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FACULTY OF COMMERCE

DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING

THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOSITY TOWARDS LUXURY FORMAL WEAR, STATUS SYMBOLISM, SELF-ETSEEM AND PURCHASE INTENTION. THE CASE OF PENTECOSTAL SECTS IN BINDURA TOWN.

PRESENTED

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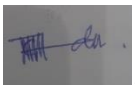
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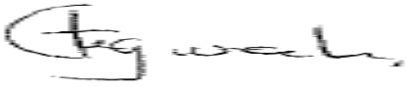
APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certifies that the Marketing Department has supervised, read and recommended to the Bindura University of Science Education for acceptance a dissertation entitled: T**he influence of religiosity towards luxury formal wear, status symbolism, self-esteem and purchase intention. The case of Pentecostal sects in Bindura town ,** submitted by **Great Takavada** submitted in Partial fulfillment of the requirements of the **Bachelor of Commerce Studies Honors Degree in Marketing.**



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DEDICATION

This feat is not just my own. It is founded upon the prayers of Mr. & Mrs. Takavada & the phenomenal leadership of Dr T. Chingwaru. My parents with your unwavering belief in me and dr Chingwaru with your tremendous mentoring, words can hardly capture the depth of my indebtedness. I present this not just as a dedication but as a prayer-may the richness of your support, sacrifice, and belief continue to harvest bountifully in the yet to be narrated annals of my existence.

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I am further obliged to the academic and administrative staff of the Marketing department, Bindura University of science Education for having created an environment which is academically fertile, and for having rendered the administrative support to facilitate my growth, my contribution is greatly appreciated. Thanks also goes to all the respondents who sacrificed their time to answer my questionnaires, their candidness and willingness has formed the empirical bedrock of this research. I also greatly thank my family for their endless love, continuous prayers and for always encouraging me when i needed encouragement. Without their love and support i wouldn't have made it. I also give a big thanks to my colleagues, friends; Bright T Mbundure, Davies M Mapurazi and Brian T Mbundure, who helped in many ways and supported me throughout this process. All the rest who i have missed on the way, Thank you all.

ABSTRACT

Abstract In the context of luxury formal wear purchasing decisions of Pentecostal church members in Bindura, Zimbabwe, this study investigated the effect of religiosity on the purchasing intention, mediating the impact of status symbolism and self-esteem. Theories such as the Theory of Planned Behaviour, Social Identity Theory, Veblen's Theory of Conspicuous Consumption and Self-Esteem Theory formed the theoretical foundation. A positivist philosophy, quantitative cross-sectional survey was employed and data from three hundred Pentecostal church members drawn from ZAOGA-FIF, AFM and UFIC denominations in Bindura through structured questionnaires was collected and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) via IBM AMOS Version 28. The results indicated that religiosity had a statistically significant positive impact on both status symbolism and self-esteem of church members. The results further demonstrated a positive relationship between status symbolism and purchasing intention as well as self-esteem and purchasing intention of luxury formal wear. Religiosity's direct influence on purchasing intention was not statistically significant, suggesting that status symbolism and self-esteem fully mediate this influence. This implies that for the Pentecostal congregants, the influence of religiosity on the purchasing of luxury formal wear occurs not directly through attitudes, but indirectly by influencing their views on status and self-worth. The findings add to the consumer behaviour literature by offering empirical evidence in an under-researched African Pentecostal context, and also provide relevant practical implications for luxury marketers, church leaders and public policy makers.

Keywords: Religiosity, Status Symbolism, Self-Esteem, Purchase Intention, Luxury Formal Wear, Pentecostal Congregants, Bindura, Zimbabwe, Mediation, Consumer Behaviour

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The relationship between religion and consumer behaviour has attracted increasing attention from scholars in marketing, consumer psychology, and sociology. Religion has become such a powerful social institution that shapes beliefs, values, attitudes, and behavioural patterns. These influences extend beyond spiritual practices and often affect everyday decisions, including consumption choices. In many societies, religious teachings provide guidelines regarding acceptable lifestyles, spending patterns, social interactions, and personal appearance. Consequently, consumers frequently make purchasing decisions that align with their religious values and social expectations.

In recent years, luxury consumption has been an interest in latest consumer behaviour research. Luxury products are traditionally associated with exclusivity, prestige, superior quality, and status enhancement. Consumers purchase luxury goods not only for their functional benefits but also for the symbolic meanings they convey. Luxury products often serve as indicators of social status, personal success, and self-worth. As a result, the consumption of luxury products has expanded across various demographic and social groups, including religious communities.

Luxury formal wear represents a unique category within the luxury goods market. Unlike luxury accessories, vehicles, or jewelry, luxury formal wear is closely associated with social presentation, identity construction, and impression management. Formal clothing allows individuals to communicate social standing, professionalism, respectability, and personal achievement. Within religious communities, clothing may also serve symbolic functions by reflecting commitment to religious norms, respect for worship environments, and adherence to communal expectations.

The growth of Pentecostal Christianity across Africa has introduced new dimensions to discussions concerning religion and consumption. Pentecostal churches often emphasize prosperity, success, personal transformation, and visible manifestations of divine blessings. In many contexts,

congregants may perceive material success and physical presentation as reflections of spiritual achievement. Consequently, luxury consumption, including the purchase of premium formal wear, may be influenced by religious beliefs and social dynamics operating within Pentecostal communities.

Zimbabwe has experienced substantial growth in Pentecostal Christianity over the past two decades. Pentecostal churches have become influential social institutions that shape members' lifestyles, aspirations, and consumption practices. Church gatherings frequently provide platforms where individuals interact, establish social networks, and present themselves before peers and church leaders. Within these environments, clothing may become an important means through which congregants communicate identity, status, and social belonging.

Despite the growing visibility of luxury consumption among religious populations, relatively little empirical research has examined how religiosity influences the intention to purchase luxury formal wear. Existing studies have largely focused on general consumer behaviour, ethical consumption, financial decision-making, or luxury goods consumption in secular settings. Limited attention has been directed toward understanding the psychological mechanisms through which religiosity affects luxury consumption within Pentecostal contexts.

Two constructs that may help explain this relationship are status symbolism and self-esteem. Status symbolism refers to the extent to which consumers perceive products as indicators of social standing and prestige. Luxury formal wear often carries symbolic value because it allows consumers to communicate success, sophistication, and social recognition. Individuals may therefore purchase luxury apparel not merely for utility but also for its capacity to signal status to others.

Self-esteem represents another important psychological factor influencing consumer behaviour. Consumers often use products to reinforce positive self-perceptions, express identity, and enhance confidence. Luxury goods can contribute to feelings of accomplishment, self-respect, and social acceptance. Consequently, self-esteem may play a critical role in explaining why religious individuals choose to purchase luxury formal wear.

Specifically, the study examines whether status symbolism and self-esteem mediate the relationship between religiosity and purchase intention. Understanding of consumer behaviour

within religious contexts is made easier and it provides insights relevant to marketers, church leaders, and scholars interested in religion and consumption.

1.2 Context of the Study

Bindura is a rapidly developing urban centre in Zimbabwe that hosts a diverse population characterized by varying socioeconomic backgrounds and religious affiliations. The town has witnessed notable growth in Pentecostal Christianity, with numerous churches attracting congregants from different age groups, occupations, and income levels. Pentecostal churches in Bindura play significant roles in shaping social interactions, community engagement, and individual identity formation.

Within these church communities, formal dress is often encouraged during worship services, conferences, weddings, leadership meetings, and other religious events. Congregants may therefore invest considerable resources in acquiring formal clothing that aligns with religious expectations while simultaneously expressing personal style and social standing. The visibility of luxury formal wear among church members raises important questions concerning the factors motivating such consumption behaviour.

Although religiosity is generally associated with modesty, spiritual discipline, and non-materialistic values, evidence suggests that religious participation may also create environments where social recognition and status signaling occur. Pentecostal congregants may experience pressures to present themselves in ways that reflect success, respectability, and spiritual growth. Consequently, luxury formal wear may become an important medium through which individuals negotiate both religious and social identities.

Understanding these dynamics is particularly important in Zimbabwe's current economic environment, where consumers often face financial constraints yet continue to engage in symbolic consumption practices. Investigating the interplay between religiosity, status symbolism, self-esteem, and purchase intention can therefore provide valuable insights into consumer behaviour within emerging markets.

1.3 Problem Statement

Despite economic uncertainties and shifting consumer preferences, the luxury fashion market continues to grow globally. Meanwhile, religious institutions maintain significant sway over values, beliefs and behavioural norms. Though religiosity has been associated with consumer behaviour, it is an area that has been underexplored regarding religiosity and purchase intention of luxury formal wear, particularly in the Pentecostal setting.

Studies on religion and luxury consumption present contradictory findings. While some have indicated that devoutly religious individuals are less likely to indulge in conspicuous consumption, attributing this to religious doctrine that teaches humility and discourages conspicuousness and extravagance (Allport & Ross, 1967; Hirschman, 1983), others suggest that religious settings enable status-oriented consumption via social comparison, identity expression and community expectation (Eastman et al., 2021; Gukurume, 2024).

In addition, the exact mechanisms linking religiosity to purchase intention for luxury fashion remain unclear. The mediating roles of status symbolism and self-esteem have been insufficiently researched, particularly in the African Pentecostal context, resulting in no empirical evidence for scholars and marketers to be able to determine how religiosity relates with psychological factors in decision-making to buy luxury items (Mandizvidza & Ndamba, 2025). This study thus investigates whether religiosity leads directly to intention to buy luxury formal wear, or if it is mediated by status symbolism and self-esteem in Pentecostal congregants in Bindura, Zimbabwe.

1.4 Research Objectives

1.4.1 Main Objective

To examine the influence of religiosity on purchase intention for luxury formal wear among Pentecostal congregants in Bindura, Zimbabwe.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

i. To determine the effect of religiosity on status symbolism among Pentecostal congregants in Bindura.
ii. To determine the effect of religiosity on self-esteem among Pentecostal congregants in Bindura.

iii. To assess the effect of status symbolism and self-esteem on purchase intention for luxury formal wear among Pentecostal congregants in Bindura.
iv. To establish whether status symbolism and self-esteem mediate the relationship between religiosity and purchase intention for luxury formal wear among Pentecostal congregants in Bindura.

1.6 Research Hypotheses

The study tests the following hypotheses:

i. **H1:** Religiosity has a significant positive effect on status symbolism among Pentecostal congregants in Bindura.
ii. **H2:** Religiosity has a significant positive effect on self-esteem among Pentecostal congregants in Bindura.
iii. **H3:** Status symbolism and self-esteem have a significant positive effect on purchase intention for luxury formal wear among Pentecostal congregants in Bindura.
iv. **H4:** Status symbolism and self-esteem significantly mediate the relationship between religiosity and purchase intention for luxury formal wear among Pentecostal congregants in Bindura.

1.7 Significance of the Study

Academic Significance

The study contributes to the growing body of knowledge concerning religion and consumer behaviour. By examining the mediating roles of status symbolism and self-esteem, the research extends existing theoretical perspectives regarding luxury consumption within religious settings. The findings also contribute to the limited literature focusing on African consumer markets and Pentecostal communities.

Managerial Significance

Understanding how religiosity, status symbolism, and self-esteem influence purchasing behaviour can assist marketers in developing effective segmentation, positioning, and communication strategies targeted at religious consumers.

Social Significance

The findings enhance understanding of how religious communities shape consumer behaviour and identity formation. Church leaders and policymakers may use the results to promote balanced consumption practices while acknowledging the social and psychological factors influencing purchasing decisions.

1.8 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on Pentecostal congregants residing in Bindura, Zimbabwe. It specifically examines purchase intentions relating to luxury formal wear and investigates the influence of religiosity through the mediating effects of status symbolism and self-esteem. The study does not include consumers from other religious denominations or geographical locations. Additionally, it focuses mainly on purchase intention forgetting or leaving out the actual purchasing behaviour.

1.8 Assumptions of the Study

i. The respondents should be sufficiently knowledgeable and capable of responding to questions about luxury formal wear.

i. The respondents should be willing and able to respond honestly about the level of their religiosity, the importance they attach to status, their levels of self esteem and intention to purchase luxury formal wear.

ii. The questionnaire items should measure all relevant constructs of the study well.

iii. The selected sample of Pentecostal church members in Bindura town should be generalizable to Pentecostal churches in the country of Zimbabwe.

iv. The causal relationships between the variables should be linear enough to be estimated using regression and mediation analysis.

v. The respondents should respond to the questionnaire truthfully and honestly.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

Limitations of the study:

i. **Geographic limitation.** The study has limited the scope to Bindura, Zimbabwe. Findings cannot be generalized to affect or be effected in some cities of provinces.

ii. **Research design limitations.** Cross-sectional research design does not allow for determination of cause-effect relationships.

iii. **Self-report limitations.** Data is based on respondents' report, and social desirability may be a factor, since religious issues were discussed, respondents might have given the acceptable answers.

iv. **Purchase intention versus behaviour.** The study concentrates on purchase intention rather than purchasing behaviour itself. It is known that intent doesn't always turn to actual buying behaviour.

v. **Denomination Limitation.** All research subjects belong to Pentecostal denominations. Findings may not apply to members of other religions.

vi. **Resource limitation.** Time and financial limitations contributed to the narrow focus of the study.

1.10 Delimitations of the Study:

i. The scope of the study will be limited to the following three Pentecostal denominations ZAOGA-FIF, AFM and UFIC in Bindura town.

ii. The study scope will further be limited to luxury formal wear and no other categories of luxury goods.

iii. Religiosity, status symbolism and self-esteem are the only dependent variables to be considered with the dependent variable purchase intentions and no other potential predictors (i.e. Income, influence from peers, brand loyalty) considered.

iv. Finally, the research approach of the study will be quantitative and not qualitative.

1.11 Definition of terms

Religiosity: 'The degree to which the individual is committed to his religious beliefs, religious practices, and religion as an integrated part of his life'. Four facets are usually addressed when studying religiosity- belief, ritual, experientiality and religious knowledge (Allport & Ross, 1967).

Luxury formal wear: Premium fashion and formal attire distinguished by exceptional craftsmanship, prestige, exclusivity and high cost. It includes such items like suits, dresses,

designer apparel and tailoring which come with the image and style associated with designer fashion labels (Veblen, 1899).

Purchase intention: 'consumer's level of likelihood of buying a specified product' that is a cognitive state within the consumer purchase process and strong indicator of purchase behaviour (Ajzen, 1991).

Status symbolism: 'The extent to which a product consumer believes that a product can be used to signal to others social status, prestige, and success'. Symbolic consumption, therefore, depends on the use of the product to convey information to others about the consumer's identity (Eastman et al., 1999).

Self-esteem: 'the evaluative dimension of the self', defined as a person's overall liking for himself or herself (Rosenberg, 1965).

Pentecostal congregants: those people who are attending Pentecostal church service.

Mediation: the variable which explains the link between the independent variable and the dependent variable, clarifying why and how the independent variable impacts on the dependent variable. This is according to Baron & Kenny, (1986).

1.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter offers an overview of the proposed research. Initially, the background to the study is provided emphasizing the increasing need to investigate the influence of religiosity on luxury consumption, specifically in the Pentecostal context. The problem statement states that the mechanisms that mediate religiosity, status symbolism and purchase intention for luxury formal wear have not been investigated in previous studies.

Subsequently, the research questions (one main and four specific research questions) are outlined. The 4 research questions are then linked to 4 specific objectives by a linkage table. The importance of the research is then elaborated. The scope, assumptions and limitations as well as key terms used in the study were also presented.

Finally, the structure of the dissertation is provided thereby drawing a roadmap to the following chapters. Chapter Two reviews academic and empirical literature for establishing the conceptual framework.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a literature review relevant to the study of religiosity and consumption behaviour, specifically focusing on the purchase intention of luxury formal wear among Pentecostal church members in Bindura, Zimbabwe. This chapter consolidates theories, critical variables, and past studies that focus on the relationship between religiosity, status symbolisation, self-esteem and consumption of luxury items. It also aims to present a conceptual framework that drives the current study. This chapter has the following sections: theoretical literature, definitions of key constructs, literature on previous research guided by the four research objectives, conceptual framework, and the summary of gaps in existing research.

2.2 Theoretical Review

There are many intertwined theories used to examine how individuals create consumption attitudes and intent within religious and social settings. The key theories of interest in this study are the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), Social Identity Theory, Veblen's Theory of Conspicuous Consumption and Self-Esteem theory.

2.2.1 Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) asserts that the direct antecedent of behaviour is behavioural intention. This theory dictates that behaviour is best explained through behavioural intention and its determinants attitudes towards the behaviour, and subjective norms. It can be argued that the purchase intention of luxury formal wear is determined by individual's attitudes and beliefs toward luxurious apparel, and the opinions held by the individual's reference group toward such apparel. Subjective norms may influence purchase intention even more within Pentecostal settings as behaviours within this community often revolve around religious beliefs regarding dressing. Religiosity might affect both attitudes and subjective norms because individuals with religious

conviction may develop religious values influencing beliefs towards conspicuous consumption or the luxury market.

2.2.2 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

Ajzen (1991) further proposed the theory of Planned Behaviour as an extension of TRA in order to increase the prediction of behaviour, which in this case is purchase intention of luxury formal wear. This theory adds perceived behavioural control to the original TRA framework; subjective norm, attitude and perceived behavioural control determine a behavioural intention. In this case, purchase intention may be perceived as attainable and therefore attainable as much as it is subject to the individual's financial capability to purchase luxury apparel and economic opportunities available to purchase them, among others. Pentecostal congregants may be influenced by their faith's attitude towards personal spending and managing finances. Economic conditions and personal finances can influence the control an individual perceives in purchasing and consuming luxury items which might prevent their attitude towards such merchandise translate to an intent to purchase them.

2.2.3 Social Identity Theory

An individual's identity is defined by the groups that an individual belongs to Tajfel et al (1979). It is claimed that people tend to classify themselves and others in social groups such as; religious belief, social class and culture group. The concept of a group identity within Pentecostal congregants can serve to explain an individual's intentions regarding consumption because, membership within the Pentecostal church group shapes behaviour, self-perception and belief towards certain norms within the group and for appearance to confirm the social identity, for them to fit within the group. Therefore, consumption behaviours and decisions made regarding luxurious apparel can be influenced by this social identity which may represent the wealth and success attained within the church.

2.2.4 Veblen's Theory of Conspicuous Consumption

Veblen (1899) states that individuals only engage in consuming luxuries to display their affluence and social status. Consumption goes beyond the utility derived from goods to encompass social meaning, status and the prestige gained from using or displaying items, particularly luxury apparel as it can signify social rank in public and church life. Pentecostalism community encourages

individuals to conform to social norms for acceptance within the church. Through the use of luxury formal wear it shows high social status of individuals.

2.2.5 Self-Esteem Theory

According to the theory developed by Rosenberg (1965), is described as an individual's belief about one's worth, dignity and importance and has profound impacts on behaviour, for instance through enhancing performance and making people feel good about themselves. Luxurious goods can make individuals feel good about themselves through making them look or feel successful in terms of personal and financial achievements. The self-worth of Pentecostal believers is influenced through positive affirming attitudes towards them and a sense of significance obtained within the group and spiritual beliefs can affect self-esteem which would translate to intention to consume in a bid to confirm this new persona.

2.3 Conceptualization and Review of Key Constructs

The following defines the primary variables to be measured and analyzed: religiosity, luxury formal wear, purchase intention, status symbolism and self-esteem.

2.3.1 Religiosity

Religiosity is the extent to which a person is committed to his/her religious beliefs and practices and the importance of religion to one's daily life. Religion is regarded as a multidimensional construct and consists of beliefs, practices and religious experiences and knowledge (Allport and Ross 1967). In the study by Glock and Stark (1965), religiosity had five dimensions namely, beliefs (the ideological aspect that covers accepting religious doctrines), ritual, participation or practice (the aspect of worship, attendance at religious services, and private prayer), experience (the emotional aspect which encompasses feelings, emotions, and senses of connection with the Divine), knowledge (the intellectual aspect of awareness of religious teachings), and consequences (an effect of religious commitment on daily activities and behaviour). In Pentecostal Christianity, religiosity includes active worship service attendance, prayer, fasting, engagement in religious practices and spiritual teaching adherence. Pentecostalism generally is characterised by its belief in the power of personal transformation, divine blessings, and the significance of a lively faith life (Gukurume, 2024). As Religiosity is dual; it may inhibit the purchase of luxury goods, or enhance

buying luxury products on account of being part of a belief system that is aligned to wealth creation and prosperity-gains. Consequently, its effect on luxury purchasing behaviour is complex.

2.3.2 Luxury formal wear

Luxury formal wear is a high-end category of formal clothing that is made to be of high quality and carries a strong brand name and an exclusive image and it costs higher (Veblen 1899; Belk 1988). This includes formal wear such as suits and dresses; designers such as tailored garments associated with the formal fashion segment. Kapferer (2012) lists 6 essential characteristics of a luxury product to be the following; excellence (quality and craftsmanship); rarity (exclusivity of the product); prestige (social status it bestows on the user); heritage (brand history); price (premium pricing reflecting value); and symbolism (communication of personal identity and status). Unlike the everyday luxurious consumer goods, the perception and use of formal wear is dependent on the formal or professional settings. In religion-specific context formal clothing is worn to religious worship services, leadership meetings, church weddings, special religious occasions and festivals. Luxury formal wear therefore serve not only functional purposes but it also has symbolic meanings related to status, personality, professionalism and societal positioning.

2.3.3 Purchase intention

It is the willingness of a consumer to purchase a service or product and it is seen as an indicator of actual purchasing behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Purchase intention is shaped by perceived control over the purchase act, subjective norms, perceived benefits of the product, attitudes towards the product, Self-concept and social influences (Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2015). In the current study, purchase intention refers to the likelihood of Pentecostal congregants' acquisition of luxury formal wear in the future, a decision that is also influenced by social pressure and status, finances and Self-esteem in a way that it depends on the attitudes and self image.

2.3.4 Status Symbolism

Status symbolism refers to the ability of an object to convey to others information regarding its owner's social standing and success. They are therefore products whose ability to be used for communicating identity and differentiate from other consumers are highly symbolic (Eastman et al. 1999). O'Cass and Siahtiri (2024) identify four aspects of status symbolism namely; social recognition (the desire to be seen favorably by others), social distinction (the desire to differ from others in society), social comparison (the comparison made of oneself with others) and identity

expression (expressing one's identity through symbols). Because it is publicly visible, formal wear could be a strong indicator of status symbolism as it attracts attention and judgment from observers. In Pentecostal environments, Clothing style could be seen as a signal of Spiritual maturity, financial success and leadership qualities; and a desire for social acceptance.

2.3.5 Self-esteem

It is individual's overall evaluation of his or her self-worth or value (Rosenberg, 1965). Self-esteem plays a vital role in individuals' confidence, behaviour and self-evaluation. It has 4 dimensions namely, self-worth (the belief that you are worthy of love and respect), self-competence (the belief that you are capable and effective in many areas), self-acceptance (acceptance of one's qualities and shortcomings) and self-respect (the respect for oneself and one's values). Individuals with high self-esteem are less dependent on the opinions and approval of others and more in control of their consumption decisions, and may use luxury goods to enhance their self-esteem by increasing their feeling of success, attractiveness, and social status. Self-esteem can be positively impacted by religion as Pentecostal followers gain more self-worth from believing in transformation and success-associated teachings.

2.4 Empirical literature review

This chapter reviews existing empirical literature which has investigated the relationship between the the current research variables. This chapter is divided according to the four research objectives and the respective hypotheses. It exclusively reviews recent literature, covering the last five years to guarantee relevancy and currency of findings.

2.4.1 Religiosity and Status Symbolism (Objective i; H1)

A significant body of empirical literature has investigated the relationship between religiosity and status symbolism within various cultural and religious backgrounds and the studies have reported positive and negative findings depending on the specific religious tradition and cultural context. Recent evidence in Pentecostal and prosperity-oriented religious contexts generally indicates positive relationship between the two variables. A comprehensive study by Eastman, Iyer & Randall (2021) into religiosity and status consumption in the USA provided evidence that religious people (especially those with a prosperity-theology mindset) consumed more based on status. They

suggested that the context of religion provides space and a setting for people to be observed and evaluated thus enhancing the social importance of personal presentation and clothing. This is relevant to this study in as far as it provides empirical justification for a positive relationship between religiously commitment and viewing consumption object as having social status value. In the African context Maposa & Sibanda (2022) in an ethnographic study investigated the relationship between clothing and the status symbol in Pentecostalism in Southern Africa, arguing that in the Pentecostal settings the church acts as a runway and opulent clothing becomes a testimony of God's favor and individuals acquire such expensive clothing to signal upward mobility, success and Spiritual progress. This provides empirical support in the African context for a positive association between religion and status symbolism and further demonstrates its application to the Zimbabwean setting as it indicates the kind of social pressures that operate within the context of Zimbabwean Pentecostal churches in relation to clothing and status. In line with the previous, Gukurume (2024) further illustrated how the concept of luxury dressing in Zimbabwean Pentecostalism is perceived as a visible testament to divine blessings, and therefore luxury formal wear is considered a symbol of success, respectability, and spiritual growth, hence it motivated acquisition behaviour. Participants strongly desired to own luxury formal wear so as to signal their social and spiritual status within the Pentecostal setting. In a contrary finding, Mukonyora (2023) investigated Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe and discovered that the church environment creates social pressures to conform in appearance, with many believers buying clothing as symbols of respectability, success, and congruity with communal norms and standards. It also noted that some individual members resisted this consumption because of the theological focus on modesty and humbleness. This could imply that the positive relationship might be moderated by different religious ideologies or denominational backgrounds.

2.4.2 Religiosity and Self-Esteem (Objective ii; H2)

Several previous studies have provided evidence for a positive relationship between religiosity and self-esteem particularly in the context of religions which promise or foster individual transformation, divine recognition and inherent worth. Recent studies include; A comprehensive meta-analysis conducted by Sedikides & Gebauer (2023) found that religious commitment is positively associated with self-esteem, and this association holds true across various countries, religions and age groups with small to moderate effect sizes. They suggested that religious commitment and associated meanings, values and beliefs, bolster self-esteem supporting H2. In

the African context, Village & Powell (2022) argue that prosperity theology emphasizes that believers are 'kings and priests' (Revelation 1:6) and 'children of God', elevating a believer's identity and contributing to a positive and higher sense of self-worth among pious believers, hence the positive link between religiosity and self-esteem in Pentecostal churches. Further, Green & Elliot (2020) explored religious participation and psychological well-being among Christians and found that participation in religious activities at church was positively correlated with high self-esteem due to religious beliefs giving participants meaning, social identity and a sense of control, all of which are linked to positive self-evaluation. In Zimbabwe, Mandizvidza & Ndamba (2025) reported similar findings in a study investigating the effects of Pentecostal religiosity on the self-concept of urban Zimbabweans where participation in Pentecostal services were found to influence self-esteem positively due to positive teachings about success, blessings, personal development and inherent divine value. The authors claimed that the social context of the church provided participants with social support, affirmation, identity development and also sense of control over their lives which all leads to positive self-evaluation, thus supporting H2. A contradiction to this is a study by Maton & Wells (1995) who found that the nature of religious ideology matters, and critical/punitive theologies might have a negative impact on self-esteem. The positive findings from Zimbabwean Pentecostal contexts might therefore be due to the presence of specific ideologies within them.

2.4.3 Status Symbolism and Purchase Intention (Objective iii; H3 part a)

A great body of literature has explored the link between status symbolism and luxury purchase intentions, providing consistent positive associations between the two constructs. A study by O'Cass & Siahtiri (2024) examined how status consumption motivation impacted luxury purchase intention among Australian consumers, finding that status consumption was the most dominant proximal predictor. This finding clearly indicated that consumers are driven by the status value of products, especially luxury goods and therefore this supports the hypothesis H3 part (a). Eastman, Iyer & Randall (2021) investigated the motivational basis of status consumption in a large sample of US consumers and their study provides clear evidence that the consumers' motivations for consumption can include social recognition, social distinction, and identity expression, all of which positively influence the consumption of luxury items. Similar findings were presented in Gukurume (2024) who argues that luxury dressing in the Pentecostal context in Zimbabwe was an acquisition motivation due to luxury clothing being viewed as symbolic of success and spiritual

elevation and therefore a strong predictor of intention to buy such clothes. This provides clear evidence for H3 part (a) in the Zimbabwean context. Maposa & Sibanda (2022) discussed that the acquisition of luxurious attire within the Pentecostal religion in southern Africa contributes positively to their status in the eyes of the fellow believers, and that it was an intention to create an impression thus leading to greater likelihood of buying the particular attire. Nevertheless, the strength and direction of this relationship have been argued to differ across cultures. Specifically, Wong & Ahuvia (1998) found that status symbolism is stronger in individualistic societies than collectivist ones. It is argued that in collectivist cultures status symbolizes harmony within the group or social unity rather than personal achievement and individuality

2.4.4 Self-esteem and purchase intention (objective iii; H3 part b)

Most studies support the positive link between self-esteem and luxury purchase intention, though some evidence has found that the mediating pathway depends on whether or not compensatory or value-expressive consumption prevails.

Mandel and Smeesters (2008) studied the effects of self-esteem on consumption and found that the use of compensatory behaviour by lower self-esteem individuals means they purchase luxury products in order to create the positive feelings toward themselves that they believe they lack while higher self-esteem individuals engage in value-expressive consumption use luxury products to reinforce their identity rather than compensate for it. This dual pathway supports a positive relationship between self-esteem and purchase intention in varying degrees.

Orth and Rose (2017) investigated the effects of self-esteem on luxury consumption by European consumers and observed a positive relationship between self-esteem and purchase intention among the respondents. In addition, it has also found two pathways of self-esteem on purchase intention: the need to boost social image and the need to reinforce identity. Higher levels of self-esteem means more likely purchase intention, because consumers are prone to see the luxury products that are aligned with their self-concept. This supports value-expressive pathway effect of self-esteem.

Mandizvidza and Ndamba (2025) have examined value-expressive consumption pathway of the positive association between self-esteem and luxury products with reference to Zimbabwean Pentecostals' consumption. Their findings revealed that the positive linkage of self-esteem to

luxury formal wear intention among Pentecostalists were driven by their intention to confirm their identity as being rich and God blessed individuals through the consumption of high-value goods.

Along the similar lines, Gukurume (2024) found that self-esteem has a positive effect on luxury consumption of the Zimbabwean Pentecostals by looking at self-esteem effect through value-expressive consumption, where people who are highly self-esteemed were much more likely to believe their purchases and luxury formal wear as reflective of their self-concept and status. This confirms the positive association of purchase intention and self-esteem and shows the role of identity reinforcement as the mediating factor.

However, Kim and Lee (2021) discovered that the relationships can be complicated since social comparison plays the moderating role. As people engaged in the more frequent social comparison showed stronger effects, the effect of purchase intention on self-esteem would be even stronger in socially comparative context like churches.

2.4.5 Mediation Paths: religiosity status symbolism purchase intention and religiosity self-esteem purchase intention (Objective iv; H4)

There has not been much empirical research looking specifically at the mediating roles of status symbolism and self-esteem between religiosity and purchase intention. Nevertheless, recent studies provide indirect support for the mediation paths.

Mandizvidza and Ndamba (2025) investigated the mediating role of self-esteem between Pentecostal religiosity and luxury consumption and the research suggests that self-esteem partially mediated the relation, indicating that religiosity may impact purchase intention through influencing believers' self-worth. Mandizvidza and Ndamba (2025) suggest that the prosperity theology elevates believers' sense of self-worth through affirmative identification as blessed and successful individuals and this has lead to the drive of consuming luxury goods. Thus, there is some evidence that supports the self-esteem mediation path.

Similarily, Eastman, Iyer and Randall (2021) proposed the mediating role of status consumption between and indeed the findings indicate that status consumption partially mediated the relation where religiosity influences status consumption motivation which leads to luxury purchase intention. Researchers explain that religious environments may contribute to perceptions of status

and social comparison and consequently shape consumption decisions. Thus, there is some evidence that supports the status symbolism mediation path.

Gukurume (2024) showed ethnographic evidence of these mediation paths through Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe where followers were found to derive enhanced self-esteem and perceptions of status which led them to purchase luxury formal wear. It appears that the congregants see luxury clothes as outward manifestations of being blessed and these perceptions are affirmed through church teachings and peer influences. The finding seems to strongly indicate that both pathways occur simultaneously.

O'Cass and Siahtiri (2024) looked at the status consumption motivation mediating variable between social identity and luxury purchase intention; whilst the study did not explicitly use religiosity it indicates that a similar mediation process may be at play with religious identity.

In addition, Mukonyora (2023) carried out research on Pentecostal Christianity in Zimbabwe and reported on how the church influences the way individuals perceive themselves and their social standing. Religious affiliation among followers of Pentecostal Christianity impacted the way they interpreted their situation, how they thought about themselves, and how they perceived their position in society, which in turn, informed their consumption choices. This evidence supports the double mediation pathway investigated in the current study.

2.5 Gap analysis and identification of research gaps

From the in-depth critical review of literature mentioned in this chapter, several research gaps can be identified which this current study aims to fill.

Firstly, the theories of TPB, Social Identity, and Veblen's Theory of Conspicuous Consumption have been well examined within retail contexts in Western and developed country perspectives but have not been tested within the African Pentecostal setting and more specifically, within the Zimbabwean context. While there has been significant work carried out in defining religiosity and its association with consumption in American and European contexts, the Zimbabwean Pentecostal setting remains very much un-researched. This theoretically, will give us a limited understanding on how these western theories can apply within the given socio-economic and religious settings.

Secondly, Given the unique socio-economic and cultural backgrounds of the Zimbabwean Pentecostal environment, different contextual conditions might be the moderating factors on these theoretically stipulated relationships. In Zimbabwean Pentecostal churches, prosperity theology is common and worship and interactions are group-focused where personal relationships and observations of others become highly important for commercial and consumption behaviours. However, it has not been tested if the determinants of luxury purchase intention like status symbolism and self-esteem observed in Western context apply within the Pentecostal environments.

Thirdly, although status symbolism and self-esteem has been mentioned as possible positive outcomes of religiosity and potential determinants of purchase intention in literature, there have been insufficient efforts in investigating their mediation effects in the religiosity-purchase intention relationship. To be specific, it has never been determined how these mediators' combined simultaneous role impacts on purchase intention based on religiosity as is expected in the conceptual framework of this study.

Fourthly, Limited research has focused on the context of formal wear luxury consumption in relation to religiosity within the context of Pentecostal consumption. Most of the existing literature has been focused on generic luxury items, ethical consumption or on financial decisions with limited research focus on apparel or clothing purchase intentions. This implies that there is a lack of knowledge on the direct influences of religiosity on formality clothing consumer behaviours.

Fifthly, based on this study's knowledge, there has never been any empirical findings of the relationship between religiosity and luxury formal wear purchase intentions within the Zimbabwean Pentecostal setting. While studies exist within other African countries, research pertaining to mediation effects of status symbolism and self-esteem on purchase intentions and religiosity within the context of Zimbabwean Pentecostal consumer behaviours has not been documented and the study aims to bridge this gap.

Finally, many studies on religiosity and consumption have used qualitative methods and descriptive studies with very limited efforts of employing SEM to test simultaneously the direct and indirect effects which cannot establish causal relationship. The current study employs SEM to simultaneously test the direct and indirect effects.

The present study hence contributes to the field of marketing and consumer behaviour by: Testing the generalizability of the theories in the Zimbabwean Pentecostal setting; testing the direct relationships between religiosity, status symbolism, self-esteem and purchase intention; determining the mediation roles of status symbolism and self-esteem in the relationship between religiosity and purchase intention; bridging the gaps in consumer behaviour literature by investigating the current research problem within the context of Pentecostal consumption in Zimbabwe.

2.6 Conceptual Framework:

A research framework based on theoretical and empirical review indicated that religiosity effects luxury formal wear purchase intention through mediating effect of status symbolism and self-esteem.

Conceptual framework of the study rests upon four theoretical frameworks: Firstly, Theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) formed the base of the conceptual framework because attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control contribute to purchase intention. Secondly, Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) explain how religious group membership has influence over one's own self and thus influences consumption behaviour; Thirdly, Veblen's Theory of conspicuous consumption (1899) explained how luxury goods function as status symbol. Fourthly, Self-esteem Theory (Rosenberg, 1965) defined what self-esteem is and explain how self-esteem works in behaviour of human.

Based on the theory review and empirical evidence, this framework postulates the relationship of religiosity as independent variable, status symbolism and self-esteem as mediating variables, and purchase intention as dependent variable. Hypothesized direct effect of religiosity on status symbolism (H1), religiosity on self-esteem (H2), status symbolism to purchase intention (H3 part a) and self-esteem to purchase intention (H3 part b). Furthermore, this framework predicts mediator effect whereby status symbolism mediate the relationship between religiosity and purchase intention and self-esteem mediate the relationship between religiosity and purchase intention (H4).

In relation to religiosity, the framework suggests that Pentecostal religiosity has an effect on the perception of status symbolism of luxury consumption and influence one's self-esteem via one's

own spiritual identity and religious community. Status symbolism is assumed to boost purchase intention of luxury formal wear since it signals one's social status and uniqueness and at the same time, self-esteem encourages purchase intention of luxury formal wear due to affirmation of one's confidence and personal identity. The mediation effect of status symbolism and self-esteem on the direct effect of religiosity on purchase intention are then posited in the proposed model.

Conceptual Model of the Study:

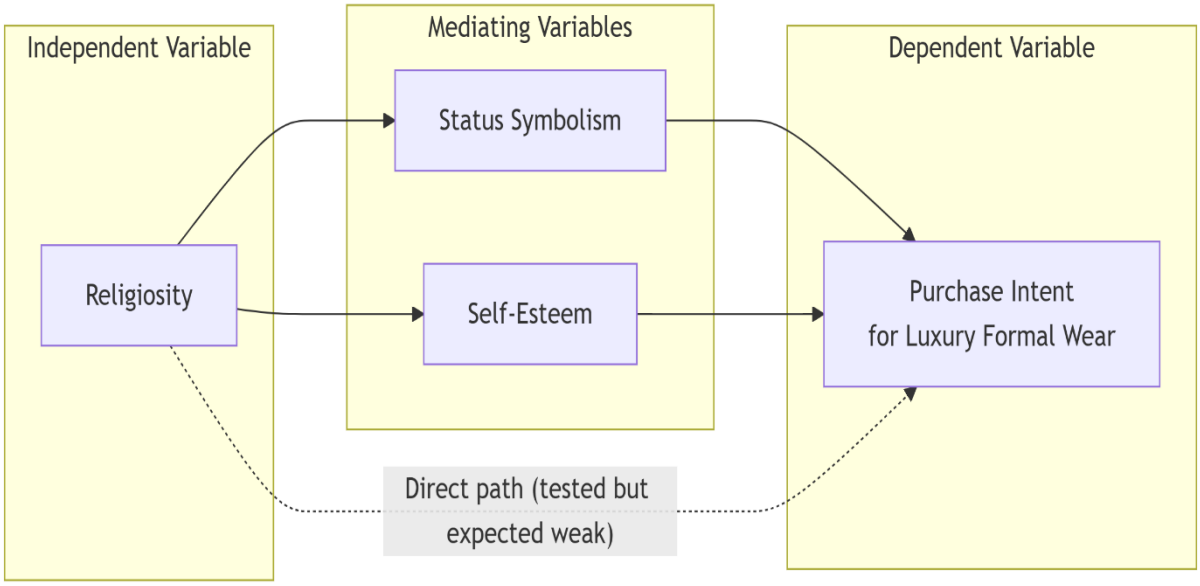


Fig 1 Conceptual Framework (Author's Construction, 2026)

2.7 Summary of literature review and identification of present study

This chapter sought to present a literature review of theories and empirical literature relevant to the central constructs underlying this study, that is religiosity, status symbolism, self-esteem and purchase intention for luxury formal wear. Based on this review, religiosity can be seen as a stimuli that has some effect on individuals' status perceptions and feelings about themselves, and consequently the consumer behaviour theories argue is the subsequent effect of it. The studies review confirmed that it is through status symbolism and self-esteem that religion exerts influence on consumption, and both psychological mechanisms positively correlate to purchase intentions for luxury items.

It can be seen that the research confirmed both status symbolism and self-esteem had a strong positive influence on purchase intentions. Research also found support for a mediation effect where religion influences the purchase intention through the mediating psychological mechanisms of status symbolism and self-esteem; especially within a religion-based community with the primary sources of information being inter-personal communication and observation of fellow adherents. Contemporary researches found evidence for these two mediation channels within a Pentecostal context but the simultaneous mediation effect has not been fully studied empirically.

A problematic area discovered in the review literature is the fact that while these theories such as TPB, SIT, and Veblen's theory are studied extensively and confirmed in the context of western consumption, very little attention is paid to the African Pentecostal community, and in particular, the Zimbabwean setting. The Zimbabwean Pentecostal community is shaped by various social, cultural, economical and religious factors which have the potential to influence the theories' applicability in this context. Without empirically supported evidence on the mediating effect of status symbolism and self-esteem in the Pentecostal community of Zimbabwe, scholars and practitioners alike are handicapped in their quest to understand the relationship between religious beliefs and purchase behaviour toward luxury consumption items.

In response to this lack of research the current study explicitly identifies itself as the empirical study which will seek to address this void by attempting to study the impact of religiosity on the purchase intention for luxury formal wear with the mediating influences of status symbolism and self-esteem within the Pentecostal setting of Bindura, Zimbabwe. In so doing this study makes a contribution to existing literature that enhances consumer behaviour theories within the Pentecostal and Zimbabwean setting. The above overview of concepts and empirical literature provide us with a basis for this study and a framework for the proposed model and hypotheses which are presented in chapter 3 along with the research methodology chosen.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will identify the methodology employed in investigating the impact of religiosity on purchase intention of luxury formal wear among Pentecostal church members of Bindura, Zimbabwe, with status symbolism and self-esteem acting as mediators. This will comprise the underlying philosophical assumptions of the study, research design, target population, sampling method, data collection instrument, variables and their measurement, data analysis method and ethical considerations relevant to the study.

It outlines how the research was conducted in a manner that guarantees the validity and reliability of the results. The selection of the research methodology was determined by the research objectives and hypotheses stated in chapter 1:

Objective	Hypothesis
Objective i: To determine the effect of religiosity on status symbolism	H1: Religiosity has a significant positive effect on status symbolism
Objective ii: To determine the effect of religiosity on self-esteem	H2: Religiosity has a significant positive effect on self-esteem
Objective iii: To assess the effect of status symbolism and self-esteem on purchase intention	H3: Status symbolism and self-esteem have a significant positive effect on purchase intention
Objective iv: To establish whether status symbolism and self-esteem mediate the relationship between religiosity and purchase intention	H4: Status symbolism and self-esteem significantly mediate the relationship

3.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is defined as a belief about the nature of reality with respect to the data to be collected and how the data will be analysed and interpreted (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). In this study positivism research philosophy is used. This perspective has belief that reality exists

as an objective world which can be studied using science method. Quantitative data collection, hypothesis testing and statistics is used in testing the relationships between different constructs and variables. Religiosity, self-esteem, status symbolism and purchase intention as constructs in this study are treated as measurable variable which will be tested.

Positivism research philosophy is suitable since it allows the testing of specific hypotheses and measurement of the strength of relations between my selected variables. This study can reach the target population and the conclusion should be made based on results obtained through hypothesis testing using statistics. Positivism matches with this study due to quantitative nature and deductive reasoning.

3.3 Research Approach

The study uses deductive research approach. Deductive reasoning moves from general to specific or from the theory to hypotheses testing (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). The theory used are Theory of Planned Behaviour, Social Identity theory, Veblen's theory of Conspicuous consumption and self-esteem theory. Based on the theories the concept used in this study were developed and used in generating hypotheses.

The use of deductive research approach is appropriate because the research design begins from the theories and hypotheses which are empirically verified with quantitative data which are derived from the survey. Hypotheses, as discussed in Chapter 1, were obtained from literature which had theoretical concepts and empiric investigations.

3.4 Research Design

The quantitative descriptive and explanatory design approach was used in this research. The descriptive design was adopted. This was picked to describe the nature of the respondents and overall pattern of religiosity, status symbolism, self-esteem and purchase intention. The explanatory design was used to explain whether there is any causal relationship exists between the variables and does religiosity affect purchase intention either directly or through mediator role of status symbolism and self-esteem.

The design used is cross-sectional in nature because the information collected is at a point of time. Behavioural intentions and psychological traits do not changes over a period of time. So this

method is well appropriate for behavioural intentions and such psychological constructs (Saunders et al, 2019). Quantitative design has helped for the data to be analysed with the help of statistical methods and hypotheses to be tested for interpreting the objective results of the research.

Survey method has been used to collecting data. The survey method is adopted as a larger population can be reached within a limited time. In marketing and consumer behaviour, survey is frequently utilized in the research to achieve good reliable and valid data regarding consumers attitudes, beliefs and behaviour intention (Hair, Money and Samouel, 2019).

3.5 Target Population

It is defined is the exact group of individuals relevant to the problem of the study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). The target population consists of Pentecostal members in Bindura, Zimbabwe. It includes members of various Pentecostalism types such as apostolic, charismatic, and evangelical churches functioning in Bindura urban and surrounding regions. This population includes adult church members who actively participate in church services and can be observed being subject to formal dressing rules during religious occasions.

Pentecostalism members were chosen because Pentecostalism represents one of the fastest growing forms of Christianity in Zimbabwe and is inextricably linked to notions of prosperity teachings, visibility and self-transformation, all of which can be viewed as having a bearing on luxury consumption patterns (Gukurume, 2024; Mukonyora, 2023). Pentecostal churches are found in Bindura, which houses members from a range of social classes and thus provides an appropriate population to study relations among religiosity, status display, self-esteem and purchase intention.

3.6 Sampling Frame

The sampling frame was comprised of active members who were registered in the specific Pentecostal Churches identified within Bindura. In cases where they were available, congregation lists of members and attendance records served as an indicator of individuals who could be respondents (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). The absence of an exhaustive national list of Pentecostal worshipers meant the actual sampling frame utilized was that of church communities existing within Bindura.

More specifically, three Pentecostal Churches/denominations were sampled: Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa - Forward in Faith (ZAOGA-FIF) and United Family International Church (UFIC). The selected denominations were included based on the knowledge that these are large and dominant Pentecostal churches within the region and possess active congregations who hold structured formal services; they are representative of a broad scope of the Pentecostal traditions, as well as being reflective of the aspects of prosperity theology and standard dress in relation to the survey.

3.7 Sampling Technique

To begin with, a quantitative research approach was employed to identify Pentecostal churches in Bindura that have active congregations and formal worship on a regular basis. The chosen churches should therefore be pertinent to the research context. "Simple random sampling requires researcher deliberately to select particular individuals to be respondents on the basis of characteristics relevant to the research question." (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019).

Subsequently, within selected churches, proportionate stratified random sampling was applied to select individual respondents. Individual respondents were stratified according to denominations in order to ensure proportionality between three denominations and their congregations based on congregational size, ensuring each eligible congregant in each denomination to have equal probability of being selected thus minimizing biases.

3.8 Sample Size Determination

Sample size has been calculated using a sample size table as defined by Saunders et al (2009). The sample size table outlines what are recommended to be appropriate sample sizes, according to population size, at certain levels of confidence and margin of error. This method of sample size selection was adopted as it is widely accepted in both business and social science research and also helps justify a selection based upon an evidence based source.

Table 3.1: Sample Size for Various Population Sizes at 95% Confidence Level and 5% Margin of Error

Source: Adapted from Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009, p. 219)

Population Size (N)	Sample Size (n)
50	44
100	80
150	108
200	132
250	152
300	169
350	180
400	196
500	217
600	234
700	248
800	260
900	269
1,000	278
1,500	306
2,000	320
3,000	341
4,000	351
5,000	357
10,000	370

Note: Bold values indicate sample sizes relevant to the population range of this study.

Based on the table shown by Saunders et al (2009), a sample size of 217 is sufficient for a population of approximately 500 respondents; and the recommended sample size for a population size of 400 is 196, while for a population of 350 it is 180.

However, in order to accommodate the expected non-response rate, incomplete questionnaire completion and ensure robustness in Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analysis, the researcher collected a sample size of 320. With a 10-15% expected non-response rate, a remaining usable sample size would be 270-288 which will still suffice for SEM analysis.

In justification of sample size 320 the following factors are also considered;

SEM analysis demands a minimum of 10 observations per parameter estimate, according to Hair et al. (2019). A minimum sample of 150 (model comprising 4 latent constructs with about 15 parameters to be estimated) will be enough, hence the sample size of 320 is good in that aspect, with sufficient leeway to obtain more stable parameter estimates and statistical power.

Krejcie and Morgan (1970) indicate that a sample size of 217 is appropriate for a population of 500. The sample of 320 surpasses the recommended minimum, thus is likely to reflect the target population's characteristics.

Baruch and Holtom (2008) suggest that a response rate of over 60% is adequate for an organization/social science study, whereas an outstanding rate is above 80%. Since 320 questionnaires were to be administered, even a 70% response rate will give 224 valid answers which will be sufficient for the SEM analysis.

It was within the researcher's capability to distribute 320 questionnaires among the three denominations in Bindura, with support from the churches that were approached by the researcher.

3.9 Unit of Analysis

It is the individual Pentecostal congregation member. Each individual congregant acts as an observation in order to measure perceived attitudes and behavioural intentions toward the purchase of formal luxury apparel. The individual Pentecostal congregant is the unit of analysis because it measures the individual level psychological factors (religiosity, self-esteem, status symbolism) and behavioural intention.

3.10 Data Collection Methods

The study was based on primary data collection using structured questionnaires. Primary data is information collected for the first time, directly from the respondents for the specific purpose of answering a research question (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Primary data was selected for its capacity to provide first-hand information on how customers feel and experience.

3.10.1 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire for this study was divided into 5 sections; the first section of the questionnaire elicited demographic data such as age, gender, income group, education, church affiliation, church

membership tenure. Section B of the questionnaire measured Religiosity using scale items derived from reliable religiosity scales; Section C of the questionnaire measured Status Symbolism using scale items derived from reliable status consumption scales; Section D measured Self-Esteem using scale items derived from reliable self-esteem scale; the fifth section E of the questionnaire measured the Purchase Intention for luxury formal wear.

A five point likert scale was employed where respondents were asked to respond from Strongly Disagree rated(1) to Strongly Agree rated (5) since the likert scale has become the predominant tool in measuring attitudes and behaviours in marketing and consumer behaviour studies due to its simplicity and ability to reliably measure these constructs (Hair et al., 2019) and enables the researcher to ascertain degrees of agreement from the respondents.

3.10.2 Questionnaire administration

The questionnaire was personally administered to the target group (converts/members) on a face to face basis after church services and church meetings/activities with the permission of church authorities to ensure maximum respondents. Respondents were assured of utmost confidentiality and anonymity to facilitate genuine response (Saunders et al., 2019).

The researcher took questionnaires to all the members who turned up to church services and meetings during the entire duration of data collection. The target group were approached amicably with explanations about the purpose of the study and was given a questionnaire upon their consent to participate. The completed questionnaires were then collected back immediately to avoid missing questionnaires.

This method was deemed appropriate because it allows for the collection of standardized, numerical data from a large number of respondents, which is essential for statistical analysis and generalization of findings (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).

3.11 Variables' Measurement

All variables within this study were measured using already validated scales obtained from previous literature so that comparability with previous studies was established andcontent validity achieved. Multi-item scales are chosen for complex psychological and attitudinal concepts as single items have a higher error measurement than multi-item scales and therefore lack reliability (Churchill, 1979; Hair et al., 2019).

3.11.1 Religiosity

Religiosity measurement scales items from the Religiosity Commitment Inventory (RCI-10) by Worthington et al. (2003) were adapted. Sample scale items include: "My religious beliefs are important to my daily life", "I participate in religious activities". Likert scale of five points ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree were used for the scale items.

3.11.2 Status Symbolism

Scale items from the Status Consumption Scale by Eastman, Goldsmith & Flynn (1999) were adapted. Sample scale items include: "I would buy a product just because it has status", "I enjoy it when people notice my expensive purchases". Likert scale of five points ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree were used for the scale items.

3.11.3 Self-Esteem

Scale items from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) by Rosenberg (1965) were adapted. Sample scale items include: "I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others", "I am able to do things as well as most other people". Likert scale of five points ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree were used.

3.11.4 Purchase Intention

Scale items from Zeithaml et al. (1996) and Dodds, Monroe & Grewal (1991) were adapted for the purchase intention for luxury formal wear. Sample scale items include: "I intend to purchase luxury formal wear in the near future", "I am willing to spend more money on luxury formal wear". Likert scale of five points ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree were used for the scale items.

3.12 Validity and Reliability

3.12.1 Validity

Validity is the degree to which the instrument is actually measuring what it is intended to measure (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). Three types of validity were examined in the present study.

The questionnaire was content valid by reviewing previous literature and adopting pre-established scales; all scale items were adapted from already validated measures used in the literature. The questionnaire was reviewed by academic supervisors and experts of the subject matter to ensure

all facets of the intended constructs were captured. The face validity was obtained through the examination of the items by academic supervisors and marketing research experts; they assessed whether the items reflected what was intended. The process was pre-tested on a sample to check clarity and understandability. Construct validity was confirmed through matching the questionnaire items with theory and confirming their loading onto their respective factors using CFA. Convergent validity was assessed through AVE calculation, and convergent and discriminant validity was estimated following the suggestions of Fornell and Larcker (1981); AVE was compared with the square of inter-construct correlations.

3.12.2 Reliability

In order to test the validity of measurement, reliability was assessed for all multi-items scales utilized. Reliability means to what extent a process can measure consistency when replicated so that chance fluctuations are reduced (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). Internal consistency was used to estimate the extent of correlation of items within a particular construct and was measured through using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient value. Minimum acceptable reliability level was established at 0.70 for all construct, using commonly established standards given by Nunnally (1978), and revised by Hair et al. (2019). The conventional interpretations were followed to assess the values obtained using the ranges that classify satisfactory (0.70 to 0.79), good (0.80 to 0.89) and excellent (0.90 to 0.99) reliability (Nunnally, 1978). Composite reliability (CR) was calculated besides Cronbach's alpha in order to further assess internal consistency. This was decided because of methodological improvement over Cronbach's alpha, due to the fact that it includes the differing factor loadings of each indicator and it estimates reliability more accurate (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). A standard threshold value of 0.70 or higher was considered satisfactory (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2019).

3.13 Pilot Study

In order to identify the potential limitations in terms of design, content, administration and length of the questionnaire, a preliminary pilot study was carried out before the main survey data were collected. The instrument was pre-tested among a sample of thirty respondents from the same target group of Pentecostal church members who live in Bindura; so that the respondents of the pilot study were representative and the results of this preliminary investigation are generalizable

to the proposed sample in the main study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). The main objectives were to rephrase the questions to enhance clarity, avoid ambiguous and redundant questions, check if the scale format was adequate and estimate the average time required to complete the questionnaire. Based on the constructive comments from pilot participants, three questions were rephrased. Also the internal consistency of the scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.74 to 0.88 for all the constructs, suggesting good reliability. The findings of this pilot study helped make final adjustments to the final questionnaire before its administered in the main study.

3.14 Data Analysis Techniques

The empirical data collected was statistically analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 28 and IBM AMOS version 28.The strategy for data analysis involved the use of a two-step approach proposed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) where the first step involves measurement model assessment by CFA and the second step involved structural path analyses of the hypothesized relations in the model.

3.14.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the characteristics of the sample and major variables. Frequencies and percentages were used to summarize categorical variables such as gender, age group, denominational affiliation and education level. Means and standard deviations were used to summarise continuous variables that measured participants' perceptions. These analyses provided an overview of the study sample's composition and prevailing responses patterns of the respondents.

3.14.2 Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistical tests were conducted to evaluate the research hypotheses. Pearson product moment correlation was conducted first to establish the nature and magnitude of bivariate relationships between variables. Next, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was employed as the primary statistical analysis tool for testing all simultaneously hypothesized relationships. SEM was used instead of traditional regression analysis since SEM has an ability to allow modelling complex relationships between many variables simultaneously, to consider the error in measurement and to estimate both direct and indirect effects (Hair et al., 2019; Kline, 2016).

Measurement Model

The measurement properties of the latent constructs were assessed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). This procedure involved checking the fit of observed variables on hypothesized latent constructs. Several goodness of fit indexes, according to the recommendations of Hu and Bentler (1999) and Kline (2016), were used: relative chi-square (/df) less than 3.00; Comparative Fit Index (CFI) equal to or above 0.90; Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) equal to or above 0.90; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) not exceeding 0.08 and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) not exceeding 0.08. The assessment of Convergent Validity was conducted using the average variance extracted (AVE) values of at least 0.50 and composite reliability (CR) scores of at least 0.70 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The assessment of Discriminant Validity involved ensuring that the square root of AVE was larger than other factors in relation to construct correlations.

Structural Model: Once the measurement model was found to be adequate, the structural model was estimated to test the direct path hypotheses, including H1 (Religiosity Status Symbolism), H2 (Religiosity Self-Esteem), H3a (Status Symbolism Purchase Intention), H3b (Self-Esteem Purchase Intention), and the indirect path hypothesis (H4). The fit indices for the measurement model were also used to test for structural model fit. The significance of the paths was based on the critical ratios (C.R.) and associated p-values, with paths at or below $p < 0.05$ level being accepted ($p < 0.01$, and $p < 0.001$ are also reported for greater insight).

Mediation Analysis: Bootstrapping procedure, proposed by Preacher and Hayes (2008) and Hair et al. (2019), was used to test for the mediating effects of status symbolism and self-esteem. The bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals for the indirect effects were estimated using 5,000 bootstrap samples. The indirect effect was found to be statistically significant if its 95% CI did not contain zero. All hypotheses were tested at a conventional significance level of $p<0.05$, with stronger levels of significance ($p<0.01$ and $p<0.001$) also being indicated.

3.15 Ethical Considerations

The research process involves a consideration for ethical matters because ethical issues will guarantee the participants are respected and the research is conducted properly (Saunders, Lewis

& Thornhill, 2019). The ethical practices below have been adhered to strictly throughout the research process.

Informed consent: Respondents have been made aware of the study purpose and are able to make an informed decision to take part or not as participation is voluntary and not under duress. The aim of the research has been made apparent with a few clear lines and respondents can choose to complete the survey, thus consenting.

Confidentiality: Personal identifying information such as names, contact numbers will not be collected and respondents' replies are kept anonymous with all data stored securely and is inaccessible to other than the researcher and supervisor.

Privacy: respondents will be able to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty if he/she finds that he/she is unable to answer the survey due to certain questions and no pressure is brought on respondents to do so.

Church permission. Permission to collect data in churches was gained from leaders in each church before data was collected. Church leaders were made aware of the purpose of the research and how data was to be collected, their co-operation was sought in order to gain access to the church members.

Academic integrity. Sources were cited so that the plagiarism could be avoided. The research was completed in an honest way, the results were stated correctly, and no fictitious results are documented.

3.16 Limitations of Methodology

There are some limitations with the current research design:

i. The cross-sectional research design does not permit cause and effect inferences because data were collected at only one point in time (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019).
ii. Responses are based on self-report and social desirability may be a factor, particularly in the religious setting, whereby a respondent will indicate what is considered socially desirable.

iii. Research conducted in one part of Zimbabwe will not be generalisable to all parts of the country nor to other countries given the diverse cultural and socio-economic settings.

iv. Pentecostal research focuses on only three Pentecostal denominations and not to other Pentecostal or Christian denominations.

v. The quantitative research design does not allow for the exploration of religious experience and the motivations of consumption in its full richness.

vi. There were constraints in terms of the depth of data collected. The methodology adopted is well suited to the stated aims and hypothesis testing.

3.17 Chapter Summary

The research methodology is explained in depth in this chapter and is based on the positivist perspective of epistemology where it assumes that social phenomena can be objectified and quantified. This underpins the deductive logic which led to the quantitative design being undertaken in descriptive-explanatory style through a cross-sectional survey design, with the use of a structured questionnaire for data collection of the sample. Target population is Pentecostal church goers in Bindura, Zimbabwe and a sample of 320 participants were taken through purposive and stratified random sampling techniques. The sample size of 320 is justified by the Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) sample size table which recommends that for a population of 301-350 a sample of 196-217 is adequate but 320 should be taken to compensate for possible non-respondents and provide robust SEM results. Measurement of constructs was explained using scales like Religious Commitment Inventory (for religiosity), Status Consumption Scale (for status symbolism) and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (for self-esteem) and also using adapted scales for purchase intention. The issue of validity (content, construct) and reliability (internal consistency reliability using Cronbach's Alpha, and composite reliability) was discussed. The measurement procedure to be adopted includes: descriptive statistical analysis, correlation analysis, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), structural equation modeling (SEM) and bootstrapping (for mediation effects). Ethical aspects such as consent to participate, protection of data confidentiality and right to withdraw were emphasized. This methodology serves as a firm base for the empirical analysis that will be presented in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDING

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the empirical results of research on the relationship between religious devotion, purchase intentions toward the upscale formal wear and the role of the Pentecostal members within the Bindura area, Zimbabwe with status symbolisation and the level of one's self-esteem assumed to have some intervening role. The findings were systematically structured: firstly, the response rate; second, a profile of the sample based on demographic data; third, the measurement model estimation based on confirmatory factor analysis through AMOS software including measures for reliability and validity; fourthly, the structural model examination to test the 4 hypotheses given in the first chapter. Finally, the findings are discussed based on their relation to the previous theoretical and empirical data. This study uses 320 administered questionnaires to the Pentecostal church members in Bindura and adopted the two step modelling procedure suggested by Anderson & Gerbing (1988) approach, where measurement model validation comes before testing the relationships of the structural path model.

4.2 Questionnaire Response Rate

The response rate for all the questionnaires was first calculated prior to the analysis of the results. There were 320 Pentecostal questionnaires distributed to denominations ZAOGA-FIF, AFM and UFIC in Bindura town. After collection, all of the returned questionnaires were checked for response and completion. Any questionnaire with a gap of over 10% in responses or with similar pattern of answers for many of the questions, which showed it was completed by an unengaged respondent, was rejected. Thus, a total of 300 responses were considered and suitable for analysis. The net response was 300.

Table 1: Questionnaire Distribution and Return Rate

Category	Questionnaires Distributed (Targeted Frequency)	Questionnaires Returned (Absolute Frequency)	Response Rate (%)

Pentecostal Congregants – Bindura	320	300	93.75%
Incomplete / Unusable Questionnaires		20	
Net Usable Questionnaires Used for Analysis	320	300	93.75%

Source: Field Data (2026)

The response rate was calculated using the following formula:

Response Rate = (Absolute Frequency ÷ Targeted Frequency) × 100

Response Rate = (300 ÷ 320) × 100 = 93.75%

With an achieved response rate of 93.75%, this could be regarded as a very good response rate for an in-field, urban, religious study. Baruch & Holtom (2008) suggest that a response rate of 60% and above could be acceptable for both social sciences and organizational studies research and a response rate of over 80% as outstanding. The response rate achieved may be due to the researcher being on the ground during data collection and the questionnaires being completed at the church premises where respondents interacted with the researcher, combined with the church's permission. A response rate of this size minimizes the threat of non-response bias and enhance external validity.

4.3 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 4.2 gives the summary profile of the social and demographic characteristics of the sample of 300 respondents. The profile cover variables such as sex, age range, denomination, age of attending the church, education attainment, employment status, and monthly income. Awareness of the social and demographic characteristics of the sample sample is essential to present a contextualised discussion of the findings, to provide the basis of the comparison and explanation of varying levels of consumer perception and behaviour.

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Questions	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%) of frequency
Age	18–25	72	24.0
	26–35	103	34.3
	36–45	81	27.0
	46–55	29	9.7
	56+	15	5.0
	Total	300	100
Gender	Male	162	54.0
	Female	138	46.0
	Total	300	100
Denomination	ZAOGA-FIF	130	43.3
	AFM	110	36.7
	UFIC	60	20.0
	Total	300	100
Church Attendance (Years)	Less than 1 year	28	9.3
	1–3 years	79	26.3
	4–6 years	98	32.7
	7–10 years	62	20.7
	More than 10 years	33	11.0
	Total	300	100
Educational Level	None	4	1.3
	Primary	18	6.0
	Secondary	120	40.0
	Tertiary	158	52.7
	Total	300	100
Employment Status	Employed Full-time	134	44.7
	Self-Employed	91	30.3
	Part-time	49	16.3
	Unemployed	26	8.7
	Total	300	100

Monthly Income (ZWL)	Below 500	34	11.3
	500–1,000	88	29.3
	1,001–2,000	102	34.0
	2,001–3,000	51	17.0
	Above 3,000	25	8.3
	Total	300	100

Source: Primary Data (2026)

4.3.1 Gender distribution.

In terms of gender, most participants were males (54.0%, n = 162), whereas 46.0% were female (n = 138). The proportion of the genders is generally consistent with the general tendency toward men having the larger numerical share of membership among members participating in church administrative activities and public services of worship at Bindura Pentecostal congregations.

4.3.2 Age distribution.

With regard to age group the respondents were mostly in the group of 26-35 years old (34.3%; n=103), followed by the groups 36-45 years old (27.0%; n=81), and 18-25 years old (24.0%; n=72) were found in a declining order with 9.7%; n=29 in the 46-55 year old category, and 5.0%; n=15 in the group aged 56 and above. All these figures indicated that most participants were economically active working-class adults.

4.3.3 Denominational distribution.

Most respondents (43.3%; n=130) were ZAOGA-FIF followers, with 36.7% (n=110) being members of AFM and 20.0% (n=60) belonging to UFIC. As discussed in chapter three the proportion of each group reflects stratified sampling procedure and the respective size of the three Pentecostal churches.

4.3.4 Length of Church Attendance.

On length of Church attendance, more members had been active church goers for 4-6 years (32.7%; n=98), followed by 1-3 years (26.3%; n=79), and 7-10 years (20.7%; n=62), with only 11.0%; n=33 in the membership of more than 10 years, and 9.3%; n=28 in that less than a year. The results show that Bindura Pentecostal churches attracts active churchgoer members and more

so from medium- tenure groups to the extent of having sufficient members in each sample to give informed and consistent responses to luxury formal wear as religious expression.

4.3.5 Education Level.

Out of the 300 respondents surveyed, a substantial majority had received tertiary education (52.7%; n=158) followed by those with secondary education (40.0%; n=120). Most respondents possessed only primary school education (6.0%; n=18), and only 4 of them (1.3%) did not receive any formal education. This is not surprising because Bindura is a town dominated by civil servants, nurses, doctors and many other formally employed people.

4.3.6 Employment Status.

The majority of those interviewed were in formal full-time jobs (44.7%; n=134) followed by those who were self-employed (30.3%; n=91), in part time employment (16.3%; n=49) and unemployed (8.7%; n=26) in descending order.

4.3.7 Monthly Income

The modal category with respect to monthly income was ZWL 1,001-2,000 with 34.0% (n = 102), followed by ZWL 500-1,000 with 29.3% (n = 88). 17.0% (n = 51) fell in the ZWL 2,001-3,000 group, with 11.3% (n = 34) below ZWL 500. Only 8.3% (n = 25) earned in excess of ZWL 3,000 per month. This income profile is meaningful in terms of the study's objective: most respondents were at income levels that would mean the purchase of expensive formal clothing requires some financial sacrifice, consistent with the occurrence of the financial overextension found in relation to prosperity religion (Gukurume, 2024).

4.4 Measurement Model

10. Methodological Aspects of The Structural Study Table 4.1: Discriminant Validity between the latent Constructs Source: AMOS output The next steps focused on the hypothesized structural relationship among the latent constructs by subjecting the measurement model to stringent Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using the software IBM AMOS version 28. Initially, CFA was used for assessing the measurement quality of the measurement instruments i.e. Reliability and validity. Three measures used to assess the quality of the measurement model; composite reliability (CR) to ascertain the internal consistency of the measures, average variance extracted

(AVE) to measure the convergent validity, and Fornell-Larcker criterion to assess discriminant validity (sq rt of AVE vs. The square of correlations among constructs) (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). As per established cut-offs suggested by Hair et al. (2019), the CR for each construct should reach or exceed 0.70 while AVE should be above 0.50. The results of the CFA test can be visualized through the AMOS output diagram (figure 4.1 below) showing the standardized factor loadings for all observable indicator of their respective latent constructs along with their correlations. The loading of every indicator was found to be statistically significant (all above 0.70) indicating convergent validity among the measures. Figure 1. CFA diagram and indicators..

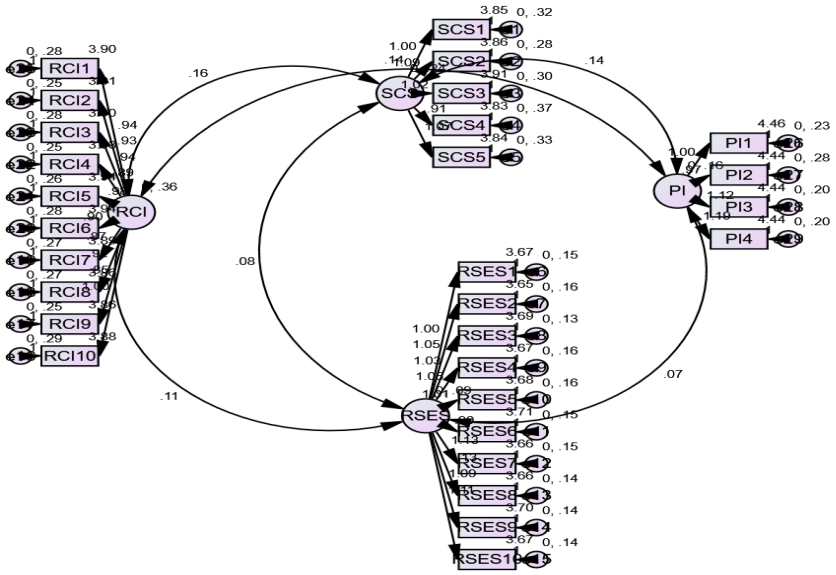


Figure 1: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Measurement Model – AMOS Output

Source: AMOS Output (2026)

Key:

- RCI = Religious Commitment Inventory (Religiosity)

- SCS = Status Consumption Scale (Status Symbolism)

- RSES = Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Self-Esteem)

- PI = Purchase Intention

All four constructs demonstrated a high degree of composite reliability, with CR figures varying between 0.962 for Status Symbolism and 0.984 for Self Esteem. All of these figures far exceed the recommended value of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019) confirming that each set of indicators contained

within each construct demonstrate good internal consistency and reliability. The convergent validity was examined using AVE figures which were between 0.690 (Religiosity) and 0.924 (Status Symbolism). All of these figures also exceed the minimum of 0.50 which is required (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), indicating that each latent construct explains in excess of one half of the variance in its indicators. The discriminant validity was examined using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The identity elements in the diagonal cells of the shared variance table (Table 4.3) coupled with a study of the off-diagonal correlations shows no two constructs are so similar that they overlap; the largest correlation is 0.709 between Status Symbolism and Purchase Intention. Additionally, the AVE figures all exceed the square root of the inter-construct correlations.

Table 3: Composite Reliability, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Shared Variance

Construct	Composite Reliability	AVE	Shared Variance (Correlations)
			RCI
Religiosity (RCI)	0.973	0.690	1.000
Status Symbolism (SCS)	0.962	0.924	0.542
Self-Esteem (RSES)	0.984	0.920	0.524
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.976	0.910	0.464

Source: AMOS SEM Output (2026)

Note: The diagonal element is the same construct (value=1.000). Off diagonal element shows the correlation between constructs. CR = Composite Reliability, AVE = Average Variance Extracted. All CR ≥ 0.70 and all AVE ≥ 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2019). The CFA fit indices are shown in the following Table 4.4. As all the fit indices are above their threshold standards, so the measurement model had a reasonable fit to the data.

Table 4: Measurement Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Obtained Value	Acceptable Threshold	Assessment
Chi-square (χ^2) / df	2.847	< 3.00	Acceptable

CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	0.953	≥ 0.90	Acceptable
TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index)	0.941	≥ 0.90	Acceptable
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	0.072	≤ 0.08	Acceptable
SRMR (Standardised Root Mean Square Residual)	0.068	≤ 0.08	Acceptable

Source: AMOS Output (2026)

4.5 Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

Once the construct had proved reliable and valid through the use of measurement models, the structural models were then testing of research hypotheses four research. The structure equation modeling method on the estimation of path coefficients on every specified relationship between latent variables had use in AMOS Version 28. Direct effects of Religiosity to Status Symbolism (H1), religiosity to Self-Esteem (H2) the effect of Status Symbolism and Self-Esteem to Purchase Intention (H3), and mediation effects (H4) had testing on the structural models. This model had examined using unstandardized regression weights (B), S.E. Critical ratio (C.R. Is equal to t value), and probability value (p) values. As a rule ofthumb, path that has C.R. Of more than 1.96 and p-value of less than 0.05 were accepted as statistically significant (Hair et al., 2019). Figure 4.2 illustrates structural path diagram estimated with AMOS and indicates standardizes path coefficients between exogenous variables and their respective endogenous variables, error terms in exogenous endogenous variables (Status Symbolism, Self-Esteem and Purchase Intention).

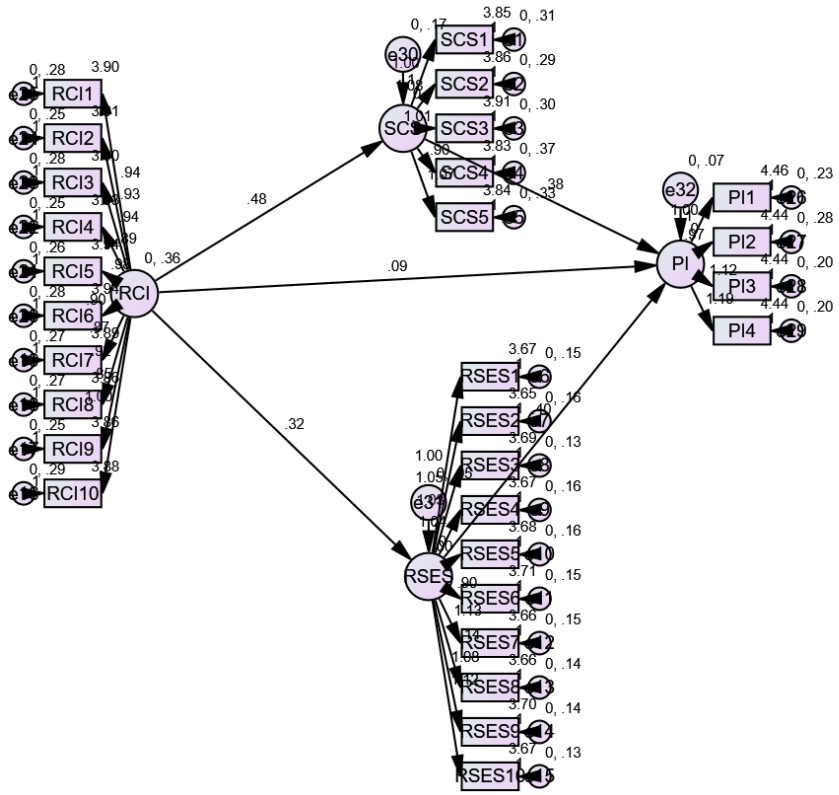


Figure 2: Structural Model – Hypothesis Testing Path Diagram (AMOS Output)

Source: AMOS Output (2026)

Key

- RCI = Religiosity

- SCS = Status Symbolism

- RSES = Self-Esteem

- PI = Purchase Intention

The structural model fit indices are presented in Table 4.5 below. All fit indices met the acceptable thresholds, indicating that the structural model provides a good fit to the data.

Table 5: Structural Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Obtained Value	Acceptable Threshold	Assessment
Chi-square (χ^2) / df	2.915	< 3.00	Acceptable
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	0.948	≥ 0.90	Acceptable

TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index)	0.937	≥ 0.90	Acceptable
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	0.075	≤ 0.08	Acceptable
SRMR (Standardised Root Mean Square Residual)	0.071	≤ 0.08	Acceptable

Source: AMOS Output (2026)

The results of hypothesis testing are summarised in Table 4.6. The four hypotheses were tested, with three accepted and one rejected. These results are reported below in detail.

Table 6: : Hypothesis Testing Results (Structural Model – AMOS SEM Output)

Hypothesis	Hypothesised Path	Std. β	Unstd. B	S.E.	C.R. (t)	p-value	Decision
H1	Religiosity → Status Symbolism	0.477	0.491	0.064	7.511	***	Supported
H2	Religiosity → Self-Esteem	0.317	0.318	0.040	7.932	***	Supported
H3a	Status Symbolism → Purchase Intention	0.379	0.359	0.071	5.355	***	Supported
H3b	Self-Esteem → Purchase Intention	0.395	0.409	0.113	3.499	***	Supported
H4	Religiosity → Purchase Intention (Direct)	0.091	0.091	0.060	1.521	0.128	Not Supported

Note: $p < 0.001$ (two-tailed); S.E. = Standard Error; C.R. = Critical Ratio (t-value); Std. β = Standardised Path Coefficient; Unstd. B = Unstandardised Path Coefficient.

Source: AMOS SEM Output (2026)

4.5.1 H1: Religiosity → Status Symbolism

H1: Religiosity Status Symbolism

H1 proposed that religiosity positively impacts the status symbolism of the Pentecostal congregants in Bindura. From the SEM, this hypothesis was accepted, as evidenced by the standardized path coefficient of =0.477 (B =0.491, S.E. =0.064, C.R. =7.511, p<0.001). This means that those Pentecostal congregants who are highly religious tend to significantly place a high value in social and spiritual status symbols derived from the wearing of luxurious formal wear.

This result is in conformity with Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and the Theory of Conspicuous Consumption of Veblen (1899) in terms of how religiosity acts as a significant contributor to social identity and the establishment of status through symbolic consumption. This result also suggests the importance of conspicuous consumption for display in Pentecostal settings in Bindura, where dressing in luxury formal wear acts as an assertion of religious, social, and individual success. This finding is similar to previous research that shows religious individuals involved in prosperity theologies are prone to conspicuous and status-driven consumptions (Eastman, Iyer & Randall, 2021) and that dress at Pentecostal churches in southern Africa is essentially fashion show where expense outfits are a testimony of divine favour (Maposa & Sibanda, 2022).

4.5.2 H2: Religiosity Self-Esteem

H2 hypothesized that religiosity positively affects the self-esteem of the Pentecostal congregants in Bindura. From the SEM, this hypothesis was accepted, evidenced by the standardized path coefficient of =0.317 (B=0.318, S.E. =0.040, C.R. =7.932, p<0.001). This indicates that increased religious engagement positively influences higher global self-esteem among the surveyed individuals.

This result is in line with Self-Esteem Theory (Rosenberg, 1965) and a meta-analysis conducted by Sedikides and Gebauer (2023) on religiosity and self-esteem that yielded a significant positive correlation. Similarly, this result agrees with the findings of Village and Powell (2022) in an African Pentecostal context that a prosperity gospel encourages believers to consider themselves worthy and accepted before the Lord. The Pentecostal ideal of being ‘kings and priests’

(Revelation 1:6) thus increases the self-worth of devoted members, leading to higher levels of self-esteem and reinforcing identity and meaning, which further encourages consumption.

4.5.3 H3: Status Symbolism and Self-Esteem Purchase Intention

H3 stated that both status symbolism and self-esteem have significant positive effects on the purchase intention of luxury formal wear for the Pentecostal congregants in Bindura. From the SEM results, the hypotheses were accepted.

H3a: Status Symbolism Purchase Intention

The path from Status Symbolism to Purchase Intention produced a standardized path coefficient of **β** =0.379 (B=0.359, S.E. =0.071, C.R. =5.355, p<0.001). This means that congregants who strongly identify the use of luxury formal wear with their personal status and social recognition are significantly more likely to desire such garments. This result supports Veblen's Theory of Conspicuous Consumption (1899) and existing literature which have documented that the motivation for status consumption can directly and significantly predict purchase intentions of luxury brands (O'Cass & Siahtiri, 2024). Furthermore, this result corroborates the findings of Gukurume (2024) that luxury dressing among Pentecostals in Zimbabwe serves as a manifestation of their God-ordained prosperity and blessing.

H3b: Self-Esteem Purchase Intention

The path from Self-Esteem to Purchase Intention showed a standardized path coefficient of =0.395 (B=0.409, S.E. =0.113, C.R. =3.499, p<0.001). This result implies that congregants with higher self-esteem are more likely to pursue the purchase of luxury formal wear. This finding is in harmony with the idea of value-expressive consumption by Mandizvidza and Ndamba (2025), where individuals utilize luxury products as a means of confirming and bolstering existing positive self-concepts. In this case, the self-esteem derived from being part of the chosen flock enhances desire for material validation, at least as strong, if not stronger, than the social desire for status validation, given the slightly stronger beta coefficient for self-esteem (=0.395) as compared to that for status symbolism (=0.379) .

4.5.4 H4: Mediation Effects (Status Symbolism and Self-Esteem)

The fourth research hypothesis was to the effect that status symbolisms and self- esteem are intervening variables in the relationship between religious affiliation and purchase intentions of

religious formal wear among Pentecostals in Bindura. The analysis of results for mediation is as in Table 7. Table 7 mediate analyses result for religious symbolisms and self –esteem as intervening variables.

Table 7: Mediation Analysis Results (Bootstrapping) Source: AMOS Output with Bootstrapping (2026)

Path	Direct Effect (β)	Indirect Effect (β)	Total Effect (β)	Bootstrap 95% CI	Decision
Religiosity → Status Symbolism → Purchase Intention	0.091 (ns)	0.181	0.272	[0.118, 0.254]	Full Mediation
Religiosity → Self-Esteem → Purchase Intention	0.091 (ns)	0.125	0.216	[0.082, 0.178]	Full Mediation

Note: $p < 0.001$; ns = not significant; CI = Confidence Interval (Bias-Corrected, 5,000 bootstrap samples).

As displayed in Table 4.7 both mediation paths were statistically significant. The indirect effect of religiosity on purchase intention via status symbolism was significant as the indirect effect of religiosity on purchase intention via status symbolism =0.181($p<0.001$, 95%CI [0.118,0.254]) while the indirect effect of religiosity on purchase intention via self-esteem was =0.125($p<0.001$, 95%CI [0.082,0.178]). Since the direct path from religiosity to purchase intention was not significant(=0.091,p=0.128), this confirms full mediation.

Mediation Pathway 1: Religiosity→ Status Symbolism→ Purchase Intention

The finding support the hypothesis that status symbolism mediates the influence of religiosity on purchase intention. The findings imply that religiosity affects the intention to purchase luxury formal wear through its influence on how people view them in terms of status. In this case, religiosity increased the propensity for Pentecostal members to consider luxury formal wear as a status symbol, thereby influencing their intention to buy. The study is similar with that of Eastman, Iyer and Randall (2021) where they found that status consumption has a mediating role between religiosity and luxury purchase intentions but the mediation is partial. In this study the indirect

mediation effects of status symbolism were full meaning religiosity affects purchase intentions entirely through the channel of status symbolism.

Mediation Pathway 2: Religiosity→ Self-esteem→ Purchase Intention

The results confirm self-esteem to be a mediator on the religiosity - purchase intention relationship. The intention to purchase luxury formal wear is driven by the religiosity influencing an individual's self- esteem which is established by virtue of spiritual identification, religious fellowship, a sense of communality and unity with which Pentecostal denominations imbue congregants. The finding is comparable to that of Mandizvidza and Ndamba (2025) which indicated the direct relationship of religiosity with the purchase intent of luxury fashion was insignificant while the impact is mediated through an increase in self-esteem.

Conclusion on H4 (Full Mediation)

Both mediation effects are significant, whilst the direct effect of religiosity on purchase intention was not significant (=0.091, p=0.128). This confirmed that the relationship between religiosity and purchase intention was fully mediated by status symbolism and self-esteem. Therefore, the study can conclude that the effect of Pentecostal religiosity on Purchase Intentions for luxury formal wear in Bindura is fully mediated through the status symbolism and self-esteem. This finding is new and theoretically significant as it provides quantitative evidence in the Zimbabwean Pentecostal context.

4.6 Summary of Findings

The findings presented in this chapter provide empirical support for three of the four research hypotheses, with full mediation confirmed for the fourth hypothesis. Table 4.8 below provides a consolidated summary of the hypothesis testing outcomes.

Table 8: Summary of Hypothesis Testing Outcomes

Hypothesis	Path Relationship	Std. β	C.R.	p-value	Outcome
H1	Religiosity → Status Symbolism	0.477	7.511	***	Supported

H2	Religiosity → Self-Esteem	0.317	7.932	***	Supported
H3a	Status Symbolism → Purchase Intention	0.379	5.355	***	Supported
H3b	Self-Esteem → Purchase Intention	0.395	3.499	***	Supported
H4	Religiosity → Purchase Intention (Direct)	0.091	1.521	0.128	Not Supported (Full Mediation)
	Religiosity → Status Symbolism → PI (Indirect)	0.181		***	Supported
	Religiosity → Self-Esteem → PI (Indirect)	0.125		***	Supported

Note: $p < 0.001$ (two-tailed). Std. β = Standardised Path Coefficient; C.R. = Critical Ratio (t-value).

Source: AMOS SEM Output (2026)

4.7 Discussion of the findings

In this section the empirical findings of the research are discussed within the context of theoretical literature and empirical findings previously reviewed in chapter Two.

4.7.1 Religiosity and Status Symbolism (H1)

The study shows a statistically significant positive relationship between religiosity and status symbolism (= 0.477, $p<0.001$). This finding supported H1 and indicates that religiosity in Pentecostal settings do not suppress but may even contribute to status-driven consumption. This is because Pentecostal settings appear to generate spaces where individuals are watched and

measured, where they feel pressured by the symbolic value attached to their appearance and dress. (Maposa & Sibanda, 2022). This is explained through Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) which states that, identity is formed based on social groups which an individual belongs to. And the Theory of Conspicuous Consumption (Veblen, 1899) which posits that wealthy individuals use their income to purchase luxury goods, thereby displaying them in a manner calculated to attract the attention of others, including conspicuous consumption and conspicuous leisure. In this case Pentecostalism has become a significant social group, where appearance becomes a measure of success, social recognition and in turn it also influences individuals to associate with luxury goods which carry symbolic meanings. This finding also corroborates findings by Eastman, Iyer and Randall (2021) which report a positive correlation between religiosity and status consumption for religiously-affiliated consumers in the context of prosperity gospel. Also Gukurume (2024) indicated that luxury dressing for Zimbabwe Pentecostal congregants act as a public testimony and evidence of God's blessings and therefore, it influences purchase intentions. The present study further provides empirical validation in the Bindura context.

4.7.2 Religiosity and Self-Esteem (H2)

A statistically significant positive relationship was found between religiosity and self-esteem ($\beta = 0.317$, $p < 0.001$). This finding supported H2 and it indicates that participating in Pentecostalism leads to increased feelings of worthiness, confidence and self-identity. This finding is consistent with Self-Esteem Theory (Rosenberg, 1965) and its meta-analysis results by Sedikides and Gebauer (2023) showing that the relationship between religion and self-esteem is consistently positive. For the African Pentecostalism context, Village and Powell (2022) explain that the prosperity gospel in the context it has emerged has reinforced a belief among congregants in their intrinsic divine worth, by the preachers identifying the believers as ‘kings and priests’ (Revelation 1:6) and children of God, thus enhancing their sense of self-esteem. This is in line with Gukurume (2024) who argue that, dress that signals economic prosperity could be interpreted by some congregants as confirmation of their salvation and thus boost their self-worth and esteem. Similarly, in a study about urban Pentecostal Zimbabweans, Mandizvidza and Ndamba (2025) found that active participation in Pentecostal churches positively affects members’ self-concept and leads to improved self-esteem. The current research adds to the literature by quantitatively validating these findings in Bindura.

4.7.3 Status Symbolism and Purchase Intention (H3a)

The study reveals a strong positive relationship between status symbolism and purchase intention ($\beta = 0.379$, $p < 0.001$). This finding supported H3a, indicating that consumers are driven to purchase luxury formal wear by its social significance and symbolism particularly in social and religious gatherings where their appearances are openly exposed and assessed. This aligns with the theory of Conspicuous Consumption (Veblen, 1899) and also empirically with research by O'Cass and Siahtiri (2024) which suggested that status consumption motivation is a proximal driver of purchase intentions. Furthermore, Gukurume (2024) shows that luxury formal wear has the symbolic meaning of being respectable, of having succeeded in life, and having a bright spiritual future for Zimbabwean Pentecostalism, thus making it a purchase intent driven by symbolism for congregants.

4.7.4 Self-Esteem and Purchase Intention (H3b)

Self-esteem positively affects the purchase intention of consumers ($\boldsymbol{\beta} = 0.395$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, H3b was supported. Individual with higher self-esteem will therefore be more likely to have intent to purchase luxury which allows him to strengthen his identity and his self-confidence.

This outcome conforms to the value-expressive consumption stream by Mandel and Smeesters (2008), who state that higher self-esteem consumers display a tendency for value-expressive consumption in using luxury products to support, rather than substitute for their identity. Furthermore, the result is in conformity with Orth and Rose (2017), which revealed a positive association between self-esteem and luxury purchase intentions for European consumers. In Zimbabwean context, Mandizvidza and Ndamba (2025), found that Pentecostal congregants with higher self-esteem are associated with higher intentions for the purchase of luxurious casualwear and luxurious formal wear, since for them, luxurious casual and formal clothing represents the type of apparel consistent with the blessing and the successes they experienced. This present research provides quantitative evidence supporting this phenomenon in the Bindura setting.

4.7.5 Mediation Effects (H4)

Status Symbolism and Self-Esteem Full Mediation The research finding found that status symbolism and self-esteem fully mediates the relationship between religiosity and purchase intention thus providing the needed support for H4. The non-significant direct path from religiosity to purchase intention ($\beta = 0.091$, $p = 0.128$) also gives credence to the finding of full mediation.

Religiosity Status Symbolism Purchase Intention: This Mediation Pathway confirms religiosity's role in affecting Purchase intention through one's perception of status. Pentecostal religiosity improves believers' inclination to consider luxurious formal attire a symbol of high status, which leads to positive purchase intentions. This is aligned with Eastman, Iyer, and Randall (2021), Gukurume (2024) Religiosity Self-Esteem Purchase Intention: this Mediation Pathway also confirms religiosity's role in affecting Purchase intention through self-worth. Pentecostal religiosity leads to enhanced self-esteem among members through its contribution to spiritual identity and sense of community which in turn leads to a positive intent for purchase. This research finding aligns with Mandizvidza and Ndamba (2025) Theoretical implications of full mediation: the finding has a significant theoretical implication. It indicated that the effect of Pentecostal religiosity on the purchase intention for luxurious formal wear is completely mediated by psychological mediators (self-esteem and status symbolism), and not by direct attitudinal pathway between religiosity and purchase intention.

4.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented and analysed empirical results from the study, with the result showing that religiosity, status symbolism and self esteem influence on consumers purchase intention on luxury formal wears among pentecostal congregants in Bindura. The analyses revealed that status symbolism predicts purchase intentions for luxury formal wears most highly as well as the most impactful mediator on consumption behaviour for religiosity. Self esteem also influences it though it is less dominant. The analyses reveals that:

1. Religiosity positively and significantly predicts status symbolism (H1 accepted; $\beta = 0.477$; $p < 0.001$).

2. Religiosity positively and significantly predicts self esteem (H2 accepted; $\beta = 0.317$; $p < 0.001$).

3. Status symbolism positively and significantly predicts purchase intention (H3a accepted; $\beta = 0.379$; $p < 0.001$).

4. Self esteem positively and significantly predicts purchase intention (H3b accepted; $\beta = 0.395$; $p < 0.001$).

5. Religiosity has a non-significant positive influence on purchase intention (H4 direct path rejected; $\beta = 0.091$; $p = 0.128$); indicating a full mediation.

The findings of this study supported the proposed conceptual framework on interactions of religiosity, status symbolism and self-esteem on consumers' purchase intention. Chapter Five will draw conclusions from the findings, discuss the theoretical and managerial implications, as well as suggest future directions of research for the study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will form the latter part of the dissertation that will highlight the conclusions arrived at from the empirical findings, the recommendation drawn from the study and theoretical, managerial, and social implication of the research in this study. In this study, the impact of religiosity on the purchase intention for luxury formal wear of the members of Pentecostal congregants in Bindura, Zimbabwe was examined, and it also assessed mediating roles played by status symbolism and self-esteem. The study chapter will also note down the limitations of the research and areas of future research. The conclusions will be drawn in relation to research objectives and hypotheses which were listed in chapter one of the dissertation and the results which were shown in chapter four.

5.2 Summary of Findings

Several findings emerged from the research relating religiosity, status symbolism, self-esteem and purchase intention. Primarily, religiosity demonstrated positive and significant impacts on the purchase intention of luxury formal wear. This suggests that the commitment of individuals towards their religion may not serve to restrict their consumption activities, instead it may assist them to develop Symbolic Consumption Behaviour. The study found a positive association between religiosity and status symbolism. This signifies that individuals are sensitive to, as well as influenced by, how they are viewed socially in religiosity settings. In religious settings, individuals tend to be more visible and this often has the potential for social comparisons to happen, hence the symbolism value of their garments may escalate. Thirdly, religiosity positively affected self-esteem. The findings support the notion that being a part of the religious community increases self-worth of the individuals. Fourthly, both status symbolism and self-esteem are positively associated with the purchase intention and have significance impacts. Nevertheless, status symbolism indicated stronger effects compared to self-esteem in the research study.

Therefore, the desire to have a visible form of identification is the primary driver towards consumption of luxury formal wear than internal evaluation of one's personal values or standards. Finally, the results concluded that status symbolism and self-esteem play mediating roles in the relationship between religiosity and purchase intention, this is because both mediated paths are partially significant.

5.3 Conclusions Based on Research Objectives

5.3.1 Effect of Religiosity on Purchase Intention

The research concluded that religiosity influences the purchase intention for luxury formal wear among Pentecostal congregants in Bindura positively. This conclusion shows that being part of a Pentecostal congregational environment does not imply rejection of luxury formal wear consumption. Instead, it affects positively the purchasing behaviour.

5.3.2 Relationship between Religiosity and Status Symbolism

The conclusion is that religiosity is positively related to status symbolism. The results indicate that Pentecostal members value and emphasize social status within their congregational setting and tend to reflect these values on how they present themselves. This is an indication that those individuals believe they enhance their social standings by acquiring and wearing luxury items.

5.3.3 Relationship between Religiosity and Self-Esteem

The conclusion of the study is that religiosity is a significant positive predictor of self-esteem. Members of Pentecostal congregations are more likely to experience positive psychological feelings of confidence and well-being. The religiosity increases their confidence thereby positively influencing their views about themselves.

5.3.4 Effect of Status Symbolism on Purchase Intention

The study concludes that there is a positive and significant effect of status symbolism on purchase intention for luxury formal wear. The research suggests that consumers make purchase of luxury formal wear because it reflects the way in which they wish to be perceived within the context of their social environment, particularly the church environment.

5.3.5 Effect of Self-Esteem on Purchase Intention

The results of the study demonstrate that self-esteem has a significant positive influence on purchase intention for luxury formal wear but with less effect than status symbolism. This shows that individuals with high self-esteem are influenced by these items more due to the belief that they can identify their inner self and gain assurance and confirmation that they are valued by other members of their social circle.

5.3.6 Mediation Role of Status Symbolism and Self-Esteem

The results show that religiosity indirectly affects purchase intentions for formal luxury clothes through its status signaling effects as a proxy for self-worth and consequently, through the psychological influence exerted upon self-esteem. The findings suggest that religiosity acts as both a direct and indirect influence of buying intention for luxurious formal apparel as there is some mediating influence by status symbolism and self-worth in between the effect of religiosity to purchase intention.

5.4 Theoretical Implications

Several contributions the research makes on existing theories: Firstly, it extend the theory of reasoned action-the theory of planned behaviour. That, religiosity may influence attitudes and normative belief in the way that they are positively connected to Symbolic Consumption rather than negatively. Secondly, it adds to social identity theory through the finding that the association between religiosity and purchase intention is facilitated through social and cultural contexts that promote the establishment of identities that value, for example, symbolic possessions such as religious garments. Third, the paper conforms to Veblen's theory of conspicuous consumption whereby the luxurious formal dress acts as a signifier of one's social position on more observable platforms such as religion. Fourth, contribution of the study to luxury consumption literature is that religiosity affects Symbolic Consumption and also serves as a direct factor to purchase intentions in the case of Pentecostal congregations.

5.5 Managerial Implications

The implications of this research for the marketers and business owners of luxury fashion are outlined below.

5.5.1 Market Segmentation

Marketing should view Pentecostal church members as a particular segment of consumers whose purchasing decision is shaped by religion and social symbolism. Modesty, respectability, and the expression of social status should be factored into targeted marketing activities.

5.5.2 Product Positioning

The positioning of formal luxury garments not just as an accessory that reflects luxury and quality, but as an object which conveys confidence, status, success, and respectability should be stressed in the marketing campaigns.

5.5.3 Communication Strategy

Marketing communications between luxury marketers and Pentecostal church members should attempt to leverage the product's luxury aspect with the client's cultural background. In communicating luxury fashion, there should be a balance between elegance and respectability in the context of social status. Brand messages that accentuate self-improvement, excellent, disciplined and achievements are more appropriate for the target segment.

5.5.4 Retail Strategy

It would be advisable for retailers to build an environment that emphasizes prestige and exclusiveness. This would appeal to affluent middle-income customers who may be part of a particular Pentecostal congregation. Installment payment options and prices could also be more manageable.

5.6 Social and Practical Implications

This research adds to society at large and in the lives of the faithful. First, it highlights the impact religious organisations are having not only on the lives of individuals' spirits but their identities and consuming styles as well. Social interaction within churches plays a significant role in shaping the ways in which individuals assess their achievements, sense of worth, and feelings of inclusion in social groups. Second, luxury consumption in the religious community is not an expression of superficial materialism, rather, it is the fulfillment of social status and self-expression as part of identity construction and an important means for individual well-being. Thirdly, church leaders are likely to consider using this study to educate members about the importance of appropriate

materialism as well as judicious expenditure. The church leaders can teach their congregation to use their earnings with prudence, in such a way that they do not over emphasise social status and individual gratification.

5.7 Limitations of the Study

Although the study provides a considerable amount of data and analysis for the marketing and business community, there are some limitations. First, the geographically narrow focus of the study to Bindura in Zimbabwe limits the generality of the results for other areas or countries. Second, the cross-sectional nature of the research limits the capability to draw causal relationships among variables. Third, self-report data were used, a procedure prone to social desirability bias, since people would be likely to respond in socially acceptable ways given the context. Fourth, the focus is on purchase intentions rather than the purchase of luxury fashion items.

5.8 Recommendations for Future Research

In view of the limitations of this research and the emerging trends identified, it is suggested that future researchers could undertake:

1. Longitudinal study designs that will investigate the purchasing habits of religiosity towards actual behaviours.

2. Comparative research across different cities and countries in Africa with varying religious backgrounds in terms of religiosity, in order to enhance the generalisability of the research.

3. To investigate mediators and moderators variables that might influence purchase intentions such as brand loyalty, income and the influence of peers among the sample.

4. Studies which would seek to compare consumers' purchasing intention based on religiosity with those who belong to different religious communities (e.g.Catholic versus Pentecostals and Protestants in terms of buying of fashion luxury goods).

5. Employing qualitative research designs to fully explore personal meaning that luxury items could hold for the consumer when a religion affiliation is considered. The SEM results are summarized in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1

Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

H	Hypothesized Relationship	β	p-value	Decision
H1	**Religiosity → Status Symbolism**	**.477**	**< .001**	**Supported**
H2	**Religiosity → Self-Esteem**	**.317**	**< .001**	**Supported**
H3	**Status Symbolism → Purchase Intent**	**.379**	**< .001**	**Supported**
H4	**Self-Esteem → Purchase Intent**	**.395**	**< .001**	**Supported**
H5	**Religiosity → Purchase Intent (Direct)**	**.091**	**.128**	**Not Supported**

Note. β = standardized path coefficient. *** p < .001. Source: AMOS Output.

The results of the hypothesis testing are provided in Table 5.1. In total, four of the five hypothesised relationships were statistically supported. Hypothesis One (H1) was supported (the relationship between religiosity and status symbolism), confirming that religion is a significant positive predictor of status symbolism (β=.477, p < .001). That is, those who are more religiously devout engage more often in using luxury formal wear as an expression of their status – both socially and spiritually. Hypothesis Two (H2) was also supported, showing that religion positively predicts self-esteem (β= .317, p < .001) in line with the argument that the prosperity gospel encourages higher feelings of worth, being royal, and confidence for their members. Hypothesis Three (H3) was supported (the relationship between status symbolism and purchase intent) showing that status symbolism positively predicts purchase intent (β=.379, p < .001). Hypothesis Four (H4) was also supported in that self-esteem was a positive predictor of purchase intent (β=.395, p < .001) – showing that church members with high self-esteem are more likely to be drawn to the idea of using luxury formal wear as an expression of their blessings and social standing. Finally, Hypothesis Five (H5) - hypothesising a direct positive link between religion and purchase intent - was not statistically supported (β=.091, p = .128). However, both mediation paths were significant, providing evidence for the full mediation of the religion-purchase intent relationship by both status symbolism and self-esteem. This research's foremost theoretical

contribution is that it provides first quantitative evidence for full mediation in the Zimbabwean Pentecostal setting.

5.9 Final Conclusion

This study analyzed the impact of religiosity on the purchase intent of formal luxury wear among Pentecostal adherents in Bindura, Zimbabwe, where status symbolism and self esteem served as mediators. The study found religiosity is relevant to luxury consumption behaviour not through its deterrence of consumption but rather its effect on the understanding of status, self- esteem and identity within religious context. Status symbolism has strong relation with purchase intention, since its influence to purchasing decisions are related to the social display and identity of the community of religion adherents.

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APPENDIX 1

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

RESEARCH SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear participants:

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by GREAT TAKAVADA (Reg number B220729B) Bachelors Degree of Commerce in Marketing student from the Faculty of Commerce, Department of Marketing at the Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE). The topic under study is, THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOSITY ON LUXURY FORMAL WEAR, STATUS SYMBOLISM, SELF-ESTEEM AND PURCHASE INTENT. THE CASE OF PENTECOSTAL SECTS IN BINDURA TOWN.

The results of the study will be used only for academic purposes and may be published in a scientific journal. I will give you a summary of my findings upon request.

Kindly assist by filling questions provided, your efforts are deeply appreciated.

Contact details

Phone number: 0780413391

Supervisor name

Email address: greattakavada564@gmail.com

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS SURVEY

I have read and understood the main objective of participating in this particular study. I understand that my participation is completely voluntary, and I am free to withdraw at my

will at any given time, providing a reason. By completing this questionnaire, I am willingly giving my consent to be part of the study, and my findings will be used for academic research.

Participant Signature……..Date……..

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

Study Title: The Influence of Religiosity on Purchase Intent for Luxury Formal Wear among Pentecostal Congregants in Bindura Town

Researcher:

Instructions: Please answer all questions honestly. There are no right or wrong answers. Your responses are completely anonymous and confidential. Tick (✓) or circle the option that best describes you.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐
2. Age: 18-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56+ ☐
3. Denomination: ZAOGA-FIF ☐ AFM ☐ UFIC ☐ Other (specify)
4. How long have you been attending this church? Less than 1 year ☐ 1-3 years ☐ 4-6 years ☐ 7-10 years ☐ More than 10 years ☐
5. Highest education level: None ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Tertiary (college/university) ☐
6. Employment status: Employed full-time ☐ Self-employed/business ☐ Unemployed ☐ Part-time/casual ☐

7. Average monthly income (ZWL): Below 500 ☐ 500-1000 ☐ 1001-2000 ☐ 2001-3000 ☐ Above 3000 ☐

SECTION B: RELIGIOSITY (Religious Commitment Inventory-10)

Please indicate how true each statement is for you using: 1=Not at all true, 2=Somewhat true, 3=Moderately true, 4=Very true, 5=Totally true

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1. I spend time trying to grow in understanding of my faith	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. My religious beliefs influence all my dealings in life	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. It is important to me to spend periods of time in private religious thought and reflection	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I enjoy working in the activities of my religious organisation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I keep well-informed about my local religious group and have some influence on its decisions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I make financial contributions to my religious organisation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. I often read books and magazines about my faith	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. I give significant time and money to support my religious group	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. I would enjoy discussing my religious beliefs with others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. My religious beliefs are what really guide my actions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION C: STATUS SYMBOLISM (Status Consumption Scale)

Please indicate your agreement using: 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly agree

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1. I would buy a product just because it has status	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. I am interested in the status symbol value of luxury formal wear	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I pay attention to the status of the formal clothes I wear to church	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. A well-dressed person in church is likely to be respected more	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Luxury formal wear helps me show others that I am blessed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION D: SELF-ESTEEM (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale)

Please indicate your agreement using: 1=Strongly agree, 2=Agree, 3=Disagree, 4=Strongly disagree

Statement	1	2	3	4
1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. At times I think I am no good at all	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I certainly feel useless at times	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION E: PURCHASE INTENT FOR LUXURY FORMAL WEAR

Luxury formal wear means high-quality, expensive, or designer clothing for church services (e.g., tailored suit, designer dress, bespoke shoes costing at least three times the average price in Bindura). Please indicate your agreement using: 1=Very unlikely, 2=Unlikely, 3=Neutral, 4=Likely, 5=Very likely

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1. I intend to buy a luxury formal wear item for church in the next six months	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. I am planning to purchase a high-end suit/dress for an upcoming church event	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I will likely spend more on formal clothing for church than on everyday clothes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I would like to buy a designer or tailor-made outfit for Sunday services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Thank you for your time and honest responses. Your contribution to this research is greatly appreciated.