



Conspicuous Consumption and Tourism Product Purchase Intention Among Social Media Users: A Moderated Mediation Model

Consumo Ostentoso e Intención de Compra de Productos Turísticos entre Usuarios de Redes Sociales: Un Modelo de Mediación Moderada

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Abstract

This study examines the effect of conspicuous consumption on purchase intention and investigates whether influencer marketing mediates this relationship. It also tests whether gender moderates this mediating effect. A quantitative research design was employed, and data were collected from social media users aged 16 and above using a survey technique. A total of 396 valid questionnaires were obtained through purposive sampling. The data were analyzed using SPSS 26, AMOS 26, and the Hayes PROCESS macro. Descriptive statistics, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), mediation analysis, and moderation analysis were conducted. The findings indicate that influencer marketing partially mediates the relationship between conspicuous consumption and purchase intention. This suggests that conspicuous consumption influences purchase intention both directly and indirectly through influencer marketing. In addition, the results reveal that gender significantly moderates this mediating relationship, with the indirect effect being stronger among male tourists compared to female tourists. Overall, the results highlight the importance of influencer marketing as a key psychological and social mechanism in shaping consumer purchase intentions in the context of social media-driven tourism consumption.

Keywords: Conspicuous Consumption, Purchase Intention, Influencer Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Moderated mediation.

Resumen

Este estudio examina el efecto del consumo ostentoso sobre la intención de compra e investiga si el marketing de influencers media esta relación. Asimismo, analiza si el género ejerce un efecto moderador en dicha mediación. Se adoptó un diseño de investigación cuantitativo y los datos se recopilaban mediante una técnica de encuesta a usuarios de redes sociales mayores de 16 años. Se obtuvieron 396 cuestionarios válidos mediante muestreo intencional. Los datos fueron analizados utilizando SPSS 26, AMOS 26 y el macro PROCESS de Hayes. Se realizaron análisis descriptivos, análisis factorial confirmatorio (AFC), así como análisis de mediación y moderación. Los resultados muestran que el marketing de influencers tiene un efecto de mediación parcial entre el consumo ostentoso y la intención de compra, indicando que existe influencia tanto directa como indirecta. Además, se encontró que el género modera significativamente esta relación mediada, siendo el efecto indirecto más fuerte en hombres que en mujeres. En conjunto, los hallazgos destacan el papel del marketing de influencers como un mecanismo clave en la configuración de las intenciones de compra en el contexto del consumo turístico en redes sociales.

Palabras clave: Consumo Ostentoso, Intención de Compra, Marketing de Influencers, Marketing en Redes Sociales, Mediación Moderada.

1. Introduction

In the context of globalization, the purchasing intentions of tourists have undergone notable transformations. Understanding and accurately predicting these intentions is of paramount importance for tourism businesses and destinations seeking to sustain their existence and maintain competitive advantage. A considerable body of research has identified multiple determinants of tourists' purchase intentions. Factors such as brand awareness, brand associations, perceived value, perceived quality, past experiences, and perceived risk have consistently been recognized as critical predictors (Jun, 2020; Susilowati & Sari, 2020; Anwar & Andrean, 2021; Zhang et al., 2021). Furthermore, digital marketing, the user-friendliness of online travel platforms, and technological readiness have been demonstrated to constitute essential drivers of consumers' purchasing decisions (Pektas & Hassan, 2020; Sharifuddin et al., 2023). More recently, the digitalization process has further underscored the significance of social media, which has emerged as a powerful determinant in shaping consumers' purchase intentions (Sohn & Kim, 2020).

Social media is an important source of information considered by tourists in the formation of their tourism product purchase intentions (Liu et al., 2020; Armutcu et al., 2023; Soares et al., 2025). In addition, social media provides opportunities for tourists to showcase the products they purchase and to engage in conspicuous consumption (Pellegrino et al., 2022). With such opportunities, along with the



number of social media users reaching 5.41 billion (DataReportal, 2025) and people spending a significant portion of their time on these platforms, social media has become one of the most important marketing channels for both businesses and tourists (Lin et al., 2020; Guerreiro et al., 2024). Among the marketing tools that have come to the forefront with the development of social media, influencer marketing stands out (Liu, 2024). Influencer marketing not only affects consumers' purchasing processes but also enables them to display their social status, thereby facilitating conspicuous consumption (Soares et al., 2025). From this perspective, it is considered that conspicuous consumption and influencer marketing are influential in the decision-making processes of social media users. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to reveal the effect of social media users' perceptions of conspicuous consumption on purchase intention. Another purpose of the study is to examine the mediating role of influencer marketing in this relationship and the moderating role of gender on this effect. The research questions developed in line with the aim of the study are as follows:

RQ1: Does conspicuous consumption affect the purchase intention of social media users?

RQ2: Does the mediating role of influencer marketing influence this relationship?

RQ3: Does gender play a moderating role in the effect of conspicuous consumption on purchase intention through influencer marketing?

When the literature is examined, it is observed that the relationship between conspicuous consumption, influencer marketing, and purchase intention has been extensively studied. Research has investigated the effect of conspicuous consumption on purchase intention (Woods, 1960; Tülin & Hallumoğlu, 2018; Biçer & Akgüre, 2022; Lai et al., 2022; Gil-Cordero et al., 2023). Similarly, the impact of influencer marketing on purchase intention has also been explored (Eyel & Şen, 2020; Hisashi et al., 2022; Karahan, 2025). As can be seen from these studies, the effects of conspicuous consumption and influencer marketing on purchase intention have generally been evaluated separately in different studies. Unlike the existing literature, this study examines the effect of conspicuous consumption and influencer marketing on purchase intention together by employing a mediation model. Moreover, the inclusion of gender as a moderating variable constitutes another important and original aspect of the study. In this respect, the research is highly significant as it fills an important gap in the literature and provides insights that can contribute to demand determinants in practical fields.

In this study, theoretical support for the proposed relationships is provided through conspicuous consumption theory, trickle-down theory, and social role theory. Conspicuous consumption is defined as the display of wealth through ostentatious leisure activities and luxury expenditures on goods and services (Trigg, 2001). According to Veblen's Theory of Conspicuous Consumption (Veblen, 1899), individuals tend to engage in luxury and ostentatious consumption in order to demonstrate their social status. From this perspective, consuming products associated with upper social classes may influence individuals' purchase intentions, as it allows them to psychologically perceive themselves as belonging to the desired social class. Indeed, previous studies have similarly emphasized that tendencies toward conspicuous consumption affect tourists' intentions to purchase and visit exclusive and prestigious destinations (Hillman, 2009; Philips & Back, 2011; Yao et al., 2021; Lai et al., 2022).

Another fundamental motivation of conspicuous consumption is the dynamics between social classes (Jaikumar & Sarin, 2015). According to Simmel's theory of fashion (1904), upper classes develop new consumption habits to differentiate themselves from lower classes, while lower classes imitate the upper classes and adopt these consumption patterns (Simmel, 1904). This cycle transforms consumption behavior into a constantly evolving and renewing structure. With contemporary transformations and the rise of social media, influencers have become role models for a wider segment of society in shaping consumption behaviors. Moreover, through their lifestyles and the products they showcase, influencers disseminate consumption patterns to lower classes. One of the most influential domains of influencers is tourism products. Since tourism products serve as status symbols, products promoted by influencers significantly influence tourists' purchase desires (Pinhal et al., 2025). Consequently, the diffusion of conspicuous consumption products through influencers has become possible. However, previous research has not sufficiently examined the mediating role of influencer marketing in the relationship between conspicuous consumption and purchase intention. Therefore, this study expands the theories of conspicuous consumption and trickle-down by integrating the effect of influencer marketing into the model and aims to better understand the purchase intentions of social media users.

Another relationship addressed in this study is the moderating role of gender, which is explained through Social Role Theory. According to Social Role Theory (Eagly, 1987), when dominant gender roles are examined, it is observed that the social behaviors of men and women differ across social classes (Kalan, 2010). One of the areas where these behavioral differences are evident is purchasing behavior. Men and women, when engaging in purchasing activities, may be influenced by the groups to which they belong. Indeed, studies focusing on the influence of gender on purchasing behavior have reported such effects (Lopez-Mosquera, 2016; Tosun et al., 2024). On the other hand, particularly with the rise of social media, the desire of individuals to display themselves, and the tendency to shape purchasing behavior according to their gender group, has not been sufficiently examined in the literature. For this reason, this study expands Social Role Theory by integrating the moderating role of gender into the model.



2. Conceptual Framework and Development of Hypotheses

2.1 Conspicuous Consumption

The term conspicuous consumption was first introduced in Thorstein Veblen's work *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899) (Fiers, 2020). Veblen defined conspicuous consumption as the acquisition and display of expensive goods and services aimed at attaining social status, noting that this phenomenon occurs at varying levels across the social spectrum (Michman & Mazze, 2006; Geg, 2021). The historical roots of conspicuous consumption can be traced back to antiquity, and over time the concept has evolved in line with different social dynamics (McKendrick et al., 1982; Mauss, 2024). Particularly with the rise of digitalization and the increased use of social media, conspicuous consumption has begun to play a significant role in individuals' social interactions and identity construction (Auger, Burke, Devinney & Louviere, 2003; Yilmaz, 2018; Rogova & Matta, 2023). In addition, consumer credit, advertising, brand-oriented shopping, and the rapid changes in fashion today serve as motivators that contribute to the widespread prevalence of conspicuous consumption (Frank, 2007; Du, Joo & Wilbur, 2019; Bayar & Varışli, 2020).

2.2 Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing is a strategy based on the process whereby individuals with a large following on social media platforms influence consumers' purchasing decisions (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Geysler, 2022; Kresovich et al., 2024). Influencers, who most frequently use social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube for the promotion of goods and services (Singh & Kaur, 2024; Ye, 2024), seek to influence their followers through the relationships they establish with them (Casaló, Flavián & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2020). In particular, the extent to which followers identify themselves with influencers directly shapes their purchasing decisions (Gilly et al., 1998). At this point, influencers' attributes such as professionalism, trustworthiness, engagement, and attractiveness play a critical role in the relationships they form with followers and in determining their marketing effectiveness (Liu, Zhang & Zhang, 2020; Wang, Wang, Wang & Zhao, 2021; Zhao, Xu, Ding & Li, 2024). This makes influencer marketing an indispensable advertising tool for brands (Evans et al., 2017).

2.3 Purchase Intention

Purchase intention refers to a consumer's willingness and likelihood to buy a product or service, and this intention is influenced by the individual's attitudes, perceptions, and external factors (Dodds et al., 1991). It also reflects the psychological and behavioral processes that determine consumers' tendencies to purchase a product or service (Bai et al., 2008; Kim & Ko, 2012). As a concept widely examined in the consumer behavior literature, purchase intention is regarded as an important predictor of actual purchasing behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Furthermore, elements such as brand trust, perceived value, and consumer satisfaction have been shown to significantly affect purchase intention (Zeithaml, 1988; Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010; Chiu et al., 2014). In the context of digital commerce, factors such as online reviews, the influence of social media, and personalized recommendations play a critical role in shaping consumers' purchase intentions (Sohn & Kim, 2020).

2.4 The Relationship Between Conspicuous Consumption, Influencer Marketing, and Purchase Intention

In this section, conspicuous consumption, influencer marketing, and purchase intention are theoretically analyzed and discussed in the context of the related literature. Having outlined a distinct theoretical justification for each link, the respective hypothesis is explicitly stated.

Interest in influencers on social media platforms reflects human nature, showing that the consumption of goods and services, or even wealth or personal information, may serve to demonstrate identity, which is indeed supported by an inclination toward conspicuous symbols rooted in demands to show altruism and seek social connectedness. Veblen's *Theory of Conspicuous Consumption* (1899) states that humans consume luxury and status- and prestige-goods to sustain the social hierarchy to which they belong. During this process, they feel more strongly connected to status-relevant content and their role models than adults. Theory of filtration, originally proposed in Simmel's theory of fashion (1904) reveals the mechanism active in this dynamic (Simmel, 1904). In particular, the consumption patterns of the upper-class spill down to wider audiences through influencers, and lower-class individuals emulate them, motivated by their desire for status. With this process becoming visible and accessible through social media, influencers have become modern-day mediators who transmit upper-class consumption cues downward: these cultural arbitrators translate elite taste to broader segments of the population (Bainotti 2024; Soares et al. 2025). In that respect, conspicuous consumption consumers identify more closely with influencers who lead ostentatious lifestyles and trust this content even more than the brand (Chopra et al., 2021; Ganeshkumar et al., 2023). Based on these findings, the following hypothesis was developed:

H1: Tourists' perceptions of conspicuous consumption have a significant and positive effect on influencer marketing.

Both theoretical and empirical perspectives support the idea that a tendency toward conspicuous consumption influences the intention to purchase tourism products. Veblen (1899) explains in his *Theory of Conspicuous Consumption* that people buy luxury goods and services to improve their social prestige and thus strengthen their social status. In the choice mode of tourism, this process directly influences destination and tourism product choice. Travel experiences that are both socially desirable and highly visible to others serve as status



symbols, reinforcing individuals' purchase intentions. Phillips and Back (2011) showed that the prevalence of conspicuous consumption leads to greater motivation to visit elite destinations, while the desirability of cosmopolitanized property locales such as Las Vegas and New York correlates directly with consumption norms and socially significant status. Research on luxury travel behavior indicates that perceptions of sensitivity to prestige and fashion lead to the conspicuous consumption of luxury travel products (Yao et al., 2021; Lai et al., 2022), for which demand is responsive to functional needs, status, and social prestige. Research on tourism products has shown a similar connection (Biçer & Akgüre, 2022; Gil-Cordero et al., 2023). When these theoretical foundations and empirical findings are evaluated together, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2: Tourists' perceptions of conspicuous consumption have a significant and positive effect on their purchase intention toward tourism products.

The main reason for the immediate impact of influencer marketing on purchase intention relies primarily on the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). This theory assumes that the desire to purchase is a personal decision that is determined by three determinants: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Subjective norms are the perceived views and behaviors of reference sources that individuals value in the formation of purchase intentions. From this point of view, influencers have impact and power of reference over their followers. This framework is also reinforced by the source credibility of the idea. Naturally, credibility, authenticity and expertise can assist influencers to build brand trust and purchase intention among the audience (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Evans et al.). This effect is more pronounced in high ID-followers (Gilly et al. 1998). This link was also examined in the tourism literature, that claims which influencers positively affect destination personality and, eventually, travel purchase intention (Upananda & Bandara, 2022; Kilipiri et al., 2023; Jaya & Prianthara, 2020). Based on this theoretical and empirical basis the following hypothesis was developed:

H3: Influencer marketing has a significant and positive effect on tourists' purchase intention toward tourism products.

Several theoretical models support can act as a mediator between conspicuous consumption and purchase intention. Simmel's Theory of Diffusion, originally proposed in Simmel's theory of fashion (1904) states that consumption habits of the upper class diffuse down to lower classes through influencers. Influencers are intermediaries in this process, connecting those who are able to afford conspicuous consumption goods with the sites where they are visible. This relationship is further supported at a theoretical level by Veblen (1899) through his Theory of Conspicuous Consumption. To gain social status, people buy the high-end tourism products recommended by the influencers and convert their desire of conspicuous consumption into purchase intention. This provides empirical evidence for this intermediary mechanism in accordance with the theoretical framework. Efendioğlu (2019) confirmed that content depicting conspicuous consumption on social media before purchase significantly influences users' buying intentions. In contrast, Dinh and Lee (2024) examined whether social media influencers could increase their followers' buyer intentions toward conspicuous consumption. In the tourism literature, Yao et al. (2021) found that shared travel experiences increase conspicuous consumption, which in turn reinforces purchase intention. Based on these insights, influencer marketing is revised as a mediating variable that carries out the effect of conspicuous consumption on purchase intention, and the following hypothesis is examined:

H4: Influencer marketing plays a mediating role in the relationship between tourists' perceptions of conspicuous consumption and their purchase intention toward tourism products.

2.5 The Moderating Role of Gender

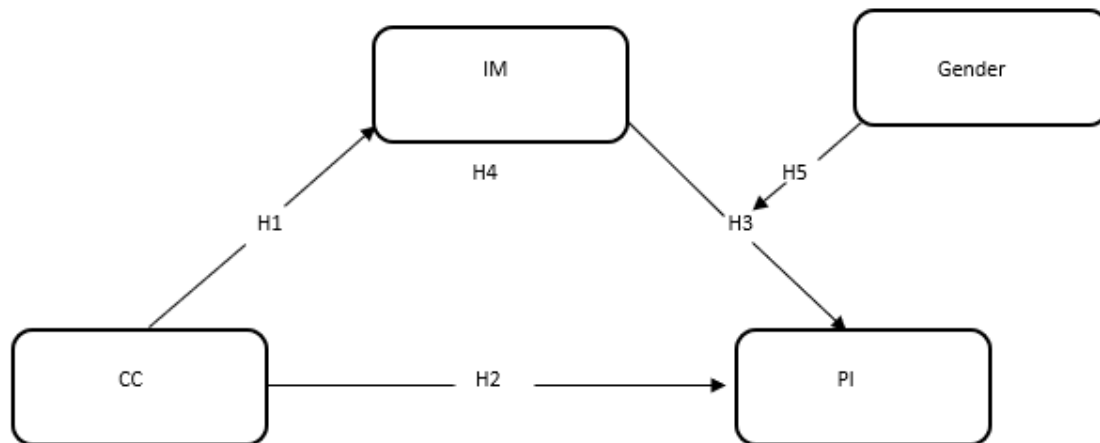
Much research on gender differences in consumer behavior has been conducted in the fields of social psychology and marketing. However, gender has not been extensively studied as a moderator of the mediating effects of influencer marketing. Social Role Theory (Eagly, 1987) states that people behave as consumers in accordance with the gender roles they have learned through socialization. Based on this theory, conspicuous consumption in pursuit of elitism, power and status. On the contrary, women's consumption trends are leaning towards refinement, aesthetics and hedonistic enjoyment (Tafari et al., 2024). This difference is also evident in the way influencer marketing content is viewed. Men tend to respond more to messages that highlight the status and power associated with products, whereas women respond more to messages that convey emotional gratification and social approval (Apostol, 2023; Kanwal et al., 2022). Recent studies have consistently revealed a greater motivation for conspicuous consumption in men than in women (Segal & Podoshen, 2013; Verdugo and Ponce, 2023; Cho et al., 2024). Furthermore, women may respond more strongly than men to emotional components in influencer content because of their hedonistic consumer tendencies (Saraç et al., 2023). When all these findings are considered together, it is expected that the mediating role of influencer marketing between the perception of conspicuous consumption and purchase intention will differ significantly based on gender. From the above, the following hypothesis was developed:

H5: Gender significantly moderates the mediating role of influencer marketing in the relationship between conspicuous consumption and purchase intention.

The conceptual model developed based on the theoretical background and hypotheses is presented in Figure 1.



Figure 1- Conceptual model



Note: CC: Conspicuous Consumption; IM: Influencer Marketing; PI: Purchase Intention.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Instruments

For the study, a questionnaire consisting of two sections was specifically developed. The first section included items related to conspicuous consumption, purchase intention, and influencer marketing. The second section contained questions on demographic information (e.g., gender, age, marital status, occupation). The first section of the questionnaire consisted of 21 items, while the second section included 10 questions. Thirteen items related to conspicuous consumption were used in the scale. The original scale was developed by Chaudhuri et al. in 2011 and was translated into Turkish by Aslan in 2021. The items used in this study were adapted from Aslan's (2021) work. Examples of items include: "Using high-status tourism products makes me popular among people around me" and "I think some popular tourism products are more attractive than others."

Three items related to purchase intention were used, adapted from the study of Escobar-Rodríguez, Grávalos-Gastaminza, and Pérez-Calanas (2017). Example items include: "I would have no hesitation in purchasing a tourism product I discovered through Instagram" and "I intend to purchase a tourism product I discovered through Instagram in the near future." Since the original scale was in English, the items were translated into Turkish using the translation method (Brislin, 1976), and the style and meaning of the translated items were examined.

Five items related to influencer marketing were also used. This scale was developed by Eyal and Şen (2020) based on the works of Gretzel (2018), Ge and Gretzel (2018), and Zietek (2016). Example items include: "I purchase tourism products shared by influencers" and "I value influencers' opinions when purchasing a tourism product." The questionnaire was measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). In the scale development process, three experts were consulted, and following five minor revisions, the final version was established.

3.2 Data Collection and Sampling

The population of the study consists of social media users in Türkiye who are 16 years of age or older and who have purchased a tourism product at least once through social media. Due to economic and time constraints, it was not possible to reach all social media users; therefore, a sampling method was employed and the data were collected online. The purposive sampling method was chosen for this study, in which only a subset of the population is selected (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Instagram was selected as the application area for data collection, primarily because it is the most widely used social media platform in Türkiye. According to DataReportal (2025), the number of Instagram users in Türkiye has reached 57.10 million.

First, participants were provided with certain definitions regarding conspicuous consumption, tourism products, and influencer marketing. Second, they were asked whether they had ever purchased a tourism product through social media and whether they perceived themselves as conspicuous consumers due to influencer marketing. Participants who answered "Yes" to both questions proceeded to respond to the remaining items of the questionnaire. Data were collected online between March 28, 2024, and October 17, 2024, resulting in a total of 396 valid responses. Since the minimum sample size of 384, which is considered sufficient to represent an infinite population (Sekaran, 2003), was reached, analyses were conducted based on 396 responses.



3.3 Data Analysis

For data analysis, IBM SPSS version 26 and AMOS version 26 were used. First, the dataset was checked for missing values, and the multiple imputation method was applied accordingly. Second, four questionnaire forms completed with straight-line responses across all items were excluded from the analysis (Hair et al., 2014). Third, skewness and kurtosis values were examined. The results showed that skewness values ranged between 0.390 and 0.728, and kurtosis values ranged between -0.533 and 0.606, which fall within the acceptable reference range. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the data exhibit a normal distribution (Kline, 2015).

To evaluate the goodness-of-fit of the measurement model, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted and several fit indices were used, including the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), PCLOSE, and the Chi-square/Degree of Freedom ratio (CMIN/DF). A model is considered to have a good fit when CMIN/DF values are below 3, CFI values exceed 0.95, SRMR values are below 0.08, and RMSEA values are below 0.06 (Hair et al., 1998; Hu & Bentler, 1999).

After the CFA, statistical tests measuring Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), as well as correlation tests, were conducted to understand the structure of the sample and the study variables. For convergent validity to be achieved, the CR value should be greater than 0.70 (Kline, 2015). To establish discriminant validity, the AVE value must be greater than 0.50 (Ab Hamid et al., 2017). In addition, the square root of the AVE for each construct should be higher than its correlation coefficients with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2014; Sharif, 2020).

For the examination of mediating effects in the study, Hayes' PROCESS macro version 4.2 with the bootstrapping technique (Model 4) was employed (Hayes, 2018). Confidence intervals were evaluated by considering the lower and upper limit values. To identify the moderating role, Model 14 was tested (Hayes, 2018; Preacher & Hayes, 2004). In this study, the mediating role of influencer marketing in the formation of conspicuous consumers' purchase intention was assessed. Many studies measuring mediating effects have used Hayes' PROCESS macro version 4.2 (Lee, 2022; Li et al., 2022; Ranjan & Dash, 2024; Sarac et al., 2025).

The first regression analyzed the relationship between the independent and mediating variables; the second examined the relationship between the independent and dependent variables excluding the mediators; and the third tested the relationship between the independent and dependent variables including the mediators. For percentile bootstrapping, 5,000 bootstrap samples were applied, using a 95% confidence level. Finally, the moderating role of gender was tested to determine whether it had an effect on the dependent variable through the mediator. Several studies have similarly attempted to measure the moderating role of gender in mediated models using Hayes' PROCESS macro (Ding et al., 2017; Rivi re & Douilliez, 2017; Tian et al., 2022).

4. Results

4.1 Participant's Profile

Table 1 presents the participant profile. According to Table 1, 27.3% (n = 108) of the participants were male and 72.7% (n = 288) were female. In terms of age distribution, the majority of participants (31.2%, n = 124) were between 16 and 22 years old, while the lowest proportion was in the age group of 44 to 50 years (5.6%, n = 22). Regarding educational background, 58.6% (n = 232) were undergraduate graduates, 20.7% (n = 82) held postgraduate degrees, 11.1% (n = 44) were associate degree graduates, and 9.6% (n = 38) had completed secondary education. In terms of occupation, the majority of participants were freelancers (31.3%, n = 124), followed by salaried employees (22.5%, n = 89), students (13.4%, n = 53), self-employed individuals (10.1%, n = 40), retirees (8.6%, n = 34), and others (14.1%, n = 56).

Table 1. Demographic Findings

	# of participants	%
Gender		
Male	108	27.3
Female	288	72.7
Age		
16-22 years	124	31.2
23-29 years	91	23
30-36 years	72	18.2
37-43 years	34	8.6
44-50 years	22	5.6
Above 50 years	53	13.4

**Education**

Secondary Education	38	9.6
Associate Degree	44	11.1
Undergraduate (Bachelor's Degree)	232	58.6
Postgraduate (Master's/Doctoral Degree)	82	20.7

Occupational Status

Salaried Employee	89	22.5
Retired	34	8.6
Self-Employed	40	10.1
Freelancer	124	31.3
Student	53	13.4
Other	56	14.1

Source: survey's data.

4.2 Confirmatory factor analysis

To test the construct reliability and convergent validity of the measurement model, CFA was conducted. As shown in Table 2, the majority of the standardized factor loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70. Although one item measuring conspicuous consumption exhibited a relatively low factor loading (0.485), it was retained because of its theoretical relevance and its contribution to the conceptual coverage of the construct. Furthermore, despite retaining this item, the CR and AVE values for the conspicuous consumption construct remained above the recommended thresholds, indicating that the construct maintained satisfactory reliability and convergent validity (Hair et al., 1998). Moreover, the Cronbach's alpha values of the scales ranged between 0.841 and 0.925. According to Kline (2015), an α value above 0.70 indicates that the measurements are reliable. When the CFA fit indices were examined, the following results were obtained: CMIN/df = 3.182, GFI = 0.888, AGFI = 0.850, NFI = 0.909, IFI = 0.936, TLI = 0.923, CFI = 0.936, and RMSEA = 0.074. These values demonstrate that the model achieved an acceptable level of fit.

Table 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Factors	Items	CFA	Mean	S.D	α
CC	I use some popular tourism products to increase my social value among people around me	.839	3.305	1.14	.925
	I want others to see the popular tourism products I purchase for the purpose of gaining status.	.830			
	I purchase certain tourism products to look wealthier.	.825			
	I want to have some of the tourism products that people around me own.	.769			
	I purchase some tourism products to be popular.	.768			
	I purchase some popular tourism products to show people around me that I am wealthy.	.760			
	I purchase some popular tourism products to be different from others.	.745			
	Using high-status tourism products makes me popular among people around me.	.707			
	I enjoy it when people around me know that I am wearing a luxury product.	.686			
	I purchase some unique tourism products that people around me do not have.	.629			
PI	I think some popular tourism products are more attractive than others.	.485	3.431	0.95	.841
	I intend to purchase a tourism product I discovered through Instagram in the near future.	.825			
	I have a strong intention to purchase a tourism product I discovered through Instagram.	.813			
	I would have no hesitation in purchasing a tourism product I discovered through Instagram.	.807			
IM	I purchase tourism products shared by influencers.	.791	3.326	0.92	.876
	I value influencers' opinions when purchasing a tourism product.	.777			
	For me, an influencer's recommendation is more important than the brand.	.759			
	I purchase tourism products shared by influencers without questioning.	.720			
	For me, an influencer's recommendation is more effective than TV commercials.	.702			

Source: survey's data.

As shown in Table 3, the CR values of the latent variables were calculated, and the results were found to be 0.928 for CC, 0.856 for PI, and 0.866 for IM. Since all CR values exceeded the threshold of 0.70 recommended by Hair et al. (1998), the internal consistency of the variables was confirmed. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were obtained as 0.544 for CC, 0.664 for PI, and 0.563 for IM. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Hair et al. (1998), AVE values should be greater than 0.50 to establish convergent validity. As this condition was met, convergent validity was confirmed.

For discriminant validity to be established, the square root of the AVE of each construct should be greater than its correlation coefficients with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As shown in Table 3, this condition was also satisfied. Therefore, discriminant validity among the constructs was confirmed.



To assess the potential risk of common method bias, Harman's single-factor test was conducted. The results indicated that multiple factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were extracted, and the first factor accounted for 49.48% of the total variance, which is below the recommended threshold of 50% (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Fuller et al., 2016). These findings suggest that common method bias is not a serious concern in this study.

Table 3. Reliability and Validity

Factors	CR	AVE	Fornell-Lacker Criterion		
			CC	PI	IM
Conspicuous Consumption (CC)	.928	.544	.738	.633	.596
Purchase Intention (PI)	.856	.664	.633	.815	.701
Influencer Marketing (IM)	.866	.563	.596	.701	.750

Source: survey's data.

4.3. Hypothesis Tests and Statistical Analyses on the Mediating Role of Influencer Marketing and the Moderating Role of Gender

In the study, the effect of conspicuous consumption on purchase intention of tourism products and the mediating role of influencer marketing were tested using the bootstrapping technique with Hayes' PROCESS Macro version 4.2. As shown in Table 4, conspicuous consumption was found to have a significant, positive, and strong effect on influencer marketing ($B = 0.666$, $t = 14.726$, $p < 0.01$). This result indicates that each one-unit increase in participants' perceptions of conspicuous consumption leads to a 0.666-unit increase in influencer marketing. This indicates a strong positive relationship, suggesting that conspicuous consumption is an important predictor of influencer marketing behavior. In addition, the R^2 value of 0.355 demonstrates that conspicuous consumption explains 35.5% of the variance in influencer marketing.

Conspicuous consumption was also found to have a significant, positive, and moderate effect on purchase intention ($B = 0.374$, $t = 8.033$, $p < 0.05$). Accordingly, each one-unit increase in participants' perceptions of conspicuous consumption results in a 0.374-unit increase in their purchase intention. This suggests that conspicuous consumption not only directly influences purchase intention but also operates through additional psychological and socially driven signaling mechanisms. Furthermore, influencer marketing was found to have a significant, positive, and strong effect on purchase intention ($B = 0.504$, $t = 12.108$, $p < 0.05$). Each one-unit increase in participants' perceptions of influencer marketing increases their purchase intention by 0.504 units. This finding highlights the importance of influencer marketing as a more immediate and influential factor in shaping consumer purchase decisions compared to direct consumption tendencies.

When the combined effect of conspicuous consumption and influencer marketing on purchase intention was examined, the R^2 value of 0.563 indicated that these two variables together explain 56.3% of the variance in purchase intention. This level of explanatory power indicates that the model has substantial predictive capability in explaining consumer purchase intention in the tourism context. Based on the results of the analyses, hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 were supported.

Table 4. Statistical Analysis of the Study Variables and Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypotheses	Regression Model		Goodness-of-Fit Indices			Regression Coefficient		p	Result
	Outcome Variable	Predictor Variable	R	R ²	F	B	t		
H1	IM	CC	.596	.355	216.856	.666	14.726	<0,01	Supported
H2	PI	CC	.751	.563	253.534	.374	8.0331	<0,01	Supported
H3		IM				.504	12.108	<0,01	Supported

Source: survey's data.

In the study, the mediating role of influencer marketing in the effect of conspicuous consumption on purchase intention was tested using Model 4 of Hayes' PROCESS Macro version 4.2, while the moderating role of gender in this mediating relationship was tested using Model 14. According to the research findings, influencer marketing plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between conspicuous consumption and purchase intention. In determining the significance of a mediating effect, bootstrap confidence intervals are taken into account. The fact that zero is not included within the 95% bootstrap confidence interval (0.267–0.407) indicates that the indirect effect is statistically significant (Hayes, 2017).



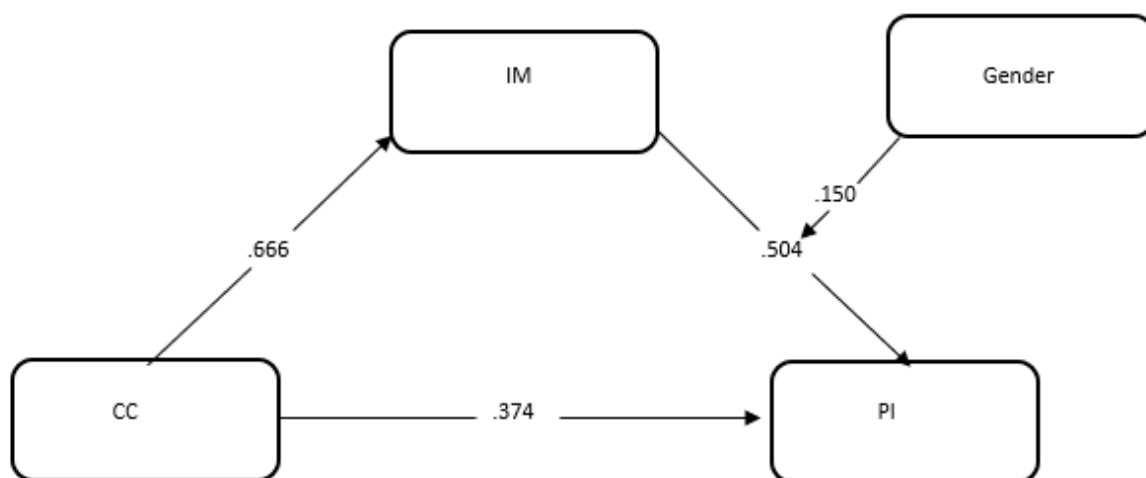
Furthermore, when the mediating variable influencer marketing was included in the model, the direct effect of conspicuous consumption on purchase intention remained significant ($B = 0.374$, $p < .001$), indicating that influencer marketing partially mediates this relationship. The total effect of conspicuous consumption on purchase intention was $B = 0.709$, while the indirect effect through influencer marketing was $B = 0.336$ (95% Boot CI = 0.267–0.407). Since the bootstrap confidence interval did not include zero and the direct effect remained significant after the inclusion of the mediator, influencer marketing was found to have a partial mediating role in the relationship between conspicuous consumption and purchase intention (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Hayes, 2022). Accordingly, hypothesis H4 was supported.

As shown in Table 5, the moderating effect of gender on the mediating role of influencer marketing between conspicuous consumption and purchase intention was found to be statistically significant (Index of Moderated Mediation = 0.150; CI [0.056–0.255]). This demonstrates that the strength of the mediated relationship varies across gender groups, highlighting the importance of individual differences in social media-driven consumption behavior. In addition, the confidence interval was found to be between 0.226–0.374 for female participants and between 0.346–0.560 for male participants. These results indicate that gender leads to differences in the magnitude of the mediation effect. The indirect effect was higher for men (0.449) compared to women (0.299). This suggests that male consumers are more responsive to status-signaling cues embedded in influencer content compared to female consumers. This finding reveals that influencer marketing assumes a stronger mediating role for male participants (see Table 5). Accordingly, hypothesis H5 was supported.

Table 5. Results of the Hypotheses on the Mediating Role of Influencer Marketing and the Moderating Role of Gender

Hypotheses	Indirect Effect	B	Boot SE	Boot 95% CI		P	Result
				Lower Limit	Upper Limit		
H4	Total Effect	.709	,059	.5481	.8729	<0,05	Supported
	Direct Effect CC → PI	.374	,047	.282	.466	=0,0000	
	Indirect Effect CC→IM→PI	.336	,036	.267	.407	<0,05	
Hypotheses		Index of Moderated Mediation	Boot SE	Boot 95% CI		P	Result
				Lower Limit	Upper Limit		
	Gender	.150	,051	.056	.255	0.0035	
H5		B	Boot SE	Boot 95% CI		P	Supported
				Lower Limit	Upper Limit		
	Female	.299	.0371	.226	.374		
	Male	.449	.0546	.346	.560	< 0,0001	

Figure 2- Hypothesis research model



Note: CC: Conspicuous Consumption; IM: Influencer Marketing; PI: Purchase Intention.



5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigates the impact of social media users' perceptions of conspicuous consumption on their purchase intentions. The study also examines the mediating role of influencer marketing and the moderating role of gender in influencer marketing. When the study results are evaluated in terms of the tested hypotheses, all of the developed hypotheses are confirmed. According to the research results, it was first concluded that tourists' perceptions of conspicuous consumption have a significant and strong impact on influencer marketing (H1). The findings show that individuals with high conspicuous consumption tendencies are more responsive to influencers' posts. This result is consistent with previous studies (Bainotti, 2024; Dinh & Lee, 2024) on the role of influencers in stimulating and triggering conspicuous consumption desires and contributing to making individuals' social status visible. Individuals with high conspicuous consumption tendencies show greater interest in destinations and products that reflect their social status. Therefore, influencers' shared experiences and recommendations have a significant impact on these individuals' consumption decisions.

On the other hand, the study focused on the effect of conspicuous consumption on purchase intention. As a result of the analysis, it was found that conspicuous consumption directly increases purchase intention (H2). Similarly, Gil-Cordero et al. (2023) found that conspicuous consumption increases purchase intention toward luxury products. In another study, Beall et al. (2021) examined the role of conspicuous consumption among the factors determining attitudes toward participation in ecotourism. Their findings indicated that, together with environmental values, conspicuous consumption is an important source of motivation for purchasing ecotourism products. Wen and Huang (2021) also found that the perceived value of lifestyle and luxury consumption alters the meaning tourists attach to a destination, thereby increasing purchase intention. As evidenced by these studies, conspicuous consumption plays a critical role in the formation of purchase intention. As previous studies have shown, conspicuous consumption plays a critical role in the formation of purchase intention. The research results indicate that individuals' consumption behaviors go beyond meeting their needs; they also reflect their efforts to make the products they purchase visible and their desire to increase their social status and gain prestige in society. Therefore, these findings confirm the basic assumptions of conspicuous consumption.

Another hypothesis proposed in the research model is that influencer marketing has a significant and positive effect on the intention to purchase a tourism product (H3). The analysis supported this hypothesis and determined that marketing activities carried out by influencers are effective in influencing individuals. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that influencer marketing has significant effects on tourists' travel perceptions and motivates their purchasing behavior (Babu et al., 2025; John & Supramaniam, 2026). On the other hand, the research also reveals a partial mediating effect of influencer marketing on the relationship between conspicuous consumption and purchase intention (H4). This finding indicates that individuals exhibiting conspicuous consumption behavior are influenced by influencer marketing in their purchasing behavior. Specifically, with the development of social media and the emergence of influencers, individuals may engage in consumption behaviors to identify with them and feel a sense of belonging to the same group as their followers. From this perspective, influencer marketing emerges as a mediator in the relationship between tourists' conspicuous consumption behaviors and their purchase intentions. Similarly, research in different fields has shown that influencer marketing increases purchase intention among individuals with high levels of conspicuous consumption (Efendioğlu, 2019; Dinh & Lee, 2024). In the field of tourism, there are also studies indicating that influencer marketing enhances purchase intention. For example, Upananda and Bandara (2022) found that influencer marketing increased the purchase intentions of social media users. Likewise, Kilipiri et al. (2023) identified that when influencers preferred sustainable destinations, their followers also developed purchase intentions. On the other hand, the mediating effect of influencer marketing in the relationship between conspicuous consumption and purchase intention has been examined only to a limited extent in tourism research. Yao et al. (2021) found that shared travel experiences could enhance conspicuous consumption and thereby strengthen purchase intention. The findings of the present study contribute to the literature by demonstrating that, among individuals with high perceptions of conspicuous consumption, influencer marketing mediates the effect on purchase intention.

Finally, the research results show that gender significantly moderates the effect of influencer marketing on purchase intention (H5). The study results reveal that influencer marketing has a stronger influence on purchase intention among men. In addition, gender also moderates the mediating effect on the GTu → Influencer Marketing → Purchase Intention path. Some previous studies have shown that women are more influenced by conspicuous consumption than men (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004; Öz, 2018), while others have found that men are more influenced than women (Russell et al., 2022). On the other hand, there are also studies indicating that gender does not have a significant effect on purchase intention in the context of influencer marketing (Akçam, 2021; Layık, 2021). In light of this evidence, a different result emerges when the moderating role is examined. The fact that influencer marketing has a stronger influence on purchase intention among men can be explained by their greater emphasis on luxury consumption, power, ostentation, and reflecting social visibility in their vacation decisions. In this respect, the research adds a different dimension



to the literature on men's travel decisions. The theoretical and practical contributions of this research, based on the findings, are presented below.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

With the development of social media, the number of studies conducted in tourism research has increased, and the effects of social media on tourism have been examined from various perspectives. One of the most significant impacts of social media is that it makes tourists' conspicuous behaviors more visible and encourages them. For this reason, many studies have investigated the effect of conspicuous consumption on tourists' preferences (Correia et al., 2016; Yao et al., 2021; Lai et al., 2022). However, existing studies have only limitedly examined the mediating role of influencer marketing in the relationship between conspicuous consumption and purchase intention, as well as the moderating role of gender. By focusing on the effect of social media users' perceptions of conspicuous consumption on purchase intention, this study contributes to the expansion of the existing literature and fills an important gap. Furthermore, the findings of this research also contribute to conspicuous consumption theory, trickle-down theory, and social role theory.

The findings demonstrate that conspicuous consumption has a significant effect on influencer marketing. Moreover, influencer marketing serves as a mediator in the relationship between conspicuous consumption and purchase intention. This result contributes to conspicuous consumption theory and trickle-down theory. In a similar study, Li and Stodolska (2022) found that tourists shape their travel experiences and engage in conspicuous consumption in order to attain their desired social status. Russel et al. (2022) emphasized that photo sharing on social media increases motivations for conspicuous consumption. Ding et al. (2024), on the other hand, highlighted a different aspect by showing that benign envy directly and positively influences conspicuous consumption intention. Similarly, Efendioğlu (2019) revealed that individuals aim to construct a different image by displaying their lifestyles on social media. In this context, by revealing the relationship between conspicuous consumption and influencer marketing, this study adds a new dimension to both theories and provides theoretical contributions.

Another important theoretical contribution of the research is related to social role theory. One of the most critical areas where differences in social behavior are observed is purchasing behavior. In line with the findings, it was determined that influencer marketing has a stronger impact on men's purchase intentions. Indeed, the study by Tafani et al. (2024) revealed that men, due to status-related motives, are more inclined toward conspicuous consumption compared to women. From this perspective, the results of the present study contribute to social role theory by linking influencer marketing with gender and purchase intention. In conclusion, the study fills an important gap in the marketing literature by adding new dimensions to the purchase intentions of social media users and contributes to conspicuous consumption theory, trickle-down theory, and social role theory.

5.2 Practical Implications

In this study, the roles of conspicuous consumption, influencer marketing, and gender were revealed in order to better understand the purchase intentions of social media users. Research showing the influence of social media on consumers today provides important implications for destinations and tourism businesses. First, the results indicate that conspicuous consumption is a critical factor that increases purchase intention among social media users. This finding is particularly important for destination management and tourism businesses in terms of their marketing decision-making processes. Accordingly, managers can develop marketing strategies that encourage conspicuous consumption by focusing on shareable experiences on social media, aesthetically appealing venues, and elements such as luxury and personalized services. Furthermore, managers can contribute to the sustainable development goals of destinations by promoting the use of local products, highlighting local businesses, and making environmentally responsible practices prestigious for consumers.

Second, influencer marketing is shown to be an element that enhances purchase intention particularly among individuals with high levels of conspicuous consumption. This finding suggests that influencer strategies specifically targeting individuals with higher conspicuous consumption tendencies may be more effective in increasing purchase intention. In this context, focusing on unique experiences and original content, especially through influencer collaborations, to achieve high visibility on social media is crucial for businesses seeking to reach wider audiences. Furthermore, integrating these strategies with local economies can help destination management organizations increase the brand value of their destinations through influencer marketing. Examples include influencers creating authentic content with local communities and organizing events such as influencer campaigns and social media competitions involving local residents.

Third, when examining the moderating role of gender, it was found that men are more strongly influenced by influencer marketing compared to women. Men tend to display greater inclinations toward conspicuous consumption, with their luxury consumption often driven by elements emphasizing status, power, and prestige. Their expenditures are aimed at demonstrating superiority and feeling privileged within society. For example, luxury yacht tours, elite golf vacations, VIP flights, and luxury safari tours are more



popular among men. Women, on the other hand, are more strongly associated with hedonic (pleasure-oriented) consumption. For instance, luxury resorts, spa services, boutique hotels, and private tours are more frequently preferred by women. Accordingly, gender-based influencer marketing emerges as a strategy that strengthens purchase intention by enhancing consumer perceptions of trust (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Therefore, when planning marketing efforts, it is necessary to develop products that align with the characteristics of the target audience in marketing communication. In the tours, campaigns, and activities developed, elements such as status and prestige can be emphasized in marketing strategies to strengthen the purchase intentions of male consumers, while experience and aesthetic appeal can be emphasized for female consumers.

5.3. Limitation, recommendation and future directions

This research was conducted within certain limitations. The study sample consists of individuals who purchased tourism products through social media and exhibit conspicuous consumption tendencies. A potential limitation of this study is the unbalanced gender distribution of the sample, with female participants accounting for 72.7% of the respondents and male participants accounting for 27.3%. Since gender was examined as a moderating variable, this imbalance may have affected the statistical precision of the estimates for the male subgroup. However, the male subgroup size ($n = 108$) exceeded the commonly accepted sample size threshold for subgroup analyses in social science research (Hair et al., 2014). Furthermore, the moderated mediation analysis was conducted using Hayes' PROCESS macro with 5,000 bootstrap resamples, which provides more robust estimates under conditions of non-normality and unequal group sizes (Hayes, 2018). Although the findings support the significant moderating role of gender, future studies are encouraged to replicate the proposed model using more balanced gender distributions to further verify the robustness of these findings.

Therefore, the generalizability of the findings to other consumer groups, particularly individuals with low conspicuous consumption tendencies, is limited, and different findings may emerge when the research is conducted with these groups. Accordingly, future research is recommended to test the proposed model using different and more heterogeneous samples. Conducting the study in a different destination may yield different results. In addition, each social media platform has its own unique audience. Therefore, studies carried out on different platforms such as X, YouTube, or TikTok may lead to different findings. This study focused on tourism products; however, future studies that examine a specific brand, business, or location may produce alternative results. Moreover, future research could investigate the factors influencing social media users' purchase intentions by incorporating different variables. On the other hand, the use of qualitative research methods would allow for a more detailed exploration of social media users' thoughts and opinions, enabling the collection of in-depth data and the development of innovative marketing strategies. Based on all the findings and recommendations, this study is considered to fill an important gap in the literature due to the lack of detailed prior research on the subject, and it is expected to serve as a valuable reference for future studies.

Declaration on the Use of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence (ChatGPT, developed by OpenAI) was used solely for language editing and translation of the manuscript. The authors take full responsibility for the scientific content, study design, data analysis, interpretation of the findings, and conclusions presented in this manuscript.

Credit author statement

Omer Sarac: Methodology, formal analysis, writing – methodology and results, supervision, writing – review & editing.

Oguz Colak: Writing – introduction, discussion, conclusion, theoretical implications, practical implications, limitations, and future research directions.

Emrah Yasarsoy: Writing – literature review and conceptual framework.

Damla Beyza Sinavci: Data collection, investigation, writing – methodology, and support for the results section.

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