

The Effect of Brand Association in Psycho-Social and Psycho-Personality Antecedents a Conceptual Model of Conspicuous Consumption among Youth Adult

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Abstract: The knowledge of consumers' behavior is considered as an essential key in successful marketing programs. This would appear more when purchasing luxury products, because in Conspicuous consumption, the motives for buying special products originate more in psychic problems of consumers than product's specifications. This study is aimed to examine the consumption behavior of luxury products among the young people (aging from 18 to 35). Thus, we focused on the two fields of brand association and psychological antecedents. Likewise, the purchase of luxury watch has been studied as consumption behavior. In this research, variables such as gaining respect, gaining popularity, noticed by others, showing who I am, symbol of success, symbol of prestige, indicates wealth, indicates achievement, gaining status, enhances self image, are psychological antecedents and some other variables like brand symbolism, brand image congruency and self-concept, brand familiarity and brand aroused feeling are the brand association. In the present study, quantitative method was used, questionnaire formulation and sampling which was randomly collected from 525 people of consumers of such watches in Tehran City. Also, it was used Structural Equations Modeling (SEM), by the Lisrel Software for testing 6 hypotheses. The findings show that two criteria such as brand association and psychological antecedents significantly affect the consumption behavior of luxury products among the youth. Also, the intensity of influence of each of the studied variables was different due to revenue level, education and sexuality. According to the results, we can apply better communication strategies to this section of target market.

Keywords: Consumer behavior, Conspicuous consumptions, psychological antecedent, self image, watch

INTRODUCTION

The conspicuous consumption is not similar to the customary models of consumption and without taking any effect from rating system, it makes some kind of dependence. The conspicuous consumption, unlike the customary one, has drawn many economists' attention and still far from the customary consumption process, it has an outside and non-monetary effect.

Since the publication of Veblen's Theory of the Leisure Class just over one hundred years ago the theory of conspicuous consumption represents a powerful critique of the neoclassical theory of consumption (Trigg, 2001). Veblen (1994) developed an evolutionary framework of conspicuous consumption in which preferences are determined socially in relation to the positions of individuals in the social hierarchy in contrast to the neoclassical approach which focuses on individual's static maximization of utility according to exogenous preferences. Conspicuous goods differ from many frequently purchased goods as they satisfy not just material needs but also social needs such as prestige (Belk, 1988; Grubb and Grathwohl, 1967) and the trend of

consuming conspicuous goods is making a strong comeback across the world (Wong and Ahuvia, 1998).

The issue of conspicuous consumption has received a great deal of interest among marketing scholars (Shukla, 2010). Consumer choose products and brands to receiver emotional benefits (e.g., display of status, wealth and prestige) as well as utilitarian benefits e.g: (quality and low price (Batra *et al.*, 2000; Dubois and Duquesne, 1993; Wilcox *et al.*, 2009). The importance of social influence on consumer purchase intentions is recognized in most consumer behavior models (Bearden *et al.*, 1989; Mourali *et al.*, 2005; Ratner and Kahn, 2002). Researchers have explored how consumers use conspicuous brands in their life and how they display their personality and status through brand image (Chao and Schor, 1998; Langer, 1997).

However, the focus of behavioral research, which has examined the role of products as a means of self expression, has been to describe the social and psychological underpinnings of consumer behavior, not firm behavior (Amaldoss and Jain, 2005).

Therefore, the increase in knowledge about the conspicuous consumption behavior model in different age ranges, could be used by marketers. It has been

noted that consumers usually choose different products and services over a lifetime and the preference in clothes, furniture and activity is also age-related (Leventhal, 1997; Solomon *et al.*, 2002).

The results gained from different studies showed that in the conspicuous consumption, the psychological and brand parameters play a major role. Due to the human's nature, the needs considered in the psychological antecedents are estimated to be higher during youthful years.

Previous studies in the area of conspicuous consumption have been found to be targeted to categories like fashion accessories, mobile phones and other personal accessories for the youth segment (O'Cass and Frost, 2002; Chao and Schor, 1998).

The luxury products are different from the ones daily purchased, because those ones, apart from being needed, also satisfy some social requirements like social prestige and through purchasing them, people show their personality. People behave differently towards purchasing during their lifetime and the youth also, when choosing a product, follow the culture having to do with their age. This research is engaged to study the consumption behavior of luxury watches among the youth of Tehran city, in the light of the psychological antecedents and brand, in order to identify the effective parameters on the conspicuous consumption into the statistical society of our country's young people.

The subject of luxury products is considered to be as an important strategic concept in manufacturers' behavior and in the case of our country, in luxury products importers' and suppliers' one. The Special Objectives of the Research Consist of:

- The identification and the development of understanding the relationship between psychological characteristics of consumers such as: gaining respect, noticed by others', gaining popularity, showing who I am, symbol of success, symbol of prestige, indicating wealth, indicating achievement, being gaining status, enhancing self-image attitude and the luxury consumption and the determination of the effect of psychological characteristics on the use of luxury watches among the youth in Tehran city.

The identification and the development of understanding the relationship between brand features such as: brand symbolism, brand image congruency and self-concept, brand familiarity, brand aroused feelings, the conspicuous consumption as well as the determination of the effect of brand features on the use of luxury watches among the youth in Tehran city.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Conspicuous consumption: Within the databases of the Iranian research antecedents and universities, it was searched the research subject and it wasn't found in the

country, any record whether select or general, based on the study of the research subject. There are some various research records within the foreign resources which most of them are related to some part of this research subject. Meanwhile, the variables of the two foreign researches exactly correspond to the ones of this research to which it is all used briefly.

O'Cass and Frost (2002) turned to study the effect of the available brands components on people's status and the conspicuous consumption at the University of Australia. This study was done on 315 young consumers. In their research, they engaged, by using the components such as brand familiarity, symbolism, brand feelings and brand image, to study status consumption and luxury consumption. The findings of this research show that the market is influenced by the parameters such as symbolic features of brand, brand feelings and the congruence degree between brand self-image and brand user's self-image. The more symbolic features, the higher positive feelings and the more congruence between consumers and brand image (O'Cass and Frost, 2002). Paurav Shukla, in England and in 2009, studied the use of luxury cars among the middle-aged people. In this research, it was studied the influence of the two psychology and brand parameters on the consumption of luxury cars, by using 277 people. The results showed that the consumption of luxury cars is significantly influenced by the psychological components and the brand association. In this research, it was studied the effect of ten psychological concepts and four brand concepts on the conspicuous consumption (Shukla, 2008).

Psycho-social and psycho-personality: Theories attempting to combine environmental and personal determinants, they usually consider the behavior as the outcome of simultaneous influence of these two parameters. During the study process of the behavior determinants according to this model, it is measured one's answers under different situational conditions and then, it is analyzed the data to determine how much behavior change is due to personal characteristics, how much to situational conditions and how much to their simultaneous influences. The influences exerted by a person and her/his behavior are evaluated as personal determinants. The personal and internal parameters and behavior also act as mutual determinants. People's expectations influence their behavior manner and the behavior outcomes change the concerning expectation.

The behavior partly determines which environmental potential influences are involved and the influences also in turn, determine to some degree which behavior reservoir is developed and activated. In this reciprocal process, both the environment and behavior are too much effective. Personal and environmental resources of influence act more as interdependent determinants than separate ones (Bandura, 1993). Product purchasing is a behavior which is influenced by

the internal and personal parameters of individual and environment.

The importance of group influence, depending on various products and brands is different. One special product or brand may be notable and outstanding, for two reasons:

First, the purchaser of such a product or brand is among few people who possess such product. Second, a product may be outstanding if it is used in public and where all can see it easily (Kotler, 1996). One can define the conspicuous consumption as follows: "the purchase of unnecessary products which are often expensive and draw others' attention" (Longman American Dictionary, 2000). Duesenberry (1949) stated that the conspicuous consumption for people depends not only on their actual revenue level, but also on their competition with others. He concentrated on the important role played by the effect of collective relationships in people's consumption model which was also confirmed by Easterlin (1995), during the next studies.

This opinion was also confirmed by Wong (1997) after finding out that the conspicuous consumption is more affected by others' judgments and viewpoints than the need for consumption. In addition, Richins (1994) concluded that even the kind of luxury products has its own effect on the creation of some relationships between individuals and it means that someone who uses a particular product or luxury services, she/he prefers to come into contact with the class consuming such product or services.

Thus, the conspicuous consumption is influenced by the two aspects: economic and psychological. The early studies show that the two social needs of consumers such as the need for uniqueness and the need for social harmony form a notable and disputable subject (Shamim and Ahmad, 2007; Frijters and Leigh, 2008). In order to study behavior, psychologists have done extensive researches and offered different theories. Moore in his theory put the emphasis on biological bases as well as on behavior's environmental determinants. Product purchasing is a behavior which is influenced by the internal and personal parameters of individual and environment. A behavior takes place following a need. Moore has divided the needs into five categories as below:

- The first and the second needs
- Clear and unclear needs
- Near and far needs
- Needs caused by internal motives and needs resulted from external ones
- Practical needs and impulsive needs

In his opinion, the practical needs are the ones that yield directly a favorite affective feeling or they allow reaching a useful goal. The fancy needs are the ones causing some activities, only for those activities, regardless of their practical advantage (Moore, 1982).

On the basis of the above categorization, the conspicuous consumption is among the fancy needs. Also, the behavior of the conspicuous consumption is due to people's internal motive and to their external ones. According to Moore's behavior theory, people's internal needs like: gaining respect, drawing others' attention, gaining popularity, showing who I am, symbol of success, symbol of prestige, indicating wealth, indicating achievement, being interested in status, enhancing self-image, may justify some part of fancy consumption behavior. Also, the conspicuous consumption behavior could be influenced by external motives such as advertisements and brands transmission to different classes of society through symbols, creation of self-image, creation of nice feelings, excitements and popularity (Sharifi, 1997).

Nagel and Holden (2002) explained that when consumers decide to do purchasing to satisfy their need for uniqueness, the value of the product uniqueness is raised while increasing the uniqueness realized by customer. In other words, when more consumers are able to purchase a product, the uniqueness value of that product may be decreased for the customer. A great number of researchers stated that the need for uniqueness is different among various people. Tian *et al.* (2001) revealed that one of the important factors influencing the conspicuous consumption is an imitation of those belonging to the high social classes. O'Cass and Frost (2002) observed that the conspicuous consumption could be done in order to promote the social status. Namely, to show one's wealth to others and to promote to higher social levels, people turn to purchase luxury products. Leibenstein (1950) explained in his theory, "Bandwagon Effect" and "Snob Effect", the parameters affecting the conspicuous consumption. The "Bandwagon Effect" suggests that people decide to purchase the products, because others purchase them. The "Snob Effect" also means that the demand in consumption market for a special product is decreased, because others purchase that too. The manner of interaction between these two effects and that is, which one is dominated over the other one, are determined on the basis of social criteria (Corneo and Jeanne, 1998). Duesenberry said that as long as the conspicuous consumption stays depended upon social status, the difference of social values among people, is an important parameter that influences the conspicuous consumption. In other words, if expensive and luxury products can be figured as a symbol and having a high social status, maybe consumers decide to purchase them. Researchers enumerated some different factors as psychological criteria, that impact on the purchase of luxury products; among them, we can refer to popularity, drawing others' attention, gaining respect and gaining prestige (Preparata, 2006). People have the strong motive to be accepted by others and to experience their respect, kindness, friendship and affection towards themselves,

particularly the others who are important for them. These different aspects of experience are called, in the whole, positive attention (Bandora, 1993).

His viewpoint about internal or self-organized motivation refers to the idea that people are somewhat interested to be involved in around them and if they find something interesting, they would like to do it Bandora (1993). Moreover, the study carried out by Solomon *et al.* (2002) declares that consumers turn to purchase luxury and branded products, in order to get some intangible values which, in this study, are classified into the following categories: Gaining security, self-esteem, establishing cordial relationships with others and showing one's wealth. These parameters being called as intangible values, are, in fact, defined as successful, prestige, wealth and enhancing self-image symbols (Hewer, 2007). The study accomplished by Shukla (2008) showed that consumers' purchasing behavior (luxury purchasing) is highly affected by people's personality factors showing who I am, enhancing self-image) rather than social ones (gaining respect or gaining status).

The values believed by a person are linked to her/his interests and attitude, but they are not the same. Namely, to believe in usefulness and importance of things or specified activities is different from their valuation. One can consider values, interests and attitude to be among personality characteristics or behavior stimulators, however there is a difference between them (Sharifi, 1997). Moore (1982) believes that there is a difference between the two groups of "means values" and "final values". He defined the means values as one's belief and the final values as one's desired or undesired goals. The final values are personal or social (Sharifi, 1997). Therefore, the use of a product, is considered as a means of having access to social and individual values. Gaining respect, gaining popularity, gaining others' attention, showing who I am, success symbol, prestige symbol, showing wealth, showing achievement, being interested in status and enhancing self-image attitude are among social and individual values. In the light of the observations and results due to the previous done studies, it is formulated the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: The conspicuous consumption in the youth people is influenced by the psychosocial factors (gaining respect or gaining status).

Hypothesis 2: The conspicuous consumption in the youth people is influenced by the psycho-personality factors (showing who I am, enhancing self-image).

Brand association: Also, based on the one study performed by O'Cass and Frost (2002) about the relationship between the brand and the conspicuous consumption, as well as another one by Park *et al.* (1986), the brand symbol is, in fact, what is significant

for consumer when purchasing and using that brand. Chernatony and McDonald (1998) suggest that people while interacting with others in society, learn their ideas about brand and therefore, consumer's behavior of purchasing luxury products is influenced by the other people of a society. Additionally, within the studies carried out by Elliott (1997), it was observed that the quality of purchasing is a means of self-expression. The consumption of branded products is a social process which could help one in creating and preserving her/his personal identity.

The results of the study accomplished by A. O'Cass and Frost showed that the more symbolic properties, the higher positive feelings and the more congruence between consumers and brand image. Rosenberg (1979) describes self-image in these words: "a set of thoughts and feelings aimed for a person". On the basis of studies carried out by Belk (1988), the conspicuous consumption is an acquired behavior by which, people show themselves to others, just as they like the others think about them. Shaw and Onkvisit (1987) found out that there is a relationship between people's purchasing behavior and their individual image; their behavior when choosing the consumed brand is influenced by their individual image, especially since one could show her/his wealth by the conspicuous consumption and gain self-respect. Hence, there is an obvious interaction between consumer's individual image and the image of a product. Alba and Hutchinson (1987) mentioned that the brand familiarity is often considered as the reflection of direct or indirect interaction amount with the brand. Flynn and Goldsmith (1999) suggested that brand familiarity is the mental perception of consumer. In other words, it may be considered as consumer's opinion about a product or services as well as a brand. Kent and Allen (1994) found out that the more brand familiarity, the more brand purchasing. Malhotra (2003) suggested that most of the people usually evaluate on the basis of how much a product or services could meet their desires like feelings and emotions. Gardner (1985) defined the feelings of people towards a brand, as a kind of personal perception formed by the brand. The feelings constitute an important factor related to consumer's viewpoint about the brand and influence her/his perception about it. Thus, it is formulated the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: The conspicuous consumption for the youth people is influenced by the brand association.

Theories attempting to combine environmental and personal determinants, they usually consider the behavior as the outcome of simultaneous influence of these two parameters. For the study of behavior determinants according to this model, it is measured one's answers under different situational conditions and

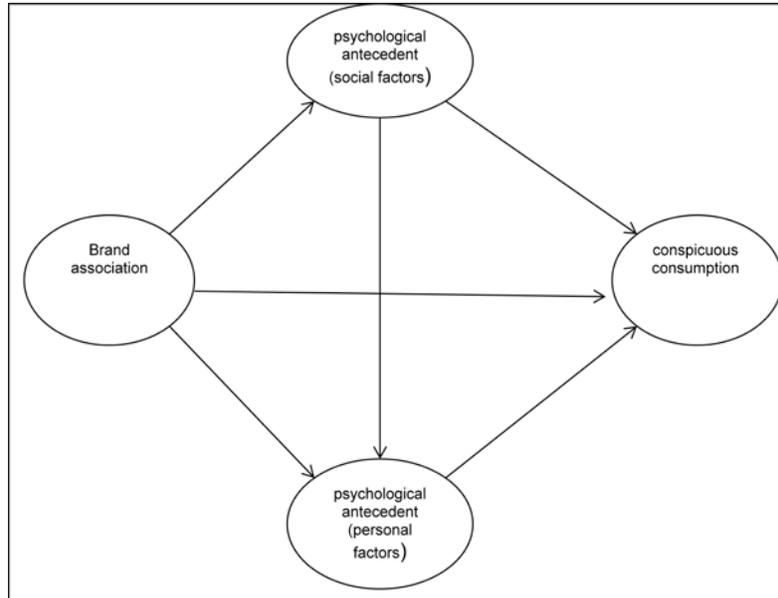


Fig. 1: Conceptual model

then, it is analysed the data to determine how much behavior change is due to personal characteristics, how much to situational conditions and how much to their simultaneous influences. The influences exerted by a person and her/his behavior are considered as personal determinants. The personal and internal parameters and behavior also act as mutual determinants. People's expectations influence their behavior manner and the behavior outcomes change the concerning expectation. The behavior partly determines which environmental potential influences are involved and the influences also in turn, somewhat determine which behavior reservoir is developed and activated. In this mutual process, both the environment and behavior are too much effective. Personal and environmental resources of influence act more as interdependent determinants than separate ones (Bandura, 1993). Thus, it is formulated the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: The personality needs of the youth people are influenced by the brand association.

Hypothesis 5: The social needs of the youth are influenced by the brand association.

According to Freud's personality theory, mankind applies defensive mechanisms that one of them consists of change and tendency towards the best. Namely, if there are some external obstacles in the path of satisfying a desire, it will be refused and then it will appear in the form of socially acceptable desires (Siassy, 1998). According to the religious instructions and the social culture of our Iranian country, flaunting is not considered as a desirable behavior, therefore it seems that such internal needs in people would change into socially favored ones, namely social symbols. Thus, it is formulated the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 6: The psycho-personality needs of the youth are influenced by their psychosocial needs. The research model is presented in Fig. 1.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data collections and sample: The present research method as regards objective is operational and as regards the method, is based on survey and correlation. The data is collected by using the questionnaire on the Likert scale and in the form of self-fulfillment by the sample members survey and it is studied the relationships between the research variables by means of the correlation method. In other words, in order to study the relationships between the research variables, it is used the Correlation Causal Modeling. For this reason, it is used the Lisrel Software Package.

The statistical society of the research is formed by the users of the luxury watches in the age range of 18-35 years old who live in Great Tehran. Today's young people have much more money and a higher economic power than their antecedents (Grant and Stephen, 2005). According to the researchers' studies, the classification of consumer based on the age, has clarified different behavioral and social characteristics during the lifecycle which is itself starter of some new researches from the consumer's perspective, but it has defined the age range of 18-34 as youthfulness and adulthood (Silvers, 1997). Moreover, the people aged over 18 are considered as young adults and the early stages of work start and the entrance into society, marriage and household formation, the birth of the first child and the events like these, have made this group culturally, socially and economically considerable (Spero and Stone, 2004).

Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents

Percent	Frequency	Under group	
44.1	220	Male	Gender
55.9	279	Female	
35.7	178	18-22	Age
39.1	195	21-25	
16.6	83	26-30	
8.6	43	31-35	
0.2	1	Under Diploma	Level of science
29.9	149	Diploma	
28.9	144	Up Diploma	
35.1	175	B.A	Income
6.0	30	Over	
21.4	107	<500,000T	
39.1	195	500-1,000,000T	
39.5	197	>1,000,000T	

Researchers revealed that how the young customers can cause the marketing world to change (Nielson and Curry, 1997). By considering all the above reasons, one finds out that the market of the youth is a too much interesting part, particularly in our country Iran being raised as a young society. Thus, the age range of 18-35 years old was taken into account as the studied society.

As the research method of survival is a cross-sectional one and it is probable that by the time passing, the results of statistical society change too, therefore the results are assigned to the time limit of the research. The statistical society of the research is formed by the users of luxury watches in Tehran city. In order that the sample group can introduce the statistical society, the sampling was done from different regions of the city. To make sure that the sample group is an introducer, it was paid attention to the number of the sample volume and the sampling method. To achieve this goal, the statistical sample was selected by using the random sampling method from different regions of Tehran City. By considering that there is not available exact information about the number of the society and their measured indexes, as a result, it was used the estimate of the sample volume from the proportion estimate formula with a limit error of 0.05 and a maximum variance of 0.50. In the light of aforementioned indexes, the sample volume is estimated to be 384 people. The formula for selecting the sample volume and its involved indexes is as follows:

$$N \geq \frac{Z_{\alpha}^2 \times pq}{\varepsilon^2} = \frac{1.96^2 \times (0.25 \times 0.25)}{0.05^2} \cong 384$$

In this study, to generalize the results better, at the stage of data collecting, it was distributed 525 questionnaires among twelve markets situated in different regions of Tehran city where it is sold luxury watches. Because of not to complete all required information, it was set aside 26 answered questionnaires from the sample and then, it was done statistical analysis, based on the information found in 499 remained questionnaires. The characteristics of the sample group are shown in the Table 1.

Measurement tools and scales: To measure the required information of the research, it was used the suggested answers in the form of packages. Within the research questionnaire, there is one control question that refers to the use or to the no use of luxury watches. There was posed four questions about the characteristics like gender, age range, education level and revenue. The scale for the answers of the control questions with the category of "Yes" or "No" and the gender question with that of "male" or "female" are on a nominal scale level. It was measured the answers of age range in four categories, the scientific level in four categories and the monthly revenue in three categories and on an ordinal scale level.

The main questions of the questionnaire being related to the research hypotheses in the fields of the brand, psychology and consumption antecedents were measured by the Likert spectrum of five options (extremely disagreed to extremely agreed).

It was measured brand features by 9 questions about brand symbolism, brand self-image, brand feelings and brand familiarity. It was measured the psychological antecedents by 16 questions about gaining respect and popularity, drawing others' attention, showing who I am, success symbol, prestige symbol, showing wealth, showing achievement, gaining status, gaining higher social image.

The conspicuous consumption was also measured by the two questions about the psychological and brand parameters. Before this questionnaire is performed on the final sample, it was executed during three steps, on the sample groups consisting of 30 people, their reliability and validity was verified and it was prepared for the final execution with the main sample group.

The study of reliability and validity of the questionnaire, by considering the final sample answers comprising 499 people, has confirmed these features of the questionnaire. The reliability of the questionnaire was verified by using Cronbach's Alpha and its justifiability was studied based on the confirmative parameter and the composite validity analysis method. As the coefficient of the Cronbach's Alpha for every four components is more than 70% and also, the composite validity of each of components is more than 60%, therefore it was confirmed the reliability and the justifiability of the questionnaire. The results of the studies are shown in the Table 2

RESULTS

Measurement model: It was studied the theoretical model and the research hypotheses by the structural equation model. In this study, it was taken three steps:

- The evaluation of the conformity of the whole model
- The evaluation of the part of the model measurement

Table 2: Confirmatory factor analysis

	Factor loading	t-value	CR1	α2	AVE3
Psychological association A			0.89	0.895	0.544
PSYCHA1	0.71	-*			
PSYCHA2	0.76	18.62			
PSYCHA3	0.78	16.38			
PSYCHA4	0.84	17.51			
PSYCHA5	0.80	16.82			
PSYCHA6	0.61	12.91			
PSYCHA7	0.64	13.54			
psychological association B			0.88	0.890	0.472
PSYCHB1	0.7	-*			
PSYCHB2	0.72	15.31			
PSYCHB3	0.73	15.44			
PSYCHB4	0.73	15.56			
PSYCHB5	0.46	13.61			
PSYCHB6	0.71	14.62			
PSYCHB7	0.7	14.34			
PSYCHB8	0.6	12.72			
PSYCHB9	0.64	13.47			
Brand association			0.75	0.762	0.253243
BRAND1	0.34	-*			
BRAND2	0.52	6.15			
BRAND3	0.51	6.06			
BRAND4	0.50	6.09			
BRAND5	0.46	7.01			
BRAND6	0.61	6.42			
BRAND7	0.55	6.18			
BRAND8	0.51	6.25			
BRAND9	0.48	6.02			
Conspicuous consumption			0.72	0.716	0.561909
CC1	0.74	-*			
CC2	0.76	17.20			

1: Composite reliability; 2: Cronbach's Alpha; 3: Average variance extracted; 4*: Parameter set equal to 1.0 for identification model

Table 3: The process of the model correction and the obtained statistics

Model	x2	(d.f.)	Difference x2 (d.f.)	RMR	RMSA	GFI	NFI	CFI
Model 0: Theoretical model	1197.23	318	-	0.048	0.075	0.85	0.95	0.96
Model 1	1097.49	317	99.74**1	0.049	0.070	0.86	0.95	0.97
Model 2	1030.89	316	66.6**	0.051	0.067	0.87	0.96	0.97
Model 3	977.84	315	53.05**	0.048	0.065	0.87	0.96	0.97
Model 4	950.02	314	27.82**	0.048	0.064	0.88	0.96	0.97
Model 5	915.72	113	34.3**	0.047	0.062	0.88	0.96	0.97
Model 6	895.69	112	20.03**	0.047	0.061	0.88	0.96	0.97

1: These p-values are below 1%

- The evaluation of the structural part of the model

The evaluation of the conformity of the whole model is aimed at specifying how much the whole model is conformed to the used experimental data. When evaluating the part of the model measurement, it was studied the relationships between hidden and obvious variables or indicators. When evaluating the structural part of the model, it was studied the relationships between internal and external hidden variables.

The results of the conformity evaluation of the whole model showed that the theoretical model is compatible with the used experimental data. This result was obtained based on the statistic of Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) by 0.061, the statistic of the Root Mean square Residual (RMR) by 0.048, the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) by 0.88, the normal fit conformity index (NFI) by 0.96 and the comparative fit index by 0.97. This model was yielded

after doing six corrections to the variance error among the observed variables or the indicators. The process of the model correction and the obtained statistics are shown in the Table 3.

The results of the evaluation of the part of the model measurement showed that the relationships between the hidden and obvious variables or the indicators are estimated to be acceptable. These results were obtained from the loading coefficients by the t value more than 1.96, the composite validity of the hidden variable of the psychosocial antecedent by the value of 0.89, the hidden variable of the psycho-personality antecedent by the value of 0.88, the hidden variable of the brand features by the value of 0.75 and the hidden variable of the conspicuous consumption by the value of 0.72 that is needed more than 0.60. The reliability of the hidden variables was studied by using the Cronbach's Alpha and the reliability value of the hidden variable of the psychosocial antecedent was 0.895, the value of the hidden variable of the psycho-

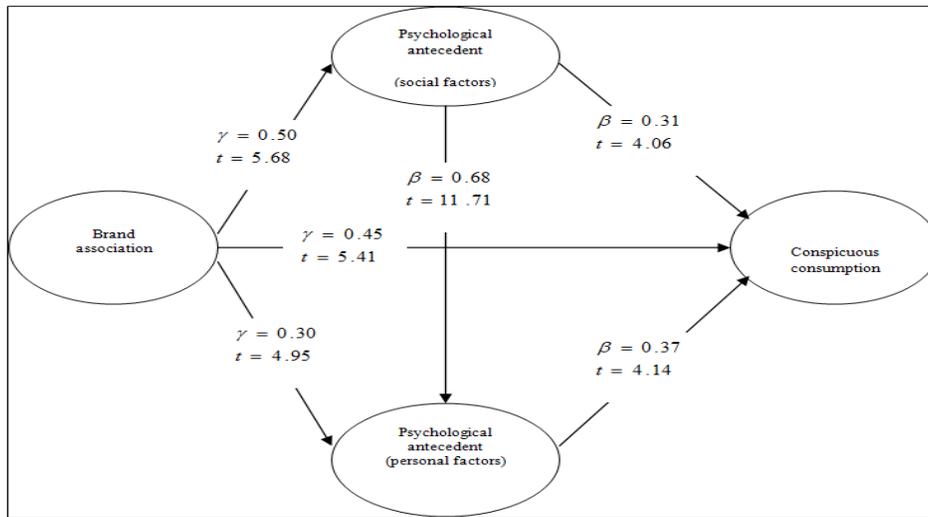


Fig. 2: Model testing result

Table 4: Parameter estimates for final model

Hypothesis path	Standardized estimates	-value	Indirect	Total
Brand →Psy (societal factors)	0.50	5.68		
Brand →Psy (personal factors)	0.30	4.95	0.34	0.65
Brand →cconsumption	0.45	5.41	0.40	0.86
Psy (societal factors) →Psy (personal factors)	0.68	11.71		
Psy(societal factors) →c Consumption	0.31	4.06	0.26	0.57
Psy (personal factors) →Consumption	0.37	4.14		

personality antecedent was 0.890, the hidden variable of the brand features was 0.762, the hidden variable of the conspicuous consumption was 0.716 and a value more than 0.70 indicates the sufficient reliability of the measurements.

The results gained from the evaluation of the structural part of the model showed that it was confirmed the relationships mentioned in the conceptual model. By noting that the Gamma coefficients of the path between the brand external variable on the internal variables of the psychosocial, personality antecedents and conspicuous consumption are positive and their t statistics are more than 1.96, therefore it was accepted the hypotheses about the effect of the brand features.

Likewise, the Beta coefficients of the path between the variables of the psychosocial and personality antecedents on the conspicuous consumption and the Beta coefficient of the variable of the psychosocial antecedents on the psycho-personality antecedents are positive and their t statistics are more than 1.96, therefore it was accepted the hypotheses related to these variables. The coefficient of the effect of the brand features on the psychosocial antecedent is 0.50, the coefficient of the effect of the brand features on the psycho-personality antecedent is 0.30 and the coefficient of the effect of the brand features on the conspicuous consumption is 0.45.

The coefficient of the effect of the psychosocial antecedent on the psycho-personality one is calculated to be 0.68 and that on the conspicuous consumption

Table 5: Parameter estimation for final method

Hypothesis path	R2
Brand →Psy (societal factors)	0.25
Brand →Psy (personal factors)	0.41
Brand →Consumption	0.70
Psy (societal factors) and Brand → Psy (personal factors)	0.76
Psy (societal factors) and Brand and Psy (personal factors) →Consumption	0.99

is 0.31. It was also observed that the coefficient of the effect of the psycho-personality antecedent on the conspicuous consumption is 0.37.

Beside the direct effect that the independent variables have on the dependent ones, it was also observed some considerable indirect effects. The coefficient of the indirect effect of the brand features on the psycho-personality antecedent through the psychosocial antecedent is 0.34 and the whole effect of the brand features on the psycho-personality antecedent is 0.65. The coefficient of the indirect effect of the brand features on the conspicuous consumption through psycho-personality and the psychosocial antecedents is 0.40 and its whole effect on the conspicuous consumption is 0.86.

The coefficient of the indirect effect of the psychosocial antecedent through the psycho-personality antecedent is 0.26 and its whole effect on the conspicuous consumption is 0.57. The results are shown in Fig. 2 and Table 4 and 5.

CONCLUSION

This study, in general, supports the positive role of the two groups of the psychological antecedent factors such as the social and personality antecedents and the brand association factors on the luxury watch consumption among the youth people in Tehran city. The gained results suggest that the luxury watch consumption as impulsive buying behavior among the youth is highly influenced by the brand and psychology antecedent. According to the results, one could say that the strongest influence of the brand association, in addition to having a direct influence upon the conspicuous consumption, is found to be on the stimulation of people's internal needs in the field of the psychosocial antecedents like gaining respect, gaining popularity, noticed by others' and gaining status. Furthermore, the brand association significantly influences the people's internal needs in the field of the psycho-personality antecedents such as: success symbol, prestige symbol, showing wealth, showing achievement, showing who I am and gaining a higher social image. These data supported the concept that the behavior is shaped by an interaction with the internal needs and the environment pressures.

In other words, the external pressures interpreted by regarding the internal needs, are strong about the conspicuous consumption. In reality, the influence of the brand association is formed by considering the people's internal needs and those who feel some internal needs like gaining respect, gaining popularity, drawing others' attention, showing who I am, they are more influenced by the brand association. Furthermore, for the reason that the emergence of the internal needs related to the social fields is something disagreeable, these needs appear more socially-favored, namely in the shape of the psycho-personality antecedents.

One can infer this result from higher impressionability of the psychosocial factors than the intense impressionability of the psycho-personality factors and that of the psycho-personality factors from the psychosocial factors. Even though, the impressionability that the psycho-personality factors make on the conspicuous consumption is more than the psychosocial ones. Since about a half of the whole effect of the brand association is due to the psychological and personality antecedents, therefore it seems that the effect of the brand association on the conspicuous consumption seriously depends on the psychological antecedents of the youth.

A considerable part of the conspicuous consumption, apart from being directly affected by the psychosocial antecedents, occurs through the psycho-personality antecedents. In general, the results of the study show that the conspicuous consumption behavior is a multidimensional behavior which is influenced by the factors such as brand association and psychological ones. This behavior is a result of mutual

and interactive impact between internal needs and environmental pressures. Hence, some reasons for customers' conspicuous consumption are depended upon the insight that how they would like to be appeared in others' eyes and some other reasons remain depended on intangible values that brands create for customers. So the results show that the customers purchase luxury products to satisfy not only their personal needs, but also their social ones. The same results were confirmed in the studies of Solomon and Shukla too. Therefore, if the presentation of a branded product can stimulate some positive feelings in customers by creating an intangible value for them and also according to the psychological needs of the target market, if it begins to produce and distribute, then it can result in success within the markets of the conspicuous consumption.

Management suggestions due to the research results:

The results suggest that the purchasing behavior and the use of luxury watches are significantly affected by the brand and psychology antecedents and the effect of the psychological ones is stronger than that of the brand ones. Moreover, the model results show that the brand exerts not only a direct influence, but also an indirect one on the luxury purchasing behavior through the psychological antecedents. Namely, about a half of the whole effect of the brand association directly happens and another half occurs due to the psychological characteristics. So, the marketing activities to make the brand in its own value model are shown through the behavior changes of the luxury purchasing. As a result, supported by the achieved results and studied variables for brand, it is offered some managerial and operational suggestions in the following:

- The luxury purchasing behavior is influenced by the brand familiarity and those who psychologically need to be more confirmed individually and socially, they pay more attention to brands too and intend more to consume. By noting that the youth are the founders of fashion in society and their beliefs shape their entertainment, if marketers reach them, it is probable that there follows a long-term loyalty. So, in order to manage the luxury purchasing behavior, the introduction of the brand to the consumers' society is considered as a business key. In the light of the effective attraction in advertisements, the target market needs to be certain about the attractiveness of the advertisements, the methods and the tools concerned. Therefore, it is required that by measuring the ideas, one identifies the indicators of appealing and pleasant advertisements, according to our country's culture and climatic conditions.
- Since the mutual effect of the psychological antecedent and the brand association is very important to explain the factors focused by

consumers when purchasing luxury products, so it is suggested, according to the research findings, that if a company determines its product or brand in such a way that they could represent success, prestige or goals achievement, then this company will have more chance to attract the youth consumers to the purchase of luxury products.

- On the basis of the research findings, the psychological antecedents have predicted the desire for purchasing, the preferred brand and customer's viewpoint about the conspicuous consumption, the product's consumers desire to possess the mentioned brands and show them to others, therefore, one can measure, by brand congruence, the self-image of the consumers. The consumers search for the products being congruent with their self-image. It should be chosen a brand congruent with the customers' self-image.

By considering the evolving markets and the role played by the psychological factors about the market of the conspicuous consumption, to be aware that what factors influence the youth consumers of luxury product, is considered as a great competitive advantage for the manufacturers of luxury products. In the light of the motivation role in the conspicuous consumption, it is suggested that the importers and marketers should pay attention to the consumers of special products as well as to the stimulating factors that distinguish such customers from the others. About a half of the effect of the brand association on the conspicuous consumption among the youth is formed through individual and social needs of the consumers' community, there are some differences between individual and social needs of consumers coming from different societies and the cultural and social environment is different too, so it is suggested to the manufacturers of luxury watches to pay attention to the consumers' individual and social needs, by means of the need measurement of the target markets.

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