

Role of Consumer Vanity in Driving the Conspicuous Consumption Behavior: The Moderating Effect of Gender

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Abstract

This research aimed to understand the development of conspicuous consumption behavior among consumers of fashion clothing brands. The study examined the influence of psychological variables physical vanity, achievement vanity, private consciousness, public consciousness, and brand consciousness on the formation of conspicuous consumption. The gender is conceptualized as a moderator that moderate all the structural relationships between physical vanity, achievement vanity, private consciousness, public consciousness, and brand consciousness. A total of 426 respondents (193 males and 233 females) participated, with data collected through both self-administered questionnaires and web-based surveys. PLS-SEM was used for analysis due to its superior predictive capability with complex theoretical models. Results confirmed positive relationships between the constructs, although private self-consciousness did not significantly contribute to conspicuous consumption. Additionally, gender was found to moderate the proposed relationships. The study develops and validates a theoretical model that helps to explain the psychological motivations driving conspicuous consumption in developing countries, along with the relative influence of each variable. The target audience was limited to students from tertiary-level institutions in Punjab, Pakistan, which may limit the generalizability of the findings.

Keywords: Physical Vanity, Achievement Vanity, Self-Consciousness, Conspicuous Consumption

Introduction

A prominent trend of luxury consumption, characterized by the use of products belonging to well-known and prestigious brands, has been observed among the general public in recent years more than ever. In contrast to a logical as well as prevalent belief, this demand is also originating from developing economies like China, India, and Brazil (Bhar et al., 2022) because the consumption of products that symbolize the characteristics of luxury is becoming the regular style of living and spending in developing economies too. Such ostentatious consumption is fueled by materialism is widely prominent among Pakistani consumers like other customers belonging to the developing and developed economies (Ahmed et al., 2023; Dev et al., 2018). In response, businesses try to target middle-class consumers by mass-producing the products that are perceived and classified as luxury by middle-class consumers through the adoption of an approach that scholars are now referring to as “masstige” (from prestige and mass) marketing (Kumar et al., 2020). However, the question of why middle and lower-class consumers from developing economies are adopting behavior (similar to) conspicuous consumption by seeking products that offer luxury value remains unanswered (Awais, 2014; Barrera & Ponce, 2021).

Few attempts have been made to answer this behavior. For instance, Sharda et al. (2019) studied the role of vanity (physical and achievement) and brand consciousness in driving attitudes towards the purchase of luxury products. Similarly, Barrera and Ponce (2021) studied personality traits (e.g., competitiveness, materialism, etc.) to predict conspicuous consumption. Also, the outcomes of contemporary studies have consistently stressed the importance that consumers' psychological variables hold for justifying conspicuous consumption (Dhaliwal et al., 2020). This is because the major rationale for rising interest in luxury goods could be the need to satisfy one's own egoistic and social goals through the consumption of products that offer social value (Saruchera & Mthombeni, 2023). This is one of the many possible reasons that customers in Pakistan are shifting from the traditional ‘bazaar’ setting that promises affordable prices toward the shopping, to the megamall settings. These megamalls are positioned using the value propositions which mainly focus on delivering superior quality of symbolically visible products blended with a shopping experience. This positing strategy ensures classy shopping environment for customers to

purchase fashion and clothing brands (Iqbal et al., 2022).

Much research has emerged in recent years in Pakistan's textile industry, especially in exploring methods to improve its efficiency in serving international markets (Mehar, 2022). However, the growth of ready-made clothing, also known as attires or apparels, brands is not fully addressed due to lack in understanding of the retail consumer market from the consumer psychological and behavioral perspectives. Despite the fact that local market has great potential and opportunity for serving these fashion-oriented customers with reduced costs. However, some key questions that scholars are yet to investigate include, (1) how do consumers view the clothing brands while deciding to purchase (2) what are the core emotional, social, psychological, and behavioral constructs that play crucial role in the decision-making process (ul Islam et al., 2022)?

Practitioners and scholars in the country are constantly evaluating methods to speed up the buyers' decision-making process in the clothing brands industry to keep up with the sales requirements of clothing brands (Ahmad et al., 2023). but practical implementation of these tools also requires clear consumer insights on a psychological level so that behavioral predictions can be made with added precision. Similar to most other businesses and markets throughout the world, impulsive buying, in-store promotions, and advertising are known to serve as a catalyst for increasing the sales of branded clothing products in Pakistan (Batoool, Awais, Rehman, Shafiq, & Dar, 2019; Nawaz, et al., 2023; Rizwan, 2023).

The most relevant psychological variables are identified from the literature for studying this market (fashion clothing) include physical vanity, achievement vanity, private consciousness and public consciousness (Giovannini et al., 2015; Huang, Kumar, & Hu, 2018; Kapoor & Munjal, 2019; Wong & Malone, 2016; Workman & Lee, 2011, 2013) and brand consciousness (Sharda & Bhat, 2019; Yi-Cheon Yim et al., 2014; Zhang & Kim, 2013). The higher ranking of fashion leaders on physical vanity, achievement vanity, private consciousness and public consciousness (Lee & Workman, 2014) solidifies the evidence for the role of these variables within fashion consumption. However, Lee and Workman (2014) pointed toward investigating the role of physical vanity, achievement vanity, private consciousness and public consciousness in understanding fashion markets of Eastern cultural countries by pointing out the need for testing the causal relationship of vanity with brand consciousness and Private Self-Consciousness as previous studies have not taken these into account. It would be beneficial to examine such relationships for a thorough understanding of fashion markets (Workman & Lee, 2013).

Taking this ahead, Sharda et al. (2019) studied the causality between vanity (physical and achievement) and brand consciousness to drive purchase intentions from luxury brands. However, the self-consciousness was again missed in this inspection and the varying preferences determined by gender differences. Such relationships are also unknown and can add rich insights to the literature on consumer behavior in fashion markets (Sharda & Bhat, 2019). As conspicuous consumption is more relevant to luxury purchases and is backed by the personality traits of the consumers (Barrera & Ponce, 2021), the current study examines the role of vanity (physical and achievement), self-consciousness (private and public), and brand consciousness (psychological variables) to drive conspicuous consumption behavior (behavioral variable) in fashion clothing markets. The mediating roles of brand consciousness, private consciousness and public consciousness are proposed in the study as the both physical vanity and private vanity directly contribute in the development of brand, private and public consciousness (Moon et al., 2022; Sardottir, 2022) that ultimately lead to the development of intentions of conspicuous consumption (Chang, 2019; Khan et al., 2023). Further, the differences that may exist between two genders in terms of motivations to consume from (perceived) luxury fashion clothing brands. To rationalize customer preference toward and purchase decisions from branded fashion and clothing brands, the study has conceptualized these brands as luxury from the customers' point of view by taking into account the *perceived luxury value* that a customer of this lower-income country intends to acquire from shopping from these brands. These perceived luxuries that customers of such brands expect to gain in the form of product attributes along with personal and social benefits (Khan, Awais, Khan, & Khan, 2017; Loureiro et al., 2020).

This research aims to provide a theoretical understanding of consumer motivations in the fashion clothing industry by developing and validating a causal model that conceptually presents the formation of conspicuous consumption behavior. Practically, this model helps marketing practitioners to design effective promotion strategies by communicating the right content which aligns with the rationales of consumer behavior highlighted. Through the help of customer understanding on a psychological level in the understudied market (geographically), the results of the study could also present an opportunity to promote the textile industry in Pakistan which not only is considered to be one of the best in the world but also has a potential to help the country's struggling economy (Jabbar, Sheikh, & Raza, 2023; Khan, Awais, & Malik, 2023; Mehar, 2022).

Literature Review

From a theoretical perspective, this research work is based on Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) to study the factors that serve as the impetus to (perceived) luxury fashion consumption. Under the domain of CCT, the acquisition of products and their association with extending one's self-concept is relevant to consumer behavior (Belk, 1988; Magklaras et al., 2023). The core idea behind such extension of one's self — through the use of (and association with) products or possessions — is that consumers relate their identity with the products used (Ahuvia, 2005). Hence, they consume certain products to alter their identity and/or for creating their ideal self (Hung et al., 2011). Therefore, luxury brand consumption could be best understood by taking into account the personal as well as social-oriented motivational factors (Tsai, 2005). In this regard, vanity, self-consciousness, and brand consciousness could provide a thorough understanding of luxury consumption in the clothing market too. Referring to the nature of consumer behavior as theorized by CCT, vanity, self-consciousness, and brand consciousness provide a good conceptualization ground for testing the assertions of CCT in the fashion clothing market. Since personal and social orientated motivations (for identity creation and/or alteration to reach the desired state) to consume from luxury fashion brands are responsible for the development of purchase intentions (Dhaliwal et al., 2020; Farrag, 2017; Giovannini, Xu & Thomas, 2015; Hung et al., 2011; Janpors, Raeisi Ziarani, & Taghavi, 2023; Sharda & Bhat, 2019), these could be leading to conspicuous consumption behavior by consumers (Barrera & Ponce, 2021; Ko et al., 2019; Li et al., 2019) for the personal and social goals set by an individual.

Vanity

The term "Vanity" is defined as an enhanced, inflated, or magnified perception/view as well as the concern of a person toward his/her physical appearance and/or achievements (Netemeyer et al., 1995; Park et al., 2008; Sharda & Bhat, 2019; Workman & Lee, 2011). Two dimensions that can be delineated from the definition include Physical Vanity (PV) and Achievement Vanity (AV) (Durvasula et al., 2001; Farrag, 2017; Huang, Kumar, & Hu, 2018; Ketron & Naletelich, 2017; Park et al., 2008; Sharda & Bhat, 2019; Wang & Waller, 2006). Both dimensions are described in the light of research interest separately below.

Physical Vanity (PV)

Physical vanity is defined as excessive concern for and/or positive perception/view (perhaps an inflated one) that a person holds regarding his/her physical appearance (Cheah et al., 2015; Netemeyer, Burton & Lichtenstein, 1995; Sharda & Bhat, 2019). Efficacious qualities, prosperous careers, and happily married lives are perceived to be led by people who are physically attractive and good-looking (Eagly *et al.*, 1991). Discriminative behavior of employers can usually be observed based on employees' physical appearance (Cavico et al., 2013). Advertising and entertainment media too, have always associated several professional and personal benefits with physical attractiveness and in doing so, brands and products that increase physical beauty are promoted (Netemeyer et al., 1995). Hence, individuals become susceptible to purchasing from luxury (and fashion) brands (Park et al., 2008) as they serve a hope for them to be acceptable and praised within social groups by becoming physically good-looking (Cheah et al., 2015). People often intentionally engage in comparisons with others based on physical attractiveness and prominent media personalities are considered to be the ultimate level for these comparisons the struggle

to achieve the desired state of physical acceptance in one's own and others' eyes often leads to fashion purchases and even cosmetic surgeries (Sigurðardóttir, 2022). These rationales behind the purchase of fashion products from the point of view of PV (specifically) might not be justified for the decision-making of customers during their purchases of counterfeit fashion purchasing but when the role of this PV is viewed for the original brands that are viewed as prestigious by the customers, the significant impact is most likely to play a significant role (Mayasari et al., 2022). Thus, for the population of this study, it would not be wrong to expect that one of the major reasons to purchase from fashion and luxury (clothing) brands is to look physically good for personal as well as social acceptance.

Achievement Vanity (AV)

Achievement vanity is an excessive concern and/or positive perception/view (perhaps inflated one) regarding one's abilities and professional accomplishments (Huang, Kumar, & Hu, 2018; Netemeyer et al., 1995; Sharda & Bhat, 2019; Wang & Waller, 2006). AV has very close ties with luxury consumption because consumers use expensive products to communicate their financial status. It plays a significant role in the consumer's decision-making processes during the purchase (Netemeyer et al., 1995). Just as PV is closely related to materialism, AV is strongly correlated with price-based prestige sensitivity (Chang et al., 2008). When it comes to the formation of the advertising appeal of luxury products (including dresses), the impact of such advertisements is much more likely to develop a positive intention to buy among the consumers who want to show their achievements by the possession of that product (Lewis & Moital, 2016) as people gather wealth primarily to purchase expensive products for demonstration (Husain et al., 2020). This contributes to the goals of self-presentation and status communication within society (Nezlek et al., 2019). Similarly, self-concept-related values which also include vanity, self as well as brand consciousness are some of the predictors of compulsive buying including purchases from fashion and clothing brands in Pakistan (Moon et al., 2022).

Self-Consciousness

Self-Consciousness is defined as the direction of thoughts/attention of the person toward his own (inner and/or outer) self (Fenigstein et al., 1975; Fenigstein, 1979; Ruganci, 1995). It is a focus of an individual towards one's self (Lee & Workman, 2014). Unlike self-awareness, which is the increased awareness of one's self, self-consciousness is more of self-examination. Self-consciousness is a variable that is involved in the decision-making of the person in terms of the acquisition and consumption of products (Giovannini et al., 2015). The major two dimensions of self-consciousness include private self-consciousness and public self-consciousness (Chang, 2019; Fenigstein, 1979; Lee & Workman, 2014; Nezlek et al., 2019). Private self-consciousness mainly consists of the aspects of the individual's personality that are not observed by or shared with other people (Chang, 2019; Fenigstein et al., 1975). Self-esteem, which by definition, can be related to PrSC was found to be positively related to purchase-related variables including conspicuous consumption (Giovannini et al., 2015). The efforts of an individual to look good (reflecting vanity concerns) result in behaviors plastic surgery, luxury brand consumption, etc. (indicators of conspicuous consumption) that can be closely linked to private and public dimensions of self-consciousness (Chang, 2019).

Public Self-Consciousness (PuSC)

Fenigstein et al. (1975) described PuSC as the state of pre-occupation of an individual toward presenting himself/herself to others. As PrSC is the person's direction of attention and concern toward exploring and satisfying himself through a connection with his inner self, PuSC can be defined as "directed attention towards the outside where an individual identifies himself/herself as a part of society and places importance over the opinions of others about himself/herself (Fenigstein, 1979; Ki & Kim, 2016; Lewis & Moital, 2016). Previous studies have asserted that publicly self-conscious individuals are more sensitive to people's rejection (Kapoor & Munjal, 2019; Nezlek et al., 2019). To gain acceptance from the reference group, publicly self-conscious individuals are more likely to purchase products that are symbolic, expensive, and more visible (Johnson, Tariq, & Baker, 2018; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). Due to this,

PuSC is positively related to compulsive buying behavior (Xu, 2008).

However, it must also be noted that the consumers with higher SC (especially the public) are brand conscious too but are prone to avoid purchasing counterfeit brands if they are very visible to protect their self-image among their peers and other social groups (Khan et al., 2023). Thus, it is most likely that self-conscious consumers are more attracted to buy from (a) original brands even if they are not very prestigious or (b) counterfeit brands if the brand is not too visible [as a part of image management]. Brand-conscious consumers purchase from relatively expensive and well-known (publicly or socially visible) brands with the belief that higher prices reflect superior quality (Shim & Gehrt, 1996). Brand consciousness (BC) can be defined as a psychological trait due to which customer prefers goods offered by famous brands (Zhang & Kim, 2013).

Brand Consciousness

A vast number of studies has considered the variable of BC to explore the attitudinal and behavioral aspects of consumers such as purchase intention, purchase behavior, brand loyalty, luxury purchase intention, etc. (Farrag, 2017; Giovannini et al., 2015; Ismail, 2017; Liao & Wang, 2009; Johnson, Tariq, & Baker, 2018; Sharda & Bhat, 2019; Soh, Rezaei, & Gu, 2017; Workman & Lee, 2013; Zhang & Kim, 2013). This shows the importance that the construct BC holds for understanding and even predicting consumer behavior. BC is initiated due to the perception that consuming products from well-known brands enhances one's social status and provides a sense of self-worth and respect within a social group (Liao & Wang, 2009). By providing a sense of belonging to their desired social group, consumption from well-known brands facilitates the consumers for their socialization-related goals (Lachance et al., 2003; Xu & Nuangjamnong, 2022). BC could be the result of the need to communicate the status of a person to others through consuming products offered by expensive and well-known brands (Sharda & Bhat, 2019).

Conspicuous Consumption (CC)

Cummings (1899); Veblen (2017), in chapter number four of his book "Theory of Leisure Class", presented the idea of Conspicuous Consumption (CC) for the first time while elaborating on the culture and living style of the elite. CC can be defined as an exceptional consumer behavior that is characterized by the possession as well as an ostentatious display of fancy items for the sake of conveying the message of belongingness to an affluent social group through communicating the wealthy status possessed by a person (Cummings, 1899; Patsiaouras & Fitchett, 2012; Lewis & Moital, 2016; Veblen, 2017). As described by Veblen (2017), two aspects of a product include serviceability and honorific (non-utility based). The honorific aspect of the product is reflective of non-productive or conspicuous consumption. People strive to enhance the interaction process with others by using tools "consumer goods" for the sake of self-enhancement because they consider such goods or possessions as a part of their extended self (Ahuvia, 2005; Belk, 1988) and this is because they attach symbolic meanings to the consumption and possessions of goods (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967). Consumers are believed to engage in CC behaviors through buying from luxury brands with the primary objective of expressing exclusivity of their personality so that it could contribute toward their goals of status enhancement (Li et al., 2019).

Vanity and Self-Consciousness

Studies undertaken by Workman and Lee (2011, 2013, 2014) focused on investigating the correlative relationships between vanity and self-consciousness. Individuals who score higher on the PrSC have higher vanity views and concerns (Workman & Lee, 2013). Extending this, Lee and Workman (2014) investigated the comparisons between fashion leaders and followers based on the levels of vanity and self-consciousness. Again, fashion leaders and followers scoring higher on PrSC were reported to have higher vanity views and concerns (Lee & Workman, 2014). These findings indicate a valid association between vanity and SC, and it may be possible that vanity-concerned individuals are more (privately) self-conscious. Among the scarce research that focused on consumer behavior concerning the role of SC and vanity, only a scintilla of studies has focused on both dimensions of the construct; and this has resulted in a compromised investigation of the construct's capacity for a satisfactory understanding of consumer

behavior in literature (Lopez-Bonilla et al., 2021). However, a recent study has argued that vanity concerns and views are responsible for the distortion of one's self-concept, thus giving rise to self-consciousness as a whole (Kupfer, 2021). Hence, the first hypothesis of this study assumed a positive impact of vanity on SC.

H1a: Physical Vanity positively contributes in the development Private Self-Consciousness.

H1b: Achievement Vanity positively contributes in the development Private Self-Consciousness.

In response to social pressure, women wear more make-up in an effort to enhance their physical appearance and social acceptance (Miller & Cox, 1982). Individuals who are highly publicly self-conscious are more sensitive toward public opinion and to gain positive opinions, they use (luxury) fashion-related products (including clothes) to enhance their physical appearance (Nia & Lynne Zaichkowsky, 2000). Highly self-conscious consumers purchase from luxury brands to achieve their ideal self-concepts and communicate their superior status to others in the social group (Kumar et al., 2020). Such behaviors could also be forerunners of self and status consciousness (Husain et al., 2022). Based on this, it was hypothesized:

H1c: Physical Vanity positively contributes in the development of Public Self-Consciousness.

H1d: Achievement Vanity positively contributes in the development of Public Self Consciousness.

Vanity and Brand Consciousness

It is evident from both theoretical and applied bodies of marketing, sociology, and psychology literature that consumption patterns are related to the achievements of the consumer (Husain et al., 2020; Netemeyer et al., 1995). This means AV affects an individual's brand selection because one of the characteristics of a luxury brand is the symbolic value that it delivers to the consumer (Ko et al., 2019). Also, the enhancement of physical appearance is the key driver for the formation of purchase intention and behavior toward luxury brands (Cheah et al., 2015; Farrag, 2017). High fashion conscious consumers are more likely to purchase from luxury brands especially when it comes to the selection and purchase of clothing (Tak, 2020). Another motivation for consuming from luxury brands is the satisfaction of one's vanity views and concerns (Siyao, 2021). Vanity is one of the prominent factors to drive the consumer's intention to purchase from (perceived) luxury brands (Xu & Nuangjamnong, 2022) and these consistent preferences toward visible original brands are most likely to make consumers more and more brand-conscious. All these shreds of evidence from different industries indicate the primary relevance of vanity in influencing the individual's BC. Hence,

H2a: Physical Vanity positively influences Brand Consciousness.

H2b: Achievement Vanity positively influences Brand Consciousness.

Self-Consciousness and Conspicuous Consumption

Since publicly self-conscious people are more concerned about others' opinions and consider themselves as a social object (Xu, 2008), they try to present themselves in a way by which others can accept them and consistently try to establish a favorable public image (Fenigstein, 1979). In doing so, they use consumer goods (Burnkrant & Page, 1982) belonging to expensive brands (Tolbert et al., 2014) to form their desired image (Fenigstein, 1979) as a part of their self-presentation (enhancement) strategy (Doherty & Schlenker, 1991). Higher PuSC translates into a higher tendency to consume conspicuously in the fashion and clothing market (Lewis & Moital, 2016). Following the desire to signal superior status to reference groups, consumers engage in CC by purchasing from well-reputed brands (Sharda & Bhat, 2019). PuSC is directly linked to the individual's tendency to purchase from luxury brands (Xu, 2021) and this tendency is related to conspicuous consumption behavior. Beyond gaining social acceptance by consuming from symbolic brands, the consumer's agenda for purchasing from luxury brands also stemmed from the effort to avoid any public embarrassment that indicates PuSC (Balabanis & Stathopoulou, 2021). Following this, it was proposed that:

H3a: Public Self-Consciousness positively contributes in the development of the Conspicuous Consumption.

Similarly, individuals can also turn toward branded products to satisfy themselves. Other than socially inspired goals, consumers are attracted to luxury clothing brands due to their emotional needs (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). Self-satisfaction is a factor that motivates consumers to consume from luxury brands because this makes them feel good about themselves (Ko et al., 2019; Tak, 2020). This was also noted by Kapoor and Munjal (2019) who found a significant relationship between PrSC and attitude toward “Femvertising” (advertising specifically directed toward females only) which in turn leads to purchase intention from advertising brands (Kapoor & Munjal, 2019). This means that PrSC could also be the reason for consumers to adopt CC behavior. Thus,

H3b: Private Self-Consciousness positively contributes in the development of the Conspicuous Consumption.

Brand Consciousness and Conspicuous Consumption

Products from luxury brands are used by consumers as a part of their impression management and the primary motive for buying such products is to impress others through the display of status and wealth (Tsai, 2005). Consumers who are highly concerned for and about the brands are the ones who have a high need or desire to create their superior or prestigious self-image (Husic & Cicic, 2009). One study found that susceptibility toward interpersonal influence (the need for creating and amplifying one’s image in front of influential others and social groups through the use of products) leads to brand consciousness which results in an attitude towards luxury [an indicator of CC] (Yi-Cheon Yim et al., 2014). Another study found that consumers who had high levels of BC also possessed a strong motivation for CC (Giovannini et al., 2015). Furthermore, as argued by Siyao (2021), luxury brands are the source of an individual’s vanity-related views and concerns which in turn makes a consumer more brand conscious; and enhanced attraction towards these luxury brands results in non-productive use of available resources (income, finance options, etc.) which ultimately feeds consumerism (Kuryshva & Vernikov, 2021) as reflected through status consumption (Husain et al., 2022). Also, as Shahid et al. (2023) noted in their study of the affordable luxury market, the conspicuous brands are the one that most likely captures the Indian customers’ attention for purchase (Shahid et al., 2023) and specifically for Pakistani customers too, like other geographical markets, brand consciousness has repeatedly been positively linked with the consumption patterns that are backed by materialistic values and status communication (Waqar et al., 2023). Thus, we hypothesized that:

H4: Brand Consciousness positively influences Conspicuous Consumption.

Gender Differences in Vanity, Self-consciousness, and Brand Consciousness

The first-ever study for the delineation of SC asserted that the stereotypes that existed about females being more self-conscious (especially publicly) might be outdated (Fenigstein et al., 1975) but the latter studies found some significant differences between genders. Private self-consciousness plays a greater role than PuSC for women during the selection of clothes (Kwon, 1991). Social desirability is also a factor due to which women in Pakistan engage in impulsive buying behavior in the apparel industry specifically (Amir et al., 2014).

When the variable of vanity is taken into consideration, it is generally believed that females are more likely to score higher on PV whereas the same is true for males when AV is taken into account (Qardottir, 2022). Females score relatively higher on the PV whereas males rank higher on AV (Huang, Kumar, & Hu, 2018). Females are more self-conscious (both privately and publicly) and score relatively higher on PV as compared to men (Lee & Workman, 2014). Similarly, males are relatively less concerned about appearance and score lower on SC than females (Workman & Lee, 2013). As per these differences in both genders in terms of self-consciousness and vanity, the following hypotheses were proposed. The conceptual model of the study is presented in Figure 01.

H5a: The relationship between Physical Vanity and Private Consciousness is moderated by Gender.

H5b: The relationship between Achievement Vanity and Private Consciousness is moderated by Gender.

H5c: The relationship between Physical Vanity and Public Consciousness is moderated by Gender.

H5d: The relationship between Achievement Vanity and Public Consciousness is moderated by Gender.

H5e: The relationship between Physical Vanity and Brand Consciousness is moderated by Gender.

H5f: The relationship between Achievement Vanity and Brand Consciousness is moderated by Gender.

It can also be inferred that woman, due to greater concerns about their physical appearance are more likely to be brand conscious as compared to men because expensive and well-known brands are believed to be capable of adding more attractiveness resulting in better presentation of self-image (O’Cass & Frost, 2002). In comparison to males, females are more sensitive toward brands and are more brand-conscious (Workman & Lee, 2013). This may result in a greater inclination of females toward symbolic brands. Hence, it was proposed that:

H5e: The relationship between Physical Vanity and Brand Consciousness is moderated by Gender.

H5f: The relationship between Achievement Vanity and Brand Consciousness is moderated by Gender.

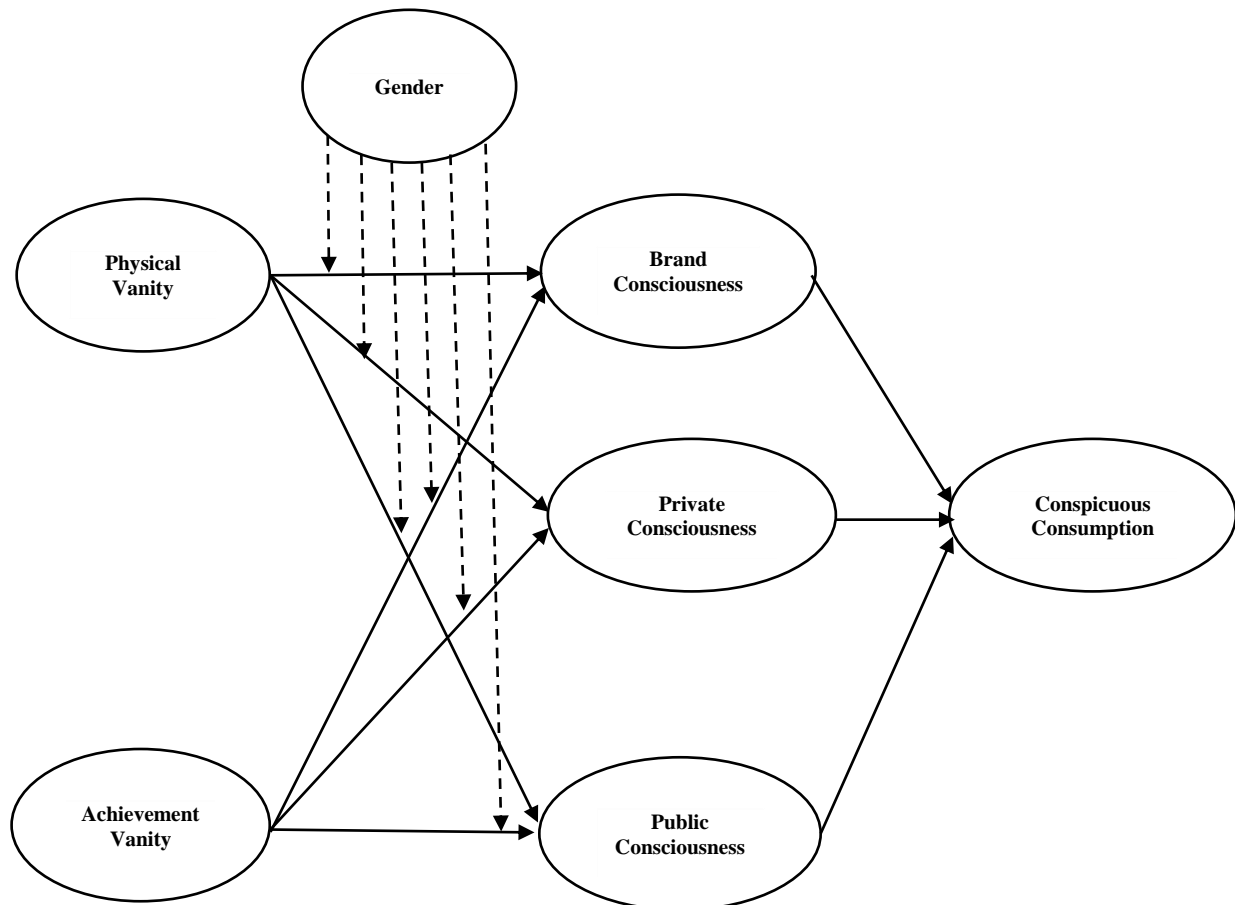


Figure-1: The conceptual model of the study

Methodology

Since the purpose of the study was to analyze consumer behavior in the fashion clothing market, the population of university students was deemed appropriate. Due to access to discretionary income, students represent the best population for studying consumer behavior (Workman & Lee, 2013). Also, university students comprise the most prominent segment that is attracted to fashion clothing brands and thus represent a significant proportion of the whole customer base of such brands. Additionally, university

students are an appropriate segment for collecting survey- based data (in Pakistan) because of their higher educational level, awareness, and knowledge of the concepts than the general public (Usmani & Ejaz, 2020). A convenience sampling technique was used to recruit 430 respondents. The sample size was calculated following the Item-response theory; according to which, items of the measurement instrument can be multiplied by 10 to obtain a suitable sample size (Hair et al., 2019). The details of the measurement instrument's items (before adaptation and item screening) are provided in Table 1.

Table 01: Sources and specifications of the adopted scales

Sr. No.	Variable Name	Source	No. of items
1.	Physical Vanity	(Hung et al., 2011)	5
2.	Achievement Vanity	(Hung et al., 2011)	4
3.	Brand consciousness	(Sprotles & Kendall, 1986)	7
4.	Private-consciousness	(Fenigstein et al., 1975)	8
5.	Public-consciousness	(Fenigstein et al., 1975)	8
6.	Conspicuous consumption	(Roy Chaudhuri, et al., 2011)	11
Total Number of Items			43

According to Spero and Stone (2004), consumers' motivations and reasons behind purchase decisions are prone to change with the change in the stage of the life cycle. Also, youngsters' purchases are mostly less conspicuous (e.g. clothing) than senior adults whose conspicuousness may be reflected by products like cars, houses, etc. (Spero & Stone, 2004). Therefore, to maintain consistency in the results, studies that focus on consumer behavior related to purchasing patterns and/or habits should target a specific age group only (Lewis & Moital, 2016). Keeping this in view, a sample was planned to be comprised of 18-35-year-old university students who shop from the clothing brands. The PLS-SEM technique was used for the data analysis and hypotheses testing because of its capability to run complex models and better predictive power in comparison to other SEM tools (Ali et al., 2018). SmartPLS 3 was used to run PLS-SEM and data was refined through data screening tools offered by SPSS version 25.

Respondent Profile

The sample is comprised of 45.3% (193) males and 54.7% (233) females with income from 0 to 500,000 Pkr/month. Table 2 presents a complete demographic profile of respondents. Data was collected through self-dissemination of the questionnaire as well as adopting online survey methods. Out of 465 responses obtained, 426 were found to be valid enough for their inclusion in statistical analyses. To ensure the quality of data, incomplete (with more than 15% missing values) and unengaged responses were highlighted and eliminated from the collected data. Additionally, by pointing out unusual response patterns, unengaged responses were also identified and discarded. Some examples of unusual response patterns include filled questionnaires with (a) single scale option selection (e.g., strongly agree) for all the items, (b) selection of more than one response (e.g., strongly agree as well as strongly disagree) for a single item, and/or (c) formation of specific shape (e.g., z-pattern) throughout the questionnaire. Furthermore, responses from the participants who highlighted themselves as not being brand-conscious were also eliminated.

Analysis and Results

As recommended by Hair et al., (2019), a two-stage analytical procedure was adopted for testing the proposed model. The first stage of analysis included the assessment of the measurement model and structural relationships were tested in the second stage of model testing (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 02: Demographic Profile of the respondents

Variable	Category	N	%	Variable	Category	N	%
Gender	Male	193	45.3	Family Income (per month)	Up to 50,000 PKR per month	90	21.1
	Female	233	54.7		Up to 100,000 PKR per month	210	49.3
	Total	426	100.0		Up to 150,000 PKR per month	53	12.4
Age	18-20 Years Old	112	26.3		Up to 200,000 PKR per month	35	8.2
	21-23 Years Old	163	38.3		Up to 400,000 PKR per month	27	6.3
	24-26 Years Old	95	22.3		More than 400,000 PKR per month	11	2.6
	27 and above	56	13.1		Total	426	100.0
	Total	426	100.0	Average spending on clothing (per month)	Up to 3,000 PKR per month	158	37.1
Preferred clothing brand	Domestic	352	82.6		Up to 6,000 PKR per month	182	42.7
	International	74	17.4		Up to 9,000 PKR per month	33	7.7
	Total	426	100.0		10,000 PKR or more	53	12.4
					Total	426	100.0

Measurement Model

Before moving on to measurement model assessment, the issue of multicollinearity needs to be checked. A variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value of lower than 5 is required for overcoming the collinearity issue (Becker et al., 2013), and the VIF values presented in Table 04 satisfy this requirement. Measurement model assessment involves analyzing the goodness of fits. For this purpose, the scale's reliability and validity were confirmed. The measurement model was found to be reliable as the values of Cronbach alpha, as well as composite reliability (CR), were greater than 0.7 (Henseler et al., 2014).

Table 03: Reliability of the measurement instrument

Sr. No.	Construct	Number of items	Cronbach Alpha
1.	Physical Vanity	5	0.816
2.	Achievement Vanity	4	0.775
3.	Private Self-Consciousness	5	0.755
4.	Public Self-Consciousness	4	0.740
5.	Brand Consciousness	6	0.865
6.	Conspicuous Consumption	10	0.922
	Overall	34	0.812

CR's value greater than 0.70, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of 0.50 or greater, and outer loading value of 0.60 or greater (Table 04) are reflective of convergent validity (Gholami et al., 2013).

Table 04: Values of Factor Loadings, CR, and AVE of the Measurement Model for Convergent Validity

Sr No.	Construct	Item	Loading	VIF (Outer)	CR	AVE
1.	Physical Vanity	PV1	0.764	1.818	0.873	0.579
		PV2	0.814	2.277		
		PV3	0.787	2.018		
		PV4	0.686	1.31		
		PV5	0.748	1.554		
2.	Achievement Vanity	AV1	0.704	1.37	0.856	0.598
		AV2	0.806	1.6		
		AV3	0.827	1.749		
		AV4	0.749	1.497		
		PrSC1	0.685	1.459		
3.	Private Self-Consciousness	PrSC2	0.758	1.64	0.836	0.516
		PrSC3	0.767	1.444		
		PrSC5	0.651	1.225		
		PrSC7	0.687	1.287		
		PuSC3	0.784	1.464		
4.	Public Self-Consciousness	PuSC4	0.753	1.481	0.837	0.563
		PuSC6	0.785	1.506		
		PuSC7	0.675	1.27		
		BC1	0.690	1.521		
		BC2	0.832	2.25		
5.	Brand Consciousness	BC3	0.762	1.963	0.899	0.598
		BC4	0.795	2.015		
		BC5	0.765	1.801		
		BC6	0.786	1.842		
		CC1	0.724	1.772		
6.	Conspicuous Consumption	CC3	0.765	2.111	0.935	0.589
		CC4	0.747	2.036		
		CC5	0.775	2.119		
		CC6	0.764	2.093		
		CC7	0.815	2.537		
		CC8	0.72	1.81		
		CC9	0.772	2.06		
		CC10	0.79	2.273		
		CC11	0.797	2.328		

Table 05: Hetrotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio for Discriminant Validity

	PV	AV	PrSC	PuSC	BC	CC
PV						
AV	0.222					
PrSC	0.734	0.431				
PuSC	0.678	0.535	0.809			
BC	0.407	0.375	0.571	0.616		
CC	0.387	0.412	0.563	0.629	0.872	

Additionally, the Fornell (1981) and Larcker criterion along with the Hetrotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio and cross-loadings were used to assess discriminant validity. As presented in Tables 05 & 06, the square root of AVE for all the constructs was greater than the correlation with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The HTMT values were also lower than 0.9 for all variables (Teo, Srivastava, & Jiang, 2008), and all indicators loaded significantly higher on the respective constructs that they measured (as compared to other variables). The value of all indicator loadings was also greater than 0.50 (Fabrigar et al., 1999; Usmani & Ejaz, 2020) which confirmed the discriminant validity of the measurement model.

Beta coefficient (P), t-statistic, and co-efficient of determination (R^2) are checked for assessing the

relationships between the variables (Hair et al., 2019). Following this, all hypothetical relationships between the variables of the study were analyzed. The structural model output results are provided in Figure 02.

Table 06: Fornell and Larcker (1981) Criterion for Discriminant Validity of Measurement Model						
	PV	AV	PrSC	PuSC	BC	CC
PV	0.761					
AV	0.18	0.773				
PrSC	0.582	0.335	0.711			
PuSC	0.536	0.405	0.608	0.75		
BC	0.351	0.31	0.47	0.496	0.783	
CC	0.346	0.353	0.48	0.525	0.773	0.768

Both PV ($P = 0.54$, $p < 0.05$) and AV ($P = 0.237$, $p < 0.05$) were found to share a significant positive relationship with private Self-Consciousness. Additionally, the relationship of PV ($P = 0.478$, $p < 0.05$) and AV ($P = 0.319$, $p < 0.05$) was also positive with the PuSC. Thus, H1 was fully supported by data. Physical ($P = 0.304$, $p < 0.05$) and Achievement ($P = 0.255$, $p < 0.05$) vanity also showed a positive association with brand consciousness. On the basis of these results, H2 was also fully accepted. The relationship between PrSC ($P = 0.074$, $p > 0.05$) and CC was found to be positive but insignificant due to which H3a was rejected. On the other hand, PuSC ($P = 0.142$, $p < 0.05$) was found to be positively and significantly associated with CC, considering which H3b was accepted. Hence, H3 was partially accepted. Finally, the strongest predictor of CC is the BC as its relation with CC was found to be highly significant and positive. Hence, H4 was also found to be supported by the data. The effect size (Z^2) of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 is considered nominal, medium, and large (Cohen, 1988). Following this guideline, the effect size of PV (on BC) and AV (on PrSC) was found to be nominal whereas the effect size of AV on BC and PuSC was found to be medium. The effect size of PV on Self-Consciousness (both private and public) and of BC on CC was found to be large (Table 07).

Table-07: Hypotheses Testing Summary									
Hypothesis	Relationship	β	SD	t-value	Support	R^2	f^2	Q^2	
H1	H1a	PV>>BC	0.304	0.048	6.346***	YES	0.182	0.109	0.107
	H1b	AV>>BC	0.255	0.042	6.170***	YES		0.078	
H2	H2a	PV>>PrSC	0.54	0.044	13.949***	YES	0.391	0.398	0.194
	H2b	AV>>PrSC	0.237	0.046	5.254***	YES		0.077	
	H2c	PV>>PuSC	0.478	0.039	13.949***	YES	0.383	0.359	0.212
	H2d	AV>>PuSC	0.319	0.035	8.995***	YES		0.161	
H3	H3	BC>>CC	0.679	0.034	19.743***	YES		0.958	
H4	H4a	PuSC>>CC	0.142	0.045	3.162**	YES	0.641	0.047	0.37
	H4b	PrSC>>CC	0.074	0.041	1.752 ^{NS}	NO		0.001	

The predictive power of all independent variables was assessed through a coefficient of determination (R^2) and predictive relevance or explanatory power (Q^2) for each dependent variable. R^2 of 0.25, 0.50, and 0.75 is interpreted as small, moderate, and substantial respectively (Hair et al., 2011) whereas Q^2 value of 0.02, 0.25, and 0.50 is indicative of little, moderate, and large model's predictive power (Hair et al., 2019). Considering this, R^2 of BC (0.182), PrSC (0.391), and PuSC (0.383) were construed to be weak. However, variance in CC due to vanity, brand, and self-consciousness was found to be moderate as these variables were found to be responsible for explaining a 64.1% variance in conspicuous consumption. Additionally, the Q^2 of PrSC, PuSC, and BC was found to be small whereas the Q^2 of target variable CC was found to be moderate (Table 07).

Moderation

The categorical moderation was assessed through the technique of multi-group analysis (MGA) in SmartPLS3 software. For running MGA, requirements of minimum sample size (Hult et al., 2008; Hair et al., 2019) and measurement invariance (Matthews, 2017) were fulfilled. The results of MGA showed that the relationships between PV and PuSC ($p^{\text{male}} - p^{\text{female}} = -0.287$, $p < 0.01$), PV and BC ($p^{\text{male}} - p^{\text{female}}$

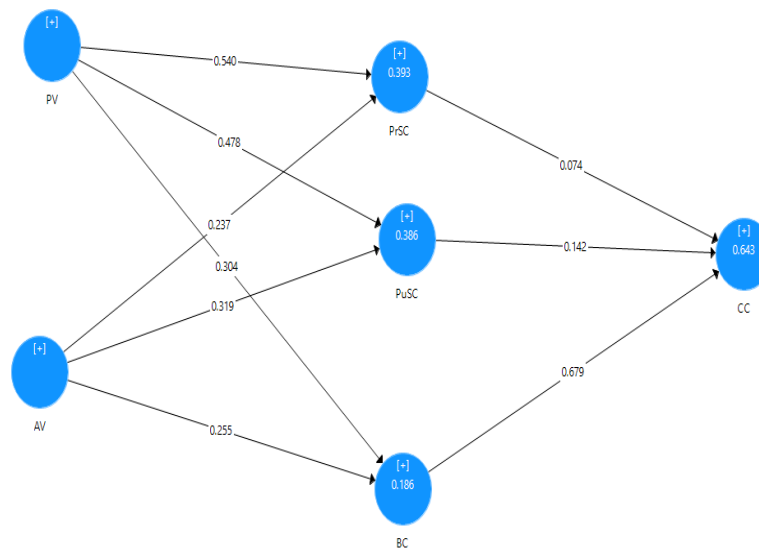
= 0.43, $p < 0.01$) and AV and BC ($p^{\text{male}} - p^{\text{female}} = 0.428$, $p < 0.01$) were found to be moderated by gender. Following this, only H5b from H5 was accepted and H6 was also fully supported by the data. All other moderating hypotheses (H5a, H5c, & H5d) were rejected. The summary of MGA results is provided in Table 08.

Table-08: Multi-Group Analysis Results for Testing of Categorical Moderation

Hypothesis	Relationship	β (Male)	β (Female)	$\beta^{\text{male}} - \beta^{\text{female}}$	t-statistic	Moderation
H5	H5a PV>>PrSC	0.427	0.557	-0.131	1.492 ^{NS}	NO
	H5b PV>>PuSC	0.304	0.591	-0.287	3.184 ^{**}	YES
	H5c AV>>PrSC	0.228	0.247	-0.019	0.195 ^{NS}	NO
	H5d AV>>PuSC	0.36	0.307	0.053	0.715 ^{NS}	NO
H6	H6a PV>>BC	0.45	0.02	0.43	4.673 ^{***}	YES
	H6b AV>>BC	0.541	0.113	0.428	5.363 ^{***}	YES

It was also found that the relationship between PV and PuSC was significantly stronger when females were taken into account whereas the relationship between vanity (both physical and achievement) and BC was stronger for males as compared to the females.

Figure-02: PLS-SEM Output Results (Diagrammatic)



Importance-Performance Matrix Analysis (IPMA)

According to Hair et al. (2019), a new dimension can be added to the overall understanding of the research by utilizing insights from IPMA. IPMA provides the relative direct as well as indirect effects of all variables on the final target variable (Hair et al., 2019) by using overall estimates of the model. The two major outcomes of IPMA are index values (which depict the importance of the variable) and performance scores (which highlight the performance of each variable (Hair et al., 2019)). As can be seen from Table 09, the most important variables are BC (0.736) and PV (0.365) as per their total effects. This means (in light of the model of study) that BC is highly responsible for triggering CC behavior and it is driven by the PV of a person. On the other hand, the performance (index value) of all variables is significantly high in determining a change in the target endogenous variable CC. Even though the variables of Self-Consciousness and BC are ranked higher for their performance, they still have little relevance if the total effects of BC and PV are taken into account.

Table 09: Total Effects and Index Values (from IPMA)

Construct	Total Effect	Index Values (Performance)
AV	0.26	62.723
BC	0.736	62.981
PV	0.365	71.637
PrSC	0.034	69.159
PuSC	0.2	69.509

Discussion

The positive relationship between PV and PrSC as well as PuSC confirms and extends the results found by Lee and Workman (2014) by establishing a positive causal link between the two constructs. This means vanity views and concerns make the individual privately as well as publicly self-conscious. Additionally, the positive association of both physical and achievement vanity with BC (found in this study) corresponds to the results of Sharda et al. (2019) who also reported the mediating effect of BC between vanity and luxury purchase intentions. This study's results extend these studies' findings by testing the collaborative effect of vanity, self-consciousness, and BC on consumption behaviors adopted by consumers. Additionally, the positive associations found between vanity and self-consciousness confirm the results of Lee (2010) and also extend the results of this study by highlighting that these relationships are also existent for males as the prior study examined data from females only (Lee, 2010).

Furthermore, the current study provides the consequences of these interactions in the form of conspicuous consumption. The causal relationship that is found between vanity and BC also extends the results of Workman and Lee (2013) which only highlighted the existence of correlative relationships between these variables. Since vanity is reflective of inflated views and concerns of the person about his/her appearance and/or achievements, luxury clothing brands provide the image of glamour by claiming the ability of the products through enhancement of physical appearance along with communicating the esteemed status of the possessor backed by prestigious brand image. This nature of brands appeals to vain consumers and justifies the positive relationship between AV and luxury purchase intention as reported by Hung et al. (2011).

The relationship of SC and BC with CC was also tested in this research by taking into account the individual effects of both dimensions of self-consciousness on conspicuous consumption. PrSC did not show any significant relationship for influencing the CC behavior in this study. The reported effects of PrSC on consumption behaviors are inconsistent across previous studies (Kapoor & Munjal, 2019; Nezlek, Mochort, & Cyprianska, 2019; Solomon & Schopler, 1982). For instance, Kapoor and Munjal (2019); Solomon and Schopler (1982) found no correlative relationships between PrSC and the formation of clothing selection but Nezlek et al. (2019) reported a significant positive association of the variable with self-presentational motives. The inconsistent results found in all those related studies including this one could be due to cultural differences. Privately self-conscious persons in different cultures may behave differently. This can be said based on the fact that all these studies (including the current one) were conducted by using the data of individuals who belonged to different cultures. However, the current study sheds light on the fact that PrSC does not play a significant role in motivating a person to consume conspicuously, especially if a consumer comes from Punjab, Pakistan.

On the other hand, PuSC showed a positive association with CC. This outcome of the study corresponds to Giovannini et al. (2015); Soh, Rezaei, and Gu (2017) where the PuSC was found to be positively related to the purchase intention of luxury clothing brands. The reason behind such a relationship of PuSC with intentional as well as consumption-related variables is quite obvious. The desire to look good and be perceived favorably by the people of the social circle motivates an individual to purchase from luxury clothing brands because these brands come with a promise of enhancing physical outlook along with symbolic meanings attached to the brand. However, it is also true that BC is triggered by PuSC which as a result contributes toward the formation of CC behavior but the results revealed that PuSC has its effect on CC even when BC is not present between two variables as a mediator. Additionally, the effect for

which BC is responsible for influencing CC is far greater than the effect caused by PuSC. Hence the biggest contributor to CC is BC which is also shown by the IPMA results. The IPMA results also indicated that where the biggest contributor of CC is BC, the most prominent effect on BC is through PV. This means the concerns and views to look physically attractive make the person brand conscious and due to this BC, an individual consumes conspicuously. Our results also confirm the assertions made by Mayasari et al. (2022) by presenting data-based evidence for the significant role of PV in the purchase behavior of customers in the (perceived) luxury fashion industry for original brands (Mayasari et al., 2022).

PV which is influenced by the BC, PrSC, and PuSC comparatively stronger in the initial chain of relationships too. This result is surprising because BC has always been strongly associated with variables like AV. The results of the study correspond to the results of all related previous studies in terms of the relationships that exist between PuSC (or social influence/pressure), BC (or brand prominence and/or perception), and Consumption practices e.g. purchase intention and/or purchase behavior, attitude toward the purchase, CC, etc. (Cheah et al., 2015; Giovannini, et al., 2015; Janpors, Raeisi Ziarani, & Taghavi, 2023; Ki & Kim, 2016; Mayasari et al., 2022; Nezlek et al., 2019; Sharda & Bhat, 2019; Siyao, 2021; Soh, Rezaei, & Gu, 2017; Xu, 2021; Zhang & Kim, 2013). The results shown by MGA for gender differences were surprising because males are more associated with AV and females are believed to rank higher on PV (Huang, Kumar, & Hu, 2018). Similarly, females were also found to be more brand conscious than males in previous related studies (Workman & Lee, 2013) but the results of the current study are contrary to this as MGA showed a relationship between vanity and BC was stronger when the males were taken into account as compared to females. This means, in the case of consumers from Punjab, Pakistan, males are more likely to be motivated to purchase from brands due to their physical appearance as well as achievement-related communication goals as compared to females. This coincides with the results of Workman, Lee, and Liang (2022) where males' obsession with their physical appearances was directly linked with social media usage. However, It should be noted that this study did not gender differences like the current study did to report higher physical vanity among males in Pakistan but logically interpret the current study's findings, the results may indicate significantly higher usage of social media among Pakistani male consumers as compared to females (Workman et al., 2022). On the other hand, females were found to be more publicly self-conscious based on their physical appearance. This indicates the fact that females view themselves more on the basis of people's opinions about their physical appearance. This also means that females are more likely to consume conspicuously to achieve their goals related to gaining positive opinions about their looks from the ones within their social circle and these opinions are even more important than what females think about themselves in terms of their appearances.

Implications

Theoretical

Different variables were identified that portray the phenomenon (or part of it) described by the respective theory. After highlighting those variables, they were integrated into the model with the help of existing pieces of evidence of the inter-relationships in the light of previous studies and theoretical knowledge. The study then tested the interactive relationships between the variables through which theories were tested, validated, and confirmed by the results of those tests. The variables that were highlighted at the beginning of the study and examined in the study did not have their causality defined and tested in any of the studies available in the literature (in terms of collective effects). The current research work adds to that knowledge (within the literature) by providing the nature and direction of the relationships between the variables for the first time. Where past studies highlighted the luxury or CC concerning vanity and SC only in terms of correlative relationships between the constructs (Lee & Workman, 2014; Workman & Lee, 2011, 2013) and/or identifying the causal relationships of the variables by taking limited variables into account (Balabanis & Stathopoulou, 2021; Giovannini et al., 2015; Khan et al., 2023; Kumagai & Nagasawa, 2023; Nagpaul & Pang, 2017; Sharda & Bhat, 2019; Siyao, 2021; Soh, Rezaei, & Gu, 2017; Xu, 2021; Waqar et al., 2023), the current work adds up to the body of literature by providing and validating a model in which a combined effect and causality of variables including vanity, self-

consciousness, and BC are assessed about conspicuous consumption. This not only advances the knowledge of consumer behavior in the industry but also provides a starting point for understanding how the variables can be influenced to reach desired marketing goals.

Practical

As far as the practical understanding and/or modification of a business model is concerned, the business tries to make perfect products to suit the personality of the customer so that the popularity of the brand among its customers can be maximized and so are the sales. As presented by the results of this research, when (fashion clothing) brand tries to design its marketing communications (e.g., advertising theme, campaign, or strategy) to make its products (garments and other fashion accessories related to garments) appealing to the target customers, the factors that are required to be taken into account include Vanity, Public Self-Consciousness and Brand Consciousness where Physical Vanity and Brand Consciousness are the most important ones. Designing communications that enhance these elements in the minds of the target customers about the products can result in maximum effectiveness leading to maximum sales as well as the brand's image. Not only these factors can boost sales but can also aid in capturing a distinct image in the minds of the customers which can result in repeat purchases. Young customers want to become more and more physically attractive by using fashion clothing products and the goal of communicating wealth through these brands is minimal (yet existent) as compared to the goals related to physical appearance. The marketing communications and efforts should be directed toward making the customers believe that the products make them look their best rather than trying to attach other meanings (which requires additional efforts that could not be of so much value and importance) to their products. This will aid (Physical) Vanity views and concerns of the customers that make them brand conscious; and which in result, brings the financial streams into the business.

The other perspective is sustainable consumption. Since conspicuous consumption does not refer to the idea of a well-balanced and productive economy, the study provides the factors that can be looked upon when the goal is to manage the consumption patterns in such a way that it could lead to sustainable consumption. Excessive orientation of individuals towards vanity aids in the development of excessive emphasis on self and brand consciousness due to which abnormal consumption patterns arise which heightens unproductive economic indicators. Hence, the actors responsible for managing and encouraging sustainable consumption can keep the narcissistic factors in check whenever the situation seems to move out of the picture of productive consumption leading to imbalanced economic elements.

Limitations and Future Directions

First of all, data from a limited geographic segment (Punjab, Pakistan) of customers was collected and analyzed in this research. Therefore, results may not be generalizable to customers from other countries. Hence, future studies can be conducted to test the relevance of the model in explaining the CC behavior of customers from different countries and cultures. Second, the study was limited to a specific group (university students) which is not reflective of the entire customer base of clothing brands. Future studies could be undertaken to study the effectiveness of the model to predict the CC behavior by taking into account the entire customer base of the clothing brands. Third, the research work presents the results that are illustrative of only one industry (fashion clothing brands) and may not be applicable to depict the consumption motivations of consumers from other industries e.g., automobile, and electronic industry. Considering this, future studies may be conducted for studying the CC's determinants in other industries where products are used by consumers conspicuously e.g., the smartphone industry. Additionally, the research assessed the categorical differences for only one group (gender) whereas differences that exist among other groups (e.g., based on income, occupation, etc.) are also worth the attention. Therefore, future studies can on studying differences among such groups toward CC. Finally, the tested psychological constructs predicted only 64.3% of the variance in CC. This indicates the room for other psychological constructs in the model that can be tested to increase the predictability of CC. Future studies could be undertaken to add and assess the effects of other psychological variables in the presented model.

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