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Scale Development on the Effect of Social Media Influencers on Purchase Intention *

Şermin ÖNEM[1], Murat Selim SELVİ[2]

Abstract

A Social Media Influencer (SMI) is a new independent third party that uses social media to shape audience attitudes. SMIs are present on most digital media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube, and build their sphere of influence by sharing their experiences on a wide range of specific topics such as fitness, fashion, beauty, DIY, vacation, entertainment, etc. with their followers. While making these posts, SMI creates a desire in social media users who are interested in those topics to follow influencers with high influence. This is because similar topics are also of interest to social media users and they feel SMI as a reflection of themselves. Therefore, every behavior of the influencer attracts more attention. This situation makes the job of marketers and brands easier. Because instead of their efforts to reach the target audience by developing many strategies, there is the SMI who brings together potential buyers who have formed their own target audience. In addition, reaching SMIs for advertising deals is less costly than reaching classic influencers. The purpose of this study is to develop and validate a scale that can measure the effect of SMIs' attitudes and behaviors on consumer purchase intention. Accordingly, the population of the study consisted of social media users who follow at least one SMI. Questionnaire method was used as a data collection tool in the research. While creating the scale items, expressions and phrases obtained from short interviews with consumers who use social media and follow at least one SMI were utilized in addition to the relevant domestic and foreign literature. Within the scope of the research, 821 questionnaires were accepted as valid and evaluated. As a result of the Structural Equation Model (SEM) application, it was determined that there is a significant effect of SMI on the effect of purchase intention.

Keywords: Social media influencer, scale development, purchase intention

1. PhD, sonem@asyaport.com, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3230-0801

2. Asst. Prof. Dr., Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University, msselvi@nku.edu.tr, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9114-3183

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1. INTRODUCTION

For today's businesses that are exposed to intense competition conditions, it has become imperative to realize marketing efforts through social media. However, it is not enough for businesses to realize their marketing efforts only on social media platforms. Because marketing efforts made through social media are no longer attractive to users and have become repulsive for those exposed to too many promotional images and videos. At this point, businesses have turned to SMI, which is expressed as independent people who will support them in sharing their marketing content online. SMIs gain the sympathy of consumers by collaborating with brands that correspond to their areas of expertise. Consumers can accept and trust the opinions of SMIs they see as their own, and even be influenced by SMIs in their purchasing decisions. There are many studies (Lim et al., 2017, p. 30; Nam and Dan, 2018, p. 4710; Casaló et al., 2020, p. 510; Saima and Khan 2020; Schouten et al., 2020, p. 258; Belanche et al., 2021, p. 186; Kurdi et al., 2022) on the effect of SMIs' attitudes and behaviors on consumers' purchase intentions. From this point of view, the study seeks to answer the question "Do the attitudes and behaviors of SMIs affect the consumer's purchase intention?". This study was conducted on subjects who use at least one of the social media platforms and have SMI followers on at least one of the social media platforms. The findings of this study are limited to purchase intention variables. It is assumed that the sample group determined in the study accurately represents the population.

It is assumed that the questionnaires used within the scope of the research provide appropriate data for the purpose of the research. It is assumed that the scales used in the research effectively measure the effect of SMIs on the purchase intention of consumers who are social media users.

Within the scope of the research, it is assumed that they are sufficiently informed about the subject, that they give answers to the questions in the questionnaire form that are compatible with their real situation, and that they are sufficient in terms of quality and quantity. In the pilot study, validity and reliability analyses were conducted on the scales in SPSS 24 program. In this context, item analysis and internal consistency were examined with Cronbach Alpha coefficient. The validity of the scale was tested with EFA and the confirmation of the factor structures was examined with AMOS 25 program.

2. SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER

Online shopping offers many benefits both in terms of information search and the purchasing process. Today, consumers prefer to passively search and collect information through SMI (Minh et al., 2021, pp. 81-82). According to Schickel (2000) people are always excited about SMI. SMI is seen as a special part of the virtual community that spreads information through various social media channels by sharing stories, photos, experiences or opinions about many objects, services and products, etc. (Minh et al., 2021, pp. 81-82). SMI also play an "initiating" and "influencing" role in the consumer purchase process. They create awareness, develop the community's interest in the brand and connect it to the product. Therefore, consumers tend to believe that a product endorsed by SMI is a good product (Malik and Guptha, 2014, p. 137). SMI, whose opinions about products resonate with other consumers, use the

power of blogs and social networking sites to leverage conversation for brands, but many see it as a way to express themselves as individuals. By giving their followers this sense of identity, SMI are seen as relatable and trustworthy, allowing them to be important messengers for consumers seeking advice on products (Forbes, 2016, p. 79). SMI can be anyone from a fashion blogger on Instagram to a wedding photographer on Pinterest to a cybersecurity expert tweeting on Twitter. Today, some influencers represent and/or recommend brands on various social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. Consumers today prefer to seek the opinions of other consumers and influencers in order to make informed decisions. Therefore, it can be said that SMI is now critical in forming consumer opinions about a brand's products or services (Chopra et al., 2020, p. 2).

Influencer marketing can be defined as a type of marketing that focuses on using influencers to mediate and influence a brand's message to the wider market. Compared to paid advertising, it is more likely to find influencers more credible. This is because social media users such as Instagram and Twitter have the ability to follow these influencers and are therefore exposed to being influenced by their views and opinions (Anongdeth and Barre, 2019, p. 10). Influencer marketing is often done by brands to build strong relationships with consumers through influencers, a strategy that is mutually beneficial for all. With the increase in the number of offers by various brands, consumers often look for authenticity in the brands they interact with. Brands often use SMI experiences shared on both social media and traditional media, along with their posts and advertisements respectively, to promote the familiarity and trust factor. This makes the product more relevant and trustworthy for consumers (Arora, 2019, pp. 87-88).

In addition to instant sharing, reviewing posts, transferring information and entertainment, research has revealed that SMIs play a critical role in the purchase intention stage, one of the purchase decision processes, by collecting information about post-purchase experiences in daily life (Bu et al., 2022, p. 855). According to Rebelo (2017, p. 30), social media users' purchase intentions;

- When they pretend to buy the product,

- When they can buy the product,

- It can happen when they are willing to buy the product promoted by the SMI.

Many authors have investigated the impact of social media influencer on consumers' purchase intention and the results are positive (Lim et al., 2017, p. 30; Nam and Dan, 2018, p. 4710; Casaló et al., 2020, p. 510; Schouten et al., 2020, p. 258; Belanche et al., 2021, p. 186). Purchase intention depends on many factors other than influencer characteristics, such as the need for a product, perceived value, price, brand perception, and others. Therefore, SMI characteristics may not make a consumer buy a product, but they can certainly make them consider buying it when the need arises and other factors are favorable (Khan and Khan, 2020, p. 17).

3. METHOD

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to develop and validate a scale that can measure the effect of SMI's attitudes and behaviors on consumer purchase intention. With this study, it is aimed to contribute to product marketers and to fill the gap in the related literature by providing meaningful inferences through statistical analysis on consumers' attitudes towards the scales.

Population and Sample: The population of this study consists of social media users who follow at least one SMI in Turkey. Purposive sampling was used in the study. Data were collected in digital environment. Therefore, it was easier to reach the population units and sampling was not taken. According to Israel (1992), if the population is more than 100,000, the sample size should be at least 400 people at 95% reliability level. Sekaran (2003) stated that the sample size should be 384 people for a population of 100,000 or more. In this study, 821 social media users were reached.

Data Collection Tool: A questionnaire form was used as a data collection tool; online survey application was preferred because it is possible to reach more people more easily. Internet-based online surveys are fast, easy and inexpensive. Smartphone versions of online surveys have been developed and have become one of the most widely used data collection tools today (Burns and Veeck, 2020, p. 174).

3.1. Scale Development and Validation Study

For the scale, procedures are carried out through 10 steps determined by Carpenter (2018).

Step 1: Exploring the intended meaning and breadth of the theoretical concept

Within the scope of the study, a conceptual framework was drawn by examining the national and international literature. With the creation of the theoretical structure, the statements required for the item pool were collected from secondary sources. Negative statements were not created in order not to cause misunderstandings and reduce reliability. Then, interviews (consisting of open-ended questions) were conducted with social media users (target audience) who follow social media influencers. From the answers received, useful statements were created to be used in the item pool. For this purpose, distinctive and determinative words related to the content of the subject, which would help to measure the attitudes of the target audience, were selected.

Phase 2: Submission of the Item Pool for Expert Opinion

At this stage, 27 statements were created for the “Effect of SMI on Purchase Intention Scale” and added to the item pool. The opinions of 11 academicians working in the department of marketing and conducting scientific studies on the subject were consulted. The quality and number of experts (between 5-40) are important for content validity (Wilson et al., 2012; Ayre & Scally, 2014). The experts were asked to evaluate each item according to the statements “1=Not Necessary”, “2=It should be corrected”, “3=Necessary.

Table 1. Number of expert opinions on the scale of the effect of SMI on purchase intention

No	Statements	Expert opinions		
		1= Number of experts who said "Not Necessary"	2= Number of experts who said "Should be corrected"	3= Number of experts who said "Necessary"
1	I follow SMI to discover new products on the market.	3	3	5
2	SMIs help me discover new trends in the market.	1	0	10
3	Watching the experiences of the SMI I follow triggers my need for that product.	0	1	10
4	Thanks to SMI, I am informed about the discounts of brands.	4	4	3
5	SMI allows me to follow seasonal discounts.	4	4	3
6	The coupon codes offered by influencers are more realistic than others.	7	3	1
7	SMI's posts help me predict my next purchase.	1	4	6
8	SMI reminds me of products I plan to buy in the future.	1	0	10
9	The promotional videos SMI shares in their stories influence my purchase plans.	0	1	10
10	I think the products SMI promotes are of good quality.	2	0	9
11	SMI's expectation-performance comparison of the product affects my purchase tendency.	3	0	8
12	I am not interested in SMI's posts about product experiences.	4	0	7
13	I am motivated to buy the product used by the SMI that I believe reflects my personality.	1	1	9
14	I would like to buy every outfit that SMI looks good in.	1	2	8
15	I will buy another product from SMI in the future.	1	3	7
16	I would consider purchasing the products/services that SMI purchases in the future.	0	2	9
17	If I need the product that SMI is promoting, I will probably buy it.	0	2	9
18	I am likely to buy a product that SMI recommends.	0	1	10
19	SMI's brand shares influence me to include that brand in my purchase plan.	2	3	6
20	SMI's information about promotions increases my online store visits.	2	1	8
21	I would be happy to learn about the products/services SMI purchases.	4	3	4
22	SMI's brand shares increase my trust in the brand.	3	0	8
23	I can buy other products of the brand that SMI promotes.	2	2	7
24	SMI's posts get me excited about the product.	3	1	7
25	SMI's posts make me want to make an unplanned (spontaneous) purchase of that product.	1	2	8
26	SMI's posts make me want to buy, ignoring the price of the product.	0	2	9
27	I would encourage my close circle to use the product offered by SMI.	2	1	8

Phase 3 and 4: Calculation of Content Validity Ratios (CVR) and Construction of the Scale

When calculating the Content Validity Ratios (CVR), all statements in the item pool that were marked as "2=Must be corrected" and "Necessary" were taken into consideration. Each statement was evaluated by 11 experts and the CVRs were calculated using the formula below.

CVR= NE / (N/2) -1

NE: Total Experts who said Necessary and Should be Corrected

N: Number of All Experts

Table 2. CVR reference table

Panel Size	Proportion Agreeing Essential	CVRCritical Exact Values	One-Sided p-Value	Ncritical (Min. No. of Experts Required to Ag reeItem Essential)	Ncriticalv Calculated From CRITBINOM Function
11	0.818	0.636	0.033	9	8

Source: Ayre and Scally, 2014: 82

Table 3. CVR and comments on the item pool of the SMI's effect on purchase intention scale

No	Ne*	CVR**	Comment	No	Ne*	CVR**	Comment
1	8	0.454	Eliminated	15	10	**0.810**	Remained
2	10	**0.810**	Remained	16	11	**1.000**	Remained
3	11	**1.000**	Remained	17	11	**1.000**	Remained
4	7	0.272	Eliminated	18	11	**1.000**	Remained
5	7	0.272	Eliminated	19	9	**0.636**	Remained
6	4	-0.272	Eliminated	20	9	**0.636**	Remained
7	10	**0.810**	Remained	21	7	0.272	Eliminated
8	10	**0.810**	Remained	22	8	0.454	Eliminated
9	11	**1.000**	Remained	23	9	**0.636**	Remained
10	9	**0.636**	Remained	24	8	0.454	Eliminated
11	8	0.454	Eliminated	25	10	**0.810**	Remained
12	7	0.272	Eliminated	26	11	**1.000**	Remained
13	10	**0.810**	Remained	27	9	**0.636**	Remained
14	10	**0.810**	Remained				

According to Table 3, the CVRs of statements 1, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 21, 22 and 24 were below 0.636, so these statements were excluded. The average CVR of the remaining 19 statements is 0.824. Therefore, since $0.824 \geq 0.636$, the content validity of the scale is statistically significant. The remaining statements constitute the final version of the scale.

Steps 2 and 3: Determining the sample, pre-testing the sample and checking the quality of the data

It is considered that the determined questions should first be applied to a small group of at least 100 people as a pre-test (Rana et al., 2022; Zenker et al., 2021). In this context, a sample of 258 people was reached. It was determined that the number obtained was sufficient for the analysis in accordance with the literature (Hollebeek et al., 2019; Lu et al., 2019).

Step 4: Reorganizing the Scale into a Factorial Structure

A correlation test was performed through the SPSS 24 program and it was determined that there were no unrelated items. According to Exploratory Factor Analysis, Bartlett's chi-square value is .05 or less. KMO=0.60 or higher. Factor loading values are above 0.50. Therefore, these values show that the applied analysis is meaningful (Hair et al., 2014).

According to Table 4, the majority of the participants are female (61.60%), 30 years of age or younger, predominantly undergraduate graduates and working in the private sector. Normality analysis was performed to examine the distribution of the data other than demographic variables.

Table 4. Demographic variables

Variable	Group	n	%	Variable	Group	n	%
Gender	Female	159	61.60	**Profession**	Academician	2	0.80
	Male	99	38.40		Not working	31	12.00
Age	30 and below	140	54.30		Retired	9	3.50
	31-40 years	69	26.70		Housewife	1	0.40
	41-50 years	29	11.20		Doctor	3	1.20
	51 and above	20	7.80		Officer	30	11.50
Marital status	Married	114	44.20		Engineer	3	1.20
	Single	144	55.80		Student	59	22.90
Education	High school and below	43	16.60		Teacher	4	1.60
	Associate Degree	51	19.80		Private Sector	113	43.70
	Undergraduate	128	49.60		Health Worker	3	1.20
	Postgraduate	36	14.00	**Experience**	Less than 3 years	95	36.80
Income	5,000 TL and below	116	45.00		3-6 years	57	22.10
	5,001-7,500 TL	62	24.00		7-10 years	39	15.10
	7,501-10,000 TL	39	15.00		11-14 years	26	10.10
	10,001-12,500 TL	12	4.70		15 years and above	41	15.90
	12,501-15,000 TL	11	4.30				
	15,001 TL and above	18	7.00				

Table 5. Normality analysis

Scale and Sub-dimensions	Central Tendency Measurements			
	Mean	**Median**	**Skewness**	**Kurtosis**
Impact of SMI on Purchase Intention	2.921	3.000	-0.009	-0.873

When the table related to the scales was examined, it was determined that the sample showed a normal distribution since the Skewness and Kurtosis values were between +1.96 and -1.96 (Hair et al., 2014). As a result of the analysis, it was seen that the scale developed provided appropriate values since the KMO value was 0.948 (KMO>0.60), Bartlett's sphericity test result was 0.001 (Bartlett's<0.05), Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was 0.936, the value was above 0.60, the Average Variance Explained (AVE) value measuring convergent validity was greater than 0.50, and the value measuring Convergent Reliability (CR) was greater than 0.70 (Hair et al, 2014), it was seen that the developed scale provided appropriate values.

Table 6. Exploratory factor analysis and parallel analysis

	Statement	Factor Load Value (SPSS)	Cronbach Alfa (α)	PA Results (Ncases: 258; Nvar: 9; Ndataset:100; Percent: 95; Brian Oc)		
				Raw Data	Means	Percently
Impact of SMI on Purchase Intention *% of Variance: 62.072 ;Eigen-value: 5.963*				5.963	1.284	1.364
INTENTION 4	SMI reminds me of products I plan to buy in the future.	0.755				
INTENTION 5	The promotional videos SMIs share in their stories influence my purchase plans.	0.790				
INTENTION 6	I think the products SMI promotes are of good quality.	0.797				
INTENTION 8	I am willing to buy the product used by the SMI that I believe reflects my personality.	0.782	α= 0.936 AVE= 0.620 CR= 0.963			
INTENTION 10	I will buy another product from SMI in the future.	0.799				
INTENTION 13	I am likely to buy a product that the SMI recommends.	0.823				
INTENTION 15	SMI's information about promotions increases my online store visits.	0.718				
INTENTION 16	I can buy other products of the brand that SMI is promoting.	0.822				
INTENTION 19	I would encourage my close circle to use the product offered by SMI.	0.800				

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood (ML); Rotation Method: Direct Oblimin
KMO: 0.948; Bartlett's sphericity test; (χ2=1583.742; df=36; p=0.001)

Horn (1965) proposed the parallel analysis method against the commonly used Kaiser-Guttman decision rule for the number of factors with Eigen-value > 1. The Eigen-value>1 method assumes that the analyzed correlation matrix is the population correlation matrix (Cho et al., 2009).

Table 7. Unidimensionality analysis (Kaiser-Gutman Criteria)

Factors	Number of Statements	1.Eigenvalue	2.Eigenvalue	Total Variance
Intention	9	5.963	0.570	62.078

Implementation of Steps 5-9: During the implementation of steps 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, the application of EFA analysis and the required values of factor loading values were explained in detail and to a significant extent (Carpenter, 2018). In this context, the analyses were performed with the Maximum Likelihood method, the factor loading value was determined as 0.50, and Direct Oblimin was preferred as the rotation method.

Table 8. Deleted statements

Deleted Statements		
INTENTION 1	SMIs help me discover new trends in the market.	It was deleted because the Factor Load Value was below 0.50.
INTENTION 2	Watching the experiences of the SMI I follow triggers my need for that product.	
INTENTION 3	SMI's posts help me predict my next purchase.	
INTENTION 7	SMI's posts are influential in determining the quantity of the product I buy.	
INTENTION 9	I would like to buy every outfit that SMI looks good in.	
INTENTION 11	I would consider purchasing the products/services that SMI purchases in the future.	
INTENTION 12	If I need the product that SMI is promoting, I will probably buy it.	
INTENTION 14	SMI's brand shares influence me to include that brand in my purchase plan.	
INTENTION 17	SMI's posts make me want to make an unplanned (spontaneous) purchase of that product.	
INTENTION 18	SMI's posts make me want to buy, ignoring the price of the product.	

In this context, the confirmatory factor analysis was repeated four times during the process of creating the scale, and the EFA and PA are shown in Table 6.

Figure 1. CFA

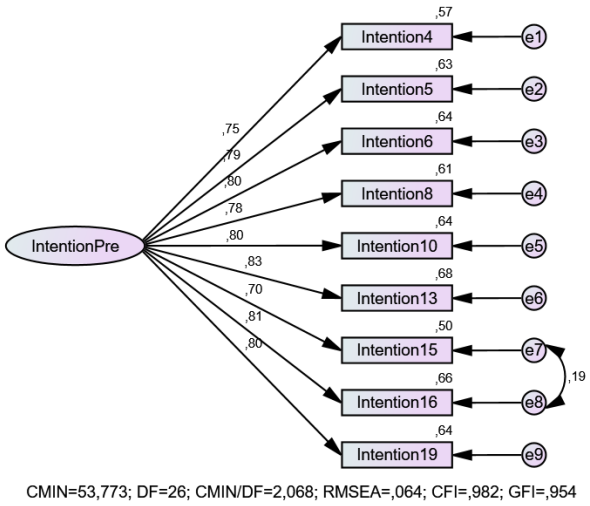


Table 9. The goodness of fit values

X^2(df)	p	RMSEA	CFI	GFI	SRMR	AVE	CR
2.068	0.001	0.064	0.982	0.954	0.027	0.618	0.963

When the results of model improvement via AMOS were analysed, it was determined that applying a covariance between Intention 15 and Intention 16 variables would improve the model. Covariance application expresses the positive change in the model as a result of the movement of two different variables together.

Table 10. Measurement model

			β1	β2	Ss	t	p
Measurement model							
Intention 4	<---	INTENTION PRE-TEST	0.753	1.000			
Intention 5	<---	INTENTION PRE-TEST	0.792	1.078	0.082	13.202	<0.001
Intention 6	<---	INTENTION PRE-TEST	0.800	1.036	0.077	13.366	<0.001
Intention 8	<---	INTENTION PRE-TEST	0.782	1.084	0.083	13.024	<0.001
Intention 10	<---	INTENTION PRE-TEST	0.799	1.063	0.080	13.350	<0.001
Intention 13	<---	INTENTION PRE-TEST	0.826	1.106	0.080	13.872	<0.001
Intention 15	<---	INTENTION PRE-TEST	0.704	0.952	0.083	11.516	<0.001
Intention 16	<---	INTENTION PRE-TEST	0.812	1.108	0.082	13.592	<0.001
Intention 19	<---	INTENTION PRE-TEST	0.802	1.105	0.082	13.413	<0.001

β1: Standard Coefficients, β2: Non-Standard Coefficients

According to the measurement model, no item was found with a factor value below 0.50. The scale consists of 9 items under one dimension. Since the analyses are limited to the responses of the sample group, these analyses should be tested on a larger sample and the scale should be tested (Wulani et al., 2014). The scale developed in this context is being tested again with a new sample of 821 people.

Table 11. Demographic variables (n=821)

Variable	Group	n	%	Variable	Group	n	%
Gender	Female	480	58.50	**Profession**	Academician	8	1.00
	Male	341	41.50		Not working	66	8.00
Age	30 and below	478	58.20		Retired	33	4.00
	31-40 years	197	24.00		Housewife	4	0.50
	41-50 years	91	11.10		Doctor	15	1.80
	51 years and above	55	6.70		Officer	67	8.20
Marital Status	Married	335	40.80		Engineer	24	2.90
	Single	486	59.20		Student	206	25.10
Educational level	High school and less	159	19.40		Teacher	11	1.30
	Associate Degree	172	21.00		Private Sector	369	44.90
	Undergraduate	372	45.30		Health Worker	18	2.30
	Postgraduate	118	14.30	**Experience**	Less than 3 years	328	40.00
Income Level	5,000 TL and below	356	43.40		3-6 years	199	24.20
	5,001-7,500 TL	173	21.10		7-10 years	110	13.40
	7,501-10,000 TL	132	16.10		11-14 years	68	8.30
	10,001-12,500 TL	67	8.20		15 years and above	116	14.10
	12,501-15,000 TL	36	4.40				
	15,001 TL and above	57	6.80				

The test procedures are conducted using only the relevant items of the 10 steps identified by Carpenter (2018). According to Table 10, the majority of the participants (58.50%) are female, more than half of them are 30 years old or younger, have a bachelor's degree and work in the private sector. Normality analysis is performed to examine the distribution of the data other than demographic variables.

Table 12. Normality analysis

Scale and Sub-dimensions	**Central Tendency Measurements**			
	Mean	**Median**	**Skewness**	**Kurtosis**
The Effect of SMI on Purchase Intention	3.134	3.222	-0.207	-0.858

According to table 12, it is seen that the Skewness and Kurtosis values are between +1.96 and -1.96, so it is understood that the sample is normally distributed (Hair et al., 2014).

Table 13. Item averages

Statement	**N**		**Mean**	**Median**	**Standard Deviation**
	The Effect of SMI on Purchase Intention				
INTENTION 4	SMI reminds me of products I plan to buy in the future.	821	3.2765	3.0000	1.27367
INTENTION 5	The promotional videos SMI shares in their stories influence my purchase plans.	821	3.0877	3.0000	1.35236
INTENTION 6	I think the products SMI promotes are of good quality.	821	3.1498	3.0000	1.27096
INTENTION 8	I am motivated to buy the product used by the SMI that I believe reflects my personality.	821	3.2460	3.0000	1.31701
INTENTION 10	I will buy another product from SMI in the future.	821	2.9354	3.0000	1.37822
INTENTION 13	I am likely to buy a product that SMI recommends.	821	3.0889	3.0000	1.31803
INTENTION 15	SMI's information about promotions increases my online store visits.	821	3.2838	3.0000	1.32282
INTENTION 16	I can buy other products of the brand that SMI promotes.	821	3.1181	3.0000	1.31388
INTENTION 19	I would encourage my close circle to use the product offered by SMI.	821	3.0219	3.0000	1.38969
Average			**3.1342**	**3.0000**	**1.3263**

The averages of the answers given were determined to be approximately at the level of 3. From this point of view, it is understood that the prepared scale was perceived by the participants and the general attitudes towards SMI were considered important. The EFA analysis was performed on the developed scale again and it was seen that the scale item distribution was compatible with the other analysis. PA was applied to the sample in order to test the randomness.

Table 14. Exploratory factor analysis and parallel analysis

	Statement	Factor Load Value (SPSS)	Cronbach Alfa (α) AVE CR	PA Results (Ncases: 821; Nvar: 9; Ndataset:100; Percent: 95; Brian Oc) Raw Data	Means	Percently
The Effect of SMI on Purchase Intention ***% of Variance: 60,596;Eigen-value: 5,843***				5.843	1.162	1.206
Intentıon 4	SMI reminds me of products I plan to buy in the future.	0.712				
Intentıon 5	The promotional videos SMI shares in their stories influence my purchase plans.	0.756				
Intentıon 6	I think the products SMI promotes are of good quality.	0.796				
Intentıon 8	I am motivated to buy the product used by the SMI that I believe reflects my personality.	0.792	α= 0.932 AVE= 0.606 CR= 0.961			
Intentıon 10	I will buy another product from SMI in the future.	0.822				
Intentıon 13	I am likely to buy a product that SMI recommends.	0.809				
Intentıon 15	SMI's information about promotions increases my online store visits.	0.746				
Intentıon 16	I can buy other products of the brand that SMI promotes.	0.812				
Intentıon 19	I would encourage my close circle to use the product offered by SMI.	0.755				

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood (ML)
Rotation Method: Direct Oblimin
KMO: 0.958;
Bartlett's sphericity test; ($\chi 2$=4749.848; df=36; p=0.001)

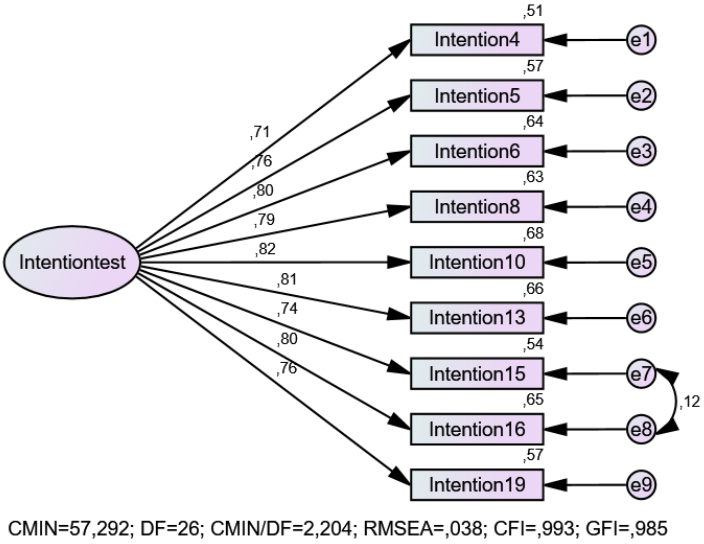
As a result of the analysis, the KMO value was 0.958 (KMO>0.60), Bartlett's sphericity test result was 0.001 (Bartlett's<0.05), Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was 0.932, the value was above 0.60, the Average Variance Explained (AVE) value measuring convergent validity was greater than 0.50, and the value measuring Combined Reliability (CR) was greater than 0.70 (Hair et al, 2014, p. 2017), it was understood that the developed scale provided the appropriate values again. However, although the results of the analysis provided the desired values, the items were analyzed for scale distribution in accordance with the Kaiser-Guttman Rule and showed that the prepared scale was distributed in the correct sub-dimensions.

Table 15. Unidimensionality analysis (Kaiser-Gutman Criteria)

Factors	Number of Statements	1.Eigenvalue	2.Eigenvalue	Total Variance
The Effect of SMI on Purchase Intention	9	5.843	0.519	60.590

As a result of the EFA analysis, the values provided the desired qualifications. However, since CFA has obvious advantages over EFA, CFA test was applied to the scale (Hair et al., 2017).

Figure 2. CFA



As a result of the analysis, X2(df) value should be below 5, p value should be below the significant level of 0.05, GFI value should be above 0.85, RMSEA value should be below 0.08, CFI value should be above 0.90, SRMR value should be below 0.08, NFI value should be above 0.90, AVE value should be above 0.50 and CR value should be above 0.70 (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003). The goodness of fit values for the analysis are presented in Table 16.

Table 16. The goodness of fit values

X^2(df)	p	RMSEA	CFI	GFI	SRMR	AVE	CR
2.204	0.001	0.038	0.993	0.985	0.017	0.605	0.961

With the increase in the number of samples, some values decreased and some values increased, but all the results obtained are within the limit values.

Table 17. Measurement model

			β1	β2	Ss	t	p
Measurement Model							
Intention 4	<---	INTENTION	0.713	1.000			
Intention 5	<---	INTENTION	0.756	1.126	0.054	20.957	<0.001
Intention 6	<---	INTENTION	0.798	1.117	0.051	22.112	<0.001
Intention 8	<---	INTENTION	0.792	1.149	0.052	21.956	<0.001
Intention 10	<---	INTENTION	0.823	1.249	0.055	22.797	<0.001
Intention 13	<---	INTENTION	0.811	1.178	0.052	22.483	<0.001
Intention 15	<---	INTENTION	0.737	1.073	0.053	20.356	<0.001
Intention 16	<---	INTENTION	0.805	1.165	0.052	22.272	<0.001
Intention 19	<---	INTENTION	0.757	1.159	0.055	20.986	<0.001

β1: Standard Coefficients, β2: Non-Standard Coefficients

As a result of the measurement model, there were no items with a factor value below 0.50. The scale was retested as nine statements under a single dimension. Although tests were conducted on two different tests and samples related to the research, it is not possible to say that the scale is valid and consistent. Therefore, it is necessary to test the validity and invariance of the scale. The testing process is done with multi-group analysis through AMOS 25 program. In the process, comparison and modeling of the two previous analyses are made (Byrne, 2016). In this context, an invariance analysis was conducted to cover both samples. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 18.

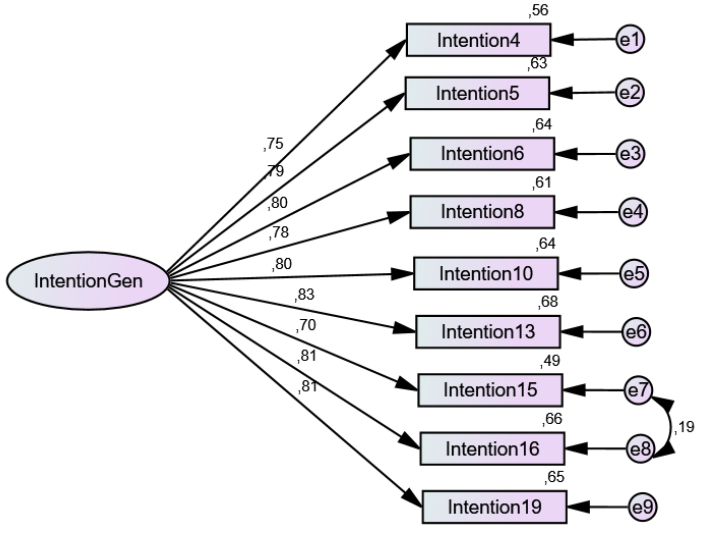
Table 18. Invariance analysis

Model	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	RMR	SRMR	CFI	RMSEA	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	ΔCFI	p-value for $\Delta\chi^2$
Grup1	53.773	26	2.068	0.045	0.027	0.982	0.064	-	-	-	-
Grup2	57.292	26	2.204	0.027	0.016	0.993	0.038	-	-	-	-
Model 1:Configural	111.065	52	2.136	0.037	0.027	0.991	0.032	-	-	-	-
Model2:Weak Metric)	116.117	60	1.935	0.053	0.029	0.991	0.029	4.890	8.000	0.001	0.769
Model 3:Scalar	116.119	61	1.904	0.054	0.029	0.991	0.029	0.002	1.000	0.000	0.964
Model 4: Strong	125.89	70	1.798	0.055	0.034	0.991	0.027	9.432	9.000	0.000	0.398
Model 5: Partial (Intention 4 :a1)	111.31	53	2.100	0.039	0.027	0.991	0.032	14.020	17.000	0.001	0.666

$\Delta\chi^2$: χ^2 change ($|\chi^2_n - \chi^2_{n-1}|$); Δdf: df change ($|df_n - df_{n-1}|$); $\Delta\chi^2$/df: χ^2/df change ($|\chi^2_n/ df_n - |\chi^2_{n-1}/ df_{n-1}$); ΔCFI: CFI change ($|CFI_n - CFI_{n-1}|$); ΔCFI<0,01**; p-value for $\Delta\chi^2$: χ^2 *significance value of change* (p<0.05*)

Since the ΔCFI value was below 0.01 (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002) between the two samples as a result of the analysis, it is possible to say that the developed scale has the property of invariance and is suitable for the use of large masses (Byrne, 2016).

Figure 3. CFA



CMIN=111,347; DF=53; CMIN/DF=2,101; RMSEA=,032; CFI=,991; GFI=,977

Intention General: invariance analysis regarding intention

The scale of the effect of Social Media Influencer on purchase intention is one-factor and consists of nine items. The items in the scale have factor loading values between 0.70 and 0.81.

4. CONCLUSION

In today's digital age following one-way communication, multi-directional communication has paved the way for influencer marketing. With influencer marketing, brands aim to continue their marketing activities effectively by using SMI as an intermediary, which has an impact on social media and attracts them with their behavior, in a way that the message to be given to the right audience, at the time it is requested, in a way that will receive the most effective feedbacks. Many brands now continue their marketing efforts by choosing the SMI with the strongest authority to represent the product. In addition, social media users who interact with individually sympathetic SMI are also influenced by the SMI's purchasing decisions. In the analysis conducted in this study, a scale development study on the effect of SMI's attitudes and behaviors on consumers' purchase intention was prepared. In the study, 27 statements regarding the effect of SMI on purchase intention were created. As a result of the scale development studies, the number of statements related to the scale is nine. As a result of EFA and CFA, the scale related to the effect of SMI on purchase intention is one-factor. In this context, re-analyses were conducted on the main population with the scales developed and it was concluded that the scale could be used in the model.

Structural equation modeling was conducted to determine whether the effect of general attitudes towards SMI on purchase intention is significant. As a result of the established measurement model, it was determined that a one-unit increase in general attitudes towards SMI will cause an increase of 0.829 on the effect of SMI on purchase decision. As a result, it is concluded that general attitudes towards SMI have a positive and significant effect on the effect of SMI on purchase intention. The studies on the effect of general attitudes towards SMI on purchase intention are as follows; and it is possible to say that the finding in this research model generally supports the results of other studies.

In the research model, the effect of general attitudes towards SMI on purchase intention was investigated. Although there are studies in which the relationship between variables is negative and insignificant, as a result of the review of the literature, there are many studies that examine the effect of social media users' attitudes towards SMI on purchase intention and find a positive relationship between variables. For example, in Nandagiri and Philip's (2018: 64) study, it was concluded that the product shared by the SMI on the social media platform is generally received with a positive effect by the follower, and the follower is willing to purchase the products exhibited by the SMI. According to the study conducted by Reinikainen et al. (2020) on YouTuber, it was revealed that SMI credibility positively affects brand trust and purchase intention. Lou and Yuan's (2018) research showed that the informative value of influencer-generated content, influencer credibility, attractiveness, and similarity

to followers positively influence followers' trust in influencers' branded posts, which subsequently affects brand awareness and purchase intentions. Lim et al. (2017, p. 30) found that respondents with a positive attitude towards SMI will generally intend to purchase the product endorsed by influencers.

Lou and Yuan (2019, p. 62) investigated the impact of the characteristics of SMI on consumers' purchase intentions and found that the informative value of posts and credibility positively affect purchase intentions. Nam and Dan (2018, p. 4710) conclude that consumers tend to strongly trust influencers and that consumer purchase intentions are significantly influenced by four factors, including influencer trust, quality of content, relevance between influencer and product, and consumer involvement. Similarly, Khan and Khan (2020, p. 17) found that SMI's credibility, information quality and entertainment value have significant direct effects on attitudes towards SMI as well as significant indirect effects on consumers' purchase intention.

Some of the attributes in the study were important in shaping consumers' purchase intentions, while others were not. SMI credibility was found to have the most significant direct impact on purchase intention. Information quality and entertainment value related to SMI credibility were also found to be among the other factors that most influence consumer purchase intention. Therefore, it is critical for a brand to choose a trustworthy SMI that can both create quality content and entertain, in order to positively influence consumers' purchase intentions. Today, with the latest legal regulations, it is mandatory for SMIs to indicate "sponsored content" when using advertisements in content sharing.

Kay et al. (2020) found that consumers exposed to micro-influencer sponsored content report higher levels of product knowledge and that products endorsed by SMI are more attractive. In the same study, it is stated that consumers exposed to micro-influencers, referred to as "sponsored content", have higher purchase intentions than those exposed to macro-influencers (Kay et al., 2020, p. 1). Although there are many studies showing a positive relationship between these two variables, there are also studies that conclude that the effect of attitudes towards SMI on purchase intention is negative. In the study conducted by Nandagiri and Philip (2018), it was concluded that there is a negative and non-significant relationship between the effect of marketing efforts made by SMI on consumers' purchase intention. Again, Johansen and Guldvik (2017, p. 89) concluded that marketing campaigns conducted by SMI do not have a direct effect on purchase intentions, and that influencer marketing does not have a stronger effect on purchase intentions than regular online advertisements. The scale developed regarding the effect of SMI's attitudes and behaviors on consumers' purchase intention can provide important perspectives to marketing and brand managers. It is important to conduct future studies only on users who use certain social media platforms in order to obtain more precise results for marketers and brands that continue their impressive marketing efforts using social media platforms. In addition, the findings of the study are limited to the variables prepared for the effect of SMI's attitudes and behaviors on consumer purchase intention. It is also possible that the developed scale can contribute to the elimination of the gap in the literature on the subject.

For the study, ethics committee permission document dated December 23, 2020 and numbered E-68438 was obtained from the Tekirdağ Namık Kelam University Ethics Committee.

The study has been crafted in adherence to the principles of research and publication ethics.

The authors declare that there exists no financial conflict of interest involving any institution, organization, or individual(s) associated with the article. Furthermore, there are no conflicts of interest among the authors themselves.

This study is derived from the first author's PhD thesis, under the supervision of the second author. Entire process of the study were carried out by the first author under the control of the supervisor.

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