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THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON IMPULSE BUYING BEHAVIOR DURING THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

Aim: In the Covid-19 pandemic process, the absence of a "new normal" has also reflected on the purchasing behaviour of consumers, encouraging impulse purchasing behaviour instead of rationally and consistently choosing the best. In parallel with this change in purchasing behaviour, the purpose of this study is to determine the effect of social media on impulse purchasing behaviours during the Covid-19 pandemic process.

Methods: For this purpose, the study applied an online questionnaire to 518 people by using the snowball sampling method, which is one of the non-random sampling methods. Apart from demographic variables, the study used three sub-dimensions, namely social media, social impact source, and social platform activities, as well as "Social Media Impact Scale" consisting of eleven questions and "Impulse Purchase Scale" consisting of nine questions.

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Results: The study analysed the data obtained from the survey using the structural equation model and determined that the social impact source and social platform activities significantly affect the social media effect.

Conclusion: The study additionally observed that the social media effect significantly affects the impulse purchases of consumers.

Keywords: Social Media, Impulsive Buying, Covid-19, Consumer Behavior

Introduction

Revolutionary developments in communication technology have caused an increase in the number of internets and social media users worldwide and the changes brought about by this process required the reshaping of business life.

Social networks have existed since the day people started interacting with each other. Indeed, the gathering of family members, close friends and colleagues creates the foundation of a social network. Therefore, in today's internet world, it is not surprising that online social networks exist completely everywhere. Since social media is a platform that enables businesses to communicate with both existing and potential customers much faster than old technologies, businesses in the recent years started to develop their marketing strategies in this area. Today, the e-commerce process has become more active due to the marketing activities carried out through social media, and consumer behavior has also changed in this new order. Social media channels are used not only in the field of trade but also as an important e-word-of-mouth communication tool, as well as a source of information for consumer empowerment on many issues. On social media platforms, consumers not only share their thoughts and experiences about products and services but also their thoughts and experiences on many issues they encounter in social life.

The Covid-19 outbreak, which was seen in Wuhan, China in 2019 and caused a global social crisis and economic recession, has quickly become the most talked about topic on social media. It is inevitable that individuals living in a society will be affected by the economic, social, cultural events and changes taking place in society. Ideas, beliefs, values, habits and behaviors develop from both positive and negative experiences. In this sense, it is expected that the Covid-19 outbreak will have a deep impact on all of this (He and Harris, 2020). At this point, it is

necessary to seek answers to the questions of how social media is used in the Covid-19 outbreak process and what effect this has on the purchasing behavior of consumers.

It is obvious that there will be changes in both economic life and social life during the global pandemic process. In addition to the developing technology, the change in consumer habits caused by the pandemic also creates the transformation needs for the goods and services offered by the businesses. Physical stores are negatively affected both by changing customer demands and preferences and by the measures taken due to the outbreak. On the other hand, online stores increase their sales volume rapidly and their customer potential increases day by day. After the pandemic, social relations will need to be reorganized, investment in health will increase, and digitalization will become even more widespread. Although digitalization was part of our lives before this process, virtual work from home and online shopping gained importance during the pandemic process. Since the World Health Organization (WHO) first announced Covid-19 as a pandemic, and the remote work, distance education, and the desire to adopt a healthier lifestyle became more prevalent, consumers with no prior online shopping experience switched to e-commerce due to its contactless, convenient, fast, and secure nature in many different sectors, including food, cleaning materials, and health. It is inevitable for information transfer and shopping habits to change in the new world order. In this process, social media platforms have become more reliable sales agents for consumers and businesses compared to traditional marketing practices (Rehman et al. 2014). Therefore, it is necessary to investigate how consumers benefit from social media platforms in the purchasing process during the Covid-19 pandemic process. Social media platforms offer consumers different opportunities as well as threats. These different opportunities and threats presented by social media platforms also diversify consumers' information, purchasing behavior and preferences. This new situation necessitates the re-discussion of consumer behavior in the digital environment theories. Based on this necessity, this study attempted to reveal the effect of social media on impulse purchasing behavior during the Covid-19 pandemic process.

Although DuPont was the first to define the concept of impulse purchasing in the 1950s, Stern's definition in 1962 is the one that still maintains its validity. According to Stern, impulse

buying behavior is any unplanned purchasing action by the consumer that creates an immediate urge to buy with an inherent impulse (Stern, 1962).

In other words, there is no pre-planned intention of the consumer to meet any specified need or to purchase any specified product (Beatty and Ferrel, 1998). This study attempts to answer the questions of how the impulse purchasing behavior is shaped on the social media platform and how social media platforms are used in the Covid-19 pandemic process.

Covid-19 has become one of the most serious challenges facing governments and businesses (Hall et al., 2020). Covid-19 has brought many important psychological, social, and professional changes such as lost jobs, low savings, fear and stress in outside visits, uncertain future, physical and mental health problems (Bradbury-Jones and Isham, 2020). As a result of the Covid-19 outbreak, social distancing and compulsory staying at home have completely changed the consumption habits as well as the purchasing and shopping habits of the consumers (Donthu and Gustafsson, 2020; Sheth, 2020; Kim, 2020). In these uncertain times, changes in priorities, attitudes, and behaviors due to panic reflect the new reality in the changing nature of the individual. New ways of spreading or confronting perceived fear and risk, changing demographics, and advancement in technology also lead to the emergence of new habits in consumers. Slickdeals (2020) surveyed nearly 2,000 Americans through leading online shopping platforms and noted that consumers did more impulse shopping during the Covid-19 outbreak than they did before the pandemic. As a result of the research in question, it was determined that before the Covid-19 outbreak in January 2020, an American's average spending on instinctual purchases was about 155.03 USD per month, while in April 2020, the average spending with an impulse purchase increased by 18% to 182.98 USD. This result shows that during the pandemic, customer impulse purchasing behavior increased. The biggest reason for this result is that consumers spend more time on the internet during their stay at home due to curfew restrictions or fear of getting sick during the pandemic process (Thakur et al. 2020).

1. Background

1.1. The New Face of the Changing World: Social Media and its Importance

Social media is defined by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) as "an Internet-based application group that is based on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allows user-generated content to be created and shared."

Social media is used by billions of people around the world and has quickly become one of the defining technologies of our age, and an indispensable part of daily life for people all over the world. Currently, more than 4.5 billion people are using the Internet and the number of social media users has exceeded 3.8 billion according to the 2020 Global Digital Report. This increase continues at approximately 9.2% annually (Table.1). Social media and customer forums are an important element in the minds of consumers that have the potential to both build and destroy brands. For consumers, the reputation of the brand can rise to the highest level based on communication on social media, or it can be destroyed overnight. It would not be surprising for marketers to embrace social media as a marketing channel, given the huge potential audience available that spends most of their time using social media on various platforms (Appel et al. 2020).

Table 1. Use of Social Media Worldwide

Total Number of Active Social Media Users	Ratio of Social Media Users to the World Population	Annual Growth in Total Social Media Users	Number of People Using Social Media Through Mobile Phones	The Ratio of the Number of Users Accessing Social Media Via Mobile Phone to the General Number of Social Media Users
3.80 Billion People	%49	%9,2	3.75 Billion People	%99

Source: Digital 2020 Global Overview Report.

It is reported that more than 2.6 billion active Facebook users (Statista, 2020) spend an average of 20 minutes a day on Facebook (Brandwatch, 2019), and 330 million active Twitter users post 500 million tweets per day (Omnicore, 2020). The third most prominent social media platform is

Instagram, which has approximately one billion active users with approximately 4.2 billion clicks a day (Adespresso, 2019).

Today's order, which can be referred to as 'new economy' or 'digital economy', is defined by innovative and creative ideas. It is very important for business managers to focus more on social media, as the intensity of users' social relationships and their commitment to social media tend to have large impact on their behavior. It is seen that digital consumers have the potential to distort existing competition as well as affecting the inclusion of new actors in existing markets. The use of the internet and social media has changed consumer behavior and the way businesses run their business. Digital and social media marketing offers significant opportunities to businesses through lower costs, improved brand awareness and increased sales (Dwivedi et al., 2020; Ajina, 2019).

Some commerce sites started to offer social networking services to improve user interaction and increase active user participation, considering that user interaction can lead to more transactions. In a social network, users interact with and receive information from each other. When a user wants to buy a product online, they can request and get more information about the product through their social network. Therefore, social media has served as a new form of word-of-mouth for products/services or providers and has proved to be critical to consumer decision making in e-commerce environments (Ye et al.,2011).

It is possible to see the reflections of this global transformation in people's lives and on social networks. People communicate with other consumers about their experiences and interact with businesses. They also spend more time online searching for information about products and services. Therefore, businesses try to respond to this change in consumer behavior by making digital and social media an important and integral part of their commercial marketing plans (Stephen, 2016). A study conducted on Facebook, one of the most commonly used social media platforms, showed that 75% of American consumers were influenced by comments on Facebook before buying a branded product they had never experienced before, and purchased the branded product in question (Wang, 2015).

In today's digital economy, it is not enough to set up a physical or virtual business and wait for customers to come. Instead, businesses should look for alternative ways to reach customers and interact with them through common communication platforms (Lai, 2010). Since many people

use social media, we can expect to see that the stronger the users' loyalty to the product and the brand, the stronger the purchasing behavior. In trade activities, social media has been used to affect both attitudes and future purchase intention (Wetzel et.al. 1998).

Businesses benefit significantly from making social media marketing an integral element of their overall business strategy. Social media allows businesses to connect with their customers, increase brand awareness, influence consumers' attitudes, receive feedback, improve existing products and services, and increase sales (Lal et al. 2020; Kaur et al. 2018; Kapoor et al. 2018; Algharabat et al. 2018). With some companies collecting social media user data, information about what people like, don't like, and they need or not is created. The main purpose of collecting data directly from the user is to determine the needs of the user and raise the user's living standards.

However, the increasing use of social media has not only increased consumers' participation in information sharing but has also influenced the purchasing behavior of customers (Brough and Martin, 2020; Carlson et al., 2018). Especially in the Covid-19 period, brands had to implement significant changes in management and communication approaches. In this period, the common motto of businesses, as well as public institutions and organizations around the world was, "Stay at Home". Social media and written and visual media for this message, as well as social message sharing, have made a positive contribution to reducing competition and directing brands and consumer preferences (Sayın, 2020).

In a study conducted by Ahmed et al. (2020) based on the theory of fear within the framework of the model in Figure 1 below, US citizens' impulse buying behaviors and antecedents during the Covid-19 outbreak were examined. In the study, data were collected from 889 US consumers and the model (Figure 1) created by making use of previous studies on the subject was confirmed.
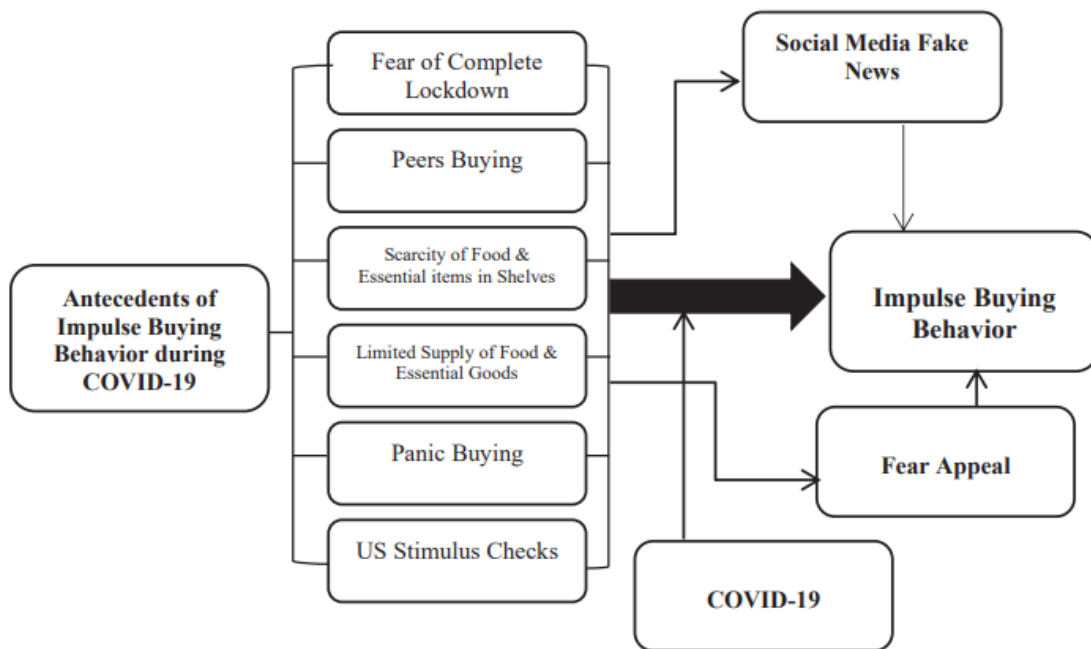
Figure 1. Antecedents of Impulse Buying Behavior During Covid-19

Source: Ahmed et al.(2020)

As can be seen in Figure 1 above, the variables of fear of complete lockdown, peers buying, scarcity of food & essential items on shelves, limited supply of food & essential goods, panic buying and US stimulus checks were determined as the antecedents of impulse purchasing behaviors during Covid-19. In the model, the social media fake news is included as an intermediary variable and Covid-19 as a regulatory variable. The research showed that negative and fake news on social media has an intermediary effect on impulse purchasing. The news and the resulting fear/anxiety seem to be a powerful factor influencing the impulse buying behavior of US citizens. In addition, the research concluded that the fear of complete lockdown due to the outbreak, the purchasing behavior of other people, the scarcity of food&essential items in shelves and the emergence of panic buying behavior affect impulse purchasing. As a result, the research determined that the Covid-19 pandemic process has a regulatory effect on all these variables and the fear created by the pandemic triggers impulse buying. The findings of this research allow researchers to understand the dynamics of impulse purchasing behavior for future studies involving situations such as natural disasters and crises and it reveals the necessary components in order to form various paradigms related to the subject. It also emphasizes the need for marketing

and brand managers to develop new strategies on social media in order to increase the market share of their brands in order to gain a competitive advantage in case of Covid-19 or similar pandemics or panic in the future.

1.2. Impulse Buying Behavior

The impulse buying phenomenon emerged in the 1940s and was considered an irrational behavior (Luna and Quintanilla, 2000). Faced with the difficulty of measuring, this concept attracted the attention of many authors later. Although there is still no consensus on the definition of the concept in the literature, some authors have tried to clarify this concept. Sharma et al. (2010) define impulse buying as "a hedonically complex purchasing behavior in which the speed of the impulse purchase decision precludes any thoughtful, deliberate consideration of alternatives or future implications". This definition has emerged from decades of research on impulse purchasing. In a study, Rook (1987) defined impulse buying as a strong and persistent urge to buy something right away. Previous research has sometimes referred to impulse purchasing as an unplanned purchase and used the action of "unplanned purchase" as a synonym in the literature (Stern,1962). It is also stated, however, that impulse purchasing behavior can typically be categorized as ad hoc, but unplanned purchases cannot always be categorized as impulse purchases. The rationale behind this distinction lies in the fact that an unplanned purchase can occur because a consumer needs the product but couldn't place the item on a structured shopping list. Unplanned purchases may not be accompanied by a strong impulse or strong positive emotions often associated with an impulse purchase. Previous research in both academic and professional fields has also shown that impulse purchasing represents 40 to 80 percent of all purchases depending on the type of product (Amos et al. 2014).

The term "impulse purchase" refers to a narrower and more specific range of phenomena than "unplanned purchase". More importantly, it identifies a psychologically different type of behavior that is strikingly different from consumer choice thinking about buying. Impulse purchasing is often known as the unplanned purchase of the consumer, and this has become an important part of purchasing behavior. Unplanned buying behavior accounts for 62% of supermarket sales and 80% of sales of some product categories (Pawar et al. 2016).

A market report by Creditcards.com estimates that 84% of all consumers buy instinctively and their impulse purchases account for around 40% of consumer spending on e-commerce (Chan et al. 2017). Given impulse purchases, the online shopping environment is believed to be easier and more effective for the consumer than offline shopping. Because the online marketplace removes restrictions such as remote store location and limited opening hours. Online consumers often seem to make spontaneous and intuitive impulse purchases after being exposed to stimulating cues initiated by online stores, such as price discounts, limited advertising offers, and attractive product appearance (Liu et al. 2013). Online retailers heavily use two strategies that cover a limited amount and time to entice consumers to buy suddenly (Wu et al. 2020).

In a study conducted by Jarboe and McDaniel (1987), it was found that those who travel longer in a shopping center shop in a more unplanned way than those who spend a short time. The reason behind this is that people who roam longer experienced more stimulation that led to their instinctive purchase impulse tendency.

1.3. The Effect of Social Media on Impulse Buying

65 percent of social media users admit that social networks affect their shopping processes, and almost half say that social media inspires online shopping (Aragoncillo and Orus, 2018). Studies have shown that consumers are impressed by others when purchasing a product, and this impact may be higher than offline (Riegner, 2007). Therefore, social media can be a powerful tool to increase impulse purchasing (Aragoncillo and Orus, 2018).

The dominance of information technology and online channels has increased impulse buying behavior among consumers. Because this dominance not only facilitates consumers' access to view goods and services by staying at home but also facilitates the payment process with secure online transactions (Chen et al. 2016). In this process, social media has become a fundamental platform for businesses and consumers to trade and connect with each other in a beneficial and mutually valuable way (Kumar et al. 2016).

Today's businesses aim to be closer to their customers by successfully leveraging the potential of social media. With the worldwide explosion of social media use, businesses are increasingly engaging with their customers through this platform (Baird and Parasnis, 2011).

A strong and persistent urge to buy something that is not planned by the influence of different stimuli can lead to impulse buying. Users are sometimes able to purchase products and services with the impulse purchasing caused by the suggestions and recommendations they encounter while interacting with other users on social media. Product recommendations are considered as one of the most important factors that can lead to impulse purchasing. Social media users can actively search for information about the products they want to buy, receive suggestions and comments from other users, and make a purchasing decision based on this information (Chen et al. 2019).

Besides, rhetoric or news especially spread on social media and circulating by word of mouth, is also seen as an important element that guides consumers ' buying behavior in a psychological sense. Two important cognitive concepts draw attention here, which are fear of missing out and Bandwagon - follow the crowd. For example, a consumer who thinks that he can go to the market in a normal period, observes or becomes aware of the majority going to the market and purchasing many things on social media especially during the Covid-19 pandemic process and they may fall into the idea of missing something or stocking something and show panic buying behavior. This situation directly reveals the relationship between social media and impulse purchasing behavior (Genç, 2020).

Businesses can take advantage of this dynamic by designing social media programs to emotionally touch customers and motivate them to share their experiences with others. In the purchases made by consumers through social media, suggestions, reviews and opinions they receive from friends, families, experts and collective social communities play an important role in impulse purchasing. Content with positive comments from acquaintances creates a very strong instinctive buying impulse in the user (Baird and Parasnis, 2011).

1.4. Literature Review

Researchers conducted many different studies on "the effect of social media and the impulsive buying behavior of consumers", "social influence source and social media impact", and "social platform activities and social media impact".

Aragoncillo and Orús (2018) examine the effect of social media influence on impulse buying behavior in their online-offline comparative studies. The findings of their study show that

the offline channel is slightly more encouraging of impulse buying than the online channel and social networks can have a big impact on impulse buying.

Dodoo and Wu (2019) determine the power of social media ads on online impulse buying tendency in their study and conclude that social media ads have a positive effect on customer relevance, increasing the online impulse buying tendency. Results also indicate the impact of perceived personalization on perceptions of value, relevance and novelty of social media ads.

Kazi et al. (2019) studied the impact of social media on impulse buying behavior by conducting a study with 196 customers in Pakistan. The results showed that social media does have a positive and significant impact on the impulsive buying behavior of the customers. Therefore, online retailers and marketers should understand the importance of social media for encouraging the online impulsive buying of the consumers.

Focusing on the effect of social influence on impulse buying, Kusmaharani and Halim (2020) studied how Indonesian cosmetic products can generate online impulse buying. The results showed that online reviews have influence on browsing and then encourage urge to buy impulsively that stimulates impulse buying behavior.

Verhagen and Dolen (2011) studied the influence of online store beliefs on consumer online impulse buying. The result of this study indicated that there is a significant and positive relationship between the urge to buy impulsively and actually buying impulsively. The authors discussed and proved the positive influence of browsing activities on the online impulse buying urge.

Examining the influence of social media in creating impulse buying tendencies, Nuseir (2020) developed two hypotheses in his study: "There are no factors affecting impulsive buying behavior" and "Social media has no effect on impulse buying behavior". The results of the study rejected these hypotheses and revealed that there is a relationship between social media platforms and impulse buying behavior. In addition, this study examined the features and roles of Facebook as a social media platform that encouraged and created impulse buying opportunities.

Studying the social influence source and social media impact, Kwahk and Ge (2012) examined user behavior in the context of social media and e-commerce and tried to identify the

impact of social media on e-commerce through the perspective of social impact theory. They also examined how social media sources affect e-commerce through social impact transfer. The study concluded that social media affects e-commerce by means of transferring the social impact. Also developing a research model in terms of both social media and e-commerce, Kwahk and Ge investigated the influence of social media based on normative social influence and informational social influence in the context of Chinese e-commerce from the social impact theory perspective.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Research Method

The study used the descriptive research method, whose main purpose was to examine the effect of social media on the instinctive purchasing action of consumers during the Covid-19 pandemic process. If the event, individual, or object subject to research is to be defined in its own conditions and as it is, it is necessary to observe and determine them as they are, without any effort to change or influence them. Descriptive research methods are suitable for such situations (Islamoğlu & Alnıaçık, 2014).

The research hypotheses are as follows:

H1: Social impact source significantly affects social media influence.
H2: Social platform activities significantly affect the social media influence.
H3: Social media influence significantly affects consumers' impulse purchases.

2.2. Universe and Sample

Designed in a descriptive type, the universe of the research is composed of people who reside in Ankara province and participate in the social media network connections of the researchers. The study decided to use the snowball sampling method among non-random sampling methods, taking into account time and budget constraints in obtaining the data. Snowball sampling method is one of the most appropriate methods in terms of the effectiveness of the research, delivery of the survey questions to the relevant people, and saving time and budget for the researchers, especially in the studies on social media (Brickman Bhutta, 2012). Accordingly, the study collected the data using the Instagram and WhatsApp accounts of the researchers and by making an announcement to those who wanted to participate in the research voluntarily. Thus, participants were asked to share the

questionnaire form created on Google Forms with their own links. As a result of the survey conducted within the scope of the research, 518 people were reached. The data were collected between September 10- October 01, 2020, from those who accepted to participate in the study.

2.3. Data Collection Tool Used in the Study

The study collected the data using a questionnaire consisting of three parts. In the first part of the questionnaire, there is a "Social Media Impact Scale", which consists of three sub-dimensions grouped as social influence, social influence source, and social platform activities, adapted from the studies made by Chung et al. (2013), Mäntymäki and Riemer (2014), Park and Lessig (1977), Venkatesh and Brown (2001), Venkatesh and Davis (2000), Yang (2011) with this used and adapted the scales into Turkish by Akar et al (2015). The results of the analysis showed that the Cronch Bach Alpha coefficient of the social influence dimension was 0.847; 0.739 of the social influence source; social platform activity was determined as 0.797. In the second part, there is the "Impulse Purchasing Scale" consisting of nine questions developed by Rook and Fisher (1995) to measure consumers' impulse purchasing behavior.

Gödelek and Akalın (2008) and Yıldırım (2011) translated Rook and Fisher's (1995) impulsive buying scale into Turkish and examined the scale's validity through Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, and reliability with exploratory factor analysis. As a result, they stated that the nine-item, one-dimensional scale that we used in our research was valid and reliable, and they determined that instinctive buying could be used to determine consumer purchasing tendency.

In the third part, there are questions about gender, marital status, age, education level, demographic characteristics, as well as the social media tool most frequently used by the participants and the way they obtain information about Covid-19. Necessary permissions were obtained from Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University Ethics Committee in order to conduct the study.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed with the Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) 24.0 program to determine the structural validity of the scales with the data made ready for analysis with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 23.0 statistical package program. The reliability of the scales was evaluated with the Cronbach Alpha (CA) and composite reliability (KG) coefficients. The hypotheses of the research were tested with the

structural equation model (SEM). Statistical significance level in the analyzes was accepted as p <0.05.

The Unweighted Least Squares (ULS) method was used with the Bootstrap method as the estimation method since it was determined that the data did not meet the multivariate normality assumption in the CFA and SEM analyzes performed in the AMOS program. Good fit and acceptable fit values regarding fit indices used in the analyzes are presented in Table 2 (Bayram, 2010; Gürbüz, 2019; Karagöz, 2016; Meydan & Şeşen, 2011).

Table 2. Fit Indices

Fit Indices	Good Fit	Acceptable Fit Values
χ2/df	≤ 3	≤ 5
GFI	0,95 ≤ GFI ≤1,00	0,90≤ GFI ≤ 0,95
AGFI	0,90 ≤ AGFI ≤1,00	0,85≤ AGFI ≤ 0,90
NFI	0,95 ≤ NFI ≤1,00	0,90≤ NFI ≤ 0,95
RMR	0< RMR ≤0.05	0,05< RMR ≤ 0,08
SRMR	0< SRMR ≤0.05	0,05< SRMR ≤ 0,08

2. Analysis

Descriptive findings regarding the participants of the study are presented in Table 3. According to these findings, it is seen that the average age of the participants is 34.53 ± 10.41. It is seen that 56.9% of the participants are women, 51.5% are bachelor's degrees, 44.8% are public employees, 34.9% have an income of 6001 TL and above, 63.7% of the participants do not find their income sufficient, 52.3% have 4-6 members in their family, and 86.1% live in provinces. 62.0% of the participants use Instagram and 72.4% use social media 1-3 hours a day. It was determined that participants answered a total of 705 answers to a multi-option question asked about how they received information about Covid-19, and 37.6% of these answers were all options.

Table 3. Descriptive Findings Regarding Participants

Descriptive Features		n	%
Age	Mean: 34,53±10,41		
Gender	Male	223	43,1
	Female	295	56,9
Education Status	Primary	11	2,1
	High school	58	11,2
	Associate Degree	110	21,2
	License	267	51,5
	Postgraduate	72	13,9
Profession	Public	232	44,8
	Private sector	124	23,9
	Self-employment	18	3,5
	Retired	21	4,1
	Not working	123	23,7
Income	2324-3000 TL	117	22,6
	3001-4000 TL	63	12,2
	4001-5000 TL	86	16,6
	5001-6000 TL	71	13,7
	6001 and above	181	34,9
Income Sufficiency	Yes	188	36,3
	No	330	63,7
Number of Family Members	1-3	236	45,6
	4-6	271	52,3
	7 and above	11	2,1
Residential area	State	446	86,1
	County	60	11,6
	Village	12	2,3
Social Media Tool	Facebook	73	14,1
	Instagram	321	62,0
	Twitter	55	10,6
	Other	30	5,8
	No account	39	7,5
Social Media Usage Time	1-3 Hour	375	72,4
	4-6 Hour	114	22,0
	7-9 Hour	22	4,2
	10 Hour and above	7	1,4
How to get information about Covid-19*	News Programs	140	19,9
	Announcements of Public Institutions (eg; Ministry of Health etc.)	136	19,3
	Social Media (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter etc.)	89	12,6
	Internet Sites	41	5,8
	Family or Friendship Circle	34	4,8
	All	265	37,6

* Since there are multiple choice questions, the number of answers is higher than the number of participants.

The construct validity of "Social Media Impact Scale" and "Impulse Purchase Scale" used in the study was evaluated with the first level CFA model in Figure 2. When the fit indexes of the model in Figure 1 are examined, it is seen that the CFA model is compatible and valid with the research data. It was determined that the factor loads of the items related to the "Social Impact Source"

dimension of the "Social Media Impact Scale" were 0.784 and 0.895, and the factor loads of the items related to the "Social Platform Activities" dimension ranged from 0.815 to 0.876. The factor loads of the items related to the "Social Media Effect" dimension were found to be 0.789 and 0.851. In addition, it was determined that the factor loads of the items of the "Impulse Purchase Scale" ranged from 0.442 to 0.844 and the factor loads of the items of both scales were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).
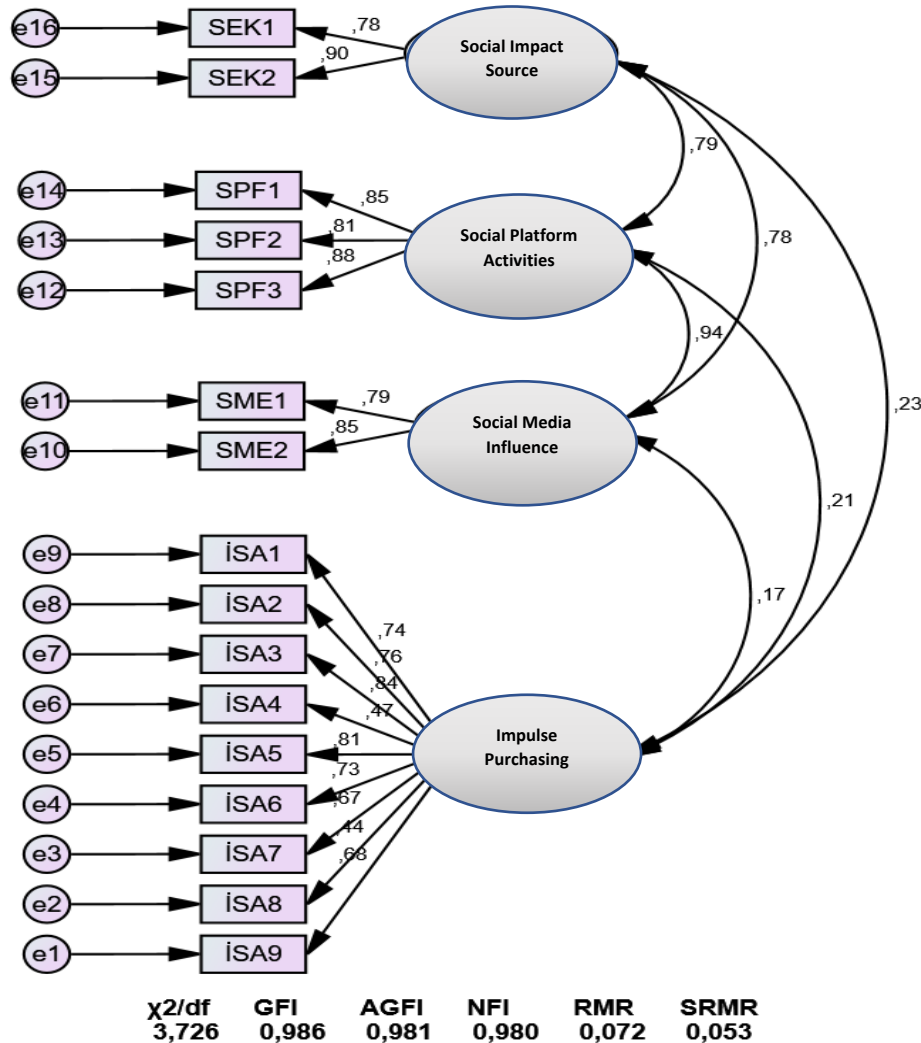

Figure 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model

For the "Social Impact Source" dimension of the CA and CG values of the research scales, 0.825 and 0.828 were found and the dimension of "Social Platform Activities" was 0.882 and 0.883. 0.803 and 0.804 appeared for the dimension "Social Media Influence" and 0.918 and 0.942

appeared for the "Social Media Impact Scale". It turned out to be 0.885 – 0.890 for the "impulse purchase scale", and both scales were found to have high reliability.

SEM model in which the analysis of research hypotheses is made is presented in Figure 3. When the fit indexes of the model in Figure 3 are examined, it is seen that the SEM model is compatible and valid with the research data.
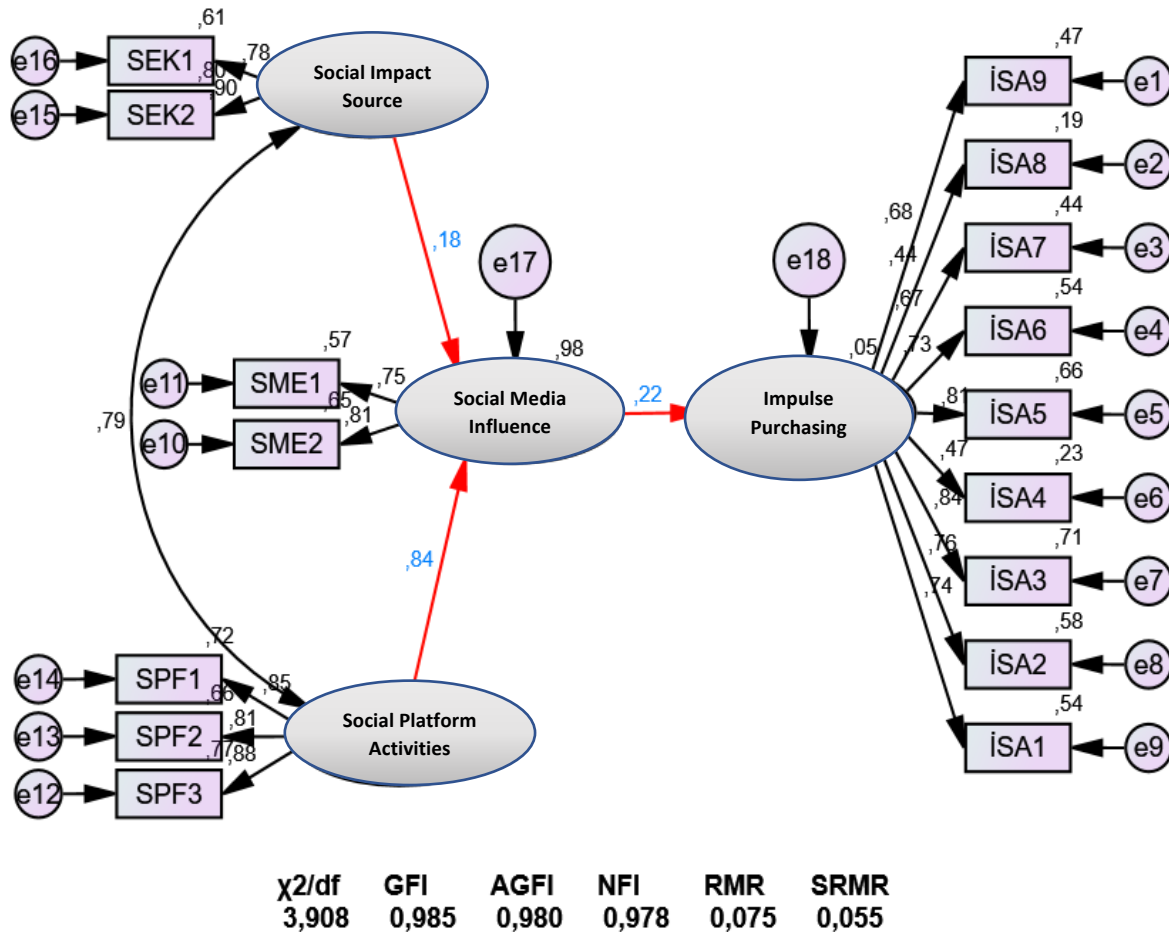

χ2/df   GFI   AGFI   NFI   RMR   SRMR
3,908   0,985   0,980   0,978   0,075   0,055

Figure 3. Structural Equation Model

Findings regarding the SEM model are presented in Table 4. According to SEM findings, it was determined that the effect of "Social Impact Source" on "Social Media Effect" (β = 0.176; p = 0.045), effect of "Social Platform Activities" on "Social Media Effect" (β = 0.844; p = 0.001) and the effect of "Social Media Effect" on "Impulse Purchasing" (β = 0.217; p = 0.002) were significant. As seen in Figure 2, it was determined that "Social Impact Source" explains 98% (R^2 = 0.980) of the variance in "Social Media Effect" together with "Social Platform Activities". In

addition, it was determined that "Social Media Effect" explains 4.7% (R2 = 0.047) of the variance in "Impulse Buying".

Table 4. Structural Equation Model Analysis Findings

			Regression Coefficient	Standardized Regression Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	95% Confidence Interval (β)		p
						Min.	Max.	
Social Media Influence	<---	Social Impact Source	0,144	0,176	0,095	0,004	0,374	**0,045**
Social Media Influence	<---	Socail Platform Activities	0,765	0,844	0,082	0,672	0,998	**0,001**
Impulse Purchasing	<---	Social Media Influence	0,170	0,217	0,050	0,114	0,310	**0,002**

According to these findings;

"H1: Social impact source significantly affects social media influence",

"H2: Social platform activities significantly affect the social media influence",

"H3: Social media influence significantly affects consumers' impulse purchases" hypotheses are accepted.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

H The main purpose of this study is to determine the effect of social media on impulse buying behavior. The model presented in the research conducted for this purpose was tested with its variables. The study determined that social influence source and social platform activities have meaningful influence on social media effect, and that social media effect has meaningful influence on the impulse purchases of consumers. Accordingly, the participants in the study were unwittingly, thoughtlessly and suddenly engaged in buying behavior. In demonstrating these behaviors, the study determined that they were influenced by the shares, likes, and comments on social media platforms. The participants believed that the shares, comments, and likes contained the correct information in the purchasing decision-making process, and that they should have an effective presence in these online platforms. As a result, it is seen that social media platforms are effective in impulse purchases in times of crisis, especially in the Covid-19 pandemic.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, individuals started to spend more time at home as a result of curfews and increased social isolation in order to control the spread of the disease, and this has led to the increasing use of social media. It was emphasized in Erkan and Evans (2016), Zhu et al. (2016), Hamilton et al. (2016) studies that the social media platform, which has the potential to change many areas from economy to politics, from education to health, has an increasing impact on the purchasing behavior of consumers. In addition, Nuseir (2020) showed in his study that the communication between social media users is effective in the formation of impulse purchasing behavior. The findings of the study show that factors such as the popularity of the product brand, page likes and comments from friends have a great influence on persuasion. Images used to help create a convincing situation that the consumer needs the product and the likes of close friends play a powerful role in impulse purchasing.

Shahpsandi et al. (2020) confirmed the strong influence of social media in the formation of impulse purchase intention in Instagram. The findings of this study showed that Instagram page managers can help them use their resources and marketing skills appropriately to achieve the desired result on consumer behavior. Wu et al. (2020b) stated that social media platforms provide a unique experience by interacting with different communication channels while shopping online and they stressed that such platforms play an important role in motivating impulse purchasing beyond individual and product concerns. Besides, the same study found that consumers often make unplanned purchases in the social media environment after being exposed to stimulating cues such as price discounts, limited product advertising, and attractive product appearance. The trend of online consumers using the social media platform to buy unplanned is creating lucrative opportunities for businesses. Therefore, it is important to identify factors that drive consumers to buy unplanned in the process of using social media and it is also important that these factors are designed to increase confidence in those who conduct online marketing practices and develop appropriate strategies.

Consumer behavior is difficult to understand and explain, and the main reason for this is that many variables affect consumer behavior. It is obvious that the Covid-19 pandemic will also have an effect in this sense, and the role of social media in the Covid-19 pandemic stands out. For this reason, it is of great importance that business managers who want to reach out to consumers should take into account the social media factor, which has an intensive effect on consumer

purchasing behavior. In addition to the efforts to adapt to radical changes in social life in this changing new world order and post-pandemic era, the study of consumer purchasing behavior reinforced through social media should be considered as one of the main responsibilities of marketing managers. Considering this situation, our study also achieved results consistent with the studies we have mentioned above. Especially in times of crisis such as a pandemic, it is a necessity for business management to act more proactively and develop strategies that will turn the encountered crisis into an opportunity. Since the study was conducted by associating it with the pandemic, the outputs also provide clues to marketing managers on how to use the social media environment to influence the purchasing impulse, especially in times of crisis.

The most important limitation of this study is that the research was conducted on a relatively small sample group with the same cultural values in connection with the Covid-19 pandemic process. Cross-studies taking into account cultural differences will increase the generalizability of the effects of social media on consumers' purchasing behavior during the pandemic process.

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