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## FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION GÖSTERİŞÇİ TÜKETİMİ ETKİLEYEN FAKTÖRLER

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### ABSTRACT

Today, for most people, the main factor behind product preference is not only the benefit obtained from the product. Consumers do not buy products just to get rational benefits. In addition, they buy products to gain social approval, to be appreciated by others and to show their social status. Social and psychological factors are also determinant in the product preference of consumers. One of these factors is materialism. For materialist consumers, the determinant of happiness is material assets and its quantity. In addition, the spending tendency of each consumer may be different. Therefore, the tendency of spend is also effective on the product preferences of consumers. In this study, the effects of social status, materialism and spending tendencies on conspicuous consumption will be examined. In addition, the mediating role of spending tendency in the effect of social status and materialism on conspicuous consumption will be examined. The population of the research consists of consumers living in Turkey. The sample of the research consists of 316 people selected from this population. Data were obtained from this sample through a questionnaire. The data obtained as a result of the research were analyzed in the AMOS program and the results were interpreted. The results obtained in the research are as follows; social status and materialism have a positive effect on tendency to spend and conspicuous consumption; The tendency to spend has a positive effect on conspicuous consumption. The mediation effect of the tendency to spend could not be determined.

**Keywords:** Social Status, Materialism, Tendency of Spending, Conspicuous Consumption

## **ÖZET**

Günümüzde çoğu insan için ürün tercihinin arkasındaki ana faktör sadece üründen elde edilen fayda değildir. Tüketiciler ürünleri sadece rasyonel faydalar elde etmek için satın almazlar. Ayrıca sosyal onay kazanmak, başkaları tarafından takdir edilmek ve sosyal statülerini göstermek için ürün satın alırlar. Tüketicilerin ürün tercihinde sosyal ve psikolojik faktörler de belirleyicidir. Bu faktörlerden biri de materyalizmdir. Materyalist tüketiciler için mutluluğun belirleyicisi maddi varlıklar ve bunların miktarıdır. Ayrıca her tüketicinin harcama eğilimi farklı olabilir. Dolayısıyla harcama eğilimi tüketicilerin ürün tercihleri üzerinde de etkilidir. Bu çalışmada sosyal statü, materyalizm ve harcama eğiliminin gösterişçi tüketim üzerindeki etkileri incelenmektedir. Ayrıca sosyal statü ve materyalizmin gösterişçi tüketim üzerindeki etkisinde harcama eğiliminin aracı rolü incelenmektedir. Araştırmanın evrenini Türkiye'de yaşayan tüketiciler oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmanın örneklemini ise bu evren içerisinde seçilen 316 kişiden oluşmaktadır. Bu örneklemden anket aracılığıyla veri elde edilmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda elde edilen veriler AMOS programında analiz edilerek, sonuçlar yorumlanmıştır. Araştırmada elde edilen sonuçlar şunlardır; sosyal statü ve materyalizmin harcama eğilimi ve gösterişçi tüketim üzerinde pozitif etkisi vardır; harcama eğiliminin gösterişçi tüketim üzerinde pozitif etkisi vardır. Harcama eğiliminin aracılık etkisi ise tespit edilememiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sosyal Statü, Materyalizm, Harcama Eğilimi, Gösterişçi Tüketim

## **INTRODUCTION**

Consumption is one of the subjects that dominate the modern psyche in social and cultural terms. For this reason, businesses take into account the social and cultural characteristics of consumers while creating a brand. They strive to create an identity, sense of accomplishment, and identification for consumers. Today, this effort of brands is seen as more important than in the past. In addition, certain brand dimensions and associations lead to increased market recognition and economic success as a result of the value consumers place on them (O'Cass & McEwen, 2005: 25-26). Some consumers give importance to the social benefit of brands or products rather than their economic and psychological benefits. These consumers see the brands they buy as status symbols and therefore they prefer them. The reason for this is social perceptions. Society values people differently according to their status (Sesli & Demir, 2010: 17). Topçu et al. (2020: 169) confirms in their study that social status has a positive effect on conspicuous consumption. In line with this information, the following hypothesis has been proposed;

H1: Social status has a positive effect on conspicuous consumption.

In addition to individuals seeking social status, individuals with materialistic tendencies also have unrealistic expectations about the social and psychological benefits provided by products, and they quickly forget the happiness of having something after purchase and want more (Richins & Dawson, 1992: 308). In addition, consumers turn to materialism to avoid this sense of lack when their psychological needs are not met (Kasser, 2002: 23). There is a strong urge to study materialism and its associated factors because of its effects on society and the individual, which are often viewed as negative. One of the factors associated with materialism is conspicuous consumption (Podoshen et al., 2011: 18). Balıkçioğlu and Volkan (2016) found in their study that there is a positive relationship between materialism and conspicuous consumption. In line with this information, the following hypothesis has been proposed;

H2: Materialism has a positive effect on conspicuous consumption.

Each individual's spending behavior can be different. Some consumers tend to spend rather than save on a particular product. Therefore, the tendency to spend affects the purchasing behavior of the person (Fah et al., 2011: 203). Consumers with a high perception of social status and materialistic tendencies tend to spend more, as they prioritize social benefits rather than economic and psychological benefits. However, consumers with a high tendency to spend are also likely to engage in conspicuous consumption behavior. In her study, Tokmak (2019) determined that there is a positive relationship between the monthly expenditure amounts of consumers and their conspicuous consumption tendencies. In line with this information, the following hypotheses has been proposed;

H3: Social status has a positive effect on the tendency to spend.

H4: Materialism has a positive effect on the tendency to spend.

H5: Tendency to spend has a positive effect on conspicuous consumption.

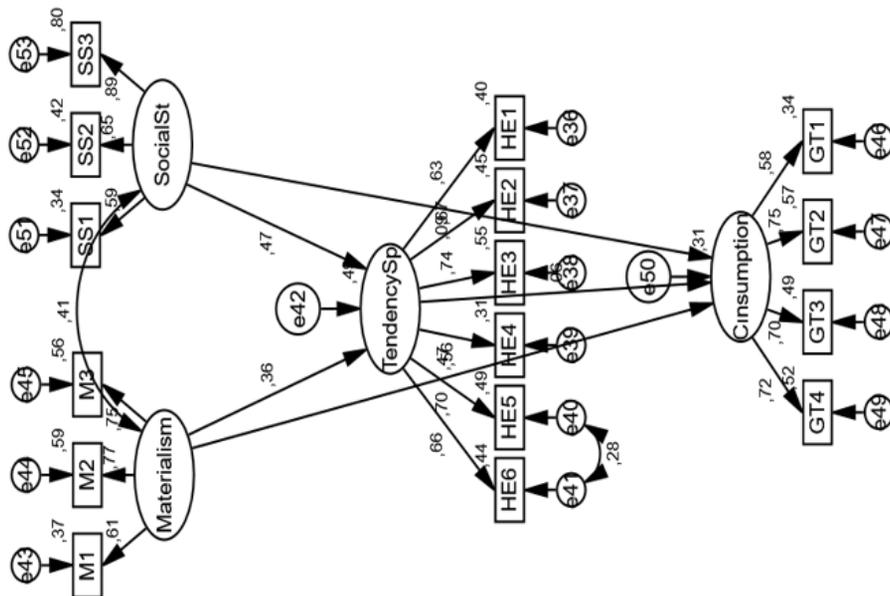
H6: Tendency to spend has a mediating effect on the relationship between social status and conspicuous consumption.

H7: Tendency to spend has a mediating effect on the relationship between materialism and conspicuous consumption..

## **METHODOLOGY**

The aim of this study is to determine the effect of social status, materialism and spending tendency on conspicuous consumption. The universe of the research consists of consumers living in Turkey. The sample of the study consists of 316 participants (M=158, F=158) selected from the universe. A questionnaire was

applied to the participants to obtain data. Social status, materialism and spending propensity scales in the survey were taken from the study of Fah et al. (2011). The conspicuous consumption scale was taken from the study of Chung and Fisher (2001). The social status scale consists of 3 items, the materialism scale consists of 3 items, the propensity to spend scale consists of 6 items and the conspicuous consumption scale consists of 4 items. The data obtained in the study were analyzed in SPSS and AMOS programs. First, frequency analysis was conducted to determine the demographic characteristics of the participants. Then, factor analysis and reliability analysis were performed. The Cronbach Alpha value was taken into account to determine the reliability of the scales. After testing the reliability of the scales, independent samples t-test and ANOVA were conducted to determine the differences between the participants in terms of research variables. Then the Structural Equation Model was used to test the hypotheses. The research model is shown in figure 1.



**Figure 1. Research Model**

## FINDINGS

### Demographic Information

**Table 1: Information About Participants**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Cinsiyet	Female	158	50
	Male	158	50
Age	18-24	82	26
	25-31	77	24
	32-38	106	33
	39-45	30	10
	46+	21	7
Educational Level	Primary Education	27	8
	High School	86	27
	Associate Degree	65	21
	Undergraduate	98	31
	Graduate	40	13
Monthly Income	4250 TL ve Altı	71	23
	4251 TL-7250 TL	106	33
	7251 TL-10250 TL	62	20
	10251 TL ve Üzeri	77	24
Total		316	100,0

The number of men and women participating in the study is equal. Most of the participants are 38 years or younger. Most of the participants are undergraduate graduates. Income status, on the other hand, shows a close distribution.

### Independent Sample T-Test and ANOVA

Independent sample t-test and ANOVA were conducted to determine the differences between the participants regarding the research variables. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the social status, materialism, spending

tendency and conspicuous consumption behaviors of the participants did not differ according to their gender. While the spending tendency and social status perceptions of all participants are low, materialism and conspicuous consumption behaviors are at moderate levels. The social status perceptions of the participants do not differ according to their age. However, their materialism, spending tendencies and conspicuous consumption behaviors differ according to their age.

**Table 2. Differences in The Materialism Tendencies of The Participants in Terms of Age**

<i>Point</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Constant Variable</i>	<i>Significant Difference (Scheffe)</i>
3,34	18-24	82	,11	1,01			18-24
3,02	25-35	77	,11	1,01	,26	18-24	25-35
2,89	32-38	106	,09	,94	,01		32-38*
2,62	39-45	30	,18	1,00	,00		39-45*
3,24	46+	21	,22	1,00	,99		46+

The materialism tendencies of the participants differ according to their age. As seen in Table 2, there are differences between the materialism tendencies of the participants between the ages of 18-24 and those between the ages of 32-45. The materialistic tendencies of the participants aged 18-24 are lower than the participants in the middle age group.

**Table 3. Differences in The Spending Tendencies of The Participants in Terms of Age**

<i>Point</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Constant Variable</i>	<i>Significant Difference (Tamhane)</i>
2,43	18-24	82	,10	,93			18-24
2,16	25-35	77	,09	,80	,20	18-24	25-35
1,90	32-38	106	,06	,63	,00		32-38*
1,92	39-45	30	,13	,72	,01		39-45*

1,71	46+	21	,11	,53	,00	46+*
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The spending tendencies of the participants differ according to their age. As seen in Table 3, there are differences between the spending tendencies of the participants aged 18-24 and those aged 32 and over. The spending tendencies of the participants between the ages of 18-24 are higher than the other participants.

**Table 4. Differences in The Conspicuous Consumption Behaviors of The Participants in Terms of Age**

<i>Point</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Constant Variable</i>	<i>Significant Difference (Scheffe)</i>
2,98	18-24	82	,10	,94			18-24
3,10	25-35	77	,10	,91	,45	39-45	25-35
2,97	32-38	106	,08	,83	,15		32-38
2,66	39-45	30	,18	,97	,45		39-45
3,49	46+	21	,23	1,05	,01		46+*

The conspicuous consumption behaviors of the participants differ according to their age. As seen in Table 4, there are differences between the materialistic behaviors of the participants aged 39-45 and those aged 46 and over. The materialistic behaviors of the participants between the ages of 39-45 are less than the participants in the upper age group.

Social status, materialism, spending tendency and conspicuous consumption behaviors of the participants do not differ according to their education level. Social status perceptions and spending tendencies of the participants do not differ according to their income.

**Table 5. Differences in The Materialism Tendencies of The Participants in Terms of Income**

<i>Point</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Constant Variable</i>	<i>Significant Difference (Scheffe)</i>
3,29	4250 TL -	71	,11	,93			4250 TL -

2,85	4251 TL	TL-7250	106	,10	,99	,02	4251 TL -	4251 TL-7250 TL*
3,06	7251 TL	TL-10250	62	,14	1,12	,54	7251 TL -	7251 TL-10250 TL
3,04	10251 TL +		77	,11	,96	,40	10251 TL +	

The materialism tendencies of the participants differ according to their income levels. As seen in Table 5, there are differences between the materialism tendencies of the participants with an income of 4250 TL and below and those with an income between 4251 TL and 7250 TL. The materialism tendencies of the participants with an income of 4250 TL and below are higher than those with an income between 4251 TL and 7250 TL.

**Table 6. Differences in The Conspicuous Consumption Behaviors of The Participants in Terms of Income**

<i>Point</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Constant Variable</i>	<i>Significant Difference (Scheffe)</i>
3,13	4250 TL -	71	,12	,99			4250 TL -
2,80	4251 TL-7250 TL	106	,08	,86	,9	4251 TL-7250 TL	4251 TL-7250 TL
3,18	7251 TL-10250 TL	62	,11	,84	,04		7251 TL-10250 TL*
3,05	10251 TL +	77	,11	,95	,80		10251 TL +

The conspicuous consumption behaviors of the participants differ according to their income levels. As seen in Table 6, there are differences between the conspicuous consumption behaviors of the participants with an income between 4251 TL and 7250 TL and those with an income between 7251 TL and 10250 TL. The conspicuous consumption behavior of the participants with an income between 4251 TL and 7250 TL is less than the participants with an income between 7251 TL and 10250 TL.

### Structural Equation Model

Before examining the findings regarding the mediator affect, the fit values of the model were checked. When the fit values were examined, it was determined that the model had good fit values and acceptable fit values. The fit values of the model are shown in Table 7.

**Table 7. Goodness of Fit Values**

	$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	$\chi^2/df$	<i>GFI</i>	<i>CFI</i>	<i>NFI</i>	<i>IFI</i>	<i>TLI</i>	<i>RMSEA</i>
Obtained Fit Values	172,620	97	1,78	0,935	0,955	0,905	0,956	0,945	0,05
Good Fit Values			≤ 3	≥ 90	≥ 97	≥ 95	≥ 95	≥ 95	≤ 0,05
Acceptable Fit Values.			≤ 5	≥ 85	≥ 90	≥ 90	≥ 90	≥ 90	≤ 0,08

The fit values were found as CFI: 0.955, GFI: 0.935, NFI: 0.905, TLI: 0.945 and IFI: 0.956. The results show that the model has good fit values and acceptable fit values. After checking the fit values of the model, the research hypotheses were tested. Analysis results are shown in Table 8.

**Table 8. Structural Equation Model Results**

<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Independent Variable</i>	<i>B</i>	$\beta$ (Standart <i>B</i> )	<i>CR</i>	<i>S.H.</i>	<i>p</i>
Conspicuous Consumption	Social Status	,33	,32	4,121	,08	,000
Tendency to Spend	Social Status	,69	,61	6,782	,10	,000
Conspicuous Consumption	Materialism	,55	,54	5,855	,09	,000
Tendency to Spend	Materialism	,56	,53	6,066	,10	,000
Conspicuous Consumption	Tendency to Spend	,36	,34	4,631	,07	,000
				<b>Bias%95</b>		
				<b>Lower Bound</b>	<b>Upper Bound</b>	
Social Status - Tendency to Spend -		,03	,03	,-88	,145	

Conspicuous Consumption (Indirect Effect)	,02	,02	,-071	,107
Materialism - Tendency to Spend - Conspicuous Consumption (Direct Effect)				

When the findings obtained as a result of the analysis are examined, it is seen that social status and materialism have a positive and significant effect on the tendency to spend and conspicuous consumption. Tendency to spend has a significant and positive effect on conspicuous consumption. When all variables are analyzed together, the effect of social status and materialism on conspicuous consumption has decreased. These results confirm the mediating effect (Baron and Kenny, 1986: 1179). However, as a result of the bootstrapping process, it is seen that the lower limit and upper limit cover zero. Therefore, the tendency to spend does not have a mediating role in the effect of social status and materialism on conspicuous consumption. The acceptance/rejection status of the hypotheses is shown in Table 9.

**Table 9. The Acceptance/Rejection Status of The Hypotheses**

Hypotheses	Accepted/Rejected
1 Social Status → Conspicuous Consumption	Accepted
2 Materialism → Conspicuous Consumption	Accepted
3 Social Status → Tendency to Spend	Accepted
4 Materialism → Tendency to Spend	Accepted
5 Tendency to Spend → Conspicuous Consumption	Accepted
6 Social Status → Tendency to Spend → Conspicuous Consumption	Rejected
7 Materialism → Tendency to Spend → Conspicuous Consumption	Rejected

## **CONCLUSION**

A large part of consumers shop for social benefit rather than economic and psychological benefit. Their status, tendencies and values in society affect their consumption behavior. Such consumers generally tend to consume conspicuously. Many factors are effective in the conspicuous consumption of consumers. The aim of this study is to determine the effect of social status, materialism and spending tendency on conspicuous consumption.

In the study, first of all, it was examined whether the perceptions of the participants about the research variables differed according to their personal characteristics. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the social status perceptions, materialism tendencies, spending tendencies and conspicuous consumption behaviors of the participants did not differ according to their gender. While both men's and women's materialistic tendencies and conspicuous consumption behaviors are at a moderate level, their perceptions of social status and their spending tendencies are at a low level. Social status perceptions of the participants do not differ according to age groups. Materialism and spending tendencies are higher in lower age groups compared to upper age groups. The conspicuous consumption behaviors of those aged 46 and over are higher than those aged 39-45. Social status, materialism, spending tendency and conspicuous consumption behaviors of the participants do not differ according to their educational status. Social status perceptions and spending tendencies of the participants do not differ according to their income. Consumers with an income below the minimum wage are more prone to materialism than consumers who earn just above the minimum wage. The fact that most of in this income group are students may have caused such a result. Likewise, the conspicuous consumption behavior of consumers with an income slightly above the minimum wage is lower than the others.

In the next stage, the hypotheses of the research were tested. As a result of the analysis, it has been determined that the perception of social status and materialism have a positive effect on the spending tendency and conspicuous consumption. These results support the H1, H2, H3 and H4 hypotheses. At the same time, the tendency to spend has a positive effect on conspicuous consumption. This result supports the H5 hypothesis. In the last analysis, it was concluded that the spending tendency does not have a mediating role in the effect of social status and materialism on conspicuous consumption. Therefore, hypotheses H6 and H7 were rejected.

The results obtained will make important contributions to the literature. Future studies may contribute to the literature by examining the effects of factors such as social media, product involvement and brand sentiment on conspicuous consumption.

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