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Online purchase intentions of affluent women: blending African beliefs, consumer vanity and luxury beauty products online purchase intentions

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ABSTRACT

With the growing popularity of online shopping and the increasing demand for luxury beauty products, understanding the underlying cultural factors influencing consumer behaviour becomes crucial for marketers and researchers alike. This study aims to investigate the influence of African social axioms on affluent women's consumer vanity and luxury beauty products online purchase intention in Zimbabwe. Data was collected from 400 affluent female respondents in Zimbabwe through convenience sampling. The study used a structured questionnaire to gather information from affluent women in affluent suburbs and shopping centres. Data was analysed using structural equation modelling on SPSS AMOS. Findings of the study revealed significant negative relations between Ubuntu and consumer vanity. Other African beliefs of ancestral relevance and religiosity had positive relations to consumer vanity. Consumer vanity had positive relations to online purchase intentions of luxury beauty products. It was also concluded that individuals who place importance on their ancestral heritage and strong religious beliefs may be more inclined to prioritise physical appearance leading to a greater interest in luxury beauty products. However, individuals who uphold Ubuntu ethos are least concerned with vanity, hence, promotional messages and branding must incorporate Ubuntu to capture such consumers.

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1. Introduction

Consumer behaviour is very elusive to comprehend due to the complexity of the several underlying factors influencing ultimate behaviour (Dubuisson-Quellier, 2022). Consumer behaviour is not uniform or fixed; rather, it is akin to shifting sands, changing within specific cultural contexts as they are influenced, *inter alia*, by cultural beliefs (Makudza et al., 2022). The convergence of African social norms and consumer behaviour in affluent women received scant attention in recent years. As African cultures face fast transition and economic progress, affluent women are increasingly seeking luxury cosmetic items to improve their personal appearance and reflect their social position (Liu, 2020).

The worldwide luxury goods market was worth US\$301 billion in 2019 and has been constantly rising for the past five years to 2024. Luxury brands continue to be significant and appealing to customers worldwide. The luxury trade has been evolving in response to the digital landscape. Online sales of luxury products have been gradually increasing, accounting for around 12% of the overall luxury market in 2019. In the luxury beauty market, e-commerce is becoming increasingly essential. Between 2020 and 2027, online sales of luxury cosmetic items are predicted to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12.3%. The COVID-19 epidemic has hastened this shift to online channels, with consumers increasingly resorting to digital platforms for beauty purchases (Jaravaza et al., 2024). L'Oreal, Estée Lauder, Shiseido, Chanel, and Dior are among the top luxury beauty brands in the world (Bosiu et al., 2017).

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The global beauty business has seen a considerable increase in demand for luxury beauty products in recent years. This increase can be linked to a variety of variables, including changing societal standards, more disposable income, and social media's expanding influence (Burgess, 2011). This increase in demand is most noticeable among affluent women, who have become more mindful of their looks and strive to enhance their beauty through the use of high-end cosmetic products (Bosiu et al., 2017). African societies are noted for their rich cultural past and distinctive social norms, which influence people's behaviours and attitudes (Burgess, 2011). Africa's diverse cultural heritage also plays a role in the growth of the luxury beauty industry. Customers in African countries have a high demand of beauty luxury products and premium beauty brands (Bosiu et al., 2017).

Research indicates that African cultural beliefs significantly influence the purchasing behaviour of affluent women, reflecting a rich tapestry of diversity across the continent (Petraivičiūtė et al., 2021). For instance, in West African countries such as Nigeria, affluent women often embrace traditional values that celebrate communal identity and social status, leading them to invest in luxury goods that symbolize prestige and heritage, such as bespoke clothing and artisanal crafts (Ezenagu, 2020). In contrast, affluent women in South Africa may prioritize brands that align with modernity and sustainability, reflecting a shift toward individualism and global consciousness in their consumer choices (Iqani, 2022). Furthermore, cultural festivals and ceremonies can drive significant spending in these demographics, as luxury purchases are often made not just for personal enjoyment but as important contributions to social events. Hence, the interplay between cultural beliefs and purchasing behaviour among affluent African women showcases a nuanced understanding of identity, tradition, and modernity in their consumer patterns.

Given that the affluent consumers are a lucrative market and that the luxury beauty products are also a lucrative market, there is need to comprehend the behaviours of these consumers. One area that has received limited attention in the literature is the impact of African social axioms on vanity and luxury beauty products purchase intention of affluent women consumers. While earlier research has investigated the relationship between cultural values and consumer behaviour, less emphasis has been paid to the unique setting of African social axioms and their impact on affluent women's attitudes toward vanity and expensive cosmetic items (Iyadi & Edeme, 2023).

Therefore, this study aims to address the following research questions:

1. How do African beliefs (social axioms) of Ubuntu, Ancestral relevance and Religiosity influence affluent women's consumer vanity in the context of luxury beauty products?
2. What is the relationship between affluent women's consumer vanity (physical appearance and achievement vanity) and affluent women's online purchase intention of luxury beauty products?

2. Literature review

2.1. Hierarchy of effects model

The Value-attitude-behaviour hierarchical model by Homer and Kahle (1988) explicitly capture the cultural beliefs-consumer vanity- online purchase behaviour conceptual model of this study. Homer and Kahle's model was generally referred to as a hierarchy of effects model (Zici et al., 2021). This hierarchy of effects of global values was succinctly describes by Homer and Kahle as depicting a logical flow from beliefs and values to attitudes to situated behaviour. Rokeach noted that an individual's belief system emanates from cultural values and beliefs (Zici et al., 2021). Cultural beliefs shape consumer attitudes that vary by specific areas or domains (Zhang et al., 2020). For this study, consumer vanity is the attitudinal construct which focuses on an individual's positive view of their physical appearance (physical vanity) and success/achievement (achievement vanity) (Sharda & Bhat, 2019). This psychological or attitudinal concept of consumer vanity is anticipated to affect luxury consumption or behaviour. Hence, just like the Homer and Kahle hierarchy of effects model, the cultural beliefs-consumer vanity-online purchase intention conceptual model of the study is expected to have a causal sequence (Sharda & Bhat, 2019).

2.2. Affluent consumers

Individuals or households with a high level of wealth or income are referred to as affluent customers. These customers often have more purchasing power and can afford luxury items, high-end products, and premium services (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). Because of their larger spending potential, they are frequently sought after by luxury businesses and marketers. Many businesses, including luxury goods, tourism and hospitality, financial services, and high-end fashion, view affluent customers as a valuable target market. Their purchasing habits and tastes frequently differ from those of other customer groups, making it critical for marketers to understand their requirements and motives (Dubuisson-Quellier, 2022). Affluent consumers have greater discretionary income, allowing them to spend more freely on goods and services.

2.3. Affluent women

In recent years, there has been a dramatic shift in the socioeconomic environment, notably in terms of rich women's expanding influence and economic power. Women's education and labour-force involvement have increased, resulting in higher salaries and greater financial independence (Lanphier et al., 2020). Women control 39% of worldwide wealth and \$20 trillion in annual consumer expenditure, according to the Harvard Business Review (Greenfield, 2017). This economic empowerment has given affluent women more decision-making power, influencing industries such as retail, luxury products, and services. Affluent women contribute significantly to consumer expenditure, with their choices impacting market trends and brand strategy (Deloitte, 2019). Women's increasing prosperity has also fuelled entrepreneurship, with an increasing number of affluent women launching their own enterprises. According to research conducted by the Center for Women's Business Research, women-owned firms in the United States alone produce \$1.8 trillion in annual sales (Womenable & American Express, 2017).

2.4. African axioms

African axioms, often referred to as cultural beliefs or principles, influence the behaviours, attitudes, and values of individuals in African communities. These axioms are deeply rooted in the continent's rich history, traditions, and cultural heritage (Sachikonye & Ramlogan, 2024). African social axioms refer to shared cultural beliefs and values that guide individuals' thoughts, feelings, and actions (Bond, 2004). Understanding the implications of these axioms is critical for understanding numerous elements of African societies, such as consumer behaviour and purchase decisions. Several researchers have investigated the impact of African axioms on various aspects of life, including family structures, social relationships, and economic activities. Sachikonye and Ramlogan (2024), for example, underlined the value of 'Ubuntu', a Southern African philosophy that fosters interconnectivity, compassion, and communitarianism. This axiom promotes people to prioritize communal well-being over individual success and impacts their behaviour in a variety of circumstances, including their purchasing habits.

2.5. Ubuntu

Ubuntu, which is derived from the Zulu word 'umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu', means 'I am because we are' and reflects the idea of interconnectedness and community in African philosophy. Ubuntu is a guiding principle for human relations that emphasizes compassion, cooperation, and a sense of common humanity (Bicaba, 2015). Ubuntu is a Nguni Bantu term that translates to 'humanity towards others' or 'I am because we are' (Chigangaidze et al., 2022). It highlights the interconnectedness and reliance of individuals within a community. Ubuntu promotes communal harmony, collaboration, and shared responsibility. Scholars have stressed its significance in fostering social cohesion, conflict resolution, and ethical behaviour in African societies. It is commonly regarded as a guiding principle for interpersonal relationships, emphasizing empathy, compassion, and concern for others (Chigangaidze et al., 2022).

2.6. Ancestral relevance

Ancestral significance is the belief in the continual presence and impact of ancestors in the lives of contemporary humans. Ancestors are revered as protectors, guardians, and teachers. This belief system is

widespread in many African civilizations and is deeply rooted in the concept of being connected to one's forefathers and ancestry. Ancestral relevance has a profound impact on societal norms, rituals, and behaviours. It influences decisions, family dynamics, and community cohesion. Ancestral beliefs have been investigated from a psychological and sociological perspective, with an emphasis on identity formation, well-being, and social integration (Iliescu et al., 2017). Ancestral significance is a critical part of African social beliefs, where ancestors have considerable spiritual and cultural significance. Ancestral devotion is profoundly ingrained in African social principles, serving to ensure cultural continuity. It entails acts of ancestral devotion, including as ancestral worship, ceremonies, and communion with the spirit realm. (Mbiti, 2002).

2.7. Religiosity

In Africa, religiosity encompasses a diverse range of indigenous, traditional, and foreign religious beliefs and practices (Iliescu et al., 2017). A holistic perspective that includes spiritual, social, and environmental components distinguishes African religiosity. It emphasizes human, natural, and supernatural connection. Several research on the role of religion in the formation of moral values, social norms, healing practices, and community development have been done (Leung & Bond, 2009). Religious beliefs and practices influence cultural norms, values, and social relationships in African communities. African societies have a wide range of religious beliefs and practices. Within African societal structures, religious heterogeneity is accommodated, promoting tolerance, respect, and peaceful coexistence. It investigates the significance of religious diversity in the formation of communal identities and the promotion of interfaith communication (Iliescu et al., 2017).

2.8. Affluent consumer vanity

Durvasula et al. (2001) defines affluent consumer vanity as the tendency of rich persons to indulge in excessive displays of wealth, prestige, and self-importance. Affluent consumer vanity focuses on understanding consumer behaviour related to status-seeking and materialism among affluent individuals (Atwal & Williams, 2009). Affluent consumer vanity literature explores how affluent consumers' desire for status and self-enhancement impacts their purchasing decisions, social behaviour, and overall lifestyle (Dubois et al., 2005). Wealth and goods are frequently perceived as signs of personal value and self-worth by affluent consumers. Displaying material things can help people boost their self-esteem and get external validation (Atwal & Williams, 2009). Affluent persons may engage in conspicuous consumption to preserve or enhance their social position through engaging in social comparison, which includes comparing oneself to others, particularly within their own social class (Wang & Waller, 2006).

2.9. Online purchase intention of luxury beauty products

Purchase intention refers to an individual's goal or plan to purchase a specific product or service in the future (Takaya, 2019). It is a psychological construct that indicates a consumer's willingness to make a purchasing choice. Personal preferences, perceived need or desire for the goods, price, quality, brand reputation, and marketing activities all impact purchase intent. The process through which customers plan to acquire a product or service because of advertisements presented through advertising media is referred to as online purchase intention (Makudza et al., 2024). According to Srivastava et al. (2023), online purchase intention is defined as the degree to which a buyer is ready to acquire a product from an online store. The study of purchase intent is crucial since every transaction activity, whether real or virtual, begins with purpose (Makudza et al., 2024).

2.10. Hypotheses development

2.10.1. Ubuntu and physical vanity

The desire of physical beauty has grown increasingly popular in today's consumer-driven society. The obsession with appearance and the yearning for perfection has given rise to a plethora of enterprises

devoted to improving one's physical attributes (Grout, 2024). This emphasis on consumer vanities, however, frequently comes at the expense of more profound values, such as Ubuntu, a traditional African philosophy emphasizing interconnectivity, compassion, and community (Barnard et al., 2008). Consumer vanity is the excessive obsession with one's physical appearance and the constant quest of physical perfection. Media depiction, societal pressures, and billion-dollar industries that thrive on promoting beauty standards all contribute to this situation. The pressure to comply to these ideals has increased with the introduction of social media platforms, driving individuals to invest significant time, energy, and financial resources in their physical well-being (Petračiūtė et al., 2021).

Kaunda and Mthembu (2020) found that adopting the Ubuntu concept has a substantial negative connection with bodily worries and beliefs, indicating a more universal approach to health and well-being. Emphasizing social well-being, Ubuntu philosophy may reduce individual concerns about physical appearance and promote a more positive body image (Eze & Jabes, 2018). Furthermore, Okafor (2019) found that Ubuntu ideology promotes good self-perception, self-acceptance, and a better understanding of social interactions. As a result, it is very probable to have a negative link with physical worries and opinions. The Ubuntu concept highlights the principle that an individual's pleasure is intimately related to the happiness of the community (Barnard et al., 2008). In contrast, consumer vanity and a culture of bodily concerns undermine Ubuntu by encouraging individualism and self-centeredness. When people place their attractiveness above all else, they miss out on crucial parts of Ubuntu, such as empathy and compassion. Embracing Ubuntu encourages people to shift their focus away from outward looks and toward all people's fundamental worth and contributions, resulting in a more compassionate and harmonious society.

Guided by the foregoing empirical discussion, extant literature posits that Ubuntu has a negative relationship with physical worry and viewpoint. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1a: Ubuntu has a negative relation to physical concern and view.

2.10.2. Ubuntu and achievement vanity

Ubuntu is a traditional African philosophy that emphasizes humanity's interdependence and promotes cooperation, empathy, and mutual support (Barnard et al., 2008). In contrast, consumer vanity has recently arisen as a serious issue in modern culture. Ubuntu promotes a cooperative and collaborative environment that prioritizes the well-being of the community over individual needs. Individuals are encouraged to recognize the inherent worth and dignity of others, resulting in a strong social fabric based on respect and empathy (García-Alonso et al., 2020).

Individuals from collectivist societies, which have ideals comparable to Ubuntu, stress relationship harmony and interdependence over individual achievement, according to Laher and Dockrat (2019). Huang et al. (2022) suggest that cultural beliefs that prioritize collectivism might reduce the focus on individual achievements in favour of goals that promote collaboration. According to Akabor and Phasha (2022), personal achievement is driven by a wish for social acceptance and success. In the context of Ubuntu, which focuses on social support, this may reduce the concern for individual achievement. Extending the concept of Ubuntu, research by Triandis et al. (1988) found that individuals from collectivist societies may have muted achievement worries if they emphasize communal interests and collective well-being over individual accomplishment, according to research.

Focusing on appearance and wealth can result in shallow relationships, where individuals are appreciated more for their belongings than their intrinsic qualities (Makudza, 2023). Consumer vanity prioritizes own preferences and self-gratification over others' needs and well-being, undermining Ubuntu values. Consumer vanity undermines the basic concepts of empathy, social peace, and shared responsibility, which are incompatible with the spirit of Ubuntu (Ajzen, 2005).

Considering the above literature, the following hypothesis are proposed:

H1b: Ubuntu negatively affects achievement concern and view.

2.10.3. Ancestral relevance and physical vanity

Ancestral relevance refers to the significance or importance of one's ancestral background in determining one's identity, values, and sense of belonging. It recognizes the influence of preceding generations on

an individual's cultural, social, and familial ties (Howe & Derbish, 2014). Consumer vanity, on the other hand, refers to a person's desire or proclivity to highlight their own appearance, position, or self-image through the purchase of goods or services. It typically comprises seeking praise or attention from others based on outer characteristics such as physical appearance, possessions, or social media presence (Sharda & Bhat, 2019).

According to Cashdan (2008), physical appearance is linked to traits such as health, fertility, and genetic fitness in many traditional civilizations. This means that people who have a better connection to their ancestors are more likely to emphasize physical well-being and, as a result, have a more positive perception of their physical appearance. According to Thoits (2010), sociocultural ideals frequently reflect evolutionary tendencies, and physical attractiveness is a ubiquitous feature of human social life. Thus, individuals with a high feeling of ancestral significance may be more willing to conform to these standards, resulting in greater physical concern and a more positive outlook. Several empirical findings support the concept that ancestral relevance influences physical concern and viewpoint. Chamorro-Premuzic et al. (2009) discovered, for example, that people who reported a stronger connection to their traditional culture had higher body esteem and were more satisfied with their physical appearance. This shows that ancestral relevance can influence positive self-perception of physical characteristics.

Therefore, based on a review of the literature, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2a: Ancestral relevance positively affects physical concern and view.

2.10.4. Ancestral relevance and achievement vanity

Ancestral relevance is the idea that recognizing and valuing one's cultural heritage promotes one's sense of identity and accomplishment. It means that when people have a strong connection to their ancestors, they are more likely to experience a sense of belonging and purpose in their life, which may motivate them to prosper in all aspects of their lives (Howe & Derbish, 2014). Concern for achievement, on the other hand, refers to a person's motivation and drive to succeed. It encompasses the desire to pursue and achieve personal goals, excel academically, and make a meaningful contribution to society. Individuals who are aware of and proud of their cultural heritage may have a higher level of accomplishment concern because they want to strive and succeed not just for themselves but also to honour their ancestors and contribute to their communities. This field regularly studies the impact of ancestral significance and cultural pride on life achievement, self-esteem, and psychosocial well-being (García-Alonso et al., 2020). According to studies, a strong connection to one's ancestors can have a major impact on one's life achievement. It can also serve to promote a sense of belonging, cultural affiliation, and resilience, all of which are important parts of personal growth and life success (Sharda & Bhat, 2019).

Chirkov et al. (2018) found that a better connection and relevance to one's ancestors favourably improved students' drive for achievement and their perception of academic success. This shows that seeing one's ancestors as important can increase a student's concern for accomplishment and positive attitude toward academic success. Osborne et al. (2019) demonstrated a statistically significant favourable relationship between ancestral consciousness and academic achievement. Students who felt a closer connection and significance to their ancestors showed greater care for achievement and a more positive attitude toward academic success.

Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2b: Ancestral relevance positively affects achievement concern and view.

2.10.5. Religiosity and physical vanity

Faiths in Africa are numerous and diverse, with ancient indigenous beliefs coexisting alongside major international religions such as Christianity and Islam. Traditional African religions usually centre on ancestor worship of a higher power or numerous deities, as well as a strong connection to the natural world (Burgess, 2011). These faiths are deeply embedded in the cultures and traditions of many African ethnic groups. Physical challenges and attitudes vary by region and culture in Africa. In contrast, many African religions emphasize the connection of the physical and spiritual spheres. There is a widespread

misperception that a person's physical problems and viewpoints are intimately linked to their spiritual well-being (Iliescu et al., 2017).

Koenig et al. (2012) found that people with higher degrees of religion were more likely to value and prioritize their physical health. They reported engaging in healthier habits such as regular exercise, a well-balanced diet, and seeking medical attention as needed. This study provides factual support for a link between religiosity and bodily worry. Masters et al. (2017) also note that with higher degrees of religiosity had lower levels of body dissatisfaction and were less likely to participate in negative body image behaviours such as extreme dieting or excessive exercise. This shows that religiosity can operate as a buffer against negative physical concerns and perceptions, creating a more favourable body image.

Thus, based on a review of the literature, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3a: Religiosity positively affects physical concern and view.

2.10.6. Religiosity and achievement vanity

The African axiom of religiosity and achievement (Boski et al., 2009) is a concept that highlights the importance of spirituality and religious beliefs in obtaining success and fulfilment. In many African civilizations, religion plays a major role in moulding individual behaviour, communal values, and general perspectives on life. In this context, religiosity refers to how actively people engage in religious activities, rites, and beliefs. It necessitates a deep feeling of faith and adherence to spiritual values. Religion is widely regarded as an important component of African identity and a source of guidance in many aspects of life, including achievement and success (Boski et al., 2009). Achievement, on the other hand, refers to the act of achieving substantial goals or objectives. In many African cultures, success is measured not just by money or prestige, but also by a sense of fulfilment, well-being, and positive impact on others. According to the African axiom of religiosity and achievement, the two concepts are inexorably intertwined. It accepts the idea that one's religious beliefs and practices can influence and improve one's ability to achieve one's objectives and wishes (Leung & Bond, 2009). This point of view is founded on the idea that owning a close connection with the divine or a higher power provides people with spiritual guidance, inner strength, and moral grounding, all of which are important for success.

The prevalence of values and beliefs fostered by religious teachings is one explanation for the association between religiosity and achievement concern. Many religions emphasize the value of hard labour, discipline, and moral behaviour, which can add to a person's sense of accomplishment (Zubairu & Sakariyau, 2016). In Christianity, for example, the concept of stewardship and using one's abilities for the greater good can inculcate in followers a strong feeling of responsibility and accomplishment concern. Furthermore, religious societies frequently provide social support and networks that can positively influence people's views toward success.

From the above literature the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3b: Religiosity positively affects achievement concern and view.

2.10.7. Physical vanity and online purchase intention of luxury beauty products

Consumer vanity involves the desire to project a positive image of oneself through material possessions as well as physical beauty. In today's hyperconnected culture, online shopping has expanded in popularity, offering people with a convenient option to purchase items that improve their physical appearance. Consumer vanity is influenced by physical concerns when purchasing online. Individuals who are self-conscious about their bodily presence are more expected to go online and make purchases (Weerawardena et al., 2020). By allowing peers and influencers to compare their physical attractiveness, social media platforms have fostered consumer vanity. This desire to improve one's self-presentation and physical appearance is a primary driver for internet purchase behaviour. Social comparison has a strong influence on consumer vanity of body concern. Consumers compare their physical appearance to that of others, resulting in a demand for products that can improve their look or help them adhere to conventional beauty norms (Biswas et al., 2021). In terms of physical concern and subsequent online purchase intents, online advertising has a considerable impact on consumer vanity. Advertisements commonly feature models with desirable physical attributes, promoting beauty or fitness products as a means to

get similar appearances (Satpathy, 2021). Personalization methods, such as personalized advertisements based on users' physical concerns, can interest clients and increase online buy intentions (Sekaran et al., 2020). E-commerce platforms can also leverage on consumer vanity by adding technologies such as virtual try-on or augmented reality, which allow users to sense a product's physical enhancement potential. Therefore, based on a review of the literature, the following proposition is made:

H4: There is a significant positive relationship between physical concern and view and online purchase intention of luxury beauty products.

2.10.8. Achievement vanity and purchase intention of luxury beauty products

Consumer vanity encompasses more than simply the desire to improve one's physical appearance; it also includes the pursuit of accomplishments and success. Individuals in today's consumer-driven society are increasingly concerned with how their successes are perceived, resulting in an increase in online viewing and buying trends. The vanity of consumer achievement influences internet viewing intention. Individuals preoccupied with achievement and success are more inclined to involve in online interests that allow them to showcase their accomplishments and follow the accomplishments of others (Dwivedi et al., 2019). On social networking platforms, career portals, and professional network sites, individuals can display their successes and compare their results with others. This need for self-presentation and status is a significant motivator of internet viewing activity. Social comparison strongly influences consumer vanity of success concern. Consumers compare their achievements, job titles, education, and other success indicators to those of their peers and role models, fuelling a need for ongoing progress and upward mobility (Guo et al., 2020). People can engage in social comparison on online platforms by publicizing their accomplishments and striving for attention and recognition. This comparison-based vanity influences online viewing intentions significantly. Online advertising has a significant impact on consumer achievement vanity, as well as subsequent online viewing and purchase intents. Advertisements commonly depict successful people performing great feats or achieving high positions, while presenting products and services to achieve equivalent levels of success (Banerjee et al., 2018). Targeted advertisements based on users' achievements or goals, for example, might pique customers' interest and increase online viewing and buy intent (Hsieh et al., 2020). E-commerce platforms can also capitalize on consumer vanity by allowing users to brag about their accomplishments, connect with successful firms and influencers, and create a sense of belonging and status.

Considering the above literature, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: There is a significant positive relationship between achievement concern and view and online purchase intention of luxury beauty products.

In light of the formulated hypotheses, [Figure 1](#) presents the research model.

3. Methodology

The current study's population consisted of affluent Zimbabwean women. Zimbabwe was chosen based on the country's beauty business that has grown at an exponential rate. The researchers employed a sample size of 400 respondents who were conveniently selected. Convenient sampling was used because the sampling frame was difficult to obtain because of limited availability of comprehensive and up-to-date demographic data on affluence and social status. Further, women are generally hesitant to disclose their financial status due to privacy concerns or fear of misrepresentation, making it challenging to compile an accurate sampling frame of affluent women. Field (2024) supports the use of convenient sampling when obtaining a representative sample frame is difficult or unfeasible. The sample unit, the smallest unit of observation that can be sampled and analysed to draw conclusions about a broader population, was individual affluent women. A structured questionnaire was utilized as a data collection instrument. A structured questionnaire ensures a systematic way of collecting data (Aithal & Aithal, 2020). The questionnaire was divided into four sections: demographic information, social axioms, affluent consumer vanity, and buying intent. Participants were asked to assess their agreement on a scale ranging from strongly disagree to highly agree using Likert scale questions. The measurement scales making up

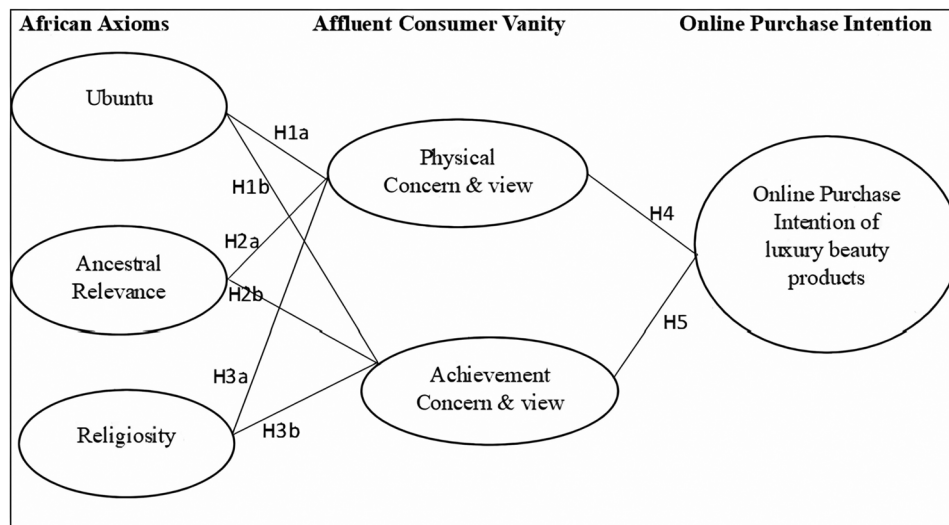


Figure 1. PartLabel-upper Research Model.

the data collection instrument were adapted from the extant literature; Ubuntu and ancestral relevance from Burgess (2011), religiosity from Huber and Huber (2012), vanity from Netemeyer et al. (1995), and online purchase intentions from Alalwan (2018). In this study SPSS-AMOS was utilized to perform various statistical analyses and generate meaningful insights. The researchers also used Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) as an inferential statistical technique for hypotheses testing. Convergent and discriminant validity were evaluated through Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and by comparing AVE with Shared Variance (SV), respectively. Reliability was assessed using Composite Reliability (CR) coefficients.

3.1 Ethical approval

The ethical committee of Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE) approved this study. The research further followed all ethical guidelines and principles throughout. Prior verbal approval from each respondent was obtained before the respondent responds, thus informed consent for participation in the study was obtained. Verbal consent allowed researchers to assess participants' understanding and willingness to participate in real-time, providing an opportunity to clarify any questions about the study immediately. Researchers audio-recorded the consent process, capturing the participant's verbal agreement along with the explanation of the study. Researchers further ensured that consent process was done transparently and in compliance with privacy regulations.

4. Results

In this chapter, the study's findings are presented, examined, and debated. The demographic profile of the respondents is shown in the first portion of the chapter. The measurement model evaluation, model fit, baseline comparisons, parsimony adjusted measures, and hypothesis testing were presented, evaluated, and debated as uni-dimensionality tests of constructs. 450 questionnaires were issued to the respondents, but, however only 400 questionnaires were completed according to instructions. Therefore, the effective response rate was 89%.

4.1. Sample characteristics

The sample characteristics presented in this section (Table 1) comprised of age, level of education, ethnicity, and income levels.

The sample statistics recorded age, gender, level of education, ethnic and monthly income as presented in Table 1. The survey attracted 400 responses. The results show that all age groups were well

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents.

Variable	Category	N	Percentage
Age	18-25	21	5.3%
	26-30	31	7.8%
	31-35	89	22.3%
	36-40	84	21.0%
	41-45	88	22.0%
	46-50	53	13.3%
	51+	34	8.5%
Level of Education	High School	13	3.3%
	College Certificate	113	28.2%
	Bachelor's Degree	192	48.0%
	Master's degree	73	18.3%
	Doctorate	9	2.3%
Ethnicity	White	5	1.3%
	African	376	94.0%
	Asian/Indian	3	0.8%
	Coloured	16	4.0%
	Other	0	0.0%
Monthly income (US\$)	Less than 500	48	12.0%
	500-1000	127	31.8%
	1000-1500	125	31.3%
	1500-2000	67	16.8%
	2001+	33	8.3%
Total		400	100

represented and are involved in online purchase intention. The age groups with the greatest number of respondents were 31-35 (22.3%), 36-40 (21%), and 41-45 (22%). These three groups consist of adults who are working and have access to internet because they are employed. With regards to the level of education, a group with the least number of participants was that of doctorate holders which had 2.3%. The group with the greatest number of respondents was that of bachelor's degree with 48%. Most of the respondents were Africans with a percentage of 94%. Most of the respondents earned between \$500-\$1000 and \$1000-\$1500 which had 31.8% and 31.3% respectively of the total respondents in the sample.

4.2. The uni-dimensionality tests

Data for the study was first analysed using Principal Axis Factoring method under Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and the extraction method with the orthogonal rotation method of direct oblimin was used. By using EFA first, and then latter confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) the study ensured that the factor structure was grounded in the data itself (Black & Babin, 2019). The exploratory phase helped to uncover patterns and relationships that may not be evident a priori. Once a factor structure was identified, conducting CFA allowed to validate the structure statistically, providing a more rigorous analysis and reinforcing the reliability and validity of findings. The unidimensional models hypothesised a single factor to explain the variance through all observed variables (Black & Babin, 2019). The factorability of data was determined using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett's test of sphericity (Black & Babin, 2019) and the results are shown in Table 2.

The factorability of data was indicated by the presence of correlations among the items making up the Ubuntu construct, KMO index = .834 and a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity, $\chi^2(15) = 2876.150$, $p < .001$, Ancestral Relevance, KMO index = .638 and a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity, $\chi^2(15) = 1084.286$, $p < .001$, Religiosity, KMO index = .638 and a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity, $\chi^2(15) = 1084.286$, $p < .001$, Physical Concern and View, KMO index = .874 and a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity, $\chi^2(15) = 5387.813$, $p < .001$, Achievement Concern and View, KMO index = .873 and a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity, $\chi^2(15) = 1948.800$, $p < .001$, and Online Purchase Intention, KMO index = .852 and a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity, $\chi^2(15) = 1973.88$, $p < .001$.

EFA extracted single factors for Ubuntu which explained 93.06% of the variance and an eigenvalue of 3.722, Ancestral Relevance which explained 80.58% of the variance and an eigenvalue of 2.417, Religiosity which explained 84.90% of the variance and an eigenvalue of 4.245, Physical Concern and View which explained 97.60% of the variance and an eigenvalue of 4.880, Achievement Concern and View which

Table 2. Exploratory factor analysis.

Item	Ubuntu	Ancestral Relevancy	Religiosity	Physical Concern and View	Achievement Concern and View	Online Purchase Intention
UB1	.990					
UB1	.970					
UB1	.980					
UB1	.871					
AR1		.986				
AR1		.962				
AR1		.591				
RE1			.965			
RE1			.963			
RE1			.892			
RE1			.847			
RE1			.952			
PCV1				.993		
PCV1				.992		
PCV1				.983		
PCV1				.981		
PCV1				.975		
ACV1					.921	
ACV1					.911	
ACV1					.884	
ACV1					.862	
ACV1					.827	
OPI1						.977
OPI1						.957
OPI1						.913
OPI1						.853
OPI1						.852
The Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin's measure of sampling adequacy	.834	.638	.638	.874	.873	.852
Variance Explained	93.06%	80.58%	84.90%	97.60%	82.11%	89.20%
Eigen Value	3.722	2.417	4.245	4.880	4.105	3.568
The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	2876.150	1084.286	1084.286	5387.813	1948.800	1973.88

explained 82.11% of the variance and an eigenvalue of 4.105, and Online Purchase Intention which explained 89.20% of the variance and an eigenvalue of 3.568. These findings indicated Unidimensionality for each construct.

4.3. Confirmatory factor analysis

Confirmatory factor assessment was conducted to determine construct validity and reliability of the measurement scales. The six-factor measurement model is shown in Figure 2.

The measurement model was assessed for fitness using base line comparisons which are namely the Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the results are shown in Table 3. The results indicated that all the baseline fit indices are above the threshold of 0.9 indicating that an empirical covariance matrix bears a close semblance to the implied covariance matrix.

Having achieved an acceptable model fit, the variants of construct validity in the name of convergent and discriminant validity were assessed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and a comparison of AVE and Shared Variance (SV) respectively. Reliability was evaluated using Composite Reliability (CR) coefficients and the findings are presented in Table 4.

The measurement model assessment revealed that all the AVE for all the constructs was above the .5 threshold indicated that presence of convergent validity. The presence of discriminant validity was indicated by the presence of no correlations between factors exceeding .8. Furthermore, discriminant validity was supported by the AVE for each construct being greater than the shared variance with the other constructs in the model (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

4.4. Structural equation modelling

Having achieved the appropriate psychometric properties for the measurement model the analysis proceeded to hypotheses testing. The hypotheses testing results are shown in Table Figure 3 and Table 5.

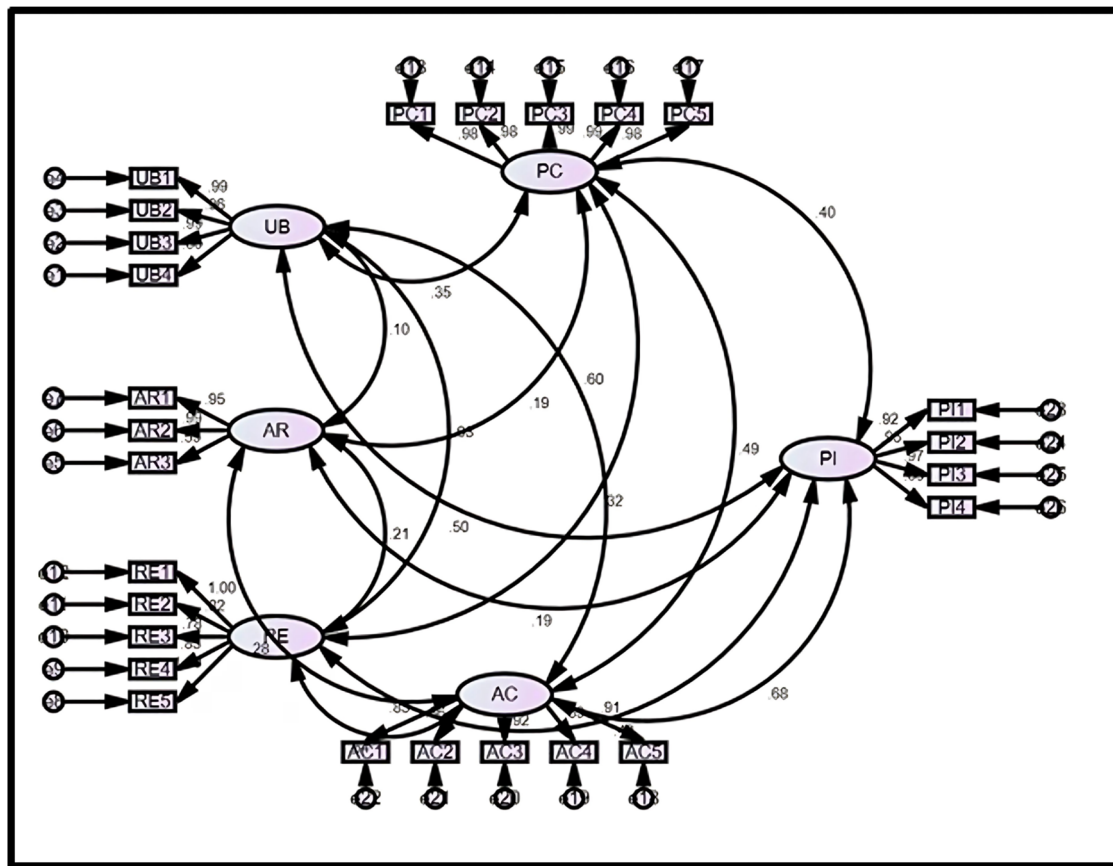


Figure 2. PartLabel-upper Measurement Model.

Table 3. Model fit indices.

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	.911	.899	.925	.915	.925

The results shown in Figure 3 and Table 5 indicated that there is empirical evidence to support H1a which stated that Ubuntu has a negative relation to physical concern and view, $\beta = .249$, $T=4.137$, $P < .001$, H1b which stated that Ubuntu negatively affects achievement concern and view, $\beta = .165$, $T=4.100$, $P < .001$, H2a which specified that Ancestral relevance positively affects physical concern and view, $\beta = .137$, $T=2.259$, $P = .005$, H2b which anticipated that Ancestral relevance positively affects achievement concern and view, $\beta = .137$, $T=2.259$, $P < .024$, H3a which suggested that Religiosity positively affects physical concern and view $\beta = .345$, $T=6.941$, $P < .001$, H3b which predicted that Religiosity positively affects achievement concern and view. $\beta = .385$, $T=7.747$, $P < .001$, H4 which indicated that there is a significant positive relationship between physical concern and view and online purchase intention of luxury beauty products, $\beta = .633$, $T=13.934$, $P < .001$, and H5 which posited that here is a significant positive relationship between achievement concern and view and online purchase intention of luxury beauty products, $\beta = .111$, $T=2.749$, $P = .006$.

4.5. Discussion and implications

4.5.1. Ubuntu and consumer vanity

The proposition that Ubuntu has a negative relation to physical concern and view was accepted (H1a). Ubuntu, as an African philosophy, promotes interconnectedness, community, and humanity (Mokgatle & Madiba, 2017). This community viewpoint may lead to a de-emphasis on individual physical concerns

Table 4. Composite reliability, average variance extracted and shared variance.

Construct	Composite reliability (ρc)	AVE	Shared variance					
			UB	AR	RE	AC	PC	PI
Ubuntu (UB)	0.979	0.907	1					
Ancestral Relevancy (AR)	0.896	0.751	.001	1				
Religiosity (RE)	0.919	0.816	.40	.04	1			
Achievement Concern and View (AC)	0.946	0.778	.35	.08	.17	1		
Physical Concern and View (PC)	0.994	0.970	.11	.04	.10	.34	1	
Online Purchase Intention (PI)	0.961	0.860	.04	.04	.18	.46	.16	1

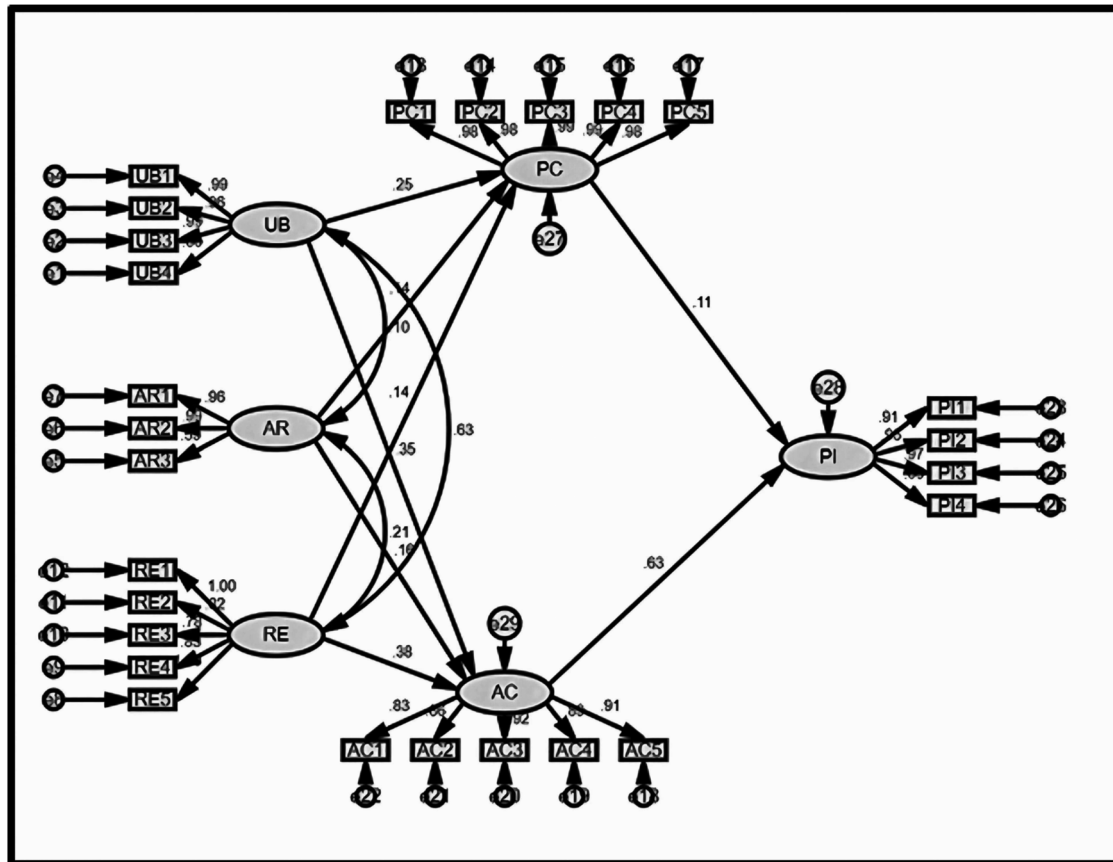


Figure 3. PartLabel-upper The Structural Model.

and opinions, particularly in the context of affluent women’s vanity and luxury cosmetic product purchasing behaviour. Mngxitama et al. (2020) focused on Ubuntu’s philosophical foundations and the ramifications for numerous parts of life, such as social interactions and value systems. It offers insights about how Ubuntu may impact attitudes toward physical concerns and viewpoints, which can help us comprehend affluent women’s purchase habits when it comes to vanity and expensive beauty products. They stressed the lack of connectivity between individuals’ well-being and the larger community.

A negative relationship between Ubuntu and achievement concern and view was hypothesized as H1b. The empirical test confirmed the relationship. According to Oyewumi (2003), a strong focus on individualism and personal achievement might collide with Ubuntu’s social principles, which promote cooperation, compassion, and empathy. In African contexts, it has been stated that an overemphasis on individualism may lead to a disregard for the needs and well-being of others, which is contrary to the Ubuntu principle (Jaravaza et al., 2024). In terms of luxury beauty products, there is evidence that consumers are becoming more interested in products that correspond with their values and views, rather

Table 5. Hypotheses testing.

	Hypotheses	B	T	P	Decision
H1a	Ubuntu has a negative relation to physical concern and view	.249	4.137	***	Accepted
H1a	Ubuntu negatively affects achievement concern and view	.165	4.100	***	Accepted
H2a	Ancestral relevance positively affects physical concern and view	.136	2.815	.005	Accepted
H2b	Ancestral relevance positively affects achievement concern and view	.137	2.259	.024	Accepted
H3a	Religiosity positively affects physical concern and view	.345	6.941	***	Accepted
H3b	Religiosity positively affects achievement concern and view	.385	7.747	***	Accepted
H4	There is a significant positive relationship between physical concern and view and online purchase intention of luxury beauty products	.633	13.934	***	Accepted
H5	There is a significant positive relationship between achievement concern and view and online purchase intention of luxury beauty products	.111	2.749	.006	Accepted

than simply purchasing things based on their status or distinction. Consumers are more inclined to engage in luxury spending when they believe the product corresponds with their values, such as sustainability, ethical manufacturing, and natural components (Park et al., 2019).

4.5.2. Ancestral relevance and consumer vanity

The study predicted that ancestral relevance positively affects physical concern and view (H2a), and this was confirmed. In the case of affluent women, their ancestral background can play a significant role in influencing their perceptions of beauty, vanity, and luxury products. According to research, Individuals frequently draw on their cultural history and social axioms to construct their self-identity and determine their preferences, including their attitudes toward physical appearance and beauty products (Sharda & Bhat, 2019). The influence of ancestral significance can be especially strong for affluent women with African social norms. African social axioms include a diverse set of cultural values, beliefs, and practices that are strongly ingrained in African communities. These axioms frequently emphasize communalism, spirituality, elder respect, and a holistic perspective of beauty that goes beyond physical appearance. As a result, wealthier women with African social axioms may place a high value on beauty goods that match with these cultural values, seeking products that not only improve their physical appearance but also reverberate with their ancestors (Thoits, 2010). This connection to their cultural roots might result in heightened physical concern and view, as well as a stronger desire to purchase premium beauty products online.

H2b was also accepted which posited that ancestral relevance positively affects achievement concern and view. Thus, Individuals who are aware of and proud of their cultural heritage have a higher level of accomplishment concern because they want to strive and succeed not just for themselves but also to honour their ancestors and contribute to their communities. The same findings were confirmed that a strong connection to one's ancestors can have a major impact on one's life achievement (Sharda & Bhat, 2019).

4.5.3. Religiosity and consumer vanity

The researcher hypothesized that religiosity positively affects physical concern and view (H3a). After empirical testing the results confirmed that there was evidence of existence of such a correlation between the two constructs. Koenig et al. (2012) investigated the association between religiosity or spirituality and

physical health, implying that religious ideas and practices can improve an individual's physical well-being. It addresses how religious involvement can influence health behaviours, coping techniques, and social support, all of which can lead to increased physical concern and awareness. Another study, conducted by Geller et al. (2020), investigates the relationship between religion and body image, offering light on how religiosity can influence people's judgments of their physical attractiveness. It examines the possibility for religious beliefs to promote positive body image and self-acceptance, which is consistent with the idea that religiosity influences physical concern and view.

The hypothesis that religiosity positively relates to achievement concern and view (H3b) was confirmed to have a perfectly significant relationship. Numerous studies have been conducted to investigate the relationship between religiosity and consumer behaviour, with some research indicating that religious people are more concerned with earning success and material prosperity (Kim & Lennon, 2013). Other research, however, has revealed that religious people are less inclined to emphasize materialism and consumerism (Pace et al., 2016). This inconsistent finding could be attributed to the fact that religious people have varied motivations for their purchasing decisions, such as pursuing spiritual fulfilment or personal improvement (Kim & Lennon, 2013). The world of luxury consumption is one area where religiosity has been demonstrated to have a favourable impact. According to research, religious people are more inclined to indulge in luxury consumption to reflect their social standing and prestige (Gao et al., 2017). This is because religious people prioritize social status and material items that reflect their religious identity more (Gao et al., 2017).

4.5.4. Consumer vanity and online purchase intention of luxury beauty products

The results confirmed that physical concern and view and online purchase intention of luxury beauty products correlate positively (H4). This shows that consumers who place a high value on physical concerns and opinions are more likely to have a favourable attitude toward and intend to acquire things that improve their appearance. This finding lends support to the idea that physical worry and perception are positively related to online purchase intention of luxury cosmetic items. According to Guo et al. (2020), customers' self-image and social position have a major influence on their buy intentions for luxury products. Furthermore, Han et al. (2017) and Phau and Prendergast (2000) found that consumers with high physical worry and view are more inclined to shop for beauty products online, particularly expensive items. These data suggest that there is a significant positive relationship between physical worry and view and the propensity to purchase luxury cosmetic items online among affluent women.

The hypothesis that there is a significant positive relationship between achievement concern and view and online purchase intention of luxury beauty products was confirmed to have a perfectly significant relationship (H5). Pace et al. (2016) found that individual characteristics are important in determining online purchasing intent. It suggests that individuals who are driven by success and prestige are more likely to purchase for premium beauty goods online. Suwanmaneechai et al. (2019) conducted research on the association between consumers' self-perception of achievement and their online purchasing intention. The data confirm the idea that consumers with a greater level of achievement worry, or view are more inclined to shop for luxury cosmetic items online. In addition, Phau and Prendergast (2000) investigate the psychological motives behind luxury consumption. It implies that people who are driven by achievement requirements may purchase premium beauty items to exhibit their achievements and improve their self-perception. As a result, this research gives context.

5. Theoretical contribution

The study makes a theoretical contribution to marketing science by bringing a conceptual model on online purchase behaviour that blends unique cultural social axioms with consumer vanity and online purchase intentions. Whereas the theory of planned behaviour, theory of reasoned action and technology acceptance model are classic theories in online purchase behaviour studies (Peña-García et al., 2020), these needs to be augmented by empirically testing additional factors that are more prevalent in emerging and frontier sub-Saharan economies. The inclusion of Ubuntu, ancestral relevance and religiosity as contextualised African beliefs adds to the precursors of behavioural intentions noted by Ajzen and Fishbein as behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs and control beliefs (Ajzen, 2002).

6. Managerial implications

In light of the above conclusions, it is therefore recommended that marketing managers need to incorporate cultural understanding. Given the negative relation between Ubuntu and physical concern/view as well as achievement concern and view, it's important for management to recognize and understand the influence of African social axioms, such as Ubuntu, on consumer behaviour. This understanding should be integrated into marketing strategies and product offerings to align with the cultural values of the target consumers.

Management should leverage ancestral relevance. Since ancestral relevance has a positive impact on both physical concern and view and achievement concern and view, management should consider incorporating elements of ancestral heritage and traditions into their marketing approach. This could include using culturally relevant symbols, narratives, or ingredients in their beauty products to resonate with the target consumers' sense of identity and heritage.

With religiosity positively affecting both physical concern and view and achievement concern and view, management should acknowledge the significance of religious beliefs in shaping consumer attitudes towards beauty products. This could involve creating marketing campaigns that respect and align with religious values, as well as offering products that cater to specific religious preferences or requirements.

Given the significant positive relationships between physical concern and view, achievement concern and view, and online purchase intention of luxury beauty products, management should prioritize addressing these concerns in their product positioning and marketing efforts. This may involve highlighting the tangible benefits of their beauty products in enhancing physical appearance as well as emphasizing how these products can contribute to achieving personal or societal standards of beauty and success.

Managers and marketers need to recognize the influence of African social axioms on the purchasing decisions of affluent women in Zimbabwe. This understanding can guide the development of marketing strategies that resonate with these cultural values, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of promotional efforts and product offerings. By integrating these recommendations into their strategic approach, management can better align their marketing efforts with the cultural values and social axioms identified in the study, thereby enhancing their appeal to affluent women consumers in Zimbabwe.

7. Limitations and areas for further research

The study suffered a limitation of lack of a control group. Without a control group, it could be difficult to establish the isolated influence of African social axioms on other variables of the study. Thus, the study had limited control for potential confounding variables that could have affected the results, allowing them to attribute any differences observed to the manipulation of the independent variable. To minimise the impact of the limitation, the study used previous empirical findings to relate to the current findings. Further, the study also used comprehensive statistical tests to control for potential confounding variables and improve the validity of your results.

Data was collected from 400 affluent women. This is a limitation since a bigger sample size has statistical advantages in analysis. However, resource constraints crippled the researchers to work within the apron string budget.

The study focused primarily on affluent African women and did not sufficiently incorporate the non-African women. Further, the study focused on specific African axioms, without sufficiently considering the potential influence of other socio-economic factors or global consumer trends. That constrains the comparative analysis of purchasing behaviours and restricts the understanding of global trends in consumer behaviour. As such, the findings may not fully capture the dynamic and diverse influences that shape affluent women's purchasing decisions across global cultural and economic landscapes, limiting the generalizability of the results and their applicability to broader global contexts.

Future scholars may choose to retest the model we validated in this study to validate its efficacy in different Sub-Saharan African affluent markets. There is particular interest in testing the model in South Africa, which is considered to be the gateway of Africa luxury market. More countries such as Zambia,

Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Cameroon and so on can also be included. Further, researchers may examine the effect of African social axioms on other digital spaces such as social commerce acceptance, mobile marketing uptake and e-business in general.

Authors contributions

Divarries Cosmas Jaravaza and Paul Mukucha conceptualized, designed, and collected data for the study. Lucy Nhidza and Forbes Makudza collected and analyzed data for the study. All authors took part in writing and edited of the original manuscript. All authors viewed the final version of the text and agreed to send it for publication and to be accountable for all issues of the work.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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Data availability statement

Data will be available from the corresponding author (forbesmakudza@gmail.com) upon reasonable request.

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