



Brand Awareness and Tourism Product Purchase Intention Among Social Media Users: A Moderated Mediation Model

Sosyal Medya Kullanıcılarında Marka Farkındalığı ve Turizm Ürünü Satın Alma Niyeti: Bir Moderatörlü Aracılık Modeli

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ABSTRACT

A comprehensive review of the literature reveals that studies examining the relationships among brand awareness, perceived value, and purchase intention in the context of social media users are limited in number. Accordingly, this study aims to investigate the mediating role of perceived value in the effect of brand awareness on tourism product purchase intention among social media users. Additionally, the moderating role of age is also evaluated within the research model. The data for the study were collected via Instagram, one of the leading social media platforms, and a total of 397 valid responses were obtained. The proposed model was tested using SPSS 22 and AMOS 22, along with the Hayes PROCESS Macro version 4.2. The findings reveal that brand awareness positively and significantly affects the purchase intention of tourism products among social media users. Furthermore, perceived value plays a partial mediating role in the relationship between brand awareness and purchase intention, and the age variable exhibits a moderating effect. The findings are discussed, and both theoretical and practical implications of the study are presented.

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ÖZ

Yapılan kapsamlı literatür taraması sonucunda, sosyal medya kullanıcıları bağlamında marka farkındalığı, algılanan değer ve satın alma niyeti arasındaki ilişkileri inceleyen çalışmaların sınırlı sayıda olduğu belirlenmiştir. Bu doğrultuda, bu araştırma, sosyal medya kullanıcılarının marka farkındalıklarının turizm ürünü satın alma niyetleri üzerindeki etkisinde algılanan değer aracı rolünü incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Ayrıca, araştırma modelinde yaş değişkeninin moderatör rolü de değerlendirilmiştir. Araştırmanın verileri, sosyal medya platformlarından biri olan Instagram üzerinden toplanmış ve toplamda 397 geçerli ankete ulaşılmıştır. Önerilen model, SPSS 22 ve AMOS 22 programları ile birlikte Hayes PROCESS Macro 4.2 eklentisi kullanılarak test edilmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular, sosyal medya kullanıcılarında marka farkındalığının turizm ürünü satın alma niyetini olumlu ve anlamlı şekilde etkilediğini ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca, algılanan değer marka farkındalığı ile satın alma niyeti arasındaki ilişkide kısmi aracı rol oynadığı ve yaş değişkeninin moderatör etkisinin bulunduğu tespit edilmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular tartışılmış; çalışmaya ilişkin teorik ve pratik katkılar ortaya konulmuştur.

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INTRODUCTION

Technological advancements and digitalization in the 21st century have led to profound changes in consumer behavior. In parallel with this transformation, supply-side actors have been reshaping their marketing strategies in line with the new tools required by digitalization. One such tool is social media marketing. Like in many other sectors, social media marketing is widely utilized in the tourism industry as a core component of marketing activities. Today, social media marketing has become one of the primary tools significantly influencing tourists' intentions to purchase tourism products (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). In particular, the ability of social media to reinforce brand associations and recognition in the minds of tourists has made brand awareness one of the key determinants affecting purchase intention (Keller, 1993).

Previous research has demonstrated that brand awareness has a significant, positive, and direct effect on purchase intention (Keller, 1993; Wu & Ho, 2014; Akkucuk & Esmaeili, 2016; Chen, 2024). In addition to this linear relationship, there are also studies that examine mediating and moderating effects. Research conducted in the context of companies using digital communication technologies has revealed that consumer attitude mediates the relationship between brand awareness and purchase intention, while celebrity endorsement has a moderating effect on this relationship (Hameed et al., 2023). Similarly, brand loyalty has been found to strongly and positively mediate the relationship between brand awareness and purchase intention (Malik et al., 2013). Perceived quality and brand loyalty (Chi et al., 2019), as well as the dimensions of brand equity (Azzari & Pelissari, 2020), have also emerged as other mediating variables in this relationship. However, in the tourism literature specifically, studies examining the mediating role of perceived value and the moderating effect of age on this mediation remain limited. The aim of this study is to investigate the mediating role of perceived value in the effect of brand awareness on tourism product purchase intention in the context of social media, and to reveal the moderating effect of age on this mediating relationship.

This study's model is grounded in the frameworks of Perceived Value Theory, the Value-Attitude-Behavior (VAB) Theory, and the Socioemotional Selectivity Theory. Perceived Value Theory (Zeithaml, 1988) posits that consumers' evaluations of a product or service are based on a comparison between the perceived benefits and the costs incurred. In this process, perceived value serves as a bridge between consumers and behavioral outcomes such as purchase intention, transforming cognitive and emotional assessments into actual behavior (Peng et al., 2019). Within the model based on Perceived Value Theory, the development of brand awareness among tourism consumers directly influences their perceived value of that brand. Another theory that explains consumer behavior is the Value-Attitude-Behavior Theory. According to this theory (Homer & Kahle, 1988), the influence of values on behavior occurs indirectly through attitudes toward that behavior. In this context, brand awareness developed by tourism consumers shapes their perceived value of the brand, which in turn guides behavioral tendencies such as purchase intention. As social media is frequently used by younger tourism consumers, they are more exposed to brands and tend to develop brand awareness more rapidly (Bolton et al., 2013; Ismahel et al., 2025). At this point, the Socioemotional Selectivity Theory suggests that individuals' perceptions of their remaining lifetime influence their motivations, priorities, and information-processing tendencies (Hicks et al., 2012). Exposure to social media enhances perceived brand value and strengthens purchase intentions. Conversely, social media tends to be a less effective environment for relatively older tourism consumers. Consequently, for these consumers, the impact of brand awareness developed through social media on perceived value and purchase intention may be more limited. According to the theory, age significantly moderates the mediating effect of perceived value in the relationship between brand awareness formed through social media and purchase intention.

This study offers three significant contributions to the existing literature. First, it is the first to examine the relationships between brand awareness on social media, purchase intention, and perceived value within the context of the tourism industry. Second, by investigating the moderating role of age in the relationship between perceived value and purchase intention, the study aims to provide more detailed and meaningful insights

regarding conditional indirect effects. Third, analyzing consumer perceptions related to brand awareness, perceived value, and purchase intention will offer valuable insights for both researchers and practitioners interested in the topic. In doing so, the study seeks to make meaningful contributions to both the tourism and marketing literature.

1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

1.1. Brand Awareness on Social Media

Social media has become a crucial communication tool for businesses aiming to reach their target audiences (Kelly et al., 2010). Social media platforms play significant roles in processes such as product promotion, interaction with tourists, information gathering, and purchase decision-making (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). These platforms enable brands to connect with current and potential consumers, thereby enhancing brand awareness and contributing to the development of a positive brand image (Seo & Park, 2018; Koçoğlu, 2018a). Hutter et al. (2013) found that sales and advertising promotions carried out through social media activities are effective in creating brand awareness.

Brand awareness refers to the impression a brand leaves in the mind of the consumer. Aaker (1996) defines brand awareness as the ability of consumers to recognize and recall a brand within a specific product category. Recognition refers to the consumer's ability to identify the brand when given a cue, whereas recall represents the ability to retrieve the brand name from memory without any prompt. Today, consumers frequently acquire information about products and services through social media platforms. Therefore, it is of great importance for brands to establish a presence in consumer memory, even if they are not physically visible (Edelman, 2010). Moreover, brand awareness is important because when consumers face an uncertain situation, their choices are typically limited to the most familiar or easily recognizable options (Jacobs & de Klerk, 2007).

Businesses use brand awareness to ensure that their brand remains top-of-mind when guests make purchasing decisions. Companies build brand awareness particularly to gain a competitive advantage and generate revenue. Through brand awareness, guests first recognize the brand and then develop familiarity with it. This process fosters a sense of trust and loyalty toward the business and increases the guests' purchase intentions (Chi, Yeh, & Yang, 2019). Brand awareness plays a significant role in shaping marketing strategies. Consequently, brand awareness helps businesses stay competitive through social media platforms, connect with their target audiences, and sustain their market presence (Chen, 2024). Studies have shown that brand awareness has positive effects on consumer behavior and contributes to improved brand performance (Liu et al., 2017). Moreover, brand awareness increases the likelihood that consumers will consider the brand during their evaluation process (Graciola et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2017), and it directly influences the customer experience (Boo, Busser & Baloglu, 2009). When brand awareness is high, the likelihood of the product being preferred by consumers also increases (Chi et al., 2009; Koçoğlu ve Aksoy, 2017).

1.2. Perceived Value in Tourism

Perceived value is a concept that goes beyond the objective characteristics of a product or service and is based on the consumer's subjective evaluation, shaped directly through individual perceptions (Tynan, McKechnie, & Chhuon, 2010). Zeithaml (1988) defines perceived value as "the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given." The success of businesses largely depends on the value created in the eyes of consumers (Kotler, 1972; Ateş & Koçoğlu, 2025). In recent times, characterized by intense competition, businesses are driven to offer greater value than their competitors. This highlights the importance of guest satisfaction and retention. Guests now tend to prefer businesses that provide them with higher perceived value (Yükselen, 2008).

In the tourism literature, perceived value refers to the evaluation of a tourism product by taking into account various factors such as service quality, pricing, emotional attachment, and social elements (Liu et al., 2014; Yaşarsoy & Oktay, 2020). The primary goal for tourism businesses is to create a positive perception of value in the minds of customers, thereby gaining a competitive advantage in the market (Ryu et al., 2019). Tourists contribute to perceived value from a utilitarian perspective by sharing information about tour packages and activities either prior to or during their experiences (Kim & Thapa, 2018). Perceived value and service quality are crucial for the success of hotel businesses. As guests become more informed, hotel enterprises recognize the importance of the concept of value and proceed accordingly (Çalhan, Çakıcı, & Karamustafa, 2012). Guests' perceptions of value increase their tendency to revisit the tourism destination or hotel, thereby fostering a sense of loyalty. Loyal hotel guests contribute to higher profitability and competitiveness for the business by visiting more frequently and recommending the hotel to others (Li, 2011).

1.3. Purchase Intention in Tourism

Intention is considered a standard step that leads to actual purchasing behavior (De Magistris & Gracia, 2008). Purchase intention refers to the combination of consumers' interest in a product or brand and their likelihood of purchasing it (Lloyd & Luk, 2010). Purchase intention is a valuable tool for predicting buying preferences. Several factors influence the formation of purchase intention, including individual needs, brand reputation, previous experiences, perceived product value, and social influence. These factors indicate the level of desire and motivation toward the purchase decision. Understanding guests' purchase intentions enables businesses to design strategies that align with guest preferences (Chen, 2024). In the tourism sector, purchase intention is defined as tourists' mental readiness and behavioral tendency toward traveling (Han, Hsu, & Sheu, 2010; Koçoğlu, 2018b). Martín-Consuegra et al. (2019) stated that consumers' positive interactions with a brand on social media generate satisfaction, which in turn enhances their desire to purchase the brand. Tourists' motivations, perceptions, and emotions are among the key factors influencing purchase intention (Baker & Crompton, 2000). In addition, online reviews, ratings, user feedback, and the price–performance ratio related to hotels on social media significantly influence tourists' purchase intentions (Ye et al., 2011).

1.4. The Effect of Brand Awareness on Perceived Value

Brand awareness on social media is not limited to the recall and recognition of the brand itself; it also involves the formation of specific associations in the consumer's memory through elements such as brand name, logo, symbol, quality, and reputation (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003). Perceived value, on the other hand, is shaped by marketing and promotional activities and stems from various factors such as product utility, reputation, quality, accessibility, and additional features (Hanaysha & Alhyasat, 2025).

Research has shown that advertisements (Alshevskaya, 2016), promotions, the human factor, and physical evidence (Esmaili et al., 2017) are significant determinants of perceived value. In this context, advertising and similar activities conducted by brands to build awareness can enhance perceived value by embedding the brand in consumers' minds, thereby facilitating recognition and recall. Similarly, when businesses' marketing strategies align with the positive values perceived by consumers, this alignment not only strengthens consumers' favorable perceptions of products and services but also improves firms' sales performance (Chen & Chang, 2012).

The value–attitude–behavior theory posits that values influence attitudes, which in turn shape behavior (Homer & Kahle, 1988). Perceived value theory, on the other hand, refers to a subjective and cognitive evaluation of a product or service (Zeithaml, 1988). At this point, consumers may assign value to features such as brand advertising and promotions, make a mental evaluation, transform this evaluation into an attitude, and eventually into behavior.

In a study conducted by Tynan, McKechnie, and Chhuon (2010), it is stated that various interactions between luxury brand owners and consumers contribute to the differentiation of luxury brands and the co-creation of superior value. Taking into account the values desired by customers—by going beyond their basic needs and accurately perceiving their social, personal, and functional values and responding accordingly—yields positive outcomes for businesses (Chattalas & Shukla, 2015). In a study conducted with guests of a five-star hotel in Jakarta, brand awareness was found to have a significant and positive effect on perceived value (Hanifah, Wahyudi, & Nurbaeti, 2016). In this context, hotel businesses can reveal the subjective value of a product or service by creating brand awareness. Based on this information, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Tourists' perceptions of brand awareness have a significant and positive effect on perceived value.

1.5. The Effect of Brand Awareness on Tourism Product Purchase Intention

For a brand to become part of consumers' purchase intentions, consumers must first be aware of the brand. When a consumer decides to purchase a product or service, the first elements that come to mind are the brand name and brand image (Saraç et al., 2019; Rungsisawat & Sirinapatpokin, 2019). According to Keller and Brexendorf (2019), brand awareness plays a critical role in shaping consumer purchasing behavior. This is significant because awareness constitutes the first stage in the customer decision-making process (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

When consumers recognize a brand, they tend to be more inclined to use products associated with that brand (Browne & Kaldenberg, 1997). On the other hand, it has been observed that consumers often state they are unlikely to purchase products from a brand they do not recognize (Peter & Olson, 2010). If a consumer is aware of a brand, this awareness enables them to better understand the marketing communications carried out by the company, respond to them, and generate appropriate reactions. At the same time, such awareness increases the likelihood that the consumer will consider the brand during the purchasing process (Aaker, 1991). Therefore, creating brand awareness and leveraging this awareness to guide consumers toward purchasing behavior holds strategic importance for both businesses and marketers.

The value-attitude-behavior theory posits that the influence of values on behavior occurs indirectly through attitudes (Homer & Kahle, 1988). In this context, brand awareness indirectly affects behavior—more specifically, purchase intention—through attitudes; this is a core assumption of the theory. A review of the literature reveals that Dabbous and Barakat (2020) demonstrated the positive effect of brand awareness generated through social networks on purchase intention in physical stores. Similarly, Evans et al. (2021) suggest that promoting a brand via social media platforms can create brand awareness that facilitates purchasing behavior. Moreover, brand awareness has also been shown to influence consumers' repeat purchase behavior (Macdonald & Sharp, 2000). Based on these insights, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Tourists' perceptions of brand awareness have a significant and positive effect on their intention to purchase tourism products.

1.6. The Effect of Perceived Value on Tourism Product Purchase Intention

The value attributed to a product or service by consumers is considered one of the primary drivers of individuals' intentions and behaviors (Kumar & Reinartz, 2016). Perceived value plays a decisive role in consumer preferences based on the benefits offered by the product or service and shapes purchase intention (Choo et al., 2012; Ha & Jang, 2010). Perceived value theory suggests that consumers mentally weigh the benefits and costs of a decision to form a net perception of value. When this perceived value is positive, it increases the likelihood of engagement or purchase intention (Zeithaml, 1988; Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991). In this context, perceived value is considered a key variable influencing consumers' intention to purchase a product or service.

Various studies in the literature have shown that perceived value is one of the strongest predictors of purchase intention (Jiang et al., 2022). Ponte, Trujillo, and Rodríguez (2015) found that perceived value significantly influences online travel purchase intention. Similarly, Llach et al. (2013) examined the impact of perceived value on the intention to purchase airline tickets and found this effect to be significant and positive. Based on these findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Perceived value has a significant and positive effect on the intention to purchase tourism products.

1.7. The Relationship Between Brand Awareness, Tourism Product Purchase Intention, and Perceived Value

Many studies have demonstrated that perceived value plays a mediating role between consumer perception and behavior (Tsaur et al., 2021; Nuryanto & Panjaitan, 2025). Perceived value functions as a fundamental link between consumers and businesses or brands, significantly influencing consumer behavior (Tuškej et al., 2013).

Since the theory of perceived value is considered a mental cost–benefit trade-off by consumers (Zeithaml, 1988), it explains how and to what extent factors such as experience, satisfaction, and purchase intention are translated into behavioral outcomes. A review of relevant studies reveals that Yap (2022) identified a mediating role of the sub-dimensions of perceived value—namely, convenience value and conditional value—in the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention in the hospitality sector. In a study focused on the café industry, Nuryanto and Panjaitan (2025) found that perceived value associated with cafés had significant effects on both electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and purchase intention. Similarly, Chen and Chen (2010) demonstrated that perceived value mediated the relationship between the quality of tourist experiences and satisfaction. In the restaurant context, Tuncer, Unusan, and Çobanoğlu (2021) confirmed the mediating role of perceived value in the impact of timely service, cleanliness, and service quality on behavioral intention.

Purchase intention is a motivational tendency that arises as a result of perceived value in the consumer (Chattalas & Shukla, 2015). Therefore, efforts aimed at enhancing perceived value may ultimately translate into purchasing behavior (Tsai, 2005). When consumers possess a positive and desirable perceived value and simultaneously demonstrate an intention to purchase, the existence of a relationship between these two variables can highly predict the likelihood of a specific brand being preferred (Aghazadeh, Gholipor & Bakhshizadeh, 2014). In light of this information, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Perceived value mediates the relationship between tourists' brand awareness and their intention to purchase tourism products.

1.8. The Moderating Role of Age

Research has shown that young individuals spend more time on social media platforms. This enables young consumers to be more frequently exposed to brand content, engage more intensively with digital marketing activities, and participate in such activities more easily (Bolton et al., 2013)

Socioemotional selectivity theory posits that individuals regulate their social goals and motivations based on their perceived time horizon. It suggests that young adults, in particular, tend to have an open-ended time perspective and are more socially active. In contrast, older adults are characterized by a more limited time perspective, a tendency to be more selective, and a desire to establish emotionally meaningful relationships (Carstensen, 1992).

A study on hotel brands found that social media engagement enhances brand loyalty, and this effect varies by age. It was observed that younger tourists are more influenced by social media interactions, whereas the effect is more limited among older tourists (Han et al., 2021). Hysa, Karasek, and Zdonek (2021), in a study conducted in Poland across different generations (Baby Boomers, X, Y, Z), revealed that the frequency of social media use decreases with age. Yi, Wu, and Tung (2005) stated that age has a moderating effect on technology use and perceptions toward these technologies. Lambert-Pandraud et al. (2017) demonstrated that older individuals have higher awareness of long-established brands compared to newer ones. In their research on online purchasing behavior, Law and Ng (2016) found that users aged 41–50 perceive online purchasing to be easier than those in the 51–70 age group. Ismahel et al. (2025) revealed that social media content promotes social interaction among younger consumers through engagement, communication, brand awareness, and perception, and that this social interaction significantly influences their purchasing decisions. Similarly, Pham and Gammoh (2015) found that younger users are more influenced by social media recommendations, while this effect diminishes with age. In light of these findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Age has a significant moderating effect on the mediating role of perceived value in the relationship between brand awareness and purchase intention.

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

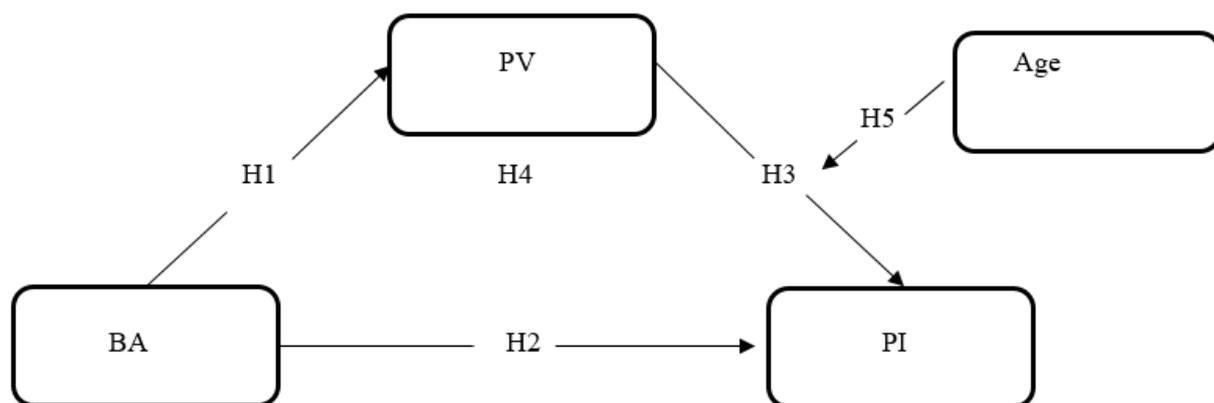


Figure 1. Hypothesized Research Model

BA: Brand Awareness; PV: Perceived Value; PI: Purchase Intention

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Instruments

The questionnaire used in the study consists of two sections. The first section includes items related to brand awareness on social media, perceived value, and purchase intention. The second section contains questions aimed at identifying demographic information (such as gender, age, etc.). The first section comprises 13 items, while the second section consists of 5 questions. To measure the variable of brand awareness, 5 items were used. The scale was adapted into Turkish from the study by Emini and Zeqiri (2021). The reliability of the scale was determined as $\alpha = 0.84$. Sample items from the scale include: “I enjoy staying at this hotel” and “Social media increases my awareness of tourism brands and helps me recognize tourism brands. To measure perceived value, 4 items were used. The original scale was developed by Chitty et al. (2007) in a study focused on the tourism sector and was adapted into Turkish by Demirbağ (2019). The reliability of the scale was found to be $\alpha = 0.87$. Sample items include: “This hotel provides services to its customers at a reasonable price” and

“I believe this hotel offers a quality accommodation experience. To measure purchase intention, 4 items were utilized. The scale was adapted into Turkish from the study by Alalwan (2018). The translation process followed Brislin’s (1976) back-translation method. The reliability of the scale was determined as $\alpha = 0.94$. Sample items from the scale include: “I will purchase tourism products advertised on social media” and “I want to buy the tourism products promoted in social media advertisements. The second part of the questionnaire includes 5 questions related to demographic characteristics.

2.2. Data Collection and Sampling

The target population of the study consists of tourism consumers aged 18 and over who reside in Türkiye and actively use social media. Due to time constraints and financial limitations, it was not feasible to reach the entire population; therefore, a sampling method was employed, and data were collected online between February 3, 2025, and March 7, 2025.

Purposive sampling was adopted for the study. This sampling technique involves selecting a specific subset of the population, meaning not all members of the population have an equal chance of being selected (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). This method assists the researcher in identifying individuals who are both capable of providing the necessary information and willing to do so (Bernard, 2002).

A total of 397 questionnaires were collected online during the specified data collection period. As the sample size exceeded the threshold of 384 respondents—considered sufficient for representing an infinite population (Sekaran, 2003) all 397 responses were included in the analysis.

2.3. Data Analysis

IBM SPSS version 22 and AMOS version 22 were used for data analysis. To examine the mediating effects, Hayes’ PROCESS macro version 4.2 with the bootstrapping technique (Model 4) was employed (Hayes, 2018). In order to identify the moderating role, Model 14 was tested (Hayes, 2018; Preacher & Hayes, 2004). Multiple imputation was used to address the issue of missing data. The normality of the data distribution was assessed by examining skewness and kurtosis values. According to Kline (2015), the assumption of normality is met when skewness values fall between -0.78 and -0.389, and kurtosis values range from -0.455 to -1.029. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess the goodness-of-fit of the measurement model, using various fit indices. The results of the CFA were significant: $\chi^2 = 91.781$; $df = 62$; $p = 0.000$; $\chi^2/df = 1.480$; $CMIN/df = 1.480$; $p = 0.008$. Additional fit indices also indicated a good model fit: $GFI = 0.96$, $IFI = 0.99$, $TLI = 0.98$, $CFI = 0.98$, $RMSEA = 0.035$, and $PCLOSE = 0.959$ (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Bentler, 1990). The bootstrapping procedure in AMOS 22 was used to test the indirect effects and potential mediators in the model. A percentile bootstrapping approach with 5,000 bootstrap samples and a 95% confidence interval was applied. To determine whether the mediating role had a significant effect on the dependent variable, the moderating role of age was examined.

3. FINDINGS

3.1. Participant Profile

As shown in Table 1, 44.6% ($n = 177$) of the participants were male and 55.4% ($n = 220$) were female. Regarding marital status, 65.3% ($n = 256$) of the participants were married, while 34.7% ($n = 138$) were single. In terms of age distribution, 34% ($n = 135$) of the participants were between the ages of 18 and 35, and 66% ($n = 158$) were 35 years old and above. Concerning educational attainment, 38.8% ($n = 154$) had a bachelor’s degree, 37.5% ($n = 145$) had completed secondary education, 19.6% ($n = 78$) held an associate degree, and 4% ($n = 16$) held a postgraduate degree. In terms of monthly income, 52.7% ($n = 209$) earned between 50,001 and

70,000, 21.4% (n = 85) earned between 30,001 and 50,000, 13.6% (n = 54) earned 70,001 or more, and 12.3% (n = 49) earned 30,000 or less.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

	# of participants	%
Gender		
Male	177	44.6
Female	220	55.4
Marital Status		
Married	259	65.3
Single	138	34.7
Age		
Ages 18-35	135	34.0
Over 35 years old	158	66.0
Educational Status		
High School	149	37,5
Associate Degree (<i>or: Vocational School Degree</i>)	78	19,6
Bachelor's Degree	154	38,8
Postgraduate Degree (<i>Master's/PhD</i>)	16	4,1
Aylık Gelir		
30.000 TL or below	49	12,3
30.001 TL-50.000 TL	85	21,4
50.001TL-70.000 TL	209	52,7
70.001 TL or above	54	13,6

3.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Table 2 presents the results of the confirmatory factor analysis, including the composite reliability values of the latent variables. The composite reliability was found to be 0.922 for BA, 0.934 for PV, and 0.911 for PI. All values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70 proposed by Hair et al. (1998), thereby confirming the internal consistency of all constructs.

The average variance extracted (AVE) values were found to be 0.591 for BA, 0.701 for PV, and 0.675 for PI. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Hair et al. (1998), an AVE value greater than 0.50 indicates adequate convergent validity. Table 2 also reports Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR) values for the scale data. Both reliability indicators exceeding the threshold of 0.70 provide evidence for the reliability

of the measurement results (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2006; Nunnally, 1976). According to Kline (2015), alpha and CR values above 0.70 are indicative of a reliable measurement.

Table 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Factors	Items	CFA	CR	AVE	α
Brand Awareness	Social media increases my awareness of tourism brands and helps me recognize them.	0.800			
	Social media provides me with more information about the characteristics of tourism brands.	0.767			
	I can easily recall tourism brands thanks to social media.	0.753	0.922	0.591	0.863
	I can easily recognize tourism brands through social media.	0.708			
	I can easily distinguish between different tourism brands thanks to social media	0.705			
Perceived Value	This hotel offers services at a price that is financially reasonable for its customers.	0.840			
	I believe this hotel provides quality accommodation.	0.835	0.934	0.529	0.897
	I enjoy staying at this hotel.	0.832			
	I believe this hotel offers good value for the price I pay.	0.801			
Purchase Intention	I will purchase tourism products advertised on social media.	0.856			
	I want to purchase tourism products promoted in social media advertisements.	0.826	0.911	0.675	0.884
	I am highly likely to purchase tourism products promoted on social media.	0.804			
	I plan to purchase tourism products promoted on social media.	0.759			

CFA: Confirmatory Factor Analysis, CR: Composite Reliability, AVE: Average Variance Extracted, α : Cronbach's Alpha

Table 3 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations among the main variables of the study. For discriminant validity to be established, the correlation coefficients between variables should be below 0.80 (Kline, 2015; Abubakar et al., 2016). As shown, all correlations are below this threshold, indicating that discriminant validity has been achieved.

Table 3. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlation Values

Descriptive statistics	Pearson correlation				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	(BA)	(PV)	(PI)
Brand Awareness, (BA)	3.289	1.136	1		
Perceived Value (PV)	3.244	0.957	0.379**	1	
Purchase Intention (PI)	3.289	0.919	0.425**	0.440**	1

Note(s): ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

3.3. Hypothesis Testing and Statistical Analyses Regarding the Mediating Role of Perceived Value and the Moderating Role of Age

In this study, the mediating role of perceived value in the effect of brand awareness on purchase intention was analyzed using Model 4 of Hayes' PROCESS macro (version 4.2). Additionally, the moderating role of age in this mediation effect was tested using Model 14. The results of the analyses are presented in Table 4, Table 5, Table 6, and Figure 2. As shown in Table 4, brand awareness has a positive, significant, and moderate effect on perceived value ($B = 0.3194$, $t = 8.1447$, $p < 0.01$). According to these results, a one-unit increase in participants' perception of brand awareness leads to an increase of approximately 0.31 units in perceived value. The R^2 value of the model is 0.1438, indicating that the model explains 14.38% of the variance. The F-test ($F = 66.3365$, $p < 0.0001$) confirms the statistical significance of the model. Brand awareness was found to have a positive and significant effect on purchase intention ($B = 0.2396$, $t = 6.3590$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that a one-unit increase in brand awareness leads to a 0.23-unit increase in purchase intention. Perceived value also demonstrated a positive and significant effect on purchase intention ($B = 0.6493$, $t = 4.1970$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that a one-unit increase in perceived value results in a 0.64-unit increase in purchase intention. Based on these findings, Hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 are supported.

Table 4. Statistical Analyses of the Study Variables and Hypothesis Results

Hypotheses	Outcome Variable	Predictor Variable	SE	B	t	p	95% CI (LLCI-ULCI)	Result
H1	Perceived Value	Brand Awareness	0.0392	0.3194	8.1447	< 0,0001	0.2423 – 0.3966	Supported
H2	Purchase Intention	Brand Awareness	0.0377	0.2396	6.3590	< 0,0001	0.1655 – 0.3137	Supported
H3	Purchase Intention	Perceived Value	0.1547	0.6493	4.1970	< 0,0001	0.3451 – 0.9535	Supported
$R^2=0.1438$, $F=66.3365$, $p<0.0001$								

The bootstrap test results presented in Table 5 indicate that brand awareness influences purchase intention both directly (by 0.2393 units) and indirectly (by 0.0998 units). Additionally, the effect of brand awareness on perceived value (0.3194 units) is observed to enhance the indirect effect on purchase intention.

Table 5. Bootstrap Test Results

Variables	Direct effect	Boot SE	95% CI
Brand Awareness → Purchase Intention	0.2393	0.0377	0.1655-0.3137
Brand Awareness → Perceived Value	0.3194	0.0392	0.2423-0.3966
Perceived Value → Purchase Intention	0.6493	0.1547	0.3451-0.9535
Indirect effect			

Brand Awareness → Perceived Value → Purchase Intention	0.0998	0.0208	0.0622-0.1428
Total indirect effect	0.0998		
Total Effect (direct+indirect)	0.9758		

According to the analysis results, perceived value plays a mediating role in the effect of brand awareness on purchase intention. In determining whether a variable assumes a mediating role, the lower and upper bounds of the bootstrap confidence interval are examined. The fact that the confidence interval ranges between 0.0622 and 0.1428 indicates a strong and significant effect. The absence of the value "0" within the two bounds implies statistical significance (Hayes, 2018). As shown in Table 6, there is no "0" value within the confidence intervals. When the mediating variable, perceived value, is included in the model, the path coefficient from brand awareness to purchase intention remains significant ($B = 0.0998$; $p < 0.0001$). These results indicate that perceived value has a partial mediating role (Baron & Kenny, 1986) in the relationship between brand awareness and purchase intention. Accordingly, H4 is supported.

As seen in Table 6, the moderated mediation effect of age on the mediating role of perceived value in the relationship between brand awareness and purchase intention is statistically significant (Index of Moderated Mediation = -0.064; Confidence Interval = -0.1299, -0.0091; Confidence Interval at Low Age = 0.082, 0.2146; Confidence Interval at High Age = 0.0397, 0.1211). The findings indicate that the moderating role of age leads to differences in the magnitude of the mediating effect. The indirect effect is relatively higher for younger participants compared to older ones (low age = 0.1430, high age = 0.0785). This demonstrates that perceived value assumes a more effective mediating role among younger participants. Accordingly, H5 is supported.

Table 6. Hypothesis Results for the Mediating Role of Perceived Value and the Moderating Role of Age

Hypothesis	Indirect Effect	B	Boot SE	Boot 95% CI		p	Result
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
H4	Total Direct Effect	0.3394	0.0421	0.2583	0.4230	< 0,0001	Supported

	BA→PI	0.2390	0.0377	0.1655	0.3137	< 0,0001	
	Indirect Effect BA→PV→PI	0.0998	0.0208	0.0622	0.1428	< 0,0001	
				Boot 95% CI			
Hypothesis	B	Boot SE		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	p	Result
	Moderated Mediation Index – Age	-0.0645	0.0303	-0.1299	-0.0091	0.0282	
H5			Boot SE	Boot 95% CI		p	Supported
	Low Age	0.1430	0.0333	0.0828	0.2146		
	High Age	0.0785	0.0363	0.0397	0.1211	< 0,0001	

BA: Brand Awerness; PV: Percieved Value; PI: Purchase Intention

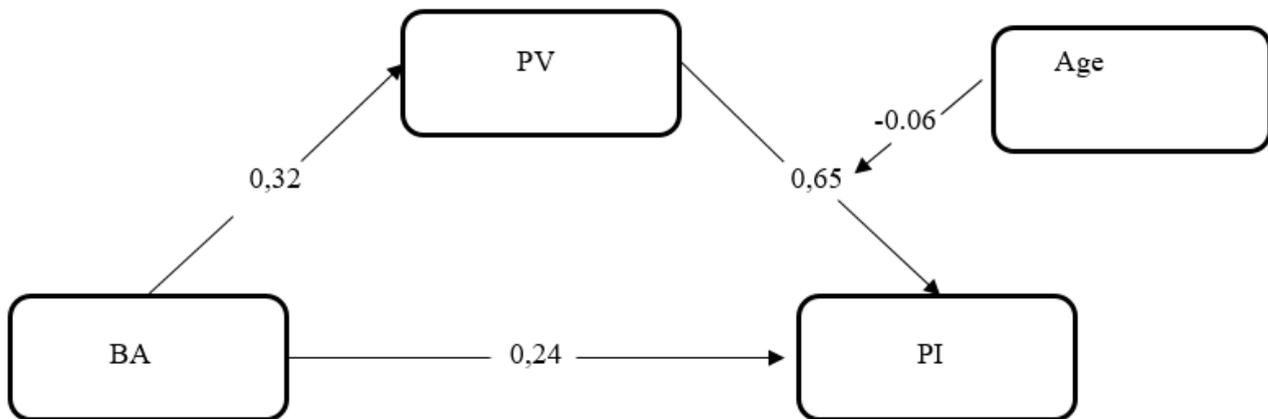


Figure 2: Structural Model

BA: Brand Awerness; PV: Percieved Value; PI: Purchase Intention

4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This study examined the effect of brand awareness on the intention to purchase tourism products among social media-using tourism consumers aged 18 and over living in Türkiye, with a particular focus on the mediating role of perceived value in this relationship. In addition, the moderating effect of age on the mediating role of perceived value was investigated.

Overall, the findings indicate that the direct effect of brand awareness on the intention to purchase tourism products is significant. Similar results have been reported in previous studies that examined the relationship between brand awareness and purchase intention. For instance, Dabbous and Barakat (2020) demonstrated that brand awareness in a social media context influences purchase intention. Moreover, other studies have also confirmed that brand awareness has a significant, positive, and direct effect on purchase intention (Keller, 1993; Wu & Ho, 2014; Akkucuk & Esmaeili, 2016; Mao et al., 2020; Chen, 2024). In line with these findings, hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 are supported.

Perceived value assumes a partial yet significant mediating role in the effect of brand awareness on the intention to purchase tourism products. The analyses revealed that approximately 9.98% of the effect of brand awareness on purchase intention occurs through perceived value. Accordingly, the effect of brand awareness on purchase intention is confirmed both directly and indirectly. Perceived value is a key mediating variable that strengthens the relationship between brand awareness and purchase intention. The findings demonstrate that, in addition to the direct effect of brand awareness, a portion of this effect is transmitted indirectly through perceived value. Furthermore, the variable of age plays a moderating role in this mediating effect. While perceived value has a stronger impact on purchase intention among younger individuals, this effect diminishes with increasing age. These results support both the mediation hypothesis (H4) and the moderated mediation hypothesis (H5).

4.1. Theoretical Implications

The Theory of Perceived Value was first introduced by Zeithaml in the 1980s. According to this theory, consumers evaluate the overall value of a product by comparing the benefits they receive with the costs they incur (Zeithaml, 1988; Ledden et al., 2007). Over time, the theory has been further developed and widely applied across various fields, including marketing, tourism management, and consumer behavior. While the theory posits that consumer value judgments are based on personal experience and perception, it also acknowledges that brand image and consumer expectations influence these judgments (Wang, 2025). Chin and Lo (2017) examined the theory from a tourism perspective, using case analyses to identify key factors affecting service quality. In the context of this study, it was observed that brand awareness influences perceived value, and in turn, perceived value plays a decisive role in purchase intention. Similarly, in the effect of brand awareness on the intention to purchase tourism products, the perceived value of the tourism product functions as a mediating variable.

The Value-Attitude-Behavior (VAB) Theory posits that individuals develop attitudes based on their core values, and these attitudes, in turn, lead to behaviors. According to the theory, individual behaviors are guided by deeper and more stable values, which play a decisive role in shaping both attitudes and actions (Homer & Kahle, 1988). In the field of tourism, research has demonstrated that the VAB theory serves as an effective framework for predicting consumer behavior (Kiatkawsin & Han, 2017). The theory has been successfully applied to explain international travelers' revisit intentions and emotional responses (Kiatkawsin & Han, 2017), decision-making processes for purchasing eco-tours (Han et al., 2019), and environmentally friendly dining and waste reduction behaviors (Kim et al., 2020). Moreover, it provides a strong theoretical foundation for explaining tourists' word-of-mouth intentions, purchase behaviors, and willingness to make sacrifices (Han et al., 2019). On the other hand, social media facilitates various types of brand stimuli and guides interaction between brands and consumers through multiple creative strategies (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). In this study, brand awareness emerging through social media leads tourists to develop favorable attitudes toward brands in alignment with their core values, and these attitudes translate into an intention to purchase tourism products.

The Socioemotional Selectivity Theory was introduced to the literature by Carstensen (1992). This theory suggests that as individuals age, they become increasingly aware of the limited time they have left, which in turn leads to changes in their social goals. With advancing age, individuals tend to focus more on close and

emotionally meaningful relationships, while the time and energy spent on superficial or distant relationships decreases (Carstensen, 1995; Fung et al., 2001). In the present study, age serves as a moderating variable in the effect of brand awareness on the intention to purchase tourism products through perceived value. According to the theory, individuals' perceptions shift with age, and their priorities increasingly gravitate toward emotional connections. In this context, it was observed that the mediating effect along the brand awareness → perceived value → purchase intention path weakens as tourists grow older. While this mediation effect occurs at a lower level among older tourists, younger individuals tend to attribute higher perceived value to tourism products, which in turn results in stronger purchase intentions.

4.2. Practical Implications

The findings indicate that brand awareness developed through social media has a significant effect on the intention to purchase tourism products. Tourism business managers can positively influence guest-business relationships by enhancing brand awareness via social media. By conducting advertising campaigns that create awareness of tourism products on social media, they can engage guests and thereby affect their purchase intentions. Furthermore, perceived value plays a mediating role in this relationship, and age moderates the strength of this mediation. Accordingly, it may be beneficial for managers to develop strategies aimed at enhancing brand awareness and perceived value, particularly among younger tourists who actively use social media. Indeed, many brands are able to compete and gain a competitive advantage in the market solely through the value perceived by consumers (Algharabat et al., 2020). Similarly, managers of tourism businesses can positively influence customers' purchase intentions by increasing their perceived value, thereby gaining a competitive edge.

4.3. Limitation, Recommendation and Future Directions

This study has several limitations. First, the use of purposive sampling may limit the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies replicate similar research using different sampling techniques. The study focuses on tourism consumers residing in Türkiye who are aged 18 and over and use social media, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other destinations or cultural contexts. Future research could broaden the scope of the results by examining different destinations. Additionally, more detailed analyses could be conducted by investigating the moderating effects of demographic variables such as gender or marital status. Moreover, exploring the relationships among other mediating variables such as attitude, tourist motivation, brand equity, and brand loyalty could provide valuable contributions to the literature.

Declaration of the use of generative AI in scientific writing:

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors utilized ChatGPT for editing Turkish texts and for English translation. All content generated with the assistance of this tool was reviewed and revised by the authors. The authors take full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the final version of the manuscript.

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