Impact of self on attitudes toward luxury brands among teens

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A B S T R A C T
The main purpose of this study is to increase understanding of teenagers’ self perception on attitudes toward luxury brands. The study investigates how social consumption motivations affect teenagers’ attitudes toward luxury brands, how teens’ self concepts can influence social consumption motivations, and whether peer pressure affects this relationship. The study also examines the effects of materialism on teenagers’ social consumption motivations and attitudes toward luxury brands. The total sample consisted of 558 teenagers between the ages of 12 and 19 (grades 7 through 12). Hypotheses were tested using structural equation modeling. This study demonstrates that materialistic orientation is a powerful force in developing positive attitudes toward luxury brands. Teenagers who have clear versus cloudy self-beliefs have a strong tendency to resist social motivations to consume because the clearer they are about themselves, the less they attend to external sources and stimuli.

1. Introduction

Adolescence is usually a complex, transitory period that includes rapid biological, social, and cognitive growth. Teens deal with a contradictory ideology; they want to create an individual identity but at the same time, still connect with their own group of friends (Gulland, 2006). In this phase, teenagers are continually learning how to behave appropriately in a new situation or phase of their lives (Steinberg, 1993). Not surprisingly, periods of transition are often accompanied by the need for a variety of products or services to ease the transition (Hartman, Shim, Barber, & O’Brien, 2006).

Not much is known about the spending motivations of this young group of powerful consumers, who just a decade ago, were not perceived to be particularly economically important (LaFeer, Edwards, & Lee, 2000). While teens do not earn large salaries, they have more disposable income than adults because most adolescents do not have to pay health insurance, credit card bills, mortgages/rent, supermarket or even utilities (Zollo, 1999). Consequently, teens’ consumer behavior gained importance as a research topic due to teenagers’ amount of disposable income.

Teens experience role requirements that often require different behaviors (Hopson & Adams, 1976). According to Moses (2000), teenagers’ spending focuses on specific brands that their peers use, sometimes called “the right brands.” Teens are shaping their identities, so having the “right” brands is a way to fit into the right group (Moses, 2000). Due to the growing spending power of teenagers, global marketers are trying to understand teenagers’ wishes and needs in order to relate to reach this attractive consumer base.

Brand loyalty is widespread in teenagers than in adults and teens often avoid taking risks in appearance-related products given the importance of these products to their perceptions of self (Zollo, 1999). Branded products are less risky because they are easily recognizable and they serve as a status symbol; this combination makes them a safe choice for teens (Bearden & Etzel, 1982; Wooten, 2006). Appealing to teenagers is an attractive business strategy because branded product companies hope that teens choose their products as lifetime brands.

Earlier studies explore self as a predictor of a variety of human behaviors, such as motivation, purchase intention, cognition, brand and advertising attitude (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Sirgy, Lee, Jolar, & Tidwell, 2008; Tsai, 2006). Adolescents often pass through a stage of identity crisis (Erikson, 1959). Adolescents seek self identity by acquiring and accumulating selections of consumption objects (Belk, 1988).

Peer pressure may play an important role in a teenager’s life, leading to a series of specific behaviors, such as what to eat, how to dress and how to speak. Teens create shared meanings with their friends, so their interpretation of reality is reasonably consistent with that of their peers (Solomon, 1983). Teenagers use their peers to align their values, discussing their personal reflections with friends, while looking...
for support and mutual understanding (Youniss & Smollar, 1985). Therefore, consumer behavior research on teens should investigate the influence of peers.

In seeking to explain how teens’ view of themselves and how the impact of peer pressure affect interest in and attitudes toward luxury brands, consumers’ social motivation and materialism are important factors in making purchasing decisions (Heaney, Goldsmith, & Jusoh, 2005). In addition, the level of materialism among adolescents is very high (Bristol & Mangleburg, 2005; Larsen, Sirgy, & Wright, 1999; Roedder-John, 1999). Given that consumers attempt to gain acceptance into social groups through the products that they purchase (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004), findings relating to materialism might explain why the luxury brand market has become increasingly important to teens.

The study here investigates how perceptions of the self impact teens’ attitudes toward luxury brands. Using a framework that represents a sum of interrelated fields such as consumer psychology, sociology, and marketing, the objectives of this study are (1) to increase our understanding of teenagers’ attitudes toward luxury brands, (2) to understand the impact of self on social consumption motivations among teenagers, (3) to investigate how peer pressure affects teenagers’ consumption motivations, (4) to analyze how social consumption motivations affect teenagers’ attitudes toward luxury brands, and (5) to examine how materialism influences teenagers’ motivations and attitudes toward luxury brands.

2. Hypothesis development

Conventionally, marketers segment luxury consumers in terms of demographic characteristics (e.g., social class)—variables that are not strong descriptors of the differences among luxury consumers (Dubois & Duquesne, 1993). Marketers need to understand the impact of social and personal influences on individual tastes and preferences in order to describe luxury consumers more richly. The current study proposes a framework intending to investigate the areas of reference group (peers and social groups in general), self, and materialism that are relevant for influencing teenagers’ attitudes toward luxury brands. Fig. 1 depicts the conceptual model.

2.1. Self dimensions, social consumption motivation, and peer pressure

Self is a primary research topic in psychology (Brewer & Hewstone, 2004). Self-concept encapsulates personal traits and characteristics like personality and self-perceptions. Self-concept is what comes to mind when we think about ourselves (Neisser, 1993).

Self-concept comprises how a person perceives himself. Most prior studies about self are found in the arenas of psychology and sociology, and studies connecting self with consumer behavior are recent and not large in number (Wong & Ahuvia, 1998). During adolescence, the process of building one’s own character takes place. For that reason, examining self-concept assists in understanding how attitudes and consumption represent a way to express a teen’s individual self to the outside world.

The stability of the self-concept can be gauged with the construct called self-concept clarity, which is the degree of consistency with which an individual perceives himself (Campbell et al., 1996). A well-developed self-concept is less susceptible to the influence of external factors. Individuals with a lucid self-concept deal better with stress and have healthier behaviors such as positive self-talk and better mental skills (Campbell, 1990; Campbell et al., 1996). Past research establishes a positive relationship between high self-concept clarity and some indices of psychological health and well-being such as high self-esteem and lack of mental problems (Campbell, 1990; Campbell et al., 1996). A poorly developed or ambiguous self-concept may direct people to rely on, and to be very affected by, external sources such as peer pressure, mass media, social consumption motivations, and other values such as materialism, which can influence individuals’ attitudes and decision making processes (Kernis, Paradise, Whitaker, Wheatman, & Goldman, 2000).

Social consumption motivation increases with age and maturity (Churchill & Moschis, 1979) and plays a critical role in the development of teenagers’ sense of self. Social consumption may be linked to self-concept clarity and has yet to be clarified by empirical research. Previous findings show that self-concept clarity is positively related to self-esteem (Campbell, 1990; Erikson, 1959) and individuals with high self-esteem are less influenced by external sources. Campbell (1990) finds that individuals with low self-concept clarity are more susceptible to and dependent on the social environment. The findings imply that teenagers with high self-concept clarity would construe their own behavior as separate from the social context.

H1. Self-concept clarity relates negatively with social consumption motivation.

Obtaining the support of reference groups (peers), from a popularity standpoint, depends largely upon the power of possessing specific luxury products (Wooten, 2006) and teenagers often feel social pressure to conform to peers with whom they socialize. Peer pressure to conform can influence how adolescents dress, what kind of music they listen to, and in what types of behavior they engage, including even risky behaviors such as using drugs, tobacco, alcohol, and engaging in sex (Robin & Johnson, 1996; Santor, Messervey, & Kusumakar, 2000; Wells, 2006). Thus, peers can have a negative or positive influence on knowledge, attitudes, perceptions, beliefs and behaviors. Meeus, Oosterwegel, and Vollebergh (2002) find that support from peers relates to a positive sense of identity, and that peer acceptance and academic performance relate to self-concept in early adolescence (Harter, Whitesell, & Kowalski, 1992).

The intensity of peer pressure varies from situation to situation. Children and teenagers give in to peer pressure because they desire to be liked or because they are concerned that others may ridicule them if they do not go along with the group (Wooten, 2006). For instance, clothing is one of the most important status symbols for youth (Elliott & Leonard, 2004). For many consumers, the desire to impress others, including peers and those in different social or age groups, is very significant. Therefore, they will purchase specific brands of clothing to achieve the support of others (Prendergast & Wong, 2003).

Peer pressure is a powerful force among teenagers because of its power to change the way teens behave and care about external influences. Both peer pressure and self concept clarity emerge slowly from childhood to the teen years (Bachmann, John & Rao, 1993; Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976). Peer pressure is a complex issue and
influences even individuals with very clear self concept. Furthermore, previous studies find that even teenagers with high self esteem and self confidence are subject to peer pressure (Michell & Amos, 1997). Even though a negative relationship between self-concept clarity and social consumption motivation is proposed, if peer pressure is high, this negative relationship should be modified. The expectation is that self-concept clarity has no effect on social consumption motivations.

H2. Peer pressure moderates the impact of self concept clarity on social consumption motivation.

Everyone possesses dimensions of both independent and interdependent self construal because the self is a complex structure (Singelis, 1994). Yet, individuals are inclined to use one dimension of self-construal more than the other to guide their behavior (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Independent self-construal “requires construing oneself as an individual whose behavior is organized and made meaningful primarily by reference to one’s own internal repertoire of thoughts” (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p. 226). One can conclude that an individual’s behavior is based on his or her own independent self-construal, if his or her own internal attributes (e.g., feelings and thoughts) determine or cause his or her behavior (Markus & Kitayama, 1998).

Clark’s (2006) study of university students in the U.S. finds that global independency is negatively related to social consumption motivation. Highly independent individuals are less susceptible to external influences such as social pressures (Wong & Ahuvia, 1998) and focus more on internal experiences (Abe & Bagozzi, 1996). These empirical studies, suggesting that independent individuals are more likely to reject motivations that are socially generated, inform the following hypothesis.

H3. Independent self-construal relates negatively to social consumption motivation.

Markus and Kitayama (1991, p. 227) suggest that interdependent self-construal “entails seeing oneself as part of an encompassing social relationship and recognizing that one’s behavior is determined, contingent, and to a large extent, organized by what one perceives to be the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others in the relationship.” The important tasks for individuals with elevated interdependent self-construal are to fit into their groups, act in suitable ways, promote their in-group goals, and conform to their social groups. Consequently, the behavior of individuals with a strong interdependent self is a reaction to others with who they are interrelated (Markus & Kitayama, 1998).

Previous research suggests a negative correlation between independency and social consumption motivations, which leads to the belief that conversely, interdependency is positively related to social consumption motivations (Clark, 2006). Individuals with high independent self-construal think about themselves in conjunction with others, and they sense that the self and others are highly intertwined (Singelis, 1994). Thus, unlike the independent self-construal, interdependent refers to the view of the self as defined by assimilation with others rather than distinguishing the self from other people.

H4. Interdependent self construal relates positively to social consumption motivation.

2.2. Social consumption motivations and attitude toward luxury

Luxury is something that many individuals cannot easily afford. However, some consumers continue to purchase luxury products, whether they can afford them or not, because luxury products may provide a sense of power or control over others or because possessing brands may be identified by their peers (Kapferer, 1998; Prendergast & Wong, 2003; Ruffin, 2007). The peer influence is particularly important among younger consumers, who often crave the attention and status that luxury brands can provide (Wooten, 2006).

Many younger consumers search for products that they consider prestigious, through association with a specific designer, brand name, or an emerging trend. In many ways, these products fulfill some type of social requirement (Heaney et al., 2005). For those consumers with discretionary income, a significant portion of these funds are often spent on goods that accommodate a social need or message (Heaney et al., 2005; Ruffin, 2007).

Social consumption motivation means that individuals want to display their consumption behavior to others. The wish to impress others with their ability to pay for prestigious brands motivates consumers (Mason, 1981) and social consumption motivation makes consumers more aware of social cues related to brand consumption. Martin and Turley (2003) establish that social consumption motivation predicts the preference for design, variety, excitement, and ambience, while Clark’s (2006) findings show that social consumption motivation positively affects prestige sensitivity. Another study conducted by Clark, Zboja, and Goldsmith (2007) shows that consumers’ attention to social comparison information has a positive influence on status consumption. These findings show that consumer interest and evaluation of different brands often reflect a strong tendency to identify with the brand’s symbolic nature and to identify with their own social motivations. For this reason, social consumption likely predicts the interest and evaluative attitude towards luxury brands.

H5a. Social consumption motivation relates positively to interest toward luxury brands.

H5b. Social consumption motivation relates positively to evaluative attitude toward luxury brands.

2.3. Role of materialism

Prendergast and Wong (2003) investigate the relationships of materialism and expenditure and social consumption motivations and expenditure. Social motivation and materialism appear to be important factors in making purchase decisions (Heaney et al., 2005).

Previous findings positively relate prestige sensitivity to social consumption motivation. Given that prestige sensitivity might be an indicator of materialism, one might conclude that materialism would also be positively related to social consumption motivation (Clark, 2006). Materialism is important in both public and personal contexts, because an individual is able to identify with a particular status group and increase personal development of his or her own self-esteem (Heaney et al., 2005; Prendergast & Wong, 2003). In summary, materialism can influence what motivates a person to consume.

H6. Materialism relates positively to social consumption motivation.

The emphasis that consumers place upon social status is important in analyzing how status symbols, like luxury brands, appear in modern society (Heaney et al., 2005). Identification with a particular social status creates new challenges for individuals. Individuals may want to identify with a specific social status and they might not be able to afford the products that represent that social status (Heaney et al., 2005). This situation is particularly important for consumer behavior among teenagers, because teens have undergone their own identity formation (Bristol & Mangleburg, 2005).

Previous findings demonstrate that materialism influences consumption patterns, such as the type and the quantity of goods purchased (Richins & Dawson, 1992). Other studies (Fournier & Richins, 1991; Richins, 1994; Wong, 1997) show materialism has a direct positive effect on status consumption. Based upon these empirical studies showing that materialism can influence what a teenager thinks about luxury brands (evaluative dimension) and can confer an importance to luxury and stimulate the curiosity about luxury brands (interest dimension), the following hypotheses emerge.
H7a. Materialism relates positively to interest toward luxury brands.

H7b. Materialism relates positively to evaluative attitudes toward luxury brands.

Fig. 2 shows the research model.

3. Research methods

A self-report, paper and pencil survey instrument was used to collect data from high school students in the São Paulo state, Brazil. The population for this study consists of high school students between 12 and 19 years of age (grades 7 through 12). For the purpose of this research, three private high schools in the city of Santos, state of São Paulo, Brazil were selected. Although in the US, private schools are associated with affluence, that is not the case for Brazil, which has a shortage of public high schools. Private schools are available and affordable to students in all socioeconomic sectors. In order to obtain a diverse sample, tuition price was used as an indicator of socioeconomic status. The three selected schools represented a range of tuition.

In cooperation with each school, students were recruited from approved classrooms. All students were informed that their participation was voluntary (even with their parental authorizations) and that any and all responses they provided would be held in the strictest confidence. All the students in the class with parental/guardian authorization were invited to complete the questionnaire.

3.1. Instrument

Once developed in English, the instrument was translated into Portuguese by a native speaker, then translated back into English by a different native Portuguese speaker (also fluent in English) who was not affiliated with this project. The instrument was pre-tested with 50 students, and reliability was satisfactorily assessed for the constructs, indicated by an acceptable range of Cronbach’s alpha coefficients close to .70 or better (Kline, 2000; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). These were: peer-pressure = .633; materialism = .809; independent self-construal = .786; interdependent self-construal = .693; self-concept clarity = .830; social consumption motivation = .849. Since the items needed no alterations, the pre-test sample was incorporated into the final sample. The full questionnaire is available from the first author on request.

3.2. Measures

3.2.1. Self-concept clarity

Self-concept clarity is a perceptual and belief-based concept. Self-concept clarity scale was developed by Campbell et al. (1996), and has a reported Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.85. This scale has 12 items and all items are measured using a 1- to 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Sample statements include “On one day I might have one opinion of myself and on another day I might have a different opinion.” This scale was used before in a study by Nezlek and Plesko (2001) with a reported reliability coefficient alpha of 0.98 and by Tian, Bearden, and Hunter (2001) with a reported reliability coefficient alpha of 0.89.

3.2.2. Independent self-construal

The independent self-construal scale used was developed by Gudykunst, Matsumoto, Ting-Toomey, Nishida, and Karimi (1994) and later improved by Gudykunst and Lee (2003). This measure was drawn from instruments used in past research in a variety of cultures (Hui, 1988; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994; Verma, 1992; Yamaguchi, 1994). The Gudykunst and Lee (2003) scale has 14 items with a reported Cronbach’s alpha of .82 for a US sample, .77 for a Japanese sample, .73 for a Korean sample, and .83 for an Australian sample. Sample items include: “Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me.” All the items are measured using a 1- to 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). This scale was previously used by Hackman, Ellis, Johnson, and Staley (1999) with reported Cronbach’s alpha of 0.85.

3.2.3. Interdependent self-construal

The interdependent self-construal measure developed by Gudykunst and Lee (2003) was adopted, which has 14 items. The reported Cronbach’s alpha coefficients are: .80 for a US sample, .84 for a Japanese sample, .85 for a Korean sample and .85 for an Australian sample.
sample. For the purpose of this study, three items related to work relationships were deleted, given that teenagers in urban areas of Brazil typically do not have jobs. Finally, a total of 11 items using a 1- to 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) was used. Sample items include: “It is important to consult close friends and get their ideas before making a decision.”

3.2.4. Social consumption motivation

A four-item social consumption motivation measure, originally developed by Moschis and Churchill (1978) and updated by Moschis (1981) was used. Before the items are presented, the participant is instructed to think about this question “What is important to know before purchasing a product?” Sample items that follow this question include “What others think of different brands or products” and “What brands or products to buy to make a good impression on others.” All the items are measured using a 1- to 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Martin and Turley (2004) and Prendergast and Wong (2003) used this scale, with reported Cronbach’s alphas higher than 0.80.

3.2.5. Attitude toward luxury

We used a short version of the attitude toward luxury measure created by Dubois and Laurent (1994) that fits the scope of the current research. Their measure includes an interest toward luxury factor comprised of seven items and an evaluative attitude toward luxury factor comprised of four items.

Interest toward luxury factor was refined to six items because one of the items was not identified as being part of the factor during a content validity analysis. All the items are measured using a 1- to 7-point scale (1 = disagree, 7 = agree). Sample items are “I’m not interested in luxury” and “I could talk about luxury for hours.” Evaluative attitude toward luxury is a four-item factor where all the items are measured using a 1- to 7-point scale (1 = disagree, 7 = agree). Sample items are “People who buy luxury try to differentiate themselves from others” and “In my opinion, luxury is too expensive for what it is.”

Dubois and Laurent’s (1994) metric is the best-known measure for attitudes toward luxury and was used in studies by Tidwell and Dubois (1996), Dubois, Czellar, and Laurent (2005), Dubois, Laurent, and Czellar (2001), and Kim, Baik, and Kwon (2002). According to Czellar (personal communication, June 30, 2007) who used this scale in the 2005 study, no Cronbach’s alpha was reported because the study did not use a conventional domain sampling paradigm (Churchill, 1979), but focused more on content validity as advocated by Rossiter (2005). From this perspective, he justified that alpha coefficients are less informative than from the perspective of domain sampling; hence, we do not report them either.

3.2.6. Peer-pressure

Santor et al. (2000) developed a measure of peer pressure based on the work of Brown, Clasen, and Eicher (1986). Santor’s scale had been used in a study by González, Huerta-Sánchez, Ortiz-Nieves, Vázquez-Alvarez, and Kribs-Zaleta (2003). Using a 1- to 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree), 11 items measure teenagers’ level of peer pressure. Statements include items such as “My friends could push me into doing just about anything.” Santor et al. (2000) reported Cronbach’s alpha coefficients of the measure ranging from 0.69 to 0.91.

3.2.7. Materialism

15 items assessing teenagers’ materialism value using a 1- to 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) were adopted. The measure was developed by Wong, Rindfleisch, and Burroughs (2003) and was tested in a cross-cultural setting. Sample questions include: “How do you feel about people who own expensive homes, car, and clothes?” The reported Cronbach’s alpha for the Wong et al. (2003) measure are U.S. 0.88, Thailand 0.70 and Japan 0.82. Furthermore, a study by Rose and Dejesus (2007) that used the same measure reports a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.82.

3.3. Reliability and validity

To ensure reliability and validity, we used previously tested versions of existing scales. To assess content validity and internal reliability, we pre-tested the instrument using a sub-set of Brazilian teenagers.

The internal consistency of the presented scales approached Nunnally and Bernstein’s (1994) acceptable range of .70. Cronbach alpha coefficients for interest toward luxury and evaluative attitude toward luxury established a priori by Dubois and Laurent (1994) were not calculated following Czellar (personal communication, June 30, 2007).

3.4. Data analysis

We used structural equation modeling to test the theoretical model (see Fig. 2) (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996). Before estimating the structural model, we established the measurement model using confirmatory factor analysis. As necessary, we made revisions to the measurement model prior to estimating the structural model. Using the revised measurement model, we estimated the structural model. Of course, common method bias may impact empirical results, particularly in the structural model, but this issue is often present in many studies of this type. Results must be interpreted with this matter in mind.

Furthermore, in order to check for the moderating effect (peer-pressure), we first ran the model with no moderator and then we added the moderator into the model to investigate any changes in the path coefficients. The objective was to check whether the path coefficients were different by adding the moderator; if the path coefficient is not different, we can conclude that this variable does not represent a significant moderator.

4. Results

4.1. Sample demographics

The total sample consists of 558 teenagers between the ages of 12 and 19 (grades 7 through 12) from three high schools. Respondents were asked about ten demographic characteristics: gender, age, ownership of mobile phone, products purchased with allowance money, job, parents’ relationship status, parents’ education, grade level, number of siblings, and the number of televisions at home. Out of 558 respondents, 40% are 17 years old and the percentages of males (44%) and females (43%) are nearly equal (13% did not answer). Almost three-fourths of the respondents have at least three televisions at home, and nearly two-thirds spend their own allowances on entertainment, clothes and shoes.

In terms of school year, 41% are in the 11th grade. More than half of the respondents have at least one brother or sister (51%). Eighty-five percent of the total sample owns a mobile phone, even though 84% of them do not have a job.

4.2. Purification of the scale and measurement model

LISREL 8.70 software (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2004) was used to perform a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on each construct, except on the two constructs of attitudes toward luxury brands: interest and evaluative, because these particular measures did not use the conventional domain sampling paradigm. After the first run of CFA in LISREL, two items were removed: one from self concept clarity, and one from materialism, because these two items were not significantly loading onto their factors.

The next step was the first round of structural equation modeling. Initial results of the analysis indicated that the main model converged, but due to the sheer number of indicators involved, the loadings of...
### Table 1

Estimation results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Estimate path coefficient</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>P-value</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Expected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SelfConc → SCM</td>
<td>−0.29</td>
<td>−5.71</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1 self-concept clarity is negatively related to social consumption motivation</td>
<td>Peer pressured added into the model</td>
<td>Peer pressured added into the model</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
<td>(t-value difference smaller than 1.96/not significant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCM → SelfConc ↑ PPress H2 the impact of self concept clarity on social consumption motivation will be moderated by peer pressure</td>
<td>−0.24</td>
<td>−4.89</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SelfConc → SCM ↑ PPress H2 the impact of self concept clarity on social consumption motivation will be moderated by peer pressure</td>
<td>−0.29</td>
<td>−5.71</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indep → SCM H3 independent self-construal is negatively related to social consumption motivation</td>
<td>−0.13</td>
<td>−2.66</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter → SCM H4 interdependent self construal is positively related to social consumption motivation</td>
<td>−0.00</td>
<td>−0.10</td>
<td>.460</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCM → ITL H5a social consumption motivation is positively related to interest toward luxury brands</td>
<td>−0.07</td>
<td>−0.74</td>
<td>.228</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCM → EATL H5b social consumption motivation is positively related to evaluative attitude toward luxury brands</td>
<td>−0.31</td>
<td>−3.16</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAT → SCM H6 materialism is positively related to social consumption motivation</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>6.63</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAT → ITL H7a materialism is positively related to interest toward luxury brands</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>6.19</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Positive</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAT → EATL H7b materialism is positively related to evaluative attitudes toward luxury brands</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
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**Goodness of fit**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi-squared (df = 451)</td>
<td>1046.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-value</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative fit Index (CFI)</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)</td>
<td>0.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodness of fit index (GFI)</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the indicators on their factors were not significant, indicating that the scales needed further purification. A high number of indicators can cause estimation problems as acknowledged by Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer (2001) “the excessive number of indicators is undesirable because of both the data collection demands it imposes and the increase in the number of parameters when the construct is embedded within a broader structural model (e.g. in a LISREL context).”

In order to refine the scales and have a fewer numbers of indicators, one should perform an extra round of CFA. Most researchers, when dealing with scales already tested and publicly well known (like this case), perform only confirmatory factor analysis followed by a structural equation modeling. However, because of an excessive number of indicators in our study, an extra step was added; this is a very common procedure as reported by previous authors (Nyamathi, Stein, & Brecht, 1995; Prajogo & Hong, 2008; Prajogo & McDermott, 2005). For each construct, items with factor loading scores below 0.4 were removed (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998).

Second, semantic differences were analyzed and the percentage of variance explained by each construct was examined. In accordance with the two-step approach advocated by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), before testing the hypothesized relationships among the latent constructs in a structural equation model, the measurement model was estimated. This technique allowed the assessment of the unidimensionality and reliability of the scales, which represents a way to confirm whether the factors are loaded properly. The resulting 32-item, 8-factor measurement model was examined to assess the fit. The results of the measurement model indicate a good fit for the data, with a chi-square score of 1094.1 (df = 436), CFI = 0.91, RMSEA = 0.052 and GFI = 0.89.

All scale reliabilities approached the cutoff of 0.6 established by Bagozzi and Yi (1988). Corrected item-total correlations approached the guideline of 0.3 (Field, 2005) demonstrating that all scales were reliable. Convergent validity was assessed by examining the magnitude and sign of the loadings of the observed variables onto their respective latent factors. Each loading was in the anticipated direction and magnitude, and each loading was significantly different from zero (p < .05).

4.3. Structural equation model

The hypothesized model was tested via structural equation modeling (Table 1). Initial results of the analysis indicated that the model fit could be improved (Chi-square = 1275.67, df = 455, p-value = 0.000, RMSEA = 0.057). Following Bollen (1989) and Steiger (1990), the model was refined by freeing error variances of conceptually similar items one by one as suggested by modification indices provided by LISREL. Errors were treated independently to avoid interpretational confounds. The lambda matrices (both X and Y) were full and fixed. Then the individual items associated with the exogenous and endogenous constructs were freed.

The resulting model fit the data relatively well based on criteria set forth by Blalock (1985) which suggest that the chi-square value should approximate less than twice the value of the degrees of freedom (Chi-square = 1046.22, df = 451, p-value = 0.0000, RMSEA = 0.049, GFI = 0.89, CFI = 0.93). The model exceeded the normally accepted criteria of .90 for CFI (Garson, 2007), is within the criteria of RMSEA ≤ .06 (Hu & Bentler, 1999), and approached the GFI guideline of ≥ .90 (Kline, 2000). Overall, the model has a good fit for the number of parameters being investigated.

5. Discussion

This study is an attempt to increase understanding of teenagers’ self and attitudes toward luxury brands. The focus was on how social consumption motivations affect teenagers’ attitudes toward luxury brands, how teens’ self concepts can influence social consumption motivations and whether peer pressure can moderate this relationship. We also examined the way in which materialism influences teenagers’ social consumption motivations and attitudes toward luxury brands. One of the key contributions is the demonstration that materialism is a powerful force in developing more positive attitudes towards luxury brands among Brazilian teenagers, confirming Prendergast and Wong’s study (2003). In addition, the desire for wealth and material ownership associates positively with social incentives to consume (social consumption motivation), consistent with Christopher and Schlenker (2004).

Another goal of the study was to understand the impact of self aspects on social consumption motivations among Brazilian teenagers and to investigate whether peer pressure affects this relationship. The study demonstrates that self aspects are very important for Brazilian teens’ consumer education; self aspects can influence the way teens perceive group pressures to shop/purchase, which represents a fundamental aspect in the research of teen consumer behavior (John, 1999; Moschis & Churchill, 1978). For example, Brazilian teenagers who have self-beliefs that are clear, confidently defined, internally consistent, and stable have a stronger tendency to resist social motivations to consume, because the clearer they are about themselves the less they attend to external sources and stimuli.

The study of the Brazilian teen market reveals that luxury brand retailers could shift marketing efforts to materialistic aspects of luxury brands and how retailers can assist in achieving personal happiness and status. Luxury brand companies should understand that some teens relate luxury brands more to their own belief that money can buy them happiness and that acquiring material possessions is a form of demonstrating one’s achievements in life (Banerjee & Dittmar, 2008).

Materialistic individuals represent the largest consumer segment for luxury brands (Wiedmann, Hennigs, & Siebels, 2009). Marketers of luxury brands should focus on consumer needs of self-directed pleasure and self gift giving as a way to connect luxury brands to accomplishments, status, and personal happiness (Tsai, 2005).

Perhaps some of the measures used lack sensitivity, which could explain why the data do not support the expected positive association between collective incentives to consume and teens’ overall evaluations of luxury brands. Our Brazilian study did not replicate the result of Prendergast and Wong (2003) that established a positive relationship between social consumption motivation and expenditure on luxury brands. This issue suggests further investigation.

The unexpected finding of a negative association between social consumption motivation and evaluative attitude toward luxury brands contradicts conventional wisdom. Evaluative attitude toward luxury brand is what a teenager thinks about luxury brands, their personal opinion about luxury brands (Dubois & Laurent, 1994). In other words, evaluative attitude is an individual’s view about luxury brands. A possible explanation for the result is that what one thinks about luxury brands is related more to personal values, not to the desire to impress others by acquiring prestigious or expensive brands. This explanation complements some previous findings by Vigneron and Johnson (1999). They state that perfectionist and hedonist motives influence luxury consumption; the hedonic effect ensues when consumers value the perceived utility of a luxury brand to arouse personal feelings and affective states.

The main findings of the study therefore suggest that image of self affects social consumption motivations among Brazilian teens, and that materialism is the main driver of the attitudes toward luxury brands. The expected relationship between social consumption motivation and attitudes toward luxury brands did not emerge, which implies that self does not impact the attitude toward luxury brands (see Fig. 2). This finding suggests that more detailed research is needed since this relationship has a solid basis in theory. More accurate measures of luxury attitudes may solve the problem.

References

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