

# Designing the Model of Factors Affecting Consumer Pessimism with a Meta Synthesis Approach

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## Abstract

Now that in the global economy, customers determine the survival of the company, companies can no longer be indifferent to the expectations and demands of customers. However, consumer pessimism is a growing phenomenon that has negative consequences for both companies and consumers. Therefore, the current research seeks to find the answer to the question, what factors affect consumer pessimism? For this purpose, the hybridization method has been used. In this research, 540 authentic scientific texts in English were identified and extracted between 2000-2022 and 60 research titles were used using the Critical Assessment Skills (CAPS) method. To analyze the research literature, a systematic review (meta-synthesis) method was used. After reading and extracting the text, the key codes were extracted and clustered with Maxqda software and arranged in the form of concepts and components. The findings of the research showed that the main factors affecting consumer pessimism include 18 main factors and 117 core categories. The main factors affecting consumer cynicism are: demographic factors, personality factors, cultural factors, social concerns, bitter experience with the company, risks affecting consumer cynicism, perceived injustice, the negative burden of individual emotions, mental and psychological disorders, deceptive company behaviors, Unethical behaviors of the company, incorrect performance of the company, advertising factors, pessimistic social attitude, negative view of the company, attention to the environment, customer behavioral characteristics, customer bargaining power.

**Keywords:** Consumer behavior, Pessimism, Customer, Dissatisfaction, Meta synthesis

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## Introduction

In the last two decades, specialists and experts have become aware of the impact of emotions to better understand customer behavior (1). Today, the importance of consumer behavior in various economic, social and cultural industries and fields is not hidden from anyone

(2). A deep understanding of consumer behavior is also unlikely without knowing the factors affecting his behavior (3). Therefore, in order to understand consumer's behavioral intentions, it is necessary to know the factors that affect the intensity of the desire to perform the behavior (4). Therefore, the act of buying cannot be



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considered a completely rational act; Because the customer's emotions play a prominent role and the emotional-emotional consumer is looking for emotional motivations during his purchase and consumption experience (5). And these feelings may manifest as pessimism in the customer (6). Customer pessimism reflects the belief that companies have little honesty in dealing with their customers (7). Customers often feel dissatisfied and dissatisfied when dealing with companies and try to express their feelings against companies and businesses (8). In marketing, skepticism studies focus on related constructs such as skepticism in causal marketing, and mistrust in advertising communications (9). By reviewing the pessimism literature, the basic idea in most studies and fields is that "pessimism is a negative attitude that can be broad or specific in terms of focus and centrality and has cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions" (10). Pessimism is commonly associated with suspicion, skepticism, doubt and mistrust of the agent's stimuli, as well as a reaction of dissatisfaction, alienation, and resistance or even hostility towards the agent (9). Researchers state that consumer cynicism is a condition for interpreting and reacting to situations by the consumer that seems to fit with the person's personality perception (7). Consumer cynicism is often considered as a psychological defense tool against persuasive efforts due to persistent doubt and suspicion of the messages and intentions of brands and retailers (8). As a psychological tool, this type of pessimism is used to resist marketing techniques. Of course, the definition of pessimism is not limited to the psychological point of view (11). In fact, pessimism is a powerful tool of pessimists and helps the consumer to reveal the hidden aspects and truths of marketing (12). and see the manipulations and abuses behind persuasive efforts; Therefore, customers can behave in ways that challenge marketing theories such as satisfaction and loyalty (13). For example, when there are attractive options in the market, satisfied customers may change their supplier due to regretting their previous decisions (14). Also, other factors may play a role in this field, such as the brand image of the options available in the market, customer commitment and trust, concern, and social norms. This also applies to unsatisfied customers, and in contrast to the above, some customers still turn to their suppliers if they are not satisfied. This may

happen due to the high cost of switching suppliers, or the lack of better options, and customers may turn to the previous supplier and remain loyal. It seems that such situations are many in real life (13), the fact is that when customers behave in this way, they weaken the power of predicting and detecting customer satisfaction and challenge loyalty theory and marketing activities (12). This is why it is very important to know customers and their mental states. It has been proven that the cost of acquiring a new customer is much higher than the cost of loyal customers. Also, an unsatisfied customer will take anti-advertisement measures against the product brand and company and transfer his dissatisfaction to a large number of other customers; Therefore, it is very important for companies and marketing managers to know and study the factors affecting pessimism (8).

The consequences of consumer pessimism have been confirmed in various studies; But there is no research that designs and presents a comprehensive and integrated model for this concept in the market based on the opinions of consumers. Therefore, the present study was formed with the aim of designing a model of factors affecting consumer pessimism with a meta synthesis approach.

## Research Methodology

With the aim of identifying the effective factors on consumer pessimism, this research examines the existing articles in the field of consumer behavior and attitudes and behavioral factors of consumer pessimism, and extracts the effective factors from related articles. The statistical population of the research is valid and related articles between the years 2000 and 2022. Therefore, the approach of this research is qualitative. The current research is considered practical in terms of its purpose; Because the results can be used in organizations.

## Findings

First step: Setting the research question

The first step in any research is to ask a question or a goal. In this article, the factors affecting consumer pessimism are identified. In the next step, the question of "who" should be determined, the society under investigation. In this research, foreign databases and reliable

journals (Science Direct, Emerald, Springer, IEEE, Taylor & Francis, Wiley) that have investigated factors affecting pessimism are examined. In the next step, the question "when" defines the time frame of the reviewed articles. In this research, foreign studies are examined in the period from 2000 AD to 2022. The last question is the "how" question, which refers to the method used to collect research data. In order to collect data, researches conducted with scientific methods (qualitative, quantitative and mixed) have been used in the field of consumer behavior and consumer attitudes. According to the above, the research question for the next steps of meta synthesis is as follows:

What are the factors affecting consumer pessimism?  
How can the identified effective factors of consumer pessimism be grouped?

Second step: systematic literature review

At this stage, a systematic search of studies published in journals and various databases is done. The key words related to the research are mentioned below:

Consumer behavior, Consumer post-purchase behaviors, consumer cynicism, Factors affecting consumer cynicism, Consumer dissatisfaction.

The third step: searching and choosing suitable articles:

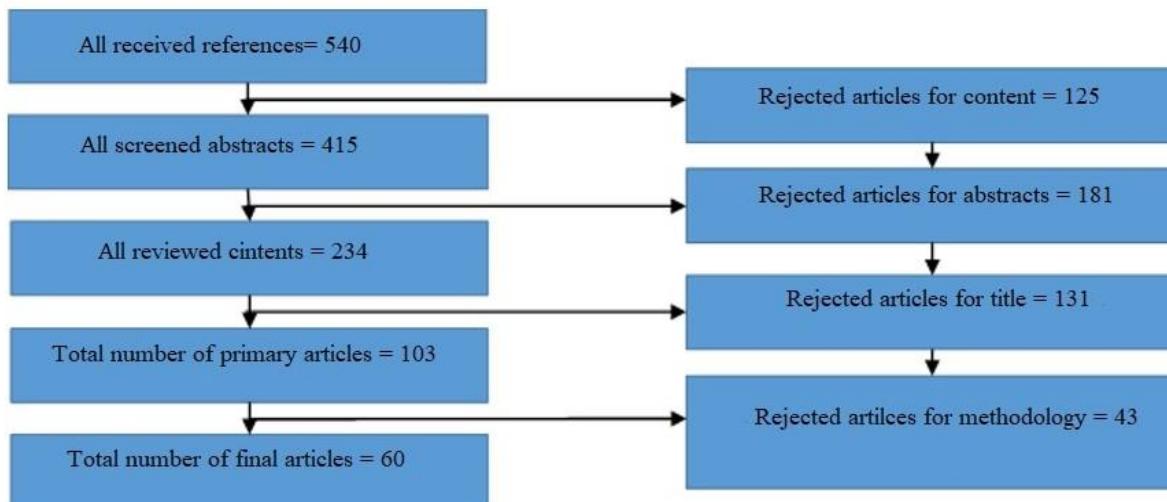
The purpose of this stage of research is to remove articles and books that do not trust the findings presented in them; Therefore, at this stage, the entry and exit criteria of the articles were determined as follows.

Kind of studies: All scientific-research and conference articles in English (due to the high quality of the articles) in the field of customer knowledge sharing in brand online communities

Methodology of studies: Articles that have investigated the subject with scientific methods (qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods).

Scope of studies: Consumer behavior, Consumer post-purchase behaviors, consumer cynicism, Factors affecting consumer cynicism, Consumer dissatisfaction

In the figure below, the process of refinement and review, according to the mentioned entry and exit criteria, is briefly presented



**Figure 1: Chart of the process of searching and selecting articles**

The fourth step: extracting the results of the studies  
The extraction of research findings, the information of the articles, is classified based on the reference of each article, including the name and surname of the researcher or researchers, the year of publication, and

the coordination components expressed in each article. In this stage, the final articles were studied by content analysis method. The results obtained from this stage are shown in the table below.

**Table 1: Factors affecting consumer pessimism extracted from selected sources**

Authors	Reference	Recognized variables
Mowen and Spears	15	Social pessimism, negative feeling towards the company, compulsive buying, need for recognition, lifestyle, social status, personality
Abraham	16	Negative social activism, social pessimism, social worries and concerns, social isolation, hostile attitude towards society, mistrust in relationships, mobilization of negative emotions.
Koslow	17	Seductive advertising, advertising skepticism, violated expectations, rumours
Eaton	18	failure in goals, educational failure, inferiority complex, self-inhibition, projection, negative emotions, obsessions and obsessive-compulsive disorders and neurosis, doubts, destructive conflicts, lack of motivation to progress, unsatisfied extreme needs, high-level needs
Barone et al	19	From the consumer's alienation, feelings of disappointment and frustration, mental anxiety
Liu et al	20	Failure to investigate customer complaints, poor company performance
Özkalp & Kirel	10	Machiavellian personality, Soda personality, people with negative attitude, sense of loss in the deal
Zavestoski	21	Lack of trust in the company, pessimism about the company's marketing, seductive advertising, skepticism
Baumeister	22	The consumer's feeling of dissatisfaction with the purchase
Holt	23	Disrespect, skepticism
Forehand and Grier	24	Perceived discrimination, advertising skepticism
Bougie et al	25	Understanding the utilitarian behavior of the company, dissatisfaction with unfulfilled expectations by the company
Vitell	26	Dishonesty, irresponsibility of the company
Helm	27	Lack of trust in the company, irresponsible behavior of the company, pessimism of the company's marketing, Machiavellian marketing, violation of psychological contracts, dishonesty, false promises, providing false information, dissatisfaction with unmet expectations by the company, need for recognition, mistrust in relationships
Wanous et al	28	Mistrust in company advertising, mistrust in relationships, company violations
De Pelsmacker et al	29	Perceived unfairness, negative view of business and trade, lack of fair trade by the company
Rotfeld	30	Pessimism about the company's marketing, defects in the product and quality
Stanley et al	31	Suspicion, dissatisfaction with unfulfilled expectations by the company



Helm	32	Negative social activism, social pessimism, negative attitude of the individual, irresponsible behavior of the company, pessimism of the company's marketing, creating a false image, defects in the product and quality, seductive advertisements, advertisements with emotional games, uninformed and merely attractive advertisements, irrational claims
Bosu and Main	33	The feeling of consumer dissatisfaction with the purchase, high level expectations, lack of response of the company to the society
Roux	34	Fear of the deal, lack of trust in the company, pessimism about the company's marketing, dishonesty, distrust in the company's advertising, seductive advertising, merely attractive advertising, advertising skepticism, belief in deception and manipulation, ineffective advertising, lack of trust in others
Darke and Ritche	35	Negative feeling towards the company, not trusting the companies, perceived moral inequality, disapproval of moral norms, irresponsible behavior of the company, violation of psychological contracts, unethical behavior of the company, dishonesty, negative reputation, mistrust of the company's advertising, seductive advertising, merely attractive advertising, advertising skepticism, belief in deception and manipulation, ineffective advertising
Brown and Cregan	36	Violated expectations, value mismatch, poor service delivery
Lee et al	37	Imbalance of customer power, negative experience of the brand, lack of responsibility of the company, poor performance of the company, negative experience of the company's products and services, lack of expected quality, mismatch of values
Grzeskowiak and Al-Khatib	38	False promise, providing false information, belief in deception and manipulation, perceived brand risk, negative attitude towards the company
Crotty and Thompson	39	Post-purchase regret, the consumer's feeling of dissatisfaction with the purchase
Lymeropoulos et al	40	Feeling of loss in the transaction, perceived injustice, negative social activism, negative attitude towards the company, pessimism towards the company's marketing, Machiavellian marketing.
Patterson and Baron	41	Dissatisfaction with unfulfilled expectations by the company, rumour, cultural factors, negative brand experience, consumer dissatisfaction with the purchase.
Gilani et al	42	Machiavellian marketing, incompatibility of goals, incompatibility of values, lack of proper knowledge of customers about the company and product, negative view of business and trade, customer's unimportance in targeting companies, lack of fair trade by the company, anti-capitalist view, negative feeling towards the company, lack of trust in the company
Bashir	43	Violation of psychological contracts, age, perceived discrimination, fear of trade and trade
Vive	44	Negative emotional state, disrespect, suspicion, skepticism, perception of people's utilitarianism, difference between individual and collective values.
Luke and Hyde	45	Perceived moral inequity, mental distress
Albayrak et al	46	Unethical behavior of the company, dishonesty, skepticism
Lindenmeier et al	47	Company violations, unethical company behaviors, poor service, negative experience of company products and services

Chiaburu	48	Negative experience of the brand, violation of the law by the company, age, gender, personality, education,
Leonidou et al	49	Unethical behavior of the company, cultural factors, urban culture, collectivist personality, education
Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi	50	Irresponsible corporate behavior, corporate violations, perceived brand risk
Rafi et al	51	Moral beliefs, negative emotional state, need for recognition, personality pessimism, suspicion, mental anxiety
Ert et al	52	Fear of transaction, negative view of business and trade, perceived discrimination, negative feeling towards the company, perception of the utilitarian behavior of the company
Helm et al	6	Lack of profit perceived in the purchase (feeling of loss), negative attitude towards the company, lack of trust in the company, violation of the law by the company, unethical behavior of the company, cultural factors, age, gender, suspicion
Maziriri and Madinga	53	Regret after purchase, lack of education, lack of motivation to progress, high level expectations, financial risk
Guven	54	Negative brand experience, negative attitude towards the company, irresponsible behavior of the company, violation of psychological contracts, hostile attitude towards society, hostile attitude towards internal culture, hostile attitude towards people
Aydin and Unal	55	Brand perceived risk, regret after purchase, social risk, psychological risk, physical risk, functional risk, financial risk, time risk
Ketron	56	Dishonesty, belief in manipulation and deception
Indibara	57	Negative experience of the brand, negative attitude towards the company, lack of trust in the company, negative feelings, pessimism, negative personality, doubt, personality and prestige, attention to the environment
Mouralia et al	58	Incompatibility of goals, incompatibility of values, regret after purchase
Akguç Çetinkaya & Emine Ceng	59	Social cynicism, perceived moral inequity, lack of expected quality, violated expectations, value mismatch, high level expectations, suspicion, difference between individual and collective values
Swalwell	60	Lack of trust in the company, lack of confirmation of ethical norms, negative reputation, perceived imbalance in the purchasing process
Balaji et al	61	Perceived moral inequality, mobilization of negative emotions
Vahedi Moakhar et al	62	Sense of responsibility, environmental pollution, customer reversibility, number of customer purchase options, customer service, customer self-confidence, social comparison, perfectionism, customer mindset, customer negativity or optimism
Göktaş	63	Belief in deception and manipulation, value mismatch, consumer alienation, gender, self-confidence level, education
Li et al	64	Negative customer experience, customer mistreatment, service quality
Muncy and Iyer	3	Social pessimism or optimism, attitude towards consumption, way of intellectual development, customer mentality
Sadiq et al	65	Consumer cynicism, product consumption, quality of products and services, social responsibility of the company towards the customer and society, attention to green shopping
Akçay & Özdemir	66	Unethical sales behaviors, education, gender, age, income
Liu et al	20	Demographic characteristics (age, gender, education, occupation), extraversion, neuroticism, emotional states of the person,

		ability to regulate emotions, personal autonomy, job autonomy, perceived social support, client's social stressors, culture
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The fifth step: analysis and qualitative synthesis  
 The purpose of meta synthesis is to create a unified and new interpretation of the findings. At this stage, the components extracted from past studies are categorized by the researcher and systematically placed next to each other. For this purpose, first all the factors extracted from the studies were considered open code. Then, considering the meaning of each of the mentioned codes, it was categorized in a similar concept. In this way, the concepts (themes) of the research were formed.

The sixth stage: quality control of the research

**Table 2: Summary of Cohen's Kappa coefficient calculations**

	Valid code		Lost		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
	Responder 1	18	100	0	0	18

**Table 3: Final results of Kappa test**

	Value	Approximate standard error	Approximate T <sup>b</sup>	Approximate significance
Coefficient Kappa	0.679	0.170	3.276	0.001
Valid cases	18			

The seventh step: presenting the results

After performing the meta synthesis steps; The conceptual model of factors affecting consumer pessimism was obtained in two layers (factors and concepts). The obtained model can be seen in Table 4.

**Table 4: Identifying the categories of identified factors and concepts**

Factors	Contents
Demographic factors	Age, gender, education, income, social status (occupation), lifestyle
Personality factors	Personality type, self-rejection, negative emotions, uncertainty avoidance, level of self-confidence, individual's personality, need for recognition, lack of motivation to progress, high-level expectations, severe unsatisfied needs, personal independence, job independence
Cultural factors	Gossip, the ruling culture of society

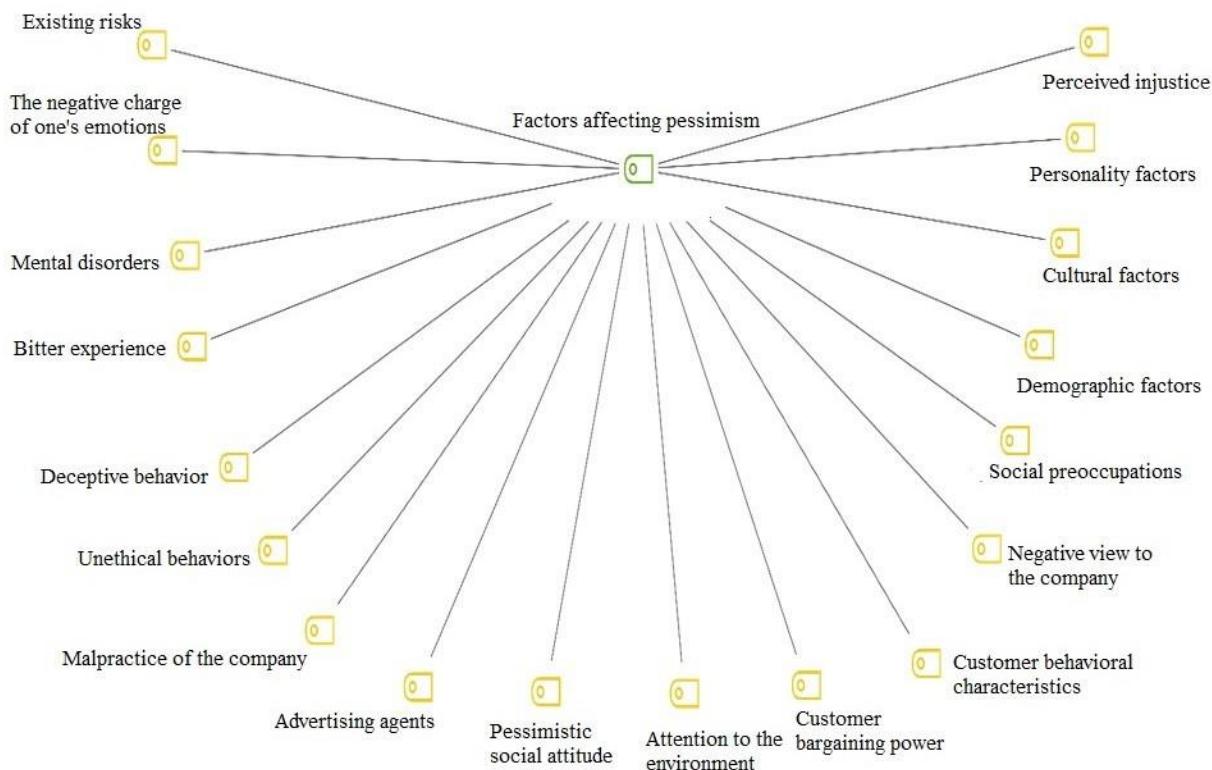
In order to measure the quality of the research, Cohen's kappa test was used. In this method, usually two researchers check the coding results independently. After that, the results of two experts are compared with each other. If the codes of these two researchers are close to each other, it indicates a high agreement between these two coders and reliability. As stated below, the Kappa index is equal to 0.679 at the error level of 0.170. Most researchers have introduced the acceptance threshold of this coefficient as more than 0.6. Since the value of this coefficient is more than 0.60, the reliability of the study was confirmed.

Social preoccupations	Social concerns and worries, negative social activism, social pessimism, moral beliefs, perceived social support, social comparison
Bitter experience from the company	Negative experience of the brand, negative experience of the company's products and services, high switching costs, violated expectations, dissatisfaction with unmet expectations by the company, lack of expected quality (unmet expectations), regret after purchase
Existing risks	Social risk, psychological risk (emotional and mental mood), physical risk, functional risk, financial risk, time risk, fear of transaction, perceived risk of the brand.
Perceived injustice	People's power in buying and selling (perceived imbalance), customer power imbalance, perceived injustice, perceived moral inequality, lack of fair trade by the company, perceived discrimination, compulsive buying, perceived lack of profit in the purchase (feeling of loss in the transaction) Non-confirmation of moral norms
The negative charge of one's emotions	The feeling of consumer dissatisfaction with the purchase, mobilization of negative emotions, negative emotional state
Mental disorders	Inferiority complex, obsession and neurotic disorders, consumer alienation, personality pessimism, educational failure, projection, doubt, negative attitude of the person, social isolation, mistrust in relationships (lack of trust), mental anxiety, destructive conflicts, failure Suspicion in targeting
Deceptive behavior to the company	Belief in deception and manipulation, Machiavellian marketing, unimportance of the customer in targeting companies, dishonesty with the consumer, company violations, understanding the utilitarian behavior of the company.
Unethical behaviors to the company	Irresponsible behavior of the company, lack of responsibility of the company, incompatibility of goals, incompatibility of values, lack of accountability of the company to the society, violation of the law by the company, violation of psychological contracts, unethical behavior of the company (mistreatment of customers and consumers), disrespect
Malpractice of the company	Lack of proper knowledge of the customers about the company and the product, weakness in service delivery, defects in the product and quality, poor performance of the company, inappropriate price, failure to investigate customer complaints (ineffective investigation of complaints), creating a false image of the brand
Advertising agents	Misinformation, misleading advertising, emotional game advertising, uninformed and merely attractive advertising, illogical claims, false promises, mistrust of company advertising, advertising skepticism, unreliable reputation.

Pessimistic social attitude	A hostile attitude towards the society (social pessimism), a hostile attitude towards the internal culture, a hostile attitude towards individuals, a perception towards the utilitarianism of individuals, the difference between individual and collective values.
Negative view to the company	Negative attitude towards the company, negative view of business and trade, anti-capitalist view, lack of trust in the company, pessimism towards the company's marketing
Attention to the environment	Product pollution, pay attention to green shopping
Customer behavioral characteristics	Perfectionism, way of thinking, attitude towards consumption, way of intellectual development (intellectual development environment), ability to control emotions
Customer bargaining power	The chance of the customer returning to buy (customer reciprocity), the bargaining power of the customer

After performing the seven stages of meta-synthesis, the coded data of the above table was categorized by

MAXQDA software and the conceptual model of factors affecting consumer pessimism was designed.



**Figure 2: Model of factors affecting consumer pessimism**

## Discussion

Meta-synthesis studies are generally used for the purpose of categorizing study indicators so that previous studies can be exploited in a systematic and correct manner; Therefore, in this study, considering that the main research question was: "What are the factors affecting consumer pessimism?" In this regard, by systematically reviewing the research conducted in the field of consumer pessimism, 117 factors affecting consumer pessimism were identified and categorized into 18 groups using the meta-composite qualitative method. In this way, the research concepts have been formed. It has also been tried to use reliable scientific sources and the sources that had insufficient scientific validity according to the provided entry and exit criteria are excluded from the study cycle in the synthesis process. At this stage, Cohen's kappa index was used to validate the coding process and control its quality. The value of Kappa index equal to 0.679 was calculated, which is at the optimal level of agreement. In this study, the factors affecting consumers' pessimism were categorized as follows:

Demographic factors include: age, gender, education, income, social status (occupation), lifestyle.

Personality factors include: personality type, self-loathing, negative emotions, uncertainty avoidance, self-confidence level, personality, need for recognition, lack of motivation to progress, high level expectations, severe unsatisfied needs, personal independence, job independence.

Cultural factors include: rumor, culture ruling the society.

Social preoccupations include: social concerns and worries, negative social activism, social pessimism, moral beliefs, perceived social support, social comparison.

Bitter experience of the company includes: negative experience of the brand, negative experience of the company's products and services, high switching costs, violated expectations, dissatisfaction with unmet expectations by the company, lack of expected quality (unmet expectations), regret after purchase.

Risks affecting consumer pessimism include: social risk, psychological risk (emotional and psychological mood), physical risk, functional risk, financial risk, time risk, fear of transaction, perceived risk of the brand.

Perceived injustice includes: people's power in buying and selling (perceived imbalance), customer power imbalance, perceived injustice, perceived moral inequality, lack of fair trade by the company, perceived discrimination, forced purchase, perceived lack of profit in purchase (feeling of loss in the transaction), disapproval of moral norms.

The negative load of individual emotions includes: the consumer's feeling of dissatisfaction with the purchase, mobilization of negative emotions, negative emotional state.

Mental and psychological disorders include: inferiority complex, obsession and obsessive disorders and neurosis, consumer alienation, personality pessimism, educational failure, projection, doubt, negative attitude of the person, social isolation, lack of trust in relationships (lack of trust), mental anxiety, destructive conflicts, failure in targeting, suspicion.

Deceptive behaviors of the company include: belief in deception and manipulation, Machiavellian marketing, customer's insignificance in targeting companies, dishonesty with the consumer, company's violations, understanding the utilitarian behavior of the company.

Unethical behaviors of the company include: irresponsible behavior of the company, lack of responsibility of the company, incompatibility of goals, incompatibility of values, lack of accountability of the company to the society, violation of the law by the company, violation of psychological contracts, unethical behavior of the company (mistreatment of customers and consumers), dishonor.

Incorrect performance of the company includes: lack of proper knowledge of the customers about the company and the product, weakness in service delivery, defects in the product and quality, poor performance of the company, inappropriate price, failure to investigate customer complaints (ineffective investigation of complaints), creating a false image of the brand.

Advertising factors include: providing false information, seductive advertising, advertising with emotional games, uninformed and merely attractive advertising, illogical claims, false promises, mistrust of company advertising, advertising skepticism, unreliable reputation.

A pessimistic social attitude includes: a hostile attitude towards society (social pessimism), a hostile attitude towards internal culture, a hostile attitude towards people, the perception of people's utilitarianism, the difference between individual and collective values.

Negative view of the company includes: negative attitude towards the company, negative view of business and trade, anti-capitalist view, lack of trust in the company, pessimism towards the company's marketing. Attention to the environment including: pollution of products, attention to green shopping.

Customer behavioral characteristics include: perfectionism, way of thinking, attitude towards consumption, way of intellectual development (environment of intellectual development), ability to control emotions. Bargaining power of the customer: the chance of the customer returning to buy (customer reversibility), the bargaining power of the customer.

## Conclusion

Consumer pessimism is a growing challenge for organizations. This has negative consequences for the company and the consumer, and if the companies are careless about building trust in their business, they will experience harmful consequences. Therefore, it is important to examine the factors influencing the formation of consumer pessimism. Based on the results of this research, it was determined that the main factors affecting consumer pessimism are: demographic factors, personality factors, cultural factors, social pre-occupations, bitter experience with the company, risks affecting consumer pessimism, perceived injustice, the negative burden of individual emotions, mental disorders, company's deceptive behaviors, company's unethical behaviors, company's improper performance, advertising factors, social pessimism, negative view of the company, attention to the environment, customer's behavioral characteristics, customer's bargaining power.

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