

## **Research Article**

### **Effect of Social Media on Conspicuous Consumption through Bandwagon and Snob Effects: A Structural Equation Modelling**

*Sosyal Medyanın Başkalarından Geri Kalmama ve Snop Etkileri Aracılığıyla Gösterişçi Tüketim Üzerindeki Etkisi: Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesi*

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## ***Abstract***

*Conspicuous consumption explains the way of consumption made by someone who want to influence others with the consumption activities they perform with the basic needs. Conspicuous consumption is a type of behavior that people buy the goods and services in order to show others their status and dignity. Social media, with the developing technology, is becoming a suitable environment for conspicuous consumption. The purpose of this study; to analyze the effect of social media on conspicuous consumption to reveal to what extent the snob and bandwagon factors have an intermediary effect between these variables. In research, data collected through the online survey method from 282 people who actively use social media. Analyzes of research data conducted using IBM SPSS Statistic 26 and IBM AMOS 23 package programs. As a result of two structural equation models conducted for the mediating effect of snob effect and bandwagon effect factors, a significant effect found between variables.*

**Keywords:** Social Media, Conspicuous Consumption, Snob Effect, Bandwagon Effect, Structural Equation Model

## ***Öz***

*Gösterişçi tüketim, mal ve hizmetleri tüketerek insanların temel ihtiyaçlarını karşılamamanın yanı sıra, gerçekleştirdiği tüketim faaliyetleriyle başkalarını etkilemek isteyen kişilerin yaptığı tüketim biçimini açıklamaktadır. İnsanların kendi statülerini ve saygınlıklarını başkalarına göstermek için satın alma faaliyeti gerçekleştirdikleri bir davranış biçimidir. Sosyal medya gelişen teknoloji ile birlikte gösterişçi tüketim için uygun bir ortam haline gelmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı; sosyal medyanın gösterişçi tüketim üzerindeki etkisini analiz etmek, snop ve başkalarından geri kalmama faktörlerinin bu değişkenler arasında ne ölçüde aracı etkiye sahip olduğunu ortaya koymaktır. Bu araştırmada sosyal medyayı aktif olarak kullanan 282 kişiden online anket yöntemiyle veri toplanmıştır. Bu analiz sonuçlarına göre, demografik faktörlerin etkisi, yaş ve gelir düzeyine göre istatistiksel olarak farklılık göstermektedir. Araştırma verilerinin analizi IBM SPSS Statistics 26 ve IBM AMOS 23 programları kullanılarak yapılmıştır. Snop etkisi ve başkalarından geri kalmama etki faktörlerinin aracılık etkisi için kurulan iki yapısal eşitlik modeli sonucunda değişkenler arasında anlamlı bir etki bulunmuştur.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sosyal Medya, Gösterişçi Tüketim, Snop Etkisi, Başkalarından Geri Kalmama Etkisi, Yapısal Eşitlik Modeli

## **Önerilen Atıf /Suggested Citation**

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## 1. Introduction

Social media has become a very suitable environment for displaying conspicuous consumption with the ever-increasing technological developments. In the literature, there are studies examining the effect of social media on conspicuous consumption and the relationship between social media and conspicuous consumption (Lehdonvirta, 2010; Yenicioglu & Christodoulides, 2014; Taylor & Strutton, 2016; Choi & Seo, 2017; İlhan, 2018). These studies in general focused on influencing factors such as status, materialism, narcissism and self-display (Veblen, 1899; Goffman, 1959; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Page, 1992; Marcoux et al., 1997; Solomon, 2006; Chaudhuri & Majumdar, 2006; Chen et al., 2008; Gierl & Huettl, 2010; Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014). Only a few of these studies have focused on the snob and bandwagon effects (Leibenstein, 1950; Corneo & Jeanne, 1997; Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012, 2014; Taylor & Strutton, 2016). However, as a result of the literature research, it is seen that a comprehensive study examining the mediating effect of the effect of snob and bandwagon in the effect of social media on conspicuous consumption has not been done enough in the literature. The aim of this study differentiate itself from literature with measure to what extent the bandwagon and snob effects the variables of social media and conspicuous consumption. This study measures how individuals consume conspicuously by exhibiting the bandwagon effect or snob effects in social media. In the study, it aimed to determine whether consumers exhibit the snob effect with the desire to be unique by wanting to be different from others when they display conspicuous consumption on social media, or the effect of bandwagon by conforming to the majority and being influenced by other people. In this direction, the importance of this study will contribute to the existing literature on social media and conspicuous consumption, through the effects of snob and bandwagon, which have not been sufficiently studied in the literature.

### 1.1. Social Media and Conspicuous Consumption

Social media; it refers to the interaction between user communities and internet users who create and share content information via Web 2.0 technologies (Ahlqvist, Back, Halonen, & Heinonen; 2008). Social media is defined as the use of electronic and internet tools to share and discuss information and experiences with other people more effectively (Parr, 2008). The main purpose of social media is social interaction (Cite, 2012; Durango, 2015; Nations, 2012; Turban, E., King, Lee, Liang, & Turban, D.C., 2015). Social media is seen as the use of technology combined with social interaction to create value (Jantsch, 2008). Social media era; it started with the establishment of Open Diary by Bruce and Susan Ableson, a social networking site that brings together diary writers. Developments have revealed the concept of social media and contributed to its current importance (Xiang & Gratzel, 2010). With technological developments, consumers now have a new world to share their purchasing and consumption experiences (Kim, Jang, & Adler, 2015). Social media; it meets a wide variety of social needs such as self-expression, self-disclosure, and enables easy sharing of personal thoughts, achievements and similar situations, connecting with others (Back et al., 2010; Gosling, Gaddis, & Vazire, 2007). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 59-68) stated that the two basic elements of social media are media research (social presence, media wealth) and social processes (self-presentation, self-exposure). The term self-presentation, which is related to the social dimension of social media, states that people have the desire to control the impressions of other people in all kinds of social interactions (Goffman, 1959). On the other hand, self-presentation is driven by a desire to create an image consistent with the person's personal identity. For example, it's like wearing a stylish outfit to be perceived as a young and trendy person. It is seen that the social dimension and the idea of self-presentation are linked to the concept of conspicuous consumption. Online social interactions have important effects on participants, such as shaping ideas, influencing their decisions and relationships (Bagozzi, Dholakia, & Pearo; 2007). With the emergence of new marketing strategies with the globalizing world, advertising taking an important place among marketing strategies, and the formation of virtual social worlds where individuals take part with developing technology, the concept of conspicuous consumption has been reshaped. Today's consumption has the possibility of being conspicuous consumption depending on the way individuals use social media (Yenicioglu & Christodoulides, 2014). The upward trend in the usage of social media encourages individuals to consume conspicuous more. The tendency to maintain social status with purchasing shares made in this channel and products consumed publicly turns social media into a digital form of conspicuous consumption. A post on social media has a greater impact on

interpersonal relationships, individual happiness and self-esteem (Duan & Dholakia, 2017; Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006; Gonzales & Hancock, 2011; Thosmas & Millar, 2013). Conspicuous online consumption can be explained by social media behaviors that lead to a desire to encourage self-consumption through conspicuous consumption (Taylor & Strutton, 2016). Influencing consumer behavior, social media allows people to display their conspicuous social behavior online. People join social networks to meet a range of social needs, including self-presentation, and to show themselves positively to others (Goffman, 1959; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Lehdonvirta (2010, p.32); states that in the online environment, consumers participate in typical conspicuous consumption behavior by clearly showing their tangibles and consumption styles. In the digitalized world, consumers use display management by sharing their carefully shaped self-identities through ownership of items in order to be socially recognized (Grace & Griffin, 2009; Kim et al., 2015). As a result, conspicuous consumption is often the result of a behavior aimed at pointing to other people in the network (Choi & Seo, 2017). However, Taylor and Strutton (2016, p.231-248) claimed that the property, status or experiences of an individual underline the snob behavior and that conspicuous consumption can be accelerated by the usage of social media. It was stated that impulsive purchasing of conspicuous luxury goods increased depending on the amount of social media usage of the individual. In short, the more consumers communicate with other people on the networks, the more likely they are to be encouraged to make a conspicuous luxury purchase (Thoumrungroje, 2014). In summary, it is seen in the literature that the relationship between conspicuous consumption behavior and social media usage has been confirmed.

## 1.2. Conspicuous Consumption

Consumption; means owning a good or service and using it to meet certain needs or to dispose of it. Consumption; it is defined as a social situation in which individuals use the consumption factors for their personal experiences and emotions in different ways. In every act of consumption, a relationship develops between consumption objects and consumers. Within the purpose behind this relationship and consumption actions; there are socio-economic factors such as the social world of consumers, the economic system in which they are located, age, gender and culture (Holt, 1995). In time, consumption has moved away from meeting the needs and has become a structure that defines social status. In fact, consumption is a necessary element to be involved in social life and to improve social relations. The conspicuous products purchased and used by consumers express the social environment around them and can show their social position (Levy, 1959). Conspicuous consumption and luxury goods are widely associated. Perceived superior quality, privilege and social visibility show the ideal identity of the consumers who own the relevant products (Hung et al., 2011). Consumers directly associate these items with their images (Bertrandias & Goldsmith, 2006). Conspicuous consumption; it explains the way of consumption made by some consumers who want to influence others with the consumption activities they perform, as well as meeting the basic needs of people by consuming goods and services. In this consumption style expressed as conspicuous consumption, the priority of consumption is beyond the basic physiological and safety needs. Thorstein Veblen introduced the term conspicuous consumption in his book "Leisure Class Theory: An Economic Study in the Evolution of Institutions" in 1899. In the Leisure Class Theory, Veblen (1899) states that especially upper-class consumers tend to buy conspicuous products or services to display their wealth related to social status and material wealth. According to Veblen, there are two different reasons for luxury consumption; the first is to show your own image to other members of the elite groups, and the second is to be different from the lower classes. Veblen states that people want to show their social status through the consumption of goods that give a message of success and prosperity. People try to compensate for differences in status by applying the consumption styles of higher-status groups or continue to consume in a conspicuous way to stand out in their current groups (Solomon, 2006). Looking at social and historical contexts, conspicuous consumption has been used to describe the efforts of upper-class men, women, and families to gain a higher social power and prestige. In general, it is stated that the goal of conspicuous consumption is to increase the prestige in the society. This can be achieved by public demonstrations and displaying welfare to others (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004).

Focus components of conspicuous consumption; the reaction of the reference group (Wong, 1997), is to present social visibility (Gierl & Huettl, 2010) and wealth with extensive luxury expenses (Trigg, 2001). Studies, according to certain groups, conspicuous consumption; to gain recognition, status or prestige

(Chen et al., 2008; Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014; Page, 1992), competition and excessive consumption aiming to be included in the membership of the superior social class (Patsiaouras & Fitchett, 2012), high self-concept (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014; Sirgy, 1982), uniqueness (Tepper-Tian, Bearden, & Hunter, 2001), displaying wealth with symbolic elements such as consumption of expensive products and services to show wealth (Gierl, 2010, Bergman, 2010). Gierl and Huettl (2010, p.225-235) explaining three main dimensions of conspicuous consumption; social visibility, status display, uniqueness or belonging to others, the acquisition and consumption of a rare and special product.

Marcoux, Filiatrault, and Cheron (1997, p.5-29) identified sub-factors affecting conspicuous consumption with the scale they developed in their study. Among these sub factors; materialistic hedonism, communication of belonging to/dissociation from a group, social status demonstration, interpersonal mediation, and ostentation. On the other hand, Chaudhuri and Majumdar (2006, p.53-60) examined the factors affecting conspicuous consumption in four subgroups as conspicuous, signaling, uniqueness and social conformation. In this study, considering the conspicuous consumption trends in social media, six factors were investigated in the study scale. These; social media use, materialistic hedonism, belonging to the same group with others or difference according to other people, social status, interpersonal mediation and display.

Conspicuous consumption of goods is divided into two different behavioral patterns at the individual consumer level: bandwagon effect and the snob effect (Corneo & Jeanne, 1997; Leibenstein, 1950). Chaudhuri and Majumdar (2006, p.53-60) have argued in their work that conspicuous consumption is a function of certain structures. Therefore, an explanation of the influencing factors should be made for a better understanding of such a structure. Considering the focal components of the definition and conspicuous consumption trends in social media, two factors are investigated; bandwagon effect and the snob effect. There are only a few studies designed to analyze conspicuous consumption in terms of other social motives such as snob and bandwagon effect (Kastanakis and Balabanis; 2012, 2014).

### **1.3. Bandwagon Effect**

The bandwagon effect describes the increasing demand for products that are frequently consumed as others buy the same goods (Corneo & Jeanne, 1997). Bandwagon effect expresses the positive relationship between individual purchasing behavior and purchasing behavior of others. (Granovetter & Song, 1986). In particular, consumers who tend to reflect the bandwagon effect in their desire to consume products try to conform to the people they want to be associated with (Leibenstein, 1950). Consumers can purchase popular products to fit a specific reference group or to be associated with relevant groups (Berger & Heath, 2007; Escalas & Bettman, 2005). Bandwagon consumption behavior occurs when consumers buy certain luxury categories due to their popularity, which further triggers demand (Amaldoss & Jain, 2005; Chaudhuri & Majumdar, 2006, 2010; Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012, 2014; Leibenstein, 1950; Vigneron & Johnson, 1999, 2004). In this context, according to Leibenstein's bandwagon analysis; people want to collaborate, be in contact with group members, be fashionable and actively part of a group (Gisser, McClure, Okten, & Santoni, 2009). While bandwagon influenced consumers follow the higher reference group in consumption patterns with a desire for a higher social class, they refer to superior groups in their quest for self-improvement (Stepien, 2018). Also, this can help create meaningful interpersonal relationships, as shown in consumption communities (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Therefore, the bandwagon effect is both socially dependent and socially valuable total consumption behaviors (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014).

Leibenstein's bandwagon effect analysis shows that consumer preferences are only psychological. In other words, the consumer can feel better by acting like others (Maxwell, 2014; Rohlf, 2001). What can be said for this affected individual is the pressure to adopt something for reasons such as "everyone does it, so we should do it" or "it will solve all our problems" (Turner, 1997, p.121-124). Therefore, whatever others want, the individual also wants the same (Choi et al., 2015). In this respect, the behavior of staying behind others is mostly affected by addiction (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012). Such products guarantee social approval as it means success, fame and membership in the respective status groups. These consumers try to meet their need for status gain by consuming luxury products consumed by others (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014). Studies shows that this motivation is more pronounced in

conspicuous consumption situations and turns into a meaningful one (Grimm et al., 1999; Zinkhan & Lascu, 1999).

#### **1.4. Snob Effect**

The snob effect is the opposite of the bandwagon effect and has a significant effect on conspicuous consumption (Corneo & Jeanne, 1997). Leibenstein (1950) explains that under the snob effect, the purchase demand for that product decreased due to the consumption of the same product in other consumers. The snob effect includes both social and personal effects. During the consumption or purchase of a product, the snob effect affects the behavior of other individuals. In addition to social and personal factors, it is also influenced by the behavior of other individuals (Mason, 1992). Snob consumers tend to manifest their individual sophistication and superior taste (Stepien, 2018). People with a strong, independent self that tends to distinguish themselves from other consumers prefer non-relational, individualistic patterns of consumption. The snob effect serves consumers' desire to be unique from others and therefore suggests products that are not consumed by many people. For these consumers, uniqueness value is superior to impressing others. They prefer luxury, new, exclusive, rare, or lesser known, that is not popular (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012). For example, some consumers are looking for a single, bespoke product that no one else can have, rather than show off their wealth with a newest luxury brand product (Reddy, 2008). In other words, for consumers looking for uniqueness, the value of a particular brand or product decreases as the number of people who buy it increases. Snob individuals are believed to buy high quality products at high prices. Contrary to this perception, when the snob behavior is big enough, it is seen that the snobs can buy a low quality but still unique product (Amaldoss & Jain, 2005). Being different according to this type of consumers is perceived as separating themselves from the herd. The stronger the anti-conformity and the desire to show one's distinctive feature, the greater the snob effect.

There are studies that prove that conspicuous consumption is related to the snob effect (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014; Mason, 1981). Snob consumers' indulgence for status and desire to be the sole owner of the property leads the individual to buy expensive luxury goods. Taylor and Strutton (2016, p.231-248) also argue that conspicuous consumption can be accelerated by the usage of social media, as they underline the snob effect of an individual's property, status or experiences.

## **2. Purpose and Method**

Social media enables people to display their conspicuous consumption behavior online (Goffman, 1959; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Sabuncuoğlu, 2015). Applications such as Youtube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter that allow the sharing of content such as visual, audio and location services are suitable environments for displaying conspicuous consumption behaviors. Consumers desire to exhibit the brands they buy, the places they go to, and their lifestyle through social media applications (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2005; White & Dahl, 2006, 2007; Sabuncuoğlu, 2015). In the study conducted by Marwick (2015), it was determined that on Instagram, one of the social media platforms, especially young social media users believe that the presentation of appearance and lifestyle and conspicuous consumption with images is necessary to become an Instagram phenomenon. Taylor and Strutton (2016, p.231-248) examined whether Facebook as a social media application has an impact on conspicuous consumption. In the study, it was found that as the level of Facebook usage of the users increased, their feelings of jealousy also increased, and as a result of the feeling of jealousy, people increased their willingness to exhibit themselves. Zhang (2015) states in the results he obtained from his interviews that expressing oneself on social media is a rather conspicuous behavior.

While the desire of the individual to keep up with their community explain the bandwagon effect, the desire to look different from other individuals explains the snob effect. Taylor and Strutton (2016, p.231-248) stated that as Facebook users' desire to envy, narcissism and self-promotion increased, their conspicuous consumption tendency increased; it has been determined that as the intensity of Facebook usage increases, users have conspicuous brands with a snob effect.

Researchers emphasize that the bandwagon and snob effect may be the main factors affecting conspicuous consumption (Leibenstein 1950; Shukla, 2008). Generally, it is seen that the upper groups seek qualities such as uniqueness as an indicator of being privileged and different in their voluntary consumption and leisure activities created by the snob effect. (Eastman, Goldsmith & Flynn, 1999).

Generally, those in the lower groups in the society aim to imitate the upper classes and display conspicuous consumption like them, with the bandwagon effect known as the effect of social adaptation to the majority. For this reason, they share their conspicuous actions on their social media platforms. In this direction, other hypotheses of the research; social media usage, conspicuous consumption, snob and bandwagon variables were created as follows.

**H1:** Social media usage level has a significant effect on conspicuous consumption level.

**H2:** Social media usage level has a significant effect on consumers snob levels.

**H3:** Social media usage level has a significant effect on consumers bandwagon levels.

**H4:** There is a significant relationship between social media usage level and conspicuous consumption level.

**H5:** There is a significant relationship between social media usage level and consumers bandwagon levels.

**H6:** There is a significant relationship between social media usage level and consumers snob levels.

**H7:** The snob effect level has a mediating role in the effect of social media usage on conspicuous consumption level.

**H8:** The bandwagon effect level effect level has a mediating role in the effect of social media usage on conspicuous consumption level.

The research universe consists of individuals using social media. According to WeAreSocial the "Digital Turkey 2020"<sup>1</sup> report, there are 54 million active users of social media in Turkey. According to the same report, 96.6% of 54 million social media users are 18 years old and above. In this context, the number of universes has been calculated as 52 million 164 thousand. However, due to time and space constraints, it is not possible to reach this number within the scope of the study, according to the sample formula of Bartlett, Kortlik and Higgins (2001) with a 95% confidence interval  $z=1.96$ , acceptable deviation tolerance  $d=0.06$ , Taking the accepted standard deviation value as  $s = 0.5$ , the sample size is calculated as 266. In the research in the field of social science, the sample size between 30 and 500 can often be sufficient (Altunisik, Coskun, Bayraktaroglu, & Yildirim, 2012). In addition, the value indicating sampling adequacy in structural equation models is the "critical N" value. In structural equation models, sample sizes of 200 and above are considered sufficient in terms of Critical N value (Bollen, 1989).

Online survey was used as a data collection method in the study. The prepared questionnaire was delivered to the participants through an online survey platform "SurveyMonkey". A total of 456 people participated in the survey. However, a total of 282 questionnaires were included in the analysis as a result of the questionnaires deemed invalid due to various reasons and data not suitable for structural equation modeling. Demographic statistics obtained from the survey results are given in Appendix A.

Four different scales were used while creating the survey questions. Social media, which is the first part of the survey, is divided into general social media usage and self-display on social media. For the general social media usage scale in the survey, "General Social Media Usage Scale" was used in the study of Rosen, Whaling, Carrier and Rokkum (2013). The scale in the study of Hauff (2016) was used for the self-promotion scale in social media. In the survey, the study of Marcoux et al. (1997) was used for conspicuous consumption scale. The study of Tepper-Tian et al. (2001) and Bearden, Netemeyer and Teel (1989) were used for the snob effect and bandwagon effect in which the mediating variability effects were to be measured.

### 3. Results

Analyses of research data were carried out using IBM SPSS Statistic 26 and IBM AMOS 23 package programs. The information about the gender, age, education level, marital status, monthly income levels, the time they spend on social media throughout the day and the purpose of using social media were concluded by descriptive analysis of the 282 participants (Appendix A). Comparison of mean scores in variables with two groups was made by Independent T-Test. In cases where the assumptions were

<sup>1</sup><https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2020-turkey>

provided, the comparison of the mean scores of the variables with 3 or more groups was made with One Way Variance Analysis. Regression models were created by performing multivariate linear regression analyzes in order to examine the general explanatory nature of demographic factors on the concepts studied. Mediated structural model analysis were performed to test two main hypotheses for the purpose of the study, and two structural equation models were established for this purpose through AMOS. Since the models are analyzed with maximum similarity method, multivariate normality was sought before this analysis according to the criteria mentioned above. The significance level was taken as 0.05 in all analyzes.

### 3.1. Validity and Reliability Analysis of the Research Scale

To analyze the validity of the scales used in the study, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyzes were applied, and the dimensions of the scales and the items belonging to these dimensions were determined. After the validity analysis, reliability tests were applied to the scale and its sub-dimensions.

Confirmatory factor analysis is used to determine whether the original structure of previously used scales is confirmed by the collected data. The relationships underlying the structure formed by the CFA variables are made through the verification of institutionally developed hypotheses (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2018, p. 342).

As a result of confirmatory factor analysis for “General Social Media Usage” scale,  $\chi^2=251,389$ ,  $sd=76$ ,  $p$  value was found significant ( $p=.000$ ). Calculated  $\chi^2/sd=3,308$ . This value is an indication that the “General Social Media Usage” scale generally fits well (Şimşek, 2007). Confirmatory factor analysis for “Conspicuous Consumption” scale,  $\chi^2=180,958$ ,  $sd=55$ ,  $p$  value was found significant ( $p=.000$ ). Calculated  $\chi^2/sd=3,290$ . All the values are acceptable according to the given criteria (Mehdiyev, Usta & Uğurlu, 2017). For “Snob Effect” scale, confirmatory factor analysis results,  $\chi^2=23,996$   $sd=8$ , the  $p$  value was found to be significant ( $p=.000$ ). Calculated  $\chi^2/sd=2,996$ . As a result of the confirmatory factor analysis for “Bandwagon Effect” scale,  $\chi^2=67,720$   $sd=18$ , and the  $p$  value was found to be significant ( $p=.000$ ). Calculated  $\chi^2/sd=3,762$ .

According to the distribution of factor loads formed as a result of the first exploratory factor analysis, it was seen that the items were not factored in their dimensions with the factor loadings at the end of the analysis. For this reason, the 4th, 5th and 8th items of the “General Social Media Usage” dimension were excluded from the study. These items were not included in any analysis and calculations after this stage. When the analysis was repeated after item extraction, it was observed that the load values factored in their own dimensions with factor loads ranging from 0.52-0.89. It can be said that construct validity is ensured because all factor loads factor in their own dimension with a factor load of more than 0.40 (Hinkin, 1995).

As a result of the exploratory factor analysis conducted for the “Conspicuous Consumption” scale, it was seen that the items were not factored in their own dimensions with factor loadings. Therefore, the 4th and 5th items of the “Materialistic Hedonist” dimension, the 4th item of the “Dissociation from a Group Dimension”, and the 3rd and 4th items of the “Interpersonal Mediation” dimension were excluded from the study. These items were not included in any analysis and calculations after this stage. When the analysis was repeated after item extraction, it was observed that the load values factored in their own dimensions with factor loads ranging from 0.42 to 0.90. It is recommended that factor loads be at least above .32 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012).

According to the results of the exploratory factor analysis for the “Snob Effect” scale, it was observed that the load values of the items factored very well in one dimension with factor loads ranging from 0.71 to 0.91. It can be said that construct validity is ensured because all factor loads are factored under one dimension with a factor load of more than 0.40 (Hinkin, 1995).

According to the results of the exploratory factor analysis for the scale of not falling behind from others, it was seen that the load values of the items factored very well in one dimension with factor loads ranging from 0.88 to 0.58.

According to the results of the reliability analysis of the scales, according to the alpha values of the 4 scales used in the study, the overall reliability of the scales is at an excellent level. The 5 sub-dimensions of the conspicuous consumption scale have high good reliability (George & Mallery, 2003). It is seen that the alpha coefficient of the “Snob Effect Scale” and the alpha coefficient reliability of the “Bandwagon Scale” are quite high. All values related to the reliability analysis are given in Table 1

**Table 1. Alpha coefficients for reliability analysis of scale**

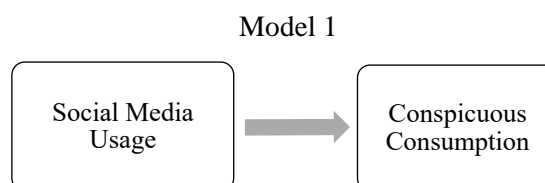
Used Scale and Sub-Dimensions	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient
<b>General Social Media Usage Scale</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0.886</b>
General Usage	6	0.722
Self-Promotion	8	0.972
<b>Conspicuous Consumption Scale</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0.923</b>
Materialistic Hedonism	3	0.848
Dissociation from a Group	3	0.901
Social Status	3	0.923
Interpersonal Mediation	2	0.742
Ostentation	2	0.843
Snob Effect Scale	6	0.911
Bandwagon Effect Scale	8	0.908

### 3.2. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

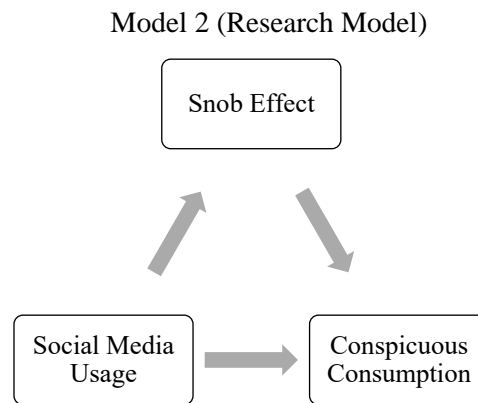
Since the Mardia kurtosis value calculated with AMOS is  $9.94 < 10$ , the data set is acceptable for the multivariate normal distribution assumption and SEM (Kline, 2005).

#### *Testing the snob effect mediator role with the structural equation model (SEM)*

Figure 1 shows the structural equation models established regarding the mediating role of the snob effect in the effect of social media usage on the conspicuous consumption level.







*Fig. 1 Structural equation models for the mediating role of the snob effect in the effect of social media usage on conspicuous consumption level*

The total effect of social media usage on conspicuous consumption was found to be statistically **significant** ( $\beta = .376, p < 0.001$ ). Its total explanation is 14.2%. Path coefficients of Model 1 are given in Table 2. Based on the results, the H1 hypothesis is confirmed. The effect of social media usage on the snob effect was found to be statistically **significant** ( $\beta = .364, p < 0.001$ ).

A positive path coefficient and regression coefficient were obtained between snob effect and conspicuous consumption ( $\beta = .305, p < 0.001$ ). H2 hypothesis is confirmed. Even though the effect of social media usage on conspicuous consumption was found to be statistically significant, there was a distortion from the p value and a decrease in its coefficient ( $\beta = .254, p = 0.003$ ). On the other hand, the conspicuous consumption of model 2 is 21.4% and is higher than Model 1. Path coefficients of Model 2 are given in Table 3.

**Table 2 Path coefficients of model 1**

	SE $\beta$	SE	CR	p	R <sup>2</sup>
Conspicuous Consumption ← Social Media Usage	0.376	0.350	3.638	<0.001**	0.142

\*\* Significant p value at 0.01 level

**Table 3 Path coefficients of model 2**

Goodness of Fit Index	Acceptable Fit Criteria	Values of Fit Indexes Obtained
$\chi^2/sd$ (1627,129/487) <sup>1</sup>	$\leq 5$	3.341
RMSEA <sup>2</sup>	<0.10	0.091
SRMR <sup>3</sup>	$\leq 0.10$	0.992
TLI <sup>4</sup>	>0.80	0.802
CFI <sup>4</sup>	>0.80	0.817

\*Significant p value at 0.05 level

\*\* Significant p value at 0.01 level

The indirect effect between social media usage and conspicuous consumption was obtained as 0.111 and 95% confidence intervals (0.056-0.160) and the effect was found to be statistically **significant** since this range does not contain 0 value ( $p=0.012$ ). To summarize, part of the effect of social media usage on conspicuous consumption is an indirect effect through the snob effect. The snob effect has a **significant mediating role** in this relationship. The values are shown in Table 4. H7 hypothesis confirmed.

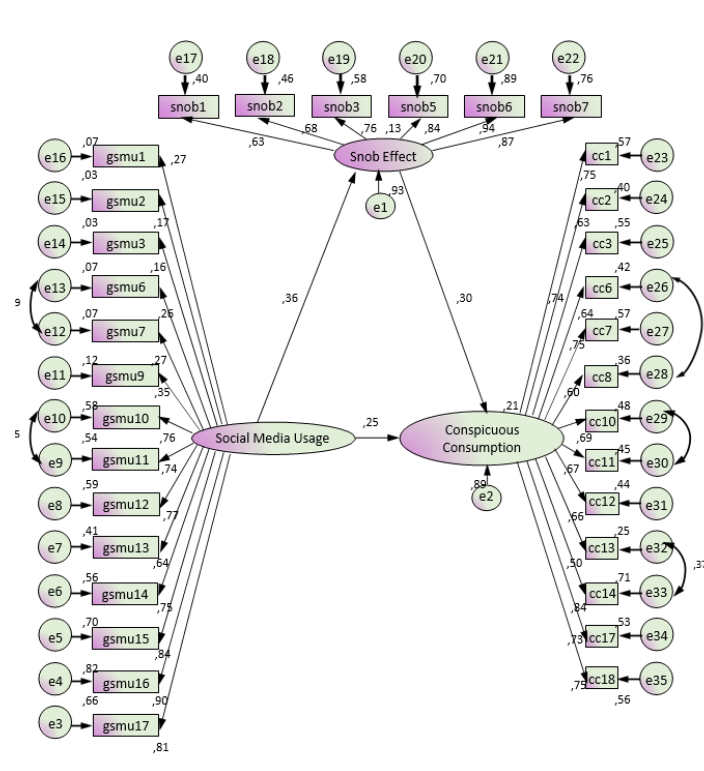
**Table 4 The indirect effect of social media usage on conspicuous consumption through the snob effect**

	SE $\beta$	p	Standardized Effect Coefficient 95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Limit	Upper Limit
Conspicuous Consumption $\leftarrow$ Social Media Usage	0.111	0.012*	0.056	<b>0.160</b>

When these criteria are evaluated, the values calculated for the model are;  $\chi^2=1627,129$ ,  $sd=487$ . Calculated  $\chi^2/df=3.341$ . RMSEA, SRMR, TLI, CFI values of other model fit index values are included in Table 5 (Meydan & Şeşen, 2015; Yılmaz & Çelik, 2009; Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Mascarinec, Novotny & Tasaki, 2000) <sup>1, 2, 3, 4</sup>. Model goodness of fit values are in the acceptable range. The structural equation model regarding the mediating role of the snob effect in the effect of social media usage on conspicuous consumption is shown in Table 5. The structural equation model regarding the mediating role of the snob effect on variables obtained from Amos shown in Fig. 3.

**Table 5. Goodness of fit criteria of structural equation model and calculated values**

	SE $\beta$	SE	CR	p	R <sup>2</sup>
Snob Effect $\leftarrow$ Social Media Usage	0,364	0,353	3,548	<0,001**	0,132
Conspicuous Consumption $\leftarrow$ Snob Effect	0,305	0,312	0,070	<0,001**	0,214
Conspicuous Consumption $\leftarrow$ Social Media Usage <i>Indirect Impact</i>	0,254	0,297	3,010	0,003**	

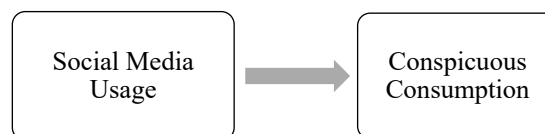


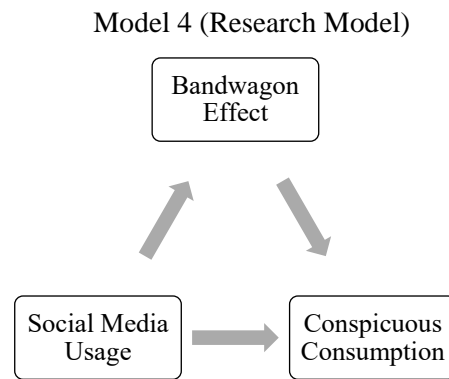
**Fig. 3. Structural equation model regarding the mediating role of the snob effect in the effect of social media use on conspicuous consumption, obtained from the Amos program.**

*Testing the bandwagon effect mediator role with the structural equation model*

Since the Mardia Kurtosis value calculated with AMOS is  $9.41 < 10$ , it was seen that the data set was acceptable for the multivariate normal distribution assumption and SEM (Kline, 2005). Figure 2 shows the structural equation models established regarding the mediating role of the bandwagon effect in the effect of social media usage on the conspicuous consumption level.

**Model 3**





**Fig. 2 Structural equation model for the mediating role of the bandwagon effect in the effect of social media usage on conspicuous consumption level**

The total effect of social media usage on conspicuous consumption was found to be statistically **significant** ( $\beta = .376, p < 0.001$ ). Its total explanation is 14.2%. Path coefficients of Model 3 are shown in Table 6. The effect of social media usage on bandwagon was found to be statistically **significant** ( $\beta = .577, p < 0.001$ ). A positive path coefficient and regression coefficient were obtained between bandwagon and conspicuous consumption ( $\beta = .529, p < 0.001$ ). The effect of social media usage on conspicuous consumption is not statistically significant for Model 4 ( $p = 0.457 > 0.05$ ). On the other hand, the conspicuous consumption of Model 4 is 31.5% and it is higher than Model 3. Path coefficients of the model are shown in Table 7.

**Table 6 Path Coefficients of Model 3**

	<b>SE</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>CR</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>
	<b><math>\beta</math></b>				
Conspicuous Consumption ← Social Media Usage	0.347	,0.045	5.298	<0.001**	0.121

\*Significant p value at 0.05 level

\*\* Significant p value at 0.01 level

**Table 7. Path Coefficients of Model 4**

	SE $\beta$	p	Standardized Effect Coefficient 95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Limit	Upper Limit
Conspicuous Consumption $\leftarrow$ Social Media Usage	0.306	0.009**	0.206	0.391

\* Significant p value at 0.05 level

\*\* Significant p value at 0.01 level

The indirect effect between social media usage and conspicuous consumption was obtained as 0.306 and 95% confidence intervals (0.206-0.391) and the effect was found to be statistically **significant** since this range does not contain 0 value ( $p=0.009$ ). In summary, part of the effect of social media usage on conspicuous consumption is an indirect effect through the bandwagon. Bandwagon plays a **significant** mediating role in this relationship. Their values are shown in Table 8.

**Table 8. The Effect of Social Media Usage on Conspicuous Consumption Through Bandwagon**

	SE $\beta$	SE	CR	p	R <sup>2</sup>
Bandwagon Effect $\leftarrow$ Social Media Usage	0.577	0.42	3.867	<0.001**	0.333
Conspicuous Consumption $\leftarrow$ Social Media Usage	0.052	0.047	0.743	0.457	0.315
Conspicuous Consumption $\leftarrow$ Bandwagon Effect	0.529	0.114	5.489	<0.001**	

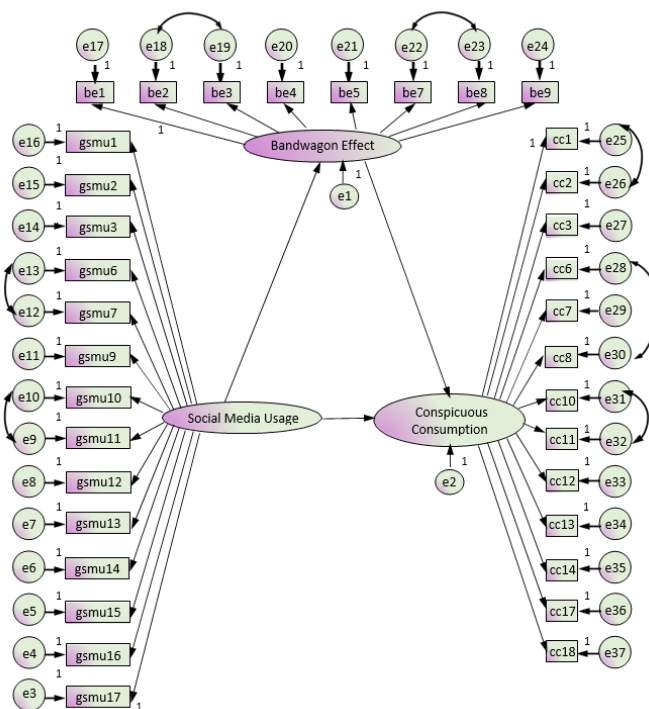
\*Significant p value at 0.05 level

\*\* Significant p value at 0.01 level

When the criteria in Table 9 are evaluated, it is seen that the values calculated for Model 4 and model data fit are within acceptable range. Calculated values for the model;  $\chi^2=1627,129$ ,  $sd=487$ . Calculated  $\chi^2/df = 3.204$ . RMSEA, SRMR, TLI, CFI values of other model fit index values were calculated (Meydan & Sesen, 2015; Yilmaz & Celik, 2009; Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Mascarinec et al., 2000). The structural equation model regarding the mediating role of the bandwagon effect on variables obtained from Amos shown in Fig. 4.

**Table 9. Goodness of Fit Criteria of Structural Equation Model and Calculated Values**

Goodness of Fit Index	Acceptable Fit Criteria	Values of Fit Indexes Obtained
$\chi^2/sd (1627,129/487)^1$	$\leq 5$	3.204
RMSEA <sup>2</sup>	$<0.10$	0.089
SRMR <sup>3</sup>	$\leq 0.10$	0.10
TLI <sup>4</sup>	$>0.80$	0.802
CFI <sup>4</sup>	$>0.80$	0.817



**Fig. 4. Structural equation model regarding the mediating role of the snob effect in the effect of social media use on conspicuous consumption, obtained from the Amos program.**

#### 4. Discussion

The results obtained from this study gain importance in terms of contribution to the literature when we consider today's social media usage styles. The aim of this study is; to determine to what extent social media's proven effect on conspicuous consumption with variables in terms of bandwagon effect and snob effect. Although there are many studies examining the effect and relationship between conspicuous consumption and social media, there is no comprehensive study examining the effect of bandwagon and snob together.

In order to develop this study and to present a new theoretical approach, the mediating roles of variables were examined by creating structural equation modeling.

In the first structural equation model created for the snob mediation effect, the total effect of social media usage on conspicuous consumption was found to be statistically significant ( $\beta = .376, p < 0.001$ ). Its total explanation is 14.2%. These results confirm the H1 hypothesis. The effect of social media usage on the snob effect was found to be statistically significant ( $\beta = .364, p < 0.001$ ). H2 hypothesis confirmed. The part of the effect of social media usage on conspicuous consumption is an indirect effect through the snob effect. The snob effect has a significant mediating role in this relationship. The model created in this direction confirms the H7 hypothesis.

In the other structural equation modeling created for the bandwagon mediation effect, the effect of social media usage on the bandwagon was found to be statistically significant ( $\beta = .577, p < 0.001$ ). A positive path coefficient and regression coefficient were obtained between bandwagon and conspicuous consumption ( $\beta = .529, p < 0.001$ ). H3 confirmed. Part of the effect of social media usage on conspicuous consumption is an indirect effect through the bandwagon. Bandwagon plays a significant mediating role in this relationship. The results obtained from the established model confirm the H8 hypothesis. These results confirm the structural equation models that created.

Based on the data obtained from the analyzes, it was seen that individuals mostly used social media to follow the daily news, to communicate and obtain information. In order to reach to people who use social media, brands can make the necessary advertising and placement studies on social media platforms or websites where the news is following and reach the consumer audience there. The effect of social media on conspicuous consumption has been proved by studies. With the increasing usage of social media day by day and individuals using social media as a place of self-display, bloggers and social media phenomena, who are considered to be opinion leaders called Key Opinion Leaders, have become key marketing tools. Decision makers can make their marketing plans much easier and faster and receive positive feedback through bloggers who can reach many people at the same time. Today, consumers can make purchase decisions by thinking that the products shared by people or accounts shared by many people on social media are good and reliable. They can use their purchasing preferences in favor of the products or services used by everyone by exhibiting the behavior of bandwagon in social media. This creates a new marketing channel for brands and advertisers. Social media is among the marketing channels preferred by businesses in terms of getting quick and easy feedback in the promotion of rare and high-cost products. Reaching faster to consumers with advertisements and collaborations on certain social media platforms. It can be easier and faster for consumers to follow up luxury brand products on social media and show the intention to buy. This can create ideas for brands in order to reach the snob consumer audience. Special products produced in small numbers or products that can be personalized can be interesting in this regard.

#### 5. Notes

According to the analysis results obtained from this study, for future studies; it has been observed that the number of samples is of great importance in terms of structural equation modeling and results. For similar studies in the future, the sample size can be kept larger or a different sample can be study. However, although there are already a few scales measuring the variables analyzed in the literature, a stand-alone scale has not been developed to measure the snob and bandwagon effect. Scale development studies can be done in this direction. The purchasing behavior of consumers may vary according to the social media platform they use. Social media platforms, which are increasing day by day, help to obtain more data for the studies to be done. A contribution to the literature can be made by choosing an application that most directs consumers to other purchasing platforms.

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**APPENDIX A: Demographic Statistics**

<b>N=</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Woman	206	73
	Men	76	27
<b>Age</b>	18-25	70	24,9
	26-33	81	28,5
	34-41	46	16,4
	42-49	32	11,3
	50 ve above	53	18,9
<b>Educational Level</b>	Primary school	1	0,4
	Secondary school	0	0
	High school	35	12,4
	University	194	68,8
	Master degree	46	16,3
	Doctorate	6	2,1
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	129	45,7
	Single	153	54,3
<b>Income Level</b>	1500 TL	36	12,8
	1501-3000 TL	47	16,7
	3001-4500 TL	53	18,9
	4501-6000 TL	53	18,9
	6001 TL ve above	93	32,7
<b>Time Spent on Social Media During the Day</b>	Less than 1 hour	20	7,1
	1-2 hour	105	37,1
	3-4 hour	93	32,9
	More than 4 hour	64	22,9
<b>Purpose of Using Social Media</b>	Content sharing	154	54,6
	Entertainment / game	103	36,5

	Follow the world agenda	235	83,3
	Be informed	207	73,4
	Shopping	108	38,3
	Communicate	210	74,5
	Share location	15	5,3

**Araştırma Makalesi****Effect of Social Media on Conspicuous Consumption through Bandwagon and Snob Effects: A Structural Equation Modelling***Sosyal Medyanın Başkalarından Geri Kalmama ve Snop Etkileri Aracılığıyla Gösterişçi Tüketim Üzerindeki Etkisi: Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesi*

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**Geniştirilmiş Özet**

Eski yıllardan beri abartılı tüketim belgelenmiş olup, ilgili konu hakkında çeşitli tartışmalar halen yapılmaktadır. Thorstein Veblen (1899), tüketimi başkalarını etkilemek amacıyla tanımlayan ve bu olguya gösterişçi tüketim adını veren ilk yazar olmuştur. Veblen kavramın yaratıcısı olsa da, gösterişçi tüketim davranışı hakkında yazan ilk iktisatçı değildir. Karl Marx, gösterişçi tüketimin, daha fazla sermaye çekmek için bir gereklilik ve güven işareti olarak görülebileceğini daha önce belirtmiştir (Karl, 1887). Modern toplumlarda, sosyal, ekonomik ve politik geçmişe bağlı olarak, yükselme ve düşme dönemleri ile gösterişçi tüketim mevcut olmaya devam etmiştir (Patsiaouras, 2010). Sosyal medya, sürekli artan teknolojik gelişmelerle birlikte gösterişçi tüketimi sergilemek için oldukça uygun bir ortam haline gelmiştir. Günümüzde sosyal medyanın ortaya çıkışı, bir şekilde geleneksel gösterişçi tüketim teorisini değiştirmiştir, çünkü artık yapılan tüketimler, bireylerin sosyal medyayı nasıl kullandıklarına bağlı olarak gösterişçi tüketim olma olasılığına sahiptir (Yenicioğlu ve Christodoulides, 2014). Sosyal medyanın gösterişçi tüketim üzerindeki etkisini ve sosyal medya ile gösterişçi tüketim arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen araştırmalar bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışmalar genel olarak statü, materyalizm, narsisizm ve kendini sergileme gibi etkileyen faktörlere odaklanmıştır. Gösterişçi tüketimin nedenleri iki davranış temeline bölünmektedir; başkalarından geri kalmama arzusu ve snop arzusu. Başkalarından geri kalmama etkisi, başkalarının da aynı malı satın almasıyla sıklıkla tüketilen ürünlere olan artan talebi tanımlamaktadır (Corneo ve Jeanne, 1997). Başkalarından geri kalmama etkisi ayrıca, snop etkisinin öncülü olarak kavramsallaştırılmıştır (Miller, McIntyre ve Mantrala, 1993; Berry, 1994). Tüketicinin snop tüketime olan ihtiyacı başkalarından geri kalmama tüketim davranışı ile negatif bir ilişkiye sahiptir, tüketiciler benzersizlik algısından ve popüler olmayan ürünlere uyumluluk sağlamaktan kaçınmaktadırlar (Kastanakis ve Balabanis, 2014). Leibenstein (1950) snop etkisi ile, başkalarının da aynı ürünü tüketmesi nedeniyle bir tüketicinin ürüne olan talebin ne ölçüde azaldığını açıklamaktadır. Birey gösterişçi tüketim sergilerken benzersizlik algısını benimseyerek kendisini diğer bireylerden ayır tutar. Varolan olan literatürden yola çıkılarak sosyal medyanın gösterişçi tüketim üzerindeki etkisinde snop ve başkalarından geri kalmama etkisinin aracılık etkisini inceleyen kapsamlı bir çalışmanın literatürde yeterince yapılmadığı görülmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, başkalarından geri kalmama ve snop etkisinin sosyal medya ve gösterişçi tüketim değişkenlerini ne ölçüde etkilediğini ölçmektir. Çalışmada, tüketicilerin sosyal medyada gösterişçi tüketim sergilediklerinde diğerlerinden farklı olmak isteyerek benzersiz olma arzusuyla snop etkisi mi sergiledikleri yoksa çoğunluğa uyarak ve diğer insanlardan etkilenecek başkalarından geri kalmama etkisinin mi ortaya konulduğu araştırılmak istenmiştir. Bu doğrultuda, bu çalışmanın önemi, literatürde yeterince çalışılmamış olan snop ve başkalarından geri kalmama etkilerinin sosyal medya ve gösterişçi tüketim konusundaki mevcut literatüre katkıda bulunacaktır. Araştırmanın amacına uygun olarak sosyal medyayı kullanan

tüketicilerin tüketim davranışları ölçülmek istendiği için veri toplama metodu olarak online anket kullanılmıştır. Anket soruları oluşturulurken dört farklı ölçek kullanılmıştır. Anketin ilk bölümünü oluşturan sosyal medya, genel sosyal medya kullanımı ve sosyal medyada kendini sergileme olarak ikiye ayrılmıştır. Ankete toplam 456 kişi katılmıştır. Ancak çeşitli nedenlerle geçersiz sayılan anketler ve yapısal eşitlik modellemesine uygun olmayan veriler sonucunda toplam 282 anket analize dahil edilmiştir. Anket sonuçlarından elde edilen demografik istatistikler Ek A'da verilmiştir. Çalışmanın amacına yönelik olarak iki ana hipotezi test etmek için aracılı yapısal model analizi yapılmış ve bu amaçla AMOS aracılığıyla iki yapısal eşitlik modeli kurulmuştur. Modeller maksimum benzerlik yöntemi ile analiz edildiğinden, bu analizden önce yukarıda belirtilen kriterlere göre çok değişkenli normallik aranmıştır. Tüm analizlerde anlamlılık düzeyi 0.05 olarak alınmıştır. Araştırmada kullanılan ölçeklerin geçerliğini incelemek için açıklayıcı ve doğrulayıcı faktör analizleri uygulanmış, ölçeklerin boyutları ve bu boyutlara ait maddeler belirlenmiştir. Geçerlilik analizinin ardından ölçeğe ve alt boyutlarına güvenirlik testleri uygulanmıştır. Snop aracılık etkisi için oluşturulan ilk yapısal eşitlik modelinde sosyal medya kullanımının gösterişçi tüketim üzerindeki toplam etkisi istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bulunmuştur ( $\beta = .376, p < 0.001$ ). Sosyal medya kullanımının snop etkisi üzerindeki etkisi istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bulunmuştur ( $\beta = .364, p < 0.001$ ). Özetlemek gerekirse, sosyal medya kullanımının gösterişçi tüketim üzerindeki etkisinin bir kısmı snop etkisi yoluyla dolaylı bir etkidir. Çoğunluk aracılık etkisi için oluşturulan diğer yapısal eşitlik modellemesinde sosyal medya kullanımının başkalarından geri kalmama etkisi istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bulunmuştur ( $\beta = .577, p < 0.001$ ). Başkalarından geri kalmama ve gösterişçi tüketim arasında pozitif bir path katsayısı ve regresyon katsayısı elde edilmiştir ( $\beta = .529, p < 0.001$ ). Sosyal medya kullanımının gösterişçi tüketim üzerindeki etkisinin bir kısmı, başkalarından geri kalmama etkisine dayalı dolaylı bir etkidir. Başkalarından geri kalmama etkisi bu ilişkide önemli bir aracılık rolü oynamaktadır. Kurulan modellerden elde edilen sonuçlar hipotezi doğrulamaktadır.