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Kim Olduğunu Görebiliyoruz! Tüketimin Sosyal Görünürlüğünün Tüketici Marka Kimliği, Ağızdan Ağıza İletişim ve Marka Sadakatine Yansımaları

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Öz

Bu araştırmanın amacı, sosyal bir kimlik içerisinde tüketimin sosyal görünürlüğünün tüketici-marka kimliğine, ağızdan ağıza iletişime ve tekrar satın alma niyetine etkisini incelemektir. Araştırmanın evrenini, Türkiye’de tanınmış beş tesettür giyim markasını (Nihan, Kayra, Tuğba, Aker ve Armine) sosyal medyada takip eden kadın tüketiciler oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmada kolayda örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmış ve araştırma verileri, 748 tüketiciden Facebook ve Instagram’da paylaşılan çevrimiçi anketler yoluyla elde edilmiştir. Elde edilen veriler, Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesi (YEM) kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Analiz sonucunda, muhafazakâr sosyal kimliğe sahip kadın tüketicilerde tüketimin sosyal görünürlüğünün tüketici marka kimliğini, ağızdan ağıza iletişimi ve tekrar satın alma niyetini pozitif yönlü etkilediği belirlenmiştir. Buna ek olarak, muhafazakâr sosyal kimliğe sahip kadın tüketicilerin tekrar satın alma niyetleri üzerinde ağızdan ağıza iletişimin tüketimin sosyal görünürlüğünden ve tüketici marka kimliğinden daha etkili olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Elde edilen sonuçlar, tesettür markalarının kendilerini muhafazakâr kadın tüketicilerin sosyal kimlikleriyle örtüştürmeye dönük aktivitelere önem vermeleri gerektiğini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tüketimin Sosyal Görünürlüğü, Tüketici Marka Kimliği, Tesettür Markaları, Ağızdan Ağıza İletişim, Tekrar Satın Alma Niyeti

We can see who you are! Reflections of Social Visibility of Consumption on Consumer-Brand Identity, WOM Communication, and Brand Loyalty

Abstract

This research examines the effect of social visibility of consumption on consumer-brand identity, word-of-mouth communication and repurchase intention in a social identity. The universe of this study consisted of female consumers who follow the five most popular hijab clothing brands in Turkey (Nihan, Kayra, Tuğba, Aker, and Armine) on social media. Convenience sampling method was used. Research data obtained through online surveys shared on Facebook and Instagram with 748 consumers. The obtained data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). It was determined that the social appearance of consumption affects consumer brand identity, word-of-mouth communication, and repurchase intention positively in female consumers with conservative social identity. Word-of-mouth communications are more effective than social identity and consumer brand identity on the repurchase intentions of female consumers with conservative social identity. Results show that hijab brands should attach importance to activities aimed at overlapping themselves with the social identities of conservative consumers.

Keywords: Social Visibility of Consumption, Customer-Brand Identification, Hijab Brands, Word Of Mouth Communication, Repurchase Intention

1. Introduction

During the last decade, the social, political and economic developments that have taken place in Turkey have encouraged female consumers with conservative or Islamic social identity to take a more active role in almost every aspect of social life. In parallel, many apparel companies have identified this consumer group as their target market, and are working hard to establish a strong brand communication with them. Moreover, global clothing brands like Dolce & Gabbana, Vakko, and H&M have discovered the potential in the conservative market, adding to their collections plenty of scarves and wide-cut sportswear covering the body. This is day by day increasing the competition in the hijab apparel sector, which is expected to reach a volume of 220 billion dollars in the global market in 2020 (Yazicioglu, 2017). The increasingly competitive environment forces hijab companies to look for new ways to communicate effectively with consumers and to find creative applications in order to gain a unique place in consumers' minds, to differentiate and be preferred from firms that produce similar goods and services. The way to be successful for hijab apparel brands that want to maximize their consumer and brand relationship is to understand thoughts, behaviours, perceptions of the target customers and how they are giving their purchasing decisions (Davis, 2000).

One of the dynamics that has deeply influenced the product and brand preferences of consumer groups that identify themselves as conservative and consumers who seek a different style of clothing from the classical fashion lineage is social media in this age of computerization. In general, social media can be defined as an online application program, platform, or mass media tool that facilitates interaction, collaboration, or content sharing among users (Kim and Ko, 2012). From the company's perspective, social media has become an important part of brand communications and marketing activities for businesses today, offering the opportunity to perform actions such as creating brand profiles, online customer service, product information and offering special offers to customers at low cost (Gallaughar and Ransbotham, 2010; Tsimonis and Dimitraidis, 2014; Breitsohl et al., 2015; Seo and Park, 2018). The studies show that social media marketing activities are highly functional for businesses in brand communication, brand value, brand identity and brand loyalty (Baird and Parasnis, 2011; Kim and Ko, 2012; McCann and Barlow, 2015; Dutot and Bergeron, 2016; Bilgin, 2018). From a consumer perspective, social media is a communication channel that facilitates communication with other consumers and reflects consumer habits, preferences, thoughts, feelings, and experiences from the consumers' point of view (Gallaughar and Ransbotham, 2010; Hajli, 2013). In social media, the limits of communication between consumers are uncertain and this communication is too small to intervene (Kohli et al., 2015). This situation increases the impact of the consumers' sharing in the social media on the trust of the other consumers of



the product and brand and their intention to purchase (Lu et al., 2010; Hajli, 2013). There are numerous studies in the literature showing that social media communications have an impact on consumers' brand perceptions and purchasing intentions (Chen et al., 2011; Duffett, 2017; Simon and Tossan, 2018).

Another aspect of social media that deeply impact the consumer behaviour is the visualization of consumption in the process of sharing information, ideas, and experiences about a product or brand in real time. The visualization of consumption through social media allows consumers to more easily express their connections with other people and their relationships with brands (Josiassen and Assaf, 2013). When we consider sectors such as clothing where visibility is essential, it is inevitable that sharing visuals in social media is more influential on consumers' product and brand preferences than other forms of experience transfer. On the other hand, the social appearance of consumption makes it easier for consumers to declare their social environment to express their social class or status by sharing purchases they make from prestigious brands (So et al., 2017). At this point, social media is becoming an important asset for showing the connection between the consumer's identity and the brand and expressing the identity that the consumer thinks to be real or ideal for him/her. It is a clear indication that many consumers are members of the pages of brands that they overlap with their identities in social media to satisfy their psychosocial needs, to strengthen their identities and to connect with others (Wirtz et al., 2013; Dessart et al., 2015). Relations among members who are interested in a brand in the social media also affect consumers' thoughts and feelings about the brand and increase their loyalty to the brand (Jang et al., 2008). In the literature, although there are findings that word-of-mouth communication in the social media influence consumers' brand loyalty, the studies examining the effect of consumer's social visibility on consumer-brand identity are rather limited.

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of the social appearance of consumption on consumer-brand identity, word-of-mouth communication and repurchase intention in the consumer group with the conservative social identity. In this respect, the theoretical framework of the research is built on the concepts of social identity and consumer-brand identity, word-of-mouth communication and repurchase intention from the perspective of social identity theory. Subsequently, the relationships between these concepts are explained and the hypotheses of the research are built. In the method section, information about the universe of the research, sample, data collection tools, data collection process, and data analysis technique is presented. Thereafter, the findings obtained from the data analysis are



presented. Finally, the results of the research were explained and suggestions were made for researchers and practitioners.

2. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

2.1. Social Visibility of Consumption

The visibility of goods and services preferred by consumers is based on the conclusions about the economic status, personality, propensity and social status of the person consuming these goods and services in almost all cultures (Belk, 1978). Many consumers, in their consumption behaviours, try to point out the characteristics of the social class they think they belong to, to show that they are one of the members of that class, and to reach the social identity they desire (Atik and Sahin, 2011). The social visibility of consumption supports the perception that the consumer is likely to be socially accepted by reference groups such as friends, family, and colleagues (Josiassen and Assaf 2013). In other words, the social visibility of consumption is in line with conspicuous consumption, which includes consumers' purchasing products from prestigious brands to improve their social status (So et al., 2017). O'Cass and McEven (2004) noted that social appearance of consumption is an important dimension of consumption for demonstration purposes. In this sense, the brand has a symbolic meaning that consumers use to build personal and social identity, to fulfil their representational goals and to reflect their self-esteem (Popp and Woratschek, 2017). Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) stated that the brand plays an important role in reflecting and reinforcing the social identities that consumers identify and relate to. Tan (2016) has found that social norms guide consumer behaviour in situations where the social visibility of consumption is high. In the literature, there is some evidence that the social visibility of the brand affects the consumer brand relations positively in consumers' expression of their social identities (Graeff, 1997; Veloutsou and Moutinho, 2009). Furthermore, research shows that social visibility is important in terms of showing consumers' social identities and statuses in product categories such as cars, clothing, and sunglasses (Goldsmith et al., 1996; Heffetz, 2004; Josiassen and Assaf, 2013).

Today, the social media is one of the most common channels of communication that the customers use to show their social identities or the brands they identify themselves to express their status (So et al., 2017; Simon and Tossan, 2018). Social media is "an environment in which people share common interests and share their thoughts, comments and ideas" (Weber, 2007:4). Many social media channels, such as Google+, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Blogs, YouTube and LinkedIn, allow consumers to share information, thoughts and experiences, without physically contacting, through both their written and visual content and reach content shared by other consumers (Chen et al., 2011; Hajli, 2014). This viral effect among social media users allows the shared experience of the product or brand to



be discussed and become known very quickly among a large number of users (Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2014; Kumar et al., 2007). So et al. (2017) have identified that social media is highly functional in the way that consumers are able to visually transfer their travel experiences to people around them. From the perspective of consumers with a conservative social identity, social media provides visualization of consumption habits and interaction with other consumers. Moreover, Dina Tokio, Ascia Akf and Diana Pelange offer the opportunity to follow fashioners and trends known as "trendsetter" in hijab clothing without time, cost and space limitations. In the literature, there is no research on the use of social media by consumers with conservative identities and their tendency to visualize consumption. However, the results of the Wizsight (2018) organization show that this social class tries to communicate on every platform with brands that they feel close to, they care about fashion, and they are unexpectedly brave in visualizing their consumption habits.

2.2. Consumer-Brand Identity

In the literature, consumer-brand identification is based on the social identity theory by Tajfel and Turner (1985), which is rooted in social psychology in general (Swaminathan et al., 2007; Lam et al., 2010; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012; Tuskej et al., 2013). According to the theory of social identity, individuals categorize themselves as members of a social group as part of their own selves, and this social group is identified with the group they share similarities of value and emotional importance (Turner, 1975; Tajfel, 1978). From this point of view, the theory of social identity is quite functioning to understand the influence of the social groups in which the individual interacts with consumer behaviour (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). A social identity consists of cognitive, evaluative and emotional dimensions (Ellemers et al., 1999). Consumers who share a common social identity show similar consumption behaviours (even though they do not recognize them) in that social identity (Tajfel and Turner, 1985; Kuenzel and Halliday, 2008) to approximate the group they think they belong to and to show their differences from other social groups.

Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) point out that consumers are trying to emphasize this difference between social identities, often with brands that reflect and reinforce the identity they identify with them. In this sense, a brand can be expressed as an important symbol or symbol to show the difference and authenticity of the social identity they have for consumers when they gain social recognition. The consumers' overlapping the brand with their identities is related to perceiving and feeling the brand identity, and to the psychological state of the value that they attach to the brand (Lam et al., 2013). Tuskej and Podnar (2018), have identified the consumer-brand



identity as “The extent to which the consumer sees his or her own self-image as overlapping with the brand's image”. In this respect, consumer-brand identity is a valid and powerful indicator of the individual's quest for expression and realization of his identity in the market (Kim et al., 2001; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). The studies show that the sense of social identity is effective beyond functioning when they adopt a brand (Ryder, 2004; Ilaw, 2014; So et al., 2018).

In everyday life, the social appearance of consumption is an effective way of expressing social identity, since many of the individuals' consumption decisions are observed by other people (Heffetz, 2004). In their behaviours, consumers prefer brands with a certain prestige and visual appeal in the society (Amatulli and Guido, 2011; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012) in order to express their social identities. In addition, visibility of goods and services encourages consumers to adopt brands and to use them as an indicator of identity (Heffetz, 2011; Clingingsmith and Sheremeta, 2015) to determine consumers' social status and spending level. Consumers with a conservative identity prefer hijab brands and combine their identities with modern life in a reputable way. On the contrary, they differ from other social groups by taking advantage of their distinguished brand identity (Oak, 2015). This positive social attention strengthens and enhances the conservative consumers' perception of their self-identities as well as other consumers (Josiasen and Assaf, 2013). The studies show that consumers who want to express their social classes and statues to others tend to choose better-known brands (Han et al., 2010; Pettit and Sivanathan, 2011). So et al. (2018) determined that the social appearance of consumption affects consumer-brand identification positively. In this direction, the proposed research hypothesis is as follows:

H1: The social visibility of consumption affects consumer-brand identification.

2.3. Word of Mouth Communication

Consumers' talking to each other and imitating each other in accordance with a social or warded learning paradigm in consumption behaviour, are the results of being social entities (Hawkins et al., 2004; Litvin et al., 2008). People often share information about their consumption experiences with people in their surroundings (Westbrook, 1987). This process, called word-of-mouth communication, is the informal conversations among consumers about products and services (Schiffman et al., 2008: 477). The basis of word-of-mouth communication relies on the ability to distribute the information about basic products, services, businesses, brands etc. (Ismail and Spinelli, 2012). Word-of-mouth communications are an important source of information (Litvin et al., 2008) for consumers who want to minimize the risk and uncertainty of using other people's experiences because they are



neutral and non-motivated communications between consumers (Silverman, 2011: 5).

Word-of-mouth communications enable consumers to share information and ideas that direct other people to specific products, services, and brands (Hawkins et al., 2004). These communications are important in terms of individuals' sharing their social identities with others, deepening their social ties and showing their place in the social hierarchy (Berger, 2014). The importance that consumers give to word-of-mouth communication to gain social status or strengthen social status in the eyes of others has been put forward by researchers (Gatignon and Robertson, 1986; Chang et al., 2010; So et al., 2017). The results of the study by Saenger et al. (2013) show that consumers communicate about consumption activities in order to express their self and attract attention. Moreover, in recent years, traditional word-of-mouth communication, with widespread social media, limitations such as time, space and reaching to fewer people, has become a structure where the visibility is foregrounded and messages are given by body language instead of words. King and others (2014) have shown that rapid visibility in social media and the ability to display high (low) volume messages without spoken words encourage word-of-mouth communication among consumers. Ranjbarian et al. (2011) found that the visibility of the social identities and social status of consumers affected their word-of-mouth communication. So et al. (2017) stated that the perception of high social visibility implies the importance and prestige of a brand, so the consumer strengthens his motivation to express himself and increases word-of-mouth communication. In this context, the hypothesis to be tested is as follows:

H2: The social visibility of consumption affects consumer's word-of-mouth communication.

Products and brands have the ability to transmit the message that consumers wish to give to the others (Belk, 1978; O'Cass and McEven, 2004). When consumers identify a product and brand with their social status or identities, they become volunteer advocates and ambassadors for that product and brand. So, in connection with word-of-mouth communication, talking about a brand is considered as an important part of an individual's identity structure (Holt, 1997). This is because of the fact that the word-of-mouth communication serves as a means of self-presentation for the consumer about the goods that are related to him/her, and this provides social benefits to himself/herself (Karjaluoto et al., 2016). Today, the most obvious impact of consumer-brand identification on word-of-mouth communication is seen in brand groups created through social media (Stokburger-Sauer, 2010). Many consumers have become members of online brand communities, seeking friends in these communities (Ridings and



Gefen, 2004; Mousavi et al., 2017) to show their status and identity to other people, to benefit from their experience and to get social support. Social group members, who come together on a common platform, make inside-group and outside-group comparisons through word-of-mouth communication. Thus, they are protecting and strengthening their social identities (Hughes and Ahearne, 2010).

Andrei et al. (2017) determined that people were encouraging brands they perceived as new and competent and that the excitement that the brand created was mediated by mouth-to-mouth communications by consumers. Ismail and Spinelli (2012) have determined that brand personality positively affects consumers' word-of-mouth communication, in fashion brands. O'Cass (2001) determined that consumers are aware of the message or impression that fashion clothing sent to others, thus determining that motives such as social approval are one of the driving forces of consumers' clothing preferences. Consumers who identify themselves with a particular brand have a higher likelihood of showing favourable action toward that brand in their communication, in order to strengthen their self-identities, as their self-esteem increases in the positive direction psychologically (Donavan et al., 2006; Papista and Dimitriadis, 2012). Algesheimer et al. (2005) determined that when consumers identify their identities with a brand, they make comments on the brand and recommend it to their social environment. In the literature, there is evidence that consumer-brand identity is influential on consumers' word-of-mouth communication (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003; Okazaki, 2009; Jorge et al., 2013). In this direction, the generated hypothesis is as follows.

H3: Consumer-brand identification affects consumers' word-of-mouth communication.

2.4. Repurchase Intention

Repurchase intention is considered in the literature as an important component of customer retention or customer loyalty (Oliver, 1999; Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003; Kuenzel and Halliday, 2008). The repurchase intention (Baldinger and Rubinson, 1996; Bloemer et al., 1999), which expresses the behavioural orientation of the customer loyalty, is the consumer's repetition of purchasing the product and brand despite the alternatives (Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002; Lam et al., 2004; Jones and Taylor, 2007). Chen and Chen (2017) define repurchase intent as "the individual's judgment about buying a service again, the decision to engage in future activity with a service provider and what form this activity will take". In the clothing industry, there are many factors that affect consumers' repurchasing intentions such as satisfaction, brand value, service quality and brand loyalty (Amatulli and Guido, 2011; Parkvithee and Miranda, 2012). In this research, consumers' repurchasing intentions are considered in terms of social visibility of consumption. The research findings show that it is



important for female consumers that the social visibility of consumption be attractive in clothing products and brands (O'Cass and McEven, 2004). From the standpoint of conservative female consumers, social visibility of consumption, in clothing products and brands, more deeply influence the intention to purchase, because many of these consumers have the belief that these clothes they buy should cover their bodies. However, unlike traditional conservative clothing habits, elegance and modernity are important in terms of design, style, colour, and fabric (Yucebas, 2012). The social visibility of the clothing does not simply symbolize the social identity of conservative female consumers, at the same time, it directs the opinions of others about them (Khare, 2014). Therefore, female consumers who want to have a reputation in the society with their conservative social identity tend to prefer products and brands with high social visibility. On the other hand, the contradiction between consumption for demonstration or status and the religiosity, which comes out as a result of the behaviour of choosing clothing brands with high social appearance and visual appeal, is still a serious debate in Muslim societies (O'Cass et al., 2013).

In the literature, the findings on the effects of the social visibility of consumption on consumers' purchasing intentions in clothing products and brands are rather limited. Moreover, there is no evidence in the literature about the effect of the social visibility of consumption on the repurchase intention, especially for conservative female consumers. Hansen and Jensen (2009) have identified that the social visibility of the product is an important reference when female consumers choose the right dress for themselves. Wilcox et al. (2009) determined that the visual appeal of luxury brands reflecting a certain image, in line with social status and identity acquisition purposes, also increased the consumers' tendency to purchase imitation products and brands, not just original products and brands. In addition, Thoumrungroje (2014) has identified that platforms such as social media, which allow visual sharing of consumption behaviour, encourage consumers to buy products with high visibility. Apart from these, in a study on tourists, Bronner and de Hoog (2018) found that the visibility of consumption in social media was influential in consumers' holiday preferences. In this context, the hypothesis to be tested is as follows.

H4: The social visibility of consumption affects consumers' repurchasing intentions.

Markets are often used by humans to support their own images because they have a symbolic nature (Matzler et al., 2011; Karjaluoto et al., 2016). While consumers prefer a product and a brand, they consider the link between the image of the product and the brand and the social identity of the brand (Batra et al., 2012), and prefer products and brands that help them



build their own selves (Saenger et al., 2013). Netemeyer et al. (1992) found that consumers who are more sensitive to other people's reactions are more likely to buy products that they think others will make positive referrals about themselves. More specifically, clothing is highly functional in showing social status, identity and personal image for consumers, as it reflects the visible aspect of the individual's social status and identity (Crane, 2006). Jennifer et al. (2014) reported that clothing reflects consumers' perceptions of their selves and identities and that consumers' appraisal of clothing products and brands is an emotional response to their selves. Cox and Dittmar (1995) found that female consumers used clothing as a symbol when building social and personal relationships with others. Similarly, Solomon (1989) identified that clothing and fashion have a more important role in female consumers than males in terms of self-identification and identity.

The results obtained in the related research support the idea that consumer brand identity is influential on the consumers' repurchasing intentions (Ahearne et al., 2005). Yet, familiarity and the harmony with the personality of the consumer is one of the important determinants of buying behaviour (Davis, 2000). Consumers behave as expected when they have the emotional connection with the brand and repurchase the brand's products when they identify the brand as part of their social identities or status (Kaufmann et al., 2016). In this regard, consumer brand identity transforms purchasing behaviour into a self-expression for consumers (Xiao and Lee, 2014). At this point, as a determinant of consumers' behaviour of re-purchasing clothing products and brands, the role of social identity (Huang, 2012), social status (Goldsmith et al., 1996) and self-esteem (Jennifer et al., 2014) come to the forefront. On the other hand, fashion and brand clothes positively affect consumers' purchasing intentions as it facilitates the acceptance to the social class that the individual thinks he/she belongs to (Niinimaki, 2010). Mese (2015) stated that the conservative customers are prone to prefer prestigious hijab products and brands to show their social identities in a credible way. O'Cass et al. (2013) found a positive relationship between the social image of clothing brands' expressing conservative identity and the conservative consumers' willingness to pay more. McNeill (2018) found consumers' desire to acquire a social identity in line with their brand identity in their intention to buy clothes. In this context, the research hypothesis generated is as follows:

H5: Consumer-brand identification affects consumers' repurchasing intentions.

The impact of word-of-mouth communications on consumers' attitudes and behaviours towards products and brands is widely acknowledged by marketers and practitioners (Opermann, 2000; Jorge et al., 2013). Consumers can share their experience regarding the products and brands they have bought with other consumers through communication channels such as telephone, e-mail, and social media, to interact with others, to help other



people, or to obtain a social identity or status (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). These interests are carefully followed and appreciated by consumers seeking to mitigate perceived risks and uncertainties in procurement decisions (Zhang et al., 2014) since there are no commercial interests in the product and brand users' opinions. Traditional word-of-mouth communications are limited to the social circles of consumers, however, in recent years, the widespread use of communication channels such as blogs and social media via the internet has removed the limitations of time and space in consumer interactions. At a short time, word-of-mouth communications through social channels facilitate the customers to reach people, who they may not be able to recognize for perhaps a lifetime, and they can direct their purchasing decisions (Bilgin, 2018). This causes word-of-mouth communication to more deeply affect consumers' expectations and purchasing behaviour toward products and brands (Kim and Kim, 2004; Loureiro et al., 2017). Thourmrunroje (2014) determined that word-of-mouth communications in social media positively affected consumers' demand for products with high social visibility.

Moslehpour et al. (2017) determined that word-of-mouth communications are more effective on consumers' repurchasing intentions than price and country of origin in cosmetic products, which have a higher frequency of reuse compared to apparel products. Hollebeek et al. (2014) stated that consumers' emotional commitment to a brand is reflected in social media sharing and that these influences positively influence consumers' purchasing intentions. Kudeshia and Kumar (2017) found that content created by users in the social media affected other users' brand attitudes and purchasing intentions. In the literature, the fact that the word-of-mouth communications have an impact on repurchase intentions of the customers is supported by findings of the studies on products and brands that have quite different characteristics (Mao and Lyu, 2017; Shin et al., 2017). In this context, the research hypothesis generated is as follows.

H6. Word-of-mouth communications affect consumers' repurchasing intentions.

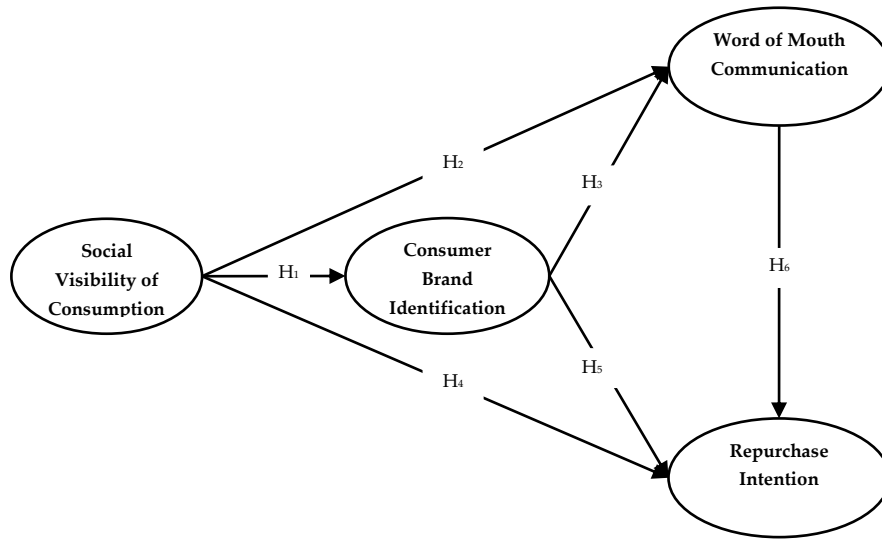
3. Methodology

The quantitative method was used to test the relationship between consumer's social visibility, consumer-brand identification, word of mouth communication and repurchase intent, which constitute the variables of the study. The research model proposed for testing the relationships between the variables of the study and the variables is as shown in Fig. 1. The model suggests that the social appearance of consumption has a positive influence on consumer-brand identification, word-of-mouth communication and repurchase intention for consumers with conservative social identity. Also,



in the model, it is considered that the consumer-brand identification is influential on consumers' word-of-mouth communication and repurchase intentions. In addition, it is assumed that consumers' word-of-mouth communication affects repurchase intentions positively.

Figure 1. Proposed Research Model



3.1. Population and Sampling

The population of the research is made up of female consumers actively following the Facebook and Instagram social media communication channels of Nihan, Kayra, Tuğba, Aker and Armine hijab brands. These brands are the most popular conservative hijab clothing brand appeal to consumers in Turkey. Considering the limited information available in the social media regarding the consumers in the research universe, convenience sampling method, which is one of the sampling methods that are not based on probability, is used.

3.2. Measurement Instrument

The data of the study were obtained using questionnaire technique. The measurement model for collecting data from the consumers of the universe consists of five parts. In the first part, there is demographic information such as age, marital status, education and income levels of consumers and duration of social media usage. In addition, there are two statements about participants' levels of defining themselves as modern and conservative with regard to their clothing habits. In the second part, there are 4 items about the social visibility of consumption. Three statements about the social visibility of consumption were taken from the study of So et al (2017). In the third part, there are 7 items about consumer-brand identity. In the fourth part, there are 3 statements to measure the word-of-mouth communications of the



consumers. The items related to consumer-brand identity and word-of-mouth communication were adapted from the study of Popp and Woratschek (2017). The last part of the measurement model consists of 3 phrases about the intention to repurchase. These items are adapted from the explanations made by Kudeshia and Kumar (2017).

The validity of the structure consisting of 21 items in the measurement model was tested by consulting the opinions of 3 expert academicians in the marketing field. Then, the opinions of 2 experts in the translation field were applied and the content validity of the expressions in the measurement model were examined. In line with the opinions of the experts, the phrase "For me, the visual appeal of the products of this brand is important" was added to the social visibility dimension of consumption in social media. The demographic characteristics of the participants were measured by closed-ended questions. Participants' perceptions of observed variables were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (5 = Strongly agree, 1 = Strongly disagree).

3.3. Data Collection and Analysis

Following the creation of the measurement model, pre-test of the reliability of the survey scale was undertaken prior to the data collection phase. The generated questionnaire was transmitted online to 624 users in the universe through the Facebook and Instagram social media communication channels. In addition, the research survey was conducted face-to-face with 40 followers of the brands. Thus, in addition to reliability, the content validity of the measurement tool was retested from the participant's perspective. As a result, the reliability analysis was applied to the data obtained from 78 brand followers. As the result of the analysis, Cronbach's Alpha value was found as 0.940 for all expressions on the scale. This result shows that the measurement model is considerably reliable. Following the pre-test, the survey data was obtained through online surveys with 748 brand followers between 1 March and 18 April 2018. The obtained data were analysed using SPSS 18.0 and Amos 21.0 program packs. The data used for the pre-test were not included in the analysis process.

4. Findings

4.1. Demographic Characteristics

74.4% of the female participants were 25 and below, 15.5% were between the ages of 26-35 and 3% were 46 and over. 26.8% of the participants were married and 72.3% were single. 37.2% of the participants have an income of 2500 TL and below, 26.2% have an income of 3501-4500 TL and 21.5% have an income of 4500 TL and above. 50% of the respondents have



undergraduate education and 8.6% are primary and secondary education graduates. 38.9% of respondents spend more than 3 hours a day on social media. A large part of the participants describes themselves as modern in terms of their clothing habits. In addition, 71.5 % of the participants identify themselves as highly conservative.

4.2. Measurement Model

The convergence validity of the measurement model was tested before going to the test of the hypotheses proposed in the study. In this direction, explanatory factor analysis (EFA) was applied first to the obtained data. It has been noted that in EFA, the factor Eigen value is at least 1, the factor load is at least 0.50, and that there is a minimum of .10 difference in factor loadings between the two factors. The results of the KMO (.953) and Barlett test ($\chi^2 = 10058,918$, $p < .000$) obtained in EFA indicate that the data set is suitable for factor analysis. In EFA using Varimax rotation, it was seen that the expression (BI2), which measures the consumer brand identity latent variable was placed under the word-of-mouth communication latency variable. This item was removed from the analysis and the measurement model was retested. Following this process, the expressions in the measurement model were collected at four factors, which constitute 78,617 of the total variance. The factor loadings of the expressions included in the measurement model are between .500 and .904. EFA results show that the measurement model is compatible with the structured structure.

Finally, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was applied to the data, which are arranged according to EFA results, in order to confirm what is happening in EFA. In this direction, the four-factor model of measurement, consisting of the social visibility of consumption, consumer-brand identity, word-of-mouth communication, and repurchase intention, was tested using confirmatory factor analysis. The confirmatory factor analysis results show that the measurement model has a satisfactory fit: $\chi^2 / df = 3.55$, $p = .000$, AGFI = 0.916, GFI = 0.940, NFI = 0.966, IFI = 0.975, CFI = 0.96, RMSEA = 0.058. In addition, the convergent validity of the measurement model is confirmed by the fact that each of the observed variables in the measurement model is loaded at a high level of the corresponding latent variable and the standardized λ coefficients are over 0.6 (Steenkamp and van Trijp, 1991). Table 1 shows the results of confirmatory factor analysis.

Table 1. Results of confirmatory factor analysis

<i>Latent variable</i>	<i>Measured variable</i>	<i>Cronbach's α</i>	<i>CR</i>	<i>AVE</i>	<i>Standardized λ</i>
Social Visibility of Consumption	SV1	0.904	0.919	0.740	0.764
	SV2				0.717
	SV3				0.745



	SV4				0.740
Customer brand- Identification	BI1	0.898	0.906	0.616	0.739
	BI3				0.778
	BI4				0.651
	BI5				0.602
	BI6				0.677
	BI7				0.619
	Word of Mouth Communication	WM1	0.935	0.932	0.820
WM2					0.870
WM3					0.839
Repurchase Intention	RI1	0.887	0.907	0.766	0.776
	RI2				0.733
	RI3				0.790

Goodness of fit index:

$\chi^2= 348.021(98)$, $\chi^2/df = 3.55$, AGFI= 0.916, GFI= 0.940, NFI= 0.966, IFI= 0.975, CFI= 0.96, RMSEA= 0.058

Notes: AVE- average variance extracted, CR - composite reliability

The reliability levels of the variables included in the measurement model ($\alpha > 0.7$) are quite high, and the AVE values are above the 0.50 level, which has been recommended by Hair et al. (2010). In addition, the correlation coefficients were examined to test the discriminant validity of the validated measurement model in CFA. Correlation values between factors are less than .8. This result supports the discriminant validity of the measurement model. In Table 2, the results of discriminate validity are shown.

Table 2. Discriminate validity

Variables	Mean	S.D.	No. of items	SVC	CBI	WOM	RI
SVC	3.04	1.24	4	.860 ^a			
CBI	2.44	1.14	6	.698	.781 ^a		
WOM	3.12	1.23	3	.745	.732	.905 ^a	
RI	3.34	1.07	3	.737	.678	.790	.871 ^a

Notes: SVC= social visibility of consumption, CBI= consumer brand identity, WOM= word of mouth communication, RI= Repurchase Intention

^a = Square root of average variance explained

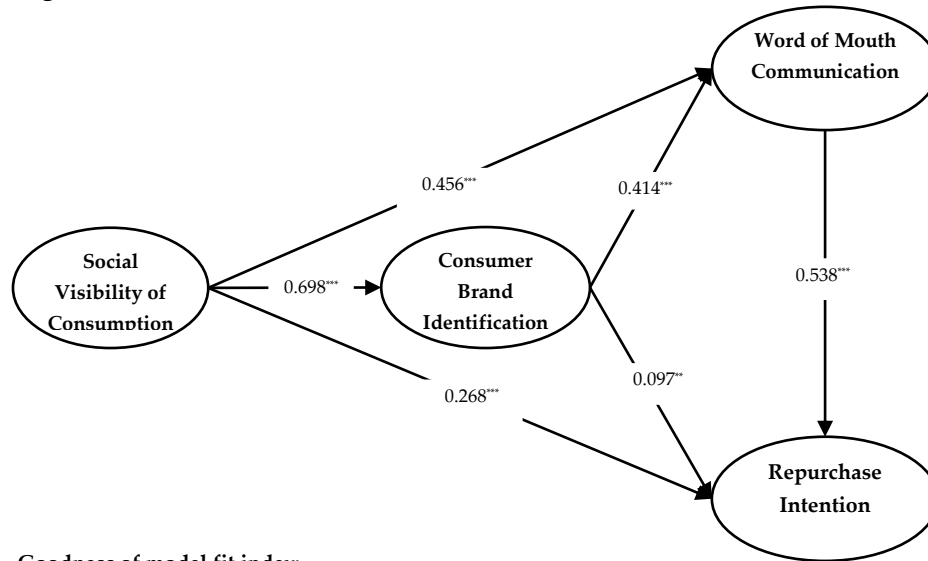
4.3. Structural Model

After testing the reliability and validity of the model, hypotheses between variables were tested using structural equation modelling (SEM) with



maximum likelihood estimation. The results of the path analysis show that the structural model has a good fit ($\chi^2 / df = 3.55$, $p < .001$, AGFI = 0.916, GFI = 0.940, NFI = 0.966, IFI = 0.975, CFI = 0.975, TLI = 0.969, RMR = 0.051, RMSEA = 0.058). Fig. 2 shows the results of structural modelling.

Figure 2. Results of the structural model



Goodness of model fit index:

$\chi^2 = 348.021(98)$, $\chi^2/df = 3.551$, AGFI= 0.916, GFI= 0.940, NFI= 0.966, IFI= 0.975, TLI= 0.969, CFI= 0.975, RMR= 0.051, RMSEA= 0.058

Note: $p < 0.01$ ***, $p < 0.05$ **

The results of the path analysis conducted to test the hypotheses suggested that the social appearance of consumption was related to the word-of-mouth communication ($\beta = .456$, CR = 17.132, $p < .01$) and repurchase intentions ($\beta = .268$, .01) of consumers. Apart from this, consumer-brand identification has a significant effect on consumers' word-of-mouth communication ($\beta = .414$, CR = 9.770, $p < .01$) and repurchase intentions ($\beta = .097$ CR = 2.262, $p < .05$). Here, it should be noted that the consumer-brand identity's effect on consumers' repurchase intention at the significance level of 0.05, and it reflects the lowest effect level among the latent variables involved in path analysis. Finally, consumers' word-of-mouth communications have a positive influence on their repurchasing intentions ($\beta = .538$, CR = 11.299, $p < .01$). From these findings, all proposed research hypotheses have been accepted. The standard path coefficients between the proposed hypotheses and variables are shown in Table 4.



Table 4. Hypotheses and standard path coefficients between variables

Hypotheses	Structural relationships	Standardized coefficients	Results
<i>H1</i>	Social Visibility of Consumption → Customer Brand Identification	.698***	Accepted
<i>H2</i>	Social Visibility of Consumption → Word of Mouth Communication	.456***	Accepted
<i>H3</i>	Customer Brand Identification → Word of Mouth Communication	.414***	Accepted
<i>H4</i>	Social Visibility of Consumption → Repurchase Intention	.268***	Accepted
<i>H5</i>	Customer Brand Identification → Repurchase Intention	.097**	Accepted
<i>H6</i>	Word of Mouth Communication → Repurchase Intention	.538***	Accepted

Notes: p < 0.05**, p < 0.01***

Discussion and Conclusion

This research was built on the idea that the social visibility of consumption in a consumer group with conservative social identity is influential on consumer brand identity, word-of-mouth communication, and repurchase intentions. Studies in the literature on clothing and brand preferences of conservative female consumers is rather limited. However, in recent years, the economic potential offered by the conservative female consumer market has led many brands in the clothing industry to this area. This makes this consumer segment attractive to both practitioners and researchers. For consumers who have a conservative social identity, clothing is an important means of expressing social identity, as the preference of clothing generally reflects beliefs, thoughts, and traditions. Surveys reveal that conservative female consumers tend to show social significance in consumption behaviours like other consumers and to show their social status and identity to others (Yucebas, 2012; Josiassen and Assaf, 2013). However, in terms of the social visibility of consumption, conservative consumers are confronted with a dilemma between consumption for status or demonstration and to avoid waste and demonstration due to being religious. The results of this research show that conservative female consumers consider the social visibility of consumption in clothing products and brands. Moreover, it has been determined that the social visibility of consumption has a high positive influence on conservative female consumers in the study in overlapping a brand with their own identities. This conclusion supports the findings,



which were put forward by Yucebas (2012), that conservative female consumers attach importance to modernity and fashion in their preferences for clothing.

At the point of social visibility of consumption, the use of social media removes time and space boundaries. This is in the social life when consumers are considered special clothing items that can be easily observed by other individuals, consumers prefer products and brands that reflect social identity and status that they think they belong to (Han et al., 2010; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). In contrast, the results of this study show that although the conservative female consumers purchase the goods of the hijab brands with high popularity in Turkey, they show a low level of overlapping the identities of these brands with their own identities. Conservative female consumers can define themselves to a large extent at the point of clothing, which may be the main factor in choosing these brands. In any case, this result gives important clues of the fact that hijab brands should focus on actions to match themselves with the social identities of consumers. Consumers who express their social identity or status via a brand are promoting and advocating that brand on many platforms, including social media, and they function as voluntary marketing agents of the enterprises. The survey results show that the social visibility of consumption and the consumer-brand identity have a positive influence on the word-of-mouth communication of conservative female consumers. This conclusion suggests that the findings support the studies that express consumer-brand identity, revealed by O'Cass (2001) and Algesheimer et al. (2005) and the social visibility of consumption, revealed by King et al. (2014) and So et al (2017,) positively influence the word-of-mouth communications of the consumers.

In addition, the findings confirm the positive impact of social visibility of consumption, consumer brand identity and word-of-mouth communication on consumers' repurchasing intentions in conservative female consumers. These results show considerable similarity to the literature. Hansen and Jensen (2009) stated that the social visibility of the consumption, Thourmrunroje (2014) stated that the word-of-mouth, Ahearne et al. (2005) stated that consumer brand identity, and Hollebeek et al. (2014) and Loureiro et al. (2017) stated that the word-of-mouth communications have positive effects on consumers' repurchasing intentions. Findings in this research show that word-of-mouth communication among conservative female consumers has a stronger influence on repurchase intention than consumption's social visibility and consumer brand identity.

The findings of this study were obtained from female consumers actively following the social media communication channels of the most well-known hijab brands in Turkey on Facebook and Instagram. The approach of conservative female consumers to social visibility of consumption differs significantly from other consumers, at least theoretically. It can be said that



there are two sources of this difference. The first is the sensitivity of the conservative female consumers to their privacy habits, the degree to which they convey their bodies or body lines to other people. The other is that this group of consumers should stay away from demonstrating consumption and avoid showing their consumption to other people in their clothing preferences, as per their beliefs and traditions. However, the results of this research show that female consumers with conservative social identity show similar consumption behaviours with other consumers in terms of building social identity and status, social visibility of consumption and word-of-mouth communication.

In this research, it was focused on the conservative female consumers, who are active social media users as a communication channel in which the social visibility of consumption is very high. In the studies to be carried out, the social visibility of consumption can be examined by focusing on hijab clothing brands or products and brands with high social visibility, especially for consumer groups with different characteristics. In addition, social surveys of consumption can be analysed comparatively between the X, Y and Z generations, taking into account the level of use of social media communication channels, both in conservative and other consumer groups. Finally, it is suggested that hijab brand managers should give importance to social media marketing activities in order to create more consumer brand identity, encourage word-of-mouth communication among consumers, and to take advantage of the social visibility of consumption to motivate consumers' repurchasing intentions.

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