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DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROJECT

Impact of affluent women conspicuous consumption behavior on luxury counterfeit purchase intention.

BY

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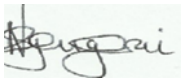
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DEDICATION

To the ones who will call me mom, although I have not met you yet, this work is dedicated to you. May it serve as reminder that prayer, perseverance, determination and hard work can turn dreams into reality. I hope that one day you will be inspired to pursue your goals with courage and confidence, knowing that every achievement begins with a single step. To my mother, thank you for being my biggest supporter and first teacher. Your prayers and lessons have carried me this far and I hope to become at least half the woman you're to my future children.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the impact of affluent women's conspicuous consumption behaviour on materialism and luxury counterfeit purchase intention. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected through questionnaires and analysed using SPSS and AMOS. The findings indicated that conspicuous consumption behaviour positively influences both materialism and luxury counterfeit purchase intention. The study provides insights into the factors driving counterfeit luxury purchases among affluent women and offers recommendations for luxury brand marketers.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Today's consumer environment is a dynamic field of desires, aspirations and behaviours that are primarily determined and influenced by the visibility and symbolic associations of products. Of these, luxury goods occupy a particular place, not only for their "necessary" use, but as a symbol of wealth, status and identity. This chapter initiates a study, which explores the complex relationship between conspicuous consumption behavior and intention to buy luxury counterfeit products. It is going to explain the context foundation, clearly state the problem this research attempts to solve, state clearly what this research is looking for, as well as clarify the boundaries of this research. The study will examine this interaction/relationship and will attempt to provide a better understanding of the motivations of consumers in the global luxury market and the shadow economy of counterfeits.

Background of the Study

The trend of consumption extends beyond mere utility, it is often used as a way of individuals to express their identity, social standing and aspirations and affluent women use this to serve exactly how they want to stand out from others wherever they are. At the heart of this is conspicuous consumption, which was popularized by Veblen (1899) and which refers to the purchase and exhibition of goods and services which are costly to display and costly to acquire as a means of demonstrating economic power or status. In today's world, especially in the rich and the aspiring class, luxury brands are very good representative symbols of such conspicuous displays according to (Keller, 2013). Such brands don't just spend heavily on craftsmanship, but also on branding and telling a story of exclusivity and prestige to convey an image of quality and high quality, which inevitably leads to high prices.

To be considered a costly signal, there are 4 factors which should be involved (Smith and Bird ,2000). Firstly, it has to be expensive in terms of time, money, and energy where the more of these are invested the more value a product possesses. Secondly, the behavior must be visible to other people so that it can be able to obtain reputational benefits. Thirdly, the product's recognition needs to be able to reach out or attract social benefits — in this case, more friends. Lastly, it should send an indicating signal to relevant others such as being an indicator of being kind or strong and courageous or being wealthy (Zahavi and Zahavi,1999). These are the kind of criteria that most women like to portray and achieve to others especially the affluent. It is

suggested that the specific group of individuals in this study, namely women of a higher economic class, are seen as having a higher social status and prestige when they consume conspicuously than those who are inconspicuous in their consumption (Nelissen and Meijers,2011).

But in parallel, and perhaps surprisingly, the high price tag and the demand for luxury has energized a third market: luxury counterfeits. These are imitations that are not authorized but mimic or copy the branding, aesthetic and sometimes even the packaging of real luxury products and sold at real lower prices (Phau and Teah,2009). The proliferation of counterfeits is a significant issue for luxury brands, leading to economic losses, brand dilution and even brand reputation damage (Bian and Moutinho,2011). This study demonstrates that this conspicuous consumption, wanting to be seen as the prestige may not necessarily result in buying luxury goods, but it can also influence the intention to buy their counterfeit, especially in case of a budget restriction. It is important to have a clear understanding of this relationship to luxury brand management and consumer behaviour theories.

Statement of the problem

Although there is a clear understanding from literature of how conspicuous consumption can influence the aim to buy genuine luxury products, there is only a partial understanding of the direct influence of conspicuous consumption on the aim of purchasing luxury counterfeits. It is often consumers wish to look successful and affluent, but with the price of true luxury items being prohibitive, it can be a major obstacle. Then there comes paradox – people want to buy luxury brands because of the status it brings them, but may lack the money for actual luxury brands. However, it is not very clear whether when faced with economic constraints this desire for status, pushes consumers to opt for visible luxury counterfeits as an alternative. Although prior studies have explored motivations of buying counterfeit goods, such as price or quality/imitation, there is a lack of in-depth research and investigation regarding the direct link between the behavioral tendency of conspicuous consumption and the intention to purchase fakes/imitations. This study hopes to fill this gap by analyzing the nature of this impact specifically on affluent female consumers and by analyzing the correlation between conspicuous consumption and counterfeit purchase intention, both positive and negative. It will also be able to pinpoint possible methods to moderate this relationship in the marketplace.

Purpose of the study

The aim of the study is to determine the impact of affluent women conspicuous consumption behavior on materialism and luxury counterfeits.

Objectives

1. To examine if there is a positive relationship between conspicuous consumption and success, centrality, and happiness.

2. To examine if there is a positive relationship between conspicuous altruism and success, centrality, and happiness.

3. To examine if there is a positive relationship between materialism and luxury counterfeit purchase intention.

Statement of Hypothesis

H1: Conspicuous Consumption

- H1a: There is a positive relationship between conspicuous consumption and perceived personal success among affluent women consumers.

- H1b: There is a positive relationship between conspicuous consumption and centrality among affluent women consumers.

- H1c: There is a positive relationship between conspicuous consumption and happiness among affluent women consumers.

H2: Conspicuous Altruism

- H2a: There is a positive relationship between conspicuous altruism and perceived personal success among affluent women consumers.

- H2b: There is a positive relationship between conspicuous altruism and centrality among affluent women consumers.

- H2c: There is a positive relationship between conspicuous altruism and happiness among affluent women consumers.

H3: Luxury Counterfeit Purchase Intention

- H3a: There is a positive relationship between luxury counterfeit purchase intention and perceived personal success among affluent women consumers.

- H3b: There is a positive relationship between luxury counterfeit purchase intention and centrality among affluent women consumers.

- H3c: There is a positive relationship between luxury counterfeit purchase intention and happiness among affluent women consumers.

Significance of the study

1.6.1To marketers and luxury brands

The findings can assist different luxury brands with refining their marketing strategies by understanding what drives affluent women's desire for visible luxury goods, and how that may actually contribute to counterfeit demand.

1.6.2 To the university

The study strengthens academic discourse not only in marketing, but in other courses such as sociology, and gender studies as well. It encourages interdisciplinary research and aligns with academic goals of addressing real-world business and some of the challenges being faced in the society through evidence-based inquiry.

1.6.3 To the student

This research offers a practical case for understanding consumer psychology, branding, and ethical consumption. It also serves as a reference point for future studies and dissertations, encouraging more localized and gender-focused research.

Assumptions

This study was based on the following assumptions

- It is assumed that respondents will provide honest and accurate answers to survey questions, reflecting their true attitudes and intentions.
- It is assumed that consumers have a general understanding of what constitutes a luxury brand and a luxury counterfeit product
- It is assumed that the chosen research instrument which is the survey questionnaire is capable of measuring conspicuous reliably.

Delimitations of the study

This study will focus on adult women mostly within Marondera and Harare. The research will specifically investigate luxury products that are highly visible and often used for status signaling by affluent women for example designer handbags and clothes, watches, apparel. The study will employ quantitative research approach, utilizing surveys to gather data on conspicuous consumption behavior.

Limitations of the study

Data collected through surveys relies on self-reported attitudes and intentions which may be subjected to social desirability bias which is the process whereby respondents might give answers they see to be more socially acceptable rather than their true and honest opinions. Financial constraints also limit the researcher in going to many different areas to survey different people.

Definition of terms

Conspicuous Consumption Behavior: The act of purchasing and conspicuously displaying expensive goods and services to exhibit economic power, social status, and prestige to others, often beyond the functional utility of the products (Veblen, 1899).

Luxury Counterfeit: An unauthorized imitation of a genuine luxury brand product, designed to mislead consumers into believing it is authentic or to benefit from the recognition and

goodwill of the original brand, typically sold at a significantly lower price point (Phau & Teah, 2009).

Luxury Purchase Intention: A consumer's conscious plan or decision to buy a luxury product, reflecting their readiness to engage in the purchasing act.

Luxury Counterfeit Purchase Intention: A consumer's expressed likelihood or readiness to acquire a product that they know or suspect to be an unauthorized imitation of a genuine luxury brand.

Luxury Brand: A brand characterized by high price, superior quality, exclusivity, hedonic value, and a strong symbolic appeal associated with prestige, status, and self-identity (Keller, 2013).

Conspicuous altruism: A costly signal, that is costly in terms of time, resources, efforts but when extended to others may reap benefits such as friendships (Hardy and Van Vugt,2006).

1.11 Organization of the study

The study is divided into 5 chapters, which are inter-related. The introduction, background to the study, statement of problem, research aim and Objectives, research questions and assumptions are introduced in Chapter One to form the basis of the research. It also provides an explanation of the meaning of the investigation; its limitations and expected restrictions. Chapter Two deals with the corroboration of the knowledge related to the topic of the research. It presents the literature review, explains the theoretical basis of the study, reviews previous empirical studies, and identifies some areas of unanswered questions that warrant further investigation. The chapter concludes by summarizing the critical points that come from the literature surveyed. The methodological procedures used in the study is described in Chapter Three. It details the research design, target population, sampling strategy, sample size, data collection instruments and procedures that they employed and the information they sought. The precautions taken to guarantee the validity and reliability of the research instruments are also discussed along with the ways the data gathered were organized and presented. The findings from the research are reported, analyzed and interpreted in Chapter Four. Results are discussed with respect to the research questions/hypothesis, and compared to findings from previous studies. Whilst doing this, the researcher can find out if the results confirm, extend or contradict what is already known. The results of the research and conclusions based on the evidence are presented in the last chapter (Five). It also offers practical suggestions based on the findings, and suggests potential areas for further research.

1.12 Chapter Summary

In a world where image and social status often shape consumer choices, the behavior of affluent women provides a unique lens through which to understand modern consumption patterns. This chapter has introduced the core focus of the study, examining how conspicuous consumption among affluent women influences materialism and the growing interest in luxury counterfeits.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The chapter examines the theoretical and empirical research on conspicuous consumption behaviour, conspicuous altruism, materialism and luxury counterfeit purchase intention of affluent women consumers. The chapter also examines theories related to the study such as the Theory of the Leisure Class by Thorstein Veblen and Materialism Theory by Marsha Richins and Scott Dawson. To get the relationship between the study variables, empirical studies conducted by various scholars are also reviewed. A gap analysis and summary of the chapter is provided at the end.

2.1 THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.1.1 Conspicuous Consumption Behaviour

Conspicuous consumption behaviour is the consumption of expensive products and services to demonstrate wealth, status, prestige and social class. It was originally developed in 1899 by Thorstein Veblen (Theory of the Leisure Class). Veblen believed that consumers buy luxury goods not only for their utility, but also to satisfy their desire for prestige of consuming and for social recognition and admiration of others.

Recent research found that conspicuous consumption has become the norm for the wealthier consumer with the influence of social media, peer pressure, and wanting to distinguish themselves from others socially. Nowadays, Joshua Becker and other scholars/observers have shown that the consumption of luxury goods is more likely to be linked to symbolic value than to utility. Luxury products are used to express success, sophistication and prestige in society.

Research from 2020 to 2025 shows that the status signalling is a determinant factor that highly affects the rich women consumers in the luxury product buying process. Consumers, like Eastman and Liu (2021) on conspicuous consumption, do what they do to gain social recognition and to validate their social identity. Likewise, Nguyen, Tambyah (2022) found that those who place a high importance on prestige are more likely to openly show off luxury goods. In this study, conspicuous consumption behaviour is explored based on Marsha Richins and Scott Dawson's dimensions of success, centrality and happiness.

2.1.2 Materialism

Materialism means the significance that people give to possessions and material goods in their lives. Materialistic consumers feel that "material possessions are a means of attaining happiness, success, and life satisfaction" (Richins & Dawson, 1992, p. 308).

Richins and Dawson found three facets to materialism – success, centrality and happiness. Success is when people look at themselves and others and use their possessions to determine success. Centrality is defined as the extent to which material goods are central to an individual's life and happiness is defined as the extent to which the individual believes possessions lead to happiness and satisfaction.

Globalization, digital marketing and social media exposure have proven to have a significant impact on the rise of materialism, as recent studies have demonstrated. Islam, Huisingh, and Ramamoorthy (2021) observed that the tendency to behave with status-driven consumption is found significant among the highly materialistic consumers. Similarly, Kaur and Anand (2023) pointed out that the materialistic people tend to look for luxury products to enhance self-image and social acceptance.

For women consumers who have relatively high levels of wealth, the concept of materialism has been associated with self-expression, prestige and social comparison. If a luxury product is not financially attainable or is a hassle to obtain, then consumers who highly value material possessions may form stronger intentions to purchase a counterfeit luxury product.

2.1.3 Success

Success is a part of the Marsha Richins and Scott Dawson's dimensions of materialism. It refers to consumers valuing achievement or social status based on the ownership of high cost products.

Those who believe that material goods are signs of success are more apt to buy goods with brands that convey success and wealth. Han et al. (2020) state that people with a status

orientation tend to use luxury products for the purpose of attracting admiration and recognition from society.

Recent research also suggests that social comparison and prestige consumption are important factors affecting well-to-do female consumers. Jain and Mishra (2022) have found that perception of success has a significant impact on luxury consumption intentions, particularly in emerging economies where luxury brands represent the upward social mobility.

2.1.4 Centrality

Centrality is the extent to which people value the possession and acquiring activities in their life. People with high centrality value shopping, luxury items and material possessions.

Richins and Dawson (1992) have shown that persons on the high end of the centrality construct are likely to view possessions as being a major aspect of their lifestyle and self-image. Sharma and Verma (2021) have found that individuals who highly value possessions are more prone to make impulse luxury consumption and symbolic consumption.

Centrality is gaining more and more relevance in today's consumer culture as people tend to show off their luxury lifestyles through social media. Consumers constantly compare themselves with others and their need for fashionable and prestigious products becomes greater.

2.1.5 Happiness

Happiness is defined as possession and acquisition being the means to life satisfaction and personal fulfilment. Many materialistic consumers equate products with emotional health and self-confidence.

Richins and Dawson (1992) found that people high on the happiness scale think that having more material things make them happier. Ali et al. (2024) have conducted recent research revealing emotional dissatisfaction to be a strong predictor in consumers' pursuit of happiness via luxury and symbolic buying.

But some experts say that the sense of happiness only lasts as long as the possession of material goods, and can lead to compulsive consumption. However, even with this negative attitude, the factor of happiness plays a significant role in the luxury purchase decisions for wealthy consumers.

2.1.6 Conspicuous Altruism

Conspicuous altruism is the term that describes when someone carries out a gesture of benefiting others and thereby earns social approval and recognition. They may choose to act in a charitable manner, use ethical products, or buy luxury items that are sustainable to express their sense of moral values and social status.

Conspicuous altruism is a combination of status signalling and socially responsible behaviour, says Neena Sondhi. Admiration is not only produced by the display of wealth, but also by acts of kindness, which are evident, and ethical consumption.

Griskevicius et al. (2021) conducted several recent studies indicating that, as people become wealthier, they are more likely to visibly engage in charitable work to enhance their social image and prestige. In the same vein, Kapoor and Dhamija (2023) discovered that acts of generosity that are visible in society help boost the self-esteem and social acceptance of consumers.

In the context of women consumers nowadays, conspicuous altruism is more prevalent among those who have acquired wealth and want to enjoy luxury products, while also maintaining a socially conscious self-image.

2.1.7 Luxury Counterfeit Purchase Intention

Luxury counterfeit purchase intention is the willingness or likelihood of consumers to purchase luxury counterfeits that are similar to authentic luxury brands. Counterfeit goods of luxury items are intended to look like the original brand but sold for less.

Neena Sondhi believes that status aspirations, affordability and social pressure are key factors in the consumption of counterfeit luxury items. People buy fake luxury items to obtain a symbolic prestige of luxury brands at lower prices.

Wilcox et al. (2021) and Hwang and Lee (2023) found that the materialistic consumers have a higher tendency to form intentions to buy counterfeited luxury products. Counterfeit purchase intentions are significantly related to social comparison, desire for status and peer influence.

For the well-heeled female consumer, counterfeit luxury goods can be a substitute for the fashionable lifestyle and identity.

2.2 THEORETICAL LITERATURE

Theories used in the study are discussed in this section. The study is guided by the Theory of the Leisure Class by Thorstein Veblen, Materialism Theory by Marsha Richins and Scott Dawson and Conspicuous Altruism Theory by Neena Sondhi. These theories can be used to

explain how rich women consumers signal their status, success, happiness, and social identity through their luxury consumption as well as through their ownership of material goods and their conspicuous altruism. Theories also offer a basis for comprehending the factors that affect consumers' intentions to buy a luxury counterfeit good.

2.2.1 Theory of the Leisure Class

The Theory of the Leisure Class was developed by Thorstein Veblen in 1899. The theory says that people buy for high-priced items to signal economic, social and prestige. Veblen suggested that the motives for luxury consumption are not functional, but for social recognition. In conspicuous consumption, people demonstrate their superiority and social class in society.
This study is relevant to the theory because women consumers who are in a good economic situation may indulge in buying luxury goods and counterfeit luxury goods in order to attain status, admiration and social acceptance.

2.2.2 Materialism Theory

Marsha Richins and Scott Dawson developed Materialism Theory. The theory suggests that material possessions are an integral part of the lives of consumers and affect their views of happiness, success, and identity.
The three dimensions of materialism which are theorized are:

- Success
- Centrality
- Happiness

The theory can be applied to the study since wealthy women consumers can use luxury goods as a means to communicate social status and emotional fulfilment that can impact the purchase intention of counterfeit luxury goods.

2.2.3 Conspicuous Altruism Theory

Conspicuous altruism theory suggests that “the practice of consumers to perform public acts of generosity to earn social acclaim and esteem.” Neena Sondhi says that consumers are now blending ethics with status symbolism.

The theory is pertinent as the high-income female consumers can emulate admiration by indulging in socially responsible consumption while at the same time enjoying luxurious life.

2.3 EMPIRICAL LITERATURE AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.3.1 Conspicuous Consumption Behaviour and Materialism

According to the study conducted by Eastman and Liu (2021), conspicuous consumption has a positive impact on materialistic values of consumers. Likewise, Jain and Mishra (2022) discovered that indulgers of prestige consumption are more inclined to link possessions to happiness and success.

Hence, the study will assume that:

H1a

The correlation of conspicuous consumption behaviour and success is large and positive.

H1b

There is a significant positive relationship between conspicuous consumption behaviour and centrality.

H1c

Conspicuous consumption behaviour is highly positively related to happiness.

2.3.2 Conspicuous Altruism and Materialism

According to Kapoor and Dhamija (2023), visible acts of generosity have a positive impact on consumers' perceptions of status and self-worth. Griskevicius et al. (2021) found in another study that conspicuous altruism increases social identity and prestige consumption.

Therefore, the study hypothesizes that:

H2a

There is a significant positive relationship between conspicuous altruism and success.

H2b

There is a significant positive relationship between conspicuous altruism and centrality.

H2c

There is a significant positive relationship between conspicuous altruism and happiness.

2.3.3 Materialism and Luxury Counterfeit Purchase Intention

No one knows whether he or she has ever purchased counterfeit luxury products, but Hwang and Lee (2023) showed that consumers who are highly materialistic are more likely to buy

counterfeit luxury products to make a statement. Likewise, Wilcox and others (2021) found that those who consume for status tend to buy counterfeit products to support their social image. Based on the above, the study assumes the hypothesis that:

H3a

There is a significant positive relationship between success and luxury counterfeit purchase intention.

H3b

There is a significant positive relationship between centrality and luxury counterfeit purchase intention.

H3c

Happiness is highly positively related to luxury counterfeit purchase intention.

Fig 1. Conceptual Framework Model

The influence of conspicuous consumption behaviour on materialism and luxury counterfeit purchase intention of women.

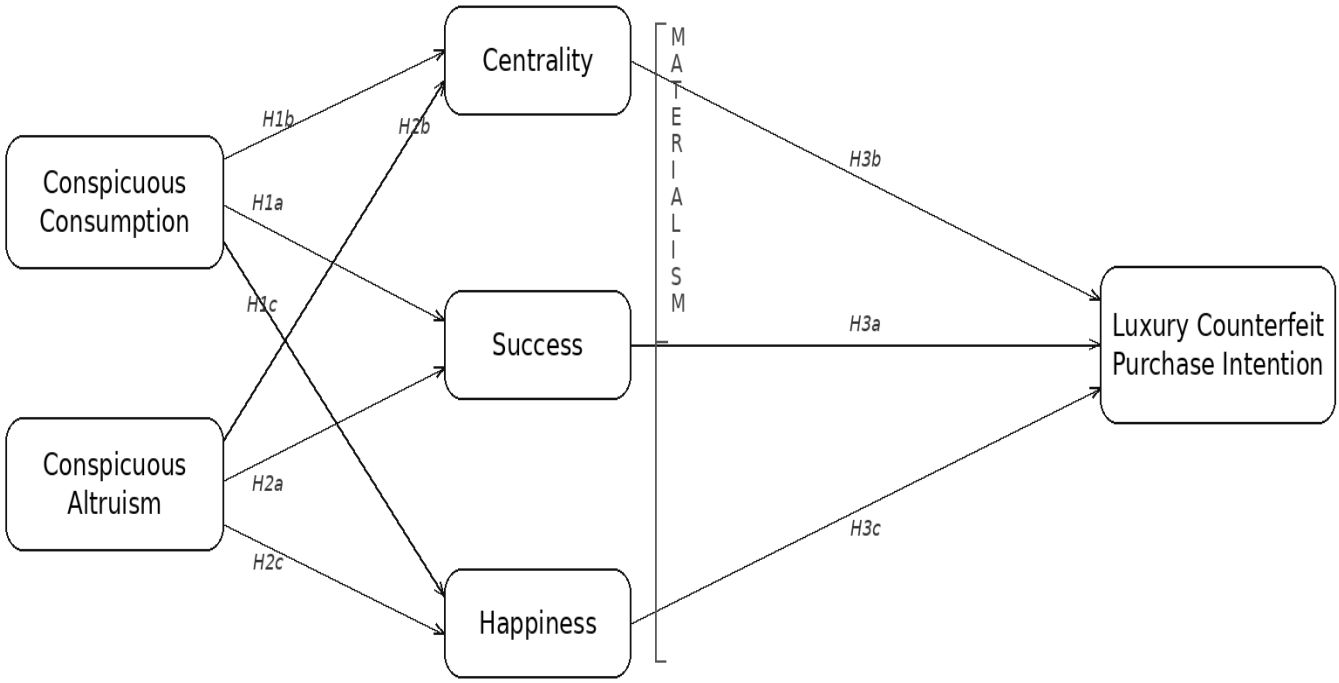


Fig 2.3: Conceptual Framework Model

Source: Adapted from Richins & Dawson (1992); Veblen (1899); Sondhi (2020)

From the above conceptual framework, it can be understood that the study is based on understanding the impact of conspicuous consumption behaviour and conspicuous altruism on materialism and luxury counterfeit purchase intention among affluent women consumers. Three sub-constructs—success, centrality and happiness—represent materialism. The framework further shows how these dimensions' influence luxury counterfeit purchase intention. Three hypotheses were generated based on this conceptual framework to look at the relationships between the study variables separately.

Hypothesis statements

H1: There is a positive relationship between conspicuous consumption and success, centrality, and happiness.

H2: There is a positive relationship between conspicuous altruism and success, centrality, and happiness.

H3: There is a positive relationship between materialism and luxury counterfeit purchase intention.

2.4 GAP ANALYSIS

There has been ample research on conspicuous consumption, materialism and counterfeit luxury consumption separately. However, there is a lack of studies which specifically investigated the combined effect of conspicuous consumption behaviour, conspicuous altruism dimensions and materialism dimensions on luxury counterfeit purchase intention among affluent women consumers, especially in developing economies.

Further, most of the previous studies focused on general consumers and not at the affluent women consumers. This study thus aims to fill this gap and explore the effect of conspicuous consumption behaviour and conspicuous altruism on success, centrality, happiness and eventually luxury counterfeit purchase intention.

2.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the conceptual, theoretical and empirical literature related to conspicuous consumption behaviour, conspicuous altruism, materialism and luxury counterfeit purchase intention were reviewed. The chapter spoke about the underpinning theories that facilitated the study which included the Theory of the Leisure Class, Materialism Theory, and Conspicuous Altruism Theory. Relevant empirical evidence defining the relationships between the study variables was also reviewed, and the study hypotheses were developed. The methodology of the study used is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the methodology process that was used to investigate conspicuous consumption and materialism and luxury goods counterfeit purchase intention among affluent female consumers is explained. It describes the research philosophy, approach, design, target population, sampling frame, sampling method, sample size, research instrument, data-collection procedure and data-analysis methods for the research.

The aim of the methodology was to set out a clear plan of how evidence could be gathered and analyzed in relation to the objectives of the study. The methods chosen enabled the researcher to examine the associations between the measurable consumer-behavior variables and the intention to buy counterfeit luxury products, as the study focused on the relationships between the variables.

The chapter starts with a presentation of the philosophical and methodological position adopted in the study. It then explains the design of the research and the reason for its appropriateness in testing the proposed relationships between the research variables. Target population and sampling procedures are also described to indicate that appropriate respondents were identified and selected.

The chapter also elaborates the instrument which was used to collect the primary data. The use of a structured questionnaire was appropriate as it allowed the researcher to obtain similar answers from all the patients. This enabled attitudes, perceptions and behavioral intentions to be measured in a consistent and measurable way.

The methods of data collection, processing and analysis are also mentioned. Validity and reliability are discussed to show the efforts in maintaining the quality and consistency of the instrument of measurement. Ethical concerns like informed consent, voluntary participation,

anonymity, confidentiality and secure handling of respondents' information were also noted throughout the research process.

In general, this chapter presents the methodology of the study. It presents the systematic planning and execution of the research to obtain objective evidence related to conspicuous consumption, materialism and purchase intention of luxury counterfeit products by affluent women.

3.1 Research Design

This study was conducted with causal-explanatory research design. This design was appropriate because it was used to be able to investigate if a change in one variable was related to a change in another variable. It also allowed the researcher to decide on the directionality and intensity of the relationships suggested in the conceptual framework (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).

The relationship between conspicuous consumption behavior and materialism, and the impact of these variables on luxury counterfeit purchase intention for affluent women was examined using the design. Conspicuous consumption and materialism were used as the explanatory variables and the luxury counterfeit purchase intention was treated as the outcome variable in this study.

A Quantitative research approach was adopted. Quantitative research refers to the gathering and analysis of numerical data to uncover patterns, examine relationships and make inferences about variables of interest (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). This method was suitable as the attitudes, values and behavioral intentions were measured using pre-determined indicators.

A structured questionnaire consisting of standardized questions and measurement scales was used to collect the data. The questions were the same for all the respondents, which helped in achieving consistency and comparison of responses. Differences that might have occurred due to differences in ways the questions were presented to the participants were also mitigated with the use of a structured instrument.

Data were coded and analyzed with the SPSS and AMOS after data collection. Data cleaning and descriptive statistics, reliability testing and preliminary analysis of relationship between variables were done using SPSS. AMOS was subsequently employed to examine the more intricate relationships between conspicuous consumption, materialism and purchase intention of luxury counterfeits.

The quantitative design thus was found suitable as it allowed the researcher to objectively test the proposed relationships and present the findings of the test in statistical form.

3.2 Target Population

The target population was the entire population of people who had all of the characteristics under study, to which the researcher wanted to relate the results of the study. What it is, it might be the larger group from which a researcher wanted to make conclusions about. (Polit and Beck 2017). In the same way, Zikmund (2000) defined target population as any group or unit of people or units that shared the attributes needed for a specific investigation. The respondents of this study were rich women consumers with good financial means for buying luxury products. Affluence was measured using income, occupation, purchasing habits and lifestyle characteristics in the context of the research. The affluent women were thought to be relevant because they were actively involved in markets for high-priced fashion, cosmetics, accessories and other luxury items. Such social status, social display, prestige and materialism values may have also played a major part in their purchasing behaviour. The study of this group provided useful evidence, however, of the role that conspicuous consumption and materialism played in the intention to purchase counterfeit versions of luxury products. Only the well to do women who lived, worked or often shopped in Marondera and certain parts of Harare were selected. The participants needed to be familiar with luxury brands, interest in or past exposure to luxury brands and related products. This enabled the collection of data from those able to answer questions about luxury consumption and intentions to purchase counterfeit products of value.

3.3 Sampling Frame

A list or source from which the units in a sample were selected and identified (Zikmund et al., 2013). This study's sampling frame comprised affluent women who visited the areas that are traditionally associated with luxury consumption among the selected areas of Marondera and

Harare. Respondents were recruited from high-end clothing stores, high-end shopping centres, beauty spas, high-end cosmetic shops, fashion shops, and other retail shops that cater to high dollar items. It was thought that these areas would be suitable to reach females that would have more time and finances to engage in luxury buying. This sampling frame was not determined by merely being physically present at these sites. Those who met the criteria for participation were initially selected based on occupation, estimated income category, lifestyle and familiarity with luxury products. Those who met the inclusion criteria were invited to participate. The sampling frame that was selected was one that would provide access to the experiences and consumer behaviour of the participants in the study which were directly relevant to the research objectives. It was not possible to have an official register of wealthy women at the two locations so the study used respondents who were accessed and met the pre-established requirements.

3.4 Sample Size

The accessible population for the study consisted of 150 affluent female consumers in Marondera and selected parts of Harare. Sample size refers to the number of respondents selected from the target population for data collection and analysis (Kothari, 2004). Although a full census of all affluent women in the two areas would have provided wider coverage, it was not practical because there was no complete official register of this consumer group. The study therefore worked with the reachable population identified through the sampling frame.

The minimum required sample was determined using Yamane's (1967) finite population formula. This formula was appropriate because the accessible population was known and finite. It also avoided reliance on a general sample-size table by calculating the sample size directly from the study population.

The formula is expressed as follows:

$$n = N / [1 + N(e)^2]$$

Where:

n = required sample size

N = accessible population size

e = margin of error at 95% confidence level

For this study, N = 150 and e = 0.05. The sample size was calculated as follows:

$$n = 150 / [1 + 150(0.05)^2]$$

$$n = 150 / [1 + 150(0.0025)]$$

$$n = 150 / [1 + 0.375]$$

$$n = 150 / 1.375$$

$$n = 109.09$$

$$n = \text{approximately } 109 \text{ respondents}$$

Therefore, the minimum required sample size for the study was approximately 109 respondents. However, to improve coverage and allow for possible non-response, questionnaires were distributed to all 150 reachable affluent women. The final analysis was based on the usable questionnaires returned by respondents, as reported in the response-rate section of Chapter Four.

This approach was suitable because it combined a statistically justified minimum sample with a practical strategy for improving respondent coverage within the accessible population.

3.5 Sampling Procedures

Sampling was a process of selecting a manageable population of respondents from the large population of participants for obtaining evidence, which would explain and understand the population under study. Sampling, according to Ogula (2005), is the technique of selecting a group whose characteristics are similar to that of a larger population.

Purposive sampling was used for the study. In this method, the participants were chosen in a deliberate manner due to the fact that they had certain characteristics which were directly connected to the aims of the study. The main selection criteria were income, knowledge of luxury brands and prior experience of luxury brand consumption.

Purposive sampling was deemed appropriate, as the investigation was not about women in general, but rather a specific group of women. It targeted only highly socio-economically advantaged women consumers whose lifestyle and consumption experiences allowed them to give informed answers regarding conspicuous consumption, materialism and intention to purchase luxury counterfeit products. Those who did not meet the predetermined eligibility criteria were not included in the study.

Purposive sampling did not increase the likelihood of all members of the population being selected but it allowed the researcher to focus on those who were directly involved in the phenomenon under study. Therefore, the technique made the information yielded from the selected participants more relevant.

3.6 Data-Collection Instrument

Primary data was collected using structured questionnaire to the respondents who have been selected. Groves et al. (2009) defined a questionnaire as an "organized series of questions designed to gather information from the research population.

The instrument was developed to gain quantifiable data regarding conspicuous consumption behaviour, materialism values and the purchasing intention for counterfeit luxury products. It featured a set of standardized questions, which were asked in the same way of everyone. This ensured uniformity in the responses and allowed coding and analysis of the information statistically.

Participants were told that the questionnaire was voluntary prior to completing it. They also were guaranteed that their names would not be released and that the information they gave would be kept confidential.

3.6.1 Questionnaire

We used a structured questionnaire as the main instruments for collecting data from affluent women. Babbie (2001) said that a questionnaire is a form composed of well-designed questions that elicit information from respondents about a specified research problem.

The questionnaire was chosen because it provided the researcher with the ability to gather similar data from a reasonably large population of respondents in a short amount of time. The standardized structure minimized variation in the ways in which questions were presented and aided quantitative analysis of the relationships between the study variables.

The instrument was split into four parts. Section A gathered data related to the socio-economic status and demographic profile of respondents such as their age, occupation, marital status and income category. These characteristics were added to make a description of the participants and to find out if consumption patterns varied between the different groups of participants.

Consciousness of the consumption of conspicuous behaviour was measured in Section B. The statements were based on the literature concerning Veblenian consumption, and were designed to measure the level to which respondents engaged in using luxury items to publicize their wealth, prestige, social position, and personal success.

Conspicuous altruism was discussed in section C. The questions were based on whether rich women exhibited acts of charity, generosity and/or socially beneficial acts in order, in part, to be recognized, approved or achieve social prestige.

In Section D, materialism and intention to purchase counterfeit luxury products were measured. Items from the Material Values Scale of Richins and Dawson (1992) were used to measure materialism. The purchase-intention statements looked at how likely a responder was to buy a counterfeit luxury product when he/she was aware that the product was not genuine.

The statements in the substantive sections were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale. The possible answers were scored from 1 to 5, with 1 representing "Strongly Disagree" and 5 representing "Strongly Agree. This scale allowed the attitudes and behavioral intentions to be transformed into numerical values and analyzed statistically.

Some contextual modifications were made in the wording of the items adopted to make them understandable and relevant to the affluent female consumers in Marondera and Harare. The changes were not made on purpose to change the meaning of the original constructs. The complete questionnaire was included in Appendix A.

Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was given to women who met the wealth and luxury consumption requirements of the study. Paper copies were dropped off in specific retail shops, fashion stores, beauty salons, cosmetics stores and other outlets where high-end consumers are found.

The reason of the research was explained prior to the questionnaire being returned. Participants were informed that they had the choice to not participate or to stop participating without any repercussions. They were also told that the research was being carried out for academic study only.

There was no information asked on the questionnaire that identified the participant. The method ensured the respondents' anonymity and facilitated them to give their honest answers about potentially sensitive questions like wealth display, material possession and buying fakes.

The questionnaire must provide justification for its use.

The questionnaire was suitable since a specific consumer group was selected and the study aims were quantitative. It enabled the researcher to gather data effectively from the respondents in more than one geographical area.

The structured format also provided uniformity since each participant answered the same set of questions. This minimized the influence of the interviewer and resulted in data suitable to coding, comparison and statistical hypothesis testing.

Measurement items were adapted and obtained from the literature and scales used in consumer-behaviour research. This was an academic basis for measuring the constructs that were principal, but the instrument was still pilot tested, analyzed for reliability, and validated for substantive conclusions.

3.6.2 Measurement Scales

The principal study constructs were assessed using multi-item scales. The respondents used a five-point Likert scale (where 1 stood for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree) to respond to the statements.

A number of items were used for each variable in order to be able to include different aspects of the constructs, rather than the reliance on a single question. The related items were then combined to create composite scores for statistical analysis.

3.6.2.1 Conspicuous Consumption Behaviour

The literature from the public and symbolic consumption of goods was used to develop the parameters used to assess conspicuous consumption. The items chosen were influenced by Veblen's (1899) idea of conspicuous consumption – items that related to the visible expenditure, to prestige, to social distinction, to the public display of economic status through possessions.

The scale was used to investigate if luxury products were purchased or desired due to attention gained, implying successfulness or improvement in the individual's place in society among others. It also checked if the awareness of the brand and social recognition had an impact on the product decision.

Higher scores signified a greater tendency to communicate wealth, status or prestige by consumption. The lower scores indicated that participants did not consider luxury products as having a public or symbolic value as important.

3.6.2.2 Materialism

Items were adapted from Richins and Dawson's (1992) Material Values Scale to assess materialism. The construct measured how significant items and material wealth are to respondents in determining their achievement and satisfaction in life.

There were three scales:

Success, which determined the extent to which respondents believed that possessions were a sign of success;
Centrality (the importance of acquiring and owning material goods in respondents' lives); and
Contentment, which determined if people felt acquiring desirable things was related to personal happiness.

The answers were marked on a Likert scale from 1 to 5. The composite scores were higher in relation to materialism values and lower in relation to the role of material possessions for respondents' feelings of successful life and happiness.

3.6.2.3 Counterfeit Luxury-Product Purchase Intention

The intent to buy counterfeit luxury product was assessed using items that were modified from previous studies of luxury and counterfeit consumption, such as studies by Sondhi et al.
The questions asked whether or not respondents would purchase counterfeit luxury goods knowing they were counterfeit. The scale additionally checked the potential impact of the price,

social acceptance, physical look of the product and prestige of showcasing a reputable luxury brand.

The Likert scale was used by the participants to rate each statement. The higher the score, the greater the willingness to consider the purchase of counterfeit luxury goods, the lower the score, the lower the willingness.

3.7 Pilot Study

A pilot study was done prior to the main data collection exercise. The questionnaire was initially tested with ten women, who were rich in Marondera. The characteristics of these respondents were similar to those of the intended main sample but were not part of the study.

A pilot study was conducted to assess the questions for their understandability, relevance and appropriate wordings. It also facilitated the researcher in determining question sequence, the effectiveness of the response categories and the approximate amount of time it would take to administer the instrument.

Through the pilot participants' feedback, it was found that some of the statements needed to be reworded. Ambiguous expressions were corrected, repetitive questions were eliminated or consolidated and instructions were simplified as appropriate.

The test additionally demonstrated that the questionnaire can be filled out in around 10-15 minutes, the pilot exercise also revealed. The required changes were carried out before the instrument was given to the primary sample.

3.8 Data-Collection Procedures

Prior to the collection of data, formal permission was secured from the involved authorities and establishments. The researcher went to the selected shopping malls, luxury shops, cosmetic shops, fashion shops, beauty salons in Marondera and some parts of Harare to approach the potential respondents.

The prospective participants were screened to determine if they met the criteria for participation in this study. People who met the criteria were told about the research and its purpose before they were asked to take part.

The questionnaires were given in person to those who were available at the chosen sites. The researcher gave the participants general directions without influencing their answer. Completed questionnaires returned at agreed time or as soon as possible when circumstances allowed.

The questionnaire was also distributed via the internet by social media and consumer circles related to luxury items, fashion and high quality lifestyles. The online component gave access to those who could not be contacted.
The questionnaires returned were checked for completeness by the researcher prior to data entry. Instruments that had significant missing data were not used in the final data analysis to prevent adding unreliable or misleading results to the analysis.

3.8.1 Primary Data

Primary data is data that is gathered for the specific purpose of the investigation (Saunders et al., 2019). This study used primary data gathered from the rich women who live, work or shop in Marondera and certain parts of Harare.

Primary data was used to have information that was directly related to the objectives and conceptual variables of the study. The respondents share their personal experience on their attitude towards social display, possessions, luxury brands and counterfeit products.

Primary data were found to be most suitable since their study concentrated on perceptions and behavioural intentions which could not have been sufficiently established from secondary sources or from reports alone.

3.9 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity procedures were used to evaluate the quality of the study. The reliability encompassed the consistency of the measurement scales; the validity was directed towards whether the instrument measured the concepts it was designed to measure.

3.9.1 Validity

Validity in this study was defined as the extent to which the questionnaire was able to capture the concepts it was designed to measure. That is, the key variables presented in the conceptual framework needed to be represented in the instrument. Bryman and Cramer (2011) stated that validity is related to the question of whether or not the measures used in the research are suitable and correct for the concept studied.

Construct validity was the topic of special concern. The questionnaire was constructed so that there were several related statements to measure each of the important variables instead of one question. The items measures of conspicuous consumption behaviour, materialism and luxury counterfeit purchase intention were compared with the operational meanings used in the study. This was done to ensure that the questions were congruent with the constructs in which the questions were designed.

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was employed to measure the convergent validity. The AVE test was used to assess the extent of sharing of common variance among the items that belonged to the same construct. A value of 0.50 or higher was considered acceptable, as it is indicative of the fact that at least 50% of the variance of the measurement items is explained by a construct.

To determine the extent to which the constructs are distinct from each other, discriminant validity was also investigated. This was determined by comparing the square root of each construct's AVE to the other constructs correlation. Constructs with a square root of AVE higher than the inter-construct correlations had acceptable discriminant validity.

The pilot study also resulted in the instrument's validity. It was useful for the researcher to spot ambiguous, redundant or ambiguous questions prior to the actual data collection phase. The results from the pilot exercise were used to correct the questionnaire to ensure it covered the research objectives.

3.9.2 Reliability

Reliability was related to the consistency of the questionnaire as a measurement tool. A valid instrument provides consistent and stable responses to the items which measure the same construct. Reliability was of importance in this study as several questionnaire items were used for measuring the variables.

Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability were used to measure internal consistency. The use of these tests was for the items that measured conspicuous consumption behaviour, materialism and the intention to purchase luxury counterfeits. The goal was to ascertain if the items that were clustered together under each construct were enough to be analyzed together.

Both Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability were greater than 0.70 which is acceptable. Constructs showing values of or above this were considered reliable. This indicated that there was enough consistency for items in each scale to be used together as composite scores for statistical analysis.

The main analysis was preceded by a review of the items with low reliability values. This was needed to prevent the utilization of measurement items which can lessen the precision of the findings. Reliability testing thus made sure that the data collected through the questionnaire was appropriate for correlation analysis, regression analysis and structural equation modeling.

The basic procedure for collecting and presenting data is as follows.

Following the administration of questionnaires, the completed questionnaires were verified, coded and entered in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. The data were screened prior to analysis for missing responses, coding errors, outlier and inconsistencies. This cleaning process helped to improve the accuracy and usefulness of the final dataset.

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the background of the respondents, and the general direction of their responses. Frequencies and percentages were used for demographic variables. The main study variables, which were measured using several questionnaire items, were summarized using means and standard deviations.

Cronbach's alpha was used to test the reliability of the measurement scales. According to Nunnally (1978) an acceptable internal consistency is 0.70 and above. The use of this standard was to see if items on the questionnaire were consistent enough to be analyzed.

This was followed by the use of inferential statistical techniques in evaluating the relationship between the variables in the study. To determine the direction and magnitude of the relationship between conspicuous consumption and materialism and purchase intention of luxury counterfeits, correlation analysis was used. The extent to which the explanatory variables predicted respondents' intention to purchase counterfeit luxury products was determined using regression analysis.

Where necessary, Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) was used to assess the measurement and structural models. A confirmatory factor analysis was performed to examine the fit of the measurement model, and structural equation modelling was performed to examine the hypothesized relationships among the constructs. The results were presented in tabular, chart and graph form. The results of each statistical output were then discussed based on the research goals, research hypotheses, and related literature.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The ethical principles were adhered to in the study. Before the respondents filled in the questionnaire, they were told the aim of the research. Every respondent was not compelled to be part of this study and participation was voluntary.

The participants were provided with sufficient information regarding the nature of the study and informed consent was obtained. They were also informed that they could leave the study at any time without any repercussions.

Anonymity was assured by not asking for names and not asking for any direct details that identify the person responding to the questionnaire. This enabled them to voice their opinions more freely, particularly with regard to the study subjects of wealth display and luxury consumption/ counterfeit products.

Confidentiality also was respected. Questionnaires and electronic records were securely stored, and only available for academic research. The data were reported in a grouped form, that is, no one individual respondent could be identified from the findings.

During the data collection, the dignity, privacy and autonomy of all respondents was respected. The questions posed were professional, and participants were not pressured to say anything they didn't want to. The information gathered was only for the purposes of this academic study.

3.12 Chapter Summary

The methodology of the study, which examined conspicuous consumption behavior, materialism and intention to purchase luxury counterfeit articles among high spending female consumers, has been detailed in this chapter. It is a quantitative causal-explanatory study and the respondents were selected through purposive sampling technique which focused on individuals with the necessary characteristics of affluence and luxury consumption.
Structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data and the data was collected from affluent female consumers in selected areas of Harare and Marondera. The chapter also discussed the measurement scales, pilot study, data-collection procedures, validity and reliability of the research instrument.

Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis of the collected data was done using SPSS and AMOS. Ethical issues like informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity, confidentiality and secure data handling were adhered to as well. The findings from the empirical study are presented, analyzed and interpreted in the following chapter based on the research objectives and research hypotheses.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.0 Introduction

The chapter described and explained the findings of the study participants. The study aimed at investigating the connection between conspicuous consumption behaviour, conspicuous altruism and the purchase of fake luxury goods among the rich and beautiful females.

The data that was gathered from the questionnaires were then coded and analyzed using the software, IBM SPSS Statistics. The software was employed to structure the answers, create statistical summary and test the relationship specified in the research objectives and research hypotheses. The chapter was divided into a few analytical sections. The beginning was with the questionnaire response rate and the demographic characteristics of those who responded. Then reliability test and description of the main study constructs were conducted. Correlation analysis then examined the direction and strength of the relationships between the variables, and regression analysis examined the proportion of variance in conspicuous consumption of counterfeit luxury products accounted for by conspicuous consumption behaviour and conspicuous altruism. Fifteen hundred questionnaires were sent to eligible rich female consumers. Of the 100 questionnaires that were returned, 100 were completed satisfactorily and were analyzed. This resulted in a 66.7% response rate. Of the 50 questionnaires that were not returned, 50 had insufficient data for incorporation into the final data set.

4.1 QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE RATE

A total of 150 affluent women who met the criteria for participation were targeted. After the end of data collection 100 usable questionnaires were recovered and 50 questionnaires were

neither returned nor recovered. The Response rate achieved for the planned statistical analysis was 66.7% which was deemed sufficient. Consequently, the 100 valid responses yielded a sufficiently large sample for the descriptions of the participants, for the test of the internal consistency of the measurement scales and for testing the hypotheses concerning the relationships between conspicuous consumption, conspicuous altruism and counterfeit luxury-product consumption. The response rate of the questionnaire is briefed in Table 4.1

Table 1 Response Rate

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Administered Questionnaires	150	100%
Returned Questionnaires	100	66.7%
Unreturned Questionnaires	50	33.3%

Source: Primary Data

The researcher also went on to observe the demographic profile of the respondents specifically the affluent women. The main sample features that were assessed were age, marital status, occupation and their monthly income bracket. Table 4.2 below shows the demographic profile of respondents.

Table 2 Demographic profile of respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	Below 18	8	8%
	20-30	32	32%
	31-40	31	31%
	Above 40	29	29%
Marital status	Single	40	40%
	Married	42	42%
	Divorced	7	7%
	Other	11	11%
Monthly income Bracket	Below 1 000	44	44%

1 000-2 500	**33**	**33%**
2 501-5 000	**18**	**18%**
Above 5 000	5	5%

Occupation Distribution Summary

Rather, in the occupational profile of the respondents, a diverse representation of professions emerged. The respondents included students from top schools like Peterhouse Girls and Africa University, entrepreneurs, receptionists, dental assistants, managers, nurses, accountants, lawyers, teachers (A schools) including Peterhouse School, Lendy Park, Wise Owl, social workers, consultants and other professional occupations. This diversity, however, suggests the study was able to capture the responses of women from professional and economic diversity, indicating that the findings were more reliable and representative.

Source: Primary Source

Interpretation of the Demographic Results

The results showed the majority of the respondents (63%) were in Age Category 20-30 and 31-40. This indicates that the majority of the respondents were relatively young to middle aged adults which is in line to the target population of luxury consumption behaviors.

As for marital status, 82% of respondents were either Single or married, suggesting that the majority of the respondents were from these two predominant marital groups.

As far as income is concerned, majority of the respondents were in the below 1 000 and 1 000-2 500 income bracket, accounting 77% of the respondents. This shows that the study showed to be successful in obtaining participants from the lower to middle income groups, with lesser participants from higher income groups.

The demographic characteristics overall suggest that the respondents were well distributed in terms of age, marital status, income and occupation, and hence were sufficient as a basis for analysis of conspicuous consumption behavior, conspicuous altruism, and intentions to buy counterfeit luxury goods.

4.2 Measurement Validation

Unidimensionality, convergent validity, discriminant validity and composite reliability of the measures were tested.

4.2.1 Unidimensionality

The study conducted a unidimensionality test to assess these questionnaire measurement items were measuring one construct. Indices based on response patterns, reliability, and validity and some principal components were used to assess unidimensionality of constructs. Factor analysis in SPSS and AMOS software was used for uni-dimensionality test. The test was performed on the 6 constructs and loaded ones are noted with the asterisk in the model.

4.2.2 Composite Reliability

The internal consistency of the measurement items was determined by using composite reliability. Most constructs were found to have acceptable reliability levels with satisfactory internal consistency of 0.70 or higher. The Centrality Dimension was not however found to be within the recommended range, indicating reliability issues. The majority of these constructs had satisfactory composite reliability despite this.

4.2.3 Convergent Validity

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was used to determine the convergent validity. The results showed that majority of the constructs achieved the recommended cut off and that the measurement items adequately converged in representing the constructs intended. The Centrality Dimension, however, was not able to reach the minimum score, indicating low convergent validity. In general, the convergent validity of most of the constructs in this study was established.

4.2.4 Discriminant Validity

The assessment of discriminant validity was conducted based on the AVE value compared with the shared variance value between the constructs as suggested by Hair et al (2019). Results showed that the AVE values exceeded the respective shared variance values, suggesting that the constructs are empirically different. Thus, satisfactory evidence of discriminant validity was obtained.

Table 3 Composite reliability, Average Variance Expected and Shared Variance

Constructs	Number of items	Composite reliability	Validity (AVE)	Shared variance					
				CCB	CA	SD	CD	HD	CLC
Conspicuous Consumption Behavior	5	0.920	0.780	**0.883**					
Conspicuous Altruism	5	0.928	0.724	0.0174	**0.850**				
Success Dimension	6	0.856	0.500	0.1927	0.0185	**0.707**			
Centrality Dimension	7	0.279	0.350	0.0012	0.02	0.0019	**0.592**		
Happiness Dimension	4	0.721	0.543	0.4692	0.0005	0.066	0.0096	**0.740**	
Counterfeit Luxury Consumption	12	0.969	0.730	0.0164	0.0166	0.0119	0.0049	0.0108	**0.854**

4.3 Measurement Model

Evaluation of the measurement model was undertaken to gauge the validity and reliability of the conceptual model. The measurement model of the study is shown below.

Fig 2 measurement model

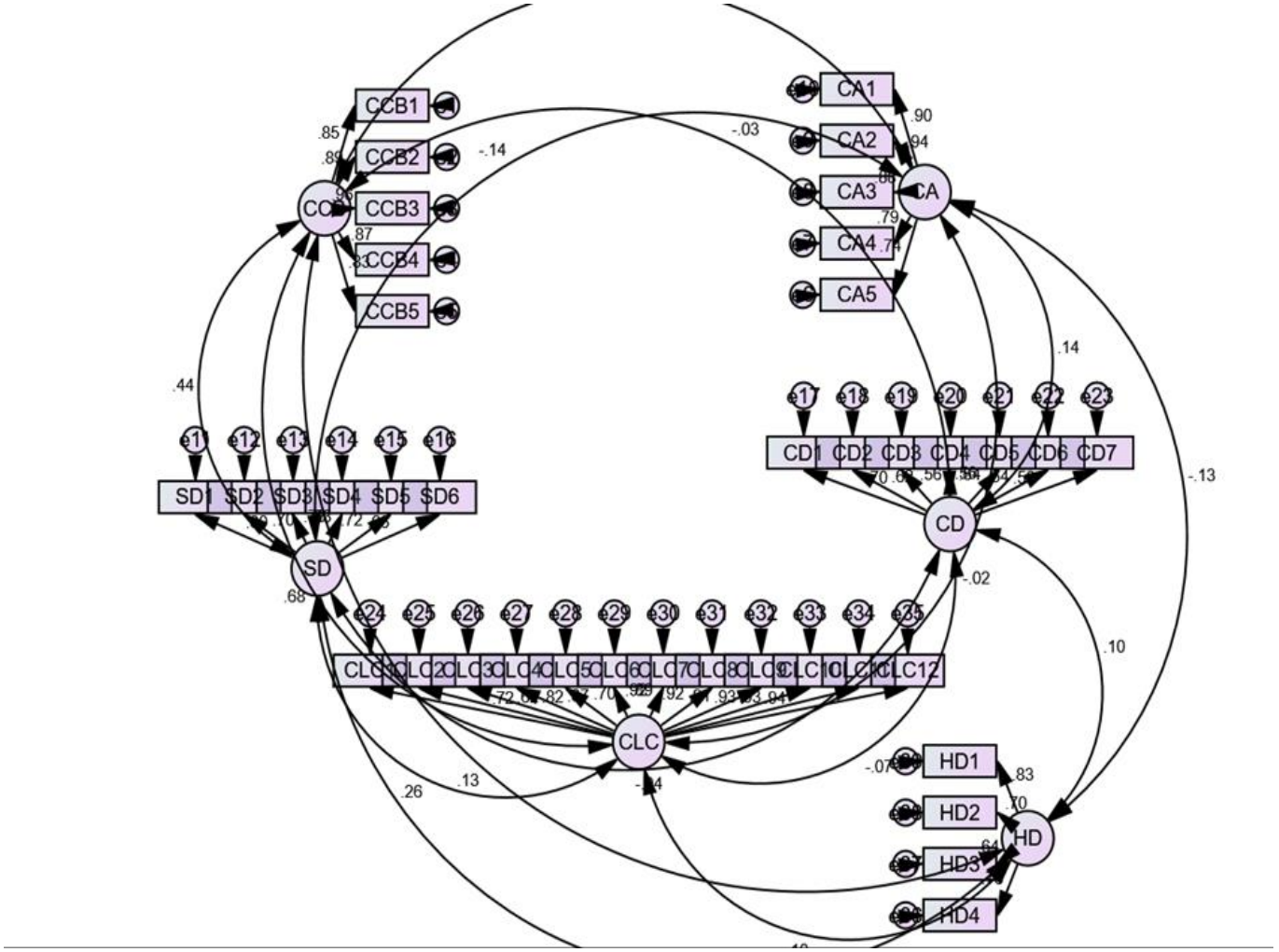


Table 4: Goodness of fit results for measurement model

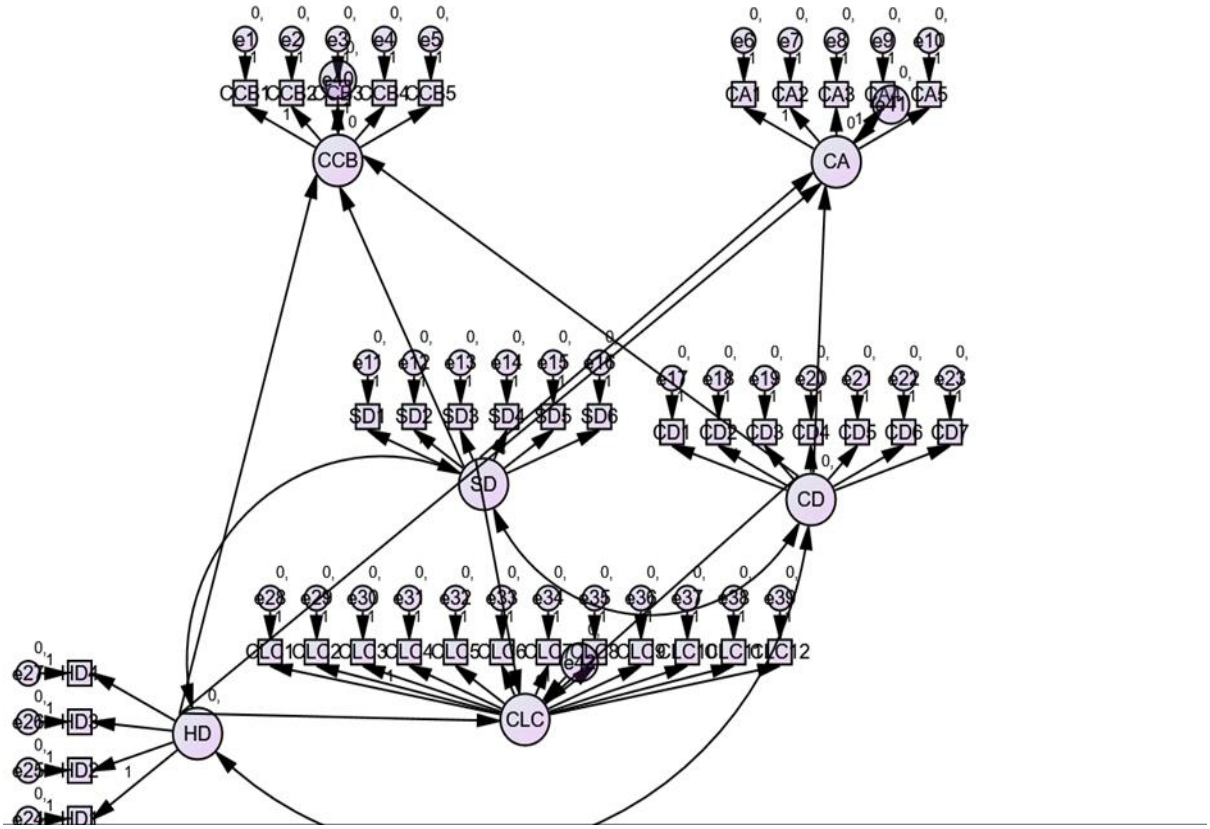
Goodness of fit statistics	Desired range of standards for good fit	Value for the study
Incremental fit index (IFI)	>0.90	0.93
Normal fit index (NFI)	>0.90	0.91
Tucker Lewis Index (TLI)	>0.90	0.95

Comparative fit index (CFI)	>0.90	0.92
Root-Mean Error Square of Approximation (RMSEA)	<0.08	0.081
Chi-Square (CMI/DF)	<3.00	0.687

Source: AMOS

4.4 HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Fig 3 Structural Model for the study



The study used the AMOS software to conduct a structural equation model to test the study's hypothesis. Only one of the hypothesis tested was accepted as shown on the table below. The diagram above is structural model of the study.

Table 5. HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Source: AMOS26

The proposed relationships among the three dimensions of materialism and conspicuous altruism along with conspicuous consumption behaviour were examined using the structural equation modelling. The beta coefficient and corresponding probability associated with each

H	Hypothesis Statement	Beta	P-Value	Decision
H1			0.002	
(a)	Conspicuous consumption behaviour- Success dimension	0.525		Accepted
(b)	Conspicuous consumption behaviour- Happiness dimension	-0.12	0.865	Rejected
(c)	Conspicuous consumption behaviour- Centrality dimension	1.508	0.099	Rejected
H2		0.256		Rejected
(a)	Counterfeit luxury consumption- Success dimension	1.942	.083	Rejected
(b)	Counterfeit luxury consumption- Happiness dimension	-0.041	.062	Rejected
(c)	Counterfeit luxury consumption- Centrality dimension		.947	
H3	Conspicuous altruism - Success dimension	0.062	.722	Rejected
(a)				
(b)	Conspicuous altruism - Happiness dimension	0.515	.467	Rejected
(c)	Conspicuous altruism- Centrality dimension	0.514	.606	Rejected

structural path was interpreted. Relationships with p-values less than 0.05 were considered statistically significant while those with p-values greater than 0.05 were considered not to be supported at the 5% significance level.

Positive and statistically significant relationship was found in the successful dimension of materialism with conspicuous consumption behaviour ($\beta = 0.525$, $p = 0.002$) in the first tested path. The coefficient indicated that a stronger association of the sense of possession with achievement was linked to greater conspicuous consumption. As the probability value was less than 0.05, the hypothesis stating that there was a significant relationship between the two variables: material success and conspicuous consumption behaviour was accepted.

The happiness dimension on the other hand yielded a negative, but non-significant coefficient (β = -0.120, p = 0.865). The findings showed that the happiness-oriented materialism was not a meaningful predictor of the differences in the conspicuous consumption behaviour. The corresponding hypothesis is not supported.

The centrality and conspicuous consumption behaviour were positively correlated (β = 1.508). The relationship was not statistically significant, however, due to a p-value of 0.099. The direction of the coefficient indicated a possible positive effect, but the data were not strong enough to support the hypothesized effect at the 5% significance level. Thus the centrality-conspicuous consumption hypothesis was rejected.

A further structural pathway was also statistically significant with a positive coefficient (β = 0.256, p = 0.083) with the success dimension and conspicuous consumption behaviour. However, this association was not significant statistically. The probability value was > 0.05 so the hypothesis for this path was not supported.

One other path had a positive coefficient for the relationship between happiness and conspicuous consumption behaviour (β = 1.942, p = 0.062). The magnitude of the estimate indicated a potential for a strong positive correlation; the direction indicated by the estimate was positive. The p value was slightly above the set significance level, however. The relation is thus said to be marginal and statistically not significant and the related hypothesis is not accepted at the 5% level of significance.

Another tested path (path 10) yielded a very small negative coefficient for the centrality dimension (β = -0.041, p = 0.947). The estimate was very close to zero and the high p-value suggested that there was no statistically meaningful result. This pathway was not a significant predictor of conspicuous consumption behaviour, however, for the centrality. Therefore, the study did not reject the null hypothesis.

The routes of conspicuous altruism were also not statistically different from zero. The correlation between success dimension and conspicuous altruism was positive and not statistically significant (β = 0.062, p = 0.722). Likewise, happiness was positively related to conspicuous altruism but the relationship is non-significant (β = 0.515, p = 0.467). The

centrality–conspicuous altruism pathway also yielded a positive coefficient, but it was not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.514$, $p = 0.606$).

The results showed that not a single p-value was significant (all $p>0.05$) and the hypotheses of conspicuous altruism with the success and the happiness and centrality dimensions of materialism were rejected. The findings showed that these materialistic aspects were not statistically sufficient to explain the variations of the respondents' conspicuous altruistic behavior.

Discussion of Findings

The results indicated that the success dimension of materialism was the only factor to have a statistically significant impact on the conspicuous consumption behaviour. This indicated that higher income women were more likely to participate in consumption that was part of the display of prestige, social status, and personal achievement.

The very strong positive correlation lent support to the idea that luxury products have symbolic role that is more than functional. Those who related success to ownership seemed to be more willing to buy and display items that made a statement about their economic status to others. Consequently, conspicuous consumption appeared to be a social signal and a way for people to show achievement and to gain recognition.

This outcome was consistent with the consumer-behaviour perspectives that see products as vehicles for social meanings. Luxury and conspicuous consumption can allow consumers to express identity, wealth and status without overt verbal expressions of status. The success dimension seemed to be a more powerful motivator for the visible consumption than the other dimensions of materialism in the context of the study.

There was no statistically significant impact on the happiness dimension on conspicuous consumption behaviour. This discovery indicated that the desire to acquire visible goods, or those of prestige, was not a primary motivation of the respondents, in the expectation that these possessions would provide them with emotional satisfaction or personal happiness.

The negligible relationship suggested that there was a greater drive to engage in conspicuous consumption rather than emotional satisfaction, perhaps due to the fact that the external social outcomes were more important. While this did not necessarily result in an increase of personal happiness, affluent women may have been able to purchase items that were visible to achieve recognition, admiration or status.

This was different from arguments that consumers buy physical goods because they believe that having goods will make them happier. The present study failed to find any support for this correlation between happiness-related materialism and conspicuous consumption. This suggested that psychology health and emotional satisfaction might have been influenced by a factor other than owning or exhibiting luxury products.

Conspicuous consumption behaviour was also not significantly influenced by the centrality dimension. This finding suggested that possessing something was not necessarily linked with its public use, and that the importance or centrality of possessions in the life did not automatically imply that they would be used publicly.

There are some people that might have been prizing material possessions highly, although they were not using them to convey social status. That is, there were two different consumer tendencies, namely private attachment and public status-oriented consumption. A person might value ownership to high degree, and not be interested in displaying it for social recognition.

The results of the conspicuous altruism indicated that none of the three materialism dimensions gave a statistically significant account of this behaviour. Positive coefficients were obtained for Success, happiness and centrality, but these correlations were not strong enough and/or consistent enough to be considered statistically significant.

The results indicated that high altruism among rich females might have been due to a variety of other factors besides materialistic values. The public generosity might have been influenced by any of the following: cultural expectations, moral views, social responsibility, religious beliefs, and identity formation or the need to maintain a positive public image.

The results also suggested that the motivations behind conspicuous altruism could have been distinct from that of visible luxury consumption. While overt consumption was strongly linked

to the use of possessions as a sign of success, displays of generosity did not seem to rely heavily on material achievement, possession centred living or happiness through material wealth.

Overall, the results of SEM are partially confirmed with the proposed model. The success dimension was the only factor to be statistically significant in predicting conspicuous consumption behaviour. Explanatory power was only found for happiness and centrality; none of the materialism dimensions significantly explained conspicuous altruism.

The results then revealed that the connections between constructs were selective, rather than universal. Not all socially visible behaviour was affected in the same way by materialism. Specifically, symbolic meaning of the possession as proof of success seemed to be more influential than the search for happiness through possession and the centrality of possessions in life.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarised the key findings of the investigation and summarised the findings of the empirical evidence to form a conclusion. It also set out recommendations based on the findings and areas that needed further research due to the limitations encountered on the study.

5.1 SUMMARY

The study looked at the correlations between conspicuous consumption behaviour, materialistic values, conspicuous altruism and counterfeit luxury-product intention purchase among high-income consumers especially females in Marondera and parts of Harare, Zimbabwe. The chapter thus compiled the main findings obtained from the statistical analysis and explained the implications of these findings in regard to the study objectives and hypotheses. The findings of the research are summarized in the following section:

The aim of the study was to explain to what extent materialism and intention to buy counterfeit luxury products were related to conspicuous consumption behaviour among the wealthy

women. The study focused specifically on the positive relationship between the three aspects of materialism (success, centrality, happiness) and conspicuous consumption.

The study also evaluated the relationship of conspicuous altruism with the same dimensions of materialism, and whether materialistic values were related to the purchase of counterfeit luxury items by affluent women. The relationships were used to create the conceptual model and the hypotheses for the research.

The theoretical basis of the study was taken from three main approaches. The public exhibition of wealth and status could be explained by Veblen's Theory of the Leisure Class (1899). The instrument of measuring success, centrality and happiness as aspects of materialism was based on the framework developed by Richins and Dawson (1992). The Conspicuous Altruism perspective used in the analysis of generosity was of Sondhi which was linked to seeing generosity as something that is visible to the public.

A quantitative causal-explanatory design was used. The study was conducted with 150 rich female consumers, with 100 returning usable questionnaires. This was a 66.7% response rate. The rest of the questionnaires were not returned or incomplete and were thus not included in the final analysis.

Structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data. The substantive items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire obtained data about the conspicuous consumption behavior, conspicuous altruism, materialism, and desire to buy counterfeit luxury-goods.

The collected data were coded and analyzed by using IBM SPSS Statistics and AMOS Version 26 in the analysis of the structural equation modelling. All the scales in the study were analyzed by descriptive statistics, reliability testing, and factor analysis and structural-path analysis to test the relationships between the study variables.

The factor-analyses showed that the measurement scales were suitable for further statistical analyses. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin coefficient for the conspicuous consumption behaviour scale was 0.882 and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.920. They were high, reflecting good sampling coverage and high internal consistency between the items in the measures.

For the conspicuous altruism scale, the KMO value was 0.868 and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.928. These results also indicated that the scale items measuring conspicuous altruism were very consistent and suitable for factor analysis.

The success scale for materialism had a KMO value of 0.877 and a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.856. The KMO and Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the happiness dimension were 0.793 and 0.721, respectively. The scale measures of happiness had a slightly lower reliability than other scales but were still within the acceptable limit of at least 0.70.

The most consistent measurement results were obtained from the counterfeit luxury-consumption scale. The KMO value was 0.935 and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.969. The values obtained suggested that the sampling was sufficient and the internal consistency of the items which measured counterfeit luxury-product consumption and purchasing intention was very high.

Nine relationships were tested in the structural equation model. One of the nine hypotheses was statistically supported. The significant path was the relationship between the success dimension of materialism and conspicuous consumption behaviour.

The result of this relationship was a positive beta coefficient of 0.525 and a p-value of 0.002. This probability value did not meet the 0.05 significance level and the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between the success dimension and conspicuous consumption behaviour was accepted.

The study found that the group who believed that the material possessions were a sign of achievement were more likely to engage in conspicuous consumption. These items were luxury or conspicuous items that seemed to represent personal achievement, social standing and economic prosperity among rich women.

The other eight hypotheses were not statistically supported as their respective p-values were above 0.05. The results indicated that these other proposed relationships failed to have enough evidence at the 5% significance level.

In general, the results indicated that materialism success dimension was the highest and only statistic significant explanatory variable in the tested model. The dimensions of happiness and centrality did not significantly account for conspicuous consumption behaviour and the dimensions of materialism did not significantly account for conspicuous altruism to emerge.

The study thus revealed that materialism had different effects on various socially observable behaviors. The symbolic use of possessions to express success was more significant than the idea that possessing things somehow brought happiness and/or played a central role in life. Likewise, there were factors other than the three dimensions of materialism studied that appeared to influence conspicuous altruism.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

The research findings led to the following conclusions:

In Zimbabwe, there is an increase in the desire to demonstrate social status and prestige among the wealthy women by means of conspicuous consumption. Luxury items and their fake counterparts have become a symbol of achievement and social affiliation – and especially young and middle-aged affluent female consumers.

Overall, the study finds that success is the most powerful and significant dimension of materialism in relation to conspicuous consumption behavior among affluent women. Those who have a strong association between material possessions and the measure of their achievement and social recognition tend to be far more prone to conspicuous consumption. This finding corroborates the theory of Veblen (1899) on theory of the leisure class and emphatically supports the studies conducted by Eastman and Liu (2021) and Jain and Mishra (2022) which have concluded that prestige and success orientations are the most important factors impacting luxury consumption behaviour.

This study did not find a significant relationship between materialism and dimension of happiness. This implies that the act of conspicuous consumption of affluent women consumers could be used not so much for emotional satisfaction but more for social recognition and status enhancement. This insignificant relationship can be interpreted as emotional satisfaction from luxury consumption is restricted with the population of the study, and the theories of materialism suggest that possession can enhance life satisfaction.

Results also showed that the centrality dimensions were not significant to the conspicuous consumption behaviour. Findings suggest that having possessions at the core of life does not necessarily mean visible and conspicuous consumption. This can imply that centrality can also be expressed in other ways in different cultural and socioeconomic settings, and that external

variables like income limitations and social norms can affect the impact of centrality on the luxury consumption behaviour of Zimbabweans.

Conspicuous altruism did not have significant impact in success, happiness or centrality dimension of materialism. The authors conclude that in affluent women, visible expressions of generosity are not significantly motivated by materialist values. Instead, altruism can be a response to cultural norms or moral duty, or simply caring for others, not to demonstrate financial status or emotional fulfilment through the acquisition of material goods. The result indicates that conspicuous altruism is not a necessary by-product of the materialistic attitude of Richins and Dawson (1992) in the study context.

The study generally finds that the success dimension of materialism is a significant determinant of conspicuous consumption behaviour while the stated other hypothesized relationships were not statistically significant in the study context of affluent women consumers in Zimbabwe. The findings add to the general knowledge about luxury consumption, materialism and counterfeit purchase behaviour in developing economies.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the findings and conclusions of the study:

Develop Targeted Marketing Strategies Based on Status and Success

The luxury brands and marketers in Zimbabwe need to be developing marketing strategies that directly relate to materialism's success dimension. The study revealed that the link between material possessions and personal performance is important in influencing conspicuous consumption behaviour, so the marketing campaign that highlights the importance of luxury products as symbols of success, social mobility and prestige is likely to be very effective for affluent women consumers. Exclusivity, achievement, and social recognition are drivers of intention to buy authentic luxury products and should be emphasized in messaging.

Address Counterfeit Demand Through Premium Accessibility Strategies

The study indicates that high resource status women consumers may be tempted to purchase counterfeited luxury items as a substitute way to demonstrate status if they cannot access luxury items in real money. Luxury brands should thus look at offering affordable premium alternatives, or purchasing options that allow customers to pay out over a period of time, to lessen the financial deterrent toward fake products. Brands can curtail counterfeit demand and bolster purchase intention and make aspirational luxury more achievable.

Strengthen Consumer Education on Authentic Versus Counterfeit Products

Consumers should be educated about the ethical, legal, and quality issues of buying fake luxury products through consumer education programs by the policymakers and luxury brand organizations. Educational programmes should focus on those women consumers who are better-off, in shopping complexes, fashion stores or online; highlighting the importance of original crafts and the adverse effects of counterfeit markets on society. By educating consumers about the risks and consequences of counterfeiting, it is possible to influence their purchasing habits and encourage them to buy original products.

Leverage Social Media and Influencer Marketing

As conspicuous consumption behaviour is closely linked to the degree of public visibility and social recognition of the brand, it is important for luxury brands to make rational investments in social media marketing and influencer marketing. Pairing up with high-priced female influencers who embody the lifestyle of the rich and privileged can help to reinforce the successful and prestigious nature of conspicuous consumption. This is especially pertinent within Zimbabwe's rapidly evolving digital consumers' landscape where social media platforms are playing an increasingly pivotal role in influencing luxury consumption among the youth and middle-aged women.

Incorporate Altruistic Brand Positioning

While conspicuous altruism was not found to be directly related to materialistic aspects of this study, brands could still profit from including social responsibility aspects that are visible in the brand. Luxury brands that clearly support their community, the environment or social issues resonate with women consumers who are concerned with altruistic values. By doing so, this helps to establish brand trust, increase consumer confidence and foster positive attitudes towards the act of buying luxury products and behaving socially responsible.

5.4 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In the present study, affluent women consumers of Harare and Marondera (Zimbabwe) were targeted in particular. The following areas are suggested for future research:

Further studies should be conducted in other geographical parts of Zimbabwe, like Bulawayo, Mutare and Gweru and other African countries to find out whether the results can be generalised to other socioeconomic and cultural settings. Raising the geographical scope of the study would enable the researchers to understand the behaviour of conspicuous consumption

and its relation to materialism and counterfeit luxury purchase intention in a more comprehensive manner.

Future studies should also involve male consumers and compare the difference between them as there may be differences between genders in terms of how conspicuous consumption and materialism is displayed. This would add to the available literature on luxury consumption and give luxury brands marketing insights in emerging markets that would be more detailed.

Furthermore, longitudinal studies on the development of conspicuous consumption behaviour and materialistic values with time among rich female consumers would give insights on the changing consumer trends in the luxury market in Zimbabwe. These studies would enable luxury brand managers and policy makers to better prepare for and react to the long-term shifts in consumption patterns.

Future study can also investigate the possible moderating and mediating effect of social media usage on the relationship between conspicuous consumption behaviour and purchase intention of counterfeit luxury goods. This is an aspect that has been underrepresented in the literature of consumer behaviour, especially in light of the importance of digital platforms on consumer aspirations and purchase decisions.

Lastly, researchers are invited to investigate the role of cultural values, religious beliefs and peer group influences on conspicuous consumption behaviour and altruistic tendencies of affluent women in Zimbabwe, since these factors may affect the motivations to consume more than the present study has shown.

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APPENDIX A

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION (BUSE)

FACULTY OF COMMERCE

DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE RESEARCH TOPIC:

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE: IMPACT OF AFFLUENT WOMEN ON CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOR ON MATERIALISM AND LUXURY COUNTERFEITS.

Introduction

My name is Ruth Kawala, a fourth-year Marketing student at Bindura University of Science Education. I am conducting a study on “The Impact of Affluent Women’s Conspicuous Consumption Behaviour on Materialism and Luxury Counterfeit Purchase Intention.”

Your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes. Kindly answer all questions honestly. Thank you for your participation.

Kindly complete Section A, B, C and D and return the completed questionnaire to the distributing organization or the researcher.

For any issues pertaining this study, please contact Doc Karedza, on email address kgodwell@yahoo.com

Thank you for your cooperation in this regard.

SECTION A

Demographic characteristics of respondents

Please tick or fill in the appropriate response

1. Age:

Below 18	20-30	31-40

2. Marital Status: □ Single □ Married □ Divorced □ Other

3. Occupation: _____

4. Monthly Income Bracket:

□ Below 1,000

□1,000–2,500

□2,501–5,000

□ Above5,000

SECTION B

CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOR

		1	2	3	4	5
CCB1	I am attracted to an individual who wears branded clothes and accessories					
CCB2	I feel stylish and classy if I am wearing branded clothes and accessories					
CCB3	I like luxury good with logos that associate with my sense of style					
CCB4	I would like to own expensive luxuries that communicate class and prestige					
CCB5	I am interested or fascinated by people who come from well to do backgrounds with heritage and lineage					

SECTION C

Conspicuous altruism

		1	2	3	4	5
CA1	I would like to volunteer to a great number of hours a month to help at an underprivileged children's hospital					
CA2	I would like to volunteer many hours a month at a homeless shelter					
CA3	I would like to volunteer many hours a month to help build housing for poor families					
CA4	I would like to help teach underprivileged youth to read					
CA5	I would like to be a responsible citizen and a helpful person by spending an afternoon each weekend picking up trash alone at the park					

SECTION D

Materialism Values (Adapted from Richins & Dawson, 1992)

SUCCESS DIMENSION

		1	2	3	4	5
SD1	I admire people who own expensive homes, cars and clothes.					

SD2	Some of the most important in life include acquiring material possessions					
SD3	I do not place much emphasis on the amount of material objects people own as a sign of success. The things I own say a lot about how well I am doing in life.					
SD4	I like to own things to impress people.					
SD5	I don't pay much attention to the material objects other people own					

CENTRALITY DIMENSION

		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
CD1	I usually buy the things I need					
CD2	I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned					
CD3	The things I own aren't all that important to me.					
CD4	I enjoy spending money on things that aren't practical					

CD5	Buying things give me a lot of pleasure					
CD6	I like a lot of luxury in my life					
CD7	I put less emphasis on material things than most people I know					

HAPPINESS DIMENSION

		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
HD1	I have all the things I really need to enjoy life					
HD2	My life would be better if I owned certain things I don't have					
HD3	I wouldn't be any happier if I owned nicer things					
HD4	I would be happier if I could afford to buy more things					

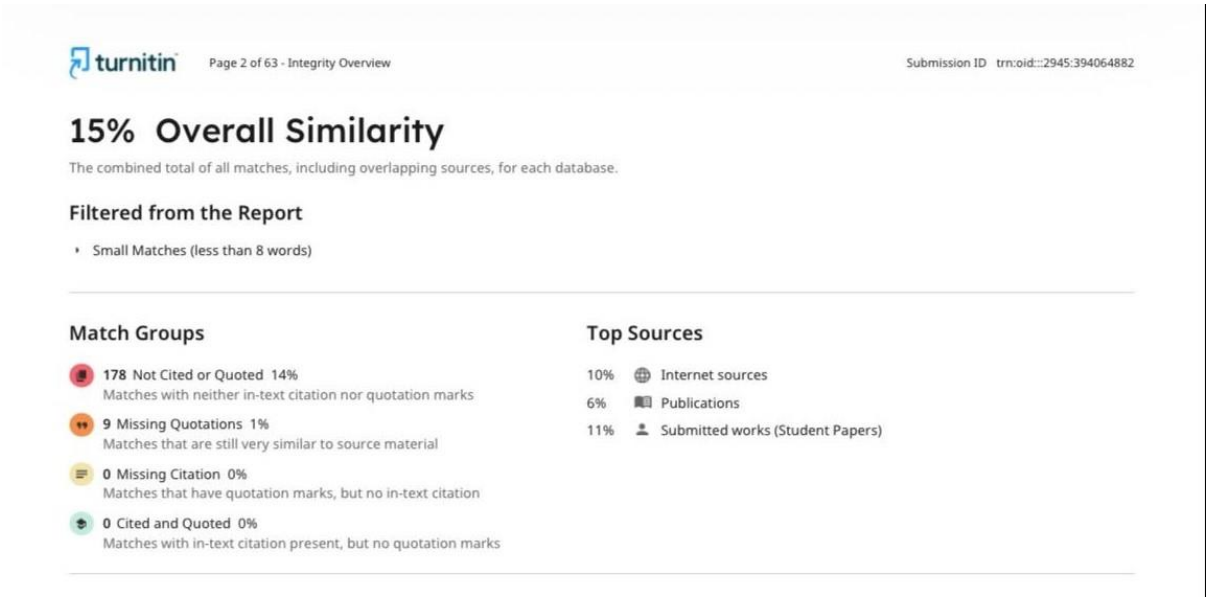
COUNTERFEIT LUXURY CONSUMPTION

		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

CLC1	Counterfeits of high end luxury brands are of superior quality					
CLC2	I carefully examine the counterfeit brand to be sure that it is an exact copy of the original luxury brand					
CLC3	Counterfeits of luxury brands are truly value for money					
CLC4	Counterfeits of luxury brands helps me own brands I normally don't buy					
CLC5	I believe that counterfeit luxury will last as long as the original					
CLC6	Buying a counterfeit of a luxury brand makes me feel so good					
CLC7	I enjoy shopping for counterfeit brands regardless of the money I save on doing so					

CLC8	Shopping for a counterfeit luxury brand is very exciting					
CLC9	I don't feel it is immoral to buy counterfeit brands					
CLC10	I look special when I am carrying the counterfeit luxury brand					
CLC11	Counterfeit brands make me feel that I am part of the elite class					
CLC12	I have no hesitation in buying a counterfeit luxury brand					

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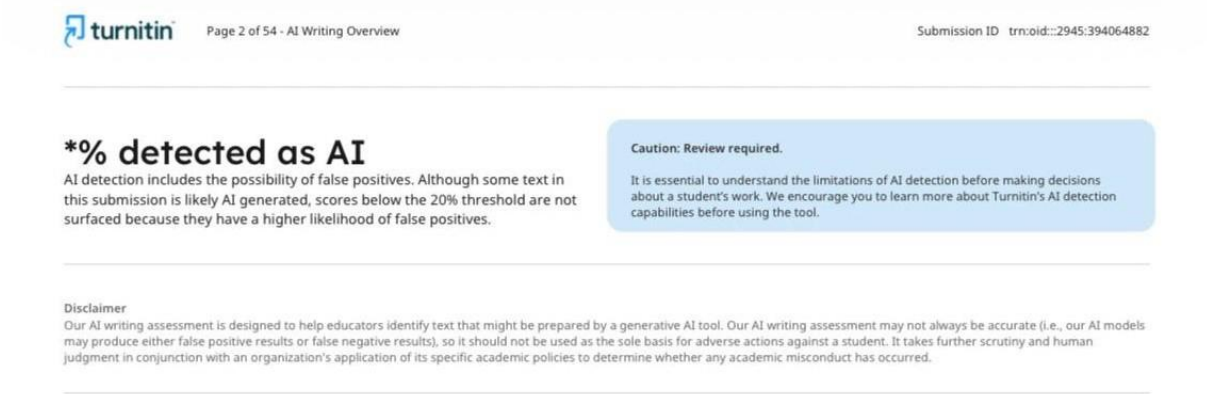
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