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The Effect of Social Media Advertising on the Intention to Purchase Counterfeit Products: An Investigation in Terms of Mediating and Moderating Variables

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Sosyal Medya Reklamlarının Taklit Ürün Satın Alma Niyetine Etkisi: Aracı ve Düzenleyici Değişkenler Açısından İncelenmesi

ABSTRACT

In our time, social media has become a channel through which businesses can communicate with consumers most effectively. Especially social media advertising has greatly increased the power of brands to influence consumer behavior. Therefore, especially in recent years, social media advertising has attracted a great deal of attention from both businesses and marketing researchers. However, social media has become a medium where not only legitimate and original products but also counterfeit products can easily meet consumers. Therefore, it poses a risk for original brands. This study aims to examine the effect of social media advertisements on the intention to purchase counterfeit products in terms of social media usage intensity (mediator) and demographic variables (moderator). In this regard, data were collected from 229 social media users through a survey. The collected data were analyzed through SPSS and AMOS programs. It was found that social media advertisements have an effect on the intention to purchase counterfeit products, social media usage intensity has a mediating effect on the effect of social media advertisements on the intention to purchase counterfeit products, and demographic variables have a partial moderating effect.

JEL Codes: M30, M31, M37
Keywords: Social Media Advertising, Counterfeit Product, Demographic Characteristics

ÖZ

Çağımızda sosyal medya, işletmelerin tüketicilerle en etkili biçimde iletişim kurabildiği bir kanal haline gelmiştir. Özellikle sosyal medya reklamcılığı, markaların tüketici davranışlarını etkileme gücünü son derece artırmıştır. Dolayısıyla sosyal medya reklamları, özellikle son yıllarda, hem işletmeler tarafından hem de pazarlama araştırmacıları tarafından yoğun ilgi görmeye başlamıştır. Bununla beraber sosyal medya, sadece yasal ve orijinal ürünlerin değil, taklit ürünlerin de tüketicilerle kolay buluşabildiği bir mecra halini almıştır. Bu nedenle orijinal markalar içinde büyük bir risk oluşturmaktadır. Bu çalışmada sosyal medya reklamlarının taklit ürün satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkisini, sosyal medya kullanım yoğunluğu (aracı) ve demografik değişkenler (düzenleyici) açısından incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Bu doğrultuda, 229 sosyal medya kullanıcısından anket aracılığı ile veri toplanmıştır. Toplanan veriler SPSS ve AMOS programları aracılığıyla analiz edilmiştir. Sosyal medya reklamlarının taklit ürün satın alma niyeti üzerinde etkili olduğu, sosyal medya reklamlarının taklit ürün satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkisinde sosyal medya kullanım yoğunluğunun aracılık etkisinin olduğu ve demografik değişkenlerin ise kısmi düzenleyici etkisinin olduğu görülmüştür.

JEL Kodları: M30, M31, M37
Anahtar Kelimeler : Sosyal Medya Reklamları, Taklit Ürün, Demografik Özellikler

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Introduction

In contemporary digital ecosystems, social media platforms are continually evolving to better meet consumers' wants and needs than ever before. At the forefront of this change is the rapid spread of digital advertising. Social media advertisements (SMA) can reach consumers much more effectively than traditional advertisements and shape their purchasing behavior thanks to their ability to turn one-way communication into two-way communication, to correctly identify the target audience according to the interests of users, and to interact directly (Aslam & Karjaluoto, 2017; Dehghani & Tumer, 2015; Göktaş & Gökerik, 2024).

Although counterfeit products are an attractive choice for people who want to experience a more luxurious consumption experience with lower budgets, this orientation causes serious damage to both original brands and the national economy. In fact, counterfeit products are instrumental in reducing brand value, deceiving consumers, and contributing to the informal economy (Grossman & Shapiro, 1986).

Depending on the level of social media use intensity (SMUI), individuals' sensitivity to advertising content may increase. This increase plays an effective role in consumers' purchase intention (Alalwan, 2018). In addition, demographic characteristics of users also affect the content they are exposed to on social media and their intention to purchase counterfeit products (IPCP) (Ndofirepi et al., 2022; Özkoç et al., 2018;Penz & Stöttinger, 2005).

Recently, it is possible to come across studies examining the effect of SMA on consumers' purchase intention or behavior. However, studies examining this effect on counterfeit products are limited in the foreign literature and are not available in the domestic literature. In addition, there are no studies that comprehensively address this effect in terms of SMUI and demographic characteristics.

This research examines the effect of SMA on the IPCP. In addition, it investigates the mediating role of SMUI and the moderating effect of demographic variables on this relationship. It is hoped that this research will contribute both to the literature and to all businesses engaged in marketing activities, especially those producing original brands.

Social Media Advertisements (SMA)

Due to the impact of globalization, contemporary management approaches have been adopted in marketing in recent years, and customer-focused management has been adopted instead of product-focused management (Yapraklı & Deligöz, 2016: 240). In addition, developments in digital technologies have brought about innovative transformations in the field of advertising, as in many other fields. With this transformation, SMA has become a focal point of current marketing strategies. This is because SMA stands out as an effective communication channel that enables companies to reach consumers in a direct, targeted, and personalized manner (Aslam & Karjaluoto, 2017). In other words, since social media channels are able to obtain much personal data, such as users' demographic characteristics, interests, and geographical locations, they can deliver advertising content to the targeted audience faster and more effectively than traditional advertisements (Dehghani & Tumer, 2015). With these advantages, it is possible to say that SMA have surpassed the traditional advertising approach and have become a dynamic marketing tool that has a strong impact on consumers' purchasing behavior. In addition to the fact that many studies reveal this situation, Bandura's (1986) 'social learning theory' also provides a strong theoretical infrastructure to explain the effects of advertisements on consumer attitudes and behaviors on social media platforms. Social learning theory reveals that individuals tend to model the behavior of others through observation. Therefore, SMA to which consumers are exposed, comments on these advertisements, or product usage/recommendations of influencers may lead to the observation of such behaviors and similar purchasing decisions (Hayes & Carr, 2015; Qiu & Zhang, 2024). In these and similar cases, consumers may adopt not only the goods or services but also the lifestyle and values associated with the advertised products. Moreover, positive user experiences shared on social media platforms motivate other consumers to have a similar experience and strengthen their purchase intentions. Therefore, SMA can have a high level of modeling effect on consumer behavior by combining personal learning processes with social factors (Ahn & Lee, 2024; Marwick, 2015).

In recent years, SMA, which have been the subject of research in different aspects, have started to attract great attention in both domestic and foreign literature in terms of their impact on purchase intention. Many of these studies have revealed that SMA affect consumers' purchase intention (Hanaysha, 2022; Sriram et al., 2021; Şişman, 2022).

In a study conducted on consumers who use Facebook, it was concluded that SMA have a significant impact on consumers' purchase intentions through their influence on brand image and brand equity (Dehghani & Tumer, 2015).

In another study, it was reported that brand awareness has an impact on users' attitudes towards SMA, which in turn affects their behavioral responses to SMA and, consequently, their purchase intentions towards luxury products (Chu et al., 2013).

There is also a view in the literature that the SMUI and the level of active participation consumers are in line with the impact of social media advertisements. Studies have shown that consumers who use social media more actively have clearer perceptions of advertisements and stronger purchase intentions thanks to interaction (Alalwan, 2018; Vinerean et al., 2013).

The Relationship Between Social Media Advertisements and Counterfeit Products

Counterfeit goods are imitation versions of high-demand goods that are designed similarly to the originals but are of lower quality and affordable (Davidson et al., 2019, p. 481). These products are highly similar to the originals in terms of appearance, emblem, brand name or many other distinctive elements. Although counterfeit products are similar to the original in terms of appearance, they are of lower quality in terms of quality, material and production process (Grossman & Shapiro, 1986). Consumers prefer counterfeit products for many reasons. These can be listed as motivations such as economic reasons, creating a perception of social status or experiencing luxury consumption at low costs (Eisend & Schuchert-Güler, 2006; Wilcox et al., 2009). The Internet and social media platforms play a major mediating role in bringing counterfeit products to consumers. Namely, social media and the Internet allow consumers to access counterfeit products more easily and to make such purchases more discreetly (Marangoz & Güneş, 2024).

An examination of the relevant literature reveals the existence of studies investigating the impact of SMA on consumers' IPCP. One such study explored the effects of advertisements on social media in promoting counterfeit products and the role of these effects on consumers' purchasing behavior. The findings of the study indicated that advertisements made by social media influencers had a significant effect on the purchase behavior of counterfeit products (Shepherd et al., 2023).

Another study investigated the impact of social media influencers' characteristics on Generation Z consumers' intentions and behaviors related to purchasing counterfeit products. The findings revealed that influencer traits such as being inspiring, knowledgeable, and informative significantly influence Generation Z consumers' IPCP (Goi & Goi, 2025).

An examination of the domestic literature reveals that the relationship between social media advertisements and purchase intention has been extensively studied (Akkaya et al., 2018; Uyar, 2019; Aksoy et al., 2021; Uğurhan & Yaşar, 2021; Çiftçi & Yolcu, 2023). However, no study has been found in the domestic literature that specifically investigates social media advertisements in the context of counterfeit product purchase intention.

In light of the information given above, the first hypothesis of the research is determined as follows:

H1: SMA have an effect on the IPCP.

Social Media Use Intensity (SMUI) and the Role of Demographic Characteristics

SMUI refers to the time individuals spend on social media, the level of interaction they realize and the importance they attach to the information they obtain through social media (Ellison et al., 2007). Researches clearly shows that the SMUI has an impact on consumer behavior. In particular, it is seen that consumers who are exposed to SMA more frequently develop a sensitivity the products subject to these contents. It has also been found that this sensitivity causes a significant increase in purchase intention (Gupta & Vohra, 2019; Saral, 2025; Sayın et al., 2024; Şener & Yücel, 2020). İlban and Güleç (2018) examined the mediating role of SMUI in the relationship between consumers' social media use and their satisfaction and touristic experience. As a result, they found that tourists' motivations for using social media influence their experiences through the intensity of social media use.

Based on the information obtained, it is anticipated that consumers with a high SMUI may be more frequently exposed to SMA and exhibit a higher level of interest toward these advertisements. Therefore, it is thought that these consumers will also have higher purchase intentions towards counterfeit products. In this context, it is considered that examining the effect of SMA on the IPCP through the intensity of social media use would provide a more objective and systematic analysis.

In this regard, the second hypothesis of the study was established as follows:

H2: SMUI mediates the effect of SMA on IPCP.

In the literature, it is possible to come across studies emphasizing that demographic characteristics have a determining role in perceptions towards counterfeit products (Bian & Veloutsou, 2007;Gamble, 2011; Gani et al., 2019;Shepherd et al., 2023). In addition, it has been presented in the literature that demographic characteristics show differences in terms of SMA perceptions (Akkaya, 2019; Taylor et al., 2011).

In this context, the evaluation of the relationship between SMA perception and IPCP together with demographic characteristics will contribute to both a more holistic examination of the study and the development of a multidimensional perspective.

In light of this information, the third hypothesis of the research is as follows:

H3: Demographic characteristics moderate the effect of SMA on IPCP.

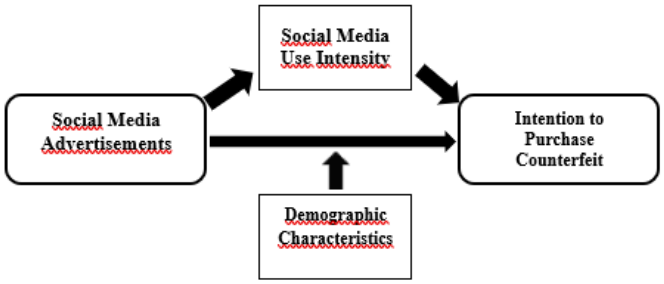
Methodology

Purpose, Scope, and Model of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of SMA on the IPCP in terms of the mediating effect of SMUI and the moderating effect of demographic characteristics. When the related literature is examined, it is seen that the effects of SMA on purchase behavior are frequently examined. In addition, it is possible to come across studies that address the issue in terms of SMUI and demographic characteristics. However, there is no study in the domestic literature on the effects of SMA on the IPCP. In addition, there is no study that addresses the issue as a whole in the context of SMUI and demographic characteristics in both domestic and foreign literature. These factors are expected to distinguish the research from the studies on similar topics and make original contributions.

Figure 1.

Research model



The research model was designed as shown in Figure 1.

Sampling Process

The main mass of the research consists of consumers living in Erzurum province, using social media, and over the age of 18. The convenience sampling method was used in the research. The survey method was preferred as a data collection tool. The survey was conducted face-to-face with people who use social media. People who use social media were asked to answer the questions in the questionnaire. Eliminate the questionnaires of the participants who answered the questions carelessly without reading the questions, an item such as 'Please proceed to the next question without answering this question' was placed among the other questions in the questionnaire form. After the invalid questionnaires were eliminated, a total of 229 valid questionnaires were evaluated. The research structure does not have a complex model. In addition, the research data exhibit a normal distribution. Finally, the sample size is above 200. Therefore, a sample size of 229 is considered sufficient for the study (Kline, 2011).

Data Collection Tool

The questionnaire form applied for the research consists of four sections. In the first section, 7 questions were asked to measure the Social Media Advertising Perceptions of the participants. The scale items in this section were adapted from the study of Raji et al. (2019). In the second section, there is an 8-item SMUI scale adapted from the study of Ellison et al. (2007). In the third section, there are 3 questions to measure the IPCP (Pavlou & Gefen, 2004). In the last part of the questionnaire form, questions regarding the demographic information of the participants were included.

SPSS 26.0 and AMOS 22.0 programs were used to analyze the data obtained.

In order to conduct the study, ethical approval was obtained from the Atatürk University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee on 14.05.2025, with the decision number 162. In addition, all participants completed the questionnaire entirely on a voluntary basis. Detailed information was provided to the participants regarding the purpose and procedures of the study. The questionnaire did not contain any personally identifiable information. Verbal informed consent was obtained from all participants before they began responding to the survey.

Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1.

Demographic Distribution

Information	Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	*18-25*	34	14.8%
	26-33	42	18.3%
	34-41	93	40.6%
	42-49	44	19.2%
	50 and above	16	7.0%
Gender	*Female*	95	41.5%
	Male	134	58.5%
Marital Status	*Married*	156	68.1%
	Single	73	31.9%
Education	*Elementary*	2	0.9%
	High School	22	9.6%
	Associate's degree	60	26.1%
	Bachelor's degree	86	37.6%
	Graduate	59	25.8%
Monthly Personal Income	*Minimum wage and below*	47	20.5%
	26.000-36.000 TL	29	12.6%
	37.000-47.000 TL	26	11.4%
	48.000-58.000 TL	25	10.9%
	59.000-69.000 TL	40	17.5%
	70.000 TL and above	62	27.1%

A total of 229 people participated in the research. 40.6% of the participants were between the ages of 34-41, with this group having the highest rate. Gender distribution was 58.5% male and 41.5% female. 68.1% of the participants were married, and 31.9% were single. In terms of education level, the highest rate belongs to bachelor's degree graduates, with 37.6%. This is followed by associate degree graduates with 26.2% and postgraduate graduates with 25.8%. In terms of monthly income, the highest group is those earning 70,000 TL and above, with 27.1%. 20.5% have an income of minimum wage or below.

Table 2.

Reliability, Validity Statistics, and Correlations

Variables	CR	AVE	CA	SMAP	SMUI	IPCP
SMAP	0.948	0.723	.947	1		
SMUI	0.926	0.618	.921	.757*	1	
IPCP	0.965	0.902	.964	.708*	.715*	1

Note: SMAP: Social Media Advertising Perception; SMUI: Social Media Usage Intensity; IPCP: Intention to Purchase Counterfeit Products; CR: Composite Reliability; AVE: Average Variance Extracted; CA: Cronbach's Alpha

As presented in Table 2, within the scope of construct validity, the CR values calculated using SPSS 26 are above .90 for the variables SMAP (.948), SMUI (.926), and IPCP (.965). Therefore, it can be stated that the relevant constructs are reliable (Hair et al., 2014). The AVE values were calculated as .723, .618, and .902, respectively, and exceed the acceptable thresholds (Cohen et al., 2013). CA values for all variables are above .90, indicating high internal consistency (Hair et al., 2014). When the correlations among the variables are examined, significant and positive relationships are observed between SMAP and SMUI (r = .757), SMAP and IPCP (r = .708), and SMUI and IPCP (r = .715) ($p < .05$).

Table 3.

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Min	Max	SD
SMAP	3.73	3.36	3.98	1.06
SMUI	3.63	3.17	4.12	1.07
IPCP	3.28	3.12	3.37	1.36

Note: SMAP: Social Media Advertising Perception; SMUI: Social Media Usage Intensity; IPCP: Intention to Purchase Counterfeit Products; SD: Standard Deviation

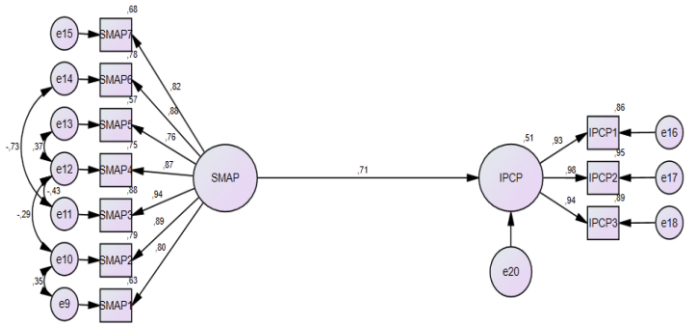
When we look at the means of the participants' responses to the scales, the mean of SMAP is 3.73, the mean of SMUI is 3.63, and the mean of IPCP is 3.28. The standard deviation values are 1.06, 1.07, and 1.36 respectively.

Table 4.
Structural Model and Fit Values

Fit Indices	Good Fit Values (Hair vd., 2006)	Acceptable Fit Values (Hair vd., 2006)	Model Values	After Modification Values
Chi-square			43.825	287.389
CFI	0.90 ≤ CFI ≤ 1.00	0.80 ≤ CFI ≤ 0.90	0.926	0.962
CMIN/df	≤2	≤3	3.362	2.299
GF	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.80	0.814	0.876
NFI	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.80	0.899	0.935
AGFI	0.95≤AGFI≤1.0	0.80≤AGFI≤0.95	760	0.830
SRMR	0.00≤SRMR≤ 0.05	0.05≤SRMR≤0.08	0.046	0.046
RMSEA	0.00≤RMSEA≤ 0.05	0.05≤ RMSEA ≤ 0.08	0.102	0.075

Since the data within the scope of the research meet the assumption of normal distribution and the sample size is over 200 (Kline, 2011), the fit values of the structural equation model tested through AMOS 22 software are presented in Table 4. While some values in the initial model were below the acceptable limits (Hair et al., 2006), the fit of the model improved after the proposed modifications. The CFI value of the model was found to be .926 before the modification. After the suggested modification, the CFI value increased to .962. Similarly, the NFI value increased from .899 to .935, and the GFI value increased from .814 to .876. The CMIN/df ratio decreased from 3.362 to 2.299 and reached an acceptable level. The SRMR value remained at the good fit limit with .046 both before and after the modification. The RMSEA value decreased from .102 to .075 and reached acceptable fit. It shows that these values and the modifications increased the overall fit of the model, and the structural model provided an acceptable level of fit.

Figure 2.
Path Diagram for SMAP and IPCP



In the measurement model analysis, the effect of SMAP on IPCP was tested and found to be statistically significant (β = 0.712). Accordingly, SMAP explains 50.7% of the variance in the IPCP variable. In other words SMAP positively and strongly affect the IPCP. Therefore, hypothesis H1 (SMA have an effect on IPCP) is supported.

Table 5.
Path Analysis for SMAP and IPCP and Moderator Analysis

			β	E	*p*	R^2
			0.712	0.088	<.001	0.507
Moderator	*Sex*	*Female*	0.698	0.172	>0.05	CR: -1.610
		Male	0.736	0.102		
	Age	*18-25 (a)*	0.758	0.103	>0.05	CR: 1.505 (e)
		26-33 (b)	0.591	0.238	<0.05	CR:2.008* (e)
		34-41 (c)	0.736	0.103	<0.05	CR:2.139* (e)
		42-49 (d)	0.774	0.103	>0.05	CR: 1.404 (e)
		50 and above (e)	0.757	0.103	<0.05	CR:2.008* (b) CR:2.139* (c)
	Marital	*Married*	0.688	0.102	>0.05	CR: 1.124
		Single	0.758	0.182		
	Education	*High School*	0.502	0.271	>0.05	CR: 1.945 (e)
		Associate's degree	0.764	0.152	>0.05	CR: -1.195 (d)
		Bachelor's degree	0.579	0.143	<0.05	CR:2.051* (e)
		Graduate	0.820	0.181	<0.05	CR:2.051* (d)
	Monthly Income	*Minimum wage and below*	0.828	0.254	<0.05	CR:-2,369* (d)
		26.000-36.000 TL	0.851	0.190	>0.05	CR: -1.919 (d)
		37.000-47.000 TL	0.697	0.165	>0.05	CR: -1.883 (a)
		48.000-58.000 TL	0.402	0.236	<0.05	CR:-2,369* (a)
		59.000-69.000 TL	0.542	0.149	>0.05	CR: -1.191 (a)

70.000 TL and above	0.785	0.149	<0.05	CR:2.260* (d)

To test whether there are demographic variables that change the direction or strength of the relationship between SMAP and SMUI, a between-group moderating effect analysis (MGA) was conducted. The results showed that gender (CR = -1.610) and marital status (CR = 1.124) did not have a moderating effect.

In age groups, the moderating effect was found to be partially present. The age group of 50 and above differed from the other groups, but there was a significant difference with the age groups of 26-33 (CR = 2.008) and 34-41 (CR = 2.139).

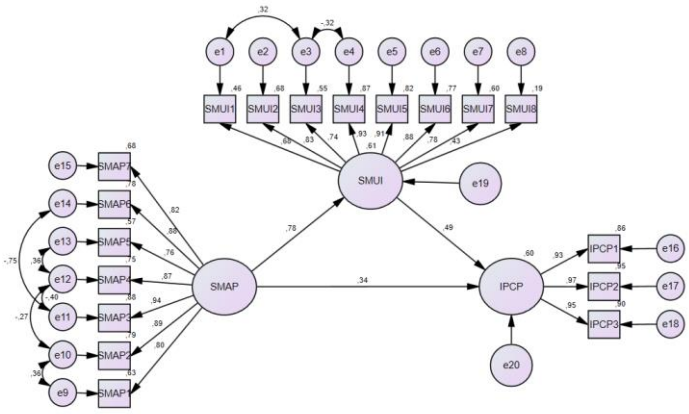
Monthly income level was also found to have a partial regulatory role. Accordingly, this effect was found to be stronger in the minimum wage and below and 70,000 TL and above income groups. Significant differences were found when these two income groups were compared with the group between 48,000-58,000 TL (CR = -2.369 and CR = 2.260).

In the moderating effect analysis conducted in terms of education level, it was found that the effect of SMAP on the SMUI differed significantly between the groups. In particular, individuals with postgraduate education levels have the strongest level of this relationship. In addition, it is seen that the group with a postgraduate level of education differs significantly from the group with an undergraduate level of education (CR = 2.051).

Hypothesis H3 (Demographic characteristics moderate the effect of SMA on IPCP) is partially supported.

Figure 2.

Path Diagram for SMAP, SMUI, and IPCP



In the other structural model analysis, the direct effect of SMAP on IPCP (β = 0.336, $p < .001$) and its effect on SMUI (β = 0.778, $p < .001$) were found to be significant. The effect of SMUI on IPCP was also significant (β = 0.487, $p < .001$).

Table 6.

Path Analysis for SMAP, SMUI, and IPCP and Mediator Analysis

	β	SE	*p*	R^2
SMAP → IPCP[II]	0.336	0.474	<.001*	0.605
SMUI → IPCP	0.487	0.851	<.001*	
SMAP → SMUI	0.778	0.066	<.001*	0.606
SMUI → SMAP → IPCP *(Indirect effect)*	0.379	0.078	<.001*	%95 GA (0.227, 0.538)

With the inclusion of SMUI as a mediating variable, the indirect effect of SMAP on IPCP also became significant (β = 0.379, $p < .001$; 95% CI: 0.227-0.538). The explained variance (R^2) for the endogenous variables is as follows: R^2 = 0.605 for IPCP and R^2 = 0.606 for SMUI. The R^2 value indicates the model's explanatory power; that is, it represents the proportion of variance in the endogenous variable accounted for by the exogenous variables (Başar & Kes-Erkul, 2024). R^2 values of 0.25, 0.50, and 0.75 are typically interpreted as weak, moderate, and substantial, respectively (Hair et al., 2019). These results suggest that the SMUI variable plays a partial mediating role in the relationship tween SMAP and IPCP. Accordingly, SMA affect the IPCP both directly and indirectly through the SMUI. Therefore, Hypothesis H2 (SMUI mediates the effect of SMA on IPCP) is supported.

Table 7.

Hypotheses and Support Status

Hypothesis	Hypothesis Statement	Result
H1	There is an effect of SMA on the IPCP.	Supported
H2	SMUI mediates the effect of SMA on IPCP.	Supported

H3	Demographic characteristics moderate the effect of SMA on IPCP.	Partially Supported

The support status of the hypotheses tested as a result of the findings is shared in the table above.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study investigated the effect of SMAP on the IPCP in terms of SMUI (mediator) and demographic variables (moderator).

Validity and reliability tests of the construct used in the study were conducted. The result that AVE and Cronbach's Alpha values are above acceptable limits. In addition, positive and significant correlations were found between the variables. Therefore, it is possible to say that the model offers a structurally consistent and theoretically supportive integrity.

In the analyses related to the structural equation model, significant improvements were achieved in the fit values after the modifications made. In particular, the fact that the basic fit values such as CFI, NFI, GFI and RMSEA are within good/acceptable limits shows that the model provides a good fit in general and that the research model is appropriate to the theoretical structure and supported by empirical data.

According to the direct effect model created within the scope of structural equation modelling it was seen that SMAP has a significant and positive effect on the IPCP. Turgut et al. (2016) examined the effect of online advertisements on purchase intention and word-of-mouth communication. As a result, they found that SMA are effective on purchase intention. Alalwan (2018) found that SMA have significant effects on purchase intention. In the study, Raji (2019), from whom the SMAP scale was adopted, found a significant relationship between SMA content and social media sales promotion content and behavioral intention through the mediating role of brand image. Özçifçi (2020) also examined the effect of social media on consumers' purchase intention with its sub-dimensions. In his research, he found that the risk, trust, and trust perceived by consumers in SMA are effective on purchase intention. KV et al. (2021) investigated how SMA are perceived by consumers and their implications for purchase intention. Their findings revealed that creative features, attention-grabbing elements, emotional appeal, and celebrity endorsement significantly influence consumers' perceptions of SMA. In particular, emotional appeal and celebrity endorsement were found to have a substantial impact on consumers' purchase intentions. Hanaysha (2022) examined the impact of social media marketing features on consumer purchase decisions in the fast-food sector from the perspective of the mediating role of brand trust. The findings revealed that the interactivity and informativeness dimensions of social media significantly influence consumer purchase decisions through the mediation of brand trust. Çiftçi and Yolcu (2023) examined the factors influencing consumers' attitudes toward SMA and their purchase intentions. They identified a significant relationship between consumers' attitudes toward SMA and their responses. In this study, the results obtained for SMA, which are examined in terms of IPCP, are supported by the results found in the literature.

Within the scope of the study's model, the moderating effect of demographic variables on the relationship between SMAP and the IPCP was tested. As a result of the test, it was observed that gender and marital status did not have a moderating effect. However, significant differences were found in terms of age groups, education level and income. Significant differences were found between those aged 26-33 and 34-41 and those aged 50 and over. This result shows that people in the older age group are more affected by SMA and this is reflected in the IPCP. Significant differences were also found in terms of the educational level of the participants. Significant differences were observed between those with undergraduate and graduate education levels. This result can be interpreted as the effect of SMA on consumers increases as the level of education increases. Income level was found to have a partial regulatory role. It was determined that those with an income of minimum wage or below and those with an income of 70,000 TL and above differed significantly from the group with an income range of 48,000 - 58,000 TL. This shows that those in the lowest and highest income groups among the participants are more influenced by SMA. This suggests that consumers with low income levels find the products presented in SMA and even lifestyle promises beyond the products more attractive. It can be interpreted that consumers with high income levels are more interested in SMA for ostentatious or status consumption. When analysed by education level, it is seen that the relationship is stronger for those with postgraduate education, especially compared to undergraduate graduates. This result indicates that as the education level of consumers increases, their interest in SMA and the effect of this interest on the IPCP also increases. As a result

of the research conducted by Sharma and Parmar (2018), they determined that gender, age, occupation and income level are effective on the online purchase intention of SMA. Eyel and Şen (2020), in their study, examined consumers' attitudes toward phenomena. They also investigated the effect of these attitudes on consumers' purchase intentions. As a result of their research, they found that consumers' purchase intentions vary according to demographic characteristics. The results obtained in this study largely coincide with the results in the literature. Since this study is specific to the IPCP, it is a natural result that it does not overlap one-to-one in terms of demographic variables.

In another structural model analysis conducted in the study, the direct effect of consumers' perception of SMA on their IPCP, as well as its effect on SMUI, was found to be significant. With the inclusion of SMUI as a mediating variable, the indirect effect of SMAP on the IPCP was also found significant. In other words, it has been observed that, in addition to the advertisements consumers are exposed to on social media, the SMUI—which includes their level of active use, their adoption of social media, and their acceptance of it as a routine part of their lives—has an effect on the IPCP. Yanar and Yılmaz (2017), in their research, examined consumer behaviours before and after the purchase of social media. Çetin et al. (2020) investigated the role of SMUI and the use of celebrities on social media in shaping luxury consumption tendencies. Based on a study conducted with university students, they found that e-WOM plays a mediating role in the effect of celebrity use and social media usage intensity on luxury consumption tendencies. Sartika and Sugiharsono (2020) revealed in their study that SMUI influences the consumption behavior of students at the Faculty of Economics, Yogyakarta State University. Aksoy et al. (2021) examined the impact of Generation Y consumers' perceptions and attitudes toward SMA on purchase intention within the scope of the mediating role of celebrity endorsement. The findings indicated that consumers' perceptions and attitudes toward SMA significantly influence purchase intention, and that celebrity endorsement plays a mediating role in this relationship. Pellegrino et al. (2022) demonstrated in their research that SMUI is a strong predictor of compulsive, conspicuous, and impulsive buying behaviors. El-Haloui and Develi (2023) examined consumers' purchasing actions on social media in terms of demographic differences and social media usage duration. Their findings revealed that as the duration of social media use increases, purchasing behavior also rises. Fırat (2023) investigated how the intensity of Instagram use as a social media platform influences conspicuous consumption. The analyses revealed that the intensity of Instagram use as a social media platform has a significant effect on conspicuous consumption. As a result, they found that there is a significant relationship between consumers' pre-purchase and post-purchase behaviours on social media and the intensity of social media use and the strength of social media ties.

In light of these findings, it is recommended that marketing managers manage their activities by taking into account the impact of SMA on consumers. This is an important issue for both businesses that carry out advertising activities and original brands that fight against counterfeit products. In particular, it is important that the SMA content of original brands is differentiated from the advertising content of counterfeit products and presented to social media. In addition, these advertisements should emphasize the advantages of original products over imitations and include ethical consumption messages. Creating a unique brand identity and value proposition in advertising messages will also be beneficial for original brands. It is also recommended that brands simplify their complaint processes in order to combat counterfeit products. Social media platforms should develop more effective control mechanisms against counterfeit product promotions. As a result of such practices, it is predicted that counterfeit products that are publicly advertised on social media can be partially prevented.

As with many academic studies, this research is not without limitations. The first limitation concerns the sample size. Although the sample size employed in this study meets the minimum threshold recommended in the literature and is deemed adequate in terms of statistical power, employing a larger sample would likely enhance external validity and provide a stronger basis for subgroup comparisons. In addition, the limited number of studies in the literature that examine purchase intention toward counterfeit products within the context of social media advertising has influenced the scope of this research. Accordingly, to establish a foundation for future investigations, the research model was framed in a general rather than a product-specific manner. It is therefore recommended that future researchers conduct studies with larger sample sizes and focus on specific product categories.

Etik Komite Onayı: Bu çalışma için etik komite onayı Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Etik Kurul Başkanlığı'ndan (Tarih: 14.05.2025, Sayı: 162) alınmıştır.
Katılımcı Onamı: Çalışmaya 18 yaş üstü kişiler katılmıştır. Anket uygulaması yapılmadan önce gereken bilgilendirmeler yapılmış ve gönüllülük esasına göre katılım sağlanmıştır. Ayrıca veriler anonim olarak toplanmış ve katılımcıların kimliklerinin tespit edilmesi mümkün değildir. Bu konudaki tüm sorumluluk tarafıma aittir.
Hakem Değerlendirmesi: Dış bağımsız.
Çıkar Çatışması: Yazar, çıkar çatışması olmadığını beyan etmiştir.
Finansal Destek: Yazar, bu çalışma için finansal destek almadığını beyan etmiştir.
Yapay Zeka Kullanımı: Dil düzeltme işlemlerinde kullanılmıştır.

Ethics Committee Approval: Ethics committee approval was received for this study from the Atatürk University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee (Date: 14 May 2025, Number: 162).
Informed Consent: Participants over the age of 18 took part in the study. Prior to the survey, necessary information was provided, and participation was based on voluntary consent. In addition, the data were collected anonymously, and it is not possible to identify the participants. All responsibility regarding this matter belongs to me.
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Genişletilmiş Özet

Amaç: Dijital dönüşüm pek çok alanda olduğu gibi reklamcılık alanında da kendini göstermektedir. Özellikle sosyal medya reklamcılığının geleneksel reklamlara nazaran hedef odaklı ve kişiselleştirilmiş biçimde, daha kısa zamanda daha fazla kitlelere ulaşabilmesi kabiliyetiyle son dönemlerde yoğun ilgi görmektedir. Bu özellikleri sayesinde sosyal medya reklamları, markaların tüketici davranışlarını etkileme gücünü artırmaktadır. Sosyal medya reklamlarının bu avantajlarının yanı sıra bazı dezavantajları da bulunmaktadır. Bu dezavantajlardan biriside taklit ürünlerin tüketicilerle kolay bir şekilde buluşturulabilmesidir. Bu durum orijinal markalar için bir risk unsuru teşkil etmektedir. Yapılan bu çalışmada sosyal medya reklamlarının taklit ürün satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkisini, sosyal medya kullanım yoğunluğu (aracı) ve demografik değişkenler (düzenleyici) açısından incelemeyi amaçlamıştır.

Yöntem: Çalışmada nicel yöntem kullanılmıştır. Veri toplama aracı olarak ise anket uygulanmıştır. Araştırmanın ana kütlesini Erzurum ilinde yaşayan, sosyal medya kullanan ve 18 yaşından büyük tüketiciler oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmada kolayda örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Veri toplama süreci sonunda 229 geçerli anket elde edilmiştir. Elde edilen veriler SPSS 26.0 ve AMOS 22.0 programları ile analiz edilmiştir.

Bulgular: Yapılan analizler neticesinde araştırmanın H1 hipotezi (Sosyal medya reklamlarının taklit ürün satın alma niyeti üzerinde etkisi vardır) desteklenmiştir. Araştırmanın H2 hipotezi (Sosyal medya kullanım yoğunluğu, sosyal medya reklamlarının taklit ürün satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkisine aracılık eder) de desteklenmiştir. H3 hipotezi (Demografik özelliklerin, sosyal medya reklamlarının taklit ürün satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkisinde düzenleyici rolü vardır) ise cinsiyet ve medeni durum açısından anlamlı bir farklılık çıkmadığı için kısmen desteklenmiştir.

Sonuç: Sonuç olarak sosyal medya reklamlarının tüketicilerin taklit ürün satın alma niyeti üzerinde etkili olduğu bulunmuştur. Ayrıca, tüketicilerin sosyal medya kullanım yoğunluğunun bu etki üzerinde aracılık rolü olduğu da görülmüştür. Bazı demografik özelliklerin ise bahsedilen bu etki üzerinde düzenleyici rolünün olduğu görülmüştür. Özellikle yaş, eğitim durumu ve gelir seviyesi açısından anlamlı farklılıklar olduğu tepit edilmiştir.