The influence of emerging market consumers’ purchase intention of luxury clothing on their purchase behaviour: a South African perspectives

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ABSTRACT

The growth of the economy has occasioned a shift in consumption patterns in the South African luxury markets. This study aims to investigate the purchasing behaviour of emerging market consumers as regards luxury clothing. A survey was conducted and data was collected online from 300 emerging market consumers in SA by means of a survey questionnaire. The results of the study demonstrated that status, quality, and materialism all influence the purchase intention of emerging market consumers as regards luxury clothing. Status had the strongest effect on purchase intention for luxury clothing, followed by quality and materialism. Consumer intention to purchase luxury products was found to influence such consumers’ purchase behaviour. This study is significant for retail stores in South Africa selling luxury clothing, as well as those intending to enter the SA luxury clothing market. The study findings shed light on factors influencing purchase behaviour by emerging market consumers as regards to luxury clothing.

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Introduction

Once considered to be the preserve of the wealthy elite, luxury clothing is now accessible to the “common man” due to globalisation (Eng & Bogaert, 2010; Brun and Castelli, 2013). With increased foreign tourism, as well as the proliferation of new media technology and globalisation, the world has been transformed into one, large interconnected market in which geographical barriers have become distorted through the consumption of ideas, commodities, technology and innovation. Hence, through globalisation, individuals now have access to an extensive array of luxury goods. The saturation of Western markets has also prompted luxury clothing to expand into emerging markets such as South Africa, as potentially profitable avenues to pursue in a constantly changing global market (Iqani, 2019).

AfrAsia Bank (2018) reported that luxury goods sales in South Africa reached a total of 2.4 billion (USD) in 2016, higher than other African countries such as Kenya, Nigeria and Angola. Although the retail market was negatively affected by Covid-19, the New World Wealth Report of 2021 reported that the luxury goods market in South Africa generated an estimated $2 billion (est. R28.5bn) within the previous year. The country maintains the leading position in the consumption of luxury goods on the continent (AfrAsia Bank, 2021). In 2023, the total value of the luxury goods market is predicted to grow to R5.9 billion (AfrAsia Bank, 2021).

In recent years, the market for luxury goods has enjoyed a meteoric rise in South Africa, a phenomenon that can be attributed to the country establishing itself as an emerging economy. South Africa is home to 60% of the dollar millionaires in Africa and their presence has allowed the country to establish a lucrative luxury goods market with an annual growth rate of 5% (Euromonitor...
Along with its significant population of millionaires, South Africa also has a growing middle class who are developing a taste for the luxurious lifestyle (CPP Luxury, 2019). The “middle class”, in the South African context, refers to the consumer market which is based on individuals who are educated or skilled and earning a decent salary (Iqani, 2017). Due to the growth of the middle class, especially the emerging middle-class segment, researchers have identified a shift in spending patterns of this market towards conspicuous consumption (James, 2017). Traditionally, it has been thought that luxury clothing is reserved for wealthier consumers, but those standards have been shattered by the middle class cementing its place in luxury brand consumerism (Cunningham & Petzer, 2021).

In an attempt to define luxury goods as different from other goods, researchers have compared the characteristics of luxury clothing to the characteristics of mass consumption brands. A study by Cervellon and Drylie Carey (2021) depicted a number of features, such as price and durability, that differentiate luxury clothing from mass consumption brands. In addition, several researchers distinguish luxury clothing according to premium prices, symbolism, high quality, aesthetic design, heritage, and rarity (Gerasimenko & Golovanova, 2021; Jain, 2021; Salem & Salem, 2018). This is because luxury clothing focus on specific niches and are subject to exclusive distribution agreements, while mass consumption brands are mass-marketed (Amatulli et al., 2018). A luxury brand can be considered to be the most expensive, image-driven and the most expensive as the “most selective in its distribution (Stakheyeva, 2021).

Interest in these luxury goods, meanwhile, has been steered mainly by the steady development of the luxury clothing industry (Hassan, Husić-Mehmedović & Duverger, 2015). Surprisingly, during times of recession there has been an increase in retailers of luxury clothing in several up-market malls in the major cities of South Africa. Examples of these malls include Sandton square, Menlyn and Mall of Africa in Gauteng; Gateway in Durban, and The Victoria and Alfred Waterfront in Cape Town (Dangor, 2018). This growth has drawn in a considerable range of luxury retailers, such as Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Zegna, Burberry, Dolce and Gabanna. (AfrAsia Bank, 2019; NWW, 2021). These leading fashion brands sell luxury clothing, handbags, shoes, and jewellery (Scheepers, 2016).

According to (Su, 2021), luxury clothing is regarded as high involvement goods and consumers do not purchase such goods impulsively. To better understand the purchasing behaviour of the South African consumers, Kaus (2013) found that emerging market consumers in SA spent more on luxury goods than did white consumers. Furthermore, Madyibi (2017) in Makihita (2021) states that emerging market consumers spend their realised income on visible consumption, and this likely translates to a significant households’ income being spent on the purchase of luxury goods (Makihita, 2021). Further research found that the South African consumers are complex and heterogenic in nature; requiring further investigation to understand the motives for purchasing luxury goods (Atwal & Bryson 2014; Stiehler, 2017) This study determines the consumer behaviour of emerging market consumers in SA as regards luxury goods.

According to the World Bank (2016), South Africa’s possibility for growth depends on the country’s townships (areas predominantly occupied by African people of SA) and “in promoting convergence with the formal and established sector of the economy.” Jürgens and Donaldson (2012) assert that, post-Apartheid, townships became areas of importance in terms of regeneration and development, due to the implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and government’s Growth, Employment, and Redistribution initiative (GEAR) policies. Nikomo, Mototo and Chuchu (2017) further assert that, after the Apartheid era, townships drew a great deal of attention from the business sector as new business opportunities within the sector came to the fore, due to emerging market consumers arising from the townships. This consumer segment was deprived and were unable to access or purchase luxurious or high-status products (Chipp, Kleyn & Manzi, 2011:131).

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The emerging middle class in SA increased to 4.2-million people in 2015 from 1.7 million in 2004 (Steyn, 2013), although this might have been negatively affected by the Covid-19 pandemic that resulted in many people losing their source of income. Emerging market consumers in SA are known to prefer luxury clothing to denote their status (Steinfeld, 2015) as well as to display flamboyance and to symbolise success and accomplishments (Atwal & Bryson, 2014). There are limited studies on the purchasing of luxury clothing in SA by emerging market consumers (Atwal & Bryson, 2013; Steinfeld, 2015).

SA is the country with the highest level of inequality in the world. However, emerging market consumers in SA allocate a significant share of their limited income to buying luxury products (Madyibi, 2017). Consumers spend their limited income on purchasing visible expensive goods, so as to appear as affluent (Moav and Neeman, 2010) and such actions denote conspicuous consumption (Kaus, 2013) since such consumers buy higher priced products to inflate their egos (Truong, 2010:4). This could be attributed to the fact that SA hosts several luxury retailers (Lee, 2016; Lodestar Marketing Research, 2015). It is therefore important to determine luxury consumer behaviour in the emerging market of SA. International luxury clothing needs to acknowledge that luxury brand consumers within emerging markets are not all the same, since there are diverse segments within the emerging markets. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to investigate consumer behaviour in respect of luxury brand consumers by focusing on factors such as materialism, conspicuousness, quality, social value and uniqueness. These factors have been found to influence luxury brand purchasing (Stiehler, 2017; Scheepers, 2016:73; Hennigs et al., 2015; Truong et al., 2008; Dubois et al., 2001). Furthermore, this study seeks to add to the existing body of knowledge by exploring the extent to which the purchase behaviour and purchase intentions of emerging market consumers in South Africa are influenced by the aura of luxury clothing.
Literature Review

Conceptual Background and Hypothesis Development

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) guides this study as it describes both personal and social factors that affect consumer purchasing and consumption behaviour. The TPB model has been identified as well-suited to consumer behaviour studies that aim to analyse the use/ adoption of luxury goods and services. Ajzen (1991) states that purchase intention takes place when a want or need arises in an individual. This want or need then motivates the individual to attempt to satisfy that want or need. Ajzen (1991) further asserts that purchase intention acts as a vital predictor of purchasing behaviour for luxury clothing and is more related to the psychological motivations behind what causes consumers to purchase luxury clothing. In addition, the grounding theory has been recognised as an effective tool to better understand the connection between perceived value and consumption patterns of luxury clothing in emerging countries such as India, China, Qatar, Malaysia (Jain, et al, 2017; Jain 2019; Valaei & Nikhashemi; Salem & Salem, 2018).

Studies have identified various factors that influence luxury brand consumption and has confirmed that luxury clothing consumption is a function of both social and personal orientation (Cronje, Jacobs and Retief, 2016; Steinfieldl, 2015; Jain, Khan and Mishra, 2015; Hennigs, Wiedmann, Klarmann and Behrens, 2015; Burger, Louw, Pegado and Van der Berg, 2014; Kaus, 2013; Amatullia and Guido, 2011; Wang, Sun & Song, 2011). These studies differ from this study in that the present study focuses on five factors influencing the purchase intention of emerging market consumers in SA, as illustrated in Figure 1, below.

Materialism

Materialism places value and worth on possessions (Islam, Wang, Ali & Akhtar, 2022). Septiana and Qastharin (2021) propose that materialism is derived from one’s need to acquire wealth, possessions, status and a certain image in order to find fulfilment. In agreement, Ajitah & Sivakumar (2017) state that possessions are an important aspect in determining satisfaction and dissatisfaction in life, therefore highlighting materialism as a leading factor in consumer purchase behaviour in the purchase of luxury clothing. Researchers found consumers’ materialistic value and perception to positively affect luxury clothing consumption behaviour (Ajitah, & Sivakumar 2017; Sharda, & Bhat, 2018).

The importance placed on material possessions has propelled luxury consumerism forward as the more expensive and glamorous the material possessions, the more the image of success is perceived. This importance placed on materials possessions is nothing more than superficial, yet luxury clothing continues to experience growth in their customer base. Materialism is perceived as an obsession an individual has for material possessions (Madinga, 2016:3). People who are materialistic often consider wealth and power as the be-all and end-all of life and perceive wealth and power as vital for satisfaction and prosperity in life. As such, they spend vast amounts of money on acquiring brands (Madinga, 2016:3). Therefore, material possessions and acquisition of such are regarded as an important component in any culture in modern society and thus influence purchase intention (Clow et al., 2014:33).

In light of this discussion the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Materialism has a statistically significant influence on purchase intention by emerging market consumers wishing to acquire luxury clothing.

Conspicuousness consumption

Conspicuous consumption is described as the purchasing of high-priced products in order to build an image of wealth (Siepmann, Holthoff, & Kowalczuk, 2021). Jain, (2021) adds that expensive purchases are often bought with the aim of creating a perception of affluence and success, which may be real or falsely crafted. Varying social groups have varying spending patterns in respect of items that indicate status in society. People who are more secure in their wealth tend to find no need for excessive displays of wealth. Some researchers attribute conspicuous or frivolous spending to lower-class people as they are more desperate to prove their wealth. Others, however, align it with self-expression, positiveness and a way to improve one's self-esteem. The idea that showcasing wealth improves one's social standing has allowed for the continuous growth in luxury brand products in South Africa. By means of fulfilling their need for status, the consumers concerned are fulfilling their need to be equal in a particularly imbalanced society (Gumede,2011).

The realisation of status-symbolising luxury clothing, a *sense of pride in oneself and their success to others is conveyed (Gumede 2011).

Several researchers in emerging countries found a link between conspicuousness and the purchase intentions of luxury clothing (Ajitha & Sivakumar, 2017; Jain, 2020; Jain & Mishra, 2020; Siepmann.et al.,2021).

Against the above background, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H2: Conspicuous consumption has a statistically significant influence on purchase intention by emerging market consumers wishing to acquire luxury clothing.
Quality
Gerasimenko and Golovanova (2021) noted that consumer motives are based on price and functionality when buying regular brands, whereas consumer motives for buying luxury brand are based on the prestigious names as well as status associated with such brand. In their study to examine the consumption of status brands in South Africa, Dondolo and Madinga (2017) found that the South African consumers believe that products sold at high prices must be of high status and high quality and that they are stylish. Consumers often buy luxury clothing for the superior quality reflected in the product or brand name. It is argued that consumers often link luxury clothing with superior brand quality and reassurance in such a way that they see more value from luxury clothing, which influences their purchase intention. Therefore, consumers purchase luxury clothing chiefly for their perceived high level of quality.

H3: Quality has a statistically significant influence on purchase intention by emerging market consumers wishing to acquire luxury clothing.

Social Value
South African history depicts South Africa as a nation whose people have valued and who continue to value their perceived status in society. Status is portrayed through ownership of material goods, such as cars, clothing, household items and accessories (Iqani, 2019). Possession of key luxury items would be seen to communicate wealth, social standing, and dignity. The South African consumer market is heterogeneous in nature and the consumption of luxury clothing is affected by several factors including materialism, conspicuousness, need for quality, social value and status. Shahid and Farooqi (2019) stated that the history of luxury clothing consumption is strongly rooted in the concept of societal hierarchy. According to Belk (1988) in Shahid and Farooqi (2019), what drives consumer behaviour is consumers’ desire for prestige or social status derived from purchasing and possessing luxury products. Luxury products can be purchased either for internal factors, such as self-reward, or external factors, such as to serve as a sign of wealth which may or may not be publicly exhibited (O’Cass and McEwen, 2004). Tsai (2005) in Shahid and Farooqi (2019) also suggested that social identification and social salience are the two reasons that consumers display their luxury products. This essentially means that if the purchase and possession of luxury products is considered to be socially acceptable, the “consumers will have to accept such conduct to fit in with the social measures” (Shahid & Farooqi, 2019). This then affirms Makhitha’s (2021) statement that emerging market consumers purchase luxury products to showcase their longing for more possessions to uphold their social status and recent position in society, thus influencing their purchase intention. From the above discussions, the below hypothesis was formulated:

H4: Social value has a statistically significant influence on purchase intention by emerging market consumers wishing to acquire luxury clothing.

Status
South Africa’s economic growth happened quite rapidly following the ending of an apartheid system that encouraged racial oppression, which in turn left a large proportion of the country’s population economically disempowered and impoverished. The change in economy simultaneously caused cultural and social change, as well as a change in consumer psyche. Suddenly, a group of people who were financially disadvantaged now had disposable income which afforded them luxuries previously not even dreamt of. This new life of luxury birthed the perception that the more ostentatious the lifestyle, the higher the standing in the hierarchy of social status. According to Bock, Eastman and McKay (2014), status consumption refers to the practice of consuming expensive products or services with the purpose of displaying wealth. Status consumption is a way in which consumers display status by means of purchasing luxury clothing (Patsiaouras & Fitchett, 2012).

As previously mentioned, the need for status in South Africa is increased because of the high level of inequality. By means of fulfilling their need for status, the consumers concerned are fulfilling their need to be equal in a particularly imbalanced society (Gumede, 2011). In trying to portray a favourable image of themselves to the world, many fall prey to conspicuous spending habits under the assumption so doing will validate their position in society. Based on these perceptions, the below hypothesis was formulated:

H5: Status has a statistically significant influence on purchase intention by emerging market consumers wishing to acquire luxury clothing.
Conceptual Model of the study

A consumer’s buying decision is not simple; rather, it is a somewhat complex process. Purchasing intention is often related to consumers’ behaviour, perception and attitude. In the case of luxury clothing, purchasing intention refers to the intention of acquiring a luxury brand item which then acts as indicator of purchasing behaviour and is associated with the psychological motivations for consumers purchasing luxury clothing. It is argued that consumers may have the intention to purchase a luxury brand, however, due to the price, quality perception, the value perception, the purchase intention may be altered. Therefore, the greater intention the consumer has, the greater the potential to purchase the luxury brand. Their behaviour will be compelled by the physiological motivation that encourages their reaction which causes them to go to a luxury retail store to fulfil their need. Furthermore, although purchase intentions and purchasing behaviour are often interrelated, they may not always be congruent (Spears & Singh 2004). Jain (2019) established that having a positive attitude about a brand is linked to favourable purchase intentions and consumption thereof. Valaei and Nikhashemi (2017) found that attitude had significant influence on luxury purchase intention among young consumers in Qatar. Salem and Salem (2018) agree that there is a relationship between attitude and purchase intention around luxury clothing.

H6: There is statistically significant relationship between purchase intention and purchase behaviour of South African consumers when purchasing luxury clothing.

Research and Methodology

Research design, sampling and data collection

The quantitative research method was deemed appropriate to investigate the luxury consumer behaviour of emerging market consumers. Previous studies on luxury purchase behaviour from both developed and developing economies have adopted quantitative study methods and this supports the selection of this method for the study. The research method was also appropriate to achieve the objectives of the study.

A survey targeting emerging-market consumers located in Soweto township and who purchase luxury clothing products was conducted. Soweto is the largest township in SA and houses many consumers belonging to the emerging middle-class segment. Data was collected online by a research company. An online link containing a questionnaire was distributed to emerging market consumers that were available in the company’s database. Data was collected in June 2021. 300 questionnaires were fully completed by the respondents. The sample size matched those of other studies investigating online shopping (Hong et al. 2016; Muda, Mohd & Hassan 2016).

Existing literature was used to identify factors influencing purchase behaviour of emerging market consumers. Various sources were consulted in the formulation of questionnaire items and included the following: materialism (Shukla, 2012), conspicuous consumption (Shukla, 2012; Hamelin & Thaichon, (2016), social value (Hennigs, 2015), quality (Sun et al. 2017, Hennigs, 2015), status (Stiehler, (2017); Truong, 2008), purchase intention (Hennigs, 2015), and purchase behaviour (Hennigs, 2015). There were 38 items measuring luxury clothing purchase behaviour, with seven items measuring materialism, four items measuring conspicuous consumption, five items measuring social value, eight items measuring quality and seven items measuring status. The purchase behaviour and purchase intention were measured using four items each. The questionnaire consisted of 13 demographic questions. A five-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating “highly disagree” and 5 “highly
agree”, was used to measure the all the constructs in the conceptual model. Ethical clearance approval was sought from the Department of Marketing and Retail Management at Unisa prior to conducting the study.

Validity and reliability

The researchers used the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to determine the validity of the study. The communalities from the EFA ranged from 0.57 to 0.88, which is higher than the minimum threshold of 0.2, proposed by Child (2006). Since the questionnaire was designed using existing studies, construct validity was attained.

The reliability of the different constructs in the questionnaire were assessed using the Cronbach’s alpha (α) coefficient and were all satisfactory and supported by Malhotra (2010). There was an overall Cronbach’s alpha of 0.98 for the constructs. The Cronbach’s alpha (α) for each of the constructs was materialism (0.95), conspicuous consumption (0.94), social value (0.97), quality (0.97) and status (0.94). Purchase behaviour and purchase intention had Cronbach’s alphas (α) of 0.89 and 0.94 respectively. This is supported by Malhotra (2010), who recommended that a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.70 and above is regarded as acceptable.

Analysis of Data

The SAS JMP version 15 for Mac and the R language version 3.5.2 were used to analyse the data. The descriptive analyses (e.g., mean and standard deviation), exploratory factor analysis, and structural equation modelling (SEM) were conducted to achieve the objectives of the study.

Validity and reliability

The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to determine if individual items load onto the constructs as intended in the questionnaire. EFA was also used to determine the construct validity of the study. Although the threshold minimum of factor loadings is 0.2 (Child, 2006), this study maintained the factor loading of 0.5, except for one item that loaded 0.4. The purpose for maintaining a high factor loading score was to ensure that construct validity would be attained. The communalities for items were between 0.41 and 0.87, with only one of them below 0.70. To ensure the reliability of the study, the Cronbach’s alpha (α) coefficient was calculated. The individual α was 0.97 (quality), 0.95 (materialism), 0.94 (status) and 0.97 (social value) and conspicuous consumption (0.94). The Cronbach’s alpha (α) for purchase intention and purchase behaviour were 0.89 and 0.84 respectively. The Cronbach’s alphas (α) were all satisfactory since, according to Malhotra (2010), a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient must be above 0.70 to be acceptable.

Results and findings

This section will discuss the profile of the respondents.

Demographics of the respondents

The female respondents comprised over 70 per cent of the population (73.6%, n=221), more than the male respondents (25.6%, n=77). The younger age group 18–29 made up 70 per cent (n=200) while those in the age group 30–40 years accounted for 22 per cent (n=65). Unmarried respondents comprised 72%, (n=216) of the population. The respondents were highly represented by those with post-school qualifications (38%, n=115), followed by those with Grade 12 (37%, n=110) and diploma/certificate (23%, n=68). Most of the respondents earned between R5 000 ($333) and R7 500 ($500) (62%, n=186), with those earning over R20 000 ($13330) being less represented (9%, n=27).

Factor analysis

It was necessary for this study to conduct exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to determine whether variables developed from a literature review could group into meaningful variables that describe motivational factors influencing store loyalty. EFA was conducted on 31 motivational factors to determine if they can group into the motivational factors influencing store loyalty. The principal axis factoring was used to extract the shopper motivation factors, followed by a quartimin (oblique) rotation. Five of the factors had eigenvalues greater than 1. All the factors had items loading 0.5 and higher, except for one item loading 0.42 on factor 3. Factors were named quality, materialism, status, social value and conspicuousness. The total variance for the combined four factors accounted for 81.67%. Table 1 below shows the factor loadings for each scale item.

Factor 1 had eight items with a mean score (M) of 3.40 and standard deviation (SD) of 1.10 and was named quality. As can be seen by the mean score in the table, this factor is considered more important by shoppers, followed by factor 2, which was named materialism and had seven factors (M= 3.22, SD= 1.11). Factor 3 and factor 4 were named status and social value, with M scores of 2.69 (SD=1.05) and 2.71 (SD=1.21) respectively. The last factor, named conspicuous consumption, factor 5, had four items loading with M score of 2.88 and SD of 0.94.
Makhitha et al., International Journal of Research in Business & Social Science 13(1) (2024), 75-86

Table 1: Factor analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Materialism</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Social Value</th>
<th>Conspicuous consumption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luxury products have a very high level of reliability</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>-0.00</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxury products are clothing made by a well-known designer or manufacturer and are worth more money</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxury products have advanced designs and craftsmanship</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxury clothing are sophisticated brands</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxury clothing are high quality brands</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxury products have a very high-quality image</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer to shop at stores that carry high-quality merchandise</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxury clothing are superior brands</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing a luxury brand makes me feel unique</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The luxury brand I purchase must be a status symbol</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important for me that the luxury brand I buy improves my image</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product prestige is my major reason for buying a luxury brand</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important to me to own really nice luxury goods</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing luxury goods increases my happiness</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It sometimes bothers me quite a bit that I cannot afford to buy all the luxury goods I want</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would pay more for a product if it had status</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am interested in new products with status</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important to shop in the same clothing stores as my friends</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to shop in the same clothing stores as celebrities</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would buy a product just because it has status</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes I would like to know where important people buy their clothes</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The status of a product is irrelevant to me</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxury clothing improve the way I am perceived</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.00</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxury products could help me to achieve social approval</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my opinion luxury clothing make a good impression on other people</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxury products could give me a sense of belonging</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxury products could make me feel acceptable</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owning luxury goods indicates a symbol of wealth</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owning luxury goods indicates a symbol of prestige</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owning luxury goods attracts attention</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owning luxury goods indicates a symbol of achievement</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard deviation (SD)</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s Alpha</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Model testing
The Lavaan version 0.6-1 (Rosseel 2012) in R version 3.5.2 (R Core Team 2018) was used to test the conceptual model of the study. The test analysis used a maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors (maximum likelihood mean [MLM]), which produce a robust (scaled) test statistic. To allow free estimation of all factor loadings, the latent factors were standardised using the R version 3.5.2 with the Lavaan library. According to Nusair & Hua (2010), this is done to assess causative relationships amongst...
latent constructs. Various indices were used to test the measures of model fit for the study and included: chi-square value over degree of freedom, normed fit index (NFI), the incremental fit index (IFI), Tucker Lewis index (TLI), comparative fit index (CFI) and standard root mean residual (root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA]).

The results of model fit testing are shown (Table 1) below. According to Hair et al. (2006), the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), CFI, TLI, IFI, relative fit index (RFI) and NFI, must be greater than or equal to 0.9 for the model to be considered fit. A value of 0.8 is, however, acceptable (Hair et al. 2006).

Table 2: Model fit indices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Fit</th>
<th>Chi-Square X²/Df</th>
<th>GFI</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>TLI</th>
<th>IFI</th>
<th>RFI</th>
<th>NFI</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value indicator</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.054</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 2, above, the model fit was moderate, with the following indices: a chi-square (178) = 238.69; \( p = 0.002 \), the relative chi-square = 1.55, RMSEA of 0.054 (90% CI (0.047, 0.061), standardised root mean squared residual (SRMSR) = 0.057, 0.057), CFI = 0.96 (robust) and TLI of 0.95 (robust). The 90% confidence interval for the RMSEA statistics ranged from 0.029 to 0.059, meaning that it is plausible that the population RMSEA statistic might be as low as 0.047 and as high as 0.061.

Hypothesis test results

As components of the structural part of the SEM model, two regressions were performed, with the first regression testing the influence of luxury clothing factors and their influence on emerging market consumers intention to buy luxury clothing. The results for this model are shown in Table 3, below, while Table 4 shows the regression results for model 2, which determined the intention of emerging market consumers regarding their purchase behaviour in respect of luxury clothing.

Table 3: Regression model 1– Luxury clothing intention to buy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intention</th>
<th>Beta Coeff.</th>
<th>St. Er.</th>
<th>Z-Value</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
<th>Std. Coeff.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>0.298</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td>4.893</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materialism</td>
<td>0.164</td>
<td>0.084</td>
<td>1.968</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>0.0157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>0.338</td>
<td>0.082</td>
<td>4.136</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Value</td>
<td>0.115</td>
<td>0.073</td>
<td>1.564</td>
<td>0.118</td>
<td>0.127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumption</td>
<td>-0.049</td>
<td>0.081</td>
<td>-0.608</td>
<td>0.543</td>
<td>-0.056</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To test the statistical significance in the SEM model, the z-values with Wald tests were used for for testing statistical significance in the SEM model. Status had a much stronger effect on intention to purchase luxury clothing, with a beta coefficient of 0.338 (\( z = 4.136 \)). This was followed by quality, with a beta coefficient of 0.298 (\( z = 4.893 \)). Materialism also influence intention to buy luxury clothing, with a beta coefficient of 0.164 (\( z = 1.968 \)). Both status, quality and materialism had a positive and significant impact on intention by emerging market consumers to purchase luxury clothing.

As shown in Table 3 below, emerging market consumers’ intention to purchase luxury clothing has a strong effect on the actual purchase behaviour, as shown by the beta coefficient of 0.704 (\( z=14.70 \)).

Table 4: Regression model 2 – Intention and purchase behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purchase behaviour</th>
<th>Beta coefficient</th>
<th>Std error</th>
<th>z-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Std. Coeff.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purchase intention</td>
<td>0.704</td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td>14.69</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.843</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: \( p \leq 0.001; p \leq 0.05* \)

Table 5, below, shows hypotheses that were accepted and rejected:
Social value has a statistically significant influence on emerging market consumers wishing to acquire luxury clothing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis relationship</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Path coefficient</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality has a statistically significant influence on purchase intention by emerging market consumers wishing to acquire luxury clothing.</td>
<td>H1</td>
<td>0.298</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materialism has a statistically significant influence on purchase intention by emerging market consumers wishing to acquire luxury clothing.</td>
<td>H2</td>
<td>0.164</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status has a statistically significant influence on purchase intention by emerging market consumers wishing to acquire luxury clothing.</td>
<td>H3</td>
<td>0.338</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social value has a statistically significant influence on purchase intention by emerging market consumers wishing to acquire luxury clothing.</td>
<td>H4</td>
<td>0.115</td>
<td>0.118</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conspicuous consumption has a statistically significant influence on purchase intention by emerging market consumers wishing to acquire luxury clothing.</td>
<td>H5</td>
<td>-0.049</td>
<td>0.543</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Intention has statistically significant influence towards purchase behaviour of luxury clothing by emerging market consumers</td>
<td>H6</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As reflected in Table 5, above, the following hypotheses were either supported or rejected:

H1: Quality has a statistically significant influence on purchase intention by emerging market consumers wishing to acquire luxury clothing. Quality has a statistically significant influence on emerging market consumers’ intention to purchase luxury clothing, with a beta coefficient = 0.298, p = 0.000 (refer to Table 3 and Table 4). The path coefficient of H1 (Quality influence towards purchase intention of luxury clothing) is 0.300 with a z value of 4.893. The results show the influence that quality has towards intention to purchase luxury clothing by emerging market consumers. The p-value of 0.001 signifies that the hypothesis is supported. The findings of Sun, et al., 2017 study outlined the effect of quality on purchase intention of luxury products. Husic and Cicic (2009). Hennigs, Wiedmann, Klarmann and Behrens (2015) also support that quality has influence on purchase intention of luxury products.

With the second hypotheses, H2 Materialism has a statistically significant influence on purchase intention by emerging market consumers wishing to acquire luxury clothing, the results show that materialism has a statistically significant influence on emerging market consumers’ intention to purchase luxury clothing. The path coefficient is 0.164, with p-value of 0.000, less than 0.05. The standard coefficient of H2 (Materialism influence towards purchase intention of luxury clothing) is 0.157. The results show the influence that materialism has towards intention to purchase luxury clothing by emerging market consumers. The p-value of 0.049 signifies that the hypothesis is supported. The findings of this study are supported by various studies that reported materialism to influence purchase intention (Sun, et al., 2017). A study by Bills (2017) found materialism to be the most important factor influencing luxury products purchases by emerging market consumers, finding it to be the third most influential factor after quality and status. This was supported by Hamelin and Thaichon (2017) who found materialism to influence purchase intention of Moroccan consumers.

The third hypothesis, H3: Status has a statistically significant influence on purchase intention by emerging market consumers wishing to acquire luxury clothing. Status has a statistically significant influence on emerging market consumers intention to purchase luxury clothing with a path coefficient = 0.338, p = 0.000. The standardised coefficient of H3 (Status influence towards purchase intention of luxury clothing) is 0.340. Status has the greatest effect on consumer intention to buy luxury clothing – more so than other factors, as shown by the high beta coefficient of 0.338. The hypothesis is also supported with a p value of 0.001. These findings are in line with Sun, et al. 2017 and Cronje, Jacobs and Retief (2016) who reported status to have a significant impact towards purchase intention of luxury products. Husic and Cicic (2009) also found status to have influence on purchase behaviour. Mathaba (2016) aver that emerging market consumers are more likely to be influenced by status consumption since there are concerned about group identity.

H4: Social value has a statistically significant influence on purchase intention by emerging market consumers wishing to acquire luxury clothing. As seen in Table 4, above, Social value has no statistically significant influence on emerging market consumers’ intention to purchase luxury clothing. The standardised coefficient is 0.127 with the p-value of 0.268. The path coefficient of H4 (Social value influence towards purchase intention of luxury clothing) is 0.086. The results show that Social value has no influence towards intention to purchase luxury clothing by emerging market consumers. The p-value of 0.118 signifies that the hypothesis is rejected is it is greater than 0.05. The findings of Hennigs, et al., 2015 and Dubhilela & Dubhilela (2017) contradict this study finds since they found social value to have influence towards purchase intention of luxury products.
The fifth hypothesis, $H_5$: **Conspicuousness consumption has a statistically significant influence on purchase intention by emerging market consumers wishing to acquire luxury clothing.** Conspicuousness consumption has no statistically significant influence on emerging market consumers’ intention to purchase luxury clothing. The standardised coefficient is -0.056 with the p-value of 0.268. The path coefficient of $H_1$ (Social value influence towards purchase intention of luxury clothing) is -0.049. The results show that *Conspicuous consumption* has no influence towards intention to purchase luxury clothing by emerging market consumers. The p-value of 0.543 signifies that the hypothesis is rejected as it is greater than 0.05. Kaus (2012) and Nwankwo, Hamelin and Khale (2015) reported conspicuousness to have influence on purchase intention of consumers.

The last hypothesis $H_6$: **Purchase intention has statistically significant influence towards purchase behaviour of luxury clothing by emerging market consumers** was supported due the p-value of 0.000 which is significant. Purchase intention had a strong effect of 0.70 towards purchase behaviour of emerging market consumers.

**Implications**

This study is significant for retail stores in South Africa selling luxury clothing, as well as those intending to enter the SA luxury clothing market. The study findings shed a deeper understanding of factors influencing purchase behaviour of luxury clothing by emerging market consumers. The understanding of the purchase behaviour of emerging market consumers will help businesses formulate the appropriate strategies targeted at the market. The emerging market consumer segment is a lucrative market, with over five million people and worth over R5 billion. Therefore, it is crucial for retailers to know who these consumers are and what they look for when purchasing luxury clothing. The emerging market consumer segment has different needs, lifestyles and cultures, all of which require a different marketing approach. According to Bills (2017), emerging market consumers in one country may not purchase luxury products for the same reasons as those of another country. Bills (2017) further argues that emerging market consumers should have their needs accommodated differently from other consumers as they differ from other consumers. Stiehler (2016) argued the need to understand different luxury market segments in SA in order to identify different behaviours, and for retailers to gain a better understanding of each.

Retailers in SA have expanded into township malls where some of the emerging market consumers reside. Understanding purchase behaviour of emerging market consumers towards luxury clothing would mean that they can select the appropriate clothing brands to locate at the malls. This study has demonstrated that status has a greater influence on purchase behaviour as regards luxury clothing. Therefore, retailers selling luxury clothing should position their brands to satisfy status needs of this market segment. Emerging market consumers are driven by uniqueness and want to distinguish themselves from others by buying unique products that will satisfy their status needs. Using luxury clothing helps consumers to communicate their status to their reference groups (Husic & Cicic, 2009). Retailers should differentiate their brands from those of others, which can be done using various strategies such as quality of the brands, and charging premium prices, since status-oriented consumers are willing to pay higher prices to satisfy status needs. Retailers could also make sure they attract celebrities to their stores or use them as brand ambassadors to influence emerging market consumers. This is because buying to impress others can be a dominant factor in luxury product consumption (Hennigs, 2015). Marketing communication messages will be useful in portraying the brands as “status one” as compared to others.

The fact that quality and materialism are also important factors influencing purchase behaviour around luxury clothing implies that retail managers should also incorporate these factors into their retail marketing strategies. Retail managers could also address the status, quality, and materialism factors throughout their supply chain by making sure that activities performed in the supply chain have the level of quality in mind that consumers want. For example, these consumers want sophisticated, superior quality products. It is also important to satisfy the emotional needs associated with owning a luxury clothing product, since consumers derive happiness from owning the product (Hennigs, 2015). Retailers could use mobile technology to engage consumers with their luxury clothing. It is important to note that the factors influencing luxury purchases may differ across age, income, gender and education level, which may require retailers to identify the differences (Makhitha, 2021, Cronje et al, 2016). This should enable retailers to target each luxury segment appropriately and in accordance with their needs and behaviours. This is necessary since consumers may perceive status and quality differently from each other. The implication for retailers is for them to understand the perceptions of consumers regarding their brand and to build a brand identity that speaks to their perceptions. If consumers perceive the brand differently from the way in which it is intended to be perceived, retailers could reposition the brand to ensure that it speaks to the identity it was created to represent. Where possible, luxury retailers could introduce different ranges in terms of product features and price levels for their luxury clothing, as is the case with motor cars. (BMW, for instance, has different versions of the brand such as 1 series and 3 series to accommodate the different needs of consumers.)

**Conclusions**

This study has demonstrated that status, quality and materialism have an influence on the purchase intention of luxury clothing by emerging market consumers. Status has the strongest effect on purchase intention for luxury clothing, followed by quality and materialism. Consumer intention to purchase luxury products was found to influence those consumers’ purchase behaviour. It is important that luxury retailers consider these factors when developing luxury products and that they position the luxury products taking these factors into account when marketing to emerging market consumers. Other factors, such as conspicuous consumption and social value, did not have any effect on purchase intention of emerging market consumers in respect of luxury products.
The limitations of this study are threefold: the first is the fact that this study targeted emerging market consumers from Soweto. Therefore, the results should not be generalised across emerging market consumers in SA. A similar study could be conducted targeting emerging market consumers in different areas in SA. The study also focused on five factors influencing consumers’ purchase intention in respect of luxury products. Future studies could identify other factors and investigate them among emerging market consumers in SA. Furthermore, future studies could also compare the various factors across different segments in SA and outside SA to identify the differences in behaviour among different consumers segments in SA and outside the country.

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**Author contribution:** KM Makhitha initiated the research project, which is a Women in Research project. Mpho Khumalo and Tumi Sekhu wrote the literature sections under the mentorship of KM Makhitha. KM makhitha wrote the research methodology and results section of the article.

**Institutional Review Board Statement:** The project received the ethics certificate from the department.

**Data Availability Statement:** The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy.

**Conflict of interest:** Authors declares no conflict of interest.

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Madyibi, S. (2017). The Relationship between Conspicuous Consumption and Poverty in Developing Countries: Evidence from South Africa. Thesis: University of Western Cape


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