

THE EFFECT OF PERSONALITY TRAITS AND SELF ENHANCEMENT
MOTIVES ON BRAND OUTCOMES IN BRANDED CLOTHING INDUSTRY

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents and my beloved wife.

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Praise to Almighty Allah, the one, and eternal, who begets not, nor was begotten, and whom, none is ever comparable. I express my sincerest gratitude to Allah's beloved prophet, Hazrat Muhammad (peace be upon him).

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ABSTRACT

The increasing trend of symbolic consumption among consumers of branded clothing in Pakistan has implications for both, the branded clothing industry and consumer behavior scholars. Self-enhancement motives (brand engagement in self-concept and status consumption) are core elements of symbolic consumption. These motives have been studied from different perspectives; however, one can rarely find a study based on personality traits as predictors and brand-related outcomes (brand loyalty and word of mouth) of self-enhancement motives. Therefore, the present study aims at the investigation of the predictors and outcomes of self-enhancement motives by drawing on Mowen's meta-theoretic model as foundation. Besides, the present study develops a model to examine openness to experience, extraversion, conscientiousness, the need for arousal and materialism as antecedents of self-enhancement motives and consumption focused self-expression word of mouth and clothing brand loyalty as outcomes. The hierarchically designed model proposes 22 hypotheses to test the direct and indirect relationships among variables. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design by using multi-stage sampling method. A total of 675 questionnaires were distributed and 502 were found complete and usable for data analysis. Structural Equation Modeling using Partial Least Squares method was applied to test the relationships in this study. The data analysis revealed that personality traits (extraversion, conscientiousness, materialism, and the need for arousal) are significant predictors of self-enhancement motives except for openness to experience. Moreover, self-enhancement motives play a significant role in influencing brand outcomes. The study also confirmed the mediating role of materialism between personality traits and self-enhancement motives. Moreover, the mediation of self-enhancement motives between the relationship of materialism and brand outcomes was also confirmed. The results of the study imply that firms should focus on the personality factors affecting self-enhancement motives to enhance brand outcomes.

ABSTRAK

Peningkatan tren penggunaan simbolik di kalangan pengguna pakaian berjenama di Pakistan mempunyai implikasi untuk kedua-dua industri pakaian berjenama dan sarjana tingkah laku pengguna. Motif peningkatan diri (penglibatan jenama dalam konsep diri dan penggunaan status) adalah elemen teras penggunaan simbolik. Motif-motif ini telah dipelajari daripada perspektif yang berbeza; walau bagaimanapun, kajian berdasarkan ciri keperibadian sebagai peramal dan hasil yang berkaitan dengan jenama (kesetiaan jenama dan buah mulut) motif peningkatan diri jarang ditemui. Oleh itu kajian ini bertujuan untuk menyiasat peramal dan hasil motif peningkatan diri dengan menggunakan model meta-teoretis Mowen sebagai asas. Selain itu, kajian ini menghasilkan model untuk mengkaji keterbukaan kepada pengalaman, *extraversion*, ketelitian, keperluan untuk rangsangan dan materialisme sebagai pendahulu motif peningkatan diri dan penggunaan yang berfokus kepada buah mulut dan kesetiaan jenama pakaian. Model yang direka secara hirarki mencadangkan 22 hipotesis untuk menguji hubungan langsung dan tidak langsung antara pembolehubah. Kajian ini menggunakan rekabentuk tinjauan keratan rentas dengan menggunakan kaedah pensampelan pelbagai peringkat. Sebanyak 675 soalselidik diedarkan dan 502 didapati lengkap dan boleh digunakan untuk analisis data. Pemodelan Persamaan Struktur menggunakan kaedah Kuasa Separa Minimum (PLS) telah digunakan untuk menguji hubungan-hubungan dalam kajian ini. Analisis data mendedahkan bahawa ciri-ciri keperibadian (*extraversion*, ketelitian, materialisme, dan keperluan untuk rangsangan) adalah peramal penting untuk motif peningkatan diri kecuali keterbukaan kepada pengalaman. Tambahan pula, motif peningkatan diri memainkan peranan penting dalam mempengaruhi hasil jenama. Kajian itu juga mengesahkan peranan pengantara materialisme antara ciri-ciri keperibadian dan motif peningkatan diri. Selain itu, pengantaraan motif peningkatan diri antara hubungan materialisme dan hasil jenama juga disahkan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa firma harus memberi tumpuan kepada faktor keperibadian yang mempengaruhi motif peningkatan diri untuk meningkatkan hasil jenama.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

3M	-	Mowen Meta-Theoretic Model
AVE	-	Average Variance Extracted
BESC	-	Brand Engagement in Self Concept
CBE	-	Customer Brand Engagement
CB-SEM	-	Covariance Based Structural Equation Modeling
CE	-	Customer Engagement
CFA	-	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CI	-	Confidence Intervals
CMB	-	Common Method Bias
CMV	-	Common Method Variance
CPEC	-	China Pakistan Economic Corridor
CR	-	Composite Reliability
CSWOM	-	Consumption Focused Self Expression Word of Mouth
EP	-	Evolutionary Psychology
EWOM	-	Electronic Word of Mouth
FATA	-	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FFM	-	Five-Factor Model
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
IV	-	Independent Variable
KPK	-	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
PKR	-	Pakistan Rupee
PLS-SEM	-	Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling
SEM	-	Structural Equation Modeling
SPSS	-	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SWOM	-	Social Media Word of Mouth
US\$	-	United States Dollar

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The demand for luxury goods has shown remarkable growth over the last three decades. During 1995 to 2013 it has increased by three times or more. The most exciting fact is that the noteworthy chunk of growth pie belongs to emerging economies (Millan & Mittal, 2017). Sarkar and Roy (2016) further confirm that luxury consumption and desire for conspicuous or status products have shown accelerated growth in emerging economies. The shifts in the global landscape of wealth and luxury goods are unprecedented (Shukla & Purani, 2012). These shifts are mirrored in the significant boost in the number of high-income earners and luxury consumers in emerging markets (Euromonitor, 2015). These emerging markets contain a sizeable segment of the growing middle class. The middle-class consumers with rising income levels have strategic implications for marketers of luxury brands. Therefore, unlike the past, the luxury or conspicuous consumption is no more exclusive only to the affluent consumers of the upper class. Instead, a significant middle tier is targeted by marketers with affordable luxury brands (O'Cass & Choy, 2008; Phau & Cheong, 2009). Luxury brands like Michael Kors and Kate Spade are now actively targeting the growing middle class of emerging economies with affordable luxury brands (Euromonitor, 2015).

Besides, consumers have a variety of choice among categories of luxury goods like automobiles, jewelry, watches, hotels, houses, tourism, and clothing. Luxury clothing, however, occupies the dominating position with the largest sales share at the global level (Euromonitor, 2015). This sales leadership position is because of frequent purchases, seasonal nature, new trends, fads, and fashion. Furthermore, it is globally consumed across gender and culture. Luxury fashion clothing category occupies central importance in this regard. Clothing brands are easily noticeable, visible, and

symbolic. Since clothing brands carry a built-in symbolic value, that is why these are used to portray status and self-image (Goldsmith, Flynn, & Clark, 2012a; Millan & Mittal, 2017; Phau & Cheong, 2009).

Pakistan is an emerging economy with a growing middle class and unprecedented consumption upsurge. Moreover, as Pakistani society is moving upward on the socioeconomic ladder; hence, consumers usually prefer symbolic brands to convey the social status (Dev, Podoshen, & Shahzad, 2018). Looking into the marketplace of Pakistan, two decades ago, one could hardly notice branded clothing in Pakistan, except very few foreign brands exclusive for a tiny portion of the market. It was almost impossible to find a clothing retail store of well-organized luxury fashion brand, both for men and women. The only option left was to buy unstitched fabric along with accessories and then engaged some tailor to stitch customized dress. The process was not only time consuming but also frantic. In the meantime, some “textile giants” introduced clothing brands in the market. These brands not only fulfill the needs of fashion but also serve as a source of prestige and status for consumers (Andrew, 2015).

Pakistan textile industry is the backbone of the economy of Pakistan. It has 8.4% contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP) and provides 40% of total employment. The branded clothing is rapidly growing sub-sector of the textile industry (Andrew, 2015). According to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2016) surveys, monthly consumption of Pakistani consumers in the category of clothing and footwear is growing every year. In 2015 it was 6.62% of income while in 2016 it was increased to 9.05. In 2016 average household monthly spending in this category was Rs. 2949.44. Besides, Pakistan is the sixth populous country in the world, with GDP per capita income of \$1472.90 (WorldBank, 2018). Pakistani society is spending oriented. Pakistani consumers devote a significant amount of their incomes to clothing. They are concerned about their social status, status signaling, and social engagement. Ostentatious consumption behavior is quite visible among Pakistani consumers (Kotler, Armstrong, Agnihotri, & Haque, 2010; Saeed, Ejaz, & Nadeem, 2013).

Moreover, marketing and consumer behavior literature explicate that status consumption is a significant motivation for consumer behavior. Conspicuous or status consumption is to consume top tier, expensive and prestigious brands to gain prestige or status (Danziger, 2004; Li, Li, & Kambele, 2012; O'cass & McEwen, 2004). Since the publication of seminal work by Veblen (1899), the conspicuous consumption of luxury goods has been the area of interest in psychology, sociology, economics, and business studies. The status consumption has been part and parcel of human society since its inception. The industry, as already mentioned, to serve this need, is ever-growing (Sarkar & Roy, 2016; Vigneron & Johnson, 1999, 2004; Wiedmann, Hennigs, & Siebels, 2007). Furthermore, brand engagement in self-concept (BESC) is another concept related to status consumption. Consumers motivated by BESC tend to make brands as part of their self-concept, and further manage to construct their self-identity and image around brands (Flynn & Goldsmith, 2016; Sprott, Czellar, & Spangenberg, 2009). The phenomenon of self-brand connection or BESC is embedded in the symbolic consumption of brands (Moliner, Monferrer-Tirado, & Estrada-Guillén, 2018). The symbolic consumption of branded clothing facilitates a consumer to express self-image or identity perfectly (Goldsmith et al., 2012a).

Status consumption and BESC are fundamental concepts to study consumer behavior regarding the symbolic consumption of clothing brands. These are self-enhancement motives which are socially and personally relevant for self-expression and self-construction (Kim, Jang, & Adler, 2015). Besides their significance, self-enhancement motives have not been given much attention in the extant literature of consumer behavior. A narrow stream of research explored the antecedents and consequences of self-enhancement motives. Their focus, however, largely remained monetary and social antecedents. So far, very little attention has been paid to investigate psychological antecedents in this regard (Millan & Mittal, 2017). Moreover status concern, public self-consciousness, self-esteem, self-monitoring, susceptibility to interpersonal influence, personal terminal value, self-concept Fashion consciousness, pride, and materialism are psychological factors affecting status consumption and can be traced back in marketing and consumer behavior literature (Cronje, Jacobs, & Retief, 2016; Flynn & Goldsmith, 2016; Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012; Lertwannawit & Mandhachitara, 2012; Leung, Yee, & Lo, 2015; Martens, Tracy, & Shariff, 2012; Millan & Mittal, 2017; O'cass & Frost, 2002; Riquelme, Rios,

& Al-Sharhan, 2011). Researchers and scholars also studied clothing brand loyalty, market mavenism, shopping frequency and fashion spending as outcomes of self-enhancement motives (Flynn, Goldsmith, & Pollitte, 2016; Goldsmith et al., 2012a). The existing accounts, however, unable to provide a holistic model to investigate personality trait antecedents and brand outcomes of self-enhancement motives. Flynn et al. (2016) constructed a basic model in this regard and further called for expansion by adding personality traits and brand outcomes as antecedents and consequences, respectively.

A significant number of studies have been conducted to explore the concept of self enhancement motives, their predictors (personality traits), and outcomes in the western world. This concept, however, got attention in emerging economies in the recent past. The findings of investigations in emerging nations particularly in India and China have provided important insights into the concept of materialism (Fang & Podoshen, 2017). Other personality traits, however remained neglected. Pakistan is one of the emerging nations with shifting demographics and consumption trends. Moreover, the changing demographics and socioeconomic factors have implications for academic researchers in Pakistan. Increasing production and consumption of luxury clothing among middle and upper class of urban Pakistan motivate marketing scholars to examine the reasons behind above mentioned emerging consumption trends among Pakistani consumers (Dev et al., 2018). A few numbers of studies have been conducted in Pakistan to explore the personality traits with respect to luxury consumption of clothing brands. Majority of these studies examined the association of materialism and compulsive buying behavior (Attiq & Azam, 2014; Bushra, 2015; Islam, Sheikh, Hameed, Khan, & Azam, 2018; Islam, Wei, Sheikh, Hameed, & Azam, 2017; Rasool, Kiyani, Khan Khattak, & Ahmed, 2012). These studies found materialistic tendencies in Pakistani consumers, however, remained limited to materialism and compulsive buying behavior. The personality traits as predictors and brand outcomes of self enhancement motives remained unexplored.

Mowen (2000) introduced an integrated and hierarchical theoretical framework in order to explicate consumer behavior as an outcome of personality traits. It was the first attempt to develop domain-specific scales to measure personality traits in the

discipline of consumer behavior. Mowen (2000) constructed his model along with four hierarchical levels; surface, situational, compound, and elemental level. A significant number of research studies has been used this model as underpinnings (Flynn et al., 2016; Harris & Fleming, 2017; Kang & Johnson, 2015; Mowen, Fang, & Scott, 2009; Mowen, Park, & Zablah, 2007; Parsad, Prashar, & Tata, 2019). This model provides hierarchical underpinnings for those researchers who want to study personality trait antecedents and consequences of some consumer behavior phenomenon.

1.2 Problem Statement

Besides functional and utilitarian value, consumer behavior researchers have confirmed the significance of the symbolic value of brands (Audrin, Brosch, Chanal, & Sander, 2017; Matzler, Pichler, Füller, & Mooradian, 2011). Self-enhancement motives (Status consumption and BESC) are symbolic manifestations of consumer behavior. Despite the importance of self-enhancement motives, there remains a paucity of exploring predictors and outcomes in this regard. Therefore it remained as a peripheral subject (Millan & Mittal, 2017). Those marketing scholars who pondered attention mostly focused either on social or economic factors or secondary level psychological traits (Eastman, Goldsmith, & Flynn, 1999; Flynn et al., 2016). Personality traits as antecedents have been neglected by academic researchers in this regard (Millan & Mittal, 2017).

Moreover, personality traits being the most fundamental psychological motivations play a significant role in the formation of consumer behavior (Kang & Johnson, 2015; Kotler et al., 2010; Roberts, Pullig, & Manolis, 2015). Consumer behavior scholars have been studying personality traits for last four decades. The trait approach is considered more effective in this regard. It has scientific basis and provides efficient ways of measurement (Mowen, 2000) The significance of examining consumer behavior with respect to personality traits is well established in the literature. Moreover, personality traits are consistently found significant predictors of consumer behavior (Wilson & Dishman, 2015; Yoon & Lim, 2018; Zuckerman & Glicksohn, 2016). Hierarchical investigations of personality traits have recently dominated the

landscape of consumer personality research. Diverse kind of consumer behaviors has been recently studied by applying the aforementioned theory. It has been appreciated by consumer behavior scholars across the globe (Dinsmore, Swani, & Dugan, 2017; Kang & Johnson, 2015; Ko, Chang, Jang, Sagas, & Spengler, 2017; Lee, 2017; Parsad et al., 2019; Ribeiro, Duarte, & Miguel, 2017). However, surprisingly the study of personality traits as antecedents of self-enhancement motives has been neglected in the marketing literature (Flynn et al., 2016; Millan & Mittal, 2017; Saran, Roy, & Sethuraman, 2016). Flynn et al. (2016) studied materialism (as a personality trait) and its effect on self-enhancement motives and left the rest of personality traits as a call for future researchers. No other scholarly endeavor can be traced in this regard.

Moreover, consumer behavior scholars agreed that materialism is an antecedent of self-enhancement motives (Flynn et al., 2016; Goldsmith et al., 2012a). Rest of the personality traits (Extraversion, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to experience, need for body resources, and need for arousal) modeled by Mowen (2000), however, are yet to be investigated as antecedents of self-enhancement motives. Extant stream of research in consumer behavior provides vague direction in this regard. Mowen's model, however, suggests a hierarchical method to align and investigate the aforementioned personality traits to predict self-enhancement motives. Few marketing scholars investigated the impact of elemental personality traits (Extraversion, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to experience, need for body resources, and need for arousal) on materialism, and subsequent impact of materialism on other behavioral tendencies (bargaining proneness, complaint propensity, compulsive buying, and involvement) related to consumers (Bosnjak, Galesic, & Tuten, 2007; Harris & Mowen, 2001; Johnson & Attmann, 2009; Mowen & Spears, 1999). To date, none of such investigation can be found concerning self-enhancement motives. The current study takes the lead to eliminate this conceptual void by drawing on Mowen (2000) hierarchical approach.

Moreover, Górnik-Durose and Pilch (2016) pointed out the inconsistent and incoherent findings on associations between personality traits and materialism in previous literature. They also argue that diverse patterns of relationships can be

discovered in this regard. Congruent to this argument, the current study intends to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by investigating the relationship between elemental personality traits and materialism. Additionally, Mowen (2000) model, as underpinnings of current research, further helps to study the impact of these personality traits on self-enhancement motives in a hierarchical manner.

Besides personality trait antecedents, the brand outcomes of self-enhancement motives are also important potential area and call for future research. Brand loyalty and word of mouth are two brand outcomes of strategic importance (Wallace, Buil, & de Chernatony, 2017). Marketing literature indicates that there are several factors affecting brand loyalty and word of mouth. These factors, however, can be divided into two broad categories; cognitive and affective factors (Han et al., 2018). However, a third category, known as self-enhancement motives, has recently evolved in the literature of consumer behavior (Kim et al., 2015; Wallace, Buil, & de Chernatony, 2014; Wallace et al., 2017). Self-enhancement motives or values are symbolic values of self-construction. These motives motivate consumers to acquire products of symbolic value (Kim et al., 2015; Richins, 2011). Moreover, these values also affect word of mouth and brand loyalty (Wallace et al., 2017). Tangsupwattana and Liu (2018) empirically demonstrated that the symbolic consumption of conspicuous brands motivates consumers to recommend the brand others and also to repurchase the brand. Due to its significance, marketing scholars have recently shifted their attention towards symbolic consumption as an antecedent of brand loyalty and word of mouth (Han, Nguyen, & Simkin, 2016; Kim & Jang, 2017). Additionally, Marketing scholars have also recommended studying brand loyalty and word of mouth as outcomes of self-enhancement motives (Flynn et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2015; Wallace et al., 2014, 2017).

Moreover, empirical studies have been conducted in Pakistan to explore outcomes of symbolic consumption. Although, these studies found symbolic tendencies in Pakistani consumers, however, largely remained limited to materialism and compulsive buying behavior (Attiq & Azam, 2014; Bushra, 2015; Islam et al., 2018; Islam et al., 2017; Rasool et al., 2012). Furthermore, far too little attention has

been paid to investigate brand loyalty and word of mouth as brand outcomes of self-enhancement motives specifically in branded clothing industry of Pakistan.

Additionally, scant attention has been paid to the aforementioned brand outcomes in extant literature. Most studies employed general measurements in this regard (Kim et al., 2015; Wallace et al., 2014, 2017). The present study addresses this dearth by using CSWOM and clothing brand loyalty. One of the motivations behind the symbolic consumption of clothing brands is to express social status and self-image (Millan & Mittal, 2017; Saenger, Thomas, & Johnson, 2013). The literature on symbolic consumption reveals that consumers use word of mouth as a tool to share brand information for status signaling and self-enhancement (Lovett, Peres, & Shachar, 2013; Yang & Mattila, 2013). Saenger et al. (2013) introduced the concept and scale of consumption focused self-expression word of mouth (CSWOM). It integrates and measures word of mouth and expression of self-concept in case of symbolic consumption. However, none of the consumer behavior researchers studied CSWOM as an outcome of self-enhancement motives. Besides, the branded clothing industry of Pakistan is in the growing stage. Hence the competition among brands has increased the significance of brand loyalty (Andrew, 2015). Although branded clothing is primarily consumed for symbolic reasons; however, it is yet to be ascertained how the self-enhancement motives help to create and enhance clothing brand loyalty among Pakistani consumers.

Furthermore, marketing scholars have empirically established that materialism is related to self-enhancement motives (Flynn et al., 2016; Goldsmith & Clark, 2012; Grotts & Widner Johnson, 2013; Podoshen & Andrzejewski, 2012; Riquelme et al., 2011; Segal & Podoshen, 2013). The positive and direct relationship between materialism and brand outcomes (brand loyalty and word of mouth) is also empirically ascertained (Chu, Windels, & Kamal, 2016; Johnstone, Fam, Ruane, & Wallace, 2013; Podoshen & Andrzejewski, 2012; Türk & Erciş, 2017). However, hardly any study (in Pakistan or internationally) can be found to investigate the mediating role of self-enhancement motives between materialism and brand outcomes.

Moreover, Mowen (2000) provides theoretical underpinnings to examine consumer behavior with regard to hierarchical approach. These underpinnings, however, largely tested in developed western world. Developing countries with different socio-economic indicators demands different theoretical lens in this regard. Pakistan being an emerging country is not equivalent to USA. Moreover, Dev et al. (2018) found different level of materialism among Pakistani and American consumers. Therefore, the present study examines materialism as compound trait instead of elemental trait.

In a nutshell, the underlying problem is associated with consumer behavior and branded clothing industry of Pakistan. It is known that branded clothing is used for symbolic and self-enhancement motives. However, the effect of consumer personality traits on self-enhancement motives is yet to be examined. Moreover, it is still unknown how self-enhancement motives affect brand outcomes (clothing brand loyalty and CSWOM) concerning branded clothing industry of Pakistan. The mediating role of self-enhancement motives between materialism and brand outcomes is also yet to explore.

1.3 Research Questions

The current study aims at addressing the following research questions. For this purpose, a research framework is designed by reviewing related marketing and consumer behavior literature.

1. Do four elemental traits (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, and need for arousal) affect materialism?
2. Does materialism affect self-enhancement motives?
3. Do self-enhancement motives affect brand-related outcomes?
4. Does materialism mediate between the relationship of four elemental traits (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, and need for arousal) and self-enhancement motives?

5. Do self-enhancement motives mediate the relationship between materialism and brand-related outcomes?

1.4 Research Objectives

Problems are identified in order to formulate solutions. Objective setting is critical in order to find solutions. Objectives offer an orientation to researchers for the sake of putting efforts. In the light of the problem statement and research questions following are primary objectives of the study:

1. To examine the effect of four elemental traits (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, and need for arousal) on materialism.
2. To study the effect of materialism on self-enhancement motives.
3. To examine the effect of self-enhancement motives on brand-related outcomes.
4. To examine the mediating role of materialism between the relationship of four elemental traits (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, and need for arousal) and self-enhancement motives.
5. To investigate the mediating role of self-enhancement motives between the relationship of materialism and brand-related outcomes.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The current study is significant, theoretically, as well as practically. It has relevance for both marketing scholars (academia) and practitioners (Industry). It helps academic researchers in knowing the personality trait predictors of self-enhancement motives. It also contributes to current consumer behavior literature by investigating how self-enhancement motives lead to clothing brand loyalty as well as CSWOM. The present study opens new avenues for future researchers in the field of marketing and consumer behavior.

It is significant for branded clothing industry of Pakistan to understand consumer behavior regarding symbolic consumption. It contributes to understanding the motivations of symbolic consumption with respect to consumer personality. The present study is necessary for the branded clothing industry, which is a rapidly growing sector in Pakistan (Andrew, 2015). In Pakistan, local clothing brands lack in finding the basis for brand identity, segmentation, brand loyalty, and word of mouth (Mahmood, 2015). This research endeavor can help them in order to understand the behaviors of Pakistani consumers.

The knowledge of the target consumer's personality and congruence of the brand with consumer personality is very significant for a successful business. The lack of empirical investigation of personality traits with respect to self-enhancement motives further adds to the significance of the current study. This research compensates for the aforementioned gap moreover; it furthers investigations towards CSWOM and clothing brand loyalty. Both CSWOM and clothing brand loyalty are enormously important in academia and industry. The mediation of self-enhancement motives is also a significant contribution to current research. In this, the current research will empirically suggest a pathway starting from materialism to reach CSWOM and clothing brand loyalty through self-enhancement motives. In addition to this, CSWOM has not been studied previously. This concept is not only relevant to symbolic consumption but also significant concerning the clothing brands success.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The current research is a quantitative investigation and aims at hypothesis testing. In this study, Pakistani consumers of branded clothing were surveyed. In the textile industry of Pakistan, there are many sub-sectors like hosiery, towel, unstitched (wool, cotton, and lawn) and ready to wear branded clothing. Branded clothing can further be classified along with various segments like for kids as well as adults. The category of branded clothing specific to adults and used for status is the focus of the present study. Seven well established and major clothing brands are chosen on the basis of their market share. These brands are popular among Pakistani consumers for their symbolic value.

Moreover, the present study investigated the trait antecedents and outcomes of self-enhancement motives with respect to the branded clothing in Pakistan. Furthermore, the five-factor model, evolutionary psychology, and control theory are underpinnings of current research. Mowen (2000) combined these theories to construct a meta-theoretic model (3M), which is applied in current research. Mowen (2000) suggested eight elemental traits. However, the current study selected only five traits (extraversion, openness to experience, need for arousal, and materialism), which are most relevant as antecedents of self-enhancement motives. Additionally, it also aims at investigating CSWOM and clothing brand loyalty as outcome variables of self-enhancement motives.

The survey was conducted via mall intercept method. All brands have their retail outlets in major cities of Pakistan. This study, however, aims at surveying the retail stores situated in the federal capital of Pakistan (Islamabad) being the representative city. Hence geographically the research was limited to the consumers of luxury apparel stores situated in Islamabad. The population of Pakistan can be divided into urban and rural areas. The current study, however, chooses urban consumers. As according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2016) survey, they have high-income levels and are frequent users of branded clothing.

1.7 Operational Definitions

This section will describe the key terms used in the framework of current research.

1.7.1 Openness to experience

Individuals with openness to experience trait are mentally inquisitive and always like to engage themselves in experiencing new things (Jacques, Garger, Brown, & Deale, 2009). According to Mowen (2000), openness to experience can be defined as “the need to find novel solutions, express original ideas, and use the imagination in

performing tasks.” The current research follows the definition given by Mowen (2000) during the operationalization of this variable.

1.7.2 Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness is “the need to be organized, orderly, and efficient in carrying out tasks”(Mowen, 2000). According to Buccioli, Cavasso, and Zarri (2015) the individuals high at conscientiousness “tend to be organized, responsible, careful and hardworking”. Individuals with a high score on conscientious are found to conform to traditions/conventional wisdom, norms, and values. They are deliberate individuals and hence plan their shopping vigilantly and avoid spontaneous or impulse buying and try to exercise full control over their behaviors (Hogan & Hogan, 2007; Olsen, Tudoran, Honkanen, & Verplanken, 2016). The current research follows the definition given by Mowen (2000) while operationalizing this variable

1.7.3 Extraversion

Extraversion is composed of many characteristics like social dominance, emotional feeling, sociability, achievement, Warmth, gregariousness, assertiveness, excitement seeking, positive emotions and activity(Carver & Scheier, 2016; Costa & McCrea, 1992). Bono and Judge (2004) described that extraverts have excitement and social attention-seeking tendencies. The current research follows the definition given by Costa and McCrea (1992) while operationalizing extraversion.

1.7.4 The need for Arousal

Mowen (2000) defines the need for arousal as “the desire for stimulation and excitement.” According to (Huang, Ali, & Liao, 2017), “Arousal refers to one’s degree of excitement, alert, and stimulate.” According to Mehrabian and Russell (1973), arousal is defined as “a basic, subjective state dimension ranging from sleep to frantic

excitement” according to them “change, unusual stimuli, risk, sensuality and new environment” are components or sub-factors of arousal. The current research follows the definition given by Mowen (2000) while operationalizing this variable.

1.7.5 Materialism

Mowen (2000) defines Need for Material Resources/materialism as “the need to collect and possess material goods.” Belk (1985) defines materialism as “the importance, a consumer, attaches to worldly possessions. At the highest levels of materialism, such possessions assume a central place in a person's life and are believed to provide the greatest sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction”. The current research follows the definition given by Mowen (2000) while operationalizing this variable.

1.7.6 Status Consumption

In the words of Eastman et al. (1999) status consumption is “the motivational process by which individuals strive to improve their social standing through the conspicuous consumption of consumer products that confer and symbolize status both for the individual and surrounding significant others.” Status products are different from ordinary products as these are purchased and consumed in order to satisfy psychological, social, and material needs, differing from other frequently purchased goods (Belk, 1988). The current research follows the definition given by Eastman et al. (1999) while operationalizing this variable.

1.7.7 Brand Engagement in Self Concept

Sprott *et al.* (2009) defined BESC as “an individual difference representing consumers’ propensity to include important brands as part of how they view themselves.” The BESC is distinct from the concept of self-brand connection. BESC assume the brands as integrated into a consumer’s self-concept. The current study follows this definition for the sake of operationalization.

1.7.8 Consumption Focused Self Expression Word of Mouth

Consumption focused self-expression word of mouth (CSWOM) is a form of word of mouth. It is a relatively new conceptualization in the marketing discipline. The CSWOM is defined as “the desire to communicate about one’s consumption activities for the purpose of expressing one’s self-concept and attracting attention to oneself” (Saenger et al., 2013). The current study follows the above definition by Saenger et al. (2013) for the sake of operationalization.

1.7.9 Clothing Brand Loyalty

Oliver (1999) defined brand loyalty as “a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior.” It is also regarded as intentions of a consumer to continue with an organization (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996) or buying more products (Gupta & Zeithaml, 2006). In the context of current research, clothing brand loyalty is buying and consuming the same clothing brand again and again without considering competing brands as alternatives.

1.7.10 Branded Clothing

In the present research, branded clothing is comprised of prestigious brands with associations like a high price, quality, aesthetics, and other non-functional, symbolic and conspicuous associations (Hennigs et al., 2012).

1.8 Organization of Thesis

The first chapter describes the background of the study, problem statement, research question, research objectives, the significance of the study, the scope of the

study, and description of terms. Next chapter gives a detailed review of literature available on all variables, dimensions, and conceptual framework of this research. The third chapter describes the research design. The research design is comprised of the philosophy of research, essential elements of research methodology like sampling design, details of the instrument, and analysis. Chapter four composed of data analyses and presentation of results. Chapter five is comprised of discussions of the results and their theoretical and empirical implications. It also includes limitations and future recommendation.

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