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DRESS WITH FINESSE

HOW PEOPLE SEE LOGOTYPES AS STATUS

Carolina Maria Ranita Rodrigues de Coco

Dissertation Proposal presented as partial requirement for obtaining the Master's degree in Statistics and Information Management with specialization in Marketing Research and CRM

NOVA Information Management School
Instituto Superior de Estatística e Gestão de Informação

Universidade Nova de Lisboa

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ABSTRACT

Logotypes are a part of a brand's identity. They are responsible for the recognizability of the brand and what it stands for. Research has shown that buying products that are easily recognizable by others is a form of being a status or a conspicuous consumer or both. This research aims to determine what are the reasons behind consumers wearing clothes that have logotypes on them. Building on existing literature it asks: to what extent does status, conspicuousness, self-monitors, self-esteem, materialism, brand loyalty, opinion seekers and leaders, and gender influence the decision of wearing visually branded clothing?

To achieve this goal, we propose a conceptual model that combines the mentioned variables. A scenario-based online questionnaire was conducted amongst 206 Portuguese individuals and the proposed model was later tested using PLS-SEM estimation. The results indicate that materialism, conspicuous consumers and brand loyalty affect the decision of wearing logotyped clothes. Meanwhile, status consumers, self-monitors, self-esteem, opinion seeker and leaders are not significant in explaining the target variable. Future research should expand the research to different countries and age groups to make sure the sample is more representative as well as use different methodologies such as scenario-based lab experiments.

KEYWORDS

Status, Logotypes, Brand Conspicuousness, Consumer Behaviour, Fashion

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1. INTRODUCTION

“Logos and branding are so important. In a big part of the world, people cannot read French or English - but are great in remembering signs” — Karl Lagerfeld

Consider the following sneaker: a plain white tennis shoe, a green detail on the heel and white shoelaces. It might sound like any other pair of white sneakers, but these characteristics describe one of the most iconic shoes in the world: the Adidas Stan Smith. Now imagine the situation where you have to choose between a pair of Stan Smiths and a pair of the same sneakers but without the Adidas logotype. Which one would you choose to wear? Figure 1 depicts this.

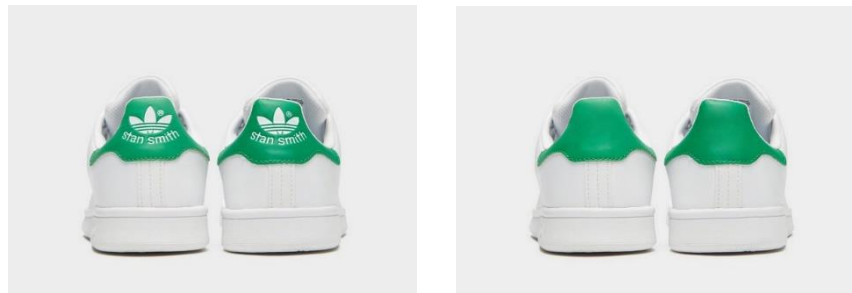


Fig. 1. – Stan Smith Tennis Shoes

As nowadays the corporate environment is increasingly visually oriented Foroudi et al. (2014), it is easy to see the importance of logotypes on consumerism. Branding a company's product with its logotype is crucial for consumers to recognize the brand and be top-of-mind (Sharma and Sharma, 2015).

Logotypes are a part of a brand's identity (Piko et al., 2017). They are responsible for the recognizability of the brand and what it stands for. Whilst in the corporate identity, the logotype is the most complex element, it stands for the mission, power, goals and culture of the company (Piko et al., 2017), in the consumer world, the logotype is often present in clothing. In addition, clothing is highly suggestive of an individual's status (Oh et al., 2020). As it is a highly logotype labelled product, it can be seen as status symbols¹. We can easily link how a logotype on a piece of clothing can become something that a consumer obtains to gain status and to be seen by others, especially when the logotype represents a known brand.

Understanding the reasons behind an individual deciding to wear a visually branded item will enable marketers to develop efficient and effective strategies (Stankevich et al., 2017) helping them in advertising, promoting and product features. Obtaining information like this will offer competitive advantages and superior positions when compared to those who do not have it. This is one of the many reasons why marketers need to understand what motivates consumers to purchase certain products and services. Understanding this consumer behaviour will lead to superior tactics, strategies and positions in the market (Stankevich et al., 2017)

Whilst early studies focused mainly on explaining the reasons why people purchase goods for their visual effect on others, and the relationship between status and conspicuous consumerism (O' Cass

¹ Status symbols are defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as an object that people want to have because they think other people will admire them if they have it.

and McEwen, 2004; Veblen, 1898), little research has been done on the specific reasons behind wearing status symbols.

Therefore, this study aims to analyse the factors that influence the decision of wearing logotyped clothes. To do so we have developed a model that combines four variables (conspicuous consumer, status consumer, self-monitor, self-esteem, brand loyalty, materialism), one mediator (opinion seeker) and one moderator (gender) to understand the reasons why people wear logotyped clothes.

The research questions that arise from this context are the following:

- RQ1 - What are the factors that influence the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing?
- RQ2 - Does gender influence the relationship between conspicuous and status consumers and the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing?
- RQ3 - Does gender influence the relationship between self-esteem, self-monitoring, brand loyalty, materialism and the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing?
- RQ4 - Do status and conspicuous consumers influence the decision of wearing logotype branded clothes through being opinion seekers or opinion leaders?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND MODEL DEVELOPMENT

Many researchers have proposed different reasons behind the decision of wearing status symbols, the majority of them are based on Veblen (1898)'s theory. Written more than 100 years ago, Veblen (1898) was a pioneer in this field of research, stating that for one person to maintain a reputation it becomes indispensable to acquire goods, in his context specifically, to acquire properties. It remains, to this day, one of the most important theories to ever be written and to introduce the term conspicuous consumption. Moving from properties to conspicuous goods, Trigg (2001) defends Veblen (1898)'s work by stating even though the original formulation might be outdated the theory is more sophisticated than meets the eye and that it can be adapted to today's consumption society.

Nowadays, conspicuous consumption is commonly defined in terms of status consumption. In literature, these two terms are often used interchangeably, Eastman and Liu (2012) and Eastman and Eastman (2015) have defined status consumption as purchasing conspicuous items to acquire status, and they have not been the only ones. O'Cass and McEwen (2004), however, separate these two terms stating that status consumers focus on the purchase of status symbols as a way of acquiring prestige, and conspicuous consumers concentrate on buying status symbols to be viewed by others. O'Cass and McEwen (2004) developed a scale that shows that both concepts are related but must be treated differently. This scale is based on a self-assessing questionnaire about fashion clothing, being the most effective way of signaling status, and evaluates an individual's conspicuous and status tendencies. Truong et al. (2008) developed a 6 item scale, based on O'Cass and McEwen (2004)'s work, that also proves to show how status and conspicuousness cannot be used as the same.

In addition, the studies conducted by O'Cass and McEwen (2004), the authors were also relevant in understanding the reasons behind a consumer being conspicuous. Using self-administrated surveys, O'Cass (2000) developed a reliable and consistent 2-factor scale to assess the level of an individual's self-monitoring level. Later O'Cass and McEwen (2004), based on their previous studies, demonstrated how self-monitors, people who adjust their persona to fit in a specific social environment, are directly correlated with being a conspicuous consumer. This study along with Cass (2001) also states the influence that materialism and gender can have on status and conspicuous consumer.

Another relevant work in this field is Goldsmith et al. (1996)'s study on how clothing can signalize status, society's opinions, consumption and its scale development. Flynn et al. (1996), Goldsmith et al. (1996) and Goldsmith and Clark (2008) do a remarkable and pioneer work on linking opinion leadership and opinion seeking to the consumption of clothes. Using a questionnaire, Goldsmith et al. (1996) show how status and conspicuous consumer are more likely to care about other's opinions. Flynn et al. (1996) develop a scale that measures if an individual is an opinion leader or opinion seeker in the context of fashion consumption. This consistent and reliable scale consists of 19 easily administered questions that are adaptable to a variety of subjects and summarizes behaviour patterns for specific product fields (Flynn et al., 1996).

Podoshen and Andrzejewski (2012) go further in trying to relate materialism, self-esteem and brand loyalty to conspicuous consumption. Using a 3-factor materialism assessment scale adapted from Richins and Dawson (1992) and a 3 item brand-loyalty scale adapted from Ailawadi et al. (2001). Podoshen and Andrzejewski (2012) conclude that goods are purchased for social status reasons in the society; they make a direct link to materialism and conspicuous consumers, as well as brand loyalty playing a reinforcing role in repeat materialistic purchases (i.e. status symbols). In addition, Podoshen and Andrzejewski (2012) relate low self-esteem with an increase in consumption of status symbols.

Later, the construct of self-esteem shows itself important to this context when Truong and McColl (2011) state that self-esteem acts as an important motivator for purchasing status symbols. This construct was also a target of research by Rosenberg (1965) who developed one of the most widely used self-report scales for evaluating an individual's level of self-esteem.

From the above literature review, this research will use the important antecedents to examine the factor underlying the decision to wear status symbols. As the literature shows, this decision is influenced by the consumer being conspicuous, status consumer or both; by the level of self-monitoring tendencies, self-esteem, brand loyalty, materialism; how much does an individual care about others' opinions and how gender plays and affects all of these.

2.1 CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

2.1.1 STATUS CONSUMERS AND CONSPICUOUS CONSUMERS

Logotyped clothing that is worn as status symbols are one of the most effective ways of signaling an individual's wealth and social hierarchy to others (Goldsmith et al., 1996), therefore wearing this type of apparel is a sort of conspicuous consumption.

As stated previously O'Cass and McEwen (2004) argue that literature treats these two concepts interchangeably as if they overlapped. They later separated them whilst conspicuous consumers buy in the hopes of being visually recognized by others, status consumers purchase to elevate their esteem. This means, however, as it is also stated, that consumers purchase status symbols because they can either be status consumers, conspicuous consumers, or both (O'Cass and McEwen, 2004).

We propose the following:

H1: Conspicuous Consumers will have a significant positive effect on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing.

H2: Status Consumers will have a significant positive effect on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing.

2.1.2 THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SOCIETY'S OPINIONS

Social relationships play a big part in the status-seeking world. Two types of individuals arise from the part that society plays in consumption: opinion leaders and opinion seekers. Opinion leaders affect and influence others behaviours in specific product fields and opinion seekers seek advice from others when deciding on what to do (Flynn et al., 2000). These two constructs were defined by (Flynn et al., 2000) as not correlated, i.e., in a specific product field, one is either an opinion leader or an opinion seeker, they cannot be both.

Consumers who are concerned about the influence that their clothes have on their social status will ensure that their position is maintained by either worrying about the opinion of others (Goldsmith et al., 1996) – opinion seekers - or by engaging in the purchase of status symbols to make sure their influence and advice are heard (Schaefer, 2014) – opinion leaders.

Status originates from the opinions that other members of the society make on an individual's position, and for this position to be established there needs to be a display of wealth (Trigg, 2001). Following Trigg (2001)'s statement, it can be said that consumers that are of the conspicuous and/or status type, i.e. purchase items to be viewed by others or to acquire prestige, will display their status symbols to

the society. Consequently, opinions will be generated on said symbols by their peers and the end goal of acquiring prestige and being noticed will be met.

Logically, being an opinion seeker or opinion leader serves as a mediator between these consumers and the decision of wearing branded apparel. On the one hand, Goldsmith and Clark (2008) argue that consumers who are opinion seekers place more emphasis on the opinions of others than other consumers because of the social importance of fashionable clothing and Flynn et al., (1996) were successful in showing that there is a positive correlation between being an opinion seeker and a status symbol consumer. On the other hand, Schaefer (2014) state that opinion leaders engage in the purchase of status symbols to maintain their social position.

This means that naturally, it is impossible to ignore the influence that society's opinions have on being a consumer since it motivates consumption to status and conspicuous consumers in the first place. Hence:

H3a: Opinion leaders mediate the relationship between conspicuous consumers and the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing.

H3b: Opinion seekers mediate the relationship between conspicuous consumers and the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing.

H4a: Opinion leaders mediate the relationship between status consumers and the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing.

H4b: Opinion seekers mediate the relationship between status consumers and the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing.

2.1.3 SELF-MONITORING

The concept of self-monitoring is related to the desire to fit in. High-level self-monitors will display higher norm-behaviour consistency than lower-level self-monitors, who will act consistently independently of the social environment (Goldsmith and Clark, 2008).

Self-monitoring is about controlling and adjusting one's self-presentation and attitudes to different social situations to ensure a front is maintained. Not only do Goldsmith and Clark (2008) argue that individuals who are high-level self-monitor will pay more attention to the social environment as a reference for making product selections, but also state that they are more conscious of what others think of their purchases and usage of products. I.e. self-monitors use conspicuous products (such as logotyped clothing) to convey an image of themselves to those around them (Goldsmith and Clark, 2008; O'Cass and McEwen, 2004).

High-level self-monitors emphasize their conspicuous apparel so that others notice them and disapprove or approve and, consequently, fit in or not. Adjusting one's clothing to the social environment demonstrates that conspicuousness is essential for self-monitors who want to be accepted by others and become part of their reference group (O'Cass and McEwen, 2004).

We hypothesize that:

H5: Self-monitors will have a significant positive effect on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing.

2.1.4 SELF-ESTEEM

According to Banister and Hogg (2004), an important motivator for purchasing status symbols as is the improvement of self-esteem. In literature, however, there is a clash of opinions on how the level of self-esteem of an individual affects consumerism. While some authors connect low self-esteem with an increase in consumption of status symbols as a way of compensatory consumption (Podoshen and Andrzejewski, 2012; Rucker and Galinsky, 2008), others state that individuals with high self-esteem are the ones that are confident enough to be conspicuous consumers and should not be related negatively to consumption (Chaudhuri et al., 2011).

To our minds, these conflicting opinions and ideas prove to show that more research needs to be done. We hypothesize that:

H6: The level of an individual's self-esteem will have a significant impact on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing

2.1.5 BRAND LOYALTY

Podoshen and Andrzejewski (2012) state that when deciding on status symbols, consumers will choose the brand they consider to be regarded as a prestige and status brand. In addition, the status and conspicuous consumer will choose the brand they know is well-known to minimize the risk of their behaviour not being accepted. The trust that consumers put in a brand supports positive perceptions and opinions towards the brand's products (Podoshen and Andrzejewski, 2012). This risk-minimizing behaviour is consistent with the concept of brand loyalty.

Not only does brand loyalty signify a preference in the consumer buying decision for a certain brand but also it means that a consumer's behaviour towards the brand consists of repeat purchases (Coelho et al., 2018; Phau & Cheong, 2009). Naturally, we can state an individual who wears a logotyped apparel of a brand due to its conspicuous or status nature is loyal to that brand – it is regarded and trusted by the individual's peers, bringing prestige, status and notice. This is also consistent with what O'Cass and Frost (2002) argue, that brands can be seen as symbols for status. We can suppose that if a brand's products are seen as a status symbol and if an individual wears these due to being a status or conspicuous consumer, then brand loyalty will arise from these decisions.

H7: Brand loyalty will have a significant positive effect on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing.

2.1.6 MATERIALISM

Much like self-monitors, materialists are consumers who attempt to portray an image of status and prestige using material possessions such as fashion clothing (Cass, 2001). Materialism favours the use of these possessions to ensure that their identity is met, therefore, possessions play a central part in a materialist life. Cass (2001) also argues that the importance of having materials relies on the ability to convey status, success and prestige.

It becomes clear how this concept can be related to the wearing of visually branded clothing. When materialists try to portray their identity to others around them, they will often use apparel as the most efficient way to convey their status, success, and prestige (Goldsmith et al., 1996).

According to Podoshen and Andrzejewski (2012), understanding materialism is of much importance in the era of consumption where the desired life is based on the display of status symbols. From a marketing point of view, materialists engage in the consumption of status symbols. Understanding how to lure them in the purchase of apparel and other goods becomes key to a good marketing strategy.

We hypothesize:

H8: Materialism will have a significant positive effect on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing.

2.1.7 THE MODERATING ROLE OF GENDER

— Conspicuous, Status Consumption and Materialism – H9, H10 and H14

There is evidence that men are more concerned about status and are more likely to engage in “show off” displays than women (Cass, 2001). Status, conspicuous consumption and materialism have been proven to be correlated with gender (Podoshen and Andrzejewski, 2012), where men have a higher probability of being status, conspicuous consumers and materialist than women. However, studies like Hogue et al. (2013) distinguish between product fields – women are more prone to status symbols when it comes to clothes, men are more prone to durable goods (e.g. cars). Podoshen and Andrzejewski (2012) also propose that women will give more importance to status symbols because of their self-expression nature. The number of studies on this subject is small and therefore needs further investigating.

— Self-monitors – H11

When it comes to self-monitors, men show higher self-monitoring tendencies than women, they are more likely to fake certain characteristics to fit in with others and maintain a front (Kling et al., 1999; Pallier, 2003). Therefore, we can predict that men will be more likely to wear logotypes on apparel than women.

— Self-esteem – H12

Moreover, gender differences have been stated to exist in terms of self-confidence, where men are generally more confident than women (Podoshen and Andrzejewski, 2012). We predict that men will have higher self-esteem than women, and therefore will be more likely to wear visually branded clothing with logotypes.

— Brand Loyalty – H13

Women appear to be more likely than men to care about loyalty (Rialti et al., 2017). Studies like Rocereto and Mosca (2012) state that women are significantly more involved in hedonic products than men due to their ease of emotional expression. Additionally, repeat brand purchases and emotional attachment to the brand are more present in the female gender than in the male gender (Rocereto

and Mosca, 2012). We predict that women will have more brand loyalty than men and therefore will be more likely to wear logotyped clothing of the brand they are loyal to.

We propose the following:

H9: *Gender moderates status consumerism on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing.*

H10: *Gender moderates conspicuous consumerism on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing, where men will be more likely to be conspicuous consumers than women.*

H11: *Gender moderates self-monitors on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing, where men will be more likely to be self-monitors than women.*

H12: *Gender moderates self-esteem on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing, where men will be more likely to have higher self-esteem than women.*

H13: *Gender moderates brand loyalty on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing, where women will be more brand loyal.*

H14: *Gender moderates materialism on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing, where women will be more brand loyal.*

Figure 2 illustrates the conceptual model for the decision to wear logotyped clothing.

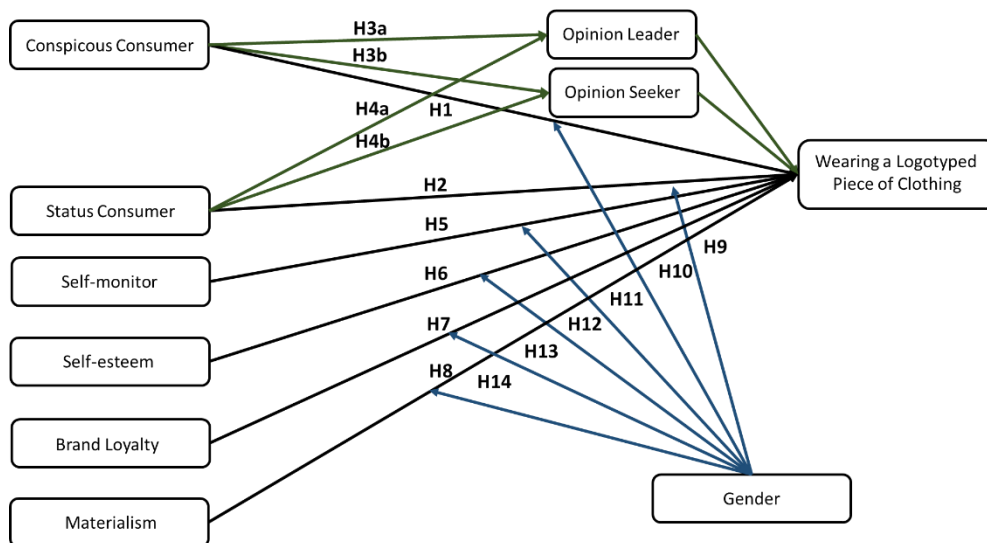


Fig. 2. – Conceptual Model

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

As this thesis aims to study the reasons behind wearing logotyped apparel we define the population as people who have been living in Portugal for the past year and who currently own at least a piece of logotyped clothing.

The sample followed a non-probabilistic convenience sampling method and was composed of a subset of the target population. The research was carried out amongst individuals that ensure differences in age, demographics and backgrounds.

Size of the sample

According to Hair et al. (2017), the minimum sample size requirements must be 10 times the largest number of structural paths directed at a particular construct in the structural model. As the model proposed is a reflective measurement model in which the indicators for each construct are correlated, we can state that our minimum sample size requirement is 70 as our largest number of structural paths directed at a particular construct in the model is 7.

3.2 DATA COLLECTION

Procedure and Questionnaire

To collect data the modified self-administrated online questionnaire was used. In line with the works of O'Cass and Fenech (2003), the online questionnaire provides a common touchpoint for all respondents and an easy-complete-and-return questionnaire. Additionally, an easy transferal of our observations to a statistical-analysis software is also ensured.

The questionnaire was based on three phases: a scenario-based questionnaire to test H1 and H2 followed by self-report questions to test H3 and H4 and H5, H6, H7 and H8 respectively. The constructs and items used can be found in Table 1. All items were measured using a seven-point range scale in each item, ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7). The summary of the questionnaire's path can be found in figure 3.

Conspicuous (CON)	
CON_1	This brand is a symbol of prestige.
CON_2	This brand attracts attention.
CON_3	This brand can be used to impress other people.
Status (STAT)	
STAT_1	This brand indicates a person's social status.
STAT_2	This brand a symbol of achievement.
STAT_3	This brand is a symbol of wealth.
Opinion Leader (OPL)	
OPL_1	My opinions influence what types of clothing other people buy.
OPL_2	When choosing what to wear, other people turn to me for advice.
OPL_3	What I say about clothing often changes other people's minds.
OPL_4	I often persuade other people to buy the clothing that I like.
Opinion Seeker (OPS)	
OPS_1	When I consider buying clothes I ask other people for advice.
OPS_2	I like to get others' opinions before I buy a piece of clothing.
OPS_3	When choosing what to wear, other people's opinions are important to me.
Self-monitoring (SM)	
SM_1	In social situations, I have the ability to alter my behaviour depending on the impression I wish to give them.
SM_2	When I feel that the image I am portraying isn't working, I can readily change it to something that does.
SM_3	I have found that I can adjust my behaviour to meet the requirements of any situation in which I find myself.
SM_4	Once I know what a situation calls for, it's easy for me to regulate my actions accordingly.
Selfesteem (SE)	
SE_1	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
SE_2	I am able to do things as well as most other people.
SE_3	I feel I have much to be proud of.
SE_4	I feel that I'm a person of worth.
SE_5	I take a positive attitude toward myself.
Materialism (MAT)	
MAT_1	I don't place much emphasis on the amount of material objects people own as a sign of success.
MAT_2	I don't pay much attention to the material objects other people own
MAT_3	I usually buy only the things I need.
MAT_4	I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned.
MAT_5	Buying things gives me a lot of pleasure.
MAT_6	I have all the things I really need to enjoy life.
MAT_7	I'd be happier if I could afford to buy more things.
Brand Loyalty (BL)	
BL_1	My favourite clothing brand is:
BL_2	I prefer this brand of most products I buy.
BL_3	I am willing to make an effort to search for my favourite brand.
BL_4	Usually, I care a lot about which particular brand I buy.

Table 1 - Questionnaire Summary

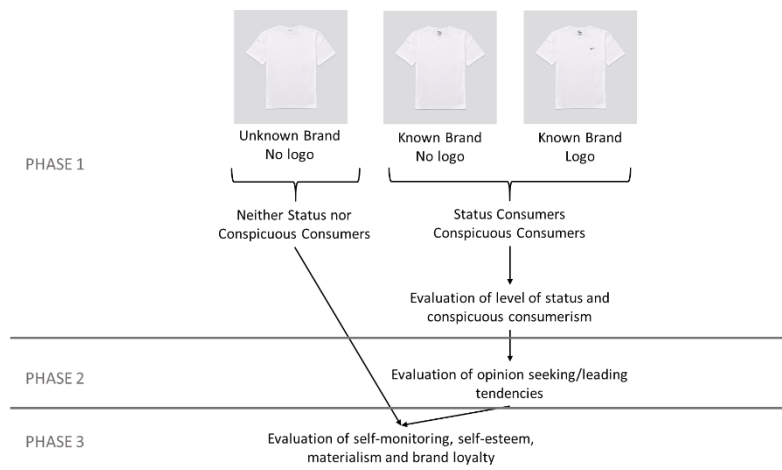


Fig. 3. - Summary of Experiment Paths

To minimize potential suspicions of what the aim of the questionnaire was, the participants were told that their memory would be tested after reading a short story. As some time had to pass between the reading and the questions – for memory decay - participants would work on the other phases of the questionnaire. The pre-test feedback showed no suspicion.

Much like Griskevicius et al. (2009) and (2010)'s work, the study had two motive conditions: 1. Status and Conspicuous (treatment) and 2. Control. Participants were randomly assigned to each group and were asked to read a short story that would either activate these motives or not. The treatment group story has been successfully used to elicit these motives in previous research (Griskevicius et al., 2009) and asks for participants to imagine graduating from college, looking for a job, and deciding to go work for a large company because it offers the greatest chance of moving up. The control group participants read about losing a set of keys before leaving the house to run errands and searching for them throughout the house. Both stories were supplied by Griskevicius et al.(2010).

Stage 1: Pre-testing

The self-administrated online questionnaire was developed using Qualtrics' online survey tools. It was administrated to 21 individuals belonging to the target population to determine the level of difficulty of both the questions interpreted by the target population and the answers given by them, the formation and sequence of the questions, the time spent to answer them and the analysis of the data (Malhotra and Dash, 2016). Consequently, three modifications were made to the questionnaire regarding wording, question order and brand used.

Stage 2: Main study

362 responses were collected. After cleaning the data set and handling all missing values, 206 responses were retrieved.

3.3. DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of our results was composed of two stages.

We first conducted descriptive statistics using the SAS software to have an overview of our sample as well as performed a chi-squared test to check if there are significant differences between the control and treatment group. Here, we tested if there was a significant correlation between the short story each individual read, and the decision taken when prompted to choose between two t-shirts – one with a logotype from a well-known brand and the second without any logotypes.

Secondly, we tested our hypothesis. Here, both the reflective and structural model were assessed with the SMARTPLS3 software using PLS-SEM (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling). PLS-SEM is based on the OLS regression which allows estimating cause-effect relationships using latent variables. When we have categorical data, like the target variable in this study, the standard PLS-SEM procedure cannot be applied, as OLS does not apply to discrete data. Despite this, authors like Lohmöller (1989) have proposed an extended PLS-SEM approach that uses discrete categorical data from experiments. Hair et al., (2019) proves to show that an appropriate and reliable approach to using this type of data consists of using the standard PLS-SEM algorithm with the inclusion of a few extra steps. These steps being: using Boolean variables, indicators of the variable must not be correlated, estimation with the PLS-SEM algorithm and rescaling and interpretation.

When analysing the reflective model, three criteria were used: indicator reliability, composite reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity. Additionally, when assessing the structural model, collinearity, R Squared and predictive relevance (Q Squared) were evaluated.

Lastly, to analyze the mediation and moderation effects we evaluate the path coefficients and indirect effects for each construct as well as the differences in path coefficients using a multigroup analysis, respectively. These results originate from a bootstrapping technique (Hair, 2017) with 5000 iterations of re-sampling, and each bootstrap sample constituted by the number of observations (206 observations).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was designed to identify the factors that explain why individuals wear status symbols as well as propose new strategies for clothing brands to better target their customers, i.e. better understand which customers are worth targeting their marketing efforts.

4.1 SAMPLE OVERVIEW

After cleaning the data set and handling all missing values, 206 responses were retrieved. Starting by analyzing descriptive statistics, the sample is composed of 65.5% ($n_f=135$) female individuals and 34.5% ($n_m=71$) male individuals. Ages vary between 17 and 62 years old. 22 years old being the most common age.

To test if the short story presented was significantly associated with the decision to wear a t-shirt with a logotype we performed a chi-square test. The results showed no association between the two different groups used and the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing ($\chi^2_{(1)}= 1.123$; $p=0.290$), this shows that the short stories provided by Griskevicius et al. (2010) were not successful in activating a status and conspicuous motive on the consumers as shown in table 2. Nonetheless, we can state that even though, the two groups do not have significant differences when it came to the t-shirt choice, option B was chosen the most out of the 2 options, which reassures us in terms of having conspicuous consumers on the sample.

Table of Group by T-shirt_Choice			
Group	T-shirt_Choice		
	A (no logo)	B (logo)	Total
CONTROL	45	60	105
TREATMENT	36	65	101
Total	81	125	206
Statistic	DF	Value	Prob
Chi-Square	1	1.123	0.289

Table 2 – Chi-square test between Group and T-shirt choice

4.2 REFLECTIVE MODEL ANALYSIS

According to Hair (2017), in exploratory research, the loadings of each indicator are considered acceptable when between 0.6 and 0.9. We ended up excluding 8 indicators (BL_1, SE_4, SE_5, SM_3, SM_4, MAT_3, MAT_4, MAT_6) that did not meet this criterion to get an optimal solution and to reach indicator reliability. We kept, however, 2 indicators that are just above the 0.9 criteria (SE_3 and SM_2) for acceptable loadings, as shown in table 3, following the outer loading relevance test that is based on the impact of the deletion of indicator on the AVE (Hair, 2017). This made sense, both theoretically and practically, to maintain due to it suggesting sufficient levels of composite reliability, all the values exceed the threshold of 0.708 indicating composite reliability (Hair, 2017). In terms of convergent validity, based on the AVE values, all constructs must be above 0.5 to be considered acceptable (Hair, 2017).

Latent Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	Outer Weight	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
BL	BL_2	0.827	0.280	0.899	0.749
	BL_3	0.902	0.388		
	BL_4	0.866	0.483		
CON	CON_1	0.805	0.489	0.863	0.678
	CON_2	0.879	0.412		
	CON_3	0.783	0.311		
MAT	MAT_1	0.788	0.374	0.811	0.521
	MAT_2	0.817	0.445		
	MAT_5	0.627	0.307		
	MAT_7	0.634	0.234		
OPL	OPL_1	0.808	0.230	0.900	0.692
	OPL_2	0.836	0.165		
	OPL_3	0.884	0.203		
	OPL_4	0.796	0.207		
OPS	OPS_1	0.851	0.186	0.909	0.769
	OPS_2	0.903	0.195		
	OPS_3	0.876	0.270		
SE	SE_1	0.804	0.200	0.908	0.768
	SE_2	0.889	0.378		
	SE_3	0.931	0.540		
SM	SM_1	0.856	0.428	0.896	0.812
	SM_2	0.944	0.671		
STAT	STAT_1	0.84	0.411	0.905	0.761
	STAT_2	0.889	0.361		
	STAT_3	0.889	0.376		

Table 3 - Reflective Measurement Model Analysis

Finally, when it came to discriminant validity, and according to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the square root of the AVE of each construct should be higher than the construct's highest correlation with any other construct in the model (Hair, 2017). This is the case of our model and therefore we have discriminant validity, as shown in table 4. The results obtained a guarantee that the measures used in this research are both reliable and valid.

	BL	CON	LOGO	MAT	OPL	OPS	SE	SM	STAT
BL	0.865								
CON	0.388	0.823							
LOGO	0.304	0.359	1.000						
MAT	0.399	0.324	0.361	0.722					
OPL	0.412	0.334	0.138	0.483	0.832				
OPS	0.199	0.310	0.213	0.340	0.298	0.877			
SE	0.139	0.156	0.087	-0.013	0.029	-0.008	0.876		
SM	0.170	0.357	0.087	0.313	0.268	0.183	0.120	0.901	
STAT	0.270	0.579	0.264	0.439	0.307	0.296	0.021	0.278	0.873

Table 4 - Fornell and Larcker Criteria

4.3 STRUCTURAL MODEL ANALYSIS

Collinearity among the predictor constructs is not a critical issue in the structural model as all VIF values are below the threshold of 5. Additionally, according to Hair (2017), the R Squared in the context of consumer behaviour is acceptable when above 0.2. As we can see, our target variable has 22.3% of its

variance explained. Finally, the values for Q Squared that are above 0 mean that the model has a good predictive relevance (Hair, 2017). As we can see in table 5, we have a predictive relevance of 0.169.

	VIF	R SQUARED	Q SQUARED
BL	1.403		
CON	1.821		
MAT	1.655		
OPL	1.475	0.131	0.082
OPS	1.216	0.117	0.079
SE	1.059		
SM	1.231		
STAT	1.705		
TSHIRT_wLOGO		0.235	0.176

Table 5 - Structural Measurement Model Analysis

The hypotheses were tested based on the level of significance in the path coefficient using the bootstrapping technique (Hair, 2017) with 5000 iterations of re-sampling, and each bootstrap sample constituted by the number of observations (206 observations). As shown in table 6, this test showed that out of fourteen path coefficients, four hypotheses were supported, whilst ten hypotheses failed to be confirmed. The result of the hypotheses testing is shown in figure 4.

	Path Coefficients	T Statistics	P Values
BL	0.139	2.009	0.045
CON	0.271	3.434	0.001
MAT	0.305	4.319	0.000
SE	0.047	0.641	0.522
SM	-0.104	1.551	0.121
STAT	-0.010	0.133	0.894

Table 6 – Path Coefficients Significances

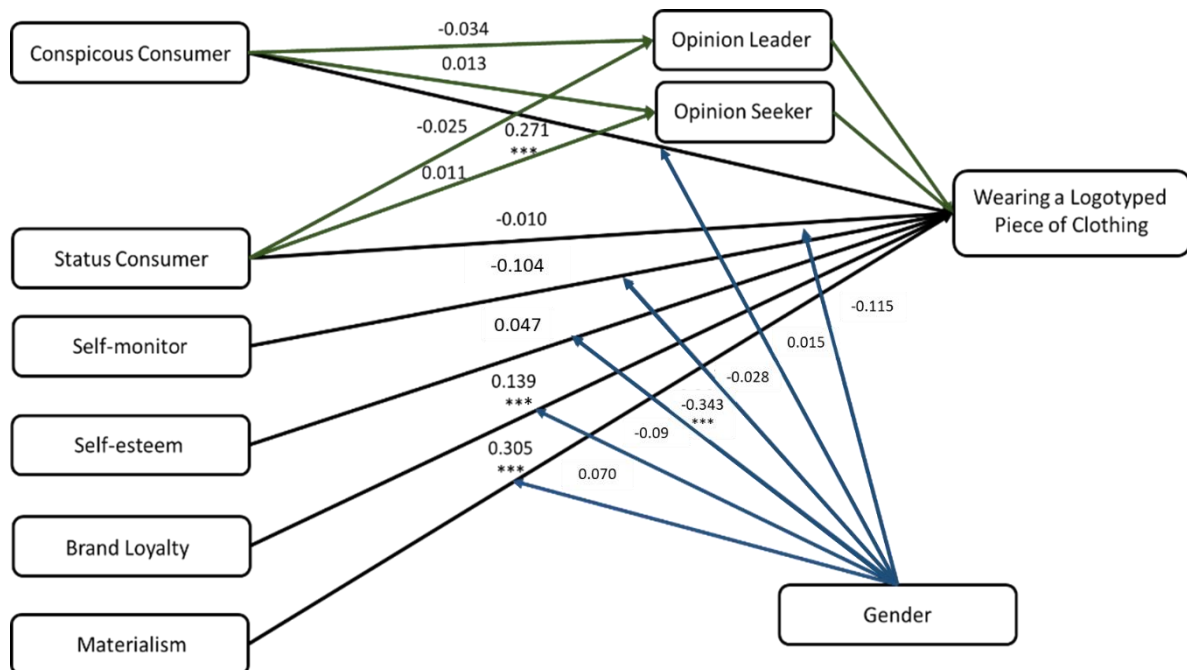


Fig. 4. - Summary of the Hypotheses supported

Previous studies suggest that status and reputation are assured when an individual acquires conspicuous goods (Trigg, 2001). In addition, many psychological factors can affect the purchasing of status symbols like the level of self-esteem, self-monitoring, materialism, and brand loyalty. Conspicuous consumers, materialism and brand loyalty were three factors that had a significant effect on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing, confirming hypotheses h1, h7 and h8. Materialism was the factor with the highest path coefficient (see table 2), i.e., the highest impact on the decision of wearing logotyped pieces of clothing, followed by conspicuous consumers and brand loyalty. These factors suggest that logotypes are worn as symbols of hierarchy, status and prestige when easily identifiable by others, i.e. conspicuous (Goldsmith et al., 1996), to gain recognition from their peers. These also relate to caring about the brand that is bought, paying attention to the objects other people own and attracting attention, respectively. In our study, a basic t-shirt from a well-known brand is seen as a symbol of prestige. We stress that a logotype from a well-known brand represents social status to others and it is worn, for this reason, consumers thrive to climb the social ladder and utilize their image to acquire this. Additionally, using a random logotype will not fulfil a consumer's need to be recognized by others, the logotypes come hand in hand with their brand. We can state that these consumers care about the specific logotype being used due to their level of loyalty to the brand (Podoshen and Andrzejewski, 2012). Naturally, those who use logotypes to portray an image of status will result in having high levels of materialism since materialists use possessions to ensure that their identity is met (Cass, 2001). The hypothesis confirmed are in line with the works of previous research (Cass, 2001; O'Cass and McEwen, 2004; Podoshen and Andrzejewski 2012).

Our study validates the relationship between these factors and the decision to wear clothes that have logotypes on them. The results obtained with PLS-SEM indicate that our model explains 23.5% of the variation in the target variable, meaning that conspicuous consumers, materialism and brand loyalty greatly explain the variance in the decision to wear a logotyped piece of clothing.

The same can be said to conspicuous consumers, to no surprise, conspicuous consumers are positively related to the decision of wearing logotypes on their clothes, especially those that other people can see or notice very easily. This is related not only to the purpose of displaying wealth but also to maintaining their hierarchical position in society (Bronner and de Hoog, 2018). Marketing efforts should be targeted at the conspicuous side of clothing, i.e., the side of clothing that attracts attention is eye-catching and offers a chance of promoting one's social position, these findings are in line with the works of Romão et al., (2019). Finally, brands should both attract new customers and reward already existing loyal customers with products they seek and want, that is, products that promise prestige, status and attention. This is in line with the works of Podoshen and Andrzejewski (2012) that state that a company that cares about their consumers and delivers them what they seek positively affects consumer attitudes. There is hardly a better way of delivering this than clothes that have a representing symbol of a premium brand. The wearing of status symbols will trigger, not only free advertising for the company as the apparel is noticed by others, but also repeat purchase behaviour in the successful cases (Phau and Cheong, 2009).

Table 7 summarizes the results of all hypothesis tested.

HYPOTHESIS	HYPOTHESIS STATEMENT	Path Coefficient (p value)	CONCLUSION
H1	Conspicuous Consumers will have a significant positive effect on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing.	0.271 (0.001)	H1 supported
H2	Status Consumers will have a significant positive effect on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing.	-0.010 (0.894)	H2 not supported
H3a	Opinion leaders mediate the relationship between conspicuous consumers and the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing.	-0.034 (0.114)	H3a not supported
H3b	Opinion seekers mediate the relationship between conspicuous consumers and the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing.	0.013 (0.395)	H3b not supported
H4a	Opinion leaders mediate the relationship between status consumers and the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing.	-0.025 (0.192)	H4a not supported
H4b	Opinion seekers mediate the relationship between status consumers and the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing.	0.011 (0.400)	H4b not supported
H5	Self-monitors will have a significant positive effect on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing.	-0.104 (0.121)	H5 not supported
H6	The level of an individual's self-esteem will have a significant impact on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing	0.047 (0.522)	H6 not supported
H7	Brand loyalty will have a significant positive effect on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing.	0.130 (0.045)	H7 supported
H8	Materialism will have a significant positive effect on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing.	0.305 (0.000)	H8 supported
H9	Gender moderates status consumerism on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing.	-0.115 (0.513)	H9 not supported
H10	Gender moderates conspicuous consumerism on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing, where men will be more likely to be conspicuous consumers than women.	0.015 (0.929)	H10 not supported
H11	Gender moderates self-monitors on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing, where men will be more likely to be self-monitors than women.	-0.028 (0.853)	H11 not supported
H12	Gender moderates self-esteem on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing, where men will be more likely to have higher self-esteem than women.	-0.343 (0.046)	H12 supported
H13	Gender moderates brand loyalty on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing, where women will be more brand loyal.	-0.098 (0.522)	H13 not supported
H14	Gender moderates materialism on the decision of wearing a logotyped piece of clothing, where women will be more brand loyal.	0.070 (0.650)	H14 not supported

Table 7 -Structural relationship test results

4.4 MEDIATION ANALYSIS

When looking at the significance levels for the mediation paths we see that all path coefficients are significant for a 95% confidence level except for STAT->OPL that is only significant for a 90% confidence level, as shown in table 8.

When it comes to the indirect effects, none are significant as all p-values are above 0.1. Our findings do not provide empirical support for the mediating role of opinion seekers and leaders in the decision to wear a logotyped piece of clothing. We can state that there is a direct only effect between all the constructs.

	Path Coefficient	Indirect Effects	T Statistics	P Values
CON -> OPL ->TSHIRT_wLOGO		-0.034	1.579	0.114
STAT -> OPL ->TSHIRT_wLOGO		-0.025	1.305	0.192
CON -> OPS ->TSHIRT_wLOGO		0.013	0.850	0.395
STAT -> OPS ->TSHIRT_wLOGO		0.011	0.842	0.400
CON -> OPL	0.235		2.987	0.003
CON -> OPS	0.209		2.459	0.014
STAT -> OPL	0.171		1.927	0.054
STAT -> OPS	0.175		1.983	0.047

Table 8 - Mediation Analysis

Whilst opinion seekers and leaders do not have a full mediating effect, they have a direct-only effect with status and conspicuous consumers, pointing to the importance of other's people's opinions. A consumer who cares about prestige, status and attracting attention will naturally care about the image they portray and the clothes they wear (Goldsmith et al., 1996), independent of that being a position of leadership or the following position, i.e., opinion leaders or seekers. Meaning that the opinions of others will always play a part in being a consumer who focuses on prestige and attention even if that does not relate to logotyped clothing. These findings are concise with Flynn et al. (2000) who states that consumers influence consumers based on their opinions. Following this, companies should take into consideration that their products' purchases will always be dependent on the opinions of consumers, whose opinions, might even be dependent on the opinion of their peers. Therefore, brands should not look at their consumers as one person who will purchase their products, but as a group of people that have the power of influencing each other and recommending products. Word-of-mouth is one of the most powerful tools brands can use and knowing that consumers influence each other is the first step to successful marketing actions.

4.5 MODERATION ANALYSIS

By performing a multigroup analysis we can state, based on the differences of the path coefficients, gender has a moderating effect in one construct – self-esteem (p-value < 0,05) as seen in table 9. Looking at the signal of the differences our findings prove that females have a lower level of self-esteem than males in our sample.

	Path Coefficients-diff (Female - Male)	p-Value new (Female vs Male)
BL	-0.098	0.522
CON	0.015	0.929
MAT	0.070	0.650
SE	-0.343	0.046
SM	-0.028	0.853
STAT	-0.115	0.513

Table 9 - Moderation Analysis

The moderating effect that self-esteem has on the decision of wearing logotyped clothes proved to be significant even if self-esteem did not. It can be stated that women are more likely to have lower levels of self-esteem, in line with the works of Podoshen and Andrzejewski (2012).

5. CONCLUSIONS

The originality of this study lies in merging different scales from several sources to understand the reasons behind consumers wearing logotyped clothing. Also, using a categorical variable as the target variable, this research is able to contribute to a gap in the extended PLS algorithm literature. Following Lohmöller (1989)'s guidelines on the PLS algorithm as well as Hair et al. (2019)'s, the present study fills, not only this gap but also contributes to the conspicuous consumption studies that relate materialism and brand loyalty to status symbols.

5.1 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

One of the theoretical by-products of this study is the clear relationship between conspicuous consumers, materialism, brand loyalty and the decision to wear branded apparel. The study is focused on a specific product field where all these factors were positively related to the target variable – apparel and more specifically, a common white t-shirt, which is a fundamental contribution to marketing in the fashion field. Here, we prove that conspicuous consumers and materialists are motivated by a need to gain status and be recognized by what they own. In addition, brand-loyal is possible to arise from these behaviours, in a way that if the mentioned goals are met, consumers will inherently become loyal to the brand because they know the branded clothing confers them prestige. Additionally, because our study also relates high levels of brand loyalty to wearing specific logotypes of the brands they are loyal to, we can state that these consumers will make an effort to chase the products of the companies they like to buy.

Another contribution lies in the proposed method that was used to analyse the data, where the target variable was categorical which meant we had to apply an extended version of the PLS algorithm (Lohmöller, 1989) which is not often seen in literature, proving valuable knowledge for future research that intends to use categorical variables on their studies.

5.2 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

After demonstrating that conspicuous consumers, materialism and brand loyalty influence the decision to wear logotyped clothing, some practical implications are disclosed to assist marketers in making informed decisions.

Our study sheds some light on the logotyped clothing market. Knowing that consumers, nowadays, value their possessions and buy more apparel than they need (Joung, 2013), brands need to take advantage of this market opportunity and focus on targeting their logotyped clothing, especially those of premium brands, to gain leverage. Companies must focus on three different consumer traits at the same time. Loyal customers, materialists and conspicuous consumers. Integrating different consumer expectations into business actions leads to putting the customer first and providing them with their wants. The challenge for marketers is how to address all the different wants into unique marketing efforts.

According to our findings, the three traits can be addressed at the same time by supplying consumers with one type of clothing: logotyped apparel. From a marketing perspective, knowing that materialists and conspicuous consumers engage in the consumption of status symbols (Podoshen and Andrzejewski, 2012) understanding how to attract them into purchasing them becomes of major

importance to a good marketing effort. Knowing that logotypes represent the brand and what it stands for (Piko et al., 2017), having clothing that has a conspicuous symbol on them will ensure that not only will the consumers' peers recognize the brand, but ensure they gain prestige and status from this. This recognizability is key to both conspicuous consumers and materialists as they both thrive to convey an image of prestige to their peers. Additionally, if these efforts result in the desired outcomes, loyal consumers will arise and engage in repeat purchases. However, it is important to note that an already loyal consumer will go out of their way to purchase products from the brand they are loyal to, so having a symbol representing the brand in the clothes is key to make sure these consumers are approached in the marketing moves.

5.3 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

We must acknowledge some limitations. This research used a non-probabilistic convenience sampling method, meaning that the sample was drawn from a part of the population that is close to hand. This means that the results drawn cannot be generalized to the entire population due to the sample not being representative of the whole population and to the qualitative nature of the study. Future research should address this limitation and confirm the results with quantitative research, having a bigger, more variate sample will allow managers to better understand the differences in gender for each latent variable as well as better grasp the reasons why different types of consumers recur to the decision of wearing logotyped pieces of clothing. In addition, the study was conducted in a single country (Portugal), which is also a constraint on generalising our findings. Future works should analyse data from different countries to combine different cultures in the sample.

This research failed to prove that the other variables, like status consumers, self-esteem and self-monitoring were significantly related to the target variable. This is most likely due to the sampling method as well as the size of the sample. This finding should encourage future works to transfer our quantitative research into qualitative research.

This study's results are based on an online questionnaire. Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, an initial scenario-based lab experiment was, unfortunately, not conducted. It would be interesting if future research could conduct the study under these conditions to ensure the short stories environment was met and to potentially have more honest and robust results.

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