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경영학 석사 학위논문

The Effect of Social Network
Types On Conspicuous Consumption

-Focused on Mediating Effect of desire for
self-promotion and Moderating Effect of
Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence

소셜미디어 상 인맥이 과시적 소비에
미치는 영향

- 자기홍보욕구의 매개효과와
대인영향력에 대한 민감도의 조절효과를 중심으로

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Abstract

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Social networking sites (SNS) are of great interest to academics and practitioners in marketing as they have become essential in consumers' daily lives. Despite its growing global popularity and increasingly frequent usage, how the composition of one's network on SNS can affect one's behavior offline remains elusive. The present study argues that using SNS with a strangers-dominated network increases desire for self-promotion, which in turn, promotes a conspicuous consumption tendency more than using SNS with a friends-dominated network. However, such effects are moderated by consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence. In study 1, 96 participants were randomly assigned to either the friends or strangers condition and went through several tasks that were similar to real SNS activities in a simulated setting. Results showed that the relationship between social network types and conspicuous consumption is fully mediated by desire for self-promotion. In study 2, 125 participants were recruited for mediated moderation analyses, having consumer susceptibility

to interpersonal influence as a moderator. As a result, the effect of social network types on desire for self-promotion was only present with individuals with a relatively low susceptibility to interpersonal influence. On the other hand, this effect did not exist for individuals who were highly susceptible to interpersonal influence.

Keywords: Social networking sites, social network types, impression management, self-promotion, consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence, conspicuous consumption

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I . Introduction

We are now living in a world where a new generation cannot conceive of living without mobile phones and social networking services. Facebook, the most powerful and influential of SNS, reported that it has reached more than 2 billion monthly active users by June 2017. The growing influence of social media can be often proved not only by the number of active users but also by the level of engagement. Social networking now captures a third of our daily internet activities and an average person spends two hours and 15 minutes a day on SNS and messaging (GlobalWebIndex, 2017). As of this writing, the number of social networking sites counts up to a few hundred worldwide, supporting diverse kinds of relationships among users. Along with this rapid growth in the industry, great attention has been given by academic researchers and marketers in organizations to understand various types of consumer behaviors in a SNS setting.

However, despite enormous amount of prior studies regarding SNS, the main focus has been the predictors and consequences of *SNS use frequency or quantity*, how often or much one uses SNS regularly (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Park, Song, & Lee, 2014; Lee et al., 2016; Thoumrungroje, 2014), and *less on other features of SNS*. Since

SNS is now the main tool of modern communication, '*who*' is on the other side of the communication can also be an important factor in predicting users' response or behavior followed. On SNS, users mostly communicate with people who are already added as 'friends' on their network list and they are well aware of the fact that their behaviors on SNS are consistently being observed by these networks. Unlike the early stage of SNS when most SNS were used to solidify pre-existing social relations (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007), SNS these days support users to meet new people based on shared interests, political views, or activities (Ellison, 2007). According to the previous findings (Brandtzaeg & Heim, 2009; Kim, Sohn, & Choi, 2011), seeking new friends ranked as first as a motive for using SNS, ahead of maintaining friendships, general socializing, and others. Hampton et al. (2011) also suggested that SNS users nowadays have increasingly diverse social networks comprised of close friends, family members, acquaintances and even complete strangers. In this respect, Rui and Stefanone (2013) found a positive association between diversity of friends on Facebook and protective self-presentation behaviors such as active rejection of unwanted other-provided information.

It has been noted that people engage in different self-presentation strategies for different types of audiences (Goffman, 1959; Schlenker, 1980; Tice et al., 1995). In addition, experiences on SNS are found to influence users' behavior,

actions, and habits in their daily lives as SNS are often used on a regular basis rather than just for one-time visit (Wilson, Gosling, & Graham, 2012). In line with these findings, this paper posits that whether one's network on SNS is mostly composed of friends or strangers will affect how he/she wants to present themselves to others, furthermore, the choices one makes offline. More specifically, this paper argues that because people are more prompted to impress others by self-enhancing when lacking emotional connection with them (Jones & Pittman, 1982), using SNS with a strangers-dominated network will induce the desire for self-promotion in users more than using SNS with a friends-dominated network will. This momentary increase in desire for self-promotion, in turn, will increase users' preferences for conspicuous consumption.

In addition, the moderating role of susceptibility to interpersonal influence should be considered. Since individuals dispositionally differ in their reactions to social influence, how the composition of their networks on SNS influences temporary state and preferences followed might be affected by whether they care more or less about others' opinions in the first place. Therefore, this paper investigates consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence as a boundary condition.

II. Literature Review

1. Social network types

Social networking sites(SNS) are electronic platforms that enable users to develop social relations across geographical boundaries through various modes of communication (Ellison, 2007). Besides the predictors, correlations, and consequences of the absolute amount a person spends on SNS, academics and practitioners have also looked at various features of SNS such as SNS platform types (Davenport et al., 2014; Kim, Seely, & Jung, 2017; Marwick & Boyd, 2011) and SNS activity types (Makri & Schlegelmilch, 2017; Sagioglou & Greitemeyer, 2014; Verduyn et al, 2015). Along with these, social network types have been investigated as an interesting topic since the notion of “online friends” has been crucial for understanding interpersonal dynamics in the field of computer-mediated communication (Lee-Won et al., 2014; Park & Floyd, 1996).

Social network types can be categorized in many different ways but the most common division relies on ‘strength of tie’ (Brown & Reingen, 1987; Granovetter 1973; Steffes & Burgee, 2009). The concept of tie strength indicates the extent to which a person is more or less involved in a given social relation and values that relation (Wilcox & Stephen, 2012). Strong ties often

refer to people whom we share close personal connection with while weak ties are those whom we have more distant relationships with (Ryu & Feick, 2007). In this paper, social network types will be classified into two categories, the one dominated by actual offline friends who are often strong ties and the other dominated by strangers who can be regarded as weak ties or no ties.

Unlike the past when the majority of social interactions used to occur between people who already knew each other (Tice et al., 1995), technological advances have made it easier for people to communicate with complete strangers online sharing their daily lives, interests and social networks. Through SNS, people with similar interests can now connect and establish relationships (Fong & Burton, 2006; López-López, Ruiz-de-Maya, & Warlop, 2014) and as such networks expand, relationships even with people whom we have no offline connections or no close affiliation have been common (Kim, An, & Kim, 2006). One important characteristic of the increase in diversity of social network types is that users aim to present themselves differently depending on the composition of their social networks.

2. Impression management strategies

- self-promotion

It is widely known that there is a strong and pervasive desire for humans to make a positive impression on others (Jones & Wortman, 1973; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Sedikides, 1993). Impression management involves the behaviors people exhibit to create and maintain desired impressions (Schlenker, 1980). The importance of impression management skills has been recognized by many scholars and practitioners as the images people portray affect their interactions with others in every context (Pfeffer, 1981). Moreover, the study of impression management in SNS settings has drawn much attention until recently as SNS provide perfect platforms to manipulate impression on others, much more easily than in the real world. The most common way of managing impressions is often through self-presentation, which can be defined as "the manipulation of information about the self by the actor" (Schneider, 1981). With the technological affords that enable SNS users to take time and selectively produce and revise messages (Walther, 2007), they can now carefully display positive information of the self to build desirable public self-images (Human et al., 2012; Schlenker, 1975; Lee-Won et al., 2014). Due to these systematic features of SNS, people tend to portray themselves in overly flattering ways on these

platforms (Barash et al., 2010; Kross et al., 2013; Mehdizadeh, 2010; Newman et al., 2011) and deliver positive life events more frequently than negative ones (Kross et al., 2013). In other words, the advantage of SNS, easier manipulation of self-image, makes users not just want to present themselves in a positive way but more in a self-promoting way.

The self-promotion tactic can be defined as describing one's achievements and highlighting one's talents and abilities in a boastful way with the aim of being seen as competent (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Stevens & Kristof, 1995; Turnley & Bolino, 2001). Since SNS provide users the opportunity to easily manipulate and share their best selves when posting, this is likely to induce the desire for self-promotion from users.

Even though people have basic desire to present themselves positively to others, *how* people form such impression may differ depending on the audience they are dealing with (Tice et al.1995). According to theories of self-presentation and impression management, to control the impressions others construct, people customize their behavior based on who is in the actual audience (Goffman, 1959; Schlenker, 1980). As the audience and context change, so does one's behavior (Litt, 2012). Extending this idea, the composition of SNS networks with respect to what portion of them are actual offline friends or strangers may be an important predictor of the desire for impression management.

Previous findings showed that actual friends, who can be often categorized as strong ties, have greater influence over their network than strangers do (Brown & Reingen, 1987). Interestingly, in spite of being more concerned about the opinion of strong ties (Brown and Reingen, 1987; Sudman et al., 1994), some researchers found that people tend to be less self-enhancing toward friends during interactions (Tice et al. 1995). This is because even though there are some upsides in presenting positive aspects about the self, repeating such facts too often to friends who already know all about one's good qualities can be perceived as conceited, which is known as a negative attribute (Schlenker & Leary 1982). In this context, individuals tend to act less boastful and self-enhancing with friends, than they do with strangers (Tice et al. 1995).

Another angle to probe the different influence of social network types on impression management concerns the role of intimacy of user-audience relationships. The earlier studies suggest that people find it easier sharing their inner thoughts and authentic selves with those in close and intimate relationships (Jones & Pittman, 1982). On the other hand, in the context of distant relationships, people are often inclined to engage in self-enhancement and highlight only positive aspects.

In addition, when one engages in impression management in a self-promoting way, strangers are easier to manipulate than friends as they lack knowledge about one's true

characteristics and qualities. Research on strategic self-presentation has found that people tend to presume that actors' claims are believable unless there are explicit reasons to be suspicious (DePaulo, Stone & Lassiter, 1985; Goffman, 1959; Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Actors take advantage of this fact during self-presentation and take the opportunity to be self-enhancing when possibly conflicting information is unreasonable or unavailable (Baumeister & Jones, 1978; Doherty & Schlenker, 1991; Schlenker, 1975). Tice et al. (1995) also found that strangers' lack of informational power that can tell the truth of one's self-display can induce one to be more boastful when facing strangers than when facing friends.

On the other hand, when interacting with friends, since they know all about your past success and achievements, you feel less need to point out your good qualities to begin with. Moreover, friends' power of prior knowledge makes it harder to manipulate them as they would not believe one's excessively favorable claims about the self. This constraint of plausibility makes users to be less desiring for self-promotion. To summarize, people tend to portray themselves in a manner which is not consistent with their own self perceptions if that inconsistent presentation is likely to be believed by an audience (Schlenker, 1975). Therefore, having more strangers than actual friends on SNS as network is likely to lead users to feel more desire for self-promotion than when having the network

friends–dominated.

3. Conspicuous consumption preferences

Desire for self–promotion can make people want to highlight not only their inner self but also the possessions that surround them or experiences that define them (Belk, 2013). Since products and brands are used as cues for others to form impressions about their users (Belk, 1978; Holman, 1981; Solomon, 1983), people actively aim to display and discuss the positional goods that can convey their desirable selves. Prior research has demonstrated that the motivation for possessing luxury goods was traditionally related to the desire of “buying to impress others” as the purchase and possession of luxury brands can convey meaning of prominent achievements (Tsai 2005). In addition, empirical evidence supports that luxury fashion products, which are often very expensive, high quality and exclusive, perfectly serve as a medium for self–expression and self–image improvement (Giovannini, Xu, & Thomas, 2015).

Besides actual goods such as luxury handbags or fancy cars, exotic experiences such as glamorous vacation or gourmet meals are all part of conspicuous consumption. In definition, conspicuous consumption is a showy behavior intended to impress others by calling attention to the self (Griskevicius, Tybur, & Van den Bergh, 2010; Lee & Shrum, 2012; Veblen

1899/1994) and to display abilities, power or wealth through luxurious or impressive spending that satisfies a person's desire for prestige (Podoshen & Andrzejewski, 2012). As consumption is closely related to the formation and communication of identity (Bauman, 1996, 2007, 2013; Beck, 1992), SNS users with strangers-dominated social network who have higher desire for self-promotion are more likely to seek for conspicuous consumption that can display their accomplishments, talents or abilities and convince others their lives are better than they actually are in order to fulfill their desires.

4. Consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence

Consumers respond to influences of others differently according to their innate characteristics, which others cannot control. Even in the same interpersonal relationships, some people are consistently agreeable to influence of others whereas others are consistently resistant (Janis, 1954). This is the same in the SNS setting. Some users care more about what others comment, think about and react to their posts, whereas some users concern less. Consequently, even for the same type of network or audience, it is hard to predict users' following reactions in the SNS setting. Therefore, it is necessary to consider consumers' internal trait such as susceptibility to

interpersonal influence as a boundary condition.

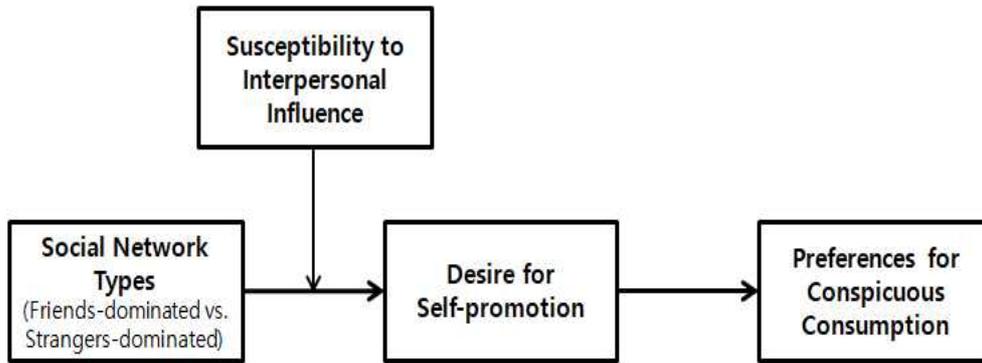
Consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence is often used as a general trait that varies across individuals, meaning that individuals differ in their responses to social influence (Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teel, 1989). The construct can be defined as "the need to identify or enhance one's image with significant others through the acquisition and use of products and brands, the willingness to conform to the expectations of others regarding purchase decisions, and/or the tendency to learn about products and services by observing others or seeking information from others (p. 473)." This construct has two dimensions; normative influences and informational influences. Normative influences can be defined as the tendency to conform to the expectations of others and can influence attitudes, norms, values, and even purchase behavior (Burnkrant & Cousineau, 1975) and informational influences are the tendency to accept information from others, which can aid to guide consumers in product and brand search and selections (Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teel, 1989; Deutsch & Gerard 1955). For the purpose of this research, only normative influences will be investigated and interpersonal influences will refer to normative influences in the rest of the paper.

Consumer behavior can be easily affected by the real or imagined opinions or presence of others (Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teal, 1989; Lascau, Bearden, & Rose, 1995; Lavack & Kropp,

2004; Terry & Hogg, 1996). Previous findings showed that consumers with higher susceptibility to interpersonal influence are more concerned about others' opinions and expectations (Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teel, 1989). Sen, Gurhan-Canh, and Morwitz (2001) found that they are more easily enticed to join their friends who support a boycott.

Individuals who are highly susceptible to interpersonal influence are sensitive to all network types. In other words, those who are sensitive to strangers' expectations and feedbacks will also be sensitive to friends' responses. Therefore, this suggests that the effect of social network types on desire for self-promotion will not be present among people who are highly susceptible to interpersonal influence. By this logic, it is feasible to hypothesize that the effect of social network types on desire for self-promotion will only be present when consumers have a relatively lower level of susceptibility to interpersonal influence.

III. Research Model and Hypotheses



[Figure 1: Research Model]

H1: Using SNS where network is dominated by strangers will increase preference for conspicuous consumption more than using SNS where network is dominated by friends. This will be mediated by desire for self-promotion.

H2: The effect of social network types on desire for self-promotion will be moderated by susceptibility to interpersonal influence.

H2-1: The effect of social network types on desire for self-promotion will be absent when individuals are highly susceptible to interpersonal influence.

H2-2: The effect of social network types on desire for self-promotion will be present when individuals are merely susceptible to interpersonal influence.

IV. Study 1

Study 1 attempted to examine whether different social network types lead to difference in conspicuous consumption preferences. To gain insight into the mechanism underlying this effect, desire for self-promotion was measured and mediation analysis using Hayes process (2013) was conducted.

1. Pretest

Before the main study, 32 individuals, who are similar in age with the participants in the main study, were recruited to ensure the stimuli that were to be included as a dependent measure in the main study. As this study predicts that using SNS where the network is dominated by strangers should lead people to prefer the more conspicuous product, it was important that the supposed product to represent conspicuous preferences was actually perceived as being more conspicuous. The participants were given two Tommy Hilfiger sweatshirt designs taken from online shopping mall (retail value = about \$100), where one of the two designs had the bigger logo in a more visible way than the other (see the Appendix). The one with the bigger logo was meant to represent more conspicuousness. This measure is widely used in literature and proved to be successful

in measuring conspicuous consumption preferences (Lee & Shrum, 2012). Then participants were asked to rate the extent of conspicuousness of the product on a 5-point scale (1 = not at all, 5 = very much) for two items. As expected, the one with the bigger logo was perceived to be more conspicuous than the smaller logo product ($M_{\text{big logo}} = 3.63$, $SD_{\text{big logo}} = 0.94$ vs. $M_{\text{small logo}} = 2.91$, $SD_{\text{small logo}} = 0.93$, $\rho = 0.001$) Therefore, the stimuli was confirmed to be used for the dependent variable in study 1.

2. Method

2.1 Samples and data collection

108 respondents were recruited on the basis of convenience (snowball) sampling with the only pre-condition of having experience with any kind of SNS up to the time of the study. Data were collected for two days via an online survey using Qualtrics, which is the most widely used online survey system.

2.2 Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to either friends-dominated or strangers-dominated conditions. After answering items assessing demographic data and daily SNS usage, they were given a scenario that asked them to imagine

using SNS. In the scenario, they were instructed to imagine they were browsing SNS where social network was dominated by friends (or strangers). Following this scenario, a simulated SNS display was shown with pictures, videos, and comments posted just like a real SNS display. In the simulated version of SNS display, participants were asked to select types of pictures and videos they would post, which would be observed by their network on SNS. They were also asked to read and comment on posts presented on the display, thinking that they are friends' (or strangers') posts. After conducting several tasks that they might do in the real SNS setting, they answered items measuring desire for self-promotion and preference for conspicuous consumption.

2.3 Measures

2.3.1 Desire for self-promotion

A measure for desire for self-promotion was adopted from Bolino and Turnley's (1999) impression-management scale. In the present study, three items that seemed to be relevant to SNS settings were selected and measured on a six-point Likert scale (1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 6 "Strongly Agree"). Even though this measure was originally scaled on a five-point, a six-point scale seemed to be more appropriate for this research in order to avoid responses from converging around the neutral point. The items are as follows:

“I want to show positive events that occur to me,” “I want to display my accomplishments/value/abilities” and “I want to show people my talents” ($\alpha = 0.81$). Higher scores indicate higher desire for self-promotion.

2.3.2 Conspicuous consumption

The preference for conspicuous consumption was measured with one choice set of products that were pretested. Participants were asked to choose between two Tommy Hilfiger sweatshirts, where one had the bigger logo in the more visible way than the other (see the Appendix). The one with the bigger logo represented more conspicuousness than the other (Lee & Shrum, 2012). Since two products were carefully designed to worth similarly in absolute manner, participants were asked to focus on their designs and packaging.

3. Results

3.1 Manipulation check

In order to ensure that participants in the friends (strangers) condition actually felt like they were engaging in SNS that had friends-dominated (strangers-dominated) network, comment tasks they completed during manipulation were carefully examined. There were two tasks that asked participants to leave comments under two different pictures as if friends

(strangers) from social network posted those pictures. By reviewing the comments participants wrote, participants who did not read the scenario carefully or follow the instructions could be segregated. For example, the participants in the strangers (friends) condition who commented as if they were viewing posts of friends (strangers) and did not use honorific are considered as failure of manipulation and 12 cases were excluded from further analyses.

3.2 Demographic profiles

Table 1 presents basic demographic profile of the 96 respondents. It was reported that male accounted for 34.4% while female comprised 65.6%. Their ages ranged from 20 to 36 ($M_{age} = 23.72$, $SD_{age} = 3.32$) and they were mostly in their twenties, accounting for 96.9%. 87.5% were students or unemployed and only 12.5% were working at the time of the study. In order to investigate the degree of current involvement with SNS, the respondents were asked to report one SNS they are usually engaged in the most and the usage frequency of that SNS. As a result, 47.9% reported that they use Facebook the most, 32.3% said Instagram, and 11.5% did not have a SNS account at the time of the study. In addition, 68.8% answered they visit SNS multiple times a day and 11.5% said they visit SNS once a day whereas 15.6% said they almost never go on SNS. This explains that 80.2% of the participants use SNS at least once a day.

[Table 1: Demographic profiles of the sample]

	Attributes	Frequency	(%)
Gender	Male	33	34.4
	Female	63	65.6
Age	20~29	93	96.9
	30~39	3	3.1
Occupation	Students/ Unemployed	84	87.5
	Housewife/ Homemaker	1	1.0
	Officer/ Employee	7	7.3
	Self-employed	1	1.0
	Specialized/ Professions	3	3.1
SNS account	Facebook	46	47.9
	Instagram	31	32.3
	Kakao story	2	2.1
	Twitter	2	2.1
	Other	4	4.2
	No account	11	11.5
Frequency of SNS use	multiple times a day	66	68.8
	once a day	11	11.5
	once every few days	4	4.2
	once a week	0	0
	once a month	0	0
	almost never	15	15.6
Total		96	100

3.3 Hypotheses testing

In order to test H1, binary logistic regression was conducted on the dependent measure using SPSS 20.0. First, the cases were coded as one, if the participants were in friends-dominated social network condition, and zero, if the participants were in strangers-dominated social network condition. For the dependent variable, data were coded as zero or one as well where choosing the more conspicuous product was coded as one. Regressing the choice of products on social network types did not yield a significant effect ($n_{\text{friends}} = 51$, $n_{\text{strangers}} = 45$, $B = -0.50$, Wald $\chi^2 = 2.63$, $\rho = 0.105$). In order to see if there is any indirect effect, it was necessary to conduct the mediation analysis using model 4 of Hayes process (2013). Hayes process is a commonly used statistical software for mediation and moderation analyses and it is also capable of dealing with dichotomous dependent variables, using binary logistic regression. First, desire for self-promotion was inserted as a possible mediator. Results showed that social network types influenced desire for self-promotion significantly ($B = -0.37$, $t = -2.07$, $\rho = 0.040$) and desire for self-promotion influenced conspicuous consumption preferences significantly ($B = 0.56$, $z = 2.19$, $\rho = 0.028$). More specifically, when social network is dominated by strangers, users feel higher desire for self-promotion, thus higher preferences for conspicuous consumption than when social network is dominated by friends.

Only indirect effect of social network on conspicuous consumption preferences is significant (Effect = -0.21, BootSE = 0.14, BootLLCI = -0.6085, BootULCI = -0.0179) while direct effect is not significant, including 0 in the confidence interval (Effect = 0.86, ρ = 0.053, LLCI = -0.012, ULCI = 1.734). Therefore, it can be concluded full mediation of social network effect on conspicuous consumption by desire for self-promotion, which supports H1.

[Table 2: Mediation analysis of desire for self-promotion]

Outcome: Desire for self-promotion						
n = 96	Coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.3481	.1312	33.1343	.0000	4.0876	4.6087
Social network	-.3743	.1800	-2.0789	.0404	-.7318	-.0168
Outcome: Conspicuous consumption preferences						
	Coeff	se	z	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	-2.9788	1.1852	-2.5133	.0120	-5.3018	-.6558
DSP	.5639	.2572	2.1928	.0283	.0599	1.0680
Social network	.8610	.4454	1.9331	.0532	-.0120	1.7340
Direct effect of x on y						
Effect	SE	Z	p	LLCI	ULCI	
.8610	.4454	1.9331	.0532	-.0120	1.7340	
Indirect effect of x on y						
	Effect	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI		
DSP	-.2111	.1437	-.6085	-.0179		

*DSP: Desire for self-promotion



[Figure 2: Mediation analysis of desire for self-promotion]

4. Discussions

Study 1 showed that how one's SNS is comprised influences preferences for conspicuous consumption and it is only through the desire for self-promotion. When people have more strangers than friends as network on their SNS, they feel higher desire to self-promote, which in turn increases their preferences for conspicuous products. However, study 1 also has some limitations. Since most of the participants were students or unemployed, this makes it hard to generalize the finding to a broader population. Since students and the unemployed lack financial power, their perception about conspicuousness might be different from people who earn income. Study 2 complements these limitations. In addition, study 2 adopts new items as stimuli for the dependent measure and this time their absolute value differ from the choice sets in study 1 in order to cover a variety of product types.

V. Study 2

Study 1 found that strangers-dominated network on SNS augments desire for self-promotion, which in turn increases conspicuous consumption preferences. The primary purpose of study 2 was to provide further corroborating evidence for the effect of social network types on conspicuous consumption preferences through desire for self-promotion and investigate the boundary condition of this effect. Consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence was measured and mediated moderation analysis was conducted using model 7 of Hayes process (2013).

1. Pretest

Just like study 1, 57 individuals participated to ensure the stimuli that were to be included as a dependent measure for the second study. This time, the participants were given three different sets of items, where each set contained two items with the same brand and price but different designs or packaging. Three different sets included Nike hats, Evian bottles, and Chanel shopping bag. Three sets were carefully selected to be different in absolute value and types (Nike hat = \$35, Evian

bottle = \$1.5, Chanel shopping bag = \$0.1) in order to cover various kinds of products. As in the study 1, one of the two items in each set had the bigger logo in the more visible way than the other, representing more conspicuousness. Then participants rated the level of conspicuousness of the product on a five-point scale (1 = not at all, 5 = very much) for each of three sets. Only Nike hats and Evian bottles showed significant differences in conspicuousness between the items in the set and the product with the bigger logo represented more conspicuousness than the one with the smaller logo (Nike hat: $M_{\text{big logo}} = 3.02$, $SD = 1.23$ vs. $M_{\text{small logo}} = 2.54$, $SD = 1.10$, $p=0.000$; Evian bottle: $M_{\text{more conspicuous}} = 3.42$, $SD = 1.03$ vs. $M_{\text{less conspicuous}} = 3.07$, $SD = 0.98$, $p=0.001$) Chanel shopping bags were not perceived to be different in representing conspicuousness ($M_{\text{big logo}} = 3.33$, $SD = 1.22$ vs. $M_{\text{small logo}} = 3.33$, $SD = 1.14$, $p=1.000$). Therefore, this pretest resulted in two sets of items being finally retained as stimuli for the dependent variable.

2. Method

2.1 Samples and data collection

145 respondents were recruited on the basis of convenience (snowball) sampling with the only pre-condition of

having experience with any kind of SNS up to the time of the study. Data were collected for three days through an online survey using Qualtrics.

2.2 Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to either the friends or strangers condition. After answering the same demographic questions as study 1, they were given modified questions about their SNS usage patterns. Unlike study 1 which asked the frequency of SNS usage on a nominal scale, the participants indicated how often they go on SNS on a continuous scale, having from 6 of multiple times a day to 0 of almost never. Hours of using SNS a week were assessed as well. In addition, they answered items for susceptibility to interpersonal influence before the manipulation. Then they were given the same scenario as study 1 and completed the tasks that they would do in the real SNS setting. After these tasks, desire for self-promotion and preference for conspicuous consumption were assessed.

2.3 Measures

2.3.1 Consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence

Consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence (CSII) was measured using three items that were adopted and revised from Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel's (1989) eight items of

susceptibility to normative influence. The items were summarized more precisely and simply and tried to ask the core questions that this construct is meant to measure. Those three items include "I tend to purchase goods that can gain social approval," "I tend to purchase goods that can enhance my popularity," and "I tend to purchase goods that make me recognized by others." The three items showed a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87, thus gained reliability. They were rated on a six-point Likert scale as well (1 = "Strongly Agree" to 6 "Strongly Disagree")and was reverse-coded in analysis.

2.3.2 Desire for self-promotion

A measure of desire for self-promotion was identical to that in study 1, which includes three items adopted from Bolino and Turnley's (1999) impression-management scale ($\alpha = 0.83$). They were measured on a six-point Likert scale (1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 6 "Strongly Agree").

2.3.3 Conspicuous consumption

The preference for conspicuous consumption was measured with two choice sets of products that were pretested, Nike hat and Evian bottle. In each of two sets, participants were asked to choose one out of a pair of the same brand products, where one had the bigger logo in the more visible way than the other (see the Appendix). The product with the bigger logo was

supposed to serve as the more conspicuous product than the other. Since two products in each set were carefully designed to cost similarly in absolute manner, participants were advised to concentrate on the designs and packaging.

3. Results

3.1 Manipulation check

The procedure for manipulation check was identical to that in study 1 and the comment tasks the participants completed during manipulation were carefully reviewed. There were twenty participants who left comments as if they were talking to friends (strangers) when they were supposed to imagine the pictures were strangers' (friends') posts. Since the survey was conducted in Korean and in contemporary Korean culture, honorific is used to differentiate between formal and informal speech depending on the level of familiarity between the speaker and the listener (Wikipedia), it was easy to filter out the cases that were not accurately manipulated. Some of those comments include; 'why didn't you take me there too? you should have called me,' 'Oh you cooked me the worst food the last time I visited you!' These participants did not read the instructions carefully, thus left comments as if they were commenting under the posts of their friends that they know offline even though they were assigned to the

strangers-dominated network condition. As a result, the twenty cases were excluded from further analyses.

3.2 Demographic profiles

Table 3 demonstrates basic demographic profile of the 125 respondents. In study 2, male accounted for 42.4% while female comprised 57.6%. Their ages ranged from 22 to 48 and the average age ($M_{\text{age}} = 28.99$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 5.13$) was higher than study 1. In addition, as opposed to study 1 which mostly consisted of students or the unemployed, the majority of the participants were officers or employees working at companies. Students accounted for 29.6%, compared to 87.5% in study 1. The questions assessing SNS usage patterns were slightly different from study 1. With the name of SNS they are mostly engaged in, the number of hours spent on that SNS each week was also assessed. The frequency of SNS usage was rated on a continuous scale. 53.6% reported that they use Instagram as a main SNS and 11.2% did not have a SNS account at the time of the study. What was interesting was that unlike in Study 1, Instagram outpaced Facebook as a SNS platform that people mostly use, accounting more than 50%. Considering the fact that the average age increased and more employees participated in Study 2, it can be interpreted that Instagram is more popular in late 20's and 30's. It is not surprising because even if many research found Facebook as the most popular SNS a few years

ago, Instagram has been called as 'next Facebook' with its rapid growth. It has announced in September that it has reached a new milestone of 800 million monthly active users. Furthermore, 44.8% answered they visit SNS multiple times a day whereas 12.0% said they almost never go on SNS. In terms of SNS use hours, 62.4% reported they use SNS less than 5 hours a week whereas 7.2% said they use SNS over 20 hours a week.

[Table 3: Demographic profiles of the sample]

Attributes		Frequency	(%)
Gender	Male	53	42.4
	Female	72	57.6
Age	20~29	89	71.2
	30~39	32	25.6
	40~49	4	3.2
Occupation	Students/ Unemployed	37	29.6
	Housewife/ Homemaker	3	2.4
	Officer/Employee	62	49.6
	Self-employed	3	2.4
	Specialized/ Professions	20	16.0
SNS account	Facebook	39	31.2
	Instagram	67	53.6
	Kakao story	1	0.8
	Twitter	2	1.6

	Other	2	1.6
	No account	14	11.2
weekly SNS use hours	0	14	11.2
	over 0~5	64	51.2
	over 5~10	25	20.0
	over 10~20	13	10.4
	over 20~30	5	4.0
	over 30	4	3.2
Total		125	100

3.3 Hypotheses testing

As in study 1, binary logistic regression was conducted on two sets of items using SPSS 20.0. Regressing the choice of products (Nike hat and Evian bottle) on social network types showed different results. Regressing the choice of Nike hat on social network yielded insignificant effect ($n_{\text{friends}} = 63$, $n_{\text{strangers}} = 62$, Nike hat: Wald $\chi^2 = 1.03$, $\rho = 0.311$) whereas the effect of social network types on the choice of Evian bottle was significant (Evian bottle: Wald $\chi^2 = 11.69$, $\rho = 0.001$). The mediation analysis using model 4 of Hayes process (2013) yielded the same result as study 1. The influence of social network types on desire for self-promotion was significant (Nike hat: $B = -0.42$, $t = -2.15$, $\rho = 0.033$; Evian bottle: $B = -0.42$, $t = -2.15$, $\rho = 0.033$) and desire for self-promotion influenced conspicuous consumption preferences significantly for both products (Nike hat: $B = 0.36$, $z = 2.02$, $\rho = 0.043$; Evian

bottle: $B = 0.45$, $z = 2.35$, $\rho = 0.019$). For Evian bottle, including self-promotion desire eliminated the direct effect of social network types on conspicuous consumption preferences. A bootstrapping analysis confirmed that only indirect effects were significant for both products (Nike hat: Effect = -0.15 , BootSE = 0.09 , BootLLCI = -0.4065 , BootULCI = -0.0161 ; Evian bottle: Effect = -0.19 , BootSE = 0.42 , BootLLCI = -0.5311 , BootULCI = -0.0212). These results are consistent with full mediation of the social network types effect on conspicuous consumption preferences through desire for self-promotion.

[Table 4: Mediation analysis of desire for self-promotion
- Nike hat]

Outcome: Desire for self-promotion						
n = 125	Coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.9570	.1377	28.7315	.0000	3.6844	4.2296
Social network	-.4173	.1940	-2.1511	.0334	-.8013	-.0333
Outcome: Conspicuous consumption preferences						
	Coeff	se	z	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	-1.6717	.7481	-2.2346	.0254	-3.1379	-.2055
DSP	.3551	.1755	2.0229	.0431	.0110	.6992
Social network	.6472	.3773	1.7155	.0863	-.0922	1.3866
Direct effect of x on y						
Effect	SE	Z	p	LLCI	ULCI	

.6472	.3773	1.7155	.0863	-.0922	1.3866
Indirect effect of x on y					
	Effect	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
DSP	-.1482	.0958	-.4065	-.0161	

*DSP: Desire for self-promotion



***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10

[Figure 3: Mediation analysis of desire for self-promotion - Nike hat]

[Table 5: Mediation analysis of desire for self-promotion - Evian bottle]

Outcome: Desire for self-promotion						
n = 125	Coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.9570	.1377	28.7315	.0000	3.6844	4.2296
Social network	-.4173	.1940	-2.1511	.0334	-.8013	-.0333
Outcome: Conspicuous consumption preferences						
	Coeff	se	z	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	-.7842	.7880	-.9952	.3197	-2.3287	.7603
DSP	.4530	.1924	2.3546	.0185	.0759	.8300
Social network	.0790	.4171	.1894	.8498	-.7385	.8965
Direct effect of x on y						
Effect	SE	Z	p	LLCI	ULCI	

.0790	.4171	.1894	.8498	-.7385	.8965
Indirect effect of x on y					
	Effect	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
DSP	-.1890	.1228	-.5311	-.0212	

*DSP: Desire for self-promotion



***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10

[Figure 4: Mediation analysis of desire for self-promotion - Evian bottle]

In order to examine the moderating effect of susceptibility to interpersonal influence, model 7 of Hayes process is conducted on SPSS 20. The interaction effect of social network types and susceptibility to interpersonal influence on desire for self-promotion was marginally significant, having p-value of 0.053 (Table 6). When looking at conditional indirect effect of the moderator, when consumers are highly susceptible to interpersonal influence, the effect of social network types on desire for self-promotion is not present (Nike hat: BootLLCI = -0.2103, BootULCI = 0.1269; Evian bottle: BootLLCI = -0.2550, BootULCI = 0.1765). However, when consumers have average and low susceptibility to interpersonal

influence, this effect is present. As individuals are less susceptible, this effect is larger (Nike hat: Effect = -0.26, BootSE = 0.15, BootLLCI = -0.7025, BootULCI = -0.0387; Evian bottle: Effect = -0.33, BootSE = 0.20, BootLLCI = -0.8847, BootULCI = -0.0516). The bootstrapping analyses showed that the moderated mediation effect was significant, having desire for self-promotion as a mediator. The index of moderated mediation showed significance, not including 0 (Nike hat: Effect = 0.09, BootSE = 0.07, BootLLCI = 0.0049, BootULCI= 0.2749; Evian bottle: Effect = 0.12, BootSE = 0.08, BootLLCI = 0.0058, BootULCI= 0.3486). More specifically, the effect that strangers-dominated social network increases desire for self-promotion only occurs for individuals who do not really concern about others' expectations and opinions. Based on these finding, H2, H2-1, and H2-2 were supported.

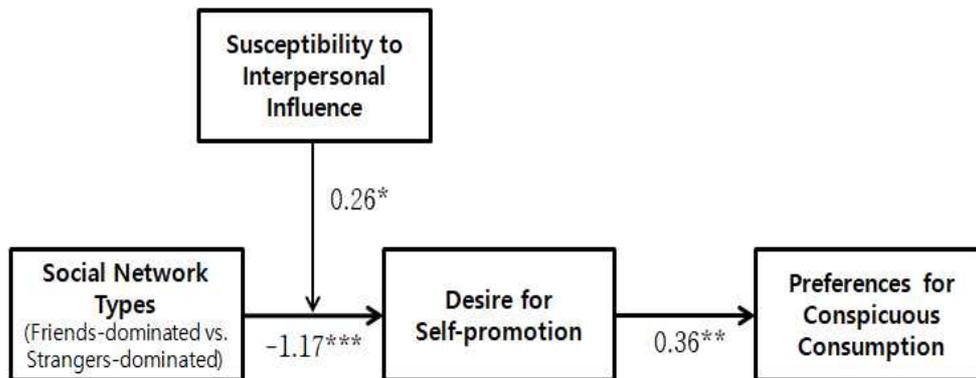
[Table 6: Moderated mediation analysis - Nike hat]

Outcome: Desire for self-promotion						
n =125	Coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.2126	.3259	9.8566	.0000	2.5673	3.8579
Social network	-1.1734	.4325	-2.7133	.0076	-2.0295	-.3172
CSII	.2442	.0994	2.4578	.0154	.0475	.4409
Int	.2568	.1315	1.9534	.0531	-.0035	.5172
Outcome: Conspicuous consumption preferences						

	Coeff	se	z	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	-1.6717	.7481	-2.2346	.0254	-3.1379	-.2055
DSP	.3551	.1755	2.0229	.0431	.0110	.6992
Social network	.6472	.3773	1.7155	.0863	-.0922	1.3866
Direct effect of x on y						
Effect	SE	Z	p	LLCI	ULCI	
.6472	.3773	1.7155	.0863	-.0922	1.3866	
Indirect effect of x on y						
	CSII	Effect	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
DSP	1.7126	-.2605	.1582	-.7025	-.0387	
	3.0213	-.1411	.0929	-.4159	-.0148	
	4.3301	-.0217	.0833	-.2103	.1269	

*CSII: Consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence

*DSP: Desire for self-promotion, *Int: Interaction



***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10

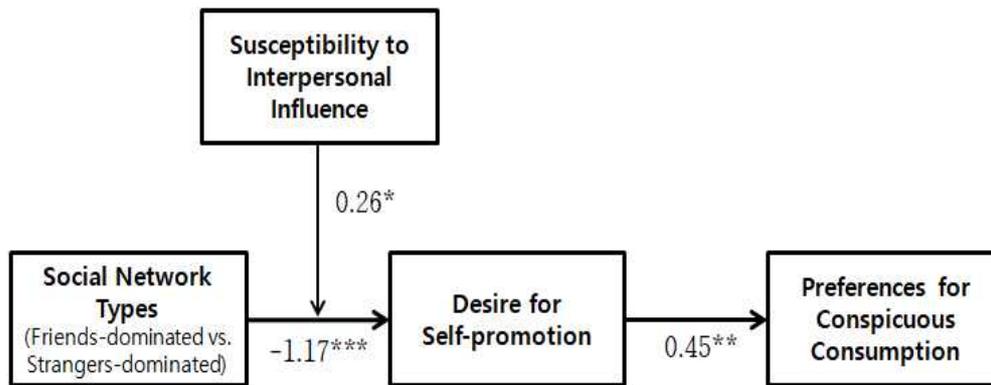
[Figure 5: Moderated mediation analysis - Nike hat]

[Table 7: Moderated mediation analysis - Evian bottle]

Outcome: Desire for self-promotion						
n = 125	Coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.2126	.3259	9.8566	.0000	2.5673	3.8579
Social network	-1.1734	.4325	-2.7133	.0076	-2.0295	-.3172
CSII	.2442	.0994	2.4578	.0154	.0475	.4409
Int	.2568	.1315	1.9534	.0531	-.0035	.5172
Outcome: Conspicuous consumption preferences						
	Coeff	se	z	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	-.7842	.7880	-.9952	.3197	-2.3287	.7603
DSP	.4530	.1924	2.3546	.0185	.0759	.8300
Social network	.0790	.4171	.1894	.8498	-.7385	.8965
Direct effect of x on y						
Effect	SE	Z	p	LLCI	ULCI	
.6472	.3773	1.7155	.0863	-.0922	1.3866	
Indirect effect of x on y						
	CSII	Effect	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
	1.7126	-.3323	.1990	-.8447	-.0516	
DSP	3.0213	-.1800	.1137	-.4794	-.0210	
	4.3301	-.0277	.1044	-.2550	.1765	

*CSII: Consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence

*DSP: Desire for self-promotion, *Int: Interaction



***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10

[Figure 6: Moderated mediation analysis – Evian bottle]

4. Discussions

Study 2 extended the mediation analysis of study 1 in two ways. First, by considering two different product sets as a dependent measure, Nike hat and Evian bottle, study 2 managed to cover more various product types. Also, by expanding the age range of the sample, the study attempted to generalize the findings to a broader population. As the result of study 2 also qualified desire for self-promotion as a mediator, the study further corroborated hypothesis 1. In addition, the moderating role of susceptibility to interpersonal influence has been investigated. As a result, it was found that the effect of social network types on self-promotion desire is only present when individuals are relatively less susceptible to interpersonal

influence. On the other hand, the result showed that when individuals are highly susceptible to others' opinions and feedbacks, the social network types do not influence their desire for self-promotion and conspicuous consumption preferences since they are sensitive to all types of network.

VI. General discussion

This study demonstrates that when users are engaged with SNS, whether their network on SNS is mostly composed of strangers or friends will influence their desire for self-promotion and preferences for conspicuous consumption differently. When the social network is mostly composed of strangers, people are likely to have higher desire for self-promotion than when it is mostly composed of friends. This is not only because people feel more need to point out good qualities they possess to strangers who have no prior-knowledge of them but also because strangers are easier targets to present manipulated self-images than friends. As friends have prior knowledge of the presenter's true self, excessively favorable claims about the self will not be believed and the presenter has to risk being discredited when the claim turns out to be false. Also, as presenting oneself in an enhancing way to friends might elicit negative impression as

being 'arrogant' or 'pretentious.' Thus when using SNS where network is dominated by strangers, people will feel more desire for self-promotion, which in turn, increases preferences for conspicuous consumption. In the condition of friends-dominated social network, on the contrary, users will have less desire for self-promotion and conspicuous consumption tendency.

However, this effect will only be present when individuals are not so worried or concerned about others' opinions and feedbacks. If a person is highly susceptible to interpersonal influence, that means that he or she is sensitive to opinions of any kind from other people. No matter whether his or her network on SNS is mostly composed of friends or strangers, an individual with high susceptibility to interpersonal influence will greatly care about how people on their network perceive them. Through the moderation analysis, the boundary condition of social network types effects on conspicuous consumption has been investigated.

This research makes a number of contributions. Theoretically, while prior studies mainly focused on the amount of time individuals spent on SNS with its predictors and outcomes, the present study aims to find whether one's network on SNS influences consumption behavior differently depending on how it is comprised of friends and strangers.

Social network type is an interesting topic since it can be

viewed at an interpersonal level, as well as on a platform level. As there exist a number of SNS that offer distinct features, they even differ in available opportunities for users to communicate with strangers or friends. On some SNS, the features they offer make it easier for users to meet strangers than on other SNS platforms. The reason why the extent to which portraits are authentic or playful varies across sites (Ellison, 2008) might be due to specific social network types different SNS encourage. Additionally, each SNS has its own culture that promotes certain types of interactions and excludes other types. For example, in contrast to Facebook, it is common for people to keep Instagram profiles public, enabling users to "follow" and therefore view, like, and comment on photos of people they do not know personally. In addition, unlike Facebook in which an account is encouraged to be made under one's actual name, Instagram lets people to make their own IDs. Search engines are an important difference between Facebook and Instagram. Instagram's popularity is derived from its hashtag function, which also promotes users to meet complete strangers based on their interests. In addition, whereas Facebook allows friending only when it is reciprocal (both individuals receiving status updates on each other), following someone on Instagram may only go in one direction. Using this information, marketers can adopt different marketing strategies depending on what kind of social network users have and which SNS platform encourages

interaction with strangers or friends more than the others.

Furthermore, if a product is perceived to be conspicuous, this paper suggests to target consumers whose network on SNS is primarily composed of strangers. If some users have an enormous amount of strangers as their network on SNS, they are often celebrities or those who are very influential on that SNS platform. Moreover, these days there has been a growing number of 'micro-celebrities' who are not celebrities but have that much of influence and power in SNS world, such as 'power bloggers' and 'brand influencers'. Marketers should target those micro-celebrities if conspicuousness is inherent in their products. Micro-celebrities are also well-known to have 'word of mouth' marketing power. According to the findings of this paper, micro-celebrities whose networks on their SNS are mostly comprised of strangers should have higher desire for self-promotion and higher preferences for conspicuous consumption than users having SNS with friends-dominated networks. However, their susceptibility to interpersonal influence should also be considered as an individual with low susceptibility to interpersonal influence is not expected to be prone to the effect of strangers-dominated network on desire for self-promotion and conspicuous consumption. The effect of social network types on desire for self-promotion and conspicuous consumption preferences were found to be only present for people who are relatively less susceptible to social

influence.

While the present study shed light on how one's SNS network composition plays a role in shaping his or her future consumption behavior, this study is not without limitations. First, since this study was conducted in South Korea, caution must be exercised when generalizing to populations in other countries. It was revealed that the motives for and patterns of using SNS showed cultural difference (Kim, Sohn, & Choi, 2011). Since not only face-to-face but also computer-mediated communication depends on a social and cultural environment wherein people learn the fundamental values and social norms that direct their behaviors (Recabarren, Nussbaum, & Leiva, 2008; Kim, Sohn, & Choi, 2011). the findings attained in South Korea might be different when this study is conducted in other countries. For instance, Lewis and George (2008) found that Koreans were more apt to lie about their job, salary, and physical appearance on SNS than Americans. In addition, it was found that Americans have less than a quarter of their networks on SNS being composed of families and close friends, whereas Koreans have more than 70% of their networks on SNS composed of close people (Kim, Sohn, & Choi, 2011). This shows that Americans are more prone to interact with strangers on SNS than Koreans. In this sense, future study should also include SNS users from other countries and examine culture as a boundary condition.

Since each country has unique local SNS platforms such

as Kakaostory in Korea, WeChat in China and VK in Russia, future studies can exploit cultural differences in key technological features of each platform as well.

Next, manipulation check could be another limitation. This study conducted the manipulation check by reviewing one of the tasks the respondents completed during manipulation, the commenting task. The parlance and expressions that seemed inappropriate to be used towards audiences in the assigned condition, friends or strangers, were considered as failure of manipulation and those samples were excluded from analysis. However, the parlance and expressions might not be enough to correctly check if the manipulation worked as intended. The reason this study used this technique was because asking 'how was your SNS network mostly composed of after manipulation?' seemed too contrived and unnatural. Future research should try to explore a better system for the manipulation check.

It would be also interesting to explore other boundaries of the observed connection between social network types and desire for self-promotion. If having network on SNS dominated by strangers makes people want to self-promote more, then such effects should be more salient for those who use SNS more frequently (i.e., intensity of SNS use) or for those who use it more actively (i.e., SNS engagement style).

In conclusion, this research illustrates that diverse audiences on SNS can affect can guide us to behave in a certain

way in our daily lives. With a careful consideration of the limitations and direction of future studies mentioned above, future research should be able to provide more comprehensive insight into self-promotion behaviors and conspicuous consumptions.

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APPENDIX

STIMULI FOR CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION

PREFERENCES

[STUDY 1]



[STUDY 2]



국 문 초 록

SNS는 소비자들의 일상생활에서 필수가 되면서 학계와 실무진들로부터 많은 관심을 받아왔다. 하지만 SNS의 인기상승과 사용빈도 증가에도 불구하고, SNS상 인맥 구성이 어떻게 이루어져있느냐에 따라 실생활에서의 행동에 어떠한 영향을 미치는 지에 대해서는 아직까지 명확히 밝혀진 바가 없다. 본 연구는 SNS상 인맥이 주로 온라인상에서만 아는 사람들로 구성되어 있을 경우에 SNS를 사용하면, 인맥이 주로 실제 지인들로 이루어져있을 때보다, 자기홍보욕구를 더 증가시켜, 과시적 소비 성향을 촉진시킬 것으로 보았다. 또한 이러한 관계는 대인영향력에 대한 개개인의 민감도에 따라 조절될 것이라고 가정하였다.

본 연구는 총 두 번의 실험을 통해 가설을 검증하였다. 실험 1에서는 총 96명의 실험 참여자가 SNS인맥이 주로 실제로 모르는 사람들로 이루어져있는 조건과 주로 실제 지인들로 이루어져 있는 조건 중에 무작위로 배정되었고, 제시된 가상 SNS상황에서 실제 SNS에서 할 법한 활동들을 실행하였다. 그 결과, SNS상 인맥 타입과 과소비성향의 관계는 자기홍보욕구에 의해 완전매개 되는 것으로 나타났다. 실험 2에서는 총 125명의 실험 참여자를 통해 대인영향력에 대한 민감도를 조절변수로 한 매개된 조절 효과를 살펴보고자 하였다. 그 결과, SNS상 인맥 타입이 자기홍보욕구에 미치는 영향은 상대적으로 대인영향력에 대해 민감도가 낮은 사람들에게만 존재하는 것으로 나타났다. 반면에, 대인영향력에 대한 민감도가 높은 사람들은 어떠한 인맥 타입에도 모두 민감하기 때문에, SNS상 인맥 타입에 따라 자기홍보욕구가 다르게 나타나지 않는 것으로 확인되었다.

주요어: 소셜네트워킹사이트, 소셜 네트워크 인맥 종류, 인상관리, 자기
홍보, 대인영향력에 대한 민감도, 과시소비

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