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The effect of vertical individualism on luxury purchase intentions: the moderating role of brand image

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The effect of vertical individualism on luxury purchase intentions: the moderating role of brand image

Ayanda Zici

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in Strategic Marketing.

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ABSTRACT

The consumption of luxury brands has grown significantly in emerging markets, particularly in Africa. These developments have resulted in marketers seeking to investigate the factors that influence purchase intentions for luxury brands, in order to develop brand communication strategies that will resonate with consumers and increase brand loyalty. There is, however, a lack of academic research in developing markets, such as South Africa, that reveal how individual consumer factors, like personal and social orientations, interact with each other to influence purchase intentions for luxury brands.

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between vertical individualism and luxury purchase intentions. The study also examined the mediation effects of self-enhancement, materialism, value-expressive attitudes and symbolic benefits of brand image. The moderation effect of brand image was examined on value-expressive attitudes.

An online survey questionnaire was conducted. 253 responses were obtained through voluntary sampling. Data was analysed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modelling (SEM) on Mplus.

The results showed that vertical individualism does have a positive relationship with self-enhancement and materialism values. These values were found to have a positive influence on value-expressive attitudes. Materialism was shown to have a significant relationship with symbolic benefits of brand image. Brand image and value-expressive attitudes were shown to have a positive relationship with luxury purchase intentions. Brand image was found to have a moderation effect on value-expressive attitudes. It was recommended that future studies test the conceptual model in other emerging markets wherein luxury brand consumption is expected to rise in the foreseeable future, and include other variables.

Key words: emerging market, vertical individualism, self-enhancement, materialism, value-expressive attitudes, brand image, luxury brands, purchase intentions, South Africa

DECLARATION

I, Ayanda Zici, declare that this research report is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in Strategic Marketing in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Ayanda Zici

Signed at …Midrand, Johannesburg……
On the …9th…….. day of …November…… 2020…..

DEDICATIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report is dedicated to my beloved son, Kaone Mashego, who inspired me to further my education and kept me motivated throughout the journey. To my mother, Nontuthuzelo Zici, thank you for your unwavering love, support and encouragement.

I thank God for giving me the strength, will and clarity to complete this research report. My sincere gratitude goes to the following people who were instrumental in this process:

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

Recent years have seen the African continent increasingly being recognised as wealthy in consumer-aspirations as well as being the new frontier of luxury consumer markets (Iqani, 2019). Literature on factors influencing luxury consumption has been studied vastly in the form of single- and cross-cultural comparisons in Western and Eastern markets. To this end, research associated with luxury consumption has been found to be dominated by social orientation, yet personal orientation is comparatively ignored (Tsai, 2005). A study by Tsai (2005) provided empirical evidence that the value attached to luxury brand purchases is attributed to individuality and sociality, and thereby states that it is “advisable to conduct luxury-brand management with multiple brand-positioning strategies” (p.11). This idea means that there is value in positioning a luxury brand in two ways: (1) as an individuality enhancer to align with self-congruity goals and (2) as a sociality enhancer to meet the needs of impression management. Such positioning strategies have the potential to increase brand loyalty. Worthwhile to note is that literature associates self-congruity with symbolic benefits of brand image (Helgeson & Supphellen, 2004), and impression management with materialism (Cleveland, Laroche, & Papadopoulos, 2009). Research by Tsai (2005) further suggested “another empirical model be established to analyse the interactive effects of personal orientation and social orientation on luxury brand purchases in the international luxury-brand market” (p. 13).

It is stated in research that many of the existing consumer behaviour models recognise social influence as a critical aspect in decision-making (Mourali, Laroche, & Pons, 2005). The manner in which individuals associate with the in-group is affected by self-oriented differences, as well as values and norms prescribed by culture and society (Mourali et al., 2005). In their research on the investigation of how individualism affects consumer susceptibility to social influence among consumers of French and English Canadian ethnicity, Mourali et al. (2005) recommended future research to validate their susceptibility model in other cultural settings as well as assess the holistic effects of Hofstede’s (1980) cultural factors. In a similar study by Shukla (2011) on the impact of social influences among British and Indian consumers, it was established that brand image had a strong moderation effect on normative influences in both countries. The normative influences were measured in consideration of utilitarian and value-expressive

influences. Furthermore, Chiou (2000) opined that individualistic orientation significantly affects attitude functions in relation to value-expressiveness. Chiou (2000) concluded that social oriented goals could be measured through value-expressiveness and social adjustment. This conclusion supports Shukla's (2011) approach on measuring normative influences in the social context. On the contrary, Schade, Hegner, Horstmann, and Brinkmann (2016) solely measured value-expressiveness as an individual-level construct that relates to the attitude functions theory. The current study considers the function of value-expressive attitudes at the individual-level (i.e., to enhance one's self-expression) as an 'additional element' to be tested in line with Mourali et al. (2005) recommendation mentioned earlier. This was supported by Chiou (2000) who proposed that future research is required to examine the influence of individualistic orientation on value-expressive attitudes in other countries because attitudes vary according to cultural orientation and situations. Schade et al. (2016) concur in their proposal that future research is required to examine "the influence of culture on the relationship between attitude functions and luxury purchase intentions" (p.321).

On the matter of Hofstede's cultural dimensions, a new method of measuring individualism versus collectivism has emerged. Research by Cleveland and Bartikowski (2018) suggested the measurement of individualism and collectivism through vertical and horizontal orientations. The orientation measurements distinguish between hierarchical importance as well as equality in society. In their research on the cultural and identify factors that influence knowledge in the Chinese market, Cleveland and Bartikowski (2018) recommended their model to be tested in other countries with other ethnicities.

In summary, the preceding discussion presents a shortfall of knowledge as follows:

1. A need to develop a model for interaction effects of personal orientation and social orientation in luxury brand purchases (Tsai, 2005)
2. A need to study the effects of Hofstede's (1980) culture dimensions on value-expressive attitudes in other countries (Chiou, 2000)
3. A need to test the model of cultural and identity antecedents in other countries (Cleveland & Bartikowski, 2018)

There is currently no literature on luxury purchase intentions in South Africa that simultaneously examines the empirical effects of the abovementioned shortfalls in literature. As such, the research problem for the current study is to develop an empirical model that examines the role of vertical individualism in luxury purchase intentions, with

the mediation of personal orientation in the form of self-enhancement and value-expressive attitudes, and social orientation in terms of materialism. The study also investigates the moderation effect of brand image (in terms of symbolic benefits) on value-expressive attitudes in the context of South Africa. Using Hofstede's (1980) national culture values theory, the current study was designed to prove that personal orientation interacts positively with social orientation in the context of luxury brand purchases in South Africa. Insights derived from the study supported marketers in leveraging multiple brand-positioning strategies that equally considered the vertical individualist's desire to achieve self-congruity and impression management goals.

The study examined the role of vertical individualism in luxury purchase intentions. In the investigation of this relationship, the study examined the mediating role of self-enhancement, materialism, and value-expressive attitudes. Furthermore, the moderating effect of the symbolic benefits of brand image were examined on the interaction between value-expressive attitudes and luxury purchase intentions.

1.2 Context of the study

The growth of the luxury market has been largely attributed to emerging countries; however, research on luxury markets in these countries is insufficient (Kaufmann, Petrovici, Goncalves, & Ayres, 2016). Emerging countries are increasingly outperforming global markets as they become the key markets for premium and luxury goods due to an increasing elite population and aspirational middle class (Atwal & Bryson, 2014). Atwal and Bryson (2014) believed that luxury consumers in developing countries such as Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, believe in rewarding themselves for their hard work and also believe that they deserve the best things (both material and immaterial) in life.

A McKinsey (2014) report based on 2025 consumer insights predicted that massive urbanisation will continue across emerging markets, resulting in the growth of the luxury consumption in these countries. Global markets are increasingly seeing a rise in luxury goods consumption with reports by Deloitte (2019), indicating that emerging economies will drive growth in luxury goods. Emerging markets are characterised by diverse populations, policy uncertainty, shortage of resources, informal competition, and inadequate infrastructure (Kaufmann et al., 2016). Despite these conditions, as in 2015, China was the leader in the global luxury goods industry, whereas the Russian market was expected to decline (Bilge, 2015).

South Africa has been coined as the *"little Europe of Africa"* due to its advanced status on the African continent as an eligible producer and buyer of luxury goods (Mutunku, 2016, p. 13). The African consumption and production of luxury goods have in itself called for reports into the future outlook of the market in terms of potential growth, profitability, and consumption drivers. Such research also validates the point that Africa is a lucrative market for premium brands and that Africans are consumers of luxury.

Many African countries are home to a vast number of millionaires. These countries have reported noticeable growth in the middle-class group (Mutunku, 2016). The wealth of Africa's high-net-worth consumers was reported in 2011 to amount to US$ 1.1 trillion, compared with US$ 1.7 trillion for the same category of consumers in the Middle East (Crosswaite, 2012). South Africa, in particular, holds the largest share (60%) of millionaires on the African continent, amounting to approximately 71,000 millionaires (Crosswaite, 2012). As a result, global luxury brands such as Tom Ford, and Giorgio Armani, to name a few, have established a presence in the country to cater to the local market as well as tourists traveling from African countries.

Research into the growth of luxury goods consumption in South Africa has revealed two aspects; luxury in the historical context of the country before democracy, as well as the impact of post-democracy policies such as BEE in enabling historically disadvantaged populations to become active in the economy. Crosswaite (2012) stated that policies developed after apartheid prompted a new wealthy black elite category characterised by a flashy lifestyle that demonstrated freedom from the apartheid system. The wealthy South African elite category can be categorised into four different typologies.

The '**money aristocracy**' who are familiar with wealth and lead luxurious lifestyles. They were born into luxury, prefer classic brands, and are considerate about their consumption patterns (Mutunku, 2016). Second, the '**established business magnate**' who views money as a symbol of power and value unique and exclusive items. Third, the '**self-made**' or 'new money' who desire a luxury lifestyle. They view this concept in the sense of self-reward. For them, luxury goods deliver a sense of specialness and accomplishment. Last, the '**deluxe aspirer**' has a significant desire for distinction. They have limited education but desire the best things in life, as can be seen in their ambitious goals. This group uses luxury brands to display their success and are less concerned with societal status (Mutunku, 2016).

According to Crosswaite (2012), the last two typologies are the most relevant categories of South Africa's luxury consumers. Furthermore, Crosswaite (2002) summarised the

consumption trend as satisfying their need for display as well as the need to share their achievement of having gone from ‘zero to hero.’

However, on the other hand, Crosswaite (2012) noted two reasons for the conspicuous consumption of luxury goods by South African elites that were evident before the apartheid era. First, such consumption existed in the sixties, where status was seen as a combination of being well educated and sophisticated. This consumption was reflected by living in residential areas, owning a vehicle, quality home decoration, and luxurious clothing representing a prestigious life. Second, the authority of aristocratic chiefs in Africa, which still exist to this day, was signalled by symbols such as special animal skin and power-related ornaments and artefacts. Therefore, the display of luxury possessions in the South African market is known to be a channel of expressing South African pride and tradition rather than it is about excessiveness (Mutunku, 2016).

Based on the above discussions signalling individual values of power, achievement, and social status in luxury consumption, the researcher aims to investigate the influence of individualism in luxury purchase intentions in South Africa through the use of Hofstede’s National Culture Values theory.

Hofstede’s scale of cultural values for the South African market found that the highest-ranked culture value in South Africa is individualism (65 out of 100). Studies of the effect of individualism on luxury brands have been conducted in cross-cultural research in other markets, except for South Africa. These studies found that a consumer can hold values of collectivism and individualism simultaneously, which is due to various reasons, including the person’s upbringing and exposure to global consumer culture. Recently, individualism and collectivism are being measured horizontally and vertically. The orientation measurements distinguish between hierarchical importance as well as equality in society (Cleveland & Bartikowski, 2018). Horizontal measurements imply non-hierarchical structures, while vertical measurements imply the opposite. For example, since South African consumers are known to make use of luxury products in order to express power, achievement, and fit into certain societal classes, this would imply vertical individualism.

To understand the underlying values of individualism, the researcher investigated the inherent values and motivations that influence individualism in luxury purchase intentions. This leads the discussion to Schwartz Basic Values theory, which suggests that values are widely held beliefs that reference desirable goals, encourage behaviour and function as standards. Various motivations drive these values. A key value in the consumption of luxury is self-enhancement. Self-enhancement is made up of motivations of power,

accomplishment, and hedonism. Some cultures have high levels of self-enhancement values than others. The distinguishing factor is individualism versus collectivism cultural values. It is for this reason that the researcher further looked into Hofstede's National Culture Values framework to measure the impact of individualism in luxury consumption. Recent studies regarding culture values and individualism in consumer behaviour for luxury brands have been conducted in Western and some Eastern societies – see Appendix 1. However, no extensive research has been conducted in this regard in South Africa.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, luxury consumption is expected to increase in emerging markets. Luxury consumption is considered a social factor used to enhance a person's perceived value and impress their peers (Godey et al., 2012). Research by Mourali et al. (2005) found a relationship between individualistic orientation and susceptibility to social influences. One of the factors considered in the measurement of susceptibility to social influences was value-expressive influence. Authors have also identified that value-expressive attitudes have a significant role in consumers' purchase intent, particularly towards luxury brands. Chiou (2000) studied the effect of individualism on value-expressive attitudes (from a social-orientation perspection) on purchase intentions. While Schade et al. (2016) studied the effect of age on value-expressive attitudes (from an individual-level perspective) on luxury brand purchases. The current study fills the gap in literature by examining the effect of individual-level value-expressiveness in purchase intentions for luxury brands in South Africa. It is in Shukla's (2011) study where the moderating effect of brand image on susceptibility to social influences is assessed. To fill the gap in existing literature, the current study examines the moderating effect of brand image on individual-level value-expressive attitudes. Brand image in this context is measured specifically in terms of symbolic benefits, which relate to the extrinsic benefits of using products and services (Keller, 1993). These benefits relate to abstract features of a product as well as underlying consumer needs for self-expression and social approval (Keller, 1993), which is common in luxury consumption behaviour.

In the development of additional mediation variables for the current study, the researcher observes that cultural orientation is a significant predictor for materialistic values (Das & Mukherjee, 2019). Materialism places the importance of material acquisition to signal success in a person's life (Das & Mukherjee, 2019). The authors found that India is a less materialistic country due to its collectivistic orientation. Therefore, this presents an

opportunity to explore the effect of vertical individualism on materialism in the South African context.

In summary, the researcher investigated the role of vertical individualism on self-enhancement values and materialism. Self-enhancement and materialism were tested on value-expressive attitudes in purchase intentions for luxury brands. The effect of materialism was tested on the symbolic benefits of brand image. Brand image was subsequently tested on luxury purchase intentions, and also moderate the relationship between value-expressive attitudes and luxury purchase intent.

1.3 Problem statement

1.3.1 Main problem

The main problem was to present an empirical model that examined the role of vertical individualism in luxury purchase intentions, with the mediation of personal orientation effects in the form of self-enhancement and value-expressive attitudes, and social orientation effects in the form of materialism.

Research by Tsai (2005) found that personal orientation effects in luxury purchase intentions are overlooked, while literature remains dominated by social orientation effects. In contrast, research by Godey et al. (2012) found that little information is known on how to optimise the luxury brands industry and leverage customer needs in relation to the impact of interpersonal influences versus brand cues on purchase intentions. The research also pointed out that while luxury brands grow rapidly and yield significant financial returns, the social influences related to premium products are “poorly understood and under-investigated” (Shukla, 2011, p. 243).This is supported by Kapferer, Kernstock, Brexendorf, and Powell (2017), who stated that despite the growing importance of research on luxury markets, there is limited academic research on how consumers respond to luxury brands versus non-luxury brands. A cross-cultural study by Shukla (2011) examined the impact of social influences on luxury purchase intentions for consumers in individualist and collectivist communities. The study assessed how individuals respond to social influences based on their cultural orientation. Prior research by Mourali et al. (2005) assessed the impact of individualistic orientation on susceptibility to social influences in Canadians ethinicities and found that normative influences were prevalent in individualist societies. On the other hand, Chiou (2000) found that individualism positively affects value-expressive attitudes at the social-level but recommended further research in other countries. Schade et al. (2016) measured value-expressive attitudes in terms of person orientation on luxury purchase intentions. This contributed to insuffient literature on luxury brands that focuses on individual-level factors as stated by Tsai (2005). To make a contribution in this regard, the researcher examined value-expressive attitudes in the individual-level context.

The overarching objective of the research was to establish the role of vertical individualism in luxury purchase intentions in South Africa. The researcher subsequently tested variables linked to luxury purchase intentions in terms of personal orientations (i.e., self-

enhancement and value-expressive attitudes) and social orientations (i.e., materialism and symbolic benefits of brand image).

1.3.2 Sub-problems

1.3.2.1 Sub-problem 1

The first sub-problem was to verify that Hofstede's culture value of (vertical) individualism positively influences Schwartz's value of self-enhancement (a dimension of personal orientation) and materialism (a dimension of impression management). This will prove that individual values are largely influenced by cultural values (Mothersbaugh & Hawkins, 2016) and that the measurement of vertical orientation in individualism is significant (Cleveland & Bartikowski, 2018) in the context of South African consumers. Bhanot (2013) related individual value to self-identity, as well as materialistic and hedonism values.

1.3.2.2 Sub-problem 2

The second sub-problem was to examine the effect of self-enhancement and materialism on consumers' value-expressive attitudes. Tsai (2005) states that luxury purchases are influenced by personal orientation (i.e., self-enhancement and value-expressive attitudes) and social orientation (i.e., materialism). Tsai (2005) further recommended the interaction of these effects to be examined in the context of luxury brands.

In light of the above, the study also aimed to establish the effect of value-expressive attitudes on purchase intentions for luxury brands. A study by Schade et al. (2016) purchase intent for luxury brands. This was examined in the context of South Africa's luxury consumer market.

1.3.2.3 Sub-problem 3

The third sub-problem was to establish the effect of materialism on symbolic benefits of brand image. Materialism has been associated with the need for impression management – a dimension of social orientation (Tsai, 2005), while symbolic benefits have been associated with the need for self-congruity (Helgeson & Supphellen, 2004) a dimension of personal orientation (Tsai, 2005). This interaction was designed to prove that personal and social orientations are positively related and should be considered for dual brand-positioning strategies for luxury brands in South Africa.

Additionally, the study investigated the relationship between brand image and luxury purchase intentions. Shukla (2011) suggested that luxury brands and their images offer a distinct value-creating competitive advantage that increases return on investment for organisations. Through the use of brand image as a critical factor in marketing strategies, these organisations can charge an added premium (Shukla, 2011). The findings will reinforce the importance of brand image, with a particular focus on symbolic benefits, in luxury purchase intentions in South Africa.

Furthermore, the study established the moderating interaction of symbolic benefits of brand image in the relationship between value-expressive attitudes and luxury purchase intent. This built on Shukla's (2011) research, which found that brand image significantly moderated the effect of normative influence (utilitarian and value-expressive) among British and Indian consumers who represent individualistic and collectivistic markets respectively. The findings will provide new insights for luxury brand literature in South Africa.

1.4 Research questions

Based on the research problems stated above, the research questions for the study are outlined as follows:

1.4.1 Sub-problem 1: Research questions

1. What is the relationship between vertical individualism and self-enhancement?
2. What is the relationship between vertical individualism and materialism?

1.4.2 Sub-problem 2: Research questions

1. What is the relationship between self-enhancement and value-expressive attitudes?
2. What is the relationship between materialism and value-expressive attitudes?
3. What is the relationship between value-expressive attitudes and luxury purchase intentions?

1.4.3 Sub-problem 3: Research questions

1. What is the relationship between materialism and brand image?

2. What is the relationship between brand image and luxury purchase intention?
3. What is the moderation effect of brand image on value-expressive attitudes?

1.5 Significance of the study

It is understood that consumers' purchase intentions are motivated by social factors that are linked to culture (Eom & Seock, 2015). Therefore, given the potential growth of the South African middle-class group as well as the growth of luxury brands in the region, there is a need to understand further how consumers respond to luxury brands, from a personal and social frame of reference (Tsai, 2005). Literature states consumer behaviour begins with cultural values. Research by Kaminakis, Karantinou, and Boukis (2014) suggested more social antecedents be considered in examining the interaction between interpersonally related values and interpersonal motives. Additionally, research by Eom and Seock (2015) suggested that future research on factors influencing luxury purchase intentions could derive valuable insights by the examination of both personal and cultural factors. This is supported by Tsai's (2005) research, where it is stated that social orientation is found extensively within luxury brand literature, yet personal orientation is frequently ignored.

On the matter of culture values and individual values, limited research on the consumption of luxury goods has been conducted among young Western adults in individualistist societies (Eom & Seock, 2015). Studies on the South African context have focused on the impact of attitudes and personality traits on luxury consumption as well as the development of African luxury brands. The key message that arises in these discussions affirms the belief that, as the middle-class income group continues to rise in South Africa, so will the demand for luxury brands (Shukla & Purani, 2012), thereby validating the need for continued research in the market. Furthermore, prior studies have suggested future cross-cultural research to look extensively at "the role of personal values related to individuals' personality traits and investigate how these personal values affect engagement with brand cues" (Kitirattarkarn, Araujo, & Neijens, 2019, p. 210). The motivation of consumers in their engagement with brands can differ according to the product category in question, therefore another suggestion for future research is to explore other product categories (Kitirattarkarn et al., 2019).

Insights derived from this study will provide luxury brand managers working on local and international luxury brands with an understanding of the role of vertical individualism, self-enhancement, materialism, and value-expressive attitudes in the market performance of

their brands. More importantly, the research will provide insights into the value of consumers' personal and social orientation for the development of multiple brand-positioning strategies in South Africa.

1.6 Definition of terms

Luxury goods:

Items that have the highest price and quality ratio in a specific consumer sector of products and services (Heine & Phan, 2011).

Consumer behaviour:

The study of individuals, groups, and organisations in relation to the processes they utilise to choose, purchase, consume and discard products, services, and experiences (Mothersbaugh & Hawkins, 2016)

Cultural values:

A complex combination of knowledge, beliefs and other human behaviours adopted by an individual as part of a societal group (Tyler, 1896).

Emerging market:

An emerging market is a country that has partially obtained development related elements but does not meet the criteria to be called an emerging market.

Middle class:

The social group between upper and working classes. This group includes professionals, business owners, and their families.

1.7 Assumptions

- Respondents answered the interview questionnaire honestly and accurately
- Respondents are new or regular buyers of at least one luxury good (limited to clothing and accessories)
- Respondents reflected on personal buying patterns and were familiar with the history of the brand selected

- Respondents were raised in homes with more individualistic values than collectivistic values

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to understand the interaction between personal orientation and social orientation effects in luxury purchase intentions. To this effect, the study examined the influence of vertical individualism on luxury purchase intentions, with the interaction of self-enhancement, materialism, value-expressive attitudes, and brand image. Additionally, the moderation effect of brand image was examined on value-expressive attitudes in luxury purchase intentions. The conceptual diagram for the study is discussed in the next section.

2.2 Background discussion

2.2.1 Luxury defined

The term “luxury” comes from “luxus”, a word of Latin origin, which means soft, extravagant living, or overindulgence (Bilge, 2015). According to literature, the meaning of luxury is relative to public opinion as some brands may be perceived as a luxury to certain groups of consumers and ordinary to others (Kapferer, 1997). Kapferer described the economic definition of luxury products as items that have the highest price and quality ratio in a specific consumer sector (1997). Research reveals that consumers determine luxury products through six through the consideration of price, perceived quality, aesthetic appearance, exclusivity, and prestige (Heine & Phan, 2011). This is supported by Sun, D’Alessandro, and Johnson (2016), who stated that luxury goods are associated with motivations of hedonism and the need to experience pleasure through aesthetic appearance and happiness. Shukla (2011) opined that it is challenging to define luxury because of the significant personal involvement and the subjectivity of value perceptions from other individuals. Kapferer, Kernstock, Brexendorf, and Powell (2017) believed that there is insufficient knowledge about consumer value perceptions in regard to luxury and that such insights are important for the development of sustainable premium brands.

Past literature has identified various definitions of luxury, which creates a challenge for selecting a standard definition applicable across products and services, markets, industries, and consumer behaviour. To this effect, De Barnier, Valette-Florence, and Falcy (2012) suggested placing more focus on defining consumer perceptions in relation

to luxury, rather than focusing on a company-centered definition. There have been studies conducted to critically view the transformations of luxury through historical years, indicating that luxury has not always been associated with the desire to stand out and consume what is endorsed by celebrities. That said, luxury remains a representative characteristic of today's consumption society of savvy consumers who have a desire for the best things in life (Christini, Kauppinen-Räisänen, Barthod-Prothade, & Woodside, 2016).

2.2.2 Characteristics of luxury

According to De Barnier et al. (2012), consumers categorise luxury according to three levels, namely: accessible, intermediate, and inaccessible luxury. Research conducted by De Barnier et al. (2012) found some convergence across the scales as well as their effectiveness in distinguishing luxury brands. The classification of luxury is detailed further in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Classification of luxury (Bilge, 2015)

Characteristics	Inaccessible	Intermediate	Accessible
Quality	Hand-crafted	Mass manual production	Mass factory production
Price	High price	Excessive price	Low price
Availability	Private	Economic	Extensive
Attractiveness	Ordinary	Charming	Normal
Consumer segment	Upper class	Luxury-oriented consumer	Loyal luxury consumer

We can assume a generalised definition of luxury based on how consumers perceive and categorise luxury in terms of accessibility, intermediary, and inaccessible. Furthermore, De Barnier et al. (2012) declared that ordinary and luxury goods are "two extremes of a continuum" (p.625). Essentially, the difference between non-luxury and luxury is subjected to the level perceived by consumers. Kapferer et al. (2017) eluded that luxury is in the eye of the consumer.

2.2.3 Luxury purchase intentions

Prior studies on luxury brands have tested various models on consumers' purchase intent in single markets and cross-cultural contexts. One such theory is Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) behavioural model, which was recently used by Mamata and Noorb (2016) to investigate motivations, income, functional, experiential, symbolic, and social influence, as well as vanity factors concerning luxury consumption within the Malaysian population. The research found that "functional value, vanity achievement, and household income have a significant effect on Malaysian consumers' luxury purchase intentions" (Mamata & Noorb, 2016, p. 206). Another model that has been tested on luxury consumption is Sheth, Newman, and Gross's (1991) theory of consumption values. In this study, the authors sought to investigate the extent to which variances in self-concept mediate personal values and motivations of consumers of luxury brands. The variables that were considered in the research were functional and emotional value. The results indicate that brand managers can enhance customer motivations by increasing the perceived value as well as considering the individual's desire to achieve their ideal self-identity. Using the social comparison framework, Eom and Seock (2015) studied the influences of purchase intention toward luxury fashion brands. The authors wanted to establish the degree to which competitiveness as individual trait moderates the relationship. In so doing, they looked at factors such as contingent self-esteem, peer and media pressure, as well as purchase intention.

Prior research that applies to this specific study is that of Chiou (2000) and Schade et al. (2016). Basing the study on theories of functional attitudes, Chiou (2000) examined the effect of individualism and collectivisim on social goals in terms of value-expressive attitudes and social adjustment. The researcher found that value-expressive attitudes were prevalent among individualistic societies, whereas social adjustment goals were more significant in collectivistic consumers. The rationale was that people in individualistic communities use value-expressive attitudes for self-expression and to improve their social ranking within their in-group. Chiou (2000) concluded that cultural orientation has a significant effect on consumers' attitudes towards products and brands. Moreover, consumer attitudes can vary in light of social and personal orientations. To this effect, Schade et al. (2016) examined the effect of age on value-expressive attitudes at the individual-level. The authors found that the effect of value-expressive attitudes in luxury purchase intentions was more significant among young adults between 24 and 39 years of age. This is supported by prior research which reported that consumers' values and motivations evolve through various lifestages and vary according to contextual situations

and product categories (Schade, et al., 2016). Furthermore, the authors proposed that future research would be valuable in examining “the influence of culture on the relationship between attitude functions and luxury purchase intentions” (p.321). It is for this reason that value-expressive attitudes towards luxury purchase intentions is measured in the current study.

To extend the focus of this study in the South African luxury consumption market, the researcher aims to establish the impact of Hofstede’s individualism culture value on Schwartz’ self-enhancement values and materialism, and assess these constructs on value-expressive attitudes. These are factors that prior studies have not linked in terms of luxury brand consumption in South Africa.

The next section elaborates on some of the factors discussed in prior studies and those which are relevant to the current study.

2.2.4 Factors affecting luxury consumption

Godey et al. (2012) reported that luxury consumption is a social condition, used to enhance a person’s value in the eyes of their peers. This relates to Schwartz’s value of self-enhancement, which is found to be prominent in societies with individualistic values. According to Bilge (2015), factors affecting luxury consumption are “brand image and quality, product features, and atmosphere in the store” (p. 49). These factors relate to value-expressive motivations wherein a consumer identifies with a brand image and also seeks to portray/communicate their personal value through the quality of a brand. Moreover, scholars have found that different value dimensions are interrelated in the study of luxury consumption (Sun et al., 2016). As such, research suggests that interpersonal and personal function simultaneously in luxury consumption, however, a common problem in these studies is that the dimensions of motive are not sufficiently defined, they overlap and are not fully comprehensive (Sun et al., 2016). On a product level, features such as design, aesthetics, price, and quality may drive a consumer to purchase a luxury good. The atmosphere in the store influences consumers’ emotional response when purchasing products and services. People enjoy shopping in stores that create feelings of comfort and pleasure.

The next section discusses the elements of consumer behaviour that drive the consumption of luxury brands.

2.2.5 Consumer behaviour in luxury purchases

A consumer is defined as any person engaged in the consumption process (Jisana, 2014). These individuals are motivated to purchase for their own consumption and to satisfy the needs of families and households. The study of consumer behaviour is the analysis of the methods employed by people, groups, and organisations to “select, secure, use, and dispose of products, services, and experiences” (Mothersbaugh & Hawkins, 2016, p. 31). The study of consumer behaviour includes what products or services consumers purchase, the reason, timing and location of the purchase, as well as the frequency in consumption (Jisana, 2014). Because it is practically not possible to accurately predict the behaviour of consumers in a given context, marketing professionals are tasked to encourage the behaviour of consumers in a desired manner (Jisana, 2014).

Bearden et al. (1989) are of the opinion that social environment and interpersonal interactions significantly influence consumer behaviour. The manner in which society engages with the marketing strategies of a product or service is influenced by the cultural values embedded in society. Sun et al. (2016) stated the possible role of culture in influencing the associations that consumers asign to products and services. Most aspects of consumer behaviour are culture-bound (Hofstede, 2001). Hofstede (2001) further stated that the processes in which consumers make a purchase decision involve social aspects such as motivation and emotion group process, as well as mental processes comprising cognition, language, learning, communication, perception, and decision making. Therefore, the stronger the intention/perceived behavioural control of purchasing a luxury item, the higher the likelihood of performing the purchase (Ajzen, 1991). Essentially, culture is present in all societies and is a cause for individual wants and behaviour (Jisana, 2014).

Cultural values are widely held beliefs that distinguish what is desirable (Mothersbaugh & Hawkins, 2016). They are learned over time, and with the influence of globalisation, many geographic regions have inevitably adapted cross-cultural values. The most widely used description of culture is a “complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law and any other habits acquired by an individual as a member of society” (Tyler, 1896). Other definitions describe culture as a universal influence underlying functions of social behaviour and interaction, and witnessed through the norms and values that govern society (Craig & Douglas, 2006). Hofstede (2001) described culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes members of one human group to another” (p. 1). Culture has also been understood as a dynamic construct visible at multiple levels

(i.e., global; country-level; as well as institutional) and encompasses the individual (Kim et al., 2016). A study by Sun et al. (2016) observes that national culture affects consumers' value perceptions. The next section discusses cultural values theory.

2.2.6 Theoretical Framework

Schwartz and Bilsky (1996) believed that cultural interpenetration causes cultural boundaries to be fluid such that geographic locality becomes less important in defining cultural groups. This, therefore, influences how individualism and collectivism are measured at a group level to ascertain values of self-enhancement in luxury purchase intentions. For this reason, the researcher took a broader look into Hofstede's dimensions for national culture values as the selected theoretical framework for the study. Hofstede found five factors of national culture, namely: "power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity/feminism, long-term orientation, and individualism/collectivism" (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2011, p. 2). Researchers have replicated Hofstede's study across various samples confirming that his scale ranking remains valid and appropraite for use (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). These scale characteristics are described in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Hofstede's national culture values (Dorfman & Howell, 1988)

Characteristics	Description
Power distance	The degree to which a society tolerates inequality of power in institutional, social and corporate environments.
Uncertainty avoidance	The degree to which people feel compromised by circumstances that cause uncertainty and endeavour to limit such occurences.
Masculinity/Feminism	Masculinity indicates the level of dominant values in a society in terms of assertiveness and competitiveness.
Long-term orientation	The nurturing of values and behaviours inspired by future rewards (i.e., delayed gratification).
Individualism/Collectivism	Individualism involves a social orientation in which people priotise taking care of themselves, whereas collectivism is characterised by groups taking care of their members.

Hofstede's index scores are used to measure a person's cultural orientation at the national level. Literature states that cultural factors at the national level affect the thinking and personal values of individuals in predictable ways (Hofstede, 2001). The index measures

South African culture on a score out of 100 as follows: power distance (49), individualism (65), masculinity (63), uncertainty avoidance (49), long term orientation (34), and indulgence (63) (Hofstede, 2019). The individualism score of 65 out of 100 associates South Africa with a culture of individualistic orientation. However, previous research stated the possibility that consumers in individualist societies who grew up in a collectivist family may hold more collectivistic values (Kitirattarkarn, et al., 2019). Additionally, high exposure to global media and communication has led to individuals being less dependent on traditional values (Kitirattarkarn et al., 2019) and more dependent on global consumer values. Due to measurement discrepancies and scholarly debates in relation to culture values, Hofstede's dimensions have been criticised for their limitation in determining culture at the individual level. There is an ongoing effort to extend Hofstede's scale for individual-level analysis (Dorfman & Howell, 1988).

South Africa's highest score in the index is individualism, with a score of 65 out of 100. Shukla (2011) stated that people with individualistic values tend to exhibit values of power, achievement, and hedonism, which have an influence on luxury purchase intentions. Bhanot (2013) describes the individual value in terms of self-identity, materialism and hedonism. Self-identity value indicates an individual's ideas as well as feelings about the kind of person they see themselves to be. Therefore, individuals may consume luxury goods in order to attach symbolic meaning into their self-identity (Bhanot, 2013).

On the other hand, materialism refers to centrality, happiness, and success. However, Cleveland et al. (2009) stated that materialism is a dimension of both personal and social orientations. Furthermore, the hedonic value in this context refers to emotional responses in luxury such as comfort, beauty, and pleasure (Bhanot, 2013).

The measurement of individualism has evolved to focus on the personal level in addition to the national level. This is evidenced in Cleveland and Bartikowski's (2018) method of measuring individualism by considering horizontal and vertical characteristics of the construct. The next section discusses the measures of vertical individualism relating to the study of luxury brand purchases.

2.3 Sub-problem 1: Vertical individualism on self-enhancement and materialism

Individualism is defined as "a preference that places high regard on an individual's own preference compared to the collective preference of a social group" (Banerjee & Chai,

2019, p. 382). In many individualistic cultures, consumers often assess their self-identity and that of their peers based in relation to personality traits, as well as variables such as age, occupation, and material symbols (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). A prior study found that the ownership of vehicles is related to wealth; however, in wealthy countries, vehicle quanities per 1000 people is attributed to individualistic values (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). Additionally, individualism has been found to have a positive relationship with self-gratification whereby consumers assign high importance on materialism values, personal achievement, aesthetic appearance (Shukla & Purani, 2012).

The concept of individualism is frequently juxtaposed with its opposite, collectivism, whereby importance is placed on the preference of an individual rather than the preference of a social group as a collective (Banerjee & Chai, 2019). Theorists also define individualism-collectivism as the "broadest and most important cultural value that can effectively distinguish occidental and oriental societies" (Cleveland & Bartikowski, 2018, p. 355). These values can occur simultaneously in an individual, with the prominence of either value depending on a specific situation (Cleveland & Bartikowski, 2018).

Research suggests that people in collectivist cultures replicate the behaviours of their social group to fit in and gain social acceptance (Banerjee & Chai, 2019). While individuals in individualistic cultures, such as Western Europe and North America, appreciate autonomy from their in-groups (Kitirattarkarn, et al., 2019). In terms of communication (including advertising), individualist societies are known to be characterised by direct and explicit communication, while collectivist societies are characterised by abstract, implicit, and indirect communication (Kitirattarkarn et al., 2019). In Sun, Horn, and Merritt's (2004) study on the value and lifestyle choices of individualistic and collectivistic consumers, they described people in individualist societies as self-centered, self-enhanced, and unwilling to put their own needs aside for the benefit of their in-group. Furthermore, individualistic societies regard the individual as the only motivation and basis from which success and life satisfaction can be achieved. This group of individuals is less concerned with the needs and consequences of their in-groups (Sun, Horn, & Merritt, 2004). One can, therefore, assume that individualist societies place high importance on fulfilling their individual needs and aspirations. However, this is not entirely true due to how individualism is manifested and measured. To measure individualism at the national level, the researcher, as previously discussed, considers the rankings in Hofstede's index, measured on a scale of 1 – 100. For individual-level measurement, the researcher considers one of the dimensions of individualism, namely vertical individualism proposed by Cleveland and Bartikowski (2018).

2.3.1 Vertical individualism (VI) and self-enhancement

Vertical individualism stresses social hierarchies such that people with high VI perceive inequality as unavoidable and fulfil their desire for recognition through competition, self-enhancement, and power (Cleveland & Bartikowski, 2018). Furthermore, vertical individualists aspire to achieve social status by noticeably consuming international brands (i.e., luxury brands). Schwartz's Basic Values theory is selected to position self-enhancement in this study. In his theory, Schwartz selects a representation of values that highlight six features that are present in prior research. These features relate to beliefs; desirable goals; acceptable behaviour; rules and principles; the ranking of values in terms of perceived importance, as well as the importance of values in guiding behaviour (Schwartz, 2012).

The motivations expressed through each of the above values distinguish them from one another. Therefore, the values theory describes ten values in line with each of their underlying motivations. The ten identified values are universalism, benevolence, tradition, security, power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, and self-direction (Schwartz, 2012). The definitions of these values are found in Table 2.3.

The values are further rationalised into four distinct values for better reasoning. These values are openness, self-enhancement, conservation, and self-transcendence. Based on Schwartz's framework, the researcher can deduce vertical individualism influences self-enhancement value, which encompasses motivations of achievement, power, and hedonism. These motivations focus on achieving social esteem, meeting social standards, as well as gaining social approval.

Values of self-enhancement can vary according to the individualist and collectivist orientation. Developed countries are reported to display high levels of individualism, meaning that consumers are motivated by individualistic values, like personal achievement (Shukla, 2011). This is seen in the competitive nature of individualists. On the contrary, people in developing countries rely on the support of family and comply with decisions made by the in-group, however, the gradual increase in wealth enables individuals to access resources that empower them to make choices that resonate with their own interests (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1996). While recognising that a consumer can hold values of individualism and collectivism simultaneously, the researcher aims to only focus the study on the self-enhancement value, which is relevant to the current study.

Table 2.3 Ten motivational types of values (Schwartz, 2012)

Basic Human Values	Definitions of 10 Basic Human Values
Universalism	Nurturing and protection for the sustainability of communities and the environment. Universalism values come from the basic needs of people and groups to survive. An individual might not be aware of these needs until they come across other people beyond the in-group and realise the shortage of resources.
Benevolence	The preservation of people with whom an individual is in constant contact with. This relates to the close relations help with family members and friends. Benevolence values are derived from the need for belonging.
Conformity	Avoidance of behaviours likely to violate social expectations and norms. The value derives from the need for one to prohibit inclinations that may disrupt smooth interaction and group function.
Tradition	Similar to conformity, tradition is the adherence to customs and beliefs that a person's culture prescribes. Social groups worldwide develop customs, beliefs and ideas that reflect their shared cultural experience.
Security	The need for a safety net in terms of social and personal stability. Security values may also include national security.
Power	Control over people or resources. Power and achievement are centered on social value.
Achievement	The achievement of personal success in accordance with standards prescribed by social groups. The value is derived from the desire to gain social approval through achievement.
Hedonism	Self-indulgent gratification for oneself. The value comes from the pleasure associated with fulfilling individual needs.
Stimulation	Excitement and openness to deal with challenges. The value involves the need for choice and excitement in order to remain motivated.
Self-direction	Independent action motivated by the need for autonomy, control and excellence.

Consumers in emerging economies (like South Africa) associate a “modern global consumer culture and growth of cosmopolitan elites with social status, success and achievement” (Cleveland & Bartikowski, 2018, p. 356).

2.3.2 Vertical individualism and materialism

In his research on materialism, Belk (1985) reported that the challenge with materialism is whether it contributes to the enhancement of self-identity. However, high regard for possessions may be present in some individuals than it is in others. Meanwhile, Cleveland et al. (2009) attributed such differences to cultural orientation, while other researchers associate such differences with demographic measures of age, income, and gender. Vohra (2016) stated that in a cultural context, individualism theory gives valuable insights about consumers’ impulsive behaviour. Remaining on the matter of cultural orientation, the study examined the effect of vertical individualism on materialism.

2.4 Sub-problem 2: Self-enhancement and materialism on value-expressive attitudes

2.4.1 Self-enhancement and value-expressive attitudes

Self-enhancement is described as a goal that guides individuals’ thoughts and actions in such a manner that motivates them to consider social environments as fragmented into social categories for comparison based on status and prestige (Roccas, 2003). According to Schwartz (2012), the value of self-enhancement is manifested through motivations of power, achievement, and hedonism. This means that consumers who strongly identify with values of self-enhancement are likely to be motivated to acquire social status, and display leadership competence (Roccas, 2003). Not only do these individuals want to be excellent, but they also want to outdo their peers and receive recognition of their worth (Roccas, 2003).

Research has linked the value of self-enhancement with Social Identity Theory (SIT), which infers that people are inclined to maintain a positive self-image and that identification with social groups is caused by this inclination (Roccas, 2003). This also speaks to value-expressive attitudes, which functions through identification and encourages luxury purchase intentions as symbols of status and prestige (Schade, et al., 2016). Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel (1989) proposed that value expressiveness is

encouraged by the person's desire to enhance their self-concept in reference to social identification. However, on a personal orientation level, where the focus is on self-expression, value-expressiveness is defined as “the tendency to purchase and consume brands to express one’s self-identity to others even though it is not in line with expectations of their social group” (Schade, et al., 2016, p. 316). That value-expressive attitudes play a significant role in one’s need to discover and express their self-identity through the consumption of products and services, particularly in late adolescent and early adulthood years. In their research, the authors found that luxury brand purchases were common among young adults for possible reasons of wanting to communicating self-identity, achievement and competency to their peers.

In this study, self-enhancement is measured through Schwartz Basic Values theory, with a specific focus on power, achievement, and hedonism.

2.4.2 Materialism and value-expressive attitudes

Materialism is described as the value individuals assign to physical goods as a tool to symbolise success in a person’s own life (Belk, 1985). This means that people with materialistic tendencies will find it relatively important to purchase and consume luxury goods as a symbol of success. In a study by Cleveland et al. (2009), the authors stated that material values are conceptualised in three categories, namely: “(1) the centrality of possessions in a person’s life; (2) the belief that the acquisition of possessions will bring joy and satisfaction in one’s life; and (3) the use of possessions to portray the success of an individual and that of others” (p. 118). Belk (1985) reported that a fundamental challenge involving materialism is its impact on interpersonal influence. This is explained through an example of raising children with the tendency to encourage desired behaviours by giving, and withdrawing material rewards such as gifts, food and toys that adults give to children (Belk, 1985). Literature also stated that the interpersonal influence of family and friends shape materialistic orientation (Ahuvia & Wong, 2002). A study by Ahuvia and Wong (2002) stated that social influence in materialism depends heavily on socialisation factors providing cognitive information to the individual. This means that the consumption of cognitive information in relation to social influence results in the expression of cognitive information displayed as values (Ahuvia & Wong, 2001). However, Chiou (2000) opines that the relationship a consumer has with material goods is a function of their attitudes. These possessions can be used as both personal and social symbols. To this end, luxury goods are understood to provide a quick and easy way to define and express one’s self-concept, to themselves and their peers. Furthermore, Schade et al. (2016) agree that,

among young adults, luxury brands are effective in communicating one's self-concept and identity. This is channeled through attitudes of value-expressive functions.

Research scholars have also studied materialism as a symbol of global culture in consumers' responses to globalisation. Furthermore, conclusions have been made that materialistic tendency is more evident in developing markets (Das & Mukherjee, 2019) which makes the study relevant to derive South African insights. This is supported by Sharma (2011) who stated that developing economies are increasingly displaying behaviours of materialism and status consumption.

2.4.3 Materialism and brand image

Sharma (2011) stated that materialism positively influences status consumption, which involves consumers' desire to purchase luxury brands that will enhance their status in society. It also relates to consumption symbolism, which speaks to the association between self-image and material possessions (Sharma, 2011). Furthermore, individuals with materialistic values are motivated to display prestige and material items, in order to make a positive impression on their social group (Sharma, 2011). These material values vary across individual consumers and also manifest differently depending on the consumption situation (Cleveland et al., 2009). Relevant to the current study, Cleveland et al. (2009) hypothesised that materialism positively predicts how often consumers purchase luxury products. This is due to the rationale that, through the symbolic benefits of brand image, luxury brands like Louis Vuitton are able to fulfill the need to conform and signify cultural membership. Additionally, the consumption of luxury brands agrees with hedonic consumption theories which concede that consumers purchase luxury goods based on their symbolic meanings. That materialistic individuals show high regard for products and brands that reflect personal achievement (Cleveland et al., 2009). The authors reported a positive relationship between the importance of owning a range of pleasurable and self-enhancing goods and the purchasing frequencies of luxurious coats, fragrances, cosmetics, and jewelry.

2.5 Sub-problem 3: Value-expressive attitudes and brand image on luxury purchase intentions

2.5.1 Value expressive attitudes on luxury purchase intentions

In a study by Cleveland and Bartikowski (2018), the authors measure the social influence of individualism and collectivism on market mavenism. The said study highlights self-concept and social identities as essential elements that encourage communication among society and thus influence consumer behaviour. Scholars have addressed the manner in which national cultural values related to Hofstede's individualism and collectivism scale affect social influence and leadership of opinion, but discovered little differences for individualist and collectivist consumers in various geographic regions (Cleveland & Bartikowski, 2018). Existing consumer behaviour models recognise social influence as an essential aspect in consumers' decision-making process (Mourali et al., 2005). The social consequence factor validates previous studies that have indicated that "in the presence of others, consumers make different choices from those they would have made by themselves" (Shukla, 2011, p. 244). It has been proposed that the susceptibility to interpersonal influence concept is a common factor that differs among consumers. This is because how people relate to a group is influenced by a combination of individual-level differences, and cultural and societal norms (Mourali et al., 2005). However, Tsai (2005) proposed that research in regard to luxury brands is dominated by social orientations, and more research is research is required to examine the interaction of these orientations with personal orientations. To this end, prior research has proposed the consideration of attitude functions in determining consumers relationships in regard to products and services, at both cultural and individual levels. At a cultural-level, Chiou (2000) found a significant relationship between individualistic orientation and value-expressive attitudes.While at the individual-level, Schade et al. (2016) found a significant relationship between age and value-expressive attitudes in luxury purchase intentions.

According to Bearden et al. (1989), value-expressiveness functions through an identification process. Identification entails that a person inherently believes in the adopted values. As a result, value-expressive functions may manifest in situations where the person's behaviour is displayed both publicly and privately (Shukla, 2011). However, it is worthwhile to mention that value-expressive functions occur in two ways: (1) to express a person's self-identity which relates to personal orientation (examined in the current study), and (2) to influence the manner in which society perceives a person's social status. From

a personal orientation viewpoint, attitudes are understood to have an effect on consumers' behaviour. The functional attitudes theory identifies value-expressiveness as one of the functions applicable to the consumption of products and services (Schade, et al., 2016). Therefore, consumers may purchase a luxury brand as a means for either, self-expression or social-expression. A study by Schade et al. (2016) found that value-expressive attitudes in luxury purchase intentions are significant only among young consumers between the ages of 26 and 39 years. This is explained by a person's need to express and distinguish their self-concept when developing through and beyond adolescent years.

The next section discusses the effect of brand image on luxury purchase intentions as well as the moderating interaction on value-expressive attitudes.

2.5.2 Moderation effect of brand image on value-expressive attitudes

Brand management is about making and implementing decisions regarding an organisation's strategic orientation. The primary aim is to acquire a place in consumers' minds and achieve brand recognition (Okur & Akpinar, 2013). In an article by Okur and Akpinar (2013), it was reported that "brand management is one of the most important strategic factors to gain and maintain a competitive advantage." The successful brand management of luxury goods has seen such businesses acquire and sustain a competitive advantage (Okur & Akpinar, 2013). This is supported by usage growth in internet shopping, the increasing showcase of luxury brands in mainstream media, as well as the increase in international travel (Seo & Buchanan-Oliver, 2015).

A brand is defined to either have a favourable or unfavourable brand equity in instances where consumers respond positively or negatively to an element of a brand's marketing mix than they do with the same marketing mix of an unbranded product or service. In a study by Keller (1993) on key factors of brand equity, the author stated that brand knowledge is conceptualised according to two elements, namely, awareness and image. The significance of brand management is influenced by the degree to which a company is able to assess how consumers interpret the brand as well as the ability to leverage brand positioning strategies such that the brand equity is revealed to the consumer (Das, Prakash, & Khattri, 2016).

Brand equity is achieved when the consumer has been exposed to the brand and can "make favourable, and distinctive brand associations in memory" (Keller, 1993, p. 2). Keller (1993) described brand knowledge as the brand information frame of reference in

memory which links multiple associations. The author further stated that the long-term sustainability of a brand's marketing strategy is affected by brand knowledge in the memory. Ultimately, brand equity aims to drive brand loyalty and encourage repeat purchases.

Brand loyalty has been associated with the avoidance of risk. This is reflected through behavioural loyalty whereby consumers are likely to (1) evaluate alternative options in the market, and (2) repurchase a brand in the future, based on their purchase history and brand perceptions (Enström & Ghosh, 2016). Brand loyalty can also be attributed to attitudinal loyalty which entails the association of a brand with a distinct value (Enstrom & Ghosh, 2016) relating to either personal or social orientation.

In the evaluation of brand equity, Aaker (1996) found that the challenge for various brands is the development of reliable measurements of brand strength that support the financial evaluation of a brand. Furthermore, Aaker (1996) suggested the Brand Equity Ten – a group of measures summarised into five distinct categories that could be applied across marketplaces. These measures relate to (1) the loyalty of customers, (2) the quality they perceive, (3) how they associate with the brand, (4) their awareness of the brand, and (5) their consumer behaviour in the marketplace.

Two of the brand equity measures proposed by Aaker (1996) agreed with Keller's (1993) definition of brand equity. These measures are associations (i.e., brand image) and awareness. Literature on purchase intentions for luxury brands tells us that brand image is an essential brand association in the market performance of such brands.

A brand image that is well-communicated has the potential to build a brand's positioning in the minds of consumers, advance a brand's competitive advantage and profitability (Park, Jaworski, & McInnis, 1986). This statement is in line with Keller (1993) definition of brand image as brand perceptions manifested through the associations stored in an individual's memory. Das et al. (2016) described brand image as a combination of associations linked to product, symbols, feelings, and experiences that are attached to the image and assist consumers in the identification of products.

In the measurement of brand image, researchers refer to associations or benefits linked to the brand image. Das et al. (2016) grouped brand image benefits into three categories: (1) functional benefits relating to physical features of a product; (2) symbolic benefits indicating abstract features which are associated with the consumer need for social approval, self-expression, and enhancement of self-worth; and (3) experiential benefits

reflecting the consumers' desires for products that provide fun experiences. Based on these categories of brand image benefits, the researcher will proceed with symbolic brand benefits as these are relevant in the consumption of luxury brands. Symbolic benefits signal the "effect of using a brand in terms of what it communicates about the consumer to themself, and others" (Helgeson & Supphellen, 2004, p. 1). The features of symbolic benefits of brand image relating to consumers' needs for social approval and self-expression imply a positive moderation effect whereby brand image increases consumers' value-expressive attitudes in luxury purchase intentions.

2.5.3 Brand image and luxury purchase intentions

Symbolic brand benefits have been linked to two fields of research; self-congruity research as well as brand personality research (Helgeson & Supphellen, 2004). Self-congruity shows how much the individual's self-concept corresponds with the personality of a certain type of consumer of a brand. Brand personality refers to the combination of human characteristics that consumers relate to a brand (Aaker, 1997). In their research, Helgeson and Supphellen (2004), sought to investigate if self-congruity and brand personality are mutually exclusive. They identified the possibility for socially desirable responding (SDR) to affect the measurement of self-congruity as well as personality traits of a brand. The concept of SDR is understood to be a behaviour in which people portray themselves in a manner that enhances their social standing (Helgeson & Supphellen, 2004). In line with the characteristics of luxury consumers, people with significant impression management goals might be more interested in symbolic benefits offered by a brand compared to consumers with low impression management goals (Helgeson & Supphellen, 2004). In their investigation on the moderating interaction of brand image, Lin, Yang, and Wan (2015) stated that brand image includes how consumers respond to brand cues, and is associated with product quality. A positive brand image has the potential to result in higher product ratings by consumers (Lin et al., 2015) in comparison to competing products. Additionally, consumers will display tolerance for high prices of products with excellent brand image due to low perceived risk (Lin et al., 2015). In the context of luxury, Atwal and Williams (2009) stated that luxury brands with a well-established identity, awareness and perceived quality, create feelings of uniqueness, and assist to retain sales and customer loyalty. Shukla (2011) concurred that luxury brand name and image are essential external factors that are considered in purchase decisions and thus create the key competitive advantage required to generate profit for companies.

It is important to emphasize that companies promoting luxury brands tend to ensure that brand image is fully leveraged in their global marketing strategies. However, research has overlooked the effects of brand image on consumer purchase intentions for luxury brands (Shukla, 2011).

Furthermore, by using brand image as an essential component of their marketing programme, luxury brands can increase the premiums they charge to consumers (Shukla, 2011). Shukla mentions a study in the USA which observed that a female carrying an expensive Gucci bag signalled different associations compared to a female carrying a less priced Coach bag. This is because the Coach brand is related to accessible luxury, and the Gucci bag is related to exclusive luxury. One can, therefore, deduce that consumer responses to the luxury brand image can vary according to the type of luxury in question.

2.6 Conclusion of Literature review

The literature review has highlighted five factors in facilitating the study: 1). the role of vertical individualism on self-enhancement values and materialism; 2) the effect of self-enhancement and materialism on value-expressive attitudes; 3). the influence of materialism on symbolic benefits of brand image; 4). the moderating effect of brand image on value-expressive attitudes in luxury purchase intentions; and 5). the relationship between the symbolic benefits of brand image and purchase intentions for luxury brands. Literature states that consumers respond differently to products and services depending on cultural (i.e., individualism versus collectivism), personal and social orientations. Therefore the study will confirm these interactions in relation to the South African luxury consumption market.

2.7 Hypotheses

The hypotheses for the study are presented as follows:

Vertical individualism and self-enhancment

$H1_0$: Vertical individualism positively affects values of self-enhancement

$H1_A$: Vertical individualism does not have an effect on values of self-enhancement

Vertical individualism and materialism

$H2_0$: *Vertical individualism positively affects materialism*

$H2_A$: *Vertical individualism does not affect materialism*

Self-enhancement and value-expressive attitudes

$H3_0$: *Self-enhancement positively affects value-expressive attitudes*

$H3_A$: *Self-enhancement does not affect value-expressive attitudes*

Materialism and value-expressive attitudes

$H4_0$: *Materialism positively affects value-expressive attitudes*

$H4_A$: *Materialism does not affect value-expressive attitudes*

Materialism and brand image

$H5_0$: *Materialism positively affects symbolic benefits of brand image*

$H5_A$: *Materialism does not affect symbolic benefits of brand image*

Value-expressive attitudes and luxury purchase intentions

$H6_0$: *Value-expressive attitudes positively affect luxury purchase intentions*

$H6_A$: *Value-expressive attitudes do not affect luxury purchase intentions*

Brand image and value-expressive attitudes

$H7_0$: *Brand image positively moderates value-expressive attitudes*

$H7_A$: *Brand image has no moderation effect on value-expressive attitudes*

Brand image and luxury purchase intentions

$H8_0$: *Brand image positively affects luxury purchase intentions*

$H8_A$: *Brand image does not affect luxury purchase intentions*

2.8 Conceptual Diagram

The conceptual diagram for the study is shown in Figure 2.1 and was derived from prior literature to address the shortfall of knowledge. The first model studies the effect of vertical-individualistic orientation on self-enhancement values and materialism. The second model examines the effect of self-enhancement values and materialism on value-expressive attitudes. The third model tests the relationship between value-expressive attitudes and luxury purchase intent. The fourth model tests the relationship between materialism and brand image. This is followed by an investigation between brand image and luxury purchase intent. The last model investigates the moderating interaction of symbolic benefits of brand image on the relationship between value-expressive attitudes and luxury purchase intent.

The next chapter will discuss the research methodology for measuring the hypothesis.

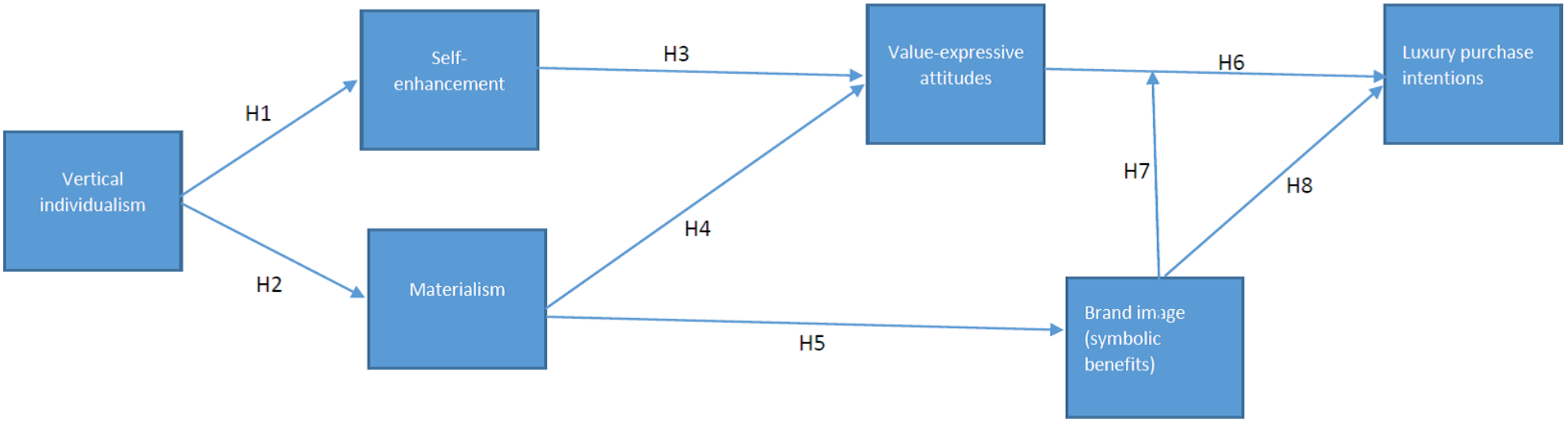


Figure 2.1 Conceptual diagram for the study

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research methodology / paradigm

The research question determines the research methodology, also known as the strategy for the research (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). The research design gives detail on how the researcher will answer research questions. This study took a deductive approach whereby a hypothesis is derived from theory, and data is collected to test the hypothesis. Regarding research methods, the most commonly used methods in literature are “(1) exploratory, (2) descriptive, and (3) explanatory” (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 170). This study made use of the exploratory method, which is a valuable way of gaining new insights. The individual variables are evaluated utilising Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA).

Since factors in the hypothesis are all correlated, the hypothesis requires further testing through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). CFA looks for relationships between variables and considers the point where values for two or more variables intersect and interdependence (Saunders et al., 2016). Upon establishing CFA relationships, the statistical method of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is used to assess the relationships between observed and underlying variables (Civelek, 2018).

3.2 Research Design

Research designs are used to collect, analyse, and interpret data using quantitative and qualitative research (Creswell, 2011). This study makes use of the quantitative method, which collects and analyses data in numerical values. The research is designed to establish the influence of consumer individualism on self-enhancement values and materialism, and then test these constructs on value-expressive attitudes in purchase intentions for luxury brands in South Africa. The targeted respondents are people who have recently purchased or are planning to purchase a luxury item in the near future.

High-value purchases require high involvement of the consumer in terms of researching the product and alternatives in the market. Therefore, the research is tested on individuals who recently evaluated or are still evaluating the criteria for selecting a luxury brand for purchase. The purpose is to understand the motivation in the decision-making process,

and therefore establish the role of consumer individualism in this regard. To gather the required data, the researcher implemented the hypothesis shown in Figure 1.

An online survey was administered for the research. The survey method is often linked with a process in which deduction is applied (Saunders et al., 2016). It is used in exploratory as well as descriptive research and allows one to collect quantitative data. There are inherent weaknesses in using a survey method in that people do not always answer questions truthfully and may answer differently if asked the question in another way.

The benefits of an online survey include:

1. Ease of data gathering – the survey can be easily distributed (via email and social networks) and completed by respondents in their own time
2. Minimal costs – online surveys are more cost-effective than face-to-face interviews
3. Increase in response rate – the constant reinforcement of the survey increases chances for respondents to participate

3.3 Population and sample

3.3.1 Population

The research was conducted within the South African society. The economically active middle class, as well as students with interests in luxury brands, were surveyed. Economically active means someone who is employed in the public/private sector as a manager, professional, or technician, as well as someone who is currently self-employed. This includes people of all races, both genders from age 18 years old and above, and residing in one of the nine provinces of South Africa, namely; Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West, Northern Cape, Kwa-Zulu Natal, Free State, Eastern Cape, and Western Cape. In terms of the influence of demographic factors, prior research states that gender has a significant effect on the consumption of luxury brands because women generally exhibit more favourable attitudes towards purchase intentions of luxury brands versus men (Kapferer et al., & Powell, 2017). This statement will be observed in the outcome of the study. Literature also states that it is a challenge separating cultures within a geographic region as a result of the effects of multiculturism, globalisation, and mass media communication.

3.3.2 Sample and sampling method

Sample

The research consists of new, potential, and regular consumers of luxury apparel brands in South Africa. The targeted consumers are within the middle-class group with a frequent purchasing method of either online or in-store.

Sampling method

The sample method is a non-probability sample as the researcher did not know the probability that each population factor would be selected and cannot ascertain that each population factor had a probable chance of being selected. The type of non-probability sampling method selected for this research is voluntary sampling. The voluntary sample is comprised of people who volunteer to participate in the survey, often because they are interested in the research topic. Voluntary sampling is understood to attract respondents who are interested in a given topic. As the study is based on purchase intentions for luxury brands, voluntary sampling was an appropriate technique to use in gaining insights from people who have purchased a luxury brand item in the recent past, or intend to do so in the near future.

Sample size

An online survey was conducted, and achieved 253 valid responses. This sample is adequate to conduct the SEM data analysis however it is not sufficient to provide a view on consumer individualism variances of each sub-culture group living in South Africa. Sub-culture in this context makes reference to religions, nationalities, geographic regions, and racial groups (Jisana, 2014). The respondents' participation in the study was completely voluntary and non-incentivised.

3.4 The research instrument

The research instrument consists of eight sections, namely: (1) qualifier question, (2) general information, (3) consumer values in relation to vertical individualism, (4) self-enhancement, (5) materialism, (6) value-expressive attitudes, (7) symbolic benefits of brand image, and (8) purchase intention.

3.4.1 Screening question

The qualifier question determined if the respondent was interested in purchasing luxury brand clothing or accessories. If the individual was not considering purchasing either of these luxury brand items in the near future nor had purchased any recently, the questionnaire was immediately terminated. The type of data collected is nominal and analysed through SPSS.

3.4.2 Demographic questions

The general information section will give insight into the respondent's age, economic activity in terms of occupation, place of residence, religious background, and social class. These questions will determine if the targeted respondents in South Africa's middle-income group have been reached. Additionally, the respondents will be required to identify a luxury brand they are planning to purchase in the near future or have recently purchased. The type of data to be collected is nominal and will be analysed through SPSS.

3.4.3 Consumer individualism questions

The consumer individualism questions comprise of three measurement items and give insight into the respondent's sense of vertical individualism. An interval scale was used to collect the data in all sections of the questionnaire. This was achieved through a 7-point Likert scale and analysed first in SPSS, then in Mplus. Likert-scales are commonly used to measure constructs related to psychology. A 7-point Likert scale allows the possibility of increased measurement precision.

3.4.4 Self-enhancement questions

These questions verify the values held by the respondents in relation to luxury brand purchases. The objective was to confirm that Schwartz's value of self-enhancement is applicable to this study. Self-enhancement was measured using five items.

3.4.5 Materialism questions

The materialism questions consisted of four items and were used to determine the extent to which respondents hold values of materialism.

3.4.6 Value-expressive attitudes

The questions on value-expressive attitudes determine the degree to which respondents are personally motivated to express their self-worth and identity. This construct was measured using three items.

3.4.7 Brand image moderation questions

This section will test moderating effect of brand image on value-expressive attitudes. The questions give insight on the function of value-expressive attitudes in relation to the symbolic benefits of the desired luxury brand. Essentially, the questions assessed whether the favourability of value-expressive attitudes increased if the consumer was aware of the symbolic benefits offered by the brand. These questions were measured with two items.

3.4.8 Purchase intention questions

This section was measured with three items which asked respondents about their intention for purchasing a luxury brand item. This was to evaluate the expectations of the consumer in purchasing the specific luxury item.

Pre-testing, in the form of a pilot study, was conducted to resolve any issues in the survey and test for content validity and reliability.

3.5 Procedure for data collection

The data was collected in its raw form from an online tool (Qualtrics), showing all completed questionnaires. Data relating to the terminated questionnaire will be excluded from the analysis.

3.6 Data analysis and interpretation

The collected data was coded into Excel and loaded on the SPSS statistical software for clean-up. Exploratory factor analysis was to be conducted through SPSS to distinguish the underlying variables from the observed variables (Civelek, 2018). Factor analysis is useful in examining the underlying relationships between the measured constructs. Cronbach’s alpha was used to measure reliability, with measures of 0.7 or above indicating a reliable scale.

The EFA was followed by CFA to establish the validity of the constructs. After that, Path Analysis, also known as Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), was conducted. SEM was applied for causal analysis using the MPlus statistical software. SEM is a statistical method that is generally used in Social Sciences. The method comprises of factor analysis and multiple regression analysis. SEM is used to measure the structural relationship between the measured constructs (Statistics Solutions, 2018). Benefits of SEM include the following (Civelek, 2018):

1. It shows the relationship between hidden structures that are not directly measured.
2. Possible errors in the measurements of the observed variables are considered.
3. It is able to analyse highly complex models and show direct and indirect relationships between variables.

3.7 Limitations of the study

The limitations of the study include the generalisation that most of the respondents of the questionnaire are middle-class individuals and share a common value system that plays a crucial role in the purchasing process. While the study was surveyed across multicultural South African, it cannot be generalised that all ethnicities demonstrate the same level of vertical-individualism, materialism, and value-expressive attitudes in the process of obtaining a luxury good item. Prior studies that used Hofstede's dimensions discovered variances in national collectivism-individualism as a result of cultural influences. This meant that cultures that were previously known to be individualistic may no longer show the expected signs or levels of individualism (Kitirattarkarn, Araujo, & Neijens, 2019). That said, the study highlights the prominence of vertical individualistic orientation in luxury purchase intentions in South Africa.

3.8 Validity and reliability

A test is valid if it measures the intended variable (McLeod, 2013). Predictive validity is undertaken in the study to determine the ability of the instrument to forecast a future outcome being purchase intent. Reliability indicates the degree to which the instrument produces compatible results.

3.8.1 External validity

External validity measures how much a study can be generalised in relation to geographic region, population and historical events (McLeod, 2013). The external validity in the research is maximised with the generalisation that all racial groups within the middle-class population share common cultural and individual values and respond more or less the same to materialism and value-expressive attitudes.

3.8.2 Internal validity

Internal validity is about determining whether the effects observed in a study are a result of the controlled independent variable and nothing else (McLeod, 2013). A challenge in regard to the internal validity of the study is, firstly, the completion of the survey by respondents who did not fall in the middle-income group, and secondly, respondents confusing consumer individualism with personality (a construct that is not included in the study).

3.8.3 Reliability

Cronbach's alpha value involves the measurement of internal consistency in terms of scale reliability ("What does Chronbach's," 2019). Cronbach's coefficient alpha is a commonly used estimator of the reliability of research tests and scales. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 or greater is generally accepted in social sciences research.

3.9 Conclusion of methodology

The study provides marketing practitioners and luxury brand managers alike with insights on the effect of vertical individualism on self-enhancement values and materialism. Consumers' value-expressive attitudes highlights the personal need to establish their identity and express themselves through luxury purchases. The brand image moderation will give insight to brand managers regarding the degree to which symbolic benefits of brand image are instrumental in enhancing the relationship between the need for self-expression and luxury purchase intent. The contributions made will enhance marketing strategies for luxury brands and the country, specifically in terms of developing effective integrated marketing communications programmes that resonate with South African values.

CHAPTER 4. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

This chapter presents the results and analysis of the research questionnaire. The discussion begins with the demographic profile of respondents, and proceeds with exploratory factor analysis whereby the reliability and validity of the research scale is tested. The discussion also presents the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) results.

4.1 Descriptive statistics: demographic profile

4.1.1 Age

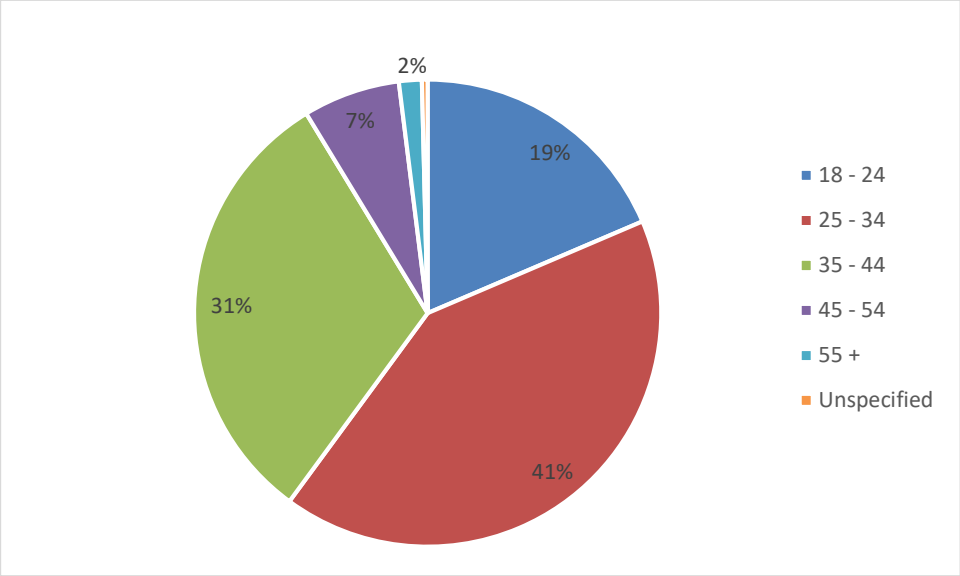


Figure 4.1 Age

As presented in Figure 4.1, 41% of respondents were between the ages of 25 and 34, followed by 31% of respondents between the ages of 35 and 44. Only 2% of respondents were above 55 years old.

4.1.2 Gender

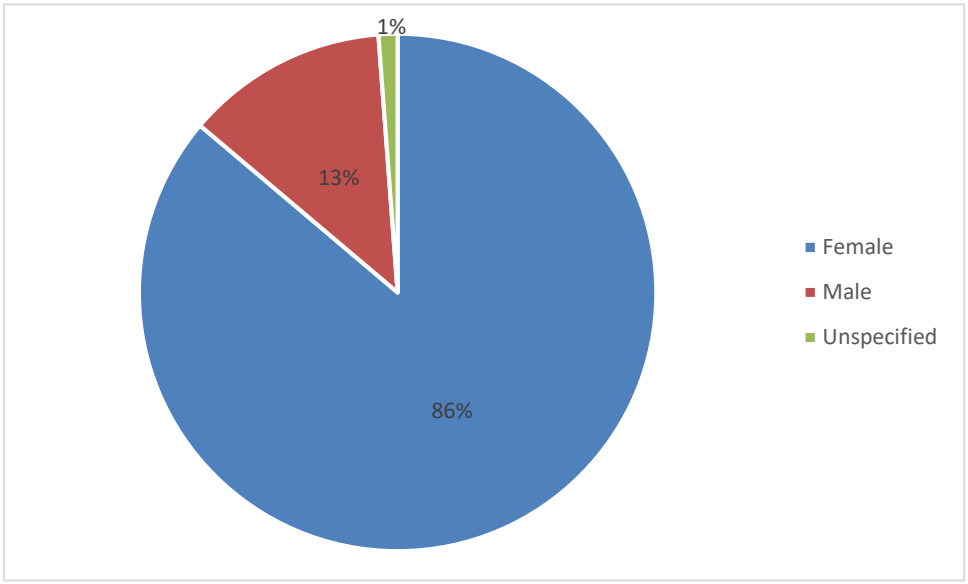


Figure 4.2 Gender

The questionnaire generated more interest among females, as represented by the 86% response rate. This supports the theory that female consumers are relatively more interested in luxury consumption compared to male consumers (Kapferer, Kernstock, Brexendorf, & Powell, 2017). Only 13% of respondents were male. The results could also indicate that women are more likely to respond to survey questionnaires than men.

4.1.3 Ethnicity

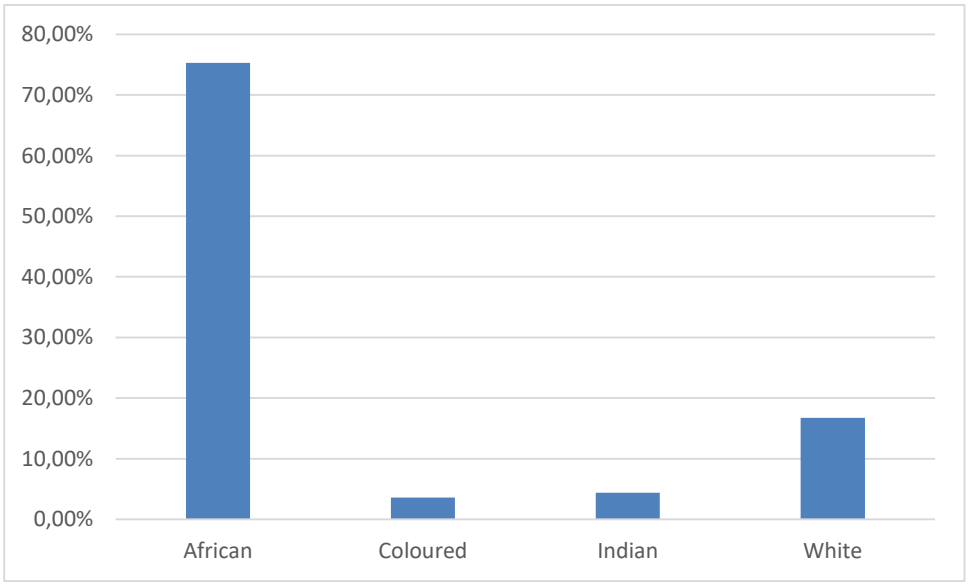


Figure 4.3 Ethnicity

Figure 4.3 indicates that the majority of respondents were African. As mentioned earlier in the literature review, luxury consumption in Africa is motivated by the need to display social status, achievement, and power.

4.1.4 Education

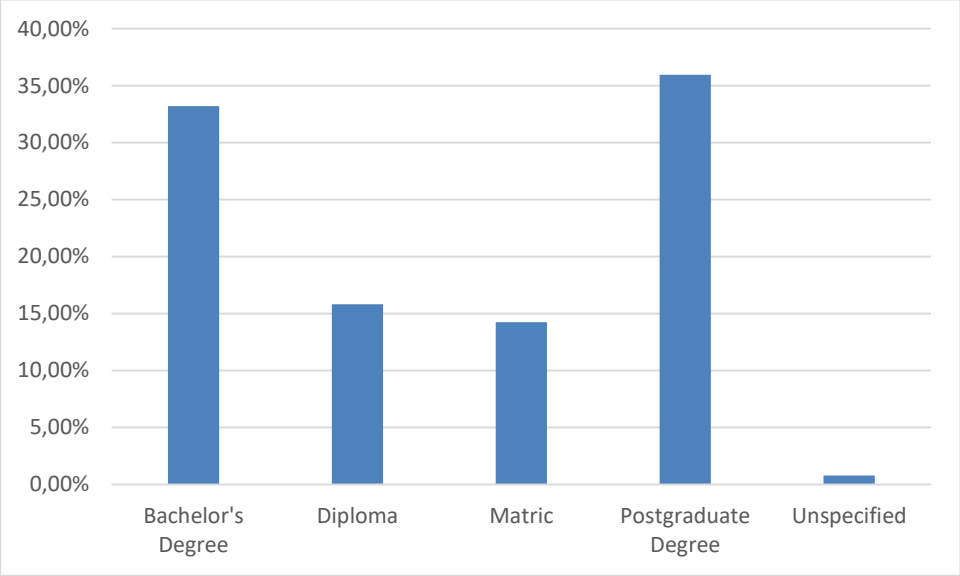


Figure 4.4 Education

The majority of respondents hold Postgraduate and Bachelor's Degrees, as indicated in Figure 4.4. Their interest in luxury brands could be interpreted as self-reward for their hard work and achievements (Atwal & Bryson, 2014). Additionally, the results could indicate that those with degrees can afford these purchases.

4.1.5 Occupation

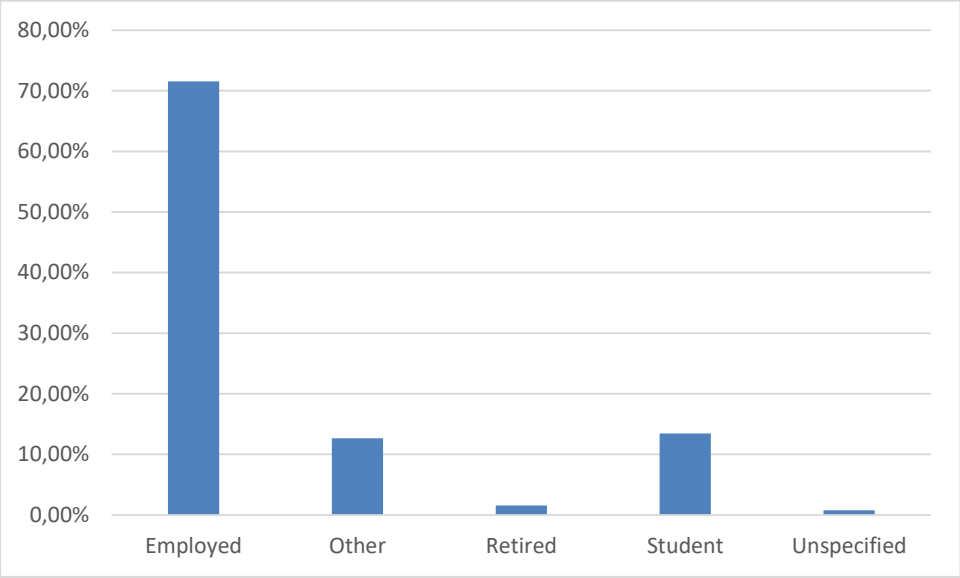


Figure 4.5 Occupation

In terms of occupation, over 70% of respondents were employed, as presented in Figure 4.5. This tells us that people with economic means are generally more interested in purchasing a luxury good.

4.1.6 Income

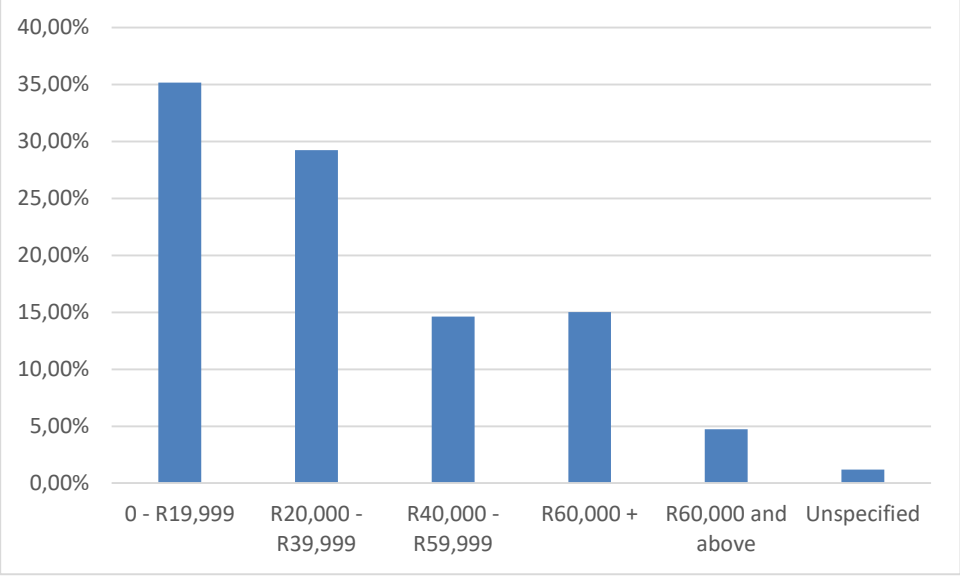


Figure 4.6 Income

The research sparked interest among the lower and upper-middle-class group at 35% and 29%, respectively. In a Business Live article by Bisseker (2019), it stated that the middle-class group earns roughly R13 127 a month, and the elite group earns approximately

R38 223 a month. Less than 5% of respondents were earning above R60 000 a month. This confirms the economic predictions that South Africa's luxury market is expected to grow with the rise of the middle-class group. This study is designed to establish the motivations of the middle-class group in purchasing luxury brands.

The following section discusses the results of the measurement scale.

4.2 Descriptive statistics: measurement scale

4.2.1 Vertical Individualism on self-enhancement and materialism (H1 and H2)

Vertical individualism measurement scales

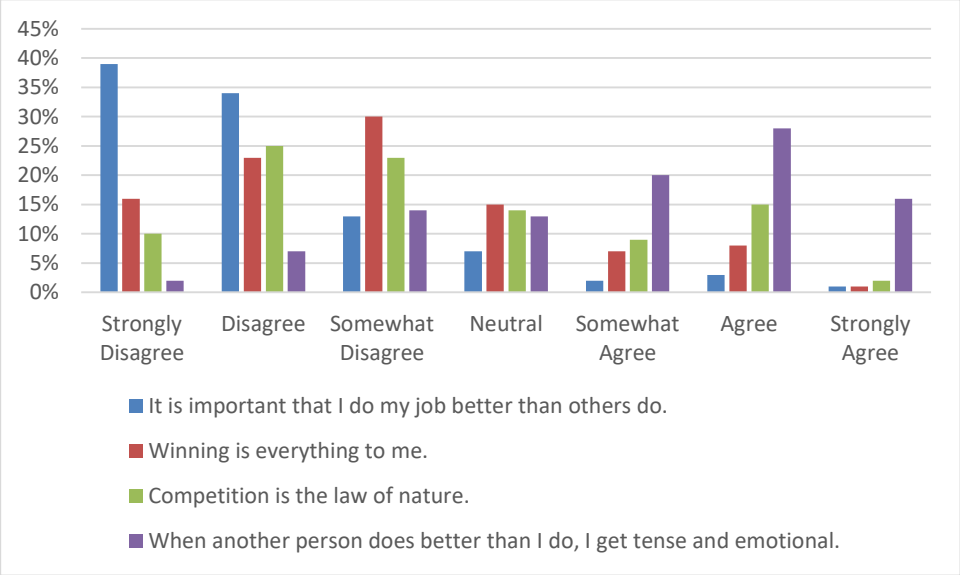


Figure 4.7 Vertical Individualism

The vertical individualism scale in Figure 4.7 revealed that 39% of respondents strongly disagree on their importance of doing their job better than others. On the contrary, 28% agree that they get tense and emotional when another person does better than them. A further 16% strongly agree on the same matter. However, 30% of respondents somewhat disagree that winning is everything to them, while 15% agree that competition is the law of nature. This confirms the presence of vertical individualist values in some of the respondents.

Self-enhancement measures

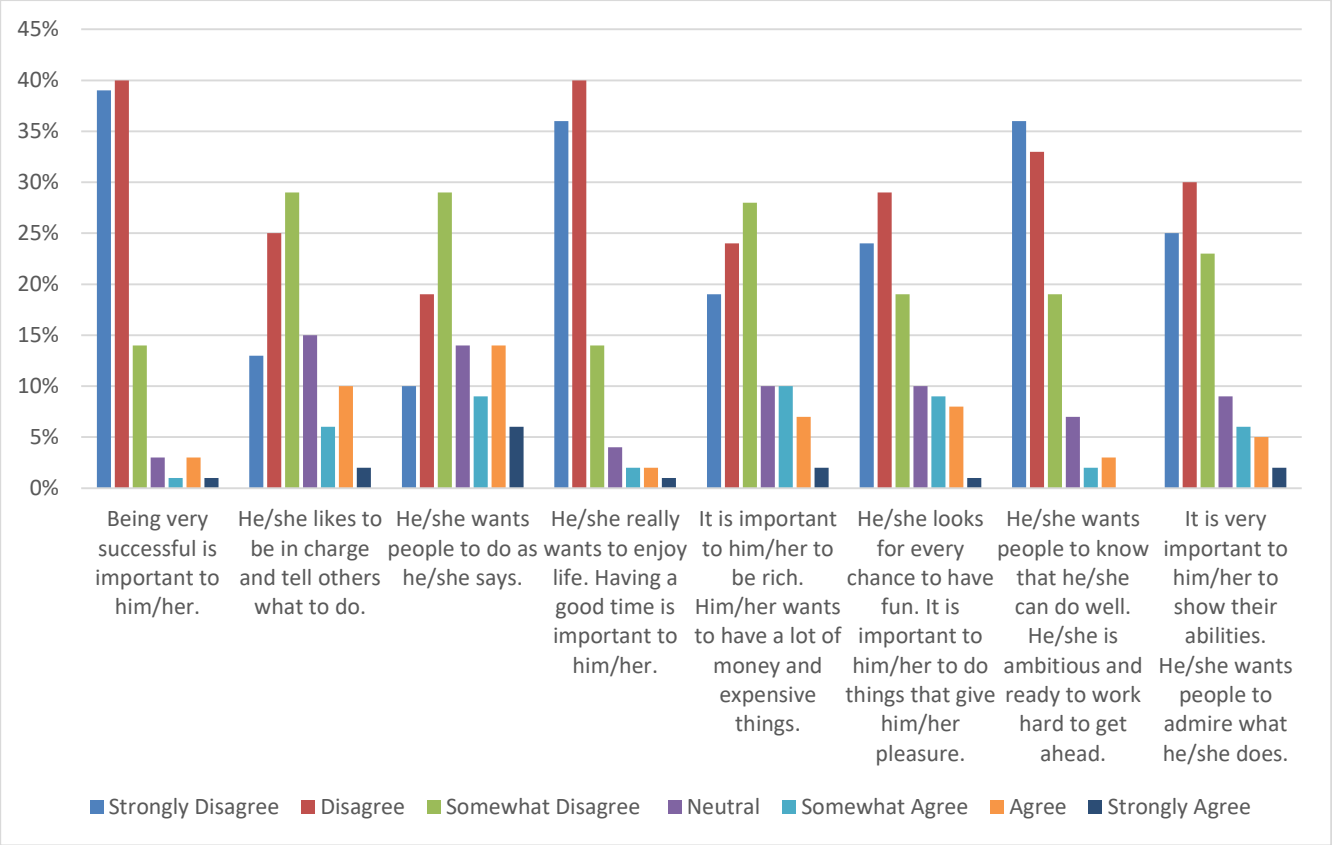


Figure 4.8 Self-enhancement

The self-enhancement scale in Figure 4.8 reveals that most respondents generally disagree that being successful and wanting to enjoy life is important to them. Fewer respondents agree that they like to be in charge (10%), want to show their abilities (5%), and feel that it is important to have a lot of money and expensive things (7%). This confirms that respondents hold self-enhancement values to some degree.

Materialism measures

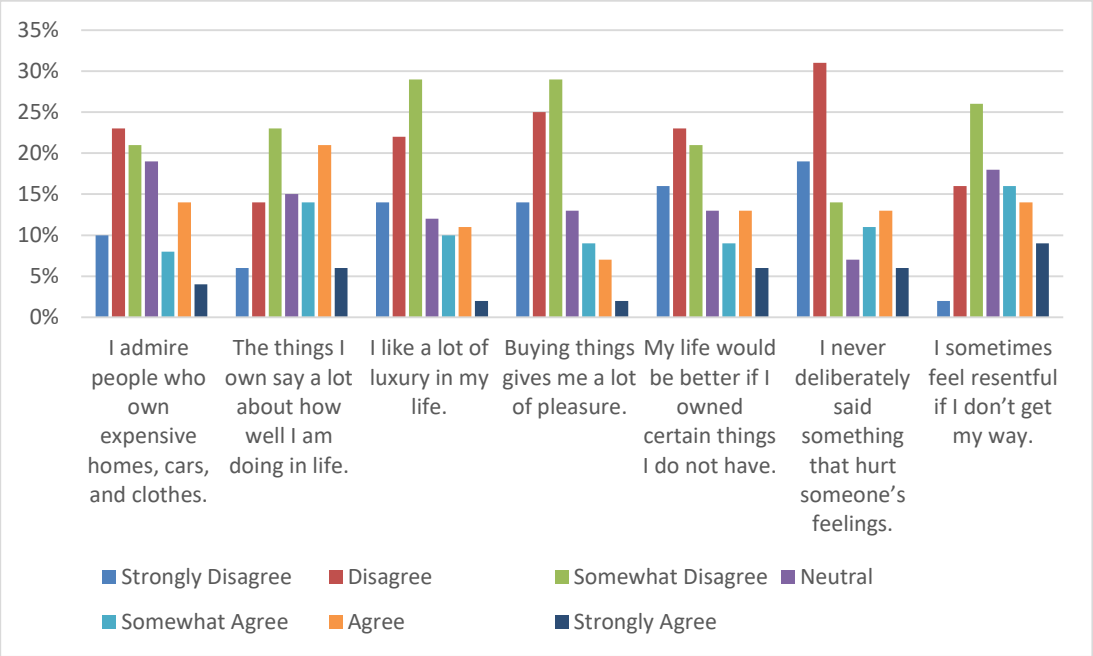


Figure 4.9 Materialism

In terms of materialism, 14% of respondents agree that they admire people who own expensive homes, cars, and clothes. Furthermore, 21% felt that the things they own say a lot about how well they are doing in life, which is reflective of value-expressive beliefs. However, 29% of respondents somewhat disagreed with liking "a lot of luxury" in their life. This does not necessarily mean they do not appreciate luxury, but instead they prefer minimum to moderate amounts of luxury in their life.

The objective of the last two questions in the materialism scale was to establish if respondents were paying attention while completing the questionnaire. The result was that 31% disagree that they never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings. A further 26% somewhat disagree with feeling resentful when they do not get their way.

4.2.2 Self-enhancement and materialism on value-expressive attitudes (H3 and H4)

Value-expressive measurement scales

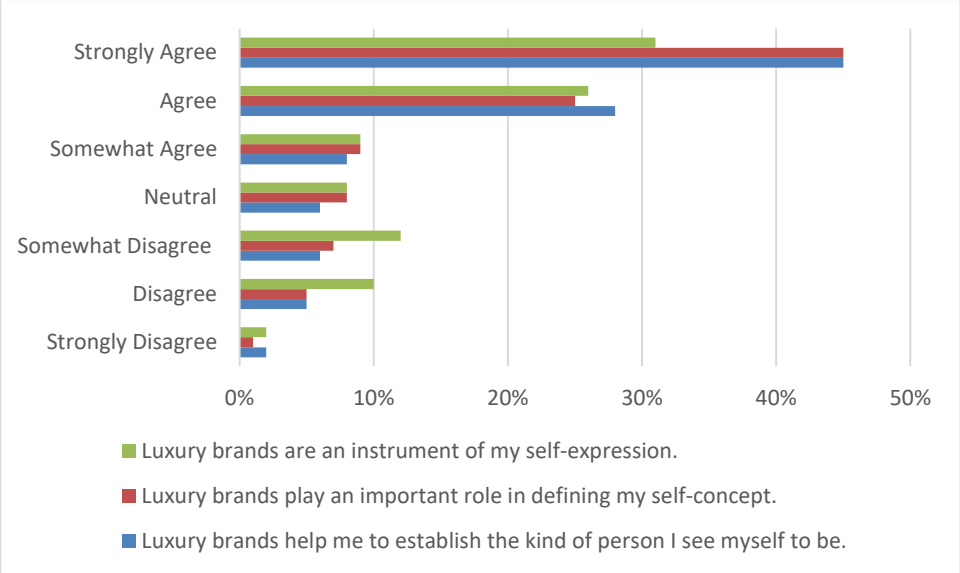


Figure 4.10 Value-expressive attitudes

The value-expressive attitudes results in Figure 4.9 revealed that 45% of respondents strongly agree that luxury brands are instrumental in defining their self-concept. Similarly, 45% strongly agree that luxury brands help them to establish the kind of person they see themselves to be. Furthermore, 31% strongly agree that luxury brands are an instrument of their self-expression.

4.2.3 Materialism on symbolic benefits of brand image (H5), brand image moderation on value-expressive attitudes (H7)

Brand image measurement scales

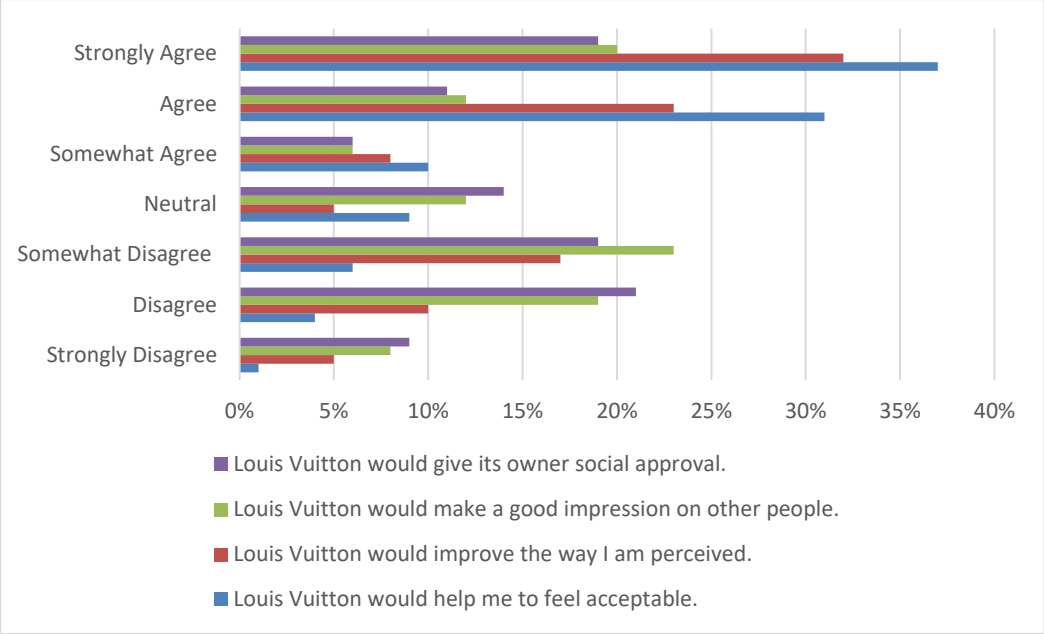


Figure 4.11 Symbolic benefits of brand image

Figure 4.10 reveals that 37% of respondents strongly agree that the Louis Vuitton brand would help them to feel accepted. A further 31% agree on the same matter. Similarly, 32% strongly agree that Louis Vuitton would improve the way they are perceived. This was supported by 23% agreeing on the same topic. On the contrary, 23% somewhat disagree that Louis Vuitton would make a good impression on other people, while 20% agree on the same matter. Furthermore, 19% of respondents strongly agree that Louis Vuitton would give its owner social approval.

4.2.4 Value-expressive attitudes and brand image on purchase intentions for luxury brands (H6 and H8)

Purchase intention measurement scales

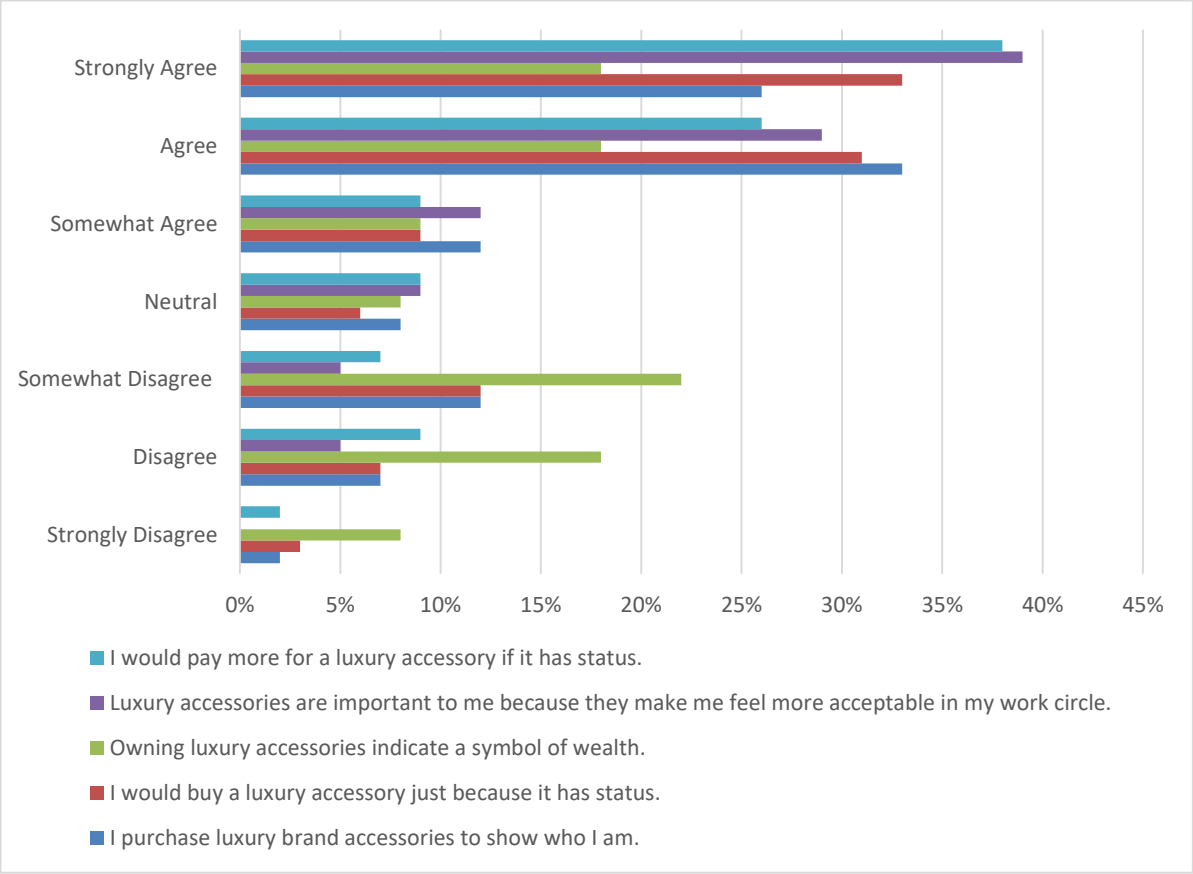


Figure 4.12 Purchase intentions for luxury brands

The scale for luxury purchase intentions in Figure 4.11 indicates that 39% of respondents strongly agree that luxury accessories are important to them as they make them feel more acceptable in their work circle. Furthermore, 38% strongly agree that they would pay more for a luxury accessory if it has status. To support this, 33% said they would buy a luxury accessory just because it has status. Interestingly, 22% somewhat disagree that owning luxury accessories indicate a symbol of wealth while 18% strongly agree on the matter. Another observation is that 33% agree that they purchase luxury brand accessories to show who they are. In summary, most respondents consider luxury accessories as tools for self-expression, power, and to obtain social approval.

4.3 Reliability and validity measurement

In this section, the researcher presents the test results of reliability and validity measurements. The reliability of a scale shows how free the scale is from random error and also indicates internal consistency, commonly measured through Cronbach's coefficient alpha (Pallant, 2016). Validity determines how accurately a scale measures the intended factors.

4.3.1 Reliability

4.3.1.1 Cronbach Alpha Coefficient

The Cronbach alpha reveals the average correlation across all of the scale items. The recommended minimum values of Cronbach alpha values are 0.7, depending on the number of items in the scale (Pallant, 2016). If scale items are less than 10, this results in lower Cronbach alpha values. The results of the items in this study were between 0.67 and 0.85, as indicated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Results of reliability measurement test

Item	Cronbach Alpha
Vertical Individualism	0.67
Self-enhancement	0.80
Materialism	0.75
Value-expressive attitudes	0.80
Brand Image (symbolic benefits)	0.85
Luxury Purchase Intentions	0.83

4.3.1.2 Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Composite reliability measures degree of internal consistency of scale items and should be above 0.60. The CR results presented in Table 4.2 indicate internal consistency across the all measured constructs. Brand image and materialism achieved the highest composite reliability scores at 0.837 and 0.879 respectively.

Average Variance Extracted evaluates the amount of variance recorded in a set of scale items in relation to measurement error and should be above 0.50. Good AVE scores were achieved in Brand image and Materialism at 0.720 and 0.648, respectively. Self-enhancement achieved the lowest AVE score with 0.379.

Table 4.2 Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted

Item	Composite Reliability	1	2	3	4	5	6
Vertical individualism	0.721	**0.473**					
Value-expressiveness	0.723	0.21	**0.469**				
Self-enhancement	0.752	0.45	0.56	**0.379**			
Brand image	0.837	0.31	0.30	0.20	**0.720**		
Materialism	0.879	0.17	0.74	0.45	0.15	**0.648**	
Luxury purchase intentions	0.723	0.31	0.33	0.33	0.43	0.19	**0.480**

4.3.1.3 Inter-construct correlation matrix

Inter-item reliability assesses the consistency among multiple items measured in the same construct. An item-total correlation of 0.30 or higher per item is considered to be sufficient. The inter-item results of the study are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Inter-construct correlation matrix

	1	2	3	4	5
Vertical Individualism	**1.00**				
Value-expressive attitudes	0.21	**1.00**			
Self-enhancement	0.45	0.56	**1.00**		
Brand Image	0.31	0.30	0.20	**1.00**	
Materialism	0.17	0.74	0.45	0.15	**1.00**
Luxury Purchase Intentions	0.31	0.33	0.33	0.43	0.19

4.3.2 Validity

The validity of a scale indicates if the scale actually measures the intended variables. A common type of validity is construct validity. Construct validity is determined through the investigation of its relationship with related constructs indicating convergent validity, and unrelated constructs indicating discriminant validity (Pallant, 2016).

Convergent validity is achieved when the standardised factor loadings are above 0.50. As discussed earlier, all variables achieved factor loadings above 0.5, except for LP3 with 0.445.

Discriminant validity is commonly determined using Fornell and Larcker's (1981) test, which compares the shared variances between each variable with their respective AVEs. If the AVEs are superior to the shared variances, we can conclude that discriminant validity is achieved. In reference to Table 4.2, discriminant validity was achieved across all variables except for the shared variance between materialism and value-expressiveness, as well as in the case of self-enhancement with vertical individualism and value-expressiveness.

4.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

CFA was conducted to test the six-factor model. Model fit was significantly and substantially achieved as all factor loadings were above 0.5, with the exception of LP3 (0.445).

Table 4.4 CFA model fit standards and results

CFA Model Fit Standards	CFA Model Fit Results
Composite Fit Index (CFI) > 0.9	Composite Fit Index (CFI) = 0.951
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) > 0.9	Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = 0.939
Random Measurements of Standard Error Approximation (RMSEA) < 0.08	Random Measurements of Standard Error Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.044
Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) < 0.08	Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = 0.048

4.4 Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

SEM is a statistical process with multiple components employed to analyse structural relationships between measured variables and underlying constructs. The technique combines factor analysis and multiple regression analysis. The SEM analysis of the study confirmed the hypotheses in the conceptual model. The results are presented in the following section.

Hypothesis testing

The purpose of the study was to test the hypothesis presented in Figure 2.1 in Chapter two.

Table 4.5 Hypothesis test

Coefficient	Hypothesis	Estimate	P-value	Result
Vertical individualism → Self-enhancement	H1	0.46	0.000**	Significant and supported
Vertical individualism → Materialism	H2	0.17	0.012*	Significant and supported
Self-enhancement → Value-expressive attitudes	H3	0.26	0.001**	Significant and supported
Materialism → Value-expressive attitudes	H4	0.62	0.000**	Significant and supported
Materialism → Brand image	H5	0.17	0.043*	Significant and supported
Value-expressive attitudes → Luxury purchase intentions	H6	0.22	0.002*	Significant and supported
Brand image → Value-expressive attitudes	H7	0.18	0.010*	Significant and supported
Brand image → Luxury purchase intentions	H8	0.35	0.000**	Significant and supported

*signifies p-value <0.05;
** signifies p-value<0.01

The P-values in Table 4.4 indicate 0.05 and 0.01 levels of confidence, which accept the hypotheses as significant and supported. A significance level of 0.05 indicates an acceptance that there is a 5% chance that the results are due to chance, not the statistical programme, while a P-value of 0.01 indicates a 1% chance. The conceptual model with coeffients is repeated in Figure 4.13.

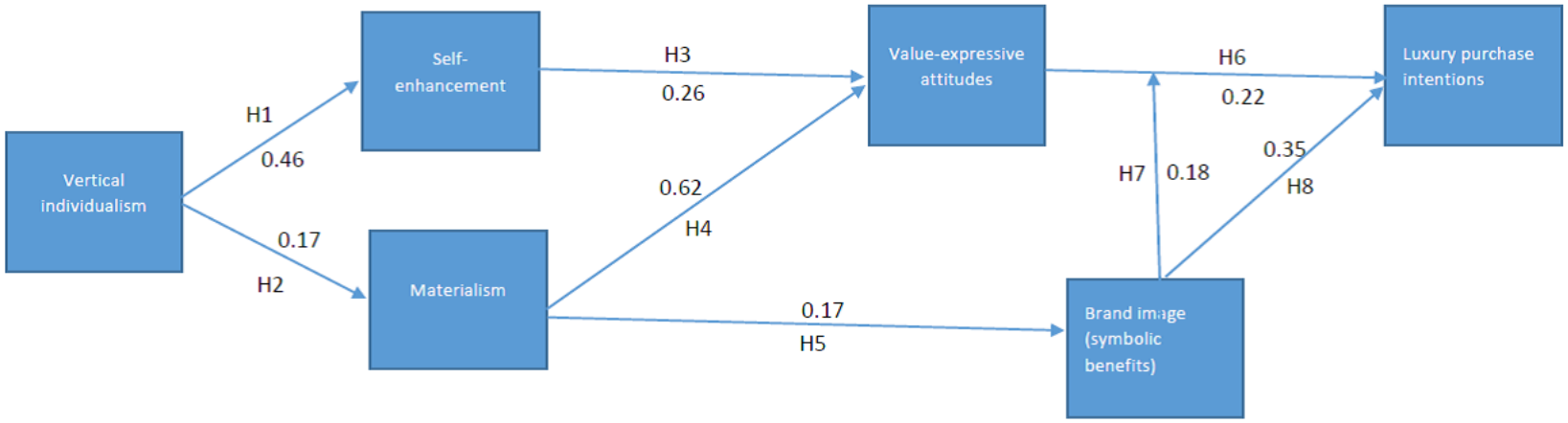


Figure 4.13 Conceptual model with coeffients

Sub-problem 1: Vertical individualism on self-enhancement and materialism

4.4.1 H1: Vertical individualism positively affects values of self-enhancement

The coefficient estimate of H1 was 0.46, which indicates a significant relationship between vertical individualism and values of self-enhancement. The P-value signals a 0.01 confidence level, approving the significance of the hypothesis. This supports the theory, which states that individual values are a function of national culture values. Additionally, the results prove that the hierarchical orientation of vertical individualism truly reflects values of power, achievement, and hedonism as stated in Schwartz's value of self-enhancement.

4.4.2 H2: Vertical individualism positively affects materialism

The coefficient estimate of H2 was 0.17, indicating a minor relationship between vertical individualism and materialism. The P-value signals a 0.01 confidence level, and suggests a weak relationship between vertical individualism and materialism. However, literature is supported in that a vertically individualistic consumer is likely to have high impression management motives that result in materialistic orientation. A dimension of materialism that closely relates to vertical individualism is possessiveness. Possessiveness relates to a desire to control material possessions through ownership as well as a propensity to retain possessions. Such materials have the potentional to assist individuals enhance their self-identity in line with their standards and those of their peers (Hunt, Kernan, & Mitchell, 1996).

Sub-problem 2: Self-enhancement and materialism on value-expressive attitudes

4.4.3 H3: Self-enhancement positively affects value-expressive attitudes

The coefficient estimate of H3 was 0.26 and indicated a significant relationship between values of self-enhancement and a luxury consumer's value-expressive attitudes. The P-value signals a 0.01 confidence level, approving the significance of the hypothesis. The result indicates that self-enhancement values of power, achievement and hedonism influence a consumer's attitudes to build and communicate their self-identity in reference to these values.

4.4.4 H4: Materialism positively affects value-expressive attitudes

The coefficient estimate of H4 was 0.62, indicating a significant relationship between materialism and value-expressive attitudes. The P-value signals a 0.01 confidence level, approving the significance of the hypothesis. This was the strongest hypothesis and indicates that materialism values can increase the manifestation of value-expressive attitudes. This means that materialistic consumers are likely to establish a self-identity that expresses the kind of person they see themselves to be, through the purchasing of luxury brands.

4.4.5 H5: Materialism positively affects brand image

The coefficient estimate of H5 was 0.17 and revealed a weak relationship between materialism and brand image. The P-value signals a 0.05 confidence level, approving the hypothesis. While the result was comparatively significant, this indicates that materialistic consumers respond positively to symbolic benefits of brand image. Literature states that materialism is driven by a need to acquire material items to satisfy the desires of social status and happiness. As such, a high luxury brand image assists materialistic consumers in fulfilling personal and social orientation goals.

Sub-problem 3: Value-expressive attitudes and brand image on luxury purchase intentions

4.4.6 H6: Value-expressive attitudes positively affect luxury purchase intentions

The coefficient estimate of H6 was 0.22, indicating a significant relationship between value-expressive attitudes and purchase intentions for luxury brands. The P-value signals a 0.01 confidence level, approving the significance of the hypothesis. This supports literature, which states that value-expressive attitudes among young adult consumers contribute significantly to luxury purchase intentions (Schade, et al., 2016). The results imply that consumers are motivated by the attitude functions of self-expression in their purchasing of luxury products. These consumers purchase luxury brands to communicate their self-identity and to express their creativity and uniqueness.

4.4.7 H7: Brand image positively moderates value-expressive attitudes

The coefficient estimate of H7 was 0.18 and proves a weak interaction of brand image with value-expressive attitudes. The P-value signals a 0.01 confidence level, approving the hypothesis. The result implies that value-expressive attitudes of consumers in South Africa are increased when they are aware of the symbolic benefits of a luxury brand's image. This means that a consumers attitudes towards self-expression can be enhanced if the brand image of a luxury brand resonates with the kind of person they see themselves to be.

4.4.8 H8: Brand image positively affects luxury purchase intentions

The coefficient estimate of H8 was 0.35, indicating a significant relationship between brand image and purchase intentions for luxury brands. The P-value signals a 0.01 confidence level, approving the significance of the hypothesis. The result supports literature, which states that brand image is a critical element in the marketing strategies of luxury brands as it enables organisations to charge an added premium for a luxury item. Literature also states that the higher a brand image, the more consumers are happy to accept a higher price.

4.5 Conclusion of results

In conclusion of this Chapter, the results from SPSS and Mplus were presented. The demographic profile of the 253 samples was presented, followed by the results of the survey instrument. The results of reliability and validity testing were presented. Using Cronbach's alpha to test reliability, the results found that the research instrument was reliable for the measured variables and underlying constructs. Internal consistency was achieved as indicated in the composite reliability test, where results were above 0.60. Good AVE scores were achieved only in Brand Image and Materialism, with the rest of the constructs fairing close to the 0.50 standard, except for Self-enhancement an AVE of 0.379.

CFA was presented and indicated factor loadings above 0.50 for the constructs within the hypothesis, except for LP3 at 0.44. SEM was subsequently presented and supported significant relationships within the hypothesis structure.

The next chapter further discusses the results in contrast with the existing literature.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

This chapter discusses the results presented in Chapter 4. The discussion commences with the respondents' demographic profile, followed by the hypothesis results.

5.1 Demographic profile of respondents

Although the demographic variables of the study were not hypothesised, the results indicate that people between the ages of 25 and 44 had the most interest in participating in the study on luxury purchase intentions. This supports research by Schade, et al, (2016) which found that age positively moderates purchase intentions for luxury brands, with young adults between the ages of 26 and 39 showing the most significant results. Only 9% of respondents were 45 years old and above. This could be explained by prior research which suggests that "as people grow older, they develop private and personal associations regarding their luxury consumption" (Schade, et al., 2016, p. 321). In terms of gender participation, 86% of respondents were female. This supports literature, which states that female consumers have positive attitudes toward luxury brands in comparison to their male counterparts as well as forecasts by Business in SA, which state that luxury female products are expected to continue driving volume sales. Interestingly, the sparked interest among individuals who hold a Bachelor or Postgraduate degree. Additionally, 75% of respondents where African. This supports statistics which reveal that South Africa's middle-class group is dominated by African citizens ("3 Graphs," 2018). Additionally, 71% of respondents are employed, while the majority of total respondents earn less than R39,999. This is supported by research which states that South Africans are aspirational in regard to choices of brand and product despite unfavourable economic challenges that constrain their disposable income ("Luxury Goods," n.d.).

5.2 Hypotheses discussion

Table 5.1 is a summary of the hypotheses tests. The following section provides a discussion of each hypothesis in support of existing empirical findings.

Table 5.1 Hypotheses results

Coefficient	Hypothesis	Estimate	P-value	Result
Vertical individualism → Self-enhancement	H1	0.46	0.000**	Significant and supported
Vertical individualism → Materialism	H2	0.17	0.012*	Significant and supported
Self-enhancement → Value-expressive attitudes	H3	0.26	0.001**	Significant and supported
Materialism → Value-expressive attitudes	H4	0.62	0.000**	Significant and supported
Materialism → Brand image	H5	0.17	0.043*	Significant and supported
Value-expressive attitudes → Luxury purchase intentions	H6	0.22	0.002*	Significant and supported
Brand image → Value-expressive attitudes	H7	0.18	0.010*	Significant and supported
Brand image → Luxury purchase intentions	H8	0.35	0.000**	Significant and supported

*signifies p<0.05; ** signifies p<0.01

Sub-problem 1: Vertical individualism on self-enhancement and materialism

5.2.1 Vertical individualism and self-enhancement

$H1_0$: Vertical individualism positively affects values of self-enhancement

$H1_A$: Vertical individualism does not affect values of self-enhancement

The standardised coefficient for the relationship between vertical individualism and self-enhancement was significant at 0.460. This shows that vertical individualism has a significant influence on the values of self-enhancement in relation to luxury purchase intentions. Literature states that caring for the interest of others is frequently not associated with behaviours that seek self-enhancement (Roccas, 2003). The finding is supported by theory in that cultural orientation has an effect on individual values (Mourali et al., 2005) and that, concerning consumer behaviour, such values can manifest differently based on a contextual situation as well as a product category. The dependency of self-enhancement on vertical individualism is supported by prior research which states that individuals with self-enhancement values tend to be concerned with social hierarchies (Cleveland & Bartikowski, 2018). The need to show others that they are doing better in terms of power, achievement, and hedonism (Shukla, 2011). The results also prove that

South Africa is an individualistic market, as indicated in Hofstede's culture index. Empirical support is provided to marketing professionals to establish the degree to which luxury brands can be positioned in terms of the marketing mix to resonate with vertical individualistic consumers who are motivated to enhance their self-concept through the acquisition of prestigious items.

5.2.2 Vertical individualism and materialism

$H2_0$: Vertical individualism positively affects materialism

$H2_A$: Vertical individualism does not affect materialism

The coefficient for the effect of vertical individualism on materialism was significant at 0.174. This supports theory in that cultural orientation is an important predictor of materialism (Das & Mukherjee, 2019). While Das and Mukherjee (2019) found that consumers in India are less materialistic due to collectivistic orientation, this study provides empirical evidence that consumers in South Africa tend to hold materialistic values due to vertical individualistic orientation. In essence, the higher the individualistic orientation of a country, the higher level of materialistic values. According to Hunt et al. (1996) materialism is established in the value system of an individual whereby importance is placed on end goals of achievement, values, as well as beliefs that possessions are useful tools to attain these goals. Research by Belk (1985) observes that differences in materialism tendencies between American and Japanese consumers undoubtedly exist due to cultural orientation. Vohra (2016) further stated that the theory of individualism in a cultural environment, reveals valuable insights regarding consumers' impulsive behaviour. Vohra (2016) further stated that people consume certain products and services in an effort to be perceived more superior in terms of social hierarchy. This results in "the use of conspicuous consumption in an attempt to find greater social status" (p. 59). Social hierarchy in this context can be associated with the hierarchical orientation of vertical individualism and values of materialism.

As such, in determining appropriate market segments for products and services, marketers need to be cognisant of cultural dynamics and how values of materialism can be leveraged in brand positioning and communication strategies.

Sub-problem 2: Self-enhancement and materialism on value-expressive attitudes

5.2.3 Self-enhancement and value-expressive attitudes

$H3_0$: *Self-enhancement positively affects value-expressive attitudes*

$H3_A$: *Self-enhancement does not affect value-expressive attitudes*

The coefficient for the effect of self-enhancement on value-expressive attitudes was significant at 0.269. This means self-enhancement values can lead to establishment of value-expressive attitudes among consumers. This is supported by the theory which states that individuals who associate with self-enhancement values are motivated to display achievement, power over resources, and social status (Roccas, 2003). These values influence attitudes and behaviours. A study by Roccas (2003) found that status positively affects identification in individuals who associate with self-enhancement values. Research by Sedikides & Gregg (2008) stated that the characteristics of self-enhancement extend into social settings whereby social comparisons activate self-regulatory measures. Furthermore, the self-enhancement maintenance theory states that three elements are relevant: (1) a person's performance in a domain, (2) the personal importance of that domain, and (3) a person's relationship with a targeted goal (Sedikides & Gregg, 2008). Therefore, a person's relationship with a targeted goal (i.e. self-expression) may explain the relationship between self-enhancement and value-expressive attitudes.

5.2.4 Materialism and value-expressive attitudes

$H4_0$: *Materialism positively affects value-expressive attitudes*

$H4_A$: *Materialism does not affect value-expressive attitudes*

The effect of materialism on value-expressive attitudes achieved the highest coefficient (0.622) in SEM analysis. This proves a significant relationship between both constructs and provides marketers with empirical evidence that the more materialistic a consumer is, the more they will have favourable attitudes towards expressing their actual or ideal self-identity. While theory states that many factors influence materialism, prior research found no relationship between materialism and affluence, however, it was observed that there is a significant relationship between materialism and income level (Vohra, 2016). The majority (35%) of respondents of this study were in the lower-income bracket, therefore, the researcher can suggest that lower-income social groups are more prevalent in values and personality traits of materialism. In contrast, a study observed by Das and Mukherjee

(2019) stated that the behaviour towards materialistic value generally declines as a person gets older. Knowing that materialism affects value-expressive attitudes, Das and Mukherjee's (2019) findings could be explained by Schade et al. (2016) who revealed that age has a positive effect on value-expressive attitudes among young consumers. As such, age would, assumably, have a similar effect on materialism. Vohra (2016) stated there is empirical evidence which shows that demographic factors, such as age and gender, significantly impact the materialism across Indian consumers. Other studies revealed that perceptions of social status are positively associated with conspicuous consumption (i.e., luxury) and that a consumer's interest in fashionable products could possibly be motivated by an individual's materialism levels (Vohra, 2016). Using the findings of this study, marketers can develop luxury brand strategies that resonate with personality traits of materialism (possessiveness, non-generosity, and envy), because it is through these personality traits that attitudes in consumption of luxury brands for self-expression can manifest.

5.2.5 Materialism and brand image

$H5_0$: *Materialism positively affects symbolic benefits of brand image*

$H5_A$: *Materialism does not affect symbolic benefits of brand image*

The coefficient for the relationship between materialism and brand image was significant at 0.174. This means that consumers with values of materialism respond better to symbolic benefits of brand image. As described by Das et al. (2016), brand image is a combination of associations related to product, symbols, feelings, and experiences that are linked to the image and help with the indentification of a product. In the context of materialism, symbolic benefits associated with luxury brands are most relevant as they signal what a brand says about the consumer to themself, and their peers (Helgeson & Supphellen, 2004). The findings in the study are supported by the theoretical link of self-congruity and socially desirable responding (SDR). The concept of SDR occurs when people intentionally represent themselves in a favourable manner (Helgeson & Supphellen, 2004). As such, individuals with strong impression management motives (i.e., materialism) may show more concern with brand symbols than individuals with low impression management motives (Helgeson & Supphellen, 2004). As an example, it was mentioned in Chapter two that Shukla (2011) observed a study in which a woman carrying an expensive Gucci bag signalled something different compared to a woman carrying a less priced Coach bag. The reason stated was that the Coach brand is perceived as

accessible luxury, meanwhile, the Gucci bag is perceived as exclusive luxury. The contribution of the current study provides empirical evidence that while consumers respond differently to different types of luxury, their level of materialism also plays a significant role in response to symbolic associations of luxury. The implication for marketers is to leverage the communication of symbolic benefits or associations of a luxury brand through careful consideration of their market's materialistic desires.

Sub-problem 3: Value-expressive attitudes and brand image on luxury purchase intentions

5.2.6 Value-expressive attitudes and luxury purchase intentions

$H6_0$: Value-expressive attitudes positively affect luxury purchase intentions

$H6_A$: Value-expressive attitudes do not affect luxury purchase intentions

The coefficient for the effect of value-expressive attitudes on luxury purchase intentions was significant at 0.220. This supports research by Kim, Yoo, Choi, Kim, and Johnson (2011) which reiterated that one of the factors influencing luxury purchase intentions is a consumer's desire to express their self-concept as indicated by Tsai (2005). The authors concur that people, particularly young adults, consume luxury brands for reasons directed at expressing one's self-identity, and self-gifting in terms of rewarding one's own achievements and success in line with values of self-enhancement. These consumers are understood to prioritise brands that "suggest a high quality of life and can therefore be materialistic in the consumption of these products" (Kim, et al., 2011, p. 136). From a cultural values perspective, Chiou (2000) affirmed that consumers in individualistic countries have more favourable attitudes (i.e. value-expressiveness) towards personal oriented brand cues than those that are social oriented. Therefore, it is important that marketing professionals acknowledge the personal influences of value-expressive attitudes and how these interact positively with the desire to consume luxury brands in public and private contexts.

5.2.7 Brand image moderation on value-expressive attitudes

$H7_0$: Brand image positively moderates value-expressive attitudes

$H7_A$: Brand image has no moderation effect on value-expressive attitudes

The coefficient for the brand image moderation effect on value-expressive attitudes in luxury purchases was 0.185. The results imply that a consumer's consumers value-expressive attitudes towards a luxury brand are heightened when their actual or ideal self-identity matches the perceived symbolic benefits of the brand's image. These results support research by Faircloth, Capella, and Alford (2001) which states that brands can take human personality characteristics. Such characteristics are vital in encouraging attitudes and behaviour among consumers and could, therefore, justify the moderation effect of brand image on value-expressive attitudes. This is supported by Aaker (1997), who observed that the higher the consistency among the personal factors that reflect the individual's ideal self, the higher the brand preference. The implication for marketers is to replicate lifestyle behaviours relevant to value-expressiveness in the development of brand strategies. It is through an increased connection with symbols of brand image that a consumer's value-expressive attitudes will effectively lead to luxury consumption of the brand.

5.2.8 Brand image and luxury purchase intentions

$H8_0$: Brand image affects luxury purchase intentions

$H8_A$: Brand image does not affect luxury purchase intentions

The coefficient for the effect of brand image in luxury purchase intentions was significant at 0.358. This indicates a very strong relationship between the positioning of symbolic benefits of a brand image, such as that of Louis Vuitton and consumers' desire to purchase the luxury brand. The findings are supported by the theory, which states that luxury products, such as Louis Vuitton, satisfy the desire to conform and signify cultural membership (Cleveland et al., 2009). Furthermore, theories of hedonic consumption have concluded that people purchase luxury goods for their symbolic meanings (Cleveland et al., 2009). The current study provides empirical evidence to support existing theory, as revealed in Figure 4.10, whereby 37% of respondents strongly agree that the Louis Vuitton brand would help them to feel acceptable. Similarly, 32% strongly agree that Louis Vuitton would improve the way they are perceived. The implication for marketers is that a high brand image of a luxury item could result in an increased likelihood that people will purchase the luxury brand.

5.3 Conclusion of discussion of results

The discussion of the results compares the findings with existing empirical research and justifies the significant relationships within the hypotheses in the context of South Africa's luxury brand market. Vertical individualism is supported by theory to affect luxury purchase intentions through the mediation of self-enhancement, materialism, value-expressive attitudes, and symbolic benefits of brand image. The latter is supported by theory to have a moderation effect on value-expressive attitudes. In summary, these results indicate that personal orientation effects and social orientation effects interact positively to elicit luxury purchase intentions. The next section discusses the conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The first chapter of this study discussed the purpose of the research, which was to examine the interaction between personal and social orientation effects in luxury purchase intentions, as recommended by Tsai (2005). To fill the literature gap, the study sought to investigate the effect of vertical individualism on luxury purchase intentions, with the mediation of associated variables, namely, self-enhancement, materialism, value-expressive attitudes, and symbolic benefits of brand image. The latter construct was also measured in terms of its moderation effect on value-expressive attitudes.

The first sub-problem was to verify that Hofstede's culture value of vertical individualism positively influences Schwartz's value of self-enhancement and materialism. The second sub-problem was to establish the degree to which self-enhancement and materialism affect a consumer's value-expressive attitudes, as well as the impact of materialism on symbolic benefits of brand image. The third sub-problem was to establish the effect of value-expressive attitudes and brand image in purchase intentions for luxury brands, as well as to establish the moderating interaction of brand image on value-expressive attitudes.

Based on the main and sub-problems, eight hypotheses were established, tested, and supported. The outcome was that vertical individualism has a positive influence on luxury purchase intentions through interactions of self-enhancement, materialism, value-expressive attitudes, and brand image. This means that custodians of luxury brands in South Africa need to be cognisant of the vertical individualistic orientation of consumers and how this orientation manifests through the desire to enhance and communicate one's self-concept, the need to acquire material possessions to display success and achievement, the need to express one's self-identity by consuming luxury brands, as well as the need to consume luxury brands that symbolise one's motivations for power, achievement, and hedonism.

6.1 Theoretical contributions and implications

The purpose of the study was to examine the effect of vertical individualism on luxury purchase intentions in South Africa. The direction of the study was established through Tsai's (2005) research, where it is observed that literature on luxury brands is dominated by social orientation, while personal orientation is overlooked. Research scholars acknowledge that social orientations alone cannot explain the consumption of luxury brands (Kim, et al., 2011). This is supported by an overview of recent studies on luxury brands presented in Appendix 2. Consumer behavior theory states that culture values influence individual values, and thus influence consumers' purchase intentions (Mothersbaugh & Hawkins, 2016). Furthermore, the theory associated with luxury brands indicates that cultural effects in luxury consumption are not widely understood (Kapferer et al., 2017). As a result, Hofstede's national culture values were selected as the theoretical framework upon which to conduct the study. Hofstede's factors of national culture measure "power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity/feminism, long-term orientation, and individualism/collectivism" (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2011, p. 2). While researchers have debated the accuracy of the scale, there have been numerous experimental variations of Hofstede's study on numerous samples that confirmed the appropriateness of the detail in his scale ranking (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2011).

Furthermore, the measurement of individualism has evolved to focus on the personal level in addition to the national level, through a method of measuring individualism by considering horizontal and vertical characteristics of the construct (Cleveland & Bartikowski, 2018). Vertical individualism was relevant to the current study as it stresses social hierarchies such that people with high VI consider inequality as unavoidable and satisfy their desire for recognition through competition, self-enhancement, and power (Cleveland & Bartikowski, 2018). The current study provides empirical evidence that vertical individualism has a significant influence on luxury purchase intentions in South Africa.

Prior literature has found individualism to have a positive relationship with self-gratification whereby consumers assign high importance on materialism values, personal achievement, aesthetic appearance (Shukla & Purani, 2012). This is supported by Kim et al. (2011) who revealed that the personal values that affect luxury consumptions are self-directed and manifest through self-identity and self-gifting in terms of rewarding oneself for achievements and successes. These factors have been linked to values of materialism. To this end, the effect of self-enhancement values, materialism, and value-expressive

attitudes in luxury purchase intentions were tested in the study. The values of self-enhancement can vary according to individualistic and collectivist orientation. Countries that are significantly developed tend to exhibit higher levels of individualism. These countries appreciate individualistic values such as personal achievement (Shukla, 2011) however, people are better able to access resources that allow them to make individual choices in line with their own interests as wealth gradually increases (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1996). The current study resulted in the positive effect of vertical individualism on self-enhancement, as well as a positive relationship between self-enhancement and s value-expressive attitudes.

In regard to materialism which is expected to have a positive influence on behaviours associated with hedonistic, expressive, and self-enhancing products such as luxury goods (Cleveland et al., 2009), the current study found that materialism positively affects consumers' value-expressive attitudes as well as their response to symbolic benefits of brand image. From a personal orientation perspective, the research findings support theory which states that consumers purchase brands that resonate with their self-identity (Schade, et al., 2016). In terms of social orientation, the research findings are in line with theoretical contributions, which state that consumers with strong impression management goals respond more favourably towards symbolic benefits of a brand compared to consumers with low impression management goals (Helgeson & Supphellen, 2004).

Interesting to observe in the study is the strong relationship between brand image and luxury purchase intentions. This supports the theory, which states that consumers distinguish luxury products through symbolic meaning (Heine & Phan, 2011), amongst other characteristics. Other factors that affect luxury consumption are "brand image and quality; product features; and atmosphere in the store" (Bilge, 2015. p. 49). Therefore, a favourable brand image can significantly increase product ratings by consumers (Lin, Yang, & Wan, 2015) and thus enable the company to charge an added premium for it (Shukla, 2011).

Value-expressive attitudes also had a positive effect on luxury purchase intentions. This is supported by theory in that attitude functions relating to value-expressiveness are relevant in self-identity motivations for luxury brands. This is supported by Aaker (1997), who reported that brand preference is positively influenced by the congruity between human characteristics that relate to a person's actual or ideal self-identity. However, scholars have reported that consumer attitudes evolve over time. This is shown in research by Schade et al. (2016) who found a significant relationship between value-

expressive attitudes of young adults and luxury purchase intent. These attitudes were less significant among older consumers. The reason is that older consumers, who have become accustomed to wealth, generally respond differently to conspicuous consumption than younger consumers who have just acquired wealth. This is supported by Choui (2000) who stated that (1) young consumers exhibit more values of individualism than older generations, and (2) a person who has suddenly acquired wealth may purchase luxury brand fashion to display their “newly acquired status” (p. 93). This is because material possessions are a quick and effective method in defining one’s personal values and self-identity. The desire to communicate one’s self-identity increases when a brand’s image resonates with the consumer’s ideal or actual self-identity. Evidence in this regard is provided through the positive moderation effect of brand image on value-expressive attitudes.

In summary, the study provides new empirical evidence that South Africa’s culture orientation of vertical individualism has a significant influence on luxury purchase intentions. The study also provides evidence that vertical individualism positively interacts with individual values (i.e., self-enhancement), materialism, value-expressive attitudes, and brand image influencing luxury purchase intentions. Ultimately, the study achieved its purpose to investigate the interaction between personal and social orientation elements to justify the importance of dual brand-positioning strategies. Kim et al. (2011) agree with Tsai (2005) in that brand-positioning strategies should consider consumers’ personal and social orientations. The managerial implications in this regard are discussed in the next section.

6.2 Managerial contributions and implications

This study provides practical insights to luxury brand managers for development of effective marketing strategies applicable to the South African market. The luxury market in South Africa and other emerging economies is expected to rise with the growing population of middle-class consumers. The involvement of the middle-class income group in luxury purchase intentions is evident in this research as most of the respondents were in the middle-class income bracket. However, the successful performance of luxury brands has been attributed to various factors, including cultural orientation, individual values, social influences, materialism, and brand image, which were all included in this study.

The first implication relates to the main problem of the research, which sought to establish the effect of vertical individualism on luxury purchase intentions. The coefficient for this relationship was 0.19 at a confidence level of 0.01 and thus supported the purpose of the study. Therefore, marketers of luxury brands in South Africa should understand the hierarchical orientation of vertical individualistic consumers. These consumers prioritise their own needs and aspirations (over their community's) in a bid to achieve power, achievement, and hedonism, and in turn, improve their self-concept. Additionally, they strive to do better than others as well as dominate and control resources. As such, an opportunity is presented for markets to craft brand strategies in a manner that reflects these values. The luxury theory supports this; consumers buy brands that resonate with their personal values. As a practical measure, luxury brand managers need to encourage a two-way communication with consumers in order to solicit insights on their level of individualism. By responding strategically to consumers' needs and aspirations, consumers will add move value to the brand and thus encourage repeat purchases and word-of-mouth referrals.

The second implication relates to the variables that have been empirically proven to positively mediate the relationship between vertical individualism and luxury purchase intention. Marketers should place importance on the fact that consumers of luxury brands are motivated by self-enhancement and materialism values to purchase a luxury item. These values manifest through both personal and social dispositions. Therefore, brand positioning strategies are critical tools that can be leveraged to create brand image associations to resonate with consumer values and lifestyles, as well as reflect symbols of social aspirations of the relevant target market. This has the potential to increase the market performance of luxury brands. In this instance, luxury brand managers are advised to use their communications platforms (i.e. advertising, website and social media) to portray user-imagery that resonates with the consumers' desired self-identity.

The third implication relates to the moderation effect of symbolic brand associations on value-expressive attitudes. This provides marketers with an opportunity to prioritise and leverage the development and communication of symbolic benefits of luxury brands as these have a significant influence on the favourability of consumers' value-expressive attitudes. Simply put, consumer attitudes toward self-expression are increased when a luxury brand's image resonates with the kind of person a consumer associates themselves with. Therefore, there is value in maintaining and building a high and admirable brand image that resonates with individualistic consumers in South Africa for increased market performance. To build a strong brand image, luxury brand managers need to ensure

consistency in their positioning strategies and ensure that all marketing efforts are aligned with the desired brand image. It will also assist to gather feedback from consumers on how they perceive the company's brand image. By soliciting these insights, luxury brand managers will be in a position to accurately fill any existing gaps.

The overall implication presented in the preceding discussion is the importance of dual brand-positioning strategies. This entails the strategic positioning of a brand to resonate with the personal and social orientations of its target market, but still, maintain differentiation from alternative luxury brands in the market. This is supported by Tsai (2005), who observes that "a more viable brand management philosophy is to synthesise different values, meanings, cognitive and emotional responses of consumers in the entire process of branding" (p. 11). Therefore, a strict balance of values and responses associated to luxury brands should be maintaining for increased brand equity and, thus profitability. As such, it is important that luxury brand managers integrate personal and social orientations in their marketing plans in order to increase brand loyalty and market share.

6.3 Limitations and Recommendations

6.3.1 Limitations of the study

Theory states that individuals can hold both values of individualism and collectivism simultaneously, and present them depending on the situational context. Also indicated in literature is that demographic factors, such as age, can have an impact on luxury brands consumption. This presents a limitation in the study in that; a generalisation can be made that respondents were predominantly vertically individualistic, however, this orientation could change based on the situation at hand. The assumption that the demographics and consumer life-cycles of the respondents did not affect the research model also poses a limitation. Another limitation is the assumption that respondents who completed the online questionnaire truly had recently purchased, or had intentions to purchase a luxury brand item as indicated in the screening question. The intention was to encourage respondents to reflect on their purchasing journey so as to determine the behavioural influences involved adequately. This creates an extended assumption and limitation that the quality of luxury purchase intentions of online respondents may not be the same as those of in-store shoppers at high-end shopping malls such as Sandton City who are actually in the process of making a purchase. Another limitation is that respondents were not exposed

to prices of luxury brands in the questionnaire. Price is considered a vital factor in luxury purchase intentions (Kapferer et al., 2017).

6.3.2 Recommendations for future research

In terms of demographics, theory states that women exhibit more favourable attitudes in relation to luxury brands than men (Kapferer et al., 2017). This was proven by 86% of respondents being female. Additionally, young adult consumers are understood to have more favourable attitudes towards luxury brands compared to older consumers (Schade, et al., 2016). The researcher, therefore, recommends further research to consider age in relation to luxury brand consumption. There is also a need to establish the factors that influence females in South Africa to purchase luxury brands. This is supported by a study observed by Das and Mukherjee (2019) that gender has a positive influence on materialism, as opposed to income and education. Furthermore, the study was conducted mainly among individuals who reside in South Africa. As such, it is recommended that the conceptual model be tested in other emerging markets wherein luxury brand consumption is expected to rise in the foreseeable future.

In regard to interactions in the influence of vertical individualism on luxury purchase intentions in South Africa, the relationship between materialism and value-expressive attitudes had the highest coefficient (0.622) at a confidence level of 0.01. This suggests a significantly strong relationship and warrants further research in other product categories to validate the model. Attention is required to establish which of the materialism personality characteristics (i.e., possessiveness, non-generosity, and envy) influence consumers' attitudes towards value-expressiveness. Additionally, theory indicates that materialism may be measured from social and personal perspectives. The current study examined the social viewpoint, and therefore, it is recommended that personal orientations of materialism also be tested. It is also recommended that the moderation role of other factors influencing luxury consumption, such as price and quality, be tested on the existing model. Additionally, empirical research is required to validate personal and social orientation effects on the performance of dual brand-positioning strategies in the South African market.

To address the limitations presented in the current study, the researcher also recommends a qualitative study to gain greater insights from respondents.

6.4 Conclusion

The study fulfilled its purpose to prove the positive effect of vertical individualism on luxury purchase intentions as an extension of prior cross-cultural research conducted by Shukla (2011) as well as Cleveland and Bartikowski (2018) on the effect of cultural orientation in the consumer. Influences of self-enhancement, materialism, value-expressive attitudes, and brand image were tested on the model and yielded positive results indicating significance. The significance of the study is supported by theoretical background, a sound research instrument, and empirical data analysis through confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modelling. Theoretical contributions and managerial implications were presented, as well as the research limitations and recommendations.

As the consumption of luxury brands is expected to rise in emerging markets, coupled with the prevalence of materialist values in transitional markets, it is important that luxury brand managers understand the effect of culture values in the influence of individual values on purchase intention. Individual values are known to change with exposure to global culture and media. Therefore ongoing research in this regard is crucial to maintain market relevance of luxury brands. Additionally, the findings presented in the study place importance on dual brand-positioning strategies with a specific focus on symbolic benefits of brand image. This has been empirically proven to encourage luxury purchases and increase market performance.

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Appendix A - Prior research on culture values in terms of luxury consumption

Authors	Title	Key variables	Context of the study	Theoretical Framework	Methodology	Findings
Mohd Noor Mamat, Norshazreena Mohd Noor, and Norshaheeda Mohd Noor	Purchase Intentions of Foreign Luxury Brand Handbags among Consumers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Motivations, income; functional, experiential, symbolic and social influence; and trait of vanity dimensions	Luxury products are purchased and adorned by people to display wealth, prosperity, success, social status, or merely the satisfaction of a superior product quality. The dominance of any one of these reasons for luxury goods purchases is influenced by culture.	Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) behavioural model	Self-administered questionnaires, simple frequencies, factor analysis, correlation and hierarchical regression	Functional value, vanity achievement and household income directly influence Malaysian consumers purchase intention for luxury goods.
Kostas Kaminakis, Kalipso Karantinou, Achilleas Boukis	The mediating role of self-concept discrepancy in the relationship between values and personal based motivation of luxury products consumers	Functional value, emotional value	The role of personal values in driving luxury motives and incorporating the self-concept construct in the luxury literature.	Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991) theory of consumption values	Random sample, structural equation modelling	Results indicate that management can enhance customer motivations by increasing the perceived value and by taking into consideration the personal desire to meet the ideal self-concept, as well as implementing value-positioning practices
Konstantinos Stylidis, Monica Rossi, Casper Wickman, Rikard Söderberg	The communication strategies and customer's requirements definition at the early design stages: an empirical study on Italian luxury automotive brands.	Perceived quality, competitors, manufacturing processes, and perceived quality attributes, shift to premium, communication, requirements definition	Research contributes to the existing debate regarding the correct definition of the customer's requirements and communication strategies. It highlights possible ways to reduce information asymmetry between car manufacturers and customers.	Perceived quality framework	Exploratory pilot study, grounded theory, qualitative	Customers of the luxury vehicle manufacturers have been actively involved in the setting up requirements and expect the same level of the perceived quality as in the premium segment. Luxury vehicle manufacturers benchmark their products not only against competitors but rather against premium segment.
Hyo Jin Eom Yoo-Kyoung Seock	Factors Influencing Purchase Intention toward Luxury Fashion Brands	Contingent self-esteem, peer pressure, media pressure, brand consciousness,	Little research on luxury goods consumption has been conducted in social contexts with individualistic Western young adult consumers. Study	Social comparison framework	Survey method, questionnaires distributed at a large state university in southeastern US. 7-point	

Authors	Title	Key variables	Context of the study	Theoretical Framework	Methodology	Findings
		competitiveness, purchase intention	aims to investigate relationships between influential factors and purchase intentions toward luxury fashion brands and to determine whether or not competitiveness as an individual trait moderates these relationships.		Likert-type scale was used to measure the six variables.	
Paurav Shukla	Impact of interpersonal influences, brand origin and brand image on luxury purchase intentions: Measuring interfunctional interactions and a cross-national comparison (Britain vs. India)	Normative interpersonal influences, informational interpersonal influences, brand image, brand origin	The study investigates and compares structure, properties, and mean levels of susceptibility to interpersonal influences and highlights the interfunctional interactions.	Interpersonal influence scale by Bearden et al. (1989)	Structured questionnaire, exploratory factor analysis	Normative interpersonal influences were found to be significant across nations; however the role of informational interpersonal influences was significant only among Indian consumers. British consumers relied increasingly on branding cues.

Appendix B – Questionnaire

Dear Participant

Title of project: Impact of consumer individualism on susceptibility to interpersonal influences in purchase intentions for luxury brands in South Africa

My name is Ayanda Zici, and I am a Masters student in Strategic Marketing at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project in which I am investigating the impact of consumer individualism on susceptibility to interpersonal influences in luxury purchase intentions under the supervision of Dr. Yvonne Saini. The aim of this research project is to find out how the values of individualism impact consumer response to social influences in purchasing a luxury brand item. As part of this project, I would like to invite you to take part in answering an online questionnaire. This will take approximately 10 minutes. There will be no personal costs to you if you participate in this project, you will not receive any direct benefits from participation and there are no disadvantages or penalties if you do not choose to participate or if you withdraw from the study. You may withdraw at any time or not answer any question if you do not want to. If you experience any distress or discomfort at any point in this process, you may stop or resume at another time. If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research, please feel free to contact me on the details listed below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the university library website. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrec-medical.researchoffice@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

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Supervisor: Dr Yvonne Saini, Yvonne.Saini@wits.ac.za, 011 717 3586

Respondent's rights:

Ethical considerations in any research should be of the utmost importance. Participation in the study is voluntary, and participants have the right to withdraw from participating in the study. The researcher will further ensure that the research does not bring any harm to the participants. All information will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity is assured. Data will be stored in a safe place. Please note that the survey requires data.

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous:

o Yes

Survey Consent

o Yes, I do Consent

o No, I do Consent

Please begin the survey here.

1. **PERSONAL IFORMATION**

PLEASE SELECT YOUR AGE GROUP	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+
Age	1	2	3	4	5

PLEASE SELECT GENDER YOU IDENTIFY WITH	Male	Female
Gender	1	2

PLEASE SELECT YOUR ETHNICITY	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Other
Ethnicity	1	2	3	4	5

PLEASE SELECT YOUR LEVEL OF EDUCATION	Some primary school	Matric	Diploma	Bachelor's Degree	Post Graduate Degree
Level of Education	1	2	3	4	5

PLEASE SELECT YOUR CURRENT OCCUPATION	Student	Employed	Retired	Other
Current Occupation	1	2	3	4

PLEASE SELECT YOUR GROSS MONTHLY INCOME LEVEL	0 - R 19,999	R 20,000 - R 39,999	R 40,000 - 59,999	R 60,000 +
Gross Monthly Income	1	2	3	4

In which South African province do you reside?	
Eastern Cape	1
Free State	2
Gauteng	3
Kwa-Zulu Natal	4
Limpopo	5
Mpumalanga	6
North West	7
Northern Cape	8

Western Cape	9

SECTION B

2. We begin the survey by asking you which luxury clothing brand you have recently bought or are considering buying in the next three months?

Burberry	Ferragamo	Paul Smith
Bvlgari	Fossil	Prada
Calvin Klein	Giorgio Armani	Ralph Lauren Polo
Cartier	Gucci	Rich Mnisi
Chanel	Hermes	Roberto Cavalli
Christian Dior	Hugo Boss	Thebe Magugu
Christian Louboutin	Jimmy Choo	Thula Sindi
Celine	Kate Spade	Tom Ford
David Tlale	Louis Vuitton	Tommy Hilfiger
Diesel	Marc Jacobs	Valentino
DKNY	Maxhosa	Versace
Dolce & Gabbana	Max Mara	Wolford
Fendi	Michael Kors	Zegna

3. Here we ask you questions about your vertical ndividualist values. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following questions.

Vertical Individualism (Cleveland & Bartikowski, 2018)		**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
VI1	It is important that I do my job better than others do.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
VI2	Winning is everything to me.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
VI3	Competition is the law of nature.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7

4. Here we describe a person with self-enhancement values. Please indicate to what extent you relate with this person.

Self-Enhancement (Burgess & Steenkamp, 1998)		**Not at all like me**	**Not like me**	**A little like me**	**Somewhat like me**	**Like me**	**Very much like me**
SE1	Being very successful is important to him/her.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6
SE2	He/she likes to be in charge and tell others what to do.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6
SE3	He/she wants people to do as he/she says.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6
SE4	He/she really wants to enjoy life. Having a good time is important to him/her.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6
SE5	It is important to him/her to be rich. Him/her wants to have a lot of money and expensive things.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6

SECTION C

5. In this section, we ask you questions about materialism. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following questions.

Materialism (Rindfleisch, Burroughs, & Wong, 2009)		**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
MA1	I admire people who own expensive homes, cars, and clothes.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
MA2	The things I own say a lot about how well I am doing in life.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
MA3	I like a lot of luxury in my life.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
MA4	Buying things gives me a lot of pleasure.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7

6. Here we ask you questions about how attitudes of value-expressiveness affect your purchase intentions towards luxury brands. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following questions.

Value-Expressive Attitudes (Schade, Hegner, Horstmann, & Brinkmann, 2016)		**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
VA1	Luxury brands help me to establish the kind of person I see myself to be.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
VA2	Luxury brands play an important role in defining my self-concept.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
VA3	Luxury brands are an instrument of my self-expression.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7

SECTION D

7. The following questions are about symbolic benefits of the Louis Vuitton brand. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following questions.

Brand Image – Symbolic Benefits (Baalbaki & Guzmán, 2016)		**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
BR2	Louis Vuitton would improve the way I am perceived.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
BR3	Louis Vuitton would make a good impression on other people.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7

8. Here we ask you about your purchase intentions in relation to luxury brands. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following questions.

Luxury Purchase Intentions (Shukla & Purani, 2012)		**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
LP3	Owning luxury accessories indicate a symbol of wealth.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
LP4	Luxury accessories are important to me because they make me feel more acceptable in my work circle.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
LP5	I would pay more for a luxury accessory if it has status.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7

You have come to the end of the Survey. Thank you!