To Buy or Not to Buy for My Baby[1]

Bebeğim için Almak ya da Almamak

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Abstract: Status consumption increased with the consumption madness via social media. This effect can be seen in pregnant or first-time mothers with their newborn babies. These mothers buy the most organic, natural, unique and attractive products for their babies and share them on their social media accounts. Also, they make exaggerated expenses in activities like birthday parties and baby showers to get the credit of best mother. At the same time, these mothers extend their selves via their babies as they see them a piece of themselves. Within this scope, the main purpose of this research is evaluating these mothers' purchases for their babies through extended-self and status consumption theory. Mixed method has been used in this research. Both surveys and in-depth interviews have been conducted. Having looked at the results of surveys, mothers see their babies as a reflection of their selves. Nevertheless, they do not accept that they made status consumption. However, the research went in deep, responses that are more honest have been got and in-depth interview results show that because of the desire of being a part of a social group or doing the best thing led mothers to status consumption.

Keywords: Baby, Mother, Extended-Self, Status Consumption, IOS Scale

JEL Classification: M30, M31, M39

Özet: Statü tüketimi sosyal medya ile birlikte bir tüketim çılgınlığına dönüşmüştür. Bu etki özellikle hamile kadınlarda veya ilk bebeği olan annelerde görülmektedir. Bu anneler bebekleri için en organik, doğal, özgün ve çekici ürünü satın almakta ve bunu sosyal medya hesaplarından paylaşmaktadır. Aynı zamanda, bu anneler bebeklerini kendi benliklerinin bir uzantısı olarak görerek yeni kimlikleri ile benliklerini genişletmektedirler. Bu kapsamda, çalışmanın temel amacı, genişletilmiş benlik ve statü tüketimi teorileri aracılığı ile bu annelerin bebekleri için yapmış oldukları satın almaları değerlendirmektir. Çalışma için karma yöntem benimsenmiştir. Bunun için hem anket hem de derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Anket sonuçlarına bakıldığında annelerin bebeklerini kendi yansımaları olarak gördüğü anlaşılmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, yaptıkları harcamaların statü tüketimi olduğunu kabul etmemektedirler. Ancak, derinlemesine inildiğinde daha dürüst cevaplara ulaşılmış; annelerin bir sosyal grup tarafından kabul edilme ve en iyi anne olma arzusunun onları statü tüketimine yönlendirdiği derinlemesine görüşme sonuçlarından anlaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bebek, Anne, Genişletilmiş Benlik, Statü Tüketimi, IOS Ölçeği

JEL Sınıflandırması: M30, M31, M39

1. Introduction

Consumerism becomes frenzy with social media. This leads consumers to conspicuous and status consumption. People started to post the things that they eat or do, places that they go and things that they buy and start to expect likes for these posts. For the last few decades, this trend can be seen in pregnant women and first-time mothers. Mothers who are called "insta-moms" emerged and these mothers post the things that they purchased on them on Instagram or Facebook during this process. In addition, these mothers expect a bunch of likes for these things and the activities that they do for their babies. They do everything in front of their followers

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and do it for pleasure. These mothers buy the most organic, natural, unique and attractive products for their babies and share them on their social media accounts. In addition, they make exaggerated expenses in activities like birthday parties and baby showers in order to get the credit of best mother.

Mothers are a big and powerful target audience as they are emotional and heuristical. Therefore, they take attraction of lots of sectors. Many brands take actions based on the theory of "mothers know the best of everything". Especially, in order to touch the mothers' hearts, brands make labels, which contain "organic, natural" expressions with the assumption of "mothers do and buy anything for their kids" (Baykal 2019, 16). The mothers, who want to find the best product for their babies, make searches online, follow social media accounts, which give information about baby products and connect with other mothers in online groups.

In this online social media groups, mothers make comparisons of what other mothers buy for their babies. Therefore, this leads mothers to buy the best product and sometime later, this becomes status consumption (Afflerback 2012). They want to be the best mother and win the general approval. Within this scope, the main aim of this research is to investigate whether there is a relation between status consumption and self-extension of mothers. Also, it is examined that level of inclusion of others in the self of mothers' has an effect on self-extension via IOS scale and evaluated in terms of demographic factors. In the in-depth interviews, grounded theory has been used in order to clarify the main relations between mothers, their babies and the products that they buy for them.

2. Theoretical Background and Literature

Marketing to mothers is not a new phenomenon. It is because they are a big and powerful demographic group in the whole world. According to a report about how to market to moms reveals interesting results for mothers' habits about purchasing. Moms are enthusiastic internet users, more generally mobile. %96 of mothers uses the internet for their shopping. They said that mobile devices are their main connection to the social world. So, the social media plays a major role in the lives of mothers. %87 of mothers uses social media. They frequently post updates about their lives and visual contents. These contents may sometimes be the products that they buy. Word of mouth plays a major role in mothers' purchasing decisions. At this point social media steps in and online social groups and discussion areas effects mothers' idea of a brand (Hutchinson 2017, Noble and Kumar 2008).

The process of expecting a baby and shopping for them is so exciting. However, this shopping process becomes frenzy due to the social media. Mothers want to make happy

themselves with the things they buy and expect appreciation from their social environment before making their children happy. Therefore, they head towards the products which are labeled as natural, organic, or innocent instead of classic market products. In some cases, in the social media groups mothers who use the market products can be criticized by other mothers and because of this some mothers need to hide the low-level products they use for their babies. Expected approval and appreciation is resulted with extension of their selves with their babies. Sometime later, the symbolic meanings of the products which are bought by the mother start to accord with mothers' personality (Özer 2015, Bailey and Ulman 2005). Individuals acknowledged that the possessions have a strong relationship with the concept of self. They define themselves with the products that they have and create an identity with those products (Siddiqui and Turley 2006). Belk suggests that, understanding consumer behavior can be possible if only meanings that consumers attached to possessions are understood. He defined extended self as combination of objects that psychological and physical identity. Also, he argues that individuals purchase products not only for the products main job but also for the meaning they can reflect by the possessions of these products (Belk 1988, Hanley et al. 2018). Thus, possessions become symbols of mothers' identity through their babies (Belk 1988, Cohen 1989). Brand trust plays a major role in this purchasing process. Purchasing the recommended products of other mothers in the social media groups is a result of need for approval and social acceptance (Aydin Ar and Taskin 2014). This need for approval and social acceptance causes the status consumption (Chaudhuri and Majumdar 2006) and desire for posting the products online (Ahuvia 2005, Bailey 2002).

Considering on the background of this consumption behavior Veblen proposed that preferences for commodities are determined socially in relation to the positions of individuals in the social hierarchy (Veblen 2015) also these individuals emulate the consumption patterns of others at higher places in the hierarchy (Trigg 2001). Status consumption is about consumer behavior which seeks to buy products and services for the status they want to present. This consumption is free of consumers' social class or income (Eastman, Goldsmith, and Flynn 1999). Perceived value plays an important role in status consumption. After the spread of the internet usage in everyday lives, especially with the WEB 2.0, social media and virtual worlds there is a great area for representing ourselves to others (Belk 2016). In order to get social approval and acceptance this self-extension turns into status consumption. When individuals, and this research talks about mothers, see someone (their baby) close to their selves and include them into their selves they started to extend their identities not only with the products they buy for themselves, but also with the products they buy for others (babies). So, the rest of this paper

investigates and clarifies the relationships between extended self, status consumption and the inclusion of others in the self.

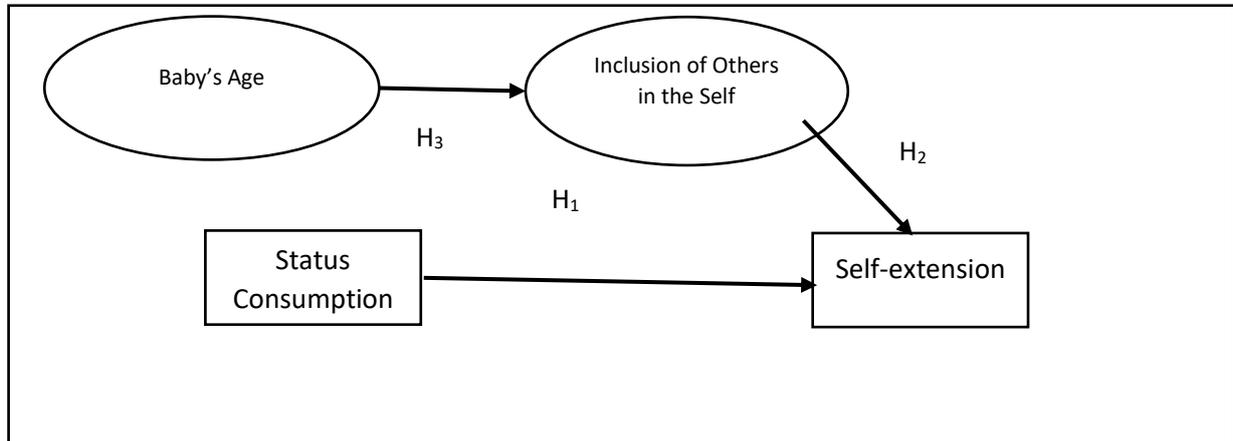## 3. Design and Methodology

3.1. Research Model and Hypothesis

Figure 1. Research Model

H₁: Status consumption has an effect on self-extension.

H₂: Level of inclusion of others in the self has an effect on self-extension.

H₃: Baby's age has an effect on level of inclusion of others in the self.

3.2. Participants and Procedure

Given our goal to explicate a construct of mothers' purchasing processes and the extension of their self-identity via their babies, and to reveal the reasons behind their status consumption, the author planned to use a mixed method approach. A mixed method approach is useful for understanding contradictions between qualitative and quantitative results. The author wants to give voice to the participants with in-depth interviews to ensure the survey findings are grounded in participants' experiences.

3.2.1. Participants and Procedure for Quantitative Research

For the quantitative study, participants were chosen from mothers who are members of social media groups whose members consist only of mothers. 919 surveys were filled out but 229 of these were eliminated due to incomplete sections. 690 surveys were accepted for the analysis. Data has been collected before January 2020. So, there is no need for ethical board permission.

3.2.2. Participants and Procedure for Qualitative Research

In order to decide the interviewees, a part had been added to the survey which asked participants whether they would like to participate in in-depth interviews. The mothers who wanted to

participate in the in-depth interviews provided their names and contact information. 188 mothers submitted their contact information and 50 of them were selected for a maximum variation sampling technique (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana 2014, 32-33) and according to their demographic features. As some mothers were located far from the researchers or did not have time to attend face-to-face interviews, several interviews were conducted with the help of technology, among others, via Skype, FaceTime or WhatsApp. 27 in-depth interviews were completed via 20-45 minutes voice recordings.

3.3. Survey and Scales for Quantitative Research

The survey was applied via QuestionPro, an online survey software. The survey contains four sections. In the first section, "Inclusion of others in the self" scale (Aron, Aron, and Smollan 1992) was applied in order to understand the relations between mothers and their babies. In the second section, Sivadas' extended self-scale (Sivadas and Machleit 1994, 410) and Eastman's status consumption scale (Eastman, Goldsmith, and Flynn 1999, 44) were applied. The third section of the survey asked participants which activities (birthday parties, newborn photo shooting, hospital room decorating etc.) they held for their babies. This part consisted only of yes/no questions. The last section of the survey consisted of demographic questions. Also a section was added to find interviewees and they asked about whether they want to participate the interviews. Surveys were analyzed using a structural equation model via the statistical analysis program, SPSS AMOS.

3.4. Data Collection for Qualitative Research

After the surveys ended, 50 of mothers have been chosen according to their willingness. The interviews have been scheduled but only 27 of interviews have been completed with enough data. The study produced 13 hours of voice recordings from the interviews. The results were analyzed using the Atlas.ti qualitative research program.

For the interview guideline, a question pool was prepared according to the previous conceptual framework, before the interviews were conducted. Pre-testing was done using this question pool, and the final interview guide was prepared according to feedback obtained from the test group. Questions are primarily based on the shopping habits about their babies, pre-birth shopping, after-birth shopping, online shopping and feelings about buying for their babies. In order to maintain internal validity, and in consideration of the environment for data collection, two of the participants were asked to confirm the results. They confirmed that the results were consistent in itself and constituted a meaningful whole. Additionally, the data collected were consistent with the literature. The codes for the qualitative analysis were created

according to the conceptual framework which had been used in previous research. In order to eliminate the period effect, the data had been collected at different times during the data collection process. At the same time, the data were checked by two academics who had previously worked on this topic.

For external validity, the research sample, data collection process and data collection environment were defined in detail before the research commenced. The results of this research are available for application in similar environments and in other countries (Başkale 2016, 24). One of the main limitations of this research is sample range. The survey was applied online to mothers who are members of social media groups related to motherhood. For additional research, this sample should be widened.

4. Findings

4.1. Survey Findings

The participants included in the analysis are all women. Only four men completed the survey and their surveys have been eliminated. Demographic values can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Variables

Baby's Age	N	%
Pregnant Mother	17	2,5
Baby (0-3 years)	577	83,6
Toddler (4+ age)	96	13,9
Total	690	100
Baby's Gender	**N**	**%**
Girl	336	48,7
Boy	354	51,3
Mother's Age	**N**	**%**
29 -	221	32
30-34	296	42,8
35-39	138	20
40 +	34	
Mother's work status	**N**	**%**
Working mother	325	47,1
Housewife	362	52,5
Mother's education	**N**	**%**
Primary school	4	0,6
High school	44	6,4
Undergraduate	482	69,9
Graduate	160	23,2
Mother's education	**N**	**%**
(-) 1500	2	0,3
1501-2500	17	2,5
2501-3500	58	8,4
3501-4500	92	13,3

4501+	521	75,5

4.2. Structural Equation Model

In order to test the hypotheses of this research, a structural equation model was created between self-extension and status consumption variables.

Table 2. Structural Equation Model Fit Indices

Model Fit Indices	Results	Good Fit*	Acceptable Fit*
X^2/df	2,29	≤ 3	$\leq 4-5$
CFI	0,90	$.95 \leq CFI \leq 1.00$	$.90 \leq CFI \leq .95$
RMSEA	0,025	$\leq 0,05$	0,06-0,08
GFI	0,93	$\geq 0,90$	0,85-0,89
AGFI	0,89	$\geq 0,90$	0,85-0,89

*(Bayram 2010, 78)

It can be seen in table 2 that model fit indices except CFI is in good fit range ($X^2/df=2,29$; RMSEA=0,025; GFI=0,93; AGFI=0,89) However CFI is in the acceptable fit range (CFI=0,90). So according to these fit indices model can be accepted. In table 3, scales and their factor weights, AVE, CR and Cronbach's Alpha (α) results can be seen. All variables are at the acceptable range.

Table 3. Scales' Evaluation

Variable	Questions	Factor Weight	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
Status Consumption Scale	I would buy a product just because it has status	,851	,602	,883	,655
	I am interested in new products with status	,797			
	I would pay more for a product if it has status	,719			
	The status of a product is irrelevant to me	,740			
	A product is more valuable to me if it has some snob appeal	,766			
Extended Self Scale	My purchases for my baby help me achieve the identity I want to have.	,735	,582	,822	,735
	My purchases for my baby help me narrow the gap between what I am and what I try to be.	,730			
	My purchases for my baby are part of who I am.	,698			
	My purchases for my baby are central to my identity	,684			
	I derive some of my identity from my purchases for my baby	,617			

The structural equation model can be seen in figure 2. According to this results status consumption have an effect on self extension (S.E= 0,11; C.R.=5,53; , p<0,05). So the main hypothesis, H_1 is supported.
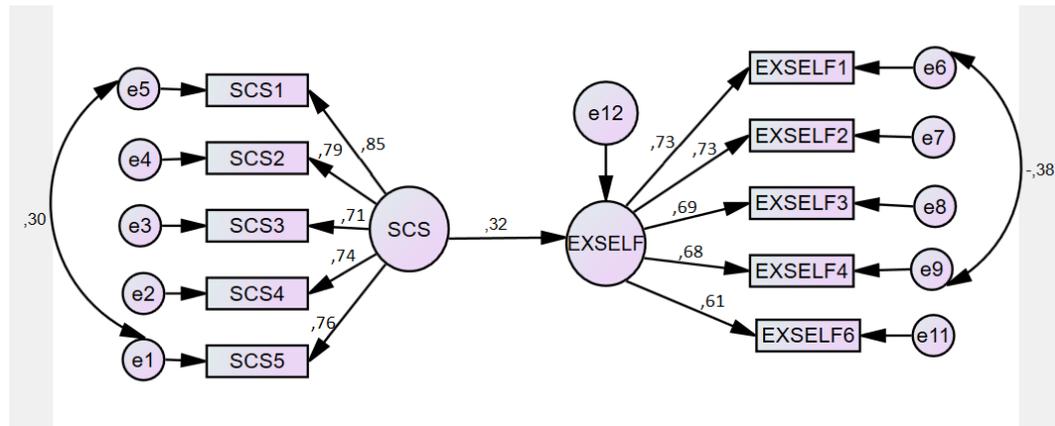
Figure 2. Structural Equation Model

4.3. Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale Results

The purpose of this scale is to measure how close the mother feels to their babies. The closer a person perceives to be to another, the more likely they are to feel more intimacy, trust and love towards that person. This scale is an easy way to capture the degree of closeness through visual representation (Aron, Aron, and Smollan 1992, Woosnam and Aleshinloye 2013, Zickfeld and Schubert 2016).

Mothers have been shown the picture, which includes circles that range from just touching to almost completely overlapping. The question that was posed, is "which picture best describes your relationship with your baby?" This question was answered by all participants of the survey. The participants were asked to circle just one letter. The letters A to G represent scores of 1 to 7.

The mean score for mothers is 4.44. According to age, as mothers get older, inclusion levels of babies in the mothers' identity, decreases. Young mothers tend to experience their babies more closely to their own self-identity. (Means according to age group 29-: 4,56; 30-34: 4,51; 35-39:4,20 and 40+: 3,97) Measured by work status, working mothers have a slightly lower mean (4,36) than housewife mothers (4,50). The baby's gender didn't have an effect on inclusion of the baby in the mother's self-identity (girl baby: 4,46; boy baby:4,42).When we look at the baby's age, there is a significant difference between pregnant mothers, mothers with 0-3 year old babies, and mothers with babies older than 4 (pregnant:4,32; 0-3 age:4,52; 4+: 3,94) . Mothers with 0-3 year old babies experience their babies more closely to their own self-identities. However, mothers with babies older than 4, start to separate their babies from their own self-identities. In order to find out if a significant difference existed between those mothers, a one-way ANOVA analysis was conducted. The test proved significant, F:,47, p:0,03. A

significant differentiation emerges between mothers with babies (0-3 age) and mothers with toddlers (4+ age).

When we look at the frequency results for the IOS scale, the most selected option is the seventh one G, where the circles nearly fully overlap (%21,19). The second most selected option is the fourth one, D (-%17,39). The third most selected option is the second one, B (-%16,7). Even though G is the most selected option, B and D decrease the mean.

Therefore, according to the results of the IOS scale, it can be inferred that not every demographic variable on the part of the mother impacts on inclusion of the baby in the mother's self-identity. However, the baby's age does have an effect. Mothers with babies aged 0-3 years old, feel a closer link between their babies and their own self-identity. The inclusion of the identity into the mother's self-identity starts during pregnancy, but not by as much as inclusion of babies aged 0-3 years. After the age of 4, children start going to kindergarten and the mothers start to separate their self-identity from their children. These findings have been confirmed from the qualitative data as well and it is observable in the qualitative data results. So, the second and third hypotheses, H_2 and H_3 are supported. Level of inclusion of others in the self, influences self-extension and this level of inclusion of others in the self, effects by the babies' age .
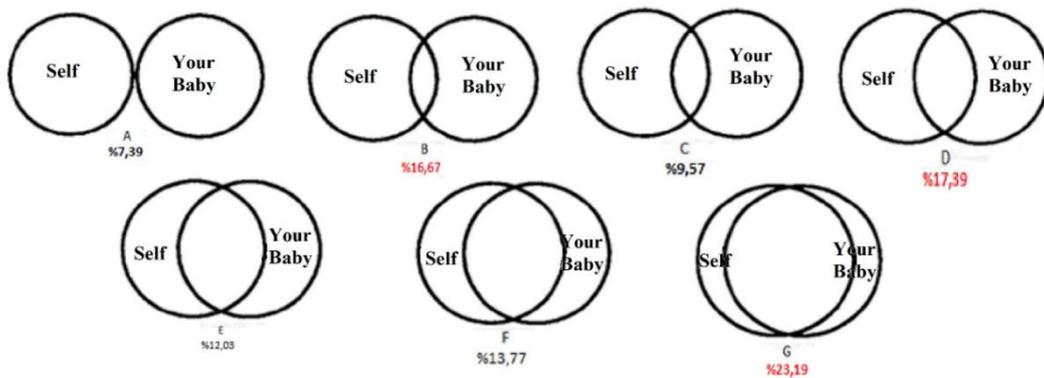

Figure 3. Inclusion of Others in the Self Scale Results

4.4. In-Depth-Interview Results

In quantitative data, it was determined that status consumption had an effect on the self-extension process and that the age of the baby was effective in the inclusion of others in the self. But more detailed research was conducted using in-depth interviews which is one of the qualitative research method tools to determine the real reasons behind status consumption in the process of self-extension and to determine which variables are related to each other. Thereby, it is aimed to determine the real reasons for the relationships which are identified with

quantitative data. In table 4 the list of interviewees can be seen. The names that are used in the interviews are the nicknames that mothers chose themselves during the interview.

Table 4. List of Interviewees

Interview no	Nickname of Mother	Mother's age	Gender of the baby	Age of the Baby		Interview no	Nickname of Mother	Mother's age	Gender of the baby	Age of the Baby
1	Ayça	32	Girl	0-3 age		15	Özge	40	Boy	4+ age
2	Dilek	28	Boy	0-3 age		16	Yeşim	22	Girl	0-3 age
3	Vildan	29	-	Pregnant		17	Gizem	34	Boy	0-3 age
4	Betül	30	Boy	0-3 age		18	Gülay	45	Girl	4+ age
5	Merve	26	Girl	0-3 age		19	Elif	28	Girl	0-3 age
6	Aslı	37	Boy	0-3 age		20	Tuba	32	Boy	0-3 age
7	Zeynep	28	Boy	0-3 age		21	Aylin	35	Boy	0-3 age
8	Büşra	29	Girl	Pregnant		22	Özgül	35	Girl	4+ age
9	Gülşah	44	Boy	4+ age		23	Gözde	40	Girl	0-3 age
10	Esin	33	Girl	0-3 age		24	Eylem	34	Boy	0-3 age
11	Begüm	28	Girl	0-3 age		25	Sümeyra	32	Girl	0-3 age
12	Çiğdem	29	Boy	0-3 age		26	Gülhan	30	Girl	0-3 age
13	Selma	41	Boy	4+ age		27	Zehra	27	Boy	0-3 age
14	Yasemin	40	Girl	4+ age						

Based upon the grounded theory, the main themes and relations were derived from the interviews. They were named as shopping before birth, shopping after birth, paid activities, social media, and working mothers. During the first stage of the analysis for the study, data coding was done using the Atlas.ti qualitative research program. The themes arose from the first stage descriptive and in-vivo coding. To facilitate the analysis, these codes were organized into second-cycle systematic patterns as themes.

Our qualitative findings generally revealed that mothers paid more attention to the products that they bought for their babies. Working mothers especially made their purchases unconstrained by budgets as a result of feeling guilty for not spending enough time with their babies. In fact, these purchases were driven by their status consumption and they extended their self-identity through their purchases for their babies. Additionally, these findings support the quantitative findings as well. As seen in the network analysis in figure 4, participation in paid activities is strongly connected to social media habits. Mothers who use social media frequently, for the most part performed all the paid for activities such as baby showers, pregnancy photos or hospital room decorations. Responses from the participants can be seen below in order of the general themes of the research.
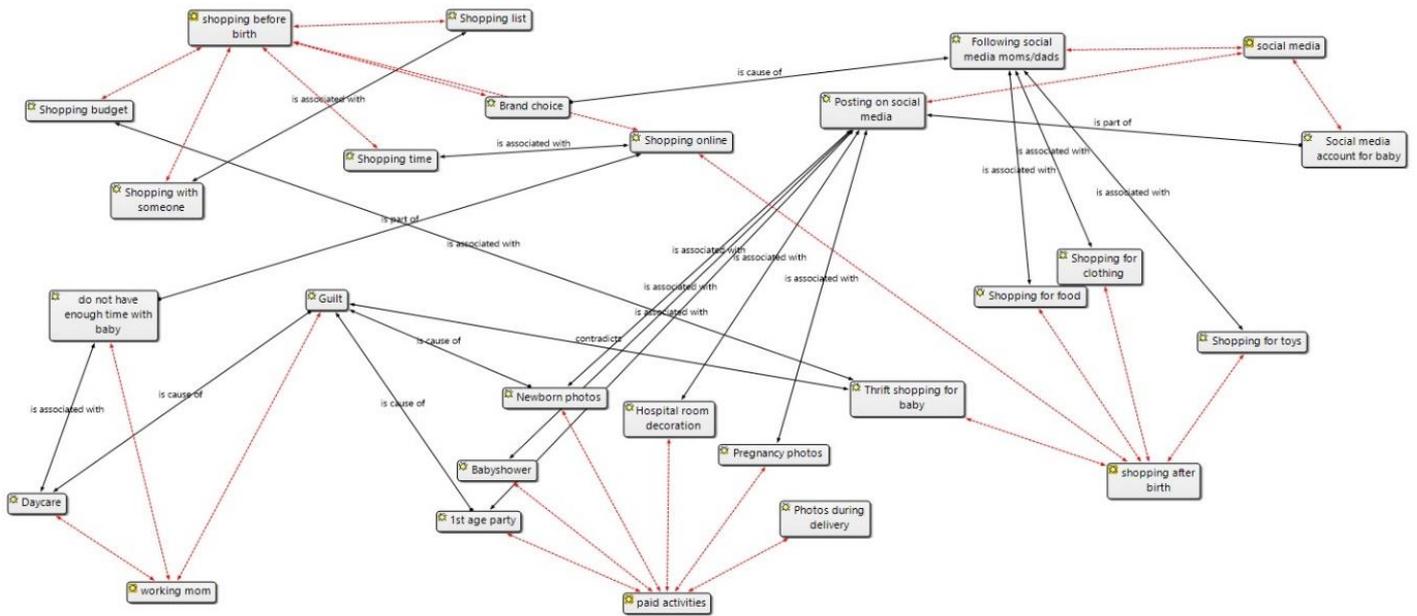
Figure 4. Network Analysis

4.4.1. Shopping before birth

Shopping during pregnancy is a really important event for mothers. They give importance to every single item they buy for their future babies, as demonstrated by searching online for the products' health standards and qualities. During the interviews, mothers were asked several questions in order to clarify their shopping during pregnancy. The interviewer asked mothers about their shopping time, who they went shopping with, whether they had a shopping list, about their budgets, and regarding their brand choices.

As can be seen from their responses, mothers generally went shopping with their husbands and friends. Half of the respondents preferred to shop with their husbands and the other half preferred their friends. None of them mentioned their mothers or mothers-in-law. When the interviewer asked why they did not mention them, one mother said;

Mother 1 (M): I preferred to shop with my friends. At first, we were going with my mom but after we bought some clothes, she started to interfere in my purchases. She said that the things I chose were unnecessary. How it can be unnecessary? I want them all. So, next time I called my bestie and we went shopping together. I bought whatever I wanted (Ayca, 32/ baby with 0-3 age).

Yet another respondent said that she preferred her husband because they needed to share the moment.

M: It was a great pleasure for me to hold my husband's hand and shop together with our baby. We lost ourselves after a while. Each weekend we went to another mall and bought something for him (Merve, 26/ baby with 0-3 age).

It can be understood from the results that non-working mothers generally prefer to shop with their husbands while working mothers prefer to shop either alone or with their friends. When we asked about the reason for this preference, working mothers said that they did not have much time for shopping. Either they did it online during their working time, or if they could, they would buy items from a store during their lunchtime.

M: Yes, shopping was so important for me during my pregnancy. I wanted to buy everything, but I have a really tight schedule at work and could not go out shopping all that often. So, I bought nearly all of the stuff online. For the things I cannot buy online, we went shopping with my colleagues during lunchtimes (Dilek, 28/ baby with 0-3 age).

The timing of the onset of pregnancy shopping is another interesting result from this research. Most of the mothers preferred to start shopping in the middle of their pregnancy. Traditionally some mothers believe that buying something during the early stages of pregnancy brings bad luck. Therefore, this led those mothers to start their shopping around their 5th months of their pregnancy. However, some of them started as soon as they heard about their pregnancy.

M: I start shopping on the day I learned that I was pregnant. Immediately, I started to follow insta-moms and baby shopping accounts on Instagram. I made my list according to the mothers on Instagram. I bought them one by one. By the 6th month, I had finished all necessary items on my list. The rest is only for pleasure I guess…(Zehra, 27/ baby with 0-3 age).

M: I am 6 months pregnant at the moment. My mother told me that I should wait to shop until the 4th month. She said that it would bring bad luck and I could lose my baby. I know it is superstition, but I cannot take that chance. I will not die if I wait, so I waited. I have been shopping for two months now. I already bought so many things (Vildan, 29/ pregnant).

M: I waited until the last month. I had my list, and the stores were selected. So, it was quite easy to buy everything over one weekend. I wanted to buy the latest fashion products (Zeynep, 28 / baby with 0-3 age).

So, it can be understood that every mother-to-be chose her own shopping time. Nevertheless, it is also seen in the results that working mothers tend to delay the shopping process a little longer than non-working mothers.

Another notable question pertaining to pre-birth shopping is whether mothers made use of online shopping lists available to expecting mothers. These lists can be found online on baby-care websites, Instagram accounts, or online shopping websites. Mothers generally share their

lists with one another. Some of the lists – filled with unnecessary items – were prepared by brands so that they could entice their customers into buying their products while others were prepared by shopping websites and included at least one item from each section. As can be seen from the responses, some mothers used these lists without changing anything while others got their lists from friends who have experience as mothers.

M: One of my friends sent me her list for baby shopping and recommended that I should buy all the items. She told that she made her own list from five other lists. At first, lots of the items seemed unnecessary but I bought all of them anyway. After my baby came, I really used all of them (Dilek, 28/ baby with 0-3 age).

M: Yes, I used a list of course. It even included a nail file for the baby. I could not have thought of that. I have not heard of some of the items on the list before. Therefore, it was a great help actually. I got my list from a mother on Instagram. She shared her list publicly and I've added a few more items from another list. The Insta-mom's list also included brand names. At first, I didn't care about the brands but for items I really didn't know, I bought the brand that she recommended (Betül,30/ baby with 0-3 age).

The shopping budget is another obstacle affecting mothers' purchasing decisions. Some of the mothers did not care about the budget when it came to purchasing for their babies. However, some families with limited budgets shopped around more in order to find more affordable optionsfor a product. The general idea was not to make a strict budget for baby shopping. The baby seemed a future prince/princess of the house, so they experienced guilt when limiting the budget for their babies.

M: What budget? No way I could limit my purchases for my baby. He will be our prince, so he deserves the best of everything. His father thinks the same way too (Merve,26/ baby with 0-3 age).

M: I know I needed to limit myself but I couldn't. I didn't tell myself "no limits", but when I liked a brand, I didn't say "off-limits" too. I bought them in installments (Aslı,37/ baby with 0-3 age).

These results revealed that when it comes to purchasing for the baby, budgets were not an issue at all. Families bought anything for their babies; even if it was way beyond their budgets. When it comes to the brand preferences, social media has a huge effect on this decision. Mothers share the brands that they use and recommend them to other mothers. It is seen in the results that all mothers follow at least two mother accounts on each social media platform. Instagram and Facebook are the favorite social media platforms for mothers when it comes to sharing their

experiences about brands and products. So, when mothers want to buy a particular product, they consult these accounts for their purchasing decisions.

M: During the first stage of my shopping, I did not know any brands besides the ones I saw in commercials. But after I joined the mom's support group on Facebook, I learned about new baby brands unwittingly. I bought some of them online and some of them from the stores. I can say that posts on Instagram and Facebook affected my brand choices (Zeynep,28/ baby with 0-3 age).

M: I had brands on my mind but one of my friends, who had a baby last year, told me about some brands that I had never heard of. I took notes on my phone and when I went shopping, I opened my list and checked for the brands. The only thing I cared about is that the brand should be organic (Büşra,29/ pregnant).

4.4.2. Shopping after birth

The birth of the baby changes the mother's life completely. They need support for everything, especially for shopping because the baby's needs never end and there is never enough time for a new mom. So, online shopping comes in handy at this point. The interviewer asked mothers whether they used online shopping after the birth of their baby. Without exception, all participants used online shopping for their babies. They searched online for special offers for the needs of babies. From nondurable toiletries like diapers to wet wipes or rash cream, all mothers have a specific brand that they use consistently. In addition, the mothers looked for sale deals for each of them.

M: For me, online shopping is a great opportunity. I started working after the 4th month,so I didn't have time for shopping in store. I bought the items online and have it delivered to my door. Great, isn't it? Besides, do you have any idea how hard it is to shop around stores with a stroller while carrying a big diaper pack? Complete nightmare for me, so, no way ... I use online shopping (Gülşah,44/ baby with 4+ age).

M: Online purchasing is a great opportunity to compare prices. Why spend more on same product? I look for deals online. I set price alarms for diapers, for example. But not for all items of course. There are things that you cannot buy online. Food for example (Esin,33/ baby with 0-3 age).

When it comes to clothing, mothers prefer organic items and those with health certificates. The participants reported that they generally buy clothes online when they are familiar with the brand. They hesitated to buy from brands that they have never heard of. They stated that they

have concerns about the fabric dyes used in those products. So, they look for brands that list the content of the product.

M: I usually use online shopping for everything I buy. But I have worries about the clothes that I buy online for my baby. If it is a well-known brand it is ok, generally they reveal their dye tests on their websites, but there are lots of Chinese made clothes which are being sold online. I am sure that their dyes are carcinogenic. So, I prefer not to buy those. Yes, they look gorgeous but not healthy (Begüm,28/ baby with 0-3 age).

M: Clothing is important for me. There are two things I look for. First, it shouldn't look cheap and second hand, it should meet health standards. I am not addicted to brands but there are specific brands which really care about health issue (Elif, 28/ baby with 0-3 age).

However, when shopping for food for their babies, mothers are reluctant to buy online. They think that only manufactured foods like baby formula can be bought online. On the other hand, there are several web sites and Instagram accounts which sell supplementary foods for babies such as homemade vermicelli with vegetables, biscuits and soup mixtures. According to the participants, if these accounts are recommended by another mother or an Insta-mom, they might trust the account.

M: I sometimes buy some supplementary foods like vermicelli. I work and I don't have time to prepare them at home. I know some mom accounts who are making those at their homes. I did my research and if I trust them, I buy from them. But, I need to read few comments about their posts (Çiğdem, 29/ baby with 0-3 age).

When it comes to toy shopping, there is a new trend that moms need to follow when buying toys, namely a preference for toys which are more educational. There are several accounts on social media that sell educational and, simultaneously, healthy toys. These accounts also provide some information about which toys can be used in respect to the age of the child. So, mothers do not need to conduct research on the entire topic to gain information. Via the toy accounts in Instagram or Facebook, they can both gather information and buy the toys they like. Once more, working mothers use this method more than non-working mothers do.

M: I know that toys play a great role in children's improvement. Because of this, I want to buy specific and more educational toys for my baby. Somehow, I readily come across these accounts on social media. I prefer to buy toys, which have an impact on my daughter's motor development. Like opening zips, grippers or locks, matching colors or shapes. Standard toys in stores are standard for every child. My daughter should be better. Before going to kindergarten, she should learn all of this. I don't want her to fall behind the other kids (Selma, 41 / baby with 4+ age).

M: Toys are so important for children's development. When we meet with friends, sometimes we talk about the things that we bought for our children and, usually, a few of them brag about the new and shiny toys that they have bought online. Organic substance, anti-allergic material and so on. I have to buy them even though they are so expensive. I don't want my friends to criticize me for not purchasing healthy toys for my son (Yasemin, 40/ baby with 4+ age).

It can be understood from the responses that mothers benchmark the items they buy for their children against purchased made by other mothers. In order to be competitive in their social environment, they use the items they buy, and they want to show that they, too, have bought the best quality items and have no regard for price. When it comes to using second-hand products, mothers divide into two groups. Some of them reported that they never use a pre-owned product. Some mothers also mentioned that their social environment will be critical of them for doing so. They said that they have the money, so why should they use second-hand products. The other group considers the use of second-hand products to be prudent. It was also mentioned that this practice is very standard in the USA and lots of mothers reuse items from other mothers, like toys, clothes, strollers etc.

M: No way…I never use anything second-hand. So, I never use them for my child either. I have the money so, why should I? Also, my husband won't allow me even if I wanted to. We cannot be sure that theywere used in healthy places. By the way, how can I explain it to my friends, it will seem that we are broke. So, a big no for anything second-hand(Gülhan, 30 / baby with 0-3 age).

M: I wish but I don't. I cannot be sure that they are clean enough. There are websites where mothers share their products, this is kind of a trend, I know, but something bothers me about it … I cannot feel at ease with this issue (Eylem,34 / baby with 0-3 age).

M: I used second-hand clothes before. I bought it from a website called "dolap (closet)" Also, I sold my stroller through another website called "Tutumlu anne (Thrifty mother)" Why not? I would use them if I cleaned them thoroughly. Some people say that, how can I be sure of their cleanness and I respond that, how can you be sure that the clothes in stores are clean. You clean them when you buy them, I clean them too. Do I do it because I do not have enough money, of course not … Some of my friends see me as saint. They congratulate me on my prudence (Özge, 40 / baby with 4+ age).

From these responses, it can be seen that the decision-making process relating to purchases during pregnancy or after birth, are hugely influenced by social media. Mothers do not want to

buy things without asking advice from other mothers in their social groups. They look for accounts, which are trusted by other mothers.

4.4.3. Active users of social media

As observed before, social media has a huge effect on everyday life. Some people live for posting something on their accounts. As is seen in the quantitative results above, status consumption has an impact on self-extension. This extension is achieved through products, which have been bought for their babies by the mothers. In order to delve deeper into the findings, a few questions were posed to the participants by the interviewer.

All participants have at least two social media accounts. All the participants report that they post something at least three times a week. According to this information, the interviewer asked the participants how many social media moms/dads they were following. The minimum number that the mothers gave is ten. They think that the more accounts they follow, the more information they would get. It can be observed that mothers who follow social media moms/dads buy the same products which are recommended by the trusted social media moms/dads.

M: I don't know how many accounts I follow. But after 15 I lost track. I follow some hashtags about babies, food, and clothing. If I come across a good account then I follow that one too (Sumeyra,32/ baby with 0-3 age).

M: I follow only 10-12 accounts. There is no need to follow too many. That brings confusion. A few are ok for good advice though. For example, there is an Insta-dad called "@muhendisinoglu" (son of an engineer) that performs chemical content analysis on baby products. I never buy anything without checking his good products lists (Yeşim, 22/ baby with 0-3 age).

M: I follow social media moms and dads. I ask for advice or read the comments below. It feels like I am not alone, and not the only one who is struggling. This calms me down. So, I trust them somehow. I don't know why but I trust them (Esin, 33/ baby with 0-3 age).

Another question was posed to participants in order to clarify self-extension on social media. It is understood from the survey results that mothers who are active social media users (posting at least two posts in a week) are more prone to self-extension. In order to examine this idea and learn more about this, we asked mothers what kind of contributions they make on social media and as a probing question, whether they post about the products that they buy for their baby.

M: Yes, I am very active on Facebook and Instagram. I like to share my happy moments with my friends. To be honest, I went through a tough time after birth. I went to psychologist for it. But I want my friends to see the other me. Not the unhappy one. In order to do it I need to post as many happy photos as possible (Yasemin, 40/ baby with 4+ age).

M: I share a lot on Instagram and yes sometimes I share the toys I have bought or food I prepared. But, not clothes. Those are not interesting. However, sometimes I share toiletries like rash cream or moisturizer if I am really satisfied with it. But not always (Gizem, 34/ baby with 0-3 age).

M: Some Insta-moms/dads share the products showing the brands, but I don't do that. That is free advertising. Why should I do that? If they send me samples then I will do it of course (Gülay 45/ baby with 4+ age).

M: Yes, if I bought something expensive, I would share it. But if it is cheap then I don't share it on Instagram. But sometimes I need to show my friends that I've bought something incredible for my baby. Is it bragging? Yes, it is, but nearly all of my friends do it (Merve,26/ baby with 0-3 age).

It is obvious from the results that moms do not want to share just any and every brand name on their social media accounts. Nevertheless, expensive products have a chance to be posted on social media. It can be also be seen that young and first-time mothers tend to share more posts and products that they have bought. Older moms or moms with second kids generally do not opt to share the products even though they share photos.

4.4.4. Involvement of paid activities

There is a huge sector for mothers and their babies. Baby shower parties, first birthday parties, pregnancy photos, photos during delivery, hospital room decorations and newborn photos are the new trends for new mothers. These are like traps and they can be seen everywhere on social media. Instagram and Facebook are full of mothers engaging in such paid for activities, sharing the photos and spending hundreds of dollars on these parties. Self-extension plays a vital role in these paid for activities. Most of them are for the mother and not for the baby. They do not even recognize that there is a party. Therefore, mothers do it for themselves and of course for their friends. One participating mother reported that she only does some of these so as not to fall behind her friends.

M: Starting with pregnancy photos I've done all of them. But not a baby shower. This is not our culture. I bought a photo package from a baby photographer which includes pregnancy, hospital room, delivery and newborn photos. So, I have all of them (Elif, 28/ baby with 0-3 age).

M: Oh my God. I've spent thousands on photos. Do I regret it? No ... I've posted nearly all of them. My husband complained about the posts, but if I don't post them on Instagram why did I spend so much money? (Tuba,32/ baby with 0-3 age).

M: Yes, I did all of them. Not for myself but for my daughter. It seems that one day when she grows up, all of her friends would have these photos. That's why I did them (Gizem ,34/ baby with 0-3 age).

M: I've done some of them. Not baby shower photos but some other photos. In a few months' time, I'll do the first birthday party. I am planning for it now with a catering company. It will be a hell of a big party. Not for my baby of course but for my friends. All of my friends did that. So I feel like I have to (Aylin,35/ baby with 0-3 age).

Table 5 shows the numbers participating in these activities. Doing these paid for activities is really associated with activeness on social media. A few working mothers also mentioned that they did a first birthday party because that they did not spend enough time with their babies. When they grow up, they can show those pictures to their children and tell them that they have had great times together and did everything that they could have done.

Table 5. Participation of Paid Activities

Did you make………?	Yes	No
Baby shower	%8,7	% 91,3
1st age party	%58,6	%41,4
Pregnancy photos	%85,4	%14,6
Photos during delivery	%70,1	%29,9
Hospital Room decorations	%54,2	%45,4
Newborn photo	%81,2	%19,8

4.4.5. Being a working mother

Speaking as a working mother, it is so hard for women. Mainstreaming gender roles start to conflict when you are both a mother and a worker. This process is both physically and psychologically demanding and hard to cope with. At this point guilt sets in. All working mother participants reported that they felt guilty about not spending enough time with their babies. In order to suppress this guilt, they buy numerous expensive items and organize the described activities, accompanied by a bloated collection of photos. According to the responses, it is understood that this guilt is not just about the mother herself but, also, in order to suppress the pressure from others about being a working mother. To ease the guilt purchasing steps in.

M: A babysitter looks after my baby when I am away at work. I am stuck between being a mom and my career. I have to work. My baby is on my mind during working hours. I have

pictures of her on my desk. While I am working, I can't help looking at Google commercials which show your previous searches. A few minutes later, I find myself shopping for my baby (Gülhan, 30/ baby with 0-3 age).

M: It is so hard to have a little baby and work at the same time. I can't see him all day, at least he is not neglected because of the things I buy. Almost every day, I bought toys. Sometimes I contradict myself, I told myself not to buy a new toy, but I can't resist the urge to buy it (Özgül,35/ baby with 4+ age).

M: I stopped buying for myself since my son was born. I don't buy anything for myself, but I buy the best of anything for my son (Gözde,40/ baby with 0-3 age).

M: This guilt kills me. Buying something expensive decreases my guilt a little bit. At least I satisfy myself in this way (Eylem, 34/ baby with 0-3 age).

5. Discussion

The results have been showed that mothers see their babies as a big part of their selves. They willingly shop and pay more in order to satisfy both themselves and their social environment. These products are labeled and introduced as natural and organic. When mothers do not buy these products they feel guilty and shame that they are not good mothers for their babies. %70 of participants has a say in deciding the products for their babies. These mothers prefer the products which are recommended by social media moms/dads. This affects the whole shopping process for babies. Mothers need to be approved by their social environment, so when they shop according to the common ideas about products, they think that they can get this approval. Also this shopping process become status consumption between mothers. There has been a race between moms that who buys the best product.

The inclusion of others in the self-scale results revealed that %48 of mothers says that there is congruence between mothers' selves and babies' selves. When we looked at the differences according to the demographic variables a significant differentiation emerges between mothers with babies (0-3 age) and mothers with toddlers (4+ age). Not every demographic variable on the part of the mother impacts on inclusion of the baby in the mother's self-identity. However, the baby's age does have an effect. Mothers with babies aged 0-3 years old, feel a closer link between their babies and their own self-identity.

It has been revealed that mothers give different answers to the in-depth interview questions. They gave negative answers to the questions about their self extension or status consumption. However, in the in-depth interview, they express that sometimes they make purchases which can be considered as status consumption and they also express the need of social acceptance.

This result also justifies our survey findings. Need for self extension via products which have been bought for babies have an impact on status consumption. Unfortunately, mothers do not think that they are making conspicuous or status consumption. They think that they buy the best product for their babies. They make these purchases unquestioningly. This is how they satisfy themselves and their social environment. Another result of in-depth interview reveals that working mothers spend more for their babies because of the guilt of not having enough time for their babies. They want to overcome this guilt with spending so much for their baby. Also because these working mothers have more social environment, they think that they need to satisfy more people than usual in social media. When pregnant mothers' results have been examined, it is seen that they make shopping for their future babies self-possessedly. However especially first-time mothers care more about the recommendations of social media moms/dads. They request shopping lists from them in order to buy everything they will need.

6. Conclusion

Both survey results and in-depth interview results have been revealed that, mothers see their babies as reflections of their selves. But they never accept that they made status or conspicuous consumption. Therefore, it can be easily seen in the results that they made status consumption in order to extend their selves in social media via their babies. When we look at the most preferred brand according to the interview results, it is seen that these brands are the most recommended brands by social media moms/dads. These products are also labeled as natural, organic or bamboo which are the features of mothers are looking for their babies.

When the whole results of surveys and in-depth interviews have been evaluated it can be seen that mothers stuck into a purchasing circle. Brands use their sensitive feelings for their babies. Everyday new products have been introduced in social media by the insta-moms/dads. The mothers who care about the recommendations of these people want to buy those products no matter their budgets and needs. Consumerist culture leads mothers to this mass-consumption era via social media. The author recommends mothers to look little behind of this social media environment and stop buying the things that they do not need, even though their favorite instagram account recommend it or their friends use it. This research shows that mothers need to be self-aware of this consumption circle.

Limitations and Further studies

One of the main limitations of this research is sample range. The survey was applied online to mothers who are members of social media groups related to motherhood. For additional research, this sample should be widened.

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