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## Article

### The relationship between metaphorical perceptions of consumption and mental well-being in the period of COVID-19

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## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN METAPHORICAL PERCEPTIONS OF CONSUMPTION AND MENTAL WELL-BEING IN THE PERIOD OF COVID-19

**Abstract.** This study aims to examine the relationship between the interpretation of the consumption concept of individuals and their mental well-being levels during the pandemic period. Metaphors are the essential communication tools used in defining and interpreting the consumption concept. The effort to reveal the interpretations loaded on a complex and multidimensional concept such as individuals' consumption expresses the important contribution of this research. The fact that these interpretations were made during the pandemic turned individuals' lives upside-down increases the degree of contribution. The study's originality has been tried to be revealed by establishing a relationship between the interpretations of the consumption phenomenon of individuals and their mental well-being. The Conceptual Metaphor Theory developed by Lakoff and Johnson was used in metaphorical interpretation. The metaphorical approach, which is one of the alternative approaches based on subjective experiences, enables the comprehension of concrete and well-known concepts, abstract concepts, symbols, or elements that are more difficult and complex to understand. The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) was used to determine the mental well-being levels of individuals. All the metaphors developed and evaluated regarding the concept of consumption have been grouped into three conceptual categories: «pleasure, insatiability and vanity», «necessity and requirement», and «addictive and harmful». In this study, the mental well-being average of all participants was calculated as 53.46. The lowest average was calculated in the «addictive and harmful» category according to conceptual categories in terms of mental well-being averages. It was determined that the mental well-being averages of the participants who interpreted the concept of consumption as «negative» were also low.

**Keywords:** conceptual metaphor, consumption, COVID-19, mental well-being, Turkey.

**Introduction.** The World Health Organization (WHO) declared a pandemic (global epidemic) in March 2020 following the COVID-19 epidemic that occurred in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. Due to the pandemic, many countries have implemented serious restrictions except for compulsory situations. The risk, uncertainty, and sense of urgency that the pandemic brought to the lives led to differences in conceptions and actions of individuals regarding life. People can act emotionally by acting irrationally in non-routine periods of economic crisis, war, and health problems. Emptying supermarket shelves, stocking toilet paper and pasta in almost every country during the first period of the pandemic could be examples of these non-routine behaviors. As the news about COVID-19 began to spread, similar consumption behaviors and significant changes in household spending were observed in different countries (Baker et al., 2020). For example, in the first wave of the pandemic (between February 26 and March 11, 2020), approximately a 50% rise in household spending was detected in a study conducted in the United States (Baker et al., 2020.) Since the pandemic threatens the most basic human right (survival), it also deeply affects people's prioritization of consumption. The measures implemented during the pandemic process and the measures regarding social distance rules caused a great economic shock worldwide (Martin et al., 2020). As could be seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, human behavior and consumer preferences are significantly affected, especially in extraordinary health-oriented periods.

This study tries to reveal the intellectual codes of the consumers' concept of consumption during a pandemic which is a non-routine period. While defining the consumption concept, it aims to determine what consumers try to describe with the words they use, how they encode the concept in their minds, and

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how these codes shape their behaviors with a conceptual metaphorical approach. The conceptual metaphorical approach is preferred in the study because this approach could provide information about the degree of relationship between the concept or phenomenon that is abstract, complex, ambiguous, difficult to explain, or has too many details. With the metaphorical approach, which is one of the alternative approaches based on subjective experiences, concrete, and well-known concepts facilitate understanding abstract concepts, symbols, or elements that are more difficult and complex to understand. For this reason, it is supposed that the meanings that individuals attribute to the concept of consumption during the pandemic process could be well explained with the metaphorical approach. It is known that many different factors, such as personal, sociological, cultural and psychological, and economic ones, are effective in interpreting and explaining the concept of consumption and behavior. Bocock (1993) stated that consumption activity continues to be important for individuals even in times of crisis and recession when the economy is in decline. Those who are unemployed during these periods both lose their sense of worth as employees and lose their roles that satisfy their family's needs by providing all kinds of consumer goods. Not being able to consume creates a deep discontent and re-forms the identities of individuals (Bocock 1993). It is also observed that consumers who meet their high-level needs through consumption are reported to have more well-being (Hill and Martin, 2012.)

This study adopted the «Mental Well-Being» approach, including positive and negative affections about individuals' lives, revealing their psychology due to being a pandemic. Mental (psychological) well-being means an individual who perceives himself/herself positively; is satisfied with himself/herself even when he/she is aware of his/her limitations; develops safe and warm relationships with others; shapes the environment in a way to meet his/her individual needs and desires; acts autonomously and independently; has a purpose and meaning in life; is aware of and try to improve his/her capacity (Keyes et al., 2002). In addition, in this process, which is important for the history of humanity due to the impact and prevalence of COVID-19, people's psychological conditions and high motivation for life are of great importance in getting over the process easier. The fact that people have to spend their lives under quarantine due to the epidemic is thought to cause them to question life's purpose and meaning and reconstruct consumption actions. Because consumption and individual actions lead to a social transformation, correct defining and interpretation of the concept are important. People's pursuit of consumption at the expense of destroying the world's limited resources and compromising universal value judgments for unlimited demands instead of basic needs causes these efforts to be questioned in this extraordinary period created by the pandemic. During the pandemic dominated by risk and uncertainty, the effort to reveal the meanings attributed to the concept of consumption in the minds of individuals expresses the important contribution of this research. Whether the person engaged in the consumption activity realizes the consumption for his real «need» or the «consumption culture» by the impact of marketing efforts that go beyond its purpose is closely related to the psychology of the consuming person, that is to say, «well-being» as the concept itself. The relationship or effect between the meaning attributed to the concept of consumption and individual psychology (well-being) gains importance, especially in the pandemic process, due to the importance of consumption in human life, its weight, and the area it covers. The study's originality has been tried to be revealed by establishing a relationship between the interpretations of the consumption phenomenon of individuals and their mental well-being.

**Literature Review.** Peoples' perspectives on the concept of consumption give important clues to researchers and practitioners about the meaning they attach to it and the purpose of their actions. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) showed that individuals act with the purpose of «experience» in realizing the act of consumption with their predominating subjective and emotional characteristics and the effects of the emphasis on the hedonic properties of the products. The emotions and desires of the people are satisfied with the consumption of products or services experienced in the social environment, and people have a unique and fun time with this experience. According to Holbrook et al. (1984), the focus of the consumption experience is to reveal intrinsically motivated hedonic entertainment. People have an exciting and fun time

with the consumption experience related to sports, games, and leisure activities. At the same time, with these actions, they interact with different people and expand their social environment. When dealing with the economic, sociological, psychological, and cultural perspectives developed for the consumption phenomenon with a holistic view, it is seen that symbolic and utilitarian goals are in the foreground in general. Emotions come to the fore in consumption behavior for symbolic purposes, and with this experience, people are provided with emotional satisfaction such as fun, pleasure, aesthetics, and excitement. With symbolic consumption, positive messages are conveyed to the social environment by using images and signs (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). In consumption action, where utilitarian goals are at the forefront, concrete, functional, and cognitive benefits with product ownership come to the fore and create a rational attraction (Ang and Lim, 2006). The concepts of «well-being» and «mental (psychological) well-being», in positive psychology are discussed in two ways that are hedonic (subjective) and eudemonic well-being (Diener, 1984; Ryan and Deci, 2001). During the examination of the concept's process formation, it is seen that the concepts are based on clinical and adult psychology theories and include humanistic values (Keyes et al., 2002). The hedonic approach, which is also called subjective well-being, is identified with the concept of happiness. It includes personal evaluations and consists of both general and positive impressions about life (Diener, 2000). Evaluation of the concept of subjective well-being is handled in two ways: namely, the emotional dimension expressing the positive and negative effects of individuals about their lives, and the cognitive dimension expressing the individual's satisfaction with various life areas. While in positive emotions, feelings such as joy, willingness, being energetic, trust and hope are at the forefront; in negative emotions, feelings such as sadness, fear, anger, and guilt are more intense (Myers and Diener, 1995). The eudemonic approach is described as accepting oneself as it is, developing good relationships with other people, making sense of life, being autonomous, benefiting from environmental opportunities, and supporting personal development (Ryff and Singer, 2008).

When the studies in the literature are examined, there are many scales to measure mental (psychological) well-being, such as the PANAS scale (Watson et al., 1988), Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985), Scale of Psychological Well-Being (Ryff and Keyes, 1995), Short Depression-Happiness Scale (Joseph et al., 2004), WHO Well-being Index (Bech, 2004). These scales measure either the hedonic or eudemonic dimension of mental well-being. Within the scope of this study, The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale was used to determine the mental well-being levels of individuals, which integrates well-being with its hedonic and eudemonic dimensions (Tennant et al., 2007). According to the «Conceptual Metaphor Theory» developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1999), conceptual metaphors match structures and relationships transferred from a field called source to a different field called target. To express the concept more clearly, the concept of metaphor means the explanation of a concept, fact or event by analogy with another concept, fact or event (Oxford et al., 1998). The basis of the metaphor concept is the explanation of an idea, through word/s or by analogy, by interpreting it according to other things' forms (Lakoff and Johnson, 2008; Palmer and Lundberg, 1995). According to Saban et al. (2006), establishing the relationship between two dissimilar ideas (phenomena) makes metaphor powerful as a mental model. Metaphors enable an individual's mind to move from one way of understanding to another and allow the individual to see a particular phenomenon as another phenomenon. For example, when an individual is asked about his thoughts about the concept of consumption, he makes a statement such as «consumption is like freedom» and compares the concept of consumption to the concept of freedom. Thus, a relationship between the two concepts of consumption and freedom is established. The individual can express his own opinion and thoughts without any restrictions and independently of any external influence with the metaphorical meaning that the individual attributes to the concept. Forceville (2002) mentioned that at least three basic elements should be in any metaphor relationship. These are «metaphor subject», «metaphor source», and «relationship between subject and source of metaphor». Again, to explain these three elements based on the metaphor of «consumption is like freedom», the word consumption here constitutes the metaphor's subject. The source

of metaphor is the word freedom. The relationship between the metaphor's subject and the source includes consumption attributes with the word freedom. In a way, «why is consumption like freedom?» is the answer to the question. The metaphor technique, which both practitioners and researchers highly prefer to reveal their perspectives on concepts, shows the reality in the minds of consumers shaped by their values, belief systems, and culture in certain ways (Smith and Eisenberg, 1987).

**Methodology and research methods.** Extraordinary periods, such as the pandemic, cause significant changes in individuals' feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. In addition to revealing individuals' perceptions and mental perspectives regarding consumption during the pandemic period, it is also important to investigate individuals' mental health, happiness level, and mental well-being, which expresses their satisfaction with life. This study aims to reveal individuals' perceptions regarding the concept of consumption through metaphors and examine the relationship between the perceptions revealed and their mental well-being. Within the framework of this general purpose, the following questions are sought:

1. What are the metaphors individuals have regarding the concept of consumption?
2. Is there a relationship between conceptual metaphors for individuals' consumption and mental well-being?
3. Do conceptual metaphors for the consumption and well-being of individuals differ in terms of gender and marital status?

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used in this study. The qualitative research method was used to reveal the perceptions about the concept of consumption. In this context, phenomenology was used. In addition, the content analysis technique, one of the qualitative research methods, was used to evaluate the data obtained. As a result of the content analysis for the concept of consumption, quantitative research methods were used to create conceptual metaphor categories, reveal the mental well-being of individuals, and examine the relationship between metaphor categories and mental well-being. In this context, SPSS 24 and AMOS 24 package programs were used in the analysis.

This research was carried out in Turkey. Due to the pandemic, the research was carried out with an «online form» created via «Google forms». Participants of the study consist of 18 years old or older and volunteer to participate in the study. The convenience sampling method has been adopted. The research form applied to the participants gave information about the research purpose, metaphor, and mental well-being. It was carried out with the participants in a wide time frame, in a single session, without time limitation. The research form consists of 3 parts in total. In the first part, there are questions about the gender and marital status of the participants. The second part of the research form includes expressions about mental well-being. In this study, the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS) developed by Tennant et al. (2007) was used to measure the mental well-being of individuals. This scale consists of 14 positive items covering both hedonic and eudemonic dimensions of well-being. A 5-point Likert scale was used to determine the level of participation of individuals in the statements in the scale (1: I do not agree at all... 5: I totally agree). In the third part of the research form, a semi-structured interview form using the metaphor technique was included to reveal individuals' perceptions and mental perspectives regarding the phenomenon of «consumption». In this section, the form included the sentences «consumption is like..... because ...». The participants were asked to fill in the blanks in this sentence. In metaphor studies, the concept of like is generally used to more clearly evoke similarity between the metaphor topic (consumption concept) and the source domain (the first blank to be filled). In this sentence, the first blank filled gives the metaphorical expression developed by the participants for the concept of «consumption». The blank after because contains the reason or the logical basis of the metaphorical expression that the participants created by analogy (Saban et al., 2006).

A process consisting of 5 stages was followed in analyzing the metaphors for the concept of «consumption» (Saban et al., 2006; Saban, 2009).

1. Coding and Extraction Stage: At this stage, firstly, a total of 435 questionnaires were listed in the computer environment. Forms were analyzed regarding the metaphor's subject and source and their relationship. A total of 435 participants were subjected to evaluation.

Although there were no quotas for the forms evaluated, the numbers were close to each other, especially in the distribution by gender. 224 (51.5%) of the participants are men, and 211 (48.5%) are women.

2. Sample Metaphor Image Compilation Stage: At this stage, the metaphors developed by each participant for the consumption concept in the form were coded (for example, love, bread, sugar, etc.). In total, 435 metaphor images were obtained. By analyzing the common and different aspects of all the metaphors obtained, metaphors were divided into groups by their similarities. Thus, the «sample metaphor list» that best represents these metaphors was created. This list serves two main purposes: (a) to use metaphors as a reference source for collecting them under a certain category and (b) to validate the data analysis process and interpretations of this research (Saban et al., 2006; Saban, 2009).

3. Category Development Stage: In a total of 435 forms that were evaluated, the metaphors developed for the consumption phenomenon were grouped under conceptual categories in terms of their common features. This stage, while creating the categories, provides an analysis of the metaphor's subject (the concept of consumption) and source (how consumption is metaphorized) and their relationship based on the «sample metaphor list». As a result, 3 conceptual categories for consumption were created (Table 1). Table 2 shows the distribution of conceptual metaphor categories by gender.

**Table 1. Distribution of metaphor by conceptual categories**

Conceptual Categories of Metaphors	Frequency	%
For pleasure, insatiability, vanity	171	39.3
As necessity and requirement	156	35.9
Addictive and harmful	108	24.8
Total	435	100

Sources: developed by the author.

**Table 2. Distribution of conceptual metaphor categories by gender**

Conceptual Categories of Metaphors	Female		Male		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
For pleasure, insatiability, vanity	96	56.14	75	43.85	171	100
As necessity and requirement	68	43.58	88	56.42	156	100
Addictive and harmful	47	43.51	61	56.49	108	100
Total	211	48.51	224	51.49	435	100

Sources: developed by the author.

4. Ensuring Validity and Reliability Stage: Ensuring validity in metaphor studies needs an open data definition process (Creed and Nacey, 2020). According to Capelli and Jolibert (2009), validity requires the analysis (1) of the concept source and assumptions, (2) the appropriateness of the metaphor by focusing on the concepts discussed, and (3) the metaphor generation process. Thus, the data analysis process should be explained in detail (Hruschka et al., 2004). In turn, collected metaphors should be shared (Saban et al., 2006; Saban, 2009). In this study, the process of analyzing the data was shared in detail (under the title of Data analysis process). A sample metaphor image that represents it best was developed for each of the 435 metaphors obtained as a result of the research, and some were shared in the «results» part (Table 2-4). In these conceptual categories, metaphors with a frequency of 5 or less could not be shared.

In ensuring the reliability of the study, the «expert opinion» criterion was considered. In this context, two lists of 435 metaphors and 3 conceptual category names were given to three independent

academicians working in marketing. Then, matches of researchers were compared with the forms distributed to 3 experts independently. In these comparisons, the number of consensus and disagreements was determined. The (internal) reliability of the study was calculated. The formula «Reliability = Consensus / (Consensus + Disagreement)» developed by Miles and Huberman was used in this calculation. If the value calculated is 90% and above, reliability is achieved (Miles and Huberman, 1994). In this study, the first expert distributed 16 metaphor images in different categories, and the reliability rate was found to be 96% ( $419/(419+16)=0.96$ ). The second expert distributed different categories of 29 metaphors from the researcher, and the rate was calculated as 93%. ( $406/(406+29)=0.93$ ). Finally, with the 3rd expert's opinion, 33 metaphor images were included in different categories, and the reliability was found to be 92% ( $402/(402+33)=0.92$ ). These results indicate that the research's internal consistency and reliability have been ensured.

5. Transfer Data to SPSS Package Program for Quantitative Data Analysis: The data were analyzed using the SPSS package program for the evaluation within the scope of research.

Before analyzing the «mental well-being» variable, the validity and reliability of the scale were tested. The «mental well-being» scale was subjected to confirmatory factor analysis for psychometric evaluation in terms of internal consistency, reliability, and convergent validity. The standardized regression coefficients of the scale expressions took values between 0.440 and 0.716. The Cronbach Alpha value of the scale was 0.89, the composite reliability (CR) value was 0.90, and the average variance extracted (AVE) value was 0.40. Within the scope of convergent validity, it is seen that the AVE value is below 0.50, and values slightly below 0.50 are also accepted (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Also, the fact that the scale expressions have significant loadings shows that convergent validity is ensured (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Fornell and Larcker, 1981). CR value was examined for internal consistency reliability. This value is 0.90 ( $> .60$ ) showed that the internal consistency reliability of the scale was ensured (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988).

**Results.** This section shares the distribution of the developed metaphors according to conceptual categories. Due to the high number of metaphors per conceptual category, only the metaphors with the highest frequency were shared.

Category 1: consumption for pleasure, insatiability, vanity purposes. The expressions developed in this category emphasize the phrases such as «I consume, therefore I am», «you are as much as you consume», that is, the transformation of consumption into an activity that drags and even captures people beyond need. Table 3 lists the metaphors with the highest frequency developed in this category.

**Table 3. Category of consumption for pleasure, insatiability, and vanity purposes**

Metaphor Name	f
Love	17
Automobile	14
Lady Bag	13
Chocolate	7

Sources: developed by the author.

In metaphors with the highest frequency, the dimensions of consumption's pleasure and dissatisfaction come to the fore. «Love» and «Chocolate» have been associated with pleasure and insatiability, «Automobile» and «Bag» with the symbolic value of products. 56.14% of the metaphors in this category (in Table 2) were developed by female participants. It is thought that the different interpretations of women than men in explaining the concept of consumption are effective in this result. «Love», «lady bag» and «chocolate» are the metaphors developed by the female participants.

Category 2: consumption as necessity and requirement. When the metaphors developed by the participants in this category were examined together with their logical basis, it was seen that they

developed concepts that highlight the functional dimension of consumption. The functional dimension is defined as «goal-oriented consumption» based on the desire to meet a basic need or to fulfill a functional task (Babin et al., 1994). Consumers make their evaluations cognitively and functionally (Ryu et al., 2010). Table 4 presents the metaphors with the highest frequency developed in this category.

**Table 4. Consumption category as necessity and requirement**

Metaphor Name	f
Water	23
Bread	18
Medicine	11
Food	9

Sources: developed by the author.

This category in which metaphors emphasizing the dimension of meeting the basic need of consumption are collected was mostly developed by men (56.42%) (Table 2). These metaphors have been identified as high metaphors because of «water», «bread» and «food», which are necessary for the continuation of life, and «medicine» for its healing properties.

Category 3: consumption as addictive and harmful. Analysis of the metaphors developed by the participants in this category and their logical basis showed that they developed concepts that highlight the addictive and damaging dimension of consumption. Consumption addiction, which could be defined as the desire to lose the object's attractiveness and replace it with a new one, is accepted as an impulsive addiction. The metaphors in this section, developed more intensely by men (56.49%) (Table 2), are explained with concepts that prioritize consumption's addictive and harmful dimensions. Table 5 presents the metaphors with the highest frequency developed in this category.

**Table 5. Consumption category as addictive and harmful**

Metaphor Name	f
Drug	13
Sugar	9
Blackhole	7
Alcohol	6

Sources: developed by the author.

The findings showed that the consumption's «need» limit could not be controlled. Later, it was assumed into an «addictive» norm. The reason why this conceptual category has a frequency above the expectation is thought to be effective as the period in which the research was conducted (the quarantine period) was the period when the concept of consumption was being questioned.

The well-being level of the participants of the study was evaluated according to the Mental Well-being scale. All 14 statements in the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale used to be evaluated are positive, allowing for average-based interpretations. If «I totally agree» option is chosen for all the expressions on the scale, the maximum score is «70». The mental well-being levels of the participants were evaluated with the «70» figure. It is evaluated as «positive» if they are closer to «70» and as «negative» if they are further from «70». In this study, the mental well-being average of all participants was calculated as 53.46.

Under the consideration of the conceptual categories created from the developed metaphors, the view of consumption could be evaluated in two main categories as «positive» and «negative». While the categories of «necessity and requirement» and «pleasure, insatiability and vanity», which express functional benefit and symbolic benefit from a consumer benefit perspective, are considered «positive», «addictive and harmful» – «negative». Based on this basic distinction, the well-being averages of the



participants who attribute positive meanings to consumption are above the general average, while the well-being averages of the participants who attribute negative meanings to consumption are below the general average (Table 6). Table 6 shows if conceptual categories and gender are evaluated together, «females» have a well-being average below the general average in categories other than the «necessity and requirement» category. On the other hand, males have a well-being average above the general average (53.46) in all conceptual categories. Especially in the «addictive and harmful» category, which could be evaluated as «negative», the difference between the two genders is at a maximum level.

**Table 6. Distribution of well-being averages by gender and metaphor category**

Metaphor Categories	Well-being Averages of Female	Well-being Averages of Male	General Average
	For pleasure, insatiability, vanity	52.85	
As necessity and requirement	53.68	53.51	53.58
Addictive and harmful	50.06	55.25	52.85
			53.46

Sources: developed by the author.

The conceptual category of «necessity and requirement», in which the metaphors that define consumption as the necessity of life and emphasize the functional benefit of consumption are clustered, is the only category where the average well-being (53.68; 53.51) of both genders are closest to each other. It is the only category in which both groups are above the general well-being average. Also, only in this category the average well-being of women (53.68) is higher than the average of men (53.51). Table 7 shows the difference between the two genders when the gender-marital status differences in conceptual metaphor categories are examined. When the conceptual metaphors are compared with gender and marital status, the difference between males (mean the difference between single men and married men) (3.85) is more than the difference between females (mean the difference between single women and married women) (2.73).

**Table 7. Distribution of well-being averages by gender-marital status and metaphor category**

Metaphor Categories	Female Well-being average			Male Well-being average		
	Single	Married	Difference	Single	Married	Difference
For pleasure, insatiability, vanity	52.62	54.48	1.86	52.32	56.15	3.83
As necessity and requirement	52.47	57.11	4.64	53.47	53.56	0.09
Addictive and harmful	49.64	51.23	1.59	50.04	59.21	9.17

Sources: developed by the author.

In the category of «necessity and requirement», emphasizing the functional dimension of consumption, the difference between females (mean the difference between single women and married women) is the highest (4.64) level detected for females in all categories. Among all-female groups, the group with the highest average well-being (married-woman: 57.11) is included in this category. The difference between males in the same category (mean the difference between single men and married men) is the lowest (0.09) difference among all categories.

In the «addictive and harmful» conceptual category, where negative approaches to the concept of consumption are clustered, the decomposition and difference are higher than in the other categories. In this category, especially the difference between males (single-male versus married-male well-being mean difference) is the highest (9.17) figure detected in all groups. The married-men group has the highest

average (59.21) among all groups in terms of well-being. At the same time, the group with the lowest average well-being (50.04) among male groups (single-men) is also included in this category. The difference between females (mean the difference between the well-being of single-woman and married-woman) is the lowest (1.59) number detected among female groups. This category has the lowest average well-being (49.64; 51.23) among female groups. The category of «pleasure, insatiability, and vanity», where metaphors related to the symbolic utility dimension of the consumption concept are clustered, is the category with the least difference between the groups (male and female).

**Conclusions.** This research was carried out to reveal the metaphors individuals have regarding the concept of consumption, collect these metaphors (in terms of their common characteristics) under certain conceptual categories, and examine the relationship between “well-being” levels of individuals and the metaphors they developed. Although consumption is defined as the use of goods and services to meet human needs, today, the concept is formed by the influence of many factors such as psychological, social, economic, and personal. Metaphors containing many mental perspectives are needed to explain this passive concept as a whole. Moreover, suppose the effort to explain this phenomenon as a whole is carried out during the pandemic that directly affects lives worldwide. In that case, much more mental perspectives, namely metaphors, will be needed. The questions developed during the design process of the research are discussed below. It is evaluated in consideration of the findings. The evaluation of the first question allowed obtaining the following results to determine the metaphors from individuals about the concept of consumption. These metaphors were categorized in terms of common features:

- 435 metaphors developed and evaluated concerning the concept of consumption are grouped into three conceptual categories: «pleasure, insatiability and vanity», «necessity and requirement», and «addictive and harmful». In the process of distributing metaphors into conceptual categories, the strategy of «consensus/disagreement of experts» was used to ensure (internal) reliability.

The conceptual category of “necessity and requirement”, in which the metaphors that define consumption as the necessity of life and emphasize the “functional benefit” of consumption, have been the most developed metaphor category. The relationship between the conceptual metaphors for consumption and the mental well-being of the individuals, which is the second question of the study, was compared by taking the average well-being as data. Based on the results obtained, the following inferences could be made:

- According to the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale used to determine the participants' mental well-being, the participants' overall «well-being» average was 53.46. The findings of this research show similarities with the findings of previous studies carried out in Turkey with the use of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (Demir et al., 2018; Gönener et al., 2017; Özgüneş et al., 2019). In these studies, the well-being averages of the participants ranged from 45 to 56.

- In the conceptual category of «addictive and harmful», a result (52.85) below the general well-being average (53.46) was obtained. In other words, the mental well-being average of the participants who do not define consumption with negative concepts is lower than the well-being average of the participants who define consumption with positive concepts.

- Among the metaphor categories, it belongs to the conceptual category of «pleasure, insatiability, and vanity», with the highest average of well-being (53.73). Participants who make sense of the consumption concept with «positive» concepts have higher mental well-being averages.

With the last research question about the difference between conceptual metaphors for consumption and the well-being of individuals in terms of gender and marital status, the following statements could be made:

- The distribution of the findings by gender was also similar to the findings of previous research, and the well-being average of males was higher than females. In this study, different from previous studies,

their «marital status» was also examined. The «well-being average» of the married was higher than the singles.

- Singles have the lowest average well-being in the «addictive and harmful» category.
- In both gender groups and all metaphor categories, the well-being average of married people is higher than that of single people. In other words, regardless of the «positive» or «negative» meanings of consumption, the married's mental well-being average was higher than the mental well-being average of the singles.

Given these, the following inferences could be made:

- In an extraordinary period, such as the pandemic, the mental well-being average of individuals «who are together» and «who share life» is higher.
- Considering that the concept of consumption concerns the whole of life, the mental well-being of those who view life positively and define consumption with positive concepts is higher.

The theoretical contribution of this study is that it puts forward the concept of «consumption» with a wide mental perspective like metaphor technique, in a general quarantine process experienced in the world, albeit at different levels in almost every country, and in a period when «market shelves are emptied». Another theoretical contribution is the association of interpretations of the concept of consumption with mental well-being. World Values Survey, conducted in about 100 countries since 1981, under the direction of Ronald F. Inglehart, tries to identify the cultural values and political tendencies of different societies. In the 7th wave of this research (period of 2017-2020) 22.3 percent of the society in Turkey was determined as «very happy» and 62.7 percent of the population as «happy» (Haerpfer et al., 2022). Both the World Values Survey results and the relatively high «well-being» average obtained in this research reveal that people are generally happy with life in Turkey despite the economic, political, and regional issues. Despite the pandemic process, it is thought that the «habituation» developed in the «crisis» and «extraordinary» periods in the society and the «defense mechanism developed for values» are effective in the relatively high average well-being. In World Values Survey's 6th wave (2010-2014) set, family is the most important value with 95.4 percent for Turkish society (Inglehart et al., 2014), while in the 7th wave (2017-2020) set, it still remains as the most important value with 91.8 percent (Haerpfer et al., 2022). In this study, the well-being average of married people being higher than single people in all conceptual categories could be interpreted as a result of the high value given to the concept of family in Turkish society. Future studies can be carried out comparatively with different cultures by taking different criteria such as age.

The study's findings regarding the mental well-being average of the group that defines consumption as «positive» is high are also supported by the findings of a study conducted by Ayhan et al. (2021) in Turkey. Hedonic consumption behavior: consumers who see shopping as an action that gives pleasure and happiness feel better mentally after shopping. After hedonic consumption behavior, which emphasizes pleasure and enjoyment in consumption processes, is expected to contribute to consumers positively.

Implications for practitioners. In addition to contributing to the literature, this study also benefits marketing practitioners and social researchers. The research findings of the high average mental well-being of the group that defines consumption as «positive» may guide marketing practitioners in positioning strategies to be followed regarding the product and service. Among the metaphors developed regarding the concept of consumption, the metaphor of «love» in the category of «means of pleasure, insatiability, and vanity» has the highest frequency after the «water» metaphor in the «necessity and requirement» category. This result concludes that «emotional» factors are important in positioning products and services, which is a useful finding. Another result of this research is that married people's interpretations of consumption are more «positive» than single people. Marketing practitioners can use this result in determining the «target market» for their products and services. The target audience evaluating consumption as «positive» could be «persuaded» more easily and at a lower cost based on the data.

Practitioners could benefit from this result in determining advertising strategies. The results of this study yield useful results not only for marketing practitioners but also for policymakers and social researchers.

The finding of this study that shows living «together» positively affects mental well-being when a health-oriented external shock is experienced may also guide suggestions to be developed in extraordinary periods to be encountered in the future. This study shows that «metaphorical analysis» could be used even to make sense of an abstract concept such as consumption and offers a wide mental perspective. It could also be used in the positioning processes of products and services.

It is important that the research was carried out only in Turkey. It should be accepted that Turkey's socio-economic and cultural structure would influence the results. Future research can be applied in different cultures using the same techniques, thus eliminating the constraint due to being conducted in only one culture. The timing of the study, especially the «pandemic» period, is an important detail that should be considered in inferences. The study was conducted in the first wave of a health-centered external shock. There may be changes in human behavior with this health-centered shock. This situation should be taken into account in the evaluation of the results. In turn, the same study could be repeated in the continuing wavelengths of external shock and aftershock. It could be seen whether the findings obtained in the study are «instantaneous» or «a tendency».

Factors such as personality traits, different demographic features, ethnic origin, and cultural codes that will affect the relationship between the interpretation of the concept of consumption and mental well-being can be added to the study. In particular, income and education levels, and religious tendencies can be effective in the relationship between the two concepts. It can be included by using one or more of these factors in future studies. This study examined the relationship between the meaning attributed only to the concept of consumption and mental well-being. The results of this relationship could not be included. Whether this relationship turns into purchasing, intention or behavior could be examined in future studies.

In addition, the mental well-being of participants was measured with a single questionnaire (Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale). Mental well-being can be measured with multiple scales and different techniques.

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### **Зв'язок між метафоричними сприйняттями споживання та психічним самопочуттям у період COVID-19**

У статті визначено сутність та трансформацію сприйняття суспільством концепції споживання під час пандемії COVID-19. Для аналізу концепції споживання автором використано метафори, які є важливим макркетинговим комунікаційним інструментом при визначенні та інтерпретації дефініції. Метою дослідження є визначення зв'язку між споживанням та психічним самопочуттям споживачів під час пандемії. Теоретичний внесок та актуальність даної статті полягає у намаганні інтерпретувати концепцію споживання у свідомості людей під час пандемії. Оригінальність дослідження полягає у спробі виявити взаємозв'язки між інтерпретаціями феномену споживання та психічним самопочуттям населення. Для метафоричної інтерпретації використано теорію концептуальної метафори, розроблену Лакоффом і Джонсоном у 1999 році. Автором наголошено, що метафоричний підхід є одним з альтернативних, який заснований на суб'єктивному досвіді, що дозволяє ідентифікувати та осмислити конкретні, широковживані та абстрактні поняття, а також символи чи елементи, які є складнішими для розуміння та сприйняття. Для визначення рівня психічного самопочуття споживачів застосовано шкалу психічного самопочуття Уорвіка-Едінбурга (Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale, WEMWBS). Усі метафори (розроблені та оцінені відносно концепції споживання) згруповано в три концептуальні категорії: «задоволення, ненаситність та марнославство», «необхідність і потреба», а також «звикання та шкідливість». Отримані результати засвідчили, що середній рівень психічного самопочуття всіх учасників оцінюється на рівні 53,46. У статті автором визначено, що за концептуальними категоріями, найнижчий рівень психологічного самопочуття виявлено у категорії «звикання та шкідливість». Автором встановлено, що учасники, які інтерпретували поняття споживання як «негативне», мали низький рівень психічного самопочуття.

**Ключові слова:** концептуальна метафора, споживання, COVID-19, психічне самопочуття, Туреччина.