEARCH FOR EXISTENTIAL MEANING

Death is drawn to sound  
like a slipper without a foot, a suit without its wearer,  
comes to knock with a ring, stoneless and fingerless,  
comes to shout without a mouth, a tongue, without a throat.  
Nevertheless its footsteps sound  
and its clothes echo, hushed like a tree.

--Pablo Neruda, *Selected Poems*

As artistically described by Pablo Neruda, the silent sound of death can be thought as the official soundtrack of every human's life, and the volume of it can be adjusted to make it either the focal point of attention or a silent background music. However, in this poem more important to me than the perfect literary explanation of death is the internalization of the materialism so deeply that the poet's describing such an abstract concept, death, even with material possessions like rings and clothes. Even though the death can be defined broadly as consuming life, the relation between death and consumption can be analyzed on a more concrete ground. This bizarre looking relationship between the death and the materialistic consumption forms the main topic of this research.

Mainly, this research aims to shed light on the nonconscious effects of increased mortality salience on consumers' decisions on how much, for whom and what to consume. For this purpose, Terror Management Theory [TMT], developed by Greenberg, Pyszczynski, and Solomon (1986), forms the skeleton of the study. TMT proposes that when the death related thoughts are out of the conscious awareness though highly accessible, people alleviate the death anxiety by bolstering their

cultural worldviews and boosting self-esteem (Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 2004). In line with this proposition, several studies showed that materialistic consumption can support this terror management process by functioning as a way to bolster one's cultural worldviews or boost self-esteem (Arndt, Solomon, Kasser, & Sheldon, 2004). However, when searching for the relationship between mortality salience and consumer behavior, the researchers mostly focused on the impact of mortality salience on consumer decisions concerning food preferences (e.g., Friese, & Hoffman, 2008; Goldenberg, Arndt, Hart, & Brown, 2005; Ferraro, Shiv, & Bettman, 2005), or the choice between luxury or normal goods (e.g., Mandel, & Heine, 1999; Page, & Smith, 2010; Frasen, Smeesters, & Fennis, 2011). Hence, it can be argued that this fertile academic territory of mortality salience and consumer behavior relationship is still waiting for an exploration. It is the purpose of this thesis to widen the enlightened field in this territory.

More specifically, this thesis study strives to examine the relationship between mortality salience and consumer decisions concerning spending or saving, spending on one's self or on others, making materialistic or experiential purchases, and choosing products with local or universal abstract symbols. Since this research will be conducted within the TMT framework, participants' mortality salience levels will be manipulated in order to observe the effects on consumption decisions. The consumption choices, which are the dependent variables of the study, will mainly be gauged by the amount of money the participants allocate to different options. In the end, it is aimed to reveal that nonconscious effect of mortality salience are present even when making important economic decisions such as deciding on how much to spend and how much to save, and people make choices conforming to their cultural values and increasing their self-esteem.

In this chapter, in order to explain the theoretical basis of this experimental research, first the TMT will be briefly summarized with an emphasis on the dual defense mechanism. Then, the accumulated knowledge on the effects of mortality salience on consumer attitudes and behavior will be provided in a nutshell. Finally, the current

study and its importance will be explained as a whole, and the chapter will be closed with the presentation of the hypotheses of this study.

### **1.1. Terror Management Theory**

Basically, TMT posits that cultural worldviews and self-esteem function as a buffer against the death anxiety. As stated by the authors, when reaching up this conclusion, the interdisciplinary studies of Ernest Becker, namely *The Denial of Death* (1973), *Escape from Evil* (1975) and *The Birth and Death of Meaning* (1962) provided the main insights. Even though being inspired by the works of Becker and many esteemed psychologists, including Allport, Freud, James, Lifton, Rank, Rogers and Yalom the TMT differentiated from them thanks to embracing experimental methodologies to conduct study in the existential psychology field. It was explicitly stated by the authors of the TMT in their book *In the Wake of 9/11: The Psychology of Terror* (Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Greenberg, 2002) that, they were guided by four basic epistemological assumptions: the theory must be interdisciplinary in nature; it must be scientific, so amenable to empirical study; it must be useful to improve social conditions to maximize individual and collective well-being; lastly, it must be grounded in evolutionary theory. With the help of this four item guideline, TMT made an important contribution to the existential-psychodynamic tradition by its ability to measure and reveal the potential role that nonconscious concerns about death have in everyday life domains (Hayes, Schimel, Arndt, & Faucher, 2010). In fact, since the TMT was first revealed in 1986, it has gathered both attention and resistance from the academic psychologists due to its broadness and connectedness to the psychoanalytic tradition. Upon the criticisms, the authors canalized their efforts to assess the validity of such a broad theory. As a result, they ended up with two basic hypotheses, which still constitute the mainstreams of the researches on TMT.

These two umbrella hypotheses were named “anxiety buffer hypothesis” and “mortality salience hypothesis” (Greenberg, Solomon, & Pyszczynski, 1997). The former, anxiety buffer hypothesis, concerns self-esteem and posits that “self-esteem functions to reduce anxiety in stressful situations” (Pyszczynski, Solomon, &

Greenberg, 2002, p. 44). This argument was supported by a set of studies showing that bolstering self-esteem through giving positive personality or success feedback results in less anxiety in response to watching a video about death or anticipating a painful shock compared to not interfering with the self-esteem (Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, Rosenblatt, Burling, Lyon, Simon, & Pinel, 1992).

On the other hand, the second one, mortality salience hypothesis concerns the cultural worldview and posits that “if a psychological structure provides protection against thoughts about death, then reminding people of their mortality should increase their need for these psychological structures” (Hayes, Schimel, Faucher, & Williams, 2008, p. 601). Hence, it is expected that when the mortality is made salient, people will try to defend themselves against the anxiety of death and bolster their cultural worldviews more (Burke, Martens, & Faucher, 2010). Especially, the researches on nationalism have an important volume among the researches on the cultural worldview defense. Some of these researches on nationalism show that the American participants who are reminded of their mortality evaluate the authors of the pro-USA articles more positively than the authors of the con-USA articles (e.g., Gailliot, Schmeichel, & Maner, 2007; Greenberg, Pyszczynski, Solomon, Simon, & Breus, 1994; Greenberg, Simon, Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Chatel, 1992).

In addition to the two main hypotheses of TMT, later on Schimel, Hayes, Williams, and Jahrig (2007) proposed a third general one, which is the death-thought accessibility hypothesis. This can be best described as a complementary to the other two, since it states that “if a psychological structure provides protection from thoughts of death then weakening this structure should render death thoughts more accessible to consciousness” (Schimel et al., 2007, pp. 790). The authors conducted 5 studies to prove the hypothesis and showed that when one’s cultural values are threatened, that person shows an increase in death thought accessibility, which is usually measured by word-fragment completion task. Also, these studies revealed that the effects of death thought accessibility occurs independently from the arousal of anxiety or anger.

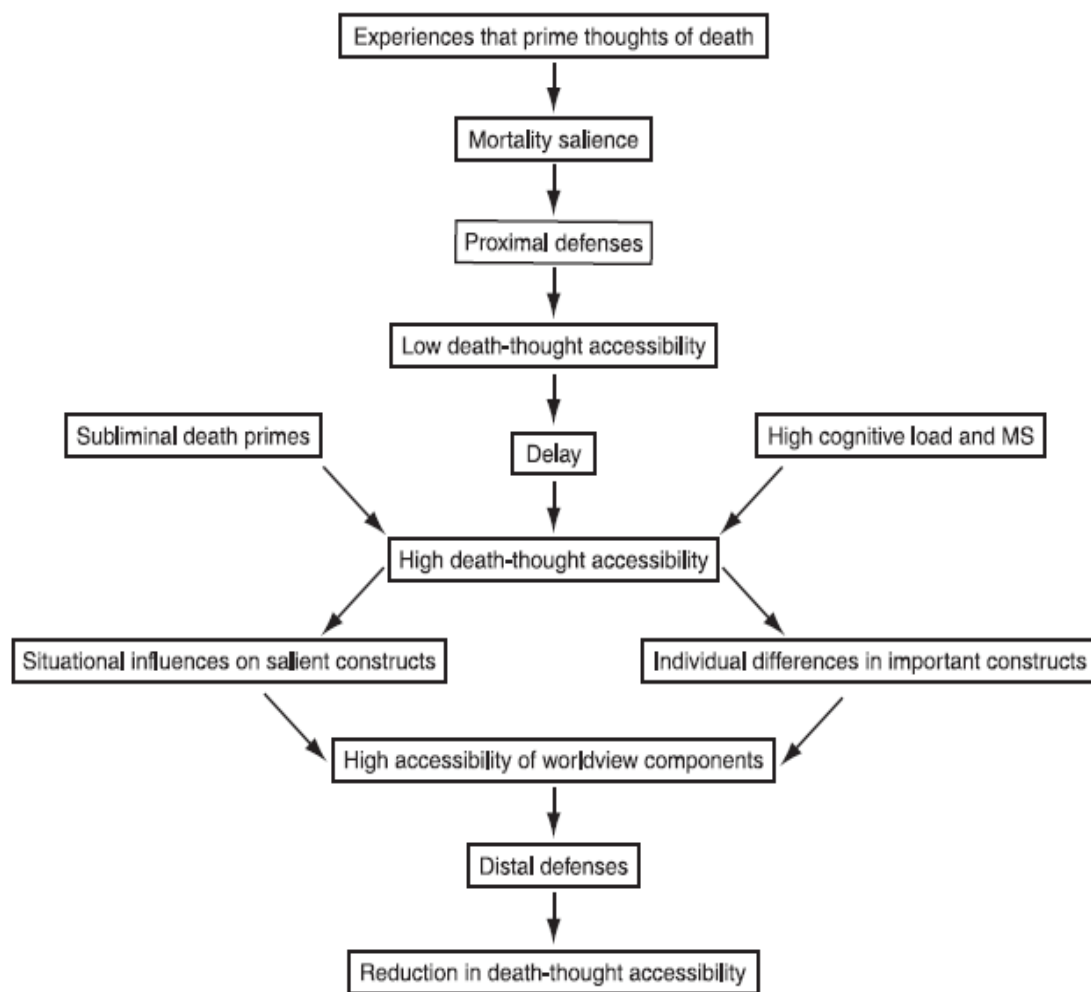
When testing for these hypotheses and forming the main propositions of TMT, the dual defense mechanism constituted the main pillar of the theory. Thus, in the following part of this chapter, a brief description of the functioning of the terror management process and the main components of dual defense mechanism, that are distal and proximal defenses, will be provided.

### **1.1.1. Functioning of Terror Management**

According to the TMT, when people are faced with the reminders of death, the first thing they do is trying to suppress the death anxiety by looking for distractions or making up somewhat rational reasons to ensure themselves that their death will not be coming soon. These conscious reactions to deny or to get rid of the unpleasant thoughts of death are named “proximal defenses”. Nevertheless, since everyday life is full of distractions nothing remains in conscious mind forever, even the thought of death regresses towards the unconsciousness eventually. When the death related thoughts go out of consciousness, people switch to use “distal defenses” in order to suppress the death anxiety (Pyszczynski et al., 2002).

In order to better explain the cognitive architecture behind terror management mechanism, Arndt, Cook, and Routledge (2004) developed a detailed model, whose visual depiction can be observed in Figure 1. As can be seen in the Figure 1 the so called dual-process model begins with the activation of the knowledge of mortality. This activation of death thought can occur in several ways changing from being explicitly made to think and write about death to being exposed to nonconscious death primes. Right after the activation of death related thoughts, the proximal or direct defenses comes into play to help the individual find somehow rational reasons to convince herself/himself that her/his death is not near or that there is nothing to be feared of.

These conscious efforts help the subject to lower the level of death-thought accessibility or to keep the death related thoughts less under the scrutiny of focal attention.



**Figure 1.** The cognitive architecture of terror management (Arndt, Cook, & Routledge, (2004), pp. 41)

However, death related thoughts' moving outside of consciousness doesn't mean that they are forever suppressed, their availability can still increase later outside of awareness. When this happens, the subject's symbolic system embarks and activates the belief that the subject's world is full of meaning and value. Together with these believes, the unconscious thoughts about death trigger distal or symbolic defenses. According to the TMT, all these listed steps, especially the distal defenses help the subject to sustain her/his equanimity even under the constant thread of death.

#### **1.1.1.1. Proximal Defenses against Death Anxiety**

Greenberg, Pyszczynski, Solomon, Simon, and Breus (1994) showed that people engage in some form of defense when their concerns about mortality are provoked explicitly. Later on, it was revealed that the first defensive reaction of an individual to increased mortality salience is striving to find simple, direct and pseudo-rational reasons to feel secure in the face of death, in other words applying proximal defenses (Greenberg, Arndt, Simon, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 2000). Even though all proximal defense efforts aim to suppress the death anxiety and to remove death related thoughts from consciousness, these defenses can take many forms. They can be grouped under several broad headings: avoidance of self-awareness, suppression of conscious death related thoughts, denial of vulnerability, and adoption of healthier/less riskier behaviors.

The first of this proximal defense mechanisms, avoidance of self-awareness, builds on human's capability of developing self-reflective thoughts (Duval & Wicklund, 1972). In other words, death poses a problem of anxiety not merely by its own existence but by human beings' capability to perceive it as an unavoidable end of every living creature, including themselves. So, individuals try to disassociate the death from themselves. Thus, as a proximal defense mechanism they avoid situations and stimuli that may foster focusing their attention on themselves. Examples of this avoidance include when their mortality salience is increased people's preferring to sit in a room without a mirror instead of a one with mirror or to write shorter essays that necessitate the use of self-reflective words.

The second proximal defense category's name, suppression of conscious death related thoughts, is quite self-explanatory. As Wegner (1992) stated decades ago, one of the most convenient way to stay away from an unpleasant thought is suppressing it. Arndt, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, and Simon's (1997) research in which after the mortality salience manipulation half of the participants were given the task of rehearsing an 11-digit number to increase cognitive load proved the effectiveness of this defense mechanism by revealing that the participants who were deprived of

mental resources by the rehearsing task showed significantly more increase in the accessibility of death related thoughts than the participants who didn't receive the cognitive load manipulation.

Third, denial of vulnerability to death can be explained as one's underestimating his/her proneness to risk factors associated with death and convincing himself/herself that he/she has a long time until the death comes. On this defense, the study by Greenberg et al. (2000) showed that following the mortality salience manipulations participants biased their self-reports of emotionality to deny their vulnerability to a short life expectancy. Last but not least, increased mortality salience may also evoke a truly beneficial defense mechanism as well, adopting healthier or less risky behaviors. Briefly, when the availability of death related thoughts is increased, participants may for example choose to quit smoking instead of denying their vulnerability to death and assuming that he/she is too young to be diagnosed with lung cancer even if he/she smokes.

#### **1.1.1.2. Distal Defenses against Death Anxiety**

In consideration of proximal defenses' not being able to offer a radical solution to death anxiety, it is inevitable that when the suppression of death related thoughts by proximal is relaxed an individual again faces of an increase in the accessibility of death related thoughts. At this time, distal defenses come into play to cope with the unconscious but still highly accessible thoughts about death. It is worth to note here that terror management theory mainly deals with and tries to shed light on the distal defenses since they are recognized to be the reason how people seemingly accept death as a natural phenomenon and peacefully continue their routine daily lives. This symbolic terror management defense functions via bolstering the cultural worldviews and the self-esteem. Hence, strong reactions that people give to the stimuli which threatens their symbolic believes, intense efforts to spread their own believes, and deeds to bolster their self-esteem make up some of the distal defense examples.



As explained by Pyszczynski, Greenberg, and Solomon (1999) there exist several points that differentiate distal defenses from proximal ones. First, while proximal defenses consist of conscious thoughts and efforts, distal defenses occur as a result of the implicit knowledge of the inevitability of death, so they take place outside of conscious awareness. Second, proximal defenses function to move death related thoughts out of awareness and suppress them; however, distal defenses aim to overcome the death anxiety by inducing the feeling that the person is a well-regarded and valuable individual and by establishing a perception of reality well beyond the limits of mortality. Nevertheless the death anxiety couldn't be totally overcome with the help of distal defenses, they are still more effective in alleviating this anxiety compared to proximal defenses.

Third, although proximal defenses arise right after the mortality salience manipulation, distal defenses begin their work only after a distraction because of their implicit functioning. Last, if the mortality salience manipulation is done via a below threshold stimulus, no proximal defense shows up while distal defenses step in immediately. This situation can be attributed to proximal defenses' necessitating the presence of death related thoughts in consciousness to embark, whereas distal defenses operate in subconscious level.

### **1.1.2. Cultural Differences in Terror Management Theory**

In the realm of TMT, bolstering the cultural worldview and attaining self-esteem by living up to the standards of one's culture are presumed to be the saviors from the death anxiety. Hence, in the light of TMT's arguments, people's reactions to increased mortality salience are expected to be highly culture dependent and various among different cultures. However, since TMT was developed by the researchers from the Western culture, and since there is still an inclination in academia to generalize the findings from, so called developed, West to the rest of the world, the effects of cross-cultural differences on TMT's main propositions didn't receive much attention almost until the mid-2000s.

In order to discuss the cross-cultural differences in ways of dealing with the death anxiety, first we need to know whether people from different cultures are affected in the same way by the reminders of their inevitable end. The experimental researches of Heine, Harihara and Niiya (2002); Kashima E. S., Halloran, Yuki and Kashima, Y. (2003); Wakimoto (2006); Tam, Chiu and Lau (2007); Renkema, Stapel and Yperen (2008); and Ma-Kellams and Blascovich (2011) all reveal that the people from Asia, Europe and America find the thought of death threatening, as they respond to mortality salience manipulations predictably. Although we can reach a consensus on that people from different cultures all find the inevitability of death as threatening, it is difficult to make a solid conclusion regarding the existence of cultural differences in people's reactions to death anxiety.

On the one hand, there exist TMT studies that were conducted with participants from East Asian countries showing that some of the typical effects of mortality salience that had been tested in Western countries also hold true in these East Asian countries. For example, in the case of Japan, Heine, Harihara, and Niiya (2002) showed that worldview defense in the form of giving negative responses to an anti-Japanese writer functions as an anxiety buffer when mortality is made salient. Also, it was found that mortality salience results in bolstering the Japanese cultural values, such as modesty, while rejecting the values belonging to individualistic cultures (Kashima, et al., 2004). Moreover, in the case of China, the same pattern of responses unfolded as it can be observed from the studies of Tam, Chiu, and Lau (2007); Fu (2010); and Routledge, Juhl, Vess, Cathey, and Liao (2012) that are correspondingly showing that increased mortality salience results in increased in-group bias, preference for a pro-China author, and nationalism. On the other hand though, studies conducted in another East Asian country, Taiwan, failed to replicate the expected mortality salience effects. For example, in Chen's research (as cited in Du, Jonas, Klackl, Agroskin, Hui, & Ma, 2013) mortality salience didn't result in increased obedience among the military personnel or in Yen and Cheng's one (as cited in Du, et al., 2013) mortality salience didn't provoke worldview defense at all.

In the light of the information provided in the previous paragraph, it can be argued that instead of searching for the validity of grand hypothesis like the mortality salience across different cultures, searching for the cross-cultural differences regarding the tenets of TMT would be more helpful. First, even though several researches prove that people from different cultures all find the death related thoughts threatening, it is still important to know how they perceive death on its own and how these perceptions affect the reactions against the death anxiety. Ma-Kellams and Blascovich (2012) argue that there are significant differences between Eastern and Western cultures regarding how people process and think about the world and of course about the death. Authors propose that while Westerns employ the linear, Aristotelian logic in assigning meaning to life and death, Easterners use holistic views which embrace the mutual existence of both positive and negative elements in all things.

Accordingly, Ma-Kellams and Blascovich (2012) posit that if there exist differences between East and West in the perception death, there can also be differences in the defenses against death. So, the symbolic immortality striving as proposed by the TMT and employed by the European American research participants to overcome the death anxiety may not be the relevant or preferred manner of responding for East Asians. The authors succeeded to prove their claims by conducting 5 consecutive studies, the first of which showing that when reminded of death East Asians tend to think about life while European Americans tend to think more about death. Second and third studies point out respectively that when mortality is made salient East Asians exhibit greater interest in daily life activities and enjoyed them more. The forth one revealed another difference that in mortality salience condition East Asians tried to enjoy their life more instead of searching for the symbolic immortality. The last one, shed light on the mechanism behind the choice revealed in the forth study by proving that when holistic thinking is primed experimentally, participants tend to enjoy life more in the face of death.

Second, another intriguing article on the cross-cultural differences in mortality salience defense, points out that these differences can be caused by individualist

cultures' embracing independent self-esteem and collectivist cultures' embracing interdependent self-esteem (Du, et al., 2013). According to TMT, together with cultural worldview bolstering, self-esteem constitutes the main defense mechanism against the thought of death. However, as self-esteem is told to be attained through living up to the cultural norms and values and trying to become a valuable member of society; it is anticipated that cross-cultural differences in norms and values lead to various different views of who can be the valuable person in the eyes of society and also to various expressions of self-esteem in different cultures.

The authors examined the effects of different views of self-esteem on mortality salience defense based on the dichotomy of individualist and collectivist cultures. First, it is explained that in individualist cultures people value being able to express themselves and validate inner attributes as indications of self-esteem, while in collectivist cultures people accept the ability to blend in the social harmony and to respond others' needs as proves of self-esteem. Accordingly, whereas the first one is called "independent self-esteem", the second one is called "interdependent self-esteem". Second, it is hypothesized that when mortality is salient, compared to people in individualist cultures, in collectivist cultures people would apply more to interdependent self-esteem and less to independent self-esteem to manage their existential terror. Last, this hypothesis was tested with the help of Chinese and Austrian subjects in three experimental studies, and it turned out to be true. Hence, it was shown that people from different cultural backgrounds have and employ different types of self-esteem in order to defend themselves against death anxiety.

Another interesting article concerning the cross-cultural differences in the effects of mortality salience was written by Maheswaran and Agrawal (2004) to point out the motivational and cultural variations in mortality salience effects. Authors' positing the existence of two different motivations, namely defense and impression motivations, behind mortality salience effects makes up the corpus of their study. They define defense motivation as "the desire to hold attitudes that are compatible with one's perceived material interests and existing beliefs" (p.214) and hold it responsible for the worldview defense effects. On the other hand, impression

motivation is referred as “the desire to be socially acceptable” (p.214) and thought to cause self-esteem striving in mortality salience condition. The authors state that knowing under what motivational conditions people apply to worldview defense or self-esteem striving can significantly increase the predictive power of the TMT. They also put forward the idea that culture can be an important factor determining which motivation has preponderance over the other; however, unfortunately the authors do not conduct studies to test their hypothesis. Hence, even evident from this article, although studies on cross-culture differences in mortality salience effects can yield very interesting results and dramatically help to improve the knowledge about TMT; this field still remains like a fertile land waiting to be fully discovered.

To sum up, human beings fight against the anxiety provoking thoughts of death by utilizing both proximal and distal defenses, and culture has an important affect on this process. So, it can be argued that the battle fronts in the war against the death anxiety are so broad that this battle continues anyhow in the background of the numberless moments, decisions and behaviors of our lives. The following section of this thesis aims to trace the repercussions of the battle against the existential anxiety in the realm of consumer behavior; hence, it makes a brief summary of the studies relating to the effects of mortality salience on consumer attitudes and behaviors.

## **1.2. Consumer Behavior through Terror Management Theory Perspective**

Taking the profound role of consumption in shaping our lives, values and selves into consideration, it is not surprising to see the tightly knitted connection between our defense against the existential anxiety and our consumption choices. Although, the symbolic role of materials to protect us from the existential anxiety may seem obvious to us, it was not until 2000s that this topic gathered attention from the academia. After that time, there accumulated a considerable academic knowledge on this topic, but there still remain parts to be enlightened. Thus, in the following part, it is aimed to provide a brief summary of the literature on the effects of mortality salience on consumer attitudes and behaviors.

### **1.2.1 Consumer Attitudes through Terror Management Theory Perspective**

As consumerism turned out to be a significant part of everyone's culture, it is not surprising to see consumption also as part of the cultural worldview defenses in the face of existential death. Several researches have supported this argument (e.g., Kassen & Sheldon, 2000). The authors posited that there are numerous researches showing increased appreciation of materialistic values as a result of feelings of insecurity. Thus, as death is a major source of insecurity feelings, they predicted that activation of death related thoughts would make the participants more focused on the accumulation of wealth and materialistic possessions. In their first study, after completing a writing task about death or listening music, the participants completed a filler survey, and finally they answered questions about their expected financial status for 15 years later. The results revealed that compared to participants in the control condition, participants in the mortality salience condition expected to have higher overall financial worth, which was operationalized as the total amount of participants' expectations about their own salary and salary of their spouse, the worth of their home, the worth of their investments, and the amount they would be spending on travel, and also pleasure spending, which consisted of the amount participants expected to spend on clothing, entertainment, and leisure activities.

In their second study, the participants passed through the same steps except the last one, in this one the participants participated in a forest management game, which is indeed a one-time resource dilemma. Specifically, the participants were asked to imagine that they own a company, which has to enter into a bidding and compete against three other bidders for getting the right to harvest timbers in a national forest. The participants were also instructed about the advantages or disadvantages of making large or small bids and reminded of the risk of forest's disappearing if companies continually make large bids. The participants were then required to evaluate based on a scale from 1 to 7 their eagerness to profit more than the other companies and how much they think that the other companies try to cut large amounts. Moreover, they were asked to submit bids for harvesting in the first year. The results showed that participants in mortality salience condition turned out to act

greedier in terms of the profit they would like to make and in terms of the acres of forest they are willing to harvest. However, no difference was observed in the fear of forest's disappearing between the participants in different conditions (Kassen & Sheldon, 2000).

In another intriguing study concerning the impact of death related thoughts on consumer attitudes, Fransen, Fennis, Pruyn, and Das (2007) apply an unusual method to provoke death related thoughts. They posit that certain brands may be associated with unintended negative thoughts, even with death. Thus, the authors hypothesize that death related thoughts can be activated with the mere exposure to certain brands. So, in the first study, the participants in experimental condition were exposed via the computer screen to a well-known insurance company's logo for 5 minutes to induce mortality related thoughts whereas the participants in the control condition did nothing. Then, all participants completed the Positive Affect Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Later, the participants participated in a word completion task, in which they can complete the incomplete words into either a death related or an unrelated word. Last, they answered the question of how much they are planning to spend on entertainment and food in the upcoming month. The study revealed that death thoughts could be provoked even by brand logos. More specifically, it was shown that compared to the participants in the control condition, the participants who were explicitly exposed to the logo of an insurance company completed the word completion task by using death related words more. Moreover, the results of the study provided a support for the claim that people tend to consume more to suppress the existential anxiety, as people in the mortality salience condition expressed their intention to spend significantly more on entertainment and food than the people in control condition.

Furthermore, in the second study of the same research (Fransen et al., 2007), the researchers tried to provoke death related thoughts by exposing participants to brand logos in an implicit way. For that purpose, in the mortality salience condition the researchers placed mousepads with the logo of the well-known insurance company near the computers used for the experiment, and in the control condition they placed

mousepads with the logo of a well-known company, which doesn't relate to mortality. Then, it was observed that the participants exposed to the implicit death prime expressed higher intention to donate to a charity foundation concerned with environmental protection and climate issue compared to participants exposed to an irrelevant brand logo. Hence, it was proven that death related thoughts can also increase the intention to make a spending for the culturally valued social expenditures.

The last study of the same research (Fransen et al., 2007) also deserves attention as it examines the role of goods' country of origin as a terror management defense mechanism. In the last study, the researchers applied the subconscious priming by asking the participants to indicate whether the syllables they see on the screen makes up a meaningful word and the brand logo, the one of insurance company in mortality salience condition and an irrelevant one in control condition, was shown between the words for a very short time that will remain under conscious awareness threshold. After that, the participants were asked to evaluate the local food, Dutch food in this case, and the food from different countries. It resulted in the participants' in mortality salience condition evaluating the local food more positively and the foreign food less positively. Hence, it can be deduced that when mortality is salient the expected increase in the more positive evaluation of the in-group was reflected in the evaluation of the local food this time.

Whereas Fransen et al. (2007) implicitly state that consumer behavior function to alleviate the death anxiety by helping the individuals to bolster their cultural worldviews, Mandel and Smeesters (2008) argue that materialistic consumption function to suppress the death anxiety by helping the individuals to escape from self-awareness. In the pilot study of their research to test this hypothesis, following the classical mortality salience manipulation and distraction tasks the researchers make the participants choose the goods from a list consisting of a variety of foods and beverages that they can consider to purchase from the grocery within the next week. The results turned out to be significant in terms of showing how death related thoughts could increase materialistic consumption. In other words, the number of



goods that the participants in the mortality salience condition intended to purchase was significantly more than the number of goods that the participants in the control condition intended to purchase. Thus, it can be understood from the result that increased mortality salience affects the consumer attitudes toward normal goods in a positive way.

Since there are a lot of other researches showing the effect of mortality salience on shaping consumer attitudes, the rest of them will be described very briefly. First, Mandel and Heine's (1999) research is important for showing that whereas mortality salience increases the interest for high status, luxury items such as Rolex and Lexus, it doesn't have an impact on the interest for the normal or low status items such as Metro and Pringles. Second, this effect of mortality salience's increasing the interest for luxury items were confirmed by the experimental study of Page and Smith (2010), moreover, it was shown that mortality salience has an impact of increased desire for luxury items which are inconspicuously consumed, in this case alternative fuel. Third, Fransen, Smeeters, and Fennis (2011), demonstrate through their research that people opt for luxury goods to boost their self-esteem via acting in accordance with cultural norms; thus, the presence of others moderates the effects of mortality salience on consumer attitudes. So, if luxury brands' are valued culturally, then the presence of others increases the expression of positive attitudes toward luxury brands in mortality salience condition; whereas culturally non-valued, non-luxury brands are evaluated less positively under the presence of others in mortality salience condition.

### **1.2.2. Consumer Behavior in the Face of Existential Anxiety**

Not surprisingly the effect of mortality salience on consumers are not limited to altering their purchase intentions or attitudes toward brands and goods, increased mortality salience has an impact on consumer behavior as well. Even the significant expansion of luxury item sales after the 9/11 terror attack can constitute a support for that claim. Besides, there exist numerous academic researches shedding light on the effects of mortality salience on consumer behavior. For example, Choi, Kwon, and Lee (2007) used the survey data collected shortly after 9/11 terror attack to examine

the effect of mortality salience on brand name and compulsive consumption, and found out that mortality salience increased consumers' tendency to engage in materialistic consumption.

This relationship between death anxiety and consumer behavior is argued to be a result of money and commodities' being accepted especially by the Western societies as the barometer of self-worth. This consumerism penetrated so deeply into the cultures that it is very difficult to keep this consumer culture from intervening the cultural worldviews. Hence, in line with the terror management hypothesis, to overcome the existential anxiety people try to bolster their cultural worldviews by purchasing the materials that are valued by their society or to attain self-esteem by internalizing the consumerism and defining their selves with brands and acquisitions.

When summarizing the literature on the effects of mortality salience on consumer behavior, as it is usually done by the terror management researchers, this thesis study focuses on the consumer reactions in the form of distal defenses. Accordingly, first the researches examining the effects of mortality salience on consumer behavior as a way to attain self-esteem and then as a way to bolster the cultural worldviews will be discussed. To begin with, because death related thoughts activate the defense of augmenting self-esteem, being exposed to such thoughts is expected to increase materialistic purchases among people for whom the consumption of such things are a salient indicator of self-worth. There are many experimental researches supporting this claim, including the one of Cox, Cooper, Vess, Arndt, Goldenberg, and Routledge (2009). At the beginning of their research, these authors draw attention to tanning's being associated with improving one's image and increasing self-esteem even though it causes a number of serious health risks. Then, following the classical mortality salience manipulation, the participants were asked to rate the likelihood that they would purchase a sun lotion that can have a range of sun-protection factors. The results showed that when mortality is salient in order to attain self-esteem via having a bronze skin, people indicated a significantly lower preference for safe sun products which provide higher protection from the skin cancer but lower tanning.

An important stream of research on the effects of mortality on consumer behavior as a way to attain self-esteem examined this relationship based on the food consumption. In the previous section of this thesis that dealt with the individual differences in mortality salience effects some of these researches were mentioned, but part of them relates to this topic as well. In their research, Goldenberg, Arndt, Hart, and Brown (2005) first acknowledge that since thinness is one of the most important expectations for attractiveness embraced by the Western nations as a societal standard, it is associated with self-esteem. Then, in their experimental procedure after exposing participants either to mortality salience or dentist manipulations and filler tasks, they gave their participants an opportunity to eat nutritious but fattening snack food in the context of a product evaluation tasks. As expected, they found that women, especially the ones who fall short of meeting the society's thinness standard, ate less of this nutritious but fattening food in mortality salience condition. Moreover, Ferraro, Shiv, and Bettman (2005) also support this claim by revealing that when mortality is salient women who are high in body esteem, in other words who consider their image as an important component of self-esteem, prefer to eat the healthy foods more than the unhealthy indulgence food. Hence, as evident from the examples, death related thought have an impact both on the type and the amount of the food to consume, so people strive to fight against the existential anxiety with the help of even their food consumption behavior.

In addition to its help in bolstering self-esteem, consumption can also help people to uphold their cultural worldviews in order to deal with the existential anxiety. This defensive use of consumption was also examined in the realm of food consumption. Friese and Hoffman (2008) conducted their research with Swiss participants and following the mortality salience or dentist manipulations and filler tasks. They required the participants to drink as much as they can of one Swiss brand and one American brand to evaluate them. In the end, the participants in the mortality salience condition turned out to consume significantly more of a Swiss brand drink than the American brand one. Furthermore, when the researchers repeated this experiment using Swiss brand and German brand chocolates, the result was the same with the previous experiment. So, Swiss participants who were exposed to mortality

salience manipulation consumed significantly more Swiss chocolate than German chocolate. These experiments are in fact very similar to that of Fransen et al. (2007) which was mentioned in this thesis in order to emphasize that mortality salience makes people prefer local brands more than the foreign ones; however, the research of Friese and Hoffman (2008) differentiates thanks to showing that the effects of mortality salience are reflected in real consumption behavior not only in attitudes.

Due to donating money to charities can also be considered as a consumer decision making process, the research by Jonas, Schimel, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski (2002) deserves to be mentioned in explaining the effect of mortality salience on consumer behavior to bolster the cultural worldview. Half of the participants of this research were asked close to a funeral parlor to make a monetary donation either to national charities or to charities directed to foreign aid and the other half was asked the same thing in a further away place from the funeral parlor. The results revealed that people who were subtly reminded of death were significantly more generous in their donations to national charities compared to people not reminded of death. However, there occurred no considerable difference in the amount of money given to foreign aid charities between the participants in experimental and control conditions.

Although the number of examples can be increased, still the provided evidence from researches clearly reveal that consumption has an important role in self-esteem and cultural worldview's functioning as defense mechanisms against the existential anxiety. However, still there exist many points in this relation between mortality salience and consumer behavior waiting to be enlightened, and this thesis study humbly deems to do so by examining the effects of death related thoughts on consumers' decisions to how much, for whom and what to consume. The exact questions that are tried to be answered by this research study are detailed in the following section.

### **1.3. Overview and Hypothesis of the Current Study**

#### **1.3.1. Overview of the Study**

While this study aims to investigate the relation between mortality salience and consumer behavior, it tries to answer some interesting questions that haven't been asked before in terror management framework. Moreover, when searching for the answers to these questions Turkish students are selected as participants, because it is argued that the nature of the fear from the death and relatedly the defense mechanisms can be very different cross-culturally than what is observed in Western societies. Up to now, the mortality salience and consumer behavior relationship has generally been studied by the researchers from Western culture with participants belonging to that culture, and these researchers mostly asked consumer behavior related questions within their consumption paradigm. Since TMT gained popularity among Turkish researchers after mid-2000s, the topics covered by the studies that are conducted in Turkey are relatively limited compared to the extensive coverage of all TMT literature (Doğulu, & Sakalli-Uğurlu, 2015). In the Turkish literature on TMT, there is only one research on the relationship between TMT and consumer behavior that was conducted by Uğurlar (2011) as part of her master's thesis study. This study aimed to contribute another answer to the mainstream debate on whether the mortality salience increases the consumption over all or only the consumption of status items; also, it searched for the effect of mortality salience on the intention to make a purchase and willingness to pay. All in all, this research and many others in the TMT literature have been very important in terms of proving the existence of the mortality salience and consumer behavior relationship and the consumer attitudes' and behaviors' potential to function either as a self-esteem or a cultural worldview defense. As a result of the accumulated knowledge in this field, we are now capable of asking more specialized questions.

First, in the field of economics, probably the most important decision that a consumer makes is allocating their monetary resources between saving and spending. Moreover, having a considerable amount of savings can provide a feeling of security,

which is severely needed in the face of death anxiety. However, the relationship between mortality salience and household saving tendency didn't gather attention from mortality salience researchers yet, probably because most of the mortality salience researchers are from United States, where saving ratio is too low to come to attention. In fact, as it is affected from the culture too, the saving tendency of households significantly vary among countries, while it is around the 4% of income in United States, it reaches up to 51% in China. Thus, one may expect to find a difference on the effect of mortality salience on saving behavior between Eastern and Western societies. In the case of Turkey though, since the average saving ratio is low and it is not a significant part of the culture, we are not expecting the saving ratio to increase significantly when participants are reminded of their death. Furthermore, the materialistic consumption culture's being deeply embraced and mortality salience's increasing the financial expectations and optimism (Kasser & Sheldon, 2000) support this expectation for Turkey. So, in the case of Turkey it is hypothesized that when reminded of death people will seek to attain a symbolic immortality and uniqueness through consuming materials and services instead of saving money to feel financially secure.

Second, as it can be observed from the mortality salience and consumer behavior relation section of this thesis, the studies (e.g., Fransen, Smeesters, & Fennis, 2011; Friese & Hoffman, 2008; Hart & Brown, 2005; Mandel & Haine, 1999) examining this relationship generally focused on the amount and the kind of the food consumed or the choice between normal or luxury goods. Thus, all of these researchers focused on the effects of mortality salience on materialistic consumption, probably because of the availability of a profound academic literature on it due to the obsession of consumer researchers with the topic. However, focusing merely on the materialistic consumption passes over the possibility of consumers' making experiential purchases. Experiential consumption is defined as "spending money with the primary intention of acquiring a life experience" (Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003, p. 1194) and is argued to bring consumers more happiness than materialistic consumption does (Dunn, Gilbert, & Wilson, 2011). So at first glance, it may be expected that people who are exposed to mortality salience manipulation to opt for

spending their money more for experiences with the aim of putting ticks besides more articles in their bucket lists; however, within the TMT framework people are expected to behave in ways that are in line with their cultural worldviews so to decrease their interest in exploring new things, because such things may undermine the security provided by their own cultural beliefs. Furthermore, as there isn't a single expected form of cultural worldview, there can't be a uniform consumer behavior expected among all societies. Hence, it is important to know the values embraced by the culture in order to make a deduction about the expected consumer behavior. In the case of Turkey though, studies conducted by Ger and Belk (1990, 1996) reveal that Turks are quite materialistic. This adds even more to our claim about the choice between experiential or material purchases. Thus, in our study conducted with Turkish participants, when reminded of their mortality we are expecting people to increase their spending on materials in order to behave in accordance with cultural norms of materialism; however it is not expected to find a significant increase on experiential purchases.

Third, TMT posits that it is the instinctive desire for continued life which makes death seem so horrifying (Schimmel, Simon, Greenberg, Pyszczynski, Solomon, Waxmonsky, & Arndt, 1999). However, it is important to note that there exist significant differences in the conceptualization of death among societies, so that how people act under the existential anxiety and how much they fear death also varies. For example, Indian university students were found to have lower death anxiety than Canadian and Australian ones (McMordie & Kumar, 1984), whereas Japanese students revealed higher death anxiety than Australian students (Schumaker, Warren, & Groth-Marnat, 1991). Nevertheless, due to majority of the mortality salience researchers' being from the United States and conducting their studies there; even the conceptualization of death anxiety by TMT researchers is made from the Western point of view. Thus, by these scholars, the death anxiety is assumed to be characterized by quiet personal concerns such as instinctive desire for continued life, uncertainty of what happens to soul, or not being able to leave a meaningful trace in the world. Yet, in a more collectivistic culture one of the root causes of death anxiety

can be the worry of making the family members and beloved ones deeply sad and of what would happen to them.

As the studies of Hofstede (2001) and Kağıtçıbaşı (2004) show, Turkey has a collectivistic culture. Thus, Turkish people are mostly expected to define their self-image in terms of their families, clans or organisations. In line with that, when mortality is reminded the worry for what would happen to family members and beloved ones will possibly constitute a significant component of death anxiety among Turkish people. Moreover, the effects of the collectivistic culture are also expected to unfold in the form of boosting self-esteem via being a devoted family member. Thus, as the consumption behaviors are examined in this study, such devotion is expected to be observed in terms of participants' who are exposed to mortality salience preferring to spend significantly more money on their families and beloved ones instead of themselves.

In fact, Florian, Mikulincer, and Hirschberger (2002) showed that mortality salience promotes greater investment in close relationships, but didn't mention the monetary investments. On the other hand, within the TMT framework, Maheswaran and Agrawal (2004) touched upon the possibility of such an effect by hypothesizing that under mortality salience people can be more inclined to think about the well-being of their family and try to protect them by buying life insurance or making long-term investments; notwithstanding, they didn't conduct the necessary studies to test this hypothesis. In this study though, it is argued the people who are exposed reminders of mortality will not choose to save more money compared to people who are reminded of dental pain, because instead of saving mortality salience is expected to motivate people to spend their money on goods and services.

Last, several researches prove that consumer behaviors can function as a worldview defense mechanism under mortality salience including the one of Friese and Hoffman (2008) which revealed that when mortality is salient people prefer to consume local brands instead of foreign ones. In a similar vein, it is expected that when under the mortality salience effect people will prefer products with local



symbols more than the ones with foreign symbols. Even though Landau, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, and Martens (2006) showed in their study that in mortality salience people show a considerable distaste for apparently meaningless art, it is still expected to find that people will opt for the local option when choosing between products with abstract symbols.

To sum up, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of mortality salience on Turkish consumers' decisions to how much, for whom and what to consume. This evaluation will be performed thanks to the explanatory power of Terror Management Theory about consumer behavior. In the next section, all hypotheses of the current study will be listed.

### **1.3.2. Hypotheses of the Study**

#### *Hypothesis 1:*

##### *1a.*

It is expected that compared to participants who are made to think about having dental pain, participants exposed to mortality salience manipulation will spend more money on purchasing materials and experiences.

##### *1b.*

When exposed to the mortality salience manipulation female participants are expected to spend more money compared to female participants in dental pain condition. However, it is not expected to see such a significant difference between the male participants in mortality salience and dental pain conditions.

##### *1c.*

Mortality salience isn't expected to have a significant effect on the amount of money that participants opt to save.

*1d.*

It is not expected to see a difference between the preferences of the participants in mortality salience and dental pain conditions on how long they want to keep their money in the saving accounts.

*Hypothesis 2:*

*2a.*

Under mortality salience it is expected that participants spend more money to purchase materials compared to the amount spend by the participants in dental manipulation condition on materials.

*2b.*

When mortality is salient participants are not expected to spend significantly more money on experiential purchases than the participants in control condition do.

*Hypothesis 3:*

*3a.*

It is hypothesized that participants in the mortality salience condition will spend more money to purchase materials and experiences for others, including the family members, romantic partner, friends, or anyone else, than participants in control condition will spend on others.

*3b.*

The degree to which the participants feel “strong” as measured by their answers to the “strong” item in PANAS (Watson et al., 1988) is expected to mediate the relationship between mortality salience and spending money on others.

3c.

Participants in the mortality salience condition are expected to spend significantly more money for their family members compared to participants in the control condition will spend for their family.

*Hypothesis 4:*

It is expected that in mortality salience condition people will opt for the product with a local abstract symbol more than the one with a foreign abstract symbol, compared to people in dental pain condition do.

*Hypothesis 5:*

In order to increase reliability of the gained results, participants' level of affect will be measured in the current study. Participants may feel negativity when they remember death, but it is expected that they would not have significantly different negative or positive affect than control participants, which were primed with dental pain (Greenberg et al., 1997).

## CHAPTER II

### METHOD

#### 2.1. Participants

Before beginning to collect data, an a priori power analysis was conducted to determine the sample size. The results from the power analysis, which was made using the G\*Power 3.1 computer program (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2009), indicated that a total sample of 210 people would be needed to detect medium effects ( $d = .5$ ) with 95% statistical power using a t test between means with alpha value at .05. Thus, in order to ensure the study's being able to detect medium effects, overall 246 participants were made to take part in this research.

Even though 246 students participated the study, as the hypotheses of this study were highly culture dependent, the data gathered from the 5 participants who were not raised in Turkey by the citizens of Turkish Republic were not used at all. Moreover, due to their skipping important manipulation parts of the study, or providing irrelevant or insufficient answers to the research questions 17 cases were excluded from the analysis as well. All in all, the remaining 224 participants consisted of 132(59%) female and 92(41%) were male students. All of the participants were undergraduate students whose ages range between 18 and 28 years ( $M = 21.40$ ,  $SD = 1.57$ ). Another important demographic information for this study was the total income that the participants receive monthly from their family, scholarships, credits or any other source. It was observed that the amount of money that each participant receives monthly ranges from 100 to 4000 Turkish Liras with the mean value of 939.80 and standard deviation of 570.2.

**Table 1.**

Demographic information of all participants.

<i>Variables</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Age</b>	21.40	1.57		
<b>Gender</b>				
Female			132	59
Male			92	41
<b>Degree currently following</b>				
Associate degree or undergraduate			224	100
<b>Total monthly individual income</b>	939.80	570.2		

## **2.2 Measures**

The questionnaire package distributed to the participants included respectively mortality salience manipulation, Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988), word search puzzle (prepared for the current study), product and services catalog (prepared for the current study), product choice, money allocation and usage questions (prepared for the current study), product design choice question, (prepared for the current study), and finally the demographic information form.

### **2.2.1. Mortality Salience Manipulation**

First of all, in order to manipulate the mortality salience levels of participants, they were given the now classical mortality salience questions or dental pain related questions. These questions, developed by Rosenblatt, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, and Lyon (1989), are now referred as a classical mortality salience manipulation thanks to the extensive use of them in a significant number of morality salience studies. They consist of these two questions: “Please briefly describe the

emotions that the thought of your own death (or dental pain) arouse in you” and “Jot down, as specifically as you can, what you think will happen to you as you physically die (or as you have dental pain)”.

In this study, the participants were given whether the questions about death or dental pain depending on the experimental condition they are in, and required to answer them using at least 8 full sentences for each one of them. However, in order to conceal the real aim of these questions from the participants for manipulation purposes, these questions were described as taken from a newly developed personality assessment tool (See Appendix B).

### **2.2.2. Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS)**

Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) was developed by Watson et al. (1988), and it consisted of ten negative affect (NA) and ten positive affect (PA) items that participants evaluate the frequency of their experiencing each one of them on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from “very slightly” to “very much”. The negative items used in the schedule are “Distressed”, “Upset”, “Guilty”, “Ashamed”, “Hostile”, “Irritable”, “Nervous”, “Jittery”, “Scared”, and “Afraid”; whereas the positive affect items are “Interested”, “Alert”, “Attentive”, “Excited”, “Enthusiastic”, “Inspired”, “Proud”, “Determined”, “Strong”, and “Active”. PANAS was adapted to Turkish by Gençöz (2000) and in this adaptation the Cronbach’s alpha was calculated as .86 for PA dimension and .83 for NA dimension, while the corresponding values were found to range between .86 to .90 and .84 to .87 in the original scale.

Since PANAS has been widely used in mortality salience researches with the aim of providing a delay after mortality salience manipulation and ensuring that the manipulation didn’t cause negative affect (Burke et al., 2010), it was employed in this study with the same purposes. So participants in this study were asked to evaluate each item for how much they identify with them at the very moment on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “*completely identifying*” to “*not at all identifying*” with higher scores indicating high and lower scores indicating low positive or

negative affect corresponding to the positive or negative items of the study (See Appendix C). When participants' answers were evaluated, the internal consistency of PANAS was found satisfactory (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .70$ ) with Cronbach's  $\alpha$  values of .87 for PA and .85 for NA.

### **2.2.3. Word Search Puzzle**

As the effects of mortality salience are best observed when the death related thoughts are retrieved from consciousness, providing the participants with a filler task after the mortality salience manipulation is a widely used method among TMT researchers. For this purpose, the participants in this study were asked to solve a word search puzzle that was prepared by the researcher. The puzzle was made up of a 15 x 15 matrix that hides 15 words in it. The words that have no association with death were chosen for this purpose. The participants were requested to find out as much words as possible within 4 minutes. After solving the puzzle, they were asked to evaluate difficulty of it on a 9-point Likert type measure ranging from "*very difficult*" to "*very easy*" (See Appendix D).

### **2.2.4. Product and Service Catalog**

In order to gauge the aggregate consumption preferences of consumers, a comprehensive product and services catalog was prepared by the researcher. This extensive 212 page catalog was made up of 170 material products, their different color or design options, and 40 events, activities and services. The products and services in this catalog were determined based on the university students' constant needs and frequent purchases for themselves or as gift. The products and services were taken from the online shopping websites by paying special attention to choosing the most conveniently priced one of the exactly same item. In the end, to ensure easy navigation through this massive catalog, the items were combined under 15 categories that are: women clothes, women footwear, women household necessities, gift options for women, men clothes, men footwear, men household necessities, gift options for men, unisex gift options, gift options for children, sports equipment, men

sportswear, women sportswear, activities and services, and foods and restaurants. One full page was devoted to each item, and this page contained the name, code, price, size, color, design, pictures and any other specifications of the product or service with a brief description as it was provided in the original website that the item is taken from. Examples of the pages from the catalog can be observed in the Appendix E.

#### **2.2.5. Product Choice, Money Allocation and Usage Questions**

Together with the products and services catalog, the participants were also provided with the written information about the second part of the study and the product choice, money allocation and usage questions. The information part indicated that, one participant would be awarded with 660 Turkish Liras as a thanks you gift for participation. It is important to note that the amount of monetary award was carefully determined for it to be close to the average amount of money that a Turkish university student spends monthly on anything except school tuition, rent and utilities. This amount was stated to be 613 Turkish Liras in a comprehensive market research (Erişkin & Dalgıç, 2015); however, this data was collected in 2012. Hence, in order to make a more accurate estimate of students' monthly spending in 2015, the future value of 613 Turkish Liras was calculated using the annual percentage change in the gross national income based on salaries and wages. The result of this calculation turned out to be approximately 658 Turkish Liras, and this amount was rounded up to 660 Turkish Liras for simplicity.

Then, it was explained that the winner can use this money for purchasing goods and services from the catalog, investing on a savings account with a 8.6% interest rate and 30 days due, and taking in cash; and it was stated that the participants are free to allocate their money among these options as they want. The 8.6% interest rate was calculated by taking the average of the monthly interest rates on savings accounts that are offered as of March 2015 by the five biggest commercial banks of Turkey that are Ziraat, İş, Garanti, Akbank and Yapı Kredi.



The information part was followed by a product and service choice form. These choice related form was aimed to help both the participants with keeping track of their purchases and the researcher with identifying the specific products and for whom the participants choose to make purchases and double-checking participants' spending preferences. For every item that a participant wants to purchase, he/she answered a few questions. These questions were asking the product code and the price; amount, size, color or the specifications of the item; and for whom the item is purchased (See Appendix F).

After the product and services choice related part, there came the questions related to how participants allocate their money among spending, saving and getting in cash options, and specifically their plans for the money they choose to save or take in cash. So, firstly participants were required to write down the amount of money, if any, that they would choose to purchase goods and services from the catalog; then the amount of money that they would like to invest in a saving account and for how many months they plan to keep their money on this account; last, the amount they would like to take in cash. After this money allocation question, there were two other questions asking the participant to indicate for what purpose they would like to save money or take money in cash. These questions can be examined in the Appendix G.

#### **2.2.6. Product Design Choice Question**

With the aim of understanding whether the mortality salience has an effect on product design choices, a simple question embracing the visual depictions of two keychains with different designs was asked to the participants. The question was probing if the participant were given a chance to have a keychain as a thank you gift for participating the current study, which one would be his/her choice. One of the choices was depicting an abstract black and white symbol of a scorpion that is commonly used in Turkish hand-made rugs on a plain keychain, whereas the other option was using an abstract, black and white, complex symbol that doesn't belong to any specific culture on the same plain keychain (See Appendix H).

### **2.2.7. Demographic Information Form**

This form was developed by the researcher to learn about the basic information about the participants. It consisted of questions about gender, age, department, grade, the total amount of money that the participant receives from various sources monthly, whether the participant has any serious illness, and whether the participant lost anyone close to himself/herself within the last month (See Appendix I).

### **2.3. Procedure**

The procedure for collecting data began with getting Human Subjects Ethics Committee approval for the proposed study. After that, the study was launched in the SONA system in order for students who take “General Psychology”, “Understanding Social Behavior” or “Principles of Behavioral Sciences” to get appointments and join the study in exchange of one and a half course points, which will be added to their total scores at the end of the semester. Meanwhile, the study was also announced to undergraduate students who are enrolled in “Principles of Finance” or “Financial Accounting” courses, and the students were invited for taking part in the study in exchange of extra course points. Among the participants, 106 students who participated to the study received extra points for “General Psychology”, “Understanding Social Behavior” or “Principles of Behavioral Sciences” courses, 79 students earned extra points for “Principles of Finance” course, and 48 students received points for “Financial Accounting” course.

In addition to these methods, 13 students were attracted with the help of posters, which hanged in various places of METU campus, indicated that one participant will get 660 Turkish Liras as a thank you gift. The approximate duration of the study was announced to be 50 minutes; however, the aim of the study was hidden thanks to describing it as study that measures the relation between emotions and consumer behavior.

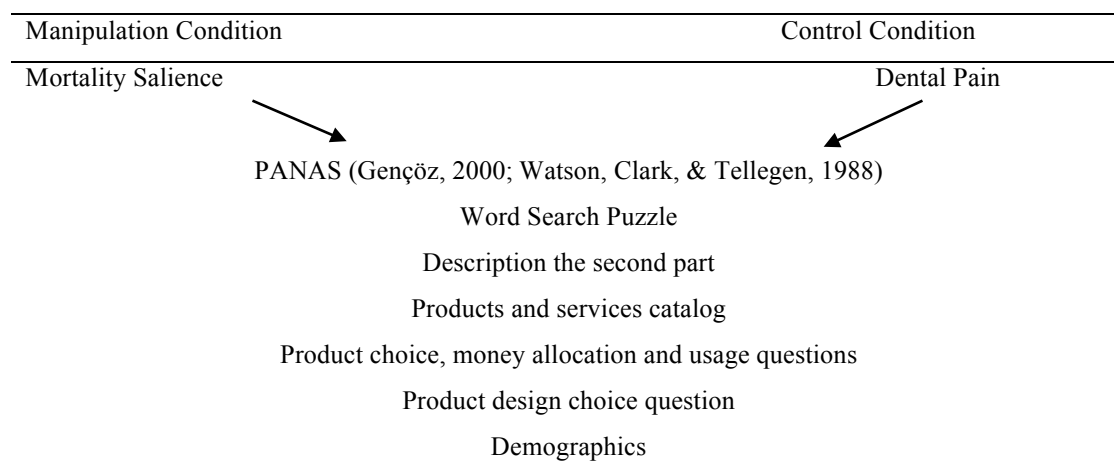
All participants attended the study in the same classroom that is located in METU Department of Business Administration building, room G163. Three tables and the seats in the class were arranged in a way that no participant faces another participant or the researcher, while the wall clock is in everyone's vision. Each session hosted one to three participants. The randomization of the experimental conditions of the study (MS – DP) was managed by researcher's randomly distributing the data collection materials to three available tables in each session break when no one is accepted to class, and participants' randomly choosing the table to sit in.

When participants were invited in to the class, each participant found an Informed Consent Form (See Appendix A), warnings sheet, questionnaires, a product and services catalog, a calculator, a pen, and two pencils on the table they chose. The participants were welcomed and requested to fill the Informed Consent Form first, give it back to the researcher and wait for the researcher's instructions before beginning. It was paid attention to let all participants start at the same time to cease the disruption of early finishers. Then, the participants were told that the study is about the relation between the emotions and consumer behavior. Also, the researcher read out loud the warnings about the study, that asks participants to provide full answers, complete the tasks and questions in their given order, not to look at next pages, not to return to finished pages, not to use mobile phones, not to leave the class earlier than 35 minutes and not to tell anything about the study to their friends who would participate. All the sessions were proctored by the researcher herself and carried out from the April 18<sup>th</sup> to the May 8<sup>th</sup>.

Contrary to most of the researches, the participants didn't begin the study with filling out the Demographic Information Form to refrain from possibility of the items in the form priming the family, disease or death related thoughts. Thus, depending on the experimental group they were in, the participants firstly jotted down about their death in MS condition or dental pain in control condition in the first page. Following that, in the second page, participants were given the PANAS (Watson et al., 1988) to both let the researcher check for the expected indifference between the scores of the participants in different conditions and to provide delay after the mortality salience

manipulation. Then, the first part of the tasks was closed with the word search puzzle on the third page.

The second part began with the further description of the study and tasks, that includes the information about the monetary award, how it can be used, the content of the catalog, the definition of the saving account and so on. Then participants, checked out the products and services catalog, and filled out the product choice form for every, if any, item they wanted to purchase. Later, the participants answered questions regarding how they plan to allocate their money among the available options and the reasons behind their opting to save or take cash. In the last page of the study, the participants were made to choose between two keychain design options and finally to provide their demographic information. When they are finished with the study, the participants leave the materials on the table and quit the class. Only when all experimental sessions are over, the Debriefing Form (See Appendix J) was e-mailed to participants and they were thanked for participation.



**Figure 2.** Order of scales for each experimental group

## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS

This chapter will provide the sections of data screening, descriptive statistics for variables of the study, differences regarding experimental conditions and also the sections consisting of testing the hypotheses of the study.

#### 3.1. Screening Data

As there occurred some missing data, the analysis process began with conducting Little's Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) to ensure that the missing data are not related to any other variable but totally random. Thanks to the non-significant results from the test ( $p = n.s$ ), it was confirmed that the missing data were totally random. This confirmation allowed further analyses on the dataset to be done. Moreover, since more than half of the subjects completed each of the items in the study, all of the variables were kept in the analyses.

First of all, as this study deals with culture dependent hypotheses, the data gathered from the 5 participants who were not raised in Turkey by the citizens of Turkish Republic were not used at all. Furthermore, in order to be certain about the effects of manipulation, only the data gathered from the subjects who have written 13 or more sentences when responding to the mortality salience manipulation, requiring the subjects to write at least 16 sentences in total, were used for the further analysis. As a result, the data collected from 14 people were totally excluded because of the participants' having given insufficient answers. Also, the data provided by three participants were excluded from the analyses, due to the participants' not proceeding through the tasks in the required order. As a result, after the removals, 224 participants were left in the analyses. Among the remaining participants, 5 of them

missed to answer only one item in the PANAS, and these missing values were replaced with item means. For this purpose, the mean replacement technique was implemented by using item group means.

Second, data were screened for detecting the univariate and multivariate outliers. The z-scores of each PANAS item, and the answers to the questions concerning the monthly total income; the amount of money to be spent, saved or taken in cash; the amount of money to be spent on materials or experiences; the amount of money that will be used for purchasing materials and goods for participant's herself/himself, family members, friends and for others overall were calculated for two groups of this study. The results indicated that 26 subjects are univariate outliers according to this criterion. Moreover, the data were screened again for the Mahalanobis score for multivariate outliers, and the scores revealed that 4 participants are multivariate outliers. Thus, at the end of the analyses to pick up outliers, the data gathered from 30 participants were eliminated. Hence, the further analyses were conducted using the data coming from the remaining 194 participants.

### **3. 2. Descriptive Statistics for the Variables**

Before starting to statistically test the hypotheses, the main variables of the study were examined to gather the basic descriptive information concerning their means and standard deviations. First, the average age of the participants whose data will be used throughout the rest of the analyses is 21.42 ( $SD = 1.54$ ); and the average monthly income of these participants is 890.71 TL ( $SD = 453.62$ ). Second, the PANAS PA and NA scores ( $M = 4.48$ ,  $SD = 1.03$  and  $M = 2.35$ ,  $SD = .96$ , respectively) implied that the participants felt relatively positive even after having been reminded of mortality or dental pain.

It was observed that on average the participants chose to spend 274.81 TL ( $SD = 202.66$ ) on goods and services, save 168.86 TL ( $SD = 222.31$ ) and get 214.02 TL ( $SD = 220.22$ ) in cash. The scores for the amount of money to be spent on materials or experiences ( $M = 133.83$ ,  $SD = 139.09$  and  $M = 140.45$ ,  $SD = 169.45$ , respectively)

revealed that overall the participants chose to spend roughly equal amount of money on both.

On the other hand, the descriptive statistics showed that on average the participants opted for spending more money for themselves instead of someone else ( $M = 166.5$ ,  $SD = 144.98$  and  $M = 106.01$ ,  $SD = 112.01$ , respectively). The scores for the amount of money to be spent for the romantic partner, family members or friends were;  $M = 32.44$ ,  $SD = 64.29$ ;  $M = 53.45$ ,  $SD = 88.92$ ;  $M = 21.07$ ,  $SD = 42.29$ , respectively. It was seen that none of the participants whose data were used in the analyses opted for spending their money for someone else than their romantic partners, family members and friends.

**Table 2.**

Descriptive statistics for the main variables.

<i>Variables</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
<b>Age</b>	21.42	1.54	
<b>Gender</b>			
Female			97
Male			97
<b>Average monthly income</b>	890.71	453.62	
<b>PANAS</b>			
Negative Affect	2.35	.96	
Positive Affect	4.48	1.03	
<b>Money allocation</b>			
Spending	274.81	202.66	
Saving	168.86	222.31	
Getting in cash	214.02	220.22	
<b>Spending for materials and experiences</b>			
Materialistic consumption	133.83	139.09	
Experiential consumption	140.45	169.45	
<b>Spending for one's self and others</b>			
Money spent for the self	166.5	144.98	
Money spent for the others	106.01	112.01	

### **3.3. Mortality Salience and Dental Pain Differences on Spending and Saving**

#### **3.3.1. Effect of MS and DP on Spending Money (Hypothesis 1a)**

First of all, one way univariate analysis of variance was conducted in order to figure out the difference between the total amount of money spent (DV) by the participants who were reminded of mortality and the participants who were reminded of dental prime (IV) that chose not to spend or save all the money.

It was observed that 88 participants who were in dental pain condition and 76 participants who were in mortality salience condition chose to spend some of their money. The average amount of money spent by the former group was 346.87 TL ( $SD = 175.42$ ) and this value for the other group was 299.84 TL ( $SD = 181.83$ ). As a result of the values' being normally distributed and Levene's F-Test being insignificant, the assumptions for the analysis were met.

One way univariate analysis of variance revealed that provoking death or dental pain related thoughts doesn't create a significant difference in the amount of money that people choose to spend ( $F(1, 162) = 2.82, p = .09, \eta^2 = .02$ ). Thus, this result couldn't confirm the hypothesis that compared to the people who were reminded of dental pain, the ones who were reminded of death would opt to spend more money. On the other hand, another one way univariate analysis of variance showed that there wasn't a significant difference between the total number of materials and experience services that the participants in mortality salience ( $M = 6.92, SD = 4.62$ ) or dental pain condition ( $M = 7.94, SD = 4.70$ ) chose to obtain ( $F(1, 159) = 1.93, p = .17, \eta^2 = .28$ ).

#### **3.3.2. Effect of MS and Gender on Spending Money (Hypothesis 1b)**

Concerning the effect of gender on the relationship between mortality salience and consumer behavior, it was hypothesized that while there won't be a significant difference on the amount of money that would be spent by male participants in



mortality salience or dental pain conditions, the female participants in the morality salience condition are expected to spend significantly more money compared to the female participants in the dental pain condition. To test this hypothesis, a 2 (death manipulation) x 2 (gender) univariate analysis of variance was conducted using the data of the participants who chose spent some of their money and taking the amount of money spent as the dependent variable.

The results from this 2 x 2 between-subjects univariate analysis of variance showed that there was not a significant interaction between gender and mortality salience manipulation ( $F(1, 160) = .22, p = .64$ ). Further analysis proved that the amount of money spent by female participants in dental pain condition ( $M = 331.24, SD = 163.78$ ) or mortality condition ( $M = 298.67, SD = 154.78$ ) wasn't meaningfully different ( $F(1, 90) = .96, p = .33$ ). Similarly, male subjects in dental pain ( $M = 361.81, SD = 186.47$ ) or mortality salience ( $M = 301.97, SD = 226.13$ ) condition didn't spend their money differently ( $F(1, 70) = 1.48, p = .29$ ). Hence, only the hypothesis which concerns the money spending choices of male participants was supported.

### **3.3.3. Effect of MS and DP on Saving Decision (Hypothesis 1c and 1d)**

It was hypothesized that exposure to mortality salience or dental pain manipulation will not have a significantly important effect on the amount of money that people choose to save. In order to test this claim, one way analysis of variance was conducted using the data from the participants who chose to save some money and taking the amount of money that people allocated to save as the independent variable.

As a result of this one way analysis of variance, it was observed participants who were exposed to mortality salience manipulation opted to save more money on average ( $M = 395.18, SD = 183.71$ ) than the participants who were made to think about dental pain ( $M = 339.54, SD = 183.7$ ). Nevertheless, this difference wasn't statistically significant,  $F(1, 87) = 2.04, p = .16$ . Thus, the analysis confirmed the

hypothesis which states that compared to exposure to dental pain, exposure to death related thoughts doesn't make people save significantly more money.

The other hypothesis of the study was concerning the length of the time period that the participants would like to keep their money in the savings account. It was expected that there wouldn't be a statistically significant difference in the time period for which the participants chose to keep save money between the participants who were made to think about the mortality or dental pain. To test this claim, different than the previous analysis, a nonparametric test, a Mann-Whitney test was conducted due to data's not confirming the normal distribution assumption of the analysis of variance test. In the end, the Mann-Whitney test indicated that the length of the time period to save money, measured by months, was not different for the participants in the mortality salience condition ( $Mdn = 6$ ) than for the participants in the dental pain condition ( $Mdn = 6.5$ ),  $U = 888$ ,  $p = .91$ . Hence, the result of the test supported the hypothesis by proving the indifference between manipulation groups in terms of the planned length of time to save money.

### **3.4. MS and DP Differences on Materialistic and Experiential Consumption (Hypothesis 2a and 2b)**

Different than the literature on mortality salience and consumer behavior, it was aimed in this research to elucidate the effect of mortality salience on the type of consumption, mainly the materialistic and experiential consumption. So, it was hypothesized that people who were reminded of mortality would spend significantly more money for materialistic consumption than people who were reminded of dental pain would do. However, it was not expected to observe a difference between these two groups in terms of the money that would be spent for the experiential consumption.

To evaluate the former hypothesis, an independent sample T-test was conducted taking the mortality salience manipulation as the dependent variable and the amount of money that would be spent on materialistic as the independent variable. Contrary

to the expectation, the test result demonstrated that participants who were exposed to dental pain manipulation ( $M = 208.91$ ,  $SD = 140.31$ ) chose to spend significantly more money on materials than participants in the mortality salience condition ( $M = 158.44$ ,  $SD = 98.17$ ) did,  $t(129.4) = 2.44$ ,  $p = .02$ , 95% CI [9.6, 91.33].

On the other hand, the second independent samples T-test that was done using the mortality salience manipulation as independent variable and the money spent for the experiential purchases as the dependent variable turned out to support the corresponding hypothesis. Thus, in line with expectations, it was seen that the amount of money spent for experiential purchases by the participants who were reminded about death ( $M = 215.02$ ,  $SD = 166.7$ ) wasn't significantly different from the respective amount spent by the participants who were reminded of dental pain ( $M = 196.39$ ,  $SD = 172.26$ ),  $t(129) = .533$ ,  $p = .53$ , 95% CI [-77.62, 40.36].

### **3.5. MS and DP Differences on the Decision to Spend Money for Whom (Hypothesis 3a, 3b and 3c)**

In order to test the hypothesis that people who were exposed to mortality salience manipulation would choose to spend more money on others than people who were exposed to dental pain manipulation would do, an independent samples T test was run taking the mortality salience manipulation as the independent variable and the total amount of money that the participants chose to spend for their family members, romantic partner, friends, or anyone else as the dependent variable. However, the analysis revealed that the participants who were made to think to about death ( $M = 157.83$ ,  $SD = 115.24$ ) didn't spend significantly more than the participants who were made to think about dental pain ( $M = 136.82$ ,  $SD = 99.87$ ) did,  $t(136) = -1.14$ ,  $p = .25$ , 95% CI [-57.28, 15.26].

Although it was found that there is not a significant relationship between the mortality salience and the amount of money to be spent on others, still a mediation analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis that the relationship between mortality

salience level and the money that would be spent on others will be mediated by how strong the participants feel. For this test, the mediator variable values were derived from the participants' answers to the PANAS (Watson et al., 1988) item of "strong". The mediation analysis was run using the indirect SPSS macro (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). As a result, since indirect effects were considered as significant when the bias corrected confidence interval did not include zero, the results revealed that how strong a participant felt (Bootstrap SE = 2.85, 95% CI [-2.50, 10.93] did not mediate the relation between mortality salience level and the amount of money that was spent on others.

The last hypothesis concerning the effect of mortality salience on the amount of money to be spent on others was positing that when the mortality is salient people would be spending more money for their family members than the people in control condition would do. This hypothesis was tested with the help of an independent samples T-test, and the analysis revealed that the amount of money that the participants from the morality salience condition ( $M = 131.97$ ,  $SD = 98.72$ ) spent for their family members wasn't significantly more than the respective amount spent by the participants from the dental pain condition ( $M = 117.51$ ,  $SD = 98.2$ ),  $t(80) = -.66$ ,  $p = .51$ , 95% CI [-58.04, 29.13].

### **3.6. MS and DP Differences on the Product Design Choice (Hypothesis 4)**

In this study, it was hypothesized that people who were reminded of death would be more interested in a product with a local abstract symbol rather than one with a foreign abstract symbol, compared to people who were reminded of dental prime. To test this hypothesis a binary logistic regression analysis was performed.

Among the participants who were reminded of mortality 46 of them opted for the keychain with a local symbol and 50 of them opted for the one with foreign symbol, similarly among the participants who were reminded of dental pain 44 of them chose the keychain with a local symbol and 50 of them opted for the other. Thus, at that point the logistic regression test wasn't expected to detect any significant relation

between the mortality salience manipulation and product design choice. Not surprisingly, the model turned out to be insignificant with the corresponding statistical values,  $c^2(1, N = 190) = .02, p < .88$ ; also, the Nagelkerke R square value for the models was .00. Moreover, it was shown that having been exposed to mortality salience or dental pain manipulation ( $B = .044, SE = .291, Exp(B) = 1.045, p = .88$ ) wasn't an indicator of the product design choice.

### **3.7. MS and DP Differences in terms of PANAS Scales (Hypothesis 5)**

In order to increase reliability of the gained results, participants' level of affect was analyzed to ensure that the participants who were exposed to mortality salience manipulation would not have significantly different negative or positive affect than the participants in the control condition. So, an independent samples T-test was conducted taking the PANAS negative and PANAS positive scores as the independent variables; however, because the PANAS negative scores were not normally distributed a non-parametric test, Mann-Whitney test was also conducted to double check the results of the first test.

When conducting independent samples T-test, Levene's test for equality of variance showed that homogeneity of variance assumption holds for both PANAS positive and PANAS negative data. Furthermore, in line with the expectations, PANAS positive scores of the participants in the mortality salience condition ( $M = 4.47, SD = 1.09$ ) were found to be statistically indifferent from the corresponding scores of the participants in the control condition ( $M = 4.49, SD = .97$ ) with the values of  $t(192) = .139, p = .89, 95\% CI [-.27, .31]$ . However, contrary to expectations, the T-test results for the PANAS negative scores revealed that the participants who were reminded of death ( $M = 2.54, SD = .95$ ) reported experiencing significantly higher negative affect, compared to the participants in the control condition ( $M = 2.17, SD = .95$ ) as it can be seen from the statistical values of  $t(192) = -2.67, p = .008, 95\% CI [-.63, -.09]$ .

On the other hand, the Mann-Whitney test also ended up with similar results which stated that even though the PANAS positive scores of the participants in the mortality salience condition ( $Mdn = 4.5$ ) weren't significantly different than those of the participants in the control condition ( $Mdn = 4.6$ ),  $U = 4653.5$ ,  $p = .9$ ; the PANAS negative scores of the participants who were exposed to mortality salience manipulation ( $Mdn = 2.4$ ) were significantly higher than those of the participants who were exposed to the dental pain manipulation ( $Mdn = 1.9$ ),  $U = 3550$ ,  $p = .003$ .

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **DISCUSSION**

As intended, the implicit effects of existential anxiety on consumer decisions regarding how much, for whom and what to consume were examined in this study. When doing so, the TMT and the literature on the effects of mortality salience on consumer behavior constituted the main pillars of this research. Thus, within the TMT framework it was mainly hypothesized that increased mortality salience can lead consumers to spend more money on goods to find refuge in materials and opt to purchase such materials more for one's own family or significant others instead of himself/herself to bolster the self-esteem through living up to the cultural norms and values. Also, it was expected that when mortality is salient people would prefer the product designs that reflect their own culture with the unconscious aim of embracing their cultural worldviews.

As explained in the "Method" and "Results" section of this study, the above mentioned hypotheses were tested with the help of an experimental research design and analyzed using several statistical tests. So, this part of the study aims to discuss the implications of these statistical results for each hypothesis, the contributions of the findings to the existing literature, the possible applications of them, and finally the limitations of the study.

#### **4.1. Evaluations of the Findings**

##### **4.1.1. Evaluation of Experimental Manipulation Differences on Spending or Saving Money (Hypotheses 1a, 1b, 1c and 1d)**

Contrary to expectations, it was found that the participants who were made to think about death didn't spend more money compared to the participants who were made to think about dental pain (Hypothesis 1a). Moreover, even though the difference wasn't significant, on average the participants who were exposed to dental pain manipulation chose to spend more money than the participants in the mortality salience condition did. There can be several reasons behind these unexpected results that are discussed in the following paragraphs.

First of all, it is important to note that in order for the gained results' reflecting uniquely the effect of mortality salience level, there shouldn't be a significant difference between mortality salience and control groups in terms of the positive or negative affect (Greenberg, Solomon, & Pyszczynski, 1997). However, even though no extraordinary mortality salience or dental pain manipulations were applied to participants, while the mean positive affect scores ( $U = 4653.5, p = .9$ ) didn't show a significant difference, unfortunately the mean negative effect scores ( $U = 3550, p = .003$ ) turned out to be significantly higher for the mortality salience participants compared to the control participants. Thus, the indifference between the mortality salience and dental pain participants in the amount of money to be spent can be attributed in this study to the mortality salience participants' experiencing significantly higher anxiety than the control participants. Considering the findings from the study of Raghunathan and Pham (1999) stating that feeling of anxiety makes people think more about risks and uncertainty and choose the options with low risk and low return as a result. Hence, it can be argued that in the current study, the participants in the mortality salience condition might instead of choosing to spend their money on goods and services that are offered by the researcher, an option that includes risk of becoming frustrated by the purchase but at the same time the reward of getting a good deal compared to purchase options outside, have chosen not to spend their money, an option which includes very low risk and return. The results from the Mann-Whitney test which was conducted using the manipulation as the independent variable and the amount of money to be taken cash as the dependent variable supported this claim by showing that the amount of money to be taken cash by the participants in the mortality salience condition ( $Mdn = 317.89$ ) was



significantly more than the corresponding amount to be taken by the participants in the control condition ( $Mdn = 233.65$ ),  $U = 1943$ ,  $p = .03$ . As a result, it can be concluded that experiencing more anxiety compared to participants in the control condition, participants in the mortality salience condition chose to use their money for an option with the least risk in our case.

On the other hand, with the aim of separating the effect of negative affect from the effect of manipulation, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was performed by entering the mean negative scores as the first variable and the manipulation as the second while using the total amount to be spent as the dependent variable.

Nevertheless, the analysis revealed that even after controlling for the negative affect, adding the manipulation variable didn't significantly improve the prediction of the total amount of money to be spent,  $R = .13$ ,  $R^2 = .02$ ,  $F(1,161) = 2.6$ ,  $p < .11$ .

Considering this situation, we should point out to the other possible reasons behind mortality salience manipulation's doesn't creating the expected effect on the amount of money to be spent. As it was mentioned, the studies in the literature concluding that increased mortality salience results in increased consumption were conducted using the foods and beverages as the measure of consumption (e.g., Ferraro, Shiv, & Bettman, 2005; Frieze & Hoffman, 2008; Goldenberg, Arndt, Hart, & Brown, 2005), instead of the amount of money used to purchase goods and services. Since, the food consumption has a direct relation with vital functions and death, we can expect it to show different patterns than the consumption of the goods and services such as clothes, shoes, gifts, jewelry, theatre tickets, etc. Hence, this difference between the consumption types and the dependent measures can be the cause of the discrepancy between the expectations based on the existing literature and the findings.

There exists another possible explanation for the discrepancy between the previous studies on the relation of mortality salience with consumption and the current study. In the related literature, the most important study which didn't measure the effect of mortality salience on the consumption using the food consumption is the one by Mandel and Heine (1999). However, even this study concludes that the mortality salience increases the interest for the high status items; thus, as a dependent measure

the authors reported the interest for the specific item even though they also collected the data for the willingness to purchase. Contrarily, in the current study the dependent variable was measured by the exact amount of money that the participants would be willing to spend on goods and services. Hence, even though the studies in the literature and the current study seem very similar, the different dependent measures might have resulted in the different psychological processes to take part and the results' showing discrepancies between expectations and the findings.

Since the general hypothesis that concerns the effect of mortality salience on the amount of money to be spent didn't hold true, it was then expected not to find gender differences on the effects of mortality salience on the spending, even though it was hypothesized that while there wouldn't be any significant difference between the amount of money spent by the male participants in either control or experimental condition, the female participants in the mortality salience condition were expected to spend significantly more money compared to female participants in the control condition (Hypothesis 1b). However, for several reasons as the general hypothesis failed to show that increased mortality salience didn't cause the consumption behavior that are shaped by society norms and values like obtaining materials, it was clear that the mortality salience wouldn't create a gender difference in terms of female participants' spending more money for consumption as it could be expected from them due to social gender roles.

Last, the second general hypothesis of this study was positing that there wouldn't be a significant difference between the experimental and control conditions concerning either the amount of money to be saved or the time period that this money would be kept in the savings account. In the end, the results of this study confirmed both parts of this hypothesis. Since the relation between the mortality salience and monetary saving behavior was not studied before, this study is important for being the first, as far as known. This finding can be attributed to mortality salience's increasing the financial expectations and optimism as posited by (Kasser & Sheldon, 2000) and also to materialism's being deeply embedded into our culture.

#### **4.1.2. Evaluation of Experimental Manipulation Differences on Materialistic and Experiential Consumption (Hypotheses 2a and 2b)**

One of the main hypothesis of this study was stating that the participants who were exposed to mortality salience manipulation would spend more money on materialistic consumption compared to participants who were exposed to dental pain manipulation would do; however, the amount of money that would be spent on the experiential consumption would not be different between these two groups. Nevertheless, the results of the analyses failed to confirm the first part of the hypothesis whereas they confirmed the second part.

Surprisingly, it was found that the participants who were made to think about dental pain chose to spend significantly more money on materials compared to the participants who were made to think about death did. There might be several reasons behind this unexpected finding. First, as it was shown that the participants who were exposed to mortality salience reported experiencing meaningfully more intense negative affects compared to the participants in control group did, the ideas about death might not have been removed from the conscious awareness while the participants were answering the consumption related questions, namely the dependent measures. If that was the case, then the participants are expected to have used proximal defenses instead of the distal ones, upon which all of the hypotheses of this study constructed. Hence, that would invalidate the expectations about the mortality salience participants' consuming more materials as a way of distal defense to bolster their cultural worldview which embraces materialistic consumption. Second, it might be the case that due to going through a more severe anxiety, the mortality salience participants might have more determinately chosen to go for a low risk option (Raghunathan & Pham, 1999), in that case not purchasing materials at all.

It might seem contrary but, another explanation for the people who were exposed to mortality salience manipulation having spent less than expected could be found in the dimensions of materialism itself. When measuring materialism Belk (1985) uses three dimensions that are possessiveness, envy and nongenerosity; however, when

mortality salience is increased expecting people to increase the desire to attain more materials is in fact a one sided approach that takes into account only the possessiveness dimension. Nevertheless, as materialism is embraced by culture in its full, it might be the case that when mortality is salient people can bolster materialism by showing nongenerosity too. Hence, even though they would like to attain more materials in line with the possessiveness dimension of materialism, still they could also become more nongenerous at the same time. Since previous studies on the effects of mortality salience on consumption used the eagerness to purchase as the dependent measure, this study's asking to allocate the actual resources for purchase might have encouraged this discrepancy between dimensions of materialism to come to the surface.

#### **4.1.3. Evaluation of Experimental Manipulation Differences on for Whom People Spend Money (Hypotheses 3a, 3b and 3c)**

It was hypothesized that the participants who were exposed to mortality salience manipulation would choose to spend significantly more money on others compared to the participants who were exposed to dental pain manipulation would do. The statistical results showed that as expected, the mortality salience participants chose to spend more money on others than the dental pain participants did; however, the difference wasn't statistically significant. Taking into account that overall the participants who were exposed to mortality salience manipulation chose to spend less money, an additional analysis was run to understand the share of others in overall spending budget of participants. For this purpose, an independent samples t-test was conducted taking the manipulation as the independent variable and this time, instead of taking the amount of money to be spent on others, the proportion of the money that would be spent on others to the total amount of money to be spent as the dependent variable. The results revealed that, compared to participants in the control group ( $M = .40$ ,  $SD = .22$ ), the participants who were exposed to mortality salience manipulation ( $M = .49$ ,  $SD = .24$ ) allocated a significantly larger portion of their total spending to purchase goods and services for others,  $t(136) = -2.18$ ,  $p = .03$ , 95% CI  $[-.16, -.01]$ . Hence, it could be concluded that even though the participants in the

mortality salience condition didn't choose to spend significantly more money in total compared to the participants in control condition did; still the participants who were made to think about death allocated significantly more portion of their total spending to others than the participants who were made to think about dental pain did. As a result, in order to understand the effect of mortality salience on the decision of for whom to spend their money, regardless of the total amount of money that they would be spending, the portion of the spending allocated for others can provide better insight. In this case, it shows that nevertheless the mortality salience participants chose to prefer a less risky consumer behavior of keeping the money in cash instead of making purchases, still it can be argued that as a distal defense they bolstered their cultural worldviews and self-esteem via allocating a significantly more amount of their budget for purchasing goods and services for their families, romantic partners and friends.

#### **4.1.4. Evaluation of Experimental Manipulation Differences on Product Design Choice (Hypothesis 4)**

As mentioned in the "Results" section of this study, the logistic regression analysis showed that the participants in either mortality salience or dental pain condition didn't exhibit a significant difference in terms of their choice between a keychain with local abstract symbol and one with a foreign abstract symbol. If design elements of the keychains had included more concrete and easy to grasp elements, it was highly probable that the mortality salience participants would have chosen the design with the local symbol. However, this study aimed to test the effect of mortality salience on the vague area of abstract symbols, but the results showed that the effects of mortality salience don't go as far to include the preference for abstract symbols too. Hence, the explanation for this unexpected result can be the symbols' being so abstract that the participants weren't able to differentiate their meaning or localness. Since, the terror management mechanism functions through providing a meaningful view of reality, the participants' disliking the abstract symbols after being exposed to mortality salience manipulation was expected (Landau et al., 2006). So, participants' having remained indifferent between two abstract product design choices can be

attributed to their not paying attention to this product choice due to their dislike for abstract and seemingly meaningless designs.

#### **4.1.5. Evaluation of Experimental Manipulation Differences on PANAS Scales (Hypothesis 5)**

In order to ensure the uniqueness (Martens, Burke, Schimel, & Faucher, 2011) of mortality salience effects on consumption decisions, mean PANAS PA and PANAS NA scores of the participants from mortality salience and dental pain conditions were compared. Even though, the comparison of the mean PANAS PA scores didn't reveal a difference between two experimental groups, the mean PANAS NA scores of the mortality salience participants turned out to be significantly higher than those of the dental pain participants. Hence, as it was mentioned before in the "Discussions" part, the findings from this study should be evaluated carefully due to the possible confounding effect of negative affect experienced by the mortality salience participants.

#### **4.2. Contributions of the Findings**

Due to consumption related TMT studies' mainly focusing on the food consumption and the consumption of high status vs. normal goods, this study is the first in investigating the effects of mortality salience on monetary savings, spending for experiential or materialistic consumption, spending on the one's self or others, and the product design choice. Moreover, it is one of the few studies on Terror Management Theory conducted with a Turkish sample.

It was found that when people were given the chance to allocate their money among three realistic options that are spending, saving and getting in cash; there didn't occur a significant difference between the people who were exposed to mortality salience or dental pain manipulation in terms of neither the amount of money they allocated for spending nor the amount of money they opted to save. However, it was observed that the participants in the mortality salience condition chose to get significantly

more amount of money in cash, compared to the participants in the control condition did.

Moreover, it was revealed that people who were made to think about dental pain chose to spend significantly more money on materials than participants in the mortality salience condition did. Nevertheless, no significant difference was detected between these groups in terms of the amount of money they allocated for experiential consumption.

Possibly due to mortality salience participants' having primarily chosen to get the money in cash instead of saving or spending, the amount of money spent on others wasn't significantly different between mortality salience and dental pain participants. However, it was found that the share of the money spent on others within the total spending budget was significantly higher for mortality salience participants than for dental pain ones.

Last, contrary to expectations this study didn't reveal a significant difference between mortality salience and dental pain participants concerning their preference for a product with an abstract local symbol over a product with an abstract foreign symbol. This unexpected finding can be attributed either to symbols' being overly abstract to recognize their localness or to mortality salience effect's not working in this study. When evaluating the second possible explanation, it is important to consider that in this study the mean PANAS NA score of the mortality salience participants was found to be significantly higher than the respective score of the dental pain participants. Hence, this significant difference in negative affect between groups decreases the reliability of the mortality salience effects observed in this study.

To sum up, this study elucidated the effects of mortality salience on the consumer decision to how much, for whom and what to consume using a Turkish sample. Even though the mortality salience effect didn't work well in several of the analyses, it can be humbly argued that this study still made a contribution to the mortality salience

and consumer behavior literature by answering the questions which haven't been asked before in the realm of TMT.

#### **4.3. Limitations of the Study and Implications for Future Research**

Being the first experimental research experience of the researcher, this study was subject to several imperfections and limitations. The probable factors limiting the study results are discussed in the following paragraphs to help the future researchers who are interested in the similar research topics.

First, in order to meet the assumptions of the statistical analyses and make the data set clear and statistically meaningful, few cases which were identified as outliers or meaningfully inadequate were eliminated from the study. Even though it was a necessary step, still the data's having been narrowed might have affected the results negatively. Omitting the data from the participants with extreme spending or saving tendencies might have caused the indifference between the mortality salience and dental pain groups in terms of the amount they chose to spend or save.

Second, the participants were requested to take monetary decisions based on the assumption that they won the prize of 660TL. Thus, making decisions based on the assumed presence of money limited the results of this study, possibly by the participants' not having thought as seriously as they would have done if they had received real money. Moreover, the monetary gift amount of 660TL was determined based on the average monthly spending of the Turkish university students. Thus, the saving or spending decisions of the students might have showed differences among the participants who normally spend significantly more or less than this amount.

Third, the independent variables concerning spending were measured based on the product and services choices of participants from an extensive product and services catalog that was prepared by the researcher. Even though the catalog was prepared in order to appeal different tastes, needs and preferences of the students, still some of the participants might have not found the options in the catalog appealing and chose



not to spend their money for that reason. On the other, it also probable that the participants who were provided with a 212 page catalog consisting of over 300 product and service options might have experienced a choice overload and this might have decreased their likelihood to make a purchase (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000). Thus, as a future research direction, the effect of mortality salience on the choice overload can be studied by providing the participants with different number of product and service choices. Furthermore, instead of making their product choices from a catalog, by examining the real products the participants might have made more accurate decisions. So, to decrease the perceived risk of purchase, in future studies the consumers can be given the opportunity to make their consumption decisions after examining the real products.

Forth, in order to create a realistic monetary decision making situation, the effect of mortality salience on the consumption related decisions was measured by the amount of money that participants used for different options. This could be considered as a limitation since the money spent for an item shows the combined effect of possessiveness and nongenerosity dimensions of materialism in Belk's (1985) term. Specifically, when deciding on purchasing an item, several factors including the product liking, willingness to purchase and willingness to pay all take part. Thus, for future research, it can be more beneficial to design experiments that can detect the individual effects of different materialism dimensions by measuring for example the product liking, and willingness to pay as different variables.

Fifth, in explaining the indifference between the product design choices of participants from mortality salience and dental pain groups it wasn't clear whether the mortality salience effect didn't work well or the product designs were too abstract. A clearer explanation might have done if there had been the results from a test to analyzing the effectiveness of the mortality salience manipulation. Hence, in order to ensure that the mortality salience effect works as expected, it can be helpful for the future researchers to add another task in the experiment to test the effectiveness of the manipulation.

Sixth, one of the major limitations of this study was its not being able to differentiate the effect of negative affect from mortality salience effects due to significant negative affect difference between groups. It is a rare case to observe significant difference between groups concerning their affects, but still to refrain from its possible results it might be useful to conduct the second PANAS before the applying the dependent measures.

Last, the main aim of this study was to detect the effect of mortality salience on consumer behavior and monetary decision making. So, an environmental difference would be needed for the participants to feel like they are really making shopping or an investment decision. Accordingly, for example if the study had been conducted in a real shopping environment, which also includes a bank in it, such as a shopping mall, the participants might have exhibited more genuine behavior. Thus, in order to increase the proximity of the research results to real life, future researchers might consider making the research environment as close as possible to natural settings.

To sum up, by this study it was humbly targeted to reveal the effects of mortality salience on Turkish people's decisions to how much, for whom and what to consume. It is truly believed that the future researches on this topic would be able to overcome the imperfections of the current study and widen the accumulated knowledge in this field.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Informed Consent Form

Değerli Katılımcı,

Bu çalışma, Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi [ODTÜ] İşletme Bölümü Araştırma Görevlisi Güneş Biliciler tarafından, ODTÜ sosyal psikoloji yüksek lisans programı bitirme tezi kapsamında yapılmaktadır. Çalışmanın amacı, duygu durumları ile tüketici davranışları arasındaki ilişkinin saptanmasıdır. Çalışmaya katılım tamamiyle gönüllülük temelinde olmalıdır. Ankette, sizden kimlik belirleyici hiçbir bilgi istenmemektedir. Cevaplarınız tamamiyle gizli tutulacak ve sadece araştırmacılar tarafından değerlendirilecektir; elde edilecek bilgiler bilimsel yayımlarda kullanılacaktır.

Çalışma, genel olarak kişisel rahatsızlık verecek sorular içermemektedir. Ancak, katılım sırasında sorulardan ya da herhangi başka bir nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz cevaplama işini yarıda bırakıp çıkmakta serbestsiniz. Böyle bir durumda çalışmayı uygulayan kişiye, çalışmayı tamamlamadığınızı söylemeniz yeterli olacaktır. Çalışmanın sonunda, bu çalışmayla ilgili sorularınız cevaplanacaktır. Katılımınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için ODTÜ İşletme Bölümü araştırma görevlisi Güneş Biliciler (Oda: H224; Tel: 03122103065; E-posta: bigunes@metu.edu.tr) ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

***Bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum ve istediğim zaman yarıda kesip çıkabileceğimi biliyorum. Verdiğim bilgilerin bilimsel amaçlı yayımlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum.*** (Formu doldurup imzaladıktan sonra uygulayıcıya geri veriniz).

İsim Soyad

Tarih

İmza

Varsa Alınan Ders

----/----/----

## Appendix B: Mortality Salience Manipulation

**Lütfen aşağıda verilen iki açık uçlu soruyu aklınıza ilk gelen duygu ve düşünceleri yansıtacak şekilde ve en az 8 cümle kullanarak yanıtlayınız. Katılımcılardan bu sorulara sezgisel cevaplar vermesini beklemekteyiz.**

Aşağıda yanıtlamanız istenilen iki soru, yakın zamanda geliştirilen yenilikçi bir duygu durumu değerlendirme anketinden alınmıştır. Yapılan araştırmalar, kişilerin yaşam ve ölüme dair duygu ve düşüncelerinin günlük hayattaki duygu durumları hakkında çok önemli oranda bilgi sağladığını göstermektedir. Bu iki soruya vereceğiniz yanıtlar, günlük hayatınızdaki duygu durumunuzu değerlendirmek için analiz edilecektir. Lütfen, bu maddeleri tam ve gerçek düşüncelerinizi yansıtacak şekilde cevaplayınız.

**1. Lütfen, kendi ölümünüzü düşünmenin sizde uyandırdığı duygu ve düşünceleri kısaca açıklayınız.**

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Lütfen, fiziksel olarak artık ölü olduğunuzda neler olacağı konusundaki düşüncelerinizi olabildiğince açık bir biçimde yazınız.**

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) \_\_\_\_\_

**Lütfen aşağıda verilen iki açık uçlu soruyu aklınıza ilk gelen duygu ve düşünceleri yansıtacak şekilde ve en az 8 cümle kullanarak yanıtlayınız. Katılımcılardan bu sorulara sezgisel cevaplar vermesini beklemekteyiz.**

Aşağıda yanıtlamanız istenilen iki soru, yakın zamanda geliştirilen yenilikçi bir duygu durumu değerlendirme anketinden alınmıştır. Yapılan araştırmalar, kişilerin yaşama dair duygu ve düşüncelerinin günlük hayattaki duygu durumları hakkında çok önemli oranda bilgi sağladığını göstermektedir. Bu iki soruya vereceğiniz yanıtlar, günlük hayatınızdaki duygu durumunuzu değerlendirmek için analiz edilecektir. Lütfen, bu maddeleri tam ve gerçek düşüncelerinizi yansıtacak şekilde cevaplayınız.

**1. Lütfen, dişinizin ağrıdığını düşünmenin sizde uyandırdığı duygu ve düşünceleri kısaca açıklayınız.**

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Lütfen, fiziksel olarak dişiniz ağrıdığında neler olacağı konusundaki düşüncelerinizi olabildiğince açık bir biçimde yazınız.**

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C: Positive and Negative Affect Schedule

Aşağıda birtakım duygu ifadeleri bulunmaktadır. Lütfen, söz konusu ifadelerin **ŞU AN** içinde bulunduğunuz duygu durumunu ne derece yansıttığını aşağıdaki derecelendirme ölçeğinde belirleyiniz. Bunu yaparken ifadenin yanında bulunan rakamlardan birini yuvarlak içine alınız.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7

Hiç Yansıtmıyor                      Ne Yansıtıyor                      Tamamen Yansıtıyor

Ne Yansıtmıyor

İlgili	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Sıkıntılı</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Heyecanlı	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mutsuz</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Güçlü	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Suçlu</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Ürkmüş	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Düşmanca</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Hevesli	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Gururlu</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Asabi	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Uyanık (dikkati açık)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Utanmış	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>İlhamlı (yaratıcı düşüncelerle dolu)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Sinirli	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Kararlı</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Dikkatli	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Tedirgin</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Aktif	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Korkmuş</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>

## Appendix D: Word Search Puzzle

Aşağıda bulunan kelime avı bulmacasında, kutuda listelenmiş olan kelimeler sağdan sola, soldan sağa, yukarıdan aşağıya ve aşağıdan yukarıya doğru gizlenmiştir. Lütfen 4 dakika içinde olabildiğince fazla kelimeyi bulmacada bulup işaretleyiniz.

KİTAP	KALEM	GEZEĞEN	BARDAK	KLAVYE
MONİTÖR	KOŞU	BİLET	TAKVİM	SİLGİ
OFİS	DEFTER	KONUK	MEVSİM	SIRA

A	G	E	R	B	U	M	G	A	K	S	İ	Ş	B	O
K	İ	T	A	P	O	M	E	Z	U	K	J	Ü	A	R
Ö	Ğ	U	G	E	Z	E	G	E	N	Z	E	Y	R	E
V	A	C	Ç	I	T	L	Y	U	O	H	v	A	D	Ü
L	I	Ğ	S	I	R	A	C	U	K	R	D	Ü	A	J
İ	R	T	H	M	E	K	A	V	Ö	S	E	İ	K	Y
G	Y	E	J	H	Ğ	Ö	C	İ	P	U	F	E	R	İ
L	N	O	Ğ	S	İ	F	O	R	P	A	T	G	L	N
İ	S	T	E	F	O	R	P	V	E	V	E	L	I	K
S	A	S	I	Ş	Z	Ü	R	T	Y	İ	R	A	H	B
A	D	K	İ	N	Ö	T	A	K	V	İ	M	G	U	İ
A	M	O	N	İ	T	Ö	R	İ	A	D	S	O	T	L
T	Ü	Ş	A	R	R	M	A	F	L	I	Z	İ	R	E
A	N	U	Y	E	K	A	L	Ü	K	A	I	L	U	T
R	Ç	İ	R	E	N	M	İ	S	V	E	M	E	Y	V

Sonraki uygulamalar için geribildirim olması için lütfen çözdüğünüz bulmacanın zorluk derecesini belirtiniz.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)

**Çok kolay**

**Çok zor**

## Appendix E: Sample Pages from Product and Services Catalog

### Kadın Ayakkabı



#### Ürün Kodu: WFN1

Fiyat: 60 TL

Marka: Sevgim

Cinsiyet: Kadın

Bedenler: 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41.

Desenler: Cupcake, mor kuş ve çiçekler, pembe çiçekler, kuşların saadeti.

Çıkış noktası kişinin kendini özel hissetmesi olan ve bu doğrultuda sınırlı sayıda tasarım yapan Sevgim Shoes'un ayakkabılarıyla kimi zaman içinizdeki çocuğa, kimi zaman bir parti kızına, kimi zaman da bir masal kahramanına hayat verirsiniz.



**Ürün Kodu: MTN24**

Fiyat: 68.25 TL

Marka: Network

Cinsiyet: Erkek

Bedenler: XS, S, M, L, XL, XXL

Renk: Lavacert, tütün rengi, siyah, beyaz, gri, mavi

Klasik model, normal kalıp, portatif bolenli ince yaka

%100 Pamuk



Unisex  
Hediyeler



**Ürün Kodu: UGN2**

Fiyat: 20 TL

Tebesirli yazı yazılabilen kupa  
Marka: 1978march

Seramik kupanın komple etrafında tebesir ile dilediğiniz notu yazabileceğiniz kara tahta bölümü vardır. Bardakla birlikte kutuda iki tane de tebesir bulunmaktadır.

Kupanın çapı: 8 cm  
Kupanın boyu: 9,5 cm

Yazıyı temizlemek için kuru bez ile hafifçe silmeniz veya yıkamanız Yeterli olacaktır.



106

Spor  
Malzemeleri



**Ürün Kodu: NSN26**

Fiyat: 19.95 TL

Badminton seti  
Badminton oynamaya yeni başlayan yetişkinler için tasarlanmıştır.

Marka: Artengo

İçerik: 2 yetişkin raketi, 2 tüy top ve 1 kılıf.

Raket ağırlığı: 130 gr.

Raket boyu: 66 cm.

2 yıl garantili.

150

## Appendix F: Product Choice Questions

**Çalışmaya katılıp bütün soruları eksiksiz tamamlayan bir kişi çekişle belirlenecek ve kendisine katılımı için teşekkür hediyesi olarak 660TL verilecektir. Lütfen aşağıdaki soruları 660TL’yi kazandığınızı varsayarak, gerçek tüketim ve biriktirme tercihlerinizi yansıtacak şekilde yanıtlayınız.**

Bu 660TL’nin isterseniz bir kısmını “Ürün Kataloğu”nda tanıtılan ürün ve hizmetlerden satın almak için, bir kısmını ise biriktirme seçeneğinde değerlendirmek için kullanabilirsiniz ya da parayı hemen teslim almayı seçebilirsiniz.

Üniversite öğrencilerinin tüketim ihtiyaçlarına uygun ürün ve hizmetlerden oluşan “Ürün Kataloğu”nda kadın giyim, kadın ayakkabısı, kadın ev giyim, kadınlar için hediyeler, erkek giyim, erkek ayakkabısı, erkek ev giyim, erkekler için hediyeler, uniseks hediye seçenekleri, çocuklar için hediyeler, spor malzemeleri, erkek spor giyim, kadın spor giyim, etkinlik ve aktiviteler ile yeme-içme hizmetleri ve bunlara ait detayları bulabilirsiniz.

Bu katalogdaki her ürün ve hizmeti kendiniz ya da bir başkası için satın alabileceğinizi ve ürünler ve hizmetler için katalogda belirtilen fiyat haricinde herhangi bir harcama yapmanız gerekmeyeceğini düşünerek karar veriniz. Satın almayı seçeceğiniz her ürün için tüketici haklarınız korunacaktır.

Satın almak istediğiniz ürünler yalnızca tüketim tercihlerinizi anlayabilmek için sorulmaktadır, paranın size çıkmaması halinde tercihlerinizin bir hükmü olmayacaktır.

Satın almak istediğiniz ürün ve hizmetlerin her biri için aşağıdaki forma ürün kodunu

yazmanız ve o ürünü/hizmeti kimin için satın almak istediğiniz sorusuna yanıt vermeniz gerekmektedir.

Katalogdaki ürünlerden satın almanın yanı sıra isterseniz paranızı teslim alacağınız süreden itibaren %8.60 faiz oranı ile 30 gün vadeli mevduat hesabında biriktirebilirsiniz. İsterseniz de kazandığınız parayı hemen teslim almayı seçebilirsiniz.

Vadeli mevduat hesapları, anında nakit paraya dönüştürülemeyen, bankadan çekilmesi için belirli bir zamanın (vade) dolması gerektiği, bu süre dolunca ise faiz getirisiyle birlikte çekilebilen ya da başka bir vadeye yatırılan hesap türüdür.

Lütfen ürün kataloğunu inceledikten sonra satın almak istediğini her bir ürün ve hizmet için aşağıdaki formları eksiksiz doldurunuz. Ardından paranızı ne şekilde değerlendirmek istediğinize dair soruyu yanıtlayınız.

1) Ürün kodu: Fiyatı:  
Kaç adet satın alınacağı: ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 ☐Diğer:.....  
Ürün bedeni:  
Ürün rengi/deseni:  
Ürünün veya hizmetin kimin için satın alındığı:  
☐ Kişinin kendisi ☐ Romantik partner  
☐ Aile üyesi, akraba ☐ Arkadaş  
☐ Diğer:.....

2) Ürün kodu: Fiyatı:  
Kaç adet satın alınacağı: ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 ☐Diğer:.....  
Ürün bedeni:  
Ürün rengi/deseni:  
Ürünün veya hizmetin kimin için satın alındığı:  
☐ Kişinin kendisi ☐ Romantik partner  
☐ Aile üyesi, akraba ☐ Arkadaş  
☐ Diğer:.....

3) Ürün kodu: Fiyatı:  
Kaç adet satın alınacağı: ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 ☐Diğer:.....  
Ürün bedeni:  
Ürün rengi/deseni:  
Ürünün veya hizmetin kimin için satın alındığı:  
☐ Kişinin kendisi ☐ Romantik partner  
☐ Aile üyesi, akraba ☐ Arkadaş  
☐ Diğer:.....

4) Ürün kodu: Fiyatı:  
Kaç adet satın alınacağı: ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 ☐Diğer:.....  
Ürün bedeni:  
Ürün rengi/deseni:  
Ürünün veya hizmetin kimin için satın alındığı:  
☐ Kişinin kendisi ☐ Romantik partner  
☐ Aile üyesi, akraba ☐ Arkadaş  
☐ Diğer:.....

5) Ürün kodu:

Fiyatı:

Kaç adet satın alınacağı: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ Diğer:.....

Ürün bedeni:

Ürün rengi/deseni:

Ürünün veya hizmetin kimin için satın alındığı:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kişinin kendisi    | <input type="checkbox"/> Romantik partner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aile üyesi, akraba | <input type="checkbox"/> Arkadaş          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diğer:.....        |   |

6) Ürün kodu:

Fiyatı:

Kaç adet satın alınacağı: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ Diğer:.....

Ürün bedeni:

Ürün rengi/deseni:

Ürünün veya hizmetin kimin için satın alındığı:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kişinin kendisi    | <input type="checkbox"/> Romantik partner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aile üyesi, akraba | <input type="checkbox"/> Arkadaş          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diğer:.....        |   |

7) Ürün kodu:

Fiyatı:

Kaç adet satın alınacağı: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ Diğer:.....

Ürün bedeni:

Ürün rengi/deseni:

Ürünün veya hizmetin kimin için satın alındığı:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kişinin kendisi    | <input type="checkbox"/> Romantik partner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aile üyesi, akraba | <input type="checkbox"/> Arkadaş          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diğer:.....        |   |

8) Ürün kodu:

Fiyatı:

Kaç adet satın alınacağı: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ Diğer:.....

Ürün bedeni:

Ürün rengi/deseni:

Ürünün veya hizmetin kimin için satın alındığı:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kişinin kendisi    | <input type="checkbox"/> Romantik partner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aile üyesi, akraba | <input type="checkbox"/> Arkadaş          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diğer:.....        |   |

9) Ürün kodu:

Fiyatı:

Kaç adet satın alınacağı: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ Diğer:.....

Ürün bedeni:

Ürün rengi/deseni:

Ürünün veya hizmetin kimin için satın alındığı:

☐ Kişinin kendisi

☐ Romantik partner

☐ Aile üyesi, akraba

☐ Arkadaş

☐ Diğer:.....

10) Ürün kodu:

Fiyatı:

Kaç adet satın alınacağı: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ Diğer:.....

Ürün bedeni:

Ürün rengi/deseni:

Ürünün veya hizmetin kimin için satın alındığı:

☐ Kişinin kendisi

☐ Romantik partner

☐ Aile üyesi, akraba

☐ Arkadaş

☐ Diğer:.....

11) Ürün kodu:

Fiyatı:

Kaç adet satın alınacağı: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ Diğer:.....

Ürün bedeni:

Ürün rengi/deseni:

Ürünün veya hizmetin kimin için satın alındığı:

☐ Kişinin kendisi

☐ Romantik partner

☐ Aile üyesi, akraba

☐ Arkadaş

☐ Diğer:.....

12) Ürün kodu:

Fiyatı:

Kaç adet satın alınacağı: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ Diğer:.....

Ürün bedeni:

Ürün rengi/deseni:

Ürünün veya hizmetin kimin için satın alındığı:

☐ Kişinin kendisi

☐ Romantik partner

☐ Aile üyesi, akraba

☐ Arkadaş

☐ Diğer:.....

**13) Ürün kodu:**

**Fiyatı:**

**Kaç adet satın alınacağı:** ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ Diğer:.....

**Ürün bedeni:**

**Ürün rengi/deseni:**

**Ürünün veya hizmetin kimin için satın alındığı:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kişinin kendisi    | <input type="checkbox"/> Romantik partner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aile üyesi, akraba | <input type="checkbox"/> Arkadaş          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diğer:.....        |   |



## Appendix G: Money Allocation and Usage Questions

**Lütfen kazandığınızı varsaymanız istenen 660 TL tutarındaki paranızı ürün veya hizmet satın almak, birikim yapmak veya kazandığının açıklandığı gün teslim almak seçenekleri arasında nasıl bölüştürmek istediğinize dair aşağıdaki soruyu yanıtlayınız. Bu üç seçeneğe ayırdığınız paranın toplamının 660 TL olmasına dikkat ediniz.**

**Boş bırakılan alanlara o seçeneğe ne kadar paranızı ayırdığınızı yazmanız gerekmektedir. Birikimle ilgili seçenekte ayırdığınız para miktarına ek olarak, ne kadar süreyle paranızı hesapta tutmayı planladığınızı da yazmanız gerekmektedir.**

Katalogdaki ürün ve hizmetlerden satın almak için kullanılan miktar: \_\_\_\_\_ TL.

%8.60 faiz oranıyla 30 gün vadeyle \_\_\_\_\_ ay süresince vadeli mevduat hesabında biriktirilmesi planlanan miktar: \_\_\_\_\_ TL.

Paranın kazanıldığı gün hemen teslim alınmak istenen tutar: \_\_\_\_\_ TL.

**Eğer paranızın bir miktarını biriktirmeyi seçtiyseniz lütfen ne amaçla para biriktirmek istediğinize yönelik aşağıdaki seçeneklerden size uyanların hepsini işaretleyiniz.**

- ☐ Kendimi finansal açıdan güvende hissetmek
- ☐ Gerekmesi halinde aile üyelerine maddi yönden destek olabilmek
- ☐ Kendim için satın almayı planladığım bir ürün (bilgisayar, bisiklet, araba, vb.) için para biriktirmek
- ☐ Kendim için satın almayı planladığım bir hizmet/deneyim (tatil, seyahat, eğitim, kurs vb.) için para biriktirmek
- ☐ Kendimden başka birisi için bir ürün ya da hizmet satın almak, hediye etmek amacıyla para biriktirmek
- ☐ Diğer: \_\_\_\_\_



**Eğer paranızın bir miktarını hemen teslim almayı seçtiyseniz lütfen ne sebeple bu tercihi yaptığınıza yönelik aşağıdaki seçeneklerden size uyanların hepsini işaretleyiniz.**

- ☐ Aile üyelerine maddi yönden destek olmak
- ☐ Kendim için satın almak istediğim başka bir ürün (bilgisayar, bisiklet, ayakkabı, araba, vb.) için kullanmak
- ☐ Kendim için satın almak istediğim başka bir hizmet/deneyim (tatil, seyahat, eğitim, kurs vb.) için kullanmak
- ☐ Kendimden başka birisi için bir ürün ya da hizmet satın almak/hediye almak

- ☐ Başka birikim ya da yatırım araçlarıyla parayı değerlendirmek
- ☐ Yardım kuruluşlarına ya da ihtiyacı olanlara bağış yapmak
- ☐ Ürün kataloğunda beğeni ve ihtiyaçlarıma yönelik ürün/hizmet bulunmaması
- ☐ Ürün kataloğundaki ürün/hizmet sağlayıcısına ya da sunulan biriktirme seçeneğine güvenmemek
- ☐ Diğer: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix H: Product Design Choice Question

**Çalışmaya katılımınız için teşekkür hediyesi olarak size bir anahtarlık hediye edilmesi planlanmaktadır. Lütfen hangi anahtarlığı tercih ettiğinizi, seçtiğiniz anahtarlığın görselinin yanındaki kutucuğa işaret koyarak belirtiniz.**

<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 
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## Appendix I: Demographic Information Form

Son olarak, lütfen demografik bilgileriniz hakkındaki kısa soruları yanıtlayınız.

- 1) Cinsiyetiniz: ☐ Kadın ☐ Erkek
- 2) Yaşınız: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Bölümünüz: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Sınıfınız: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Her ay yaşam masraflarınız ve diğer ihtiyaçlarınız için aileniz ya da diğer kaynaklardan elinize geçen toplam para miktarı: \_\_\_\_\_ TL.
- 6) Kronik ciddi bir rahatsızlığınız var mı?  
☐ Evet: \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Hayır
- 7) Son 1 ay içinde bir yakınınız vefat etti mi?  
☐ Evet ☐ Hayır

## Appendix J: Debriefing Form

Değerli Katılımcı,

Bu çalışma daha önce de belirtildiği gibi ODTÜ İşletme Bölümü araştırma görevlisi Güneş Biliciler tarafından kendisinin Sosyal Psikoloji Yüksek Lisans Programı tezi kapsamında yürütülmektedir. Çalışmanın amacı kişilerin ölümlülüğünün farkında olmasının yarattığı kaygının tüketim davranışlarına olan etkisinin Terör Yönetimi Teorisi çerçevesi içinde incelemektir. Bu teori aslen ölümün bilinçli farkındalığın dışında olan ve örtük olarak işleyen süreçleriyle ilgilidir. Bu çalışmada da ölüm düşüncesinin bilinçli farkındalığın dışına çıkmasıyla birlikte ortaya çıkan uzak savunmaların tüketim tercihi ile olan ilgisi araştırılmaktadır. Dolayısıyla, kişilerin araştırmanın amacının ölüm belirliliğinin tüketim davranışına olan etkisi olduğu bilgisine sahip olmasının ölüm düşüncesinin bilinçli farkındalığın dışına itilmesini engelleyip çalışmanın amacından sapmasına neden olması ihtimalini ortadan kaldırmak için çalışmanın amacı kısmen katılımcılardan saklanmak zorunda kalmış ve katılımcılara çalışmanın amacı ilk başta “duyguların tüketici davranışına etkisini ölçmek” olarak bildirilmiştir. Oysa, bu çalışmada temel olarak kişilerin ölümlülüğünün farkında olmasının para biriktirme veya harcama, kendisi için yada başkası için satın alma ve kendi kültürüne ait ya da belli bir kültüre ait olmayan desenleri içeren ürünler arasında tercih yapma davranışlarına odaklanılmaktadır.

Terör Yönetimi Teorisi’ne göre kişilerin ölümlü olduğunun farkında olması varoluşsal bir kaygıya sebep olur ve kişiler bu kaygıdan kendilerini ve yaşadıkları hayatı değerli kılarak uzaklaşmaya çalışırlar. Bunun yolu da kültürel dünya görüşlerine sarılmak ve bu dünya görüşlerine uygun biçimde hareket etmekten geçmektedir. Günümüzde tüketim kültürümüzün ayrılmaz bir parçası haline gelmiştir. Bu farkındalığın ürünü olarak Terör Yönetimi Teorisi çerçevesinde ölüm belirliliğinin tüketici davranışına olan etkisini incelen pek çok araştırma yapılmıştır. Ölüm belirliliğinin tüketici davranışlarına olan etkisini farklı bir açıdan incelemeyi amaçlayan bu çalışmada da kişilerin ölüm kaygısının altındaki nedenin yok oluştan

kaynaklı bir korkudan çok, birey ölünce kendi yakın çevresinin yaşayacağı üzüntü ve zorluklar olabileceği öngörülmüştür. Bu öngöründen ve alandaki diğer çalışmaların bulgularından yola çıkarak, kişilerin ölüm belirliliğinin arttırılması durumunda kendileri için ürünler almak yerine yakın çevreleri için ürünler satın alması beklenmektedir. Fakat, bu alandaki bir diğer çalışma ölüm belirliliğinin artması halinde kişilerin gelecekteki muhtemel finansal durumları ile ilgili daha iyimser tahminleri olduğunu gösterdiği için ölüm belirliliği arttırılmış kişilerin daha sonra ihtiyaç halinde ailesi yada yakın çevresine ulaştırmak üzere para biriktirmek yerine bu yakın çevreleri için para harcamayı, ürünler satın almayı tercih edeceği düşünülmektedir. Ölüm kaygısı karşısında kültürel değerlere bağlanmanın tüketici davranışları alanında kendisini göstereceği bir diğer noktanın da ürün tercihleri olacağı ve ölüm belirliliğinin arttırılması durumunda kişilerin ait oldukları kültürden izler taşıyan ürünleri herhangi bir kültürle ilişkilendirilmeyen figür ve desenlere sahip olanlara tercih edeceği öngörülmektedir.

Bu çalışmadan alınacak ilk verilerin Mayıs 2015 başında elde edilmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Elde edilen bilgiler sadece bilimsel araştırma ve yazılarda kullanılacaktır. Çalışmanın sonuçlarını öğrenmek ya da bu araştırma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için aşağıdaki iletişim bilgilerini kullanarak Güneş Biliciler'e başvurabilirsiniz. Bu araştırmaya katıldığınız için tekrar çok teşekkür ederiz.

Arş. Gör. Güneş Biliciler (Oda: H224; Tel: 210 3065; [bigunes@metu.edu.tr](mailto:bigunes@metu.edu.tr))

## Appendix K: Ethics Committee Approval

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARASTIRMA MERKEZİ  
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



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17.02.2015

Gönderilen : Prof. Dr. Nuray Sakallı Uğurlu  
Psikoloji Bölümü

Gönderen : Prof. Dr. Canan Sümer  
IAK Başkan Vekili

İlgi : Etik Onayı

Danışmanlığını yapmış olduğunuz Psikoloji Bölümü öğrencisi Güneş Biliciler'in "Effects of Mortality Salience on Turkish Consumers' Decisions to How Much, for Whom and What to Consume." isimli araştırması "İnsan Araştırmaları Komitesi" tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay verilmiştir.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

Etik Komite Onayı

Uygundur

17/02/2015

Prof.Dr. Canan Sümer  
Uygulamalı Etik Araştırma Merkezi  
( UEAM ) Başkan Vekili  
ODTÜ 06531 ANKARA

17.02.2015

G

## Appendix L: Turkish Summary

### 1. GİRİŞ

Tüketimin günlük hayatımızda her geçen gün daha fazla işleve ve öneme sahip olduğu göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, tüketimin varoluşsal kaygı karşısında oraya çıkan bilinç dışı savunmalarda da rol alacağı düşünülebilir. Bu tez çalışmasında, ölüm belirginliğinin tüketim kararları alırken sorduğumuz “Neyi? Ne kadar? Kimin için?” sorularına verdiğimiz yanıtları ne şekilde etkilediğinin Dehşet Yönetimi Kuramı çerçevesinde araştırılması amaçlanmaktadır.

#### 1.1. Dehşet Yönetimi Kuramı (DYK)

Dehşet Yönetimi Kuramı (Greenberg ve ark., 1986; Greenberg ve ark., 1997; Solomon ve ark., 1991), ölüm düşüncesinin yarattığı dehşetle başa çıkabilmek için kişilerin kültürel dünya görüşlerine daha sıkı bağlanarak ve bu şekilde öz-saygılarını da arttırarak bir nevi sembolik ölümsüzlük elde etme yoluna gideceklerini öne sürer. Bu sav, kuramın şu iki temel hipotezi (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Solomon, 1997) vasıtasıyla test edilmektedir: ölüm belirginliği hipotezi ve anksiyeteyi önleme hipotezi. Ölüm belirginliği hipotezi, eğer herhangi bir psikolojik yapı kaygı verici bir durum karşısında koruma sağlıyorsa, kaygı verici durumlarla karşılaşılması halinde bu yapıya duyulan ihtiyacın artacağını savunur (Hayes, Schimel, Faucher, & Williams, 2008). Dolayısıyla, ölüm belirginliğinin arttığı durumlarda, ölüm kaygısından korunmak amacıyla kültürel dünya görüşlerinin daha fazla benimseneceği Dehşet Yönetimi Kuramı’na savunulmaktadır (Burke, Martens, & Faucher, 2010). Diğer yandan, anksiyeteyi önleme hipotezi de kaygı verici bir durum karşısında koruma sağlayan bir psikolojik yapı varsa eğer bu yapının güçlendirilmesinin kişinin daha az kaygı yaşamasını sağlayacağını öne sürer (Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Greenberg, 2002).



DYK'nın bilişsel işleyişi ikili savunma modeli ile açıklanmaktadır, bu modele göre açık bir biçimde ölüm hatırlatıldığında, kişi öncelikle yakın savunmalara başvurur yani ölüm düşüncesini baskılama yada ölümün henüz uzak olduğuna kendisini inandırmak için görece mantıklı açıklamalar bulma yoluna gider. Ölüm hakkında eşik altı bir uyarı ile karşılaşıldığında yada açık bir biçimde uyarılmış olan ölüm düşüncesi bilinçli farkındalığın dışına çıktığı zaman ise uzak savunmalar devreye girer. Kurama göre kişiler kültürel dünya görüşlerine daha sıkı sarılarak ve öz-saygılarını artırma yoluna giderek bilinçli farkındalığın dışındaki ölüm kaygısını bastırmaya çalışırlar. Ölüm düşüncesinin yarattığı dehşete rağmen, kişilerin günlük hayatlarına normal şekilde devam edebilmesini sağlayan da DYT'nin asıl ilgilendiği alan olan bu uzak savunmalardır.

## **1.2. DYT Perspektifinden Tüketici Tutumları ve Davranışları**

Materyalist tüketim kültürünü benimsediğimizi ve tüketimin hayatımızı, değerlerimizi ve kimliğimizi hem şekillendiren hem de yansıtan rolünü düşündüğümüzde, kişilerin ölümlülüklerine yönelik farkındalığına karşı verdiği örtük savaşta da tüketimin önemli bir rolü olması beklenmektedir. Genellikle 2000'lerden sonra yapılmış olan, ölüm belirginliği ve tüketim ilişkisi üstüne çalışmalar da ölüm belirginliğinin tüketici tutumları ve davranışları ile ilişkisini ortaya koymuştur.

Ölüm belirginliği ve tüketici tutumları üstüne ilk araştırmalardan sayılabilecek araştırmalarında Kasser ve Sheldon (2000) göstermiştir ki ölüm düşüncesi belirginleştirildiğinde kişiler gelecekle ilgili daha materyalist beklentiler ve açgözlü davranışlar içine girer. Fransen ve ark. (2007) ise ölüm belirginliği artırıldığı durumda kişilerin yerel yiyecekleri daha olumlu değerlendirdiğini göstermiştir. Mandel ve Heine'in (1999) ve Page ve Smith'in (2010) araştırmaları ise ölüm belirginliğinin artması halinde lüks ürünlere olan ilginin de arttığını kanıtlamıştır.

Ölüm belirginliğinin tüketiciler üstündeki etkisi yalnızca tutumlarla sınırlı değildir, sınırlı sayıda da olsa bu alandaki çalışmalar, ölüm belirginliğinin tüketici davranışlarını da etkilediğini göstermiştir. Ölüm hakkında düşünceleri

sağlandığında, Cox ve ark. (2009) katılımcıların çekicilikle ilişkilendirilen bronz bir cilde sahip olmak için daha az güneş kremi kullandığını; Friese ve Hoffman (2008) da yine ölüm belirginliği artırıldığında katılımcıların yerel bir marka tarafından üretilen çikolataları daha çok tükettiğini bulmuştur.

### **1.3. Çalışmaya Genel Bakış ve Hipotezler**

Bu çalışmanın amacı ölüm belirginliğinin Türkiye’deki tüketicilerin neyi, ne kadar ve kimin için tüketeyeceğine olan etkisini araştırmaktır. Bu amaçla oluşturulan hipotezler şu şekildedir:

1a: Diş ağrısı (DA) koşulundaki katılımcılara kıyasla ölüm belirginliği (ÖB) koşulundaki katılımcıların ürün ve hizmet satın almak için daha fazla para harcaması beklenmektedir.

1b: ÖB koşulundaki kadın katılımcıların DA koşulundaki katılımcılara kıyasla daha fazla para harcaması beklenirken, ÖB ve DA koşulundaki erkek katılımcıların harcamayı seçecekleri para miktarının anlamlı bir farklılık göstermesi beklenmemektedir.

1c: ÖB’nin katılımcıların ne kadar para biriktireceği üstünde önemli bir etkisi olacağı düşünülmemektedir.

1d: ÖB ve DA koşulundaki katılımcıların biriktirecekleri parayı ne kadar süreyle birikim hesabında tutmayı planladıklarının farklılık göstermemesi beklenmektedir.

2a: ÖB koşulundaki katılımcıların materyal satın almak için DA koşulundaki katılımcılara göre daha fazla para harcayacağı düşünülmektedir.

2b: Farklı deney gruplarındaki katılımcıların deneyim satın almak için harcayacakları para miktarının anlamlı bir fark göstermemesi beklenmektedir.

3a: ÖB koşulundaki katılımcıların başkaları, yani aile üyeleri, romantik partnerleri veya arkadaşları, için ürün ve hizmet satın almaya DA koşulundaki katılımcılara göre daha fazla para harcayacağı düşünülmektedir.

3b: Katılımcıların PANAS ölçeğinde ne kadar “güçlü” hissettikleri maddesine verecekleri yanıtın, ÖB manipülasyonunun katılımcıların başkaları için harcayacakları para miktarına olan etkisi arasında arabulucu rol üstlenmesi beklenmektedir.

3c: ÖB grubundaki katılımcıların aile üyeleri için DA grubundaki katılımcıların harcayacağından daha fazla para harcayacağı öngörülmektedir.

4: DA koşulundaki katılımcılara kıyasla ÖB koşulundaki katılımcıların, üzerinde yerel ve soyut bir sembol bulunan ürün tasarımını daha fazla tercih etmesi beklenmektedir.

5: Farklı deney koşullarındaki katılımcıların PANAS ölçeğiyle ölçülen olumlu yada olumsuz duygu durumları açısından bir fark göstermemesi beklenmektedir (Greenberg ve ark., 1997).

## **2. YÖNTEM**

### **2.1. Katılımcılar**

Çalışma için gerekli katılımcı sayısını belirlemek üzere yapılan güç analizi sonucunda %95 istatistiki güçle orta seviye etki ( $d = .5$ ) saptamak için toplamda 210 katılımcıya gerek olduğu bulunmuştur. Çalışma ODTÜ’de lisans öğrencisi olan 224 kişi ile yapılmıştır, bu kişilerin 132’si (59%) kadın, 92’si (41%) erkektir. Bu katılımcılardan 211 tanesi çalışmaya katılımları karşılığında çeşitli Psikoloji ya da İşletme Bölümü dersleri için ekstra puan alırken, yalnızca 13 tanesi kampüse asılan posterler sonucunda bir karşılık almadan çalışmaya katılmıştır.

### **2.2. Ölçüm Araçları**

Katılımcılara verilen ölçek paketi ölüm belirginliği manipülasyonu, Olumlu ve Olumsuz Duygu Ölçeği (Watson, Clark, ve Tellegen, 1988), kelime avı bulmacası (mevcut çalışma için hazırlandı), ürün ve servis kataloğu (mevcut çalışma için hazırlandı), ürün seçimi, paranın nasıl bölüşürüleceği ve ne için kullanılacağı üstüne sorular (mevcut çalışma için hazırlandı), ürün tasarım tercihi sorusu (mevcut çalışma için hazırlandı) ve demografik bilgi formundan oluşmaktadır.

#### **2.2.1. Ölüm Belirginliği Manipülasyonu**

Katılımcılar rastgele şekilde ölçek paketlerinin yerleştirildiği masalara, yine rastgele şekilde oturduktan sonra ilk olarak ÖB yada DA ile ilgili iki tane açık uçlu soruyu en az 8 cümle kullanarak yanıtlamışlardır. Katılımcılara yöneltilen sorular şunlardır: “Lütfen, kendi ölümünüzü (diş ağrınızı) düşünmenin sizde uyandırdığı duyguları kısaca açıklayınız” ve “Lütfen, fiziksel olarak artık ölü olduğunuzda (dişiniz ağrıdığı anda) neler olacağı konusundaki düşüncelerinizi olabildiğince açık bir biçimde yazınız”.

### **2.2.2. Olumlu ve Olumsuz Duygu Ölçeği (PANAS)**

Watson ve arkadaşları (1988) tarafından geliştirilen Olumlu ve Olumsuz Duygu Ölçeği 10 adet olumlu ve 10 adet olumsuz duygu belirten maddeden oluşmaktadır. Türkçe'ye adaptasyonu Gençöz (2000) tarafından yapılan ölçeğin mevcut çalışmadaki Cronbach alpha güvenilirlik puanı olumlu alt-ölçek için .87, olumsuz alt-ölçek içinse .85 olarak hesaplanmıştır.

### **2.2.3. Kelime Avı Bulmacası**

ÖB ve DA manipülasyonlarının ardından ölüm ve diş ağrısı ile ilgili düşüncelerin bilinçli farkındalığın dışına itilebilmesi için katılımcılardan bir dolgu görevi olarak kelime avı bulmacası çözmeleri istenmiştir. Mevcut çalışma için hazırlanan 15 x 15 matris bulmacanın içine ölüm ya da diş ağrısı ile ilişkilendirilemeyecek 15 kelime saklanmıştır. Katılımcıların 4 dakika içerisinde olabildiğince çok kelimeyi bulması istenmiştir.

### **2.2.4. Ürün ve Servis Kataloğu**

Katılımcıların tüketim tercihlerini ölçmek için kullanmak üzere mevcut çalışma için kapsamlı bir ürün ve hizmet kataloğu hazırlanmıştır. Katalogda yer alan 300'den fazla ürün ve hizmet seçilirken üniversite öğrencilerinin ihtiyaçlarına, isteklerine ve beğenilerine uygun olmalarına özen gösterilmiştir. Sonuç olarak 212 sayfadan oluşan bu katalog için seçilen ürün ve hizmetler şu gruplar altında toplanmıştır: kadın giysileri, kadın ayakkabıları, kadın ev giyimi, kadınlar için hediye seçenekleri, erkek giysileri, erkek ayakkabıları, erkek ev giyimi, erkekler için hediye seçenekleri, üniseks hediye seçenekleri, çocuklar için hediye seçenekleri, spor malzemeleri, erkek spor giyim, kadın spor giyim, etkinlik ve servisler, yiyecekler ve restoranlar. Katalogdaki her sayfa bir ürüne ayrılmış ve ürünlerin adı, kodu, fiyatı, bedenleri, tasarımları, görselleri, açıklamaları ve varsa diğer özellikleri belirtilmiştir.

### **2.2.5. Ürün Seçimi, Paranın Nasıl Bölüşürüleceği ve Ne için Kullanılacağına İlişkin Sorular**

Ürün ve hizmet kataloğuyla birlikte katılımcılara çalışmanın ikinci kısmıyla ilgili yazılı bilgilendirme ve ürün seçimi, paranın nasıl bölüşürüleceği ve ne için kullanılacağına dair sorular da verilmiştir. Bilgilendirme kısmında, katılımcılardan bir kişinin kurayla seçileceği ve kendisine 660 TL'nin katılımı için teşekkür hediyesi olarak verileceği belirtilmiş, tüm katılımcılardan bundan sonraki sorulara 660 TL'yi kendilerinin aldıklarını varsayarak yanıt vermesi istenmiştir. Ardından bu parayı katalogdan ürün ve hizmet satın almak, ayda %8.6 faizle birikim hesabında biriktirmek ve nakit olarak teslim almak seçenekleri arasında istedikleri şekilde bölüştürmeleri istenmiştir. Sonra, katalogdan satın almayı seçtikleri her bir ürün ve hizmet için ürün kodu, fiyatı ve kimin için satın alındığı sorularından oluşan kısa formu doldurmaları rica edilmiştir.

### **2.2.6. Ürün Tasarım Tercihi Sorusu**

Bu bölümde, mevcut çalışma için hazırlanmış iki anahtarlık tasarımı görseli sunulmuş ve katılımcılara eğer bu anahtarlıklardan biri kendilerine hediye edilecek olsa hangisini tercih edecekleri sorulmuştur. Anahtarlıklar, birinin üstünde Anadolu'ya ait soyut bir sembol diğerinin üstünde ise yabancı bir soyut sembol olması haricinde herhangi bir fark olmayacak şekilde tasarlanmıştır.

### **2.2.7. Demografik Bilgi Formu**

Bu son kısımda katılımcılardan yaşları, cinsiyetleri, bölümleri, kendilerinin aylık toplam gelirleri, herhangi bir ciddi hastalıkları olup olmadığı ve son bir ay içerisinde bir yakınlarının vefat edip etmediği ile ilgili kısa orulara yanıt vermeleri istenmiştir.

### **2.3. Prosedür**

ODTÜ Etik Komitesi'nden izin alınmasının ardından çalışma için katılımcılardan bilgi toplanmasına ODTÜ İşletme Bölümü G 163 nolu sınıfta başlanmıştır. Çalışmanın her bir seansına en fazla üç katılımcı kabul edilmiştir. Katılımcılara önce araştırmacı tarafından kısa bir bilgilendirme yapılmış ve katılımcılardan en az 40 dakika boyunca deney sınıfında kalmaları ve çalışmayla meşgul olmaları rica edilmiştir. Katılımcılar çalışmada kullanılacak ölçeklerin deney manipülasyonuna göre rastgele yerleştirildiği masalara rastgele oturmuştur. Bu süreçte ne araştırmacı ne de katılımcıların hangi deney grubunda olduğunu bilmemesine önem verilmiştir. Çalışma için katılımcılar önce bilgilendirme yazısını okumuş, ardından kendilerine belirli bir sırayla verilen görevleri ve soruları tamamlamışlardır. Çalışmayla ilgili bilgilendirme, tüm katılımcılardan veriler toplandıktan sonra e-posta yoluyla yapılmıştır. Bilgi toplama süreci üç hafta sürmüş ve araştırmacının kendisi tarafından yapılmıştır.

### **3. BULGULAR**

İlk olarak katılımcılardan elde edilen bütün skorlar ve çalışmanın tüm değişkenleri çok yönlü inceleme ölçütleri ile gözden geçirilmiş ve bunun sonucunda öncelikle ÖB manipülasyonunu büyük ölçüde eksik veya yanlış dolduran 14 kişinin bilgileri çalışmadan çıkarılmış, ardından 30 kişiden elde edilen bilgilerin de aykırı (outlier) değerlerinden ötürü veri setinden çıkarılmasına karar verilmiştir. Dolayısıyla, bundan sonraki analizler 194 kişiden toplanan skorlar kullanılmıştır.

#### **3.1. ÖB Manipülasyonunun Harcama ya da Biriktirme Kararına Etkisi**

Hipotez 1a'da belirtildiğinin aksine ÖB yada DA gruplarındaki katılımcıların katalogdan ürün ve hizmet satın almak için harcamayı seçtikleri para miktarları arasında anlamlı bir fark bulunamamıştır. Ayrıca ne ÖB ya da DA grubundaki kadın katılımcılar arasında ne de ÖB ya da DA grubundaki erkek katılımcılar arasında ne kadar para harcamayı seçtikleri hususunda bir fark tespit edilmemiştir.

Diğer yandan ÖB ve DA koşullarındaki katılımcıların biriktirmek istedikleri para miktarı ve biriktirecekleri parayı kaç ay süreyle banka hesabında tutmayı planladıkları temellerinde de birbirlerinden anlamlı şekilde farklılaşmadığı görülmüştür. Fakat, çalışmanın sonuçları ÖB koşulundaki katılımcıların DA koşulundaki katılımcılara kıyasla istatistiki olarak anlamlı miktarda fazla parayı nakit olarak teslim almak istediğini ortaya koymuştur.

### **3.2. ÖB Manipülasyonunun Materyal ya da Deneyim Tüketimi Kararına Etkisi**

Çalışmanın başında oluşturulan beklentinin tam aksine DA manipülasyonuna maruz kalan katılımcıların ÖB manipülasyonuna maruz kalanlara kıyasla materyal tüketimi için anlamlı ölçüde fazla para harcamayı seçtiği görülmüştür. Öbür taraftan, ÖB ve DA gruplarındaki katılımcıların deneyim tüketimi için harcamayı seçtikleri para miktarının önemli bir farklılık göstermemesi, çalışmanın bu yöndeki hipotezini desteklemiştir.

### **3.3. ÖB Manipülasyonunun Kimin için Ne Kadar Harcama Yapılacağı Kararına Etkisi**

Ölüm hakkında düşünen katılımcıların diş ağrısı hakkında düşünen katılımcılara kıyasla başkaları için ürün ve hizmet satın almak üzere daha fazla para harcayacağı çalışmanın başında ileri sürülmüştür. Fakat, analiz sonuçları ÖB ya da DA koşullarındaki katılımcıların başkaları için harcadığı para miktarının anlamlı bir biçimde birbirinden farklı olmadığını göstermiştir. Bu sonucun temel olarak ÖB grubundaki katılımcıların DA grubundaki katılımcılara kıyasla daha az para harcamayı seçmesinden etkilenip etkilenmediğini anlamak için yapılan ikinci bir analiz yapılmıştır. Bu analizin sonucu AD koşulundaki katılımcılara kıyasla, ÖB koşulundaki katılımcıların başkalarına harcamak için kullandıkları para miktarının toplam harcama bütçelerine oranının istatistiki olarak anlamlı bir biçimde fazla olduğunu göstermiştir.



Fakat, beklenenin aksine katılımcıların PANAS ölçeğinde “güçlü” ifadesine verdikleri skorların ÖB manipülasyonu ile başkaları için harcanan para miktarı arasındaki ilişkide arabulucu rol üstlenmediği görülmüştür. Ayrıca, yine beklenenin aksine ÖB ve DA katılımcıları arasında aile üyeleri için ürün ve hizmet satın almak üzere kullanılan para miktarı temelinde bir farklılık olmadığı kaydedilmiştir.

### **3.4. ÖB Manipülasyonunun Ürün Tasarım Tercihine Etkisi**

Ölüm hakkında düşünen katılımcıların diş ağrısı hakkında düşünenlere kıyasla, ölüm kaygısı karşısında kendi kültürel dünya görüşlerine bağlanarak ölüm fikrinden kaynaklı varoluşsal dehşeti bastırması beklendiği için, bu çalışmanın başında ÖB grubundaki katılımcıların DA grubundakilere kıyasla tasarımında yerel soyut bir sembol kullanılan ürünü daha fazla tercih edeceği öne sürülmüştür. Lakin, ne yazık ki analiz sonuçları bu iki grubun ürün tasarımı tercihleri arasında herhangi bir fark bulamamıştır.

### **3.5. PANAS Ölçeklerinin ÖB ve DA Koşullarındaki Farklılıkları**

Çalışmadan elde edilen sonuçların yalnızca ÖB manipülasyonunun etkisini yansıttığından emin olmak amacıyla ÖB ve DA koşulundaki katılımcıların PANAS ölçeklerine verdikleri yanıtlar arasında bir farklılık olmaması beklenmektedir. PANAS olumlu duygu skorlarında bu iki gruba mensup katılımcılar arasında herhangi bir farklılık görülmezken, ne yazık ki, ÖB koşulundaki katılımcıların DA koşulundakilere göre önemli ölçüde daha çok olumsuz duygu yaşadığını göstermiştir. Bu bulgu, mevcut çalışma kapsamında elde edilen ÖB’nin etkilerini değerlendirirken dikkatli davranılması gerektiğini göstermektedir.

## 4. TARTIŞMA

Türkiye’deki tüketicilerin neyi, kimin için ve ne kadar tüketecekleri hususlarındaki kararlarının ölüm belirginliğinden nasıl etkilendiğini ortaya koymayı hedefleyen bu çalışmanın bulgularının değerlendirilmesi, bu sonuçların ardındaki olası nedenler ve literatürdeki benzer çalışmaların sonuçları ile birlikte incelenerek bu bölümde sunulacaktır.

### 4.1.Bulguların Değerlendirilmesi ve Çalışmanın Katkıları

Çalışmadan elde edilen bulguların bir kısmı hipotezleri tamamen ya da kısmen doğrularken, bir kısmının beklenin tam tersi sonuçları ortaya çıkardığı görülmüştür. Hipotez 1a’da ÖB koşulundaki katılımcıların DA koşulundakilere kıyasla ürün ve hizmet satın almak için daha fazla para harcaması beklenirken, bulgular bu iki koşuldaki katılımcıların harcadığı para miktarı arasında bir fark olmadığını göstermiştir, üstelik anlamlı bir fark olmasa da DA koşulundaki katılımcılar, ÖB’dekilere kıyasla daha fazla harcamayı seçmişlerdir. Bu beklenmedik bulgunun ardında birkaç sebep olabilir. Öncelikle, ÖB manipölasyonuna maruz kalan katılımcıların olumsuz duygu skorlarının DA koşulundakilere kıyasla daha yüksek olduğu göz önünde bulundurulduğunda bu beklenmedik sonucun yalnız ölüm belirginliği manipölasyonundan kaynaklanmadığı, olumsuz duyguların da etkisiyle ortaya çıktığı savunulabilir. Diğer yandan, literatürdeki ÖB’nin tüketime olan etkisini araştıran diğer çalışmalar bu etkiyi genellikle yiyecek tüketimi (Mandel ve Heine, 1999) ya da ürün değerlendirmesini baz alarak ölçtüğü için, bu çalışmada daha gerçekçi bir sonuç elde etmek amacıyla etkinin harcanacak para miktarı olarak ölçülmesi bu beklenmedik bulgunun nedenlerinden sayılabilir. Hipotez 1b’de öne sürülenin aksine ÖB manipölasyonunun katılımcıların ne kadar para harcamayı seçtiklerine olan etkisinde cinsiyetin herhangi bir etkisinin olmadığı bulunması da yine bu sebepler dahilinde değerlendirilebilir.

Diğer yandan hipotez 1c ve 1d’de belirtildiği üzere ÖB ve DA koşullarındaki katılımcıların biriktirmek istedikleri para miktarı arasında ve bu biriktirecekleri parayı kaç ay süreyle birikim hesabında tutmayı planladıkları arasında herhangi bir fark bulunmamış ve bu hipotezler desteklenmiştir. Daha önce ÖB ile biriktirme davranışı arasındaki ilişki çalışılmadığı için bu bulgu önem taşımakta ve de Kasser ve Sheldon’ın (2000) çalışmalarında bahsettiği ÖB’nin geleceğe yönelik finansal beklentileri ve optimizmi arttırdığı yönündeki beklentilerine de bir anlamda destek sağlamaktadır.

Çalışmanın bir diğer beklenmedik sonucu da hipotez 2a’da belirtilenin aksine, DA koşulundaki katılımcıların ÖB koşulundakilere kıyasla materyal tüketimi için anlamlı ölçüde çok para harcamayı seçmiş olmasıdır. Bu şaşırtıcı bulgu ise bu hipotez geliştirilirken ÖB karşısında bir savunma mekanizması olarak katılımcıların materyalist tüketim kültürüne daha sıkı sarılacaklarının beklenmesi; fakat bu beklentinin Belk’in (1985) materyalizm boyutlarından yalnız sahipleniciliğin temel alınmasına bağlanabilir. Bu sonuç, ÖB karşısında bireylerin bir diğer materyalizm boyutu olan eli sıkılığa daha fazla önem vermesinden kaynaklanıyor olabilir. Öte yandan çalışmanın bulguları hipotez 2b’de belirtildiği üzere ÖB ve DA koşullarındaki katılımcıların deneyim tüketimi için harcadıkları para miktarında bir fark olmadığını göstermiştir.

Çalışmanın bulguları hipotez 3a’yı yani ÖB koşulundaki katılımcıların DA koşulundaki katılımcılara göre başkaları için ürün ve hizmet satın almak üzere harcayacağı paranın daha fazla olacağını desteklememiştir. Fakat, ÖB katılımcılarının genel olarak daha az para harcamayı tercih ettiği göz önünde bulundurularak, başkaları için para harcamanın öneminin bu iki grup arasında nasıl bir farklılık gösterdiğini saptamak üzere ikinci bir analiz yapılmıştır. Bu ikinci analize göre DA koşulundakilere kıyasla ÖB koşulundaki katılımcıların başkaları için ürün ve hizmet satın almak için kullandıkları paranın toplam harcama bütçelerine olan oranının istatistiki olarak anlamlı şekilde fazla olduğu bulunmuş ve hipotez 3a kısmen desteklenmiştir. Bu araştırma sorusunu test eden ilk çalışma olması açısından bu bulgunun önem taşıdığı söylenebilir.

Çalışmanın diğer temel hipotezlerinden olan hipotez 4 ise ÖB katılımcılarının DA katılımcılarına kıyasla üzerinde yerel soyut sembol bulunan ürün tasarımını üzerinde yabancı soyut sembol bulunan ürün yerine daha fazla tercih edeceğini savunur. Fakat, çalışmanın bulguları bu iki deney grubundaki katılımcılar arasında ürün tasarımı tercihi temelinde hiçbir fark ortaya çıkarmamıştır. Bu sonuç, ürün tasarımında kullanılan sembollerin katılımcıların yerelliğini değerlendirmesine olanak tanımayacak kadar soyut olmasından veya dehşet yönetimi mekanizmasının bu çalışmada beklenen şekilde çalışmamasından kaynaklanıyor olabilir.

Son olarak, hipotez 5 çalışma bulguları sayesinde yalnız kısmen doğrulanmıştır. ÖB ve DA gruplarındaki katılımcıların PANAS olumlu duygu skorları arasında bir fark görülmesi de, ÖB grubundaki katılımcıların daha yüksek PANAS olumsuz duygu skorları olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Dolayısıyla, bu çalışmadan elde edilen bulguların yalnız ölüm belirginliği manipülasyonunun bir sonucu olarak değerlendirilmesi noktasında dikkatli olunması gerekmektedir.

#### **4.3. Çalışmanın Sınırlılıkları ve Gelecek Çalışmalar için Öneriler**

Mevcut çalışma elbette ki mükemmel değildir ve bulguları birçok nedenden dolayı ne yazık ki sınırlıdır. Gelecekte bu alanda çalışacak araştırmacılara fikir vermesi açısından, mevcut çalışmanın eksikleri ve sınırlılıkları bu başlıkta değerlendirilecektir. Bu sınırlılığa neden olan faktörlerden ilki istatistiki olarak gerekli olsa da veri setinden kimi katılımcıların değerlerinin çıkartılması ve setin daraltılmasıdır. İkincisi, katılımcılardan tüketim kararlarını kazandıklarını varsaydıkları bir para ile yapmalarının beklenmesidir, bu durumda katılımcılar gerçekten sahip oldukları parayı kullanarak yapacakları harcamalara göre daha az düşünerek karar vermiş olabilirler. Üçüncüsü, mevcut çalışma için oldukça geniş bir ürün ve hizmet kataloğu hazırlanmaya çalışıldıysa da, katılımcıların gerçek bir alışveriş ortamı yerine katalogdan tercih yapmalarını istemek kimi katılımcıların ihtiyaç ve beğenilerine yönelik ürün bulamamasına, kimilerinin katalogdaki ürünlerin fazlalığı dolayısıyla zihinsel olarak yorulup satın almaktan vazgeçmesine, kimilerinin

ise gerek bir satıcı ve tüketicili ilişkisi kuramadığı için ürün satın almaya güvenememesine sebep olmuş olabilir.

Bir diğerk faktör olarak bağımlı değışkenin katılımcıların harcamayı seçtiğı para miktarı ile ölçölmesidir. Bir ürün ya da hizmet için harcanan para miktarı belirlenirken ürünün ne kadar beğenildiğı, satın alma isteğı, ödeme isteğı gibi birçok faktör devreye girdiğı için bu faktörlerin tek tek ölçölmesi ÖB etkisinin daha net biçimde görölmesini sağlayabilir. Çalışmadaki bulgular ve eksiklikler göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, ölüm belirginliğinin materyalizmin temel üç boyutu üstündeki etkisinin ölçölmesi gelecek çalışmalar için faydalı olacaktır. Diğerk yandan, ÖB'nin ne kadar etkili olduğundan emin olabilmek için çalışmaya manipölasyonun ne kadar etkili olduğunu ölçmek üzere bir görev daha eklenmesi faydalı olacaktır. Ek olarak, duyguların etkisini ayırt etmek için de bağımlı değışkenden önce bir kere daha katılımcıların duygularının ölçölmesi değerkendirilmelidir. Son olarak, çalışmanın gerekleştirildiğı şart ve koşulların gerek çevreye olabildiğince yakın olması çalışmadan elde edilecek sonuçların genellenebilirliğini önemli ölçüde artırmaya yarayacaktır.

## Appendix M: Thesis Photocopying Permission Form

### TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

#### ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü

☐

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

☒

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü

☐

Enformatik Enstitüsü

☐

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü

☐

#### YAZARIN

Soyadı: BİLİCİLER ÜNAL

Adı : GÜNEŞ

Bölümü: PSİKOLOJİ

**TEZİN ADI** (İngilizce): Effects of Mortality Salience on Turkish People's Decisions to How Much, For Whom and What to Consume

**TEZİN TÜRÜ:** Yüksek Lisans

☒

Doktora

☐

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.

☐

2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.

☐

3. Tezimden bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

☒

**TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ:**