

CONSUMER VANITY AND LUXURY CONSUMPTION IN BRAND-CONSCIOUS CONSUMERS: THE ROLE OF MATERIALISM AND NARCISSISM

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Abstract

Consumer vanity is a psychological characteristic characterized by an inordinate preoccupation with one's appearance and achievements. In a society governed by social media and brand-aware consumers, vanity has progressively emerged as a significant motivator of luxury purchasing. This research examines the correlation between consumer vanity and luxury consumption, particularly analysing the mediating effects of materialism and narcissism. The study used a correlational survey approach including a sample of 500 brand-aware consumers aged 18 to 29. The results demonstrate a positive correlation between consumer vanity and materialism, narcissism, and luxury consumption. Moreover, materialism and narcissism act as crucial mediators in the correlation between vanity and luxury consumption. The study findings provide actionable insights for marketers seeking to engage brand-conscious consumers.

INTRODUCTION

The evolution of luxury consumption has shifted from a marker of exclusivity for the wealthy to a more democratized phenomenon, more shaped by psychological and social factors (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). In modern culture, the desire for luxury items is driven not only by practical needs but also by a quest for prestige, image, and self-worth (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). Luxury goods, once perceived as symbols of wealth, have become increasingly accessible and now serve as representations of social standing and personal achievement (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). This transformation is most evident among brand-conscious individuals, particularly those aged 18 to 29, who engage in luxury consumption to enhance

their social standing and identity (Lee & Workman, 2017).

Consumer vanity, characterized by a preoccupation with personal achievements and appearance, has emerged as a significant psychological factor influencing consumer decisions, particularly in the luxury goods market (LeBel, 2003). The digital age has intensified the demand for self-presentation, rendering vanity a more substantial factor in consumer behavior, particularly among younger demographics aiming to project an attractive image to their social networks (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). Social media platforms, emphasizing aesthetics and social approval, have intensified this issue, promoting a societal trend of vanity-driven consumption (Lee & Workman, 2017).

This research seeks to clarify the influence of consumer vanity, materialism, and narcissism on luxury purchases among brand-aware consumers. These traits, when evaluated collectively, provide a comprehensive understanding of the motivations driving certain consumers' acquisitions of luxury goods. Social media platforms facilitate self-presentation, associating luxury items with personal success and social approbation, so rendering vanity a significant element of consumer behavior (Twenge & Campbell, 2009).

Luxury consumption has seen a notable transformation in recent decades, evolving from an exclusive endeavor of the wealthy to a more widespread practice among consumers, especially those aged 16 to 29, seeking to elevate their social identity (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). The advent of social media has been pivotal in this shift, with platforms like Instagram and TikTok emphasizing visual material and the portrayal of idealized lifestyles (Lee & Workman, 2017). The growing prevalence of luxury goods on these platforms has shifted consumer motivations from traditional utilitarian needs to aspirational consumption, where ownership of luxury items signifies not only material wealth but also functions as a form of social validation and self-expression (Richins & Dawson, 1992).

In this context, consumer vanity, characterized by the desire to display an idealized self-image, acts as a principal motivator for luxury purchases (LeBel, 2003). Vanity, arising from the want for validation and status, transforms luxury expenditure into a means of enhancing one's public image (Workman & Lee, 2013). The rise of "selfie culture" on social media has heightened the imperative for individuals to cultivate their own brands by showcasing luxurious items that signify status, refinement, and success (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). Luxury goods represent individual achievement and a meticulously constructed self-image, aligning with the psychological motivations of consumer vanity.

Materialism and narcissism intensify the complex relationship between vanity and luxury consumerism (Richins & Dawson, 1992; Ames & Kamrath, 2004). Materialism, which emphasizes the importance of possessions in forming personal identity and fulfillment, acts as a stimulus for the pursuit of luxury items (Richins & Dawson, 1992).

As individuals embrace the belief that luxury goods are vital for social acceptance and success, materialism exacerbates the relationship between vanity and consumption (Wiedmann, Hennigs, & Siebels, 2007). Narcissism, characterized by an inflated sense of self-importance and an insatiable want for admiration, also propels the tendency to obtain luxury items as a method of validating one's status and superiority (Ames & Kamrath, 2004). Narcissistic individuals often employ material possessions to project their exaggerated self-image to others (Durvasula & Lysonski, 2014).

This study aims to clarify the relationship among the psychological traits of consumer vanity, materialism, and narcissism in the context of luxury consumption. This study seeks to clarify the impact of these characteristics on customer behaviour, offering marketers essential insights into the reasoning behind luxury brand purchases (Bodenhausen et al., 2011).

This study's conceptual framework posits that consumer vanity directly influences luxury consumption, with materialism and narcissism acting as mediators. The framework asserts that materialism and narcissism are essential psychological intermediaries that amplify the effect of vanity on luxury consumption. The relationships are delineated as follows:

In this framework, consumer vanity acts as the principal psychological driver for luxury purchasing, while materialism and narcissism function as essential mediators that amplify and direct the desire for high-status products. Materialism links vanity to luxury goods by equating ownership of these items with personal success and satisfaction (Richins & Dawson, 1992), while narcissism amplifies the desire for luxury consumption as a means of showcasing self-importance and dominance (Durvasula & Lysonski, 2014).

This conceptual framework elucidates the relationship between consumer vanity, materialistic values, and narcissistic tendencies, providing a comprehensive explanation for the motivations behind luxury brand consumption (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). The paradigm emphasizes that vanity-driven individuals seek to improve their self-image while also attempting to express their identity

and status through luxury goods (Bodenhausen et al., 2011).

Study Objectives

The primary aims of this study are to:

1. Study the correlation between consumer vanity and luxury consumption (LeBel, 2003).
2. Study the mediating effect of materialism in the relationship between consumer vanity and luxury consumption (Richins & Dawson, 1992).
3. Study the mediating function of narcissism in the correlation between consumer vanity and luxury consumption (Ames & Kammrath, 2004).

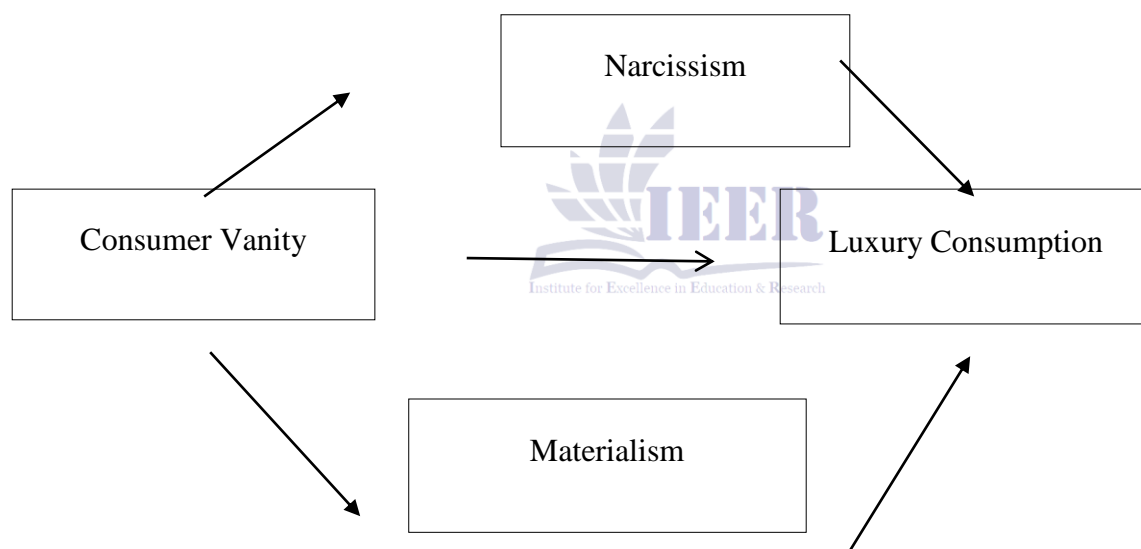
4. Study notable demographic disparities in luxury consumption behaviors and the psychological characteristics of vanity, materialism, and narcissism (Workman & Lee, 2013).

Hypotheses

Following the literature review, the subsequent hypotheses were formulated:

- H1:** Consumer vanity is positively correlated with luxury consumption.
- H2:** Materialism mediates the relationship between consumer vanity and luxury consumption.
- H3:** Narcissism mediates the relationship between consumer vanity and luxury consumption.

Conceptual Framework



METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilizes a correlational research approach to investigate the associations among psychological traits consumer vanity, materialism, and narcissism and luxury consumption. This method facilitates the examination of the relationship between psychological characteristics and purchase behaviour without determining direct causation. The study elucidates the extent and direction of correlations, yielding significant insights into the impact of vanity, materialism, and narcissism on consumer behaviour,

especially regarding luxury goods, thereby establishing a basis for subsequent experimental or longitudinal research (Field, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Participants and Sampling Methodology

The study utilized purposive sampling, a non-probability technique frequently employed in consumer research, to obtain a diverse and representative sample by selecting participants with specific relevant characteristics (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). The sample comprised 500 brand-conscious customers aged 16 to 29 from Sargodha,

Pakistan. The selected age range is particularly pertinent as younger consumers are increasingly inclined towards luxury purchasing, largely due to the increasing impact of social media and the transition towards prioritizing image and self-presentation (Twenge & Campbell, 2009).

The sample was primarily female, as women in this age group typically demonstrate elevated levels of luxury purchasing, notably in the fashion and beauty industries. Studies indicate that women are typically more affected by societal standards about beauty, fashion, and status, resulting in a higher propensity to acquire luxury items (Workman & Lee, 2013). The link of femininity with beauty, elegance, and social status elucidates the prioritization of this population (Stokburger-Sauer & Teichmann, 2013). Moreover, women frequently lead in consumption influenced by social media, where luxury goods are commonly depicted as emblems of success and status (Richins & Dawson, 1992).

Participants needed to possess elevated brand awareness and brand consciousness, indicating they regularly acquired branded things and saw these items as essential components of self-expression and social status (Wiedmann et al., 2007). Purposive sampling facilitated a targeted methodology, guaranteeing that the participants accurately represented the target demographic possessing the psychological characteristics necessary to investigate the principal correlations among vanity, materialism, narcissism, and luxury expenditure (Etikan et al., 2016).

Instruments

To precisely evaluate the psychological qualities and consumption patterns in the sample, the study utilized four validated psychological measures, each designed to measure distinct psychological categories. These scales have undergone rigorous validation in prior consumer behaviour research, confirming that the assessments are dependable and suitable for the study's aims.

1) **LeBel Vanity Scale (2003):** This measure is explicitly developed to evaluate consumer vanity, emphasizing issues related to consumer vanity. It encompasses elements that assess the degree of individuals' preoccupation with their consumer vanity, personal accomplishments, and the impact of

these aspects on their inclination towards luxury goods (LeBel, 2003). Vanity is closely associated with the acquisition of status-signaling products, rendering it a crucial factor for comprehending luxury consumption (Workman & Lee, 2013).

2) **Material Values Scale (Richins & Dawson, 1992):** This scale assesses materialism, the conviction that goods and riches are fundamental to an individual's happiness and success (Richins & Dawson, 1992). Materialism has historically been linked to luxury consumption, since materialistic individuals like to acquire commodities that bolster their identity and social status (Wiedmann et al., 2007). The scale comprises elements evaluating the significance of wealth, possessions, and the influence of luxury goods on attaining happiness and prestige.

3) **Narcissistic Personality Inventory-16 (Ames & Kammrath, 2004):** The NPI-16 is a condensed variant of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory, utilized to assess narcissistic characteristics including grandiosity, entitlement, and the desire for external validation (Ames & Kammrath, 2004). Narcissism significantly influences luxury consumption, as those exhibiting narcissistic traits are strongly driven to get luxury items as emblems of superiority and distinctiveness (Durvasula & Lysonski, 2014). The scale comprises forced-choice items that discern narcissistic from non-narcissistic qualities.

4) **Luxury Consumption Tendency Scale (Doğan, Yalçın, & Doğan, 2018):** This scale assesses individuals' proclivities for luxury consumption, encompassing elements such as conspicuousness, perceived quality, social worth, and originality (Doğan et al., 2018). Luxury purchasing is frequently driven by the aspiration for social acknowledgment, and this scale evaluates the psychological and social factors that compel individuals to acquire premium products (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). Research indicates that persons with elevated scores on this scale are more inclined to prioritize luxury goods that bolster their self-identity and social standing.

The use of these scales guarantees precise and consistent measurement of each psychological construct consumer vanity, materialism, narcissism, and luxury consumption thereby establishing a dependable basis for further investigation (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Procedure

The surveys were distributed solely through in-person techniques in public locations, such as shopping malls, universities, and cafes, guaranteeing that all data was acquired physically rather than online. This method promoted interaction with a varied participant population and guaranteed fair customer representation (Cozby & Bates, 2017). Through in-person data collection, the researchers engaged directly with participants, offering better instructions and assuring comprehensive understanding of the study's aims. Participants were provided with clear instructions and a summary of the study's aims before undertaking the survey. All participants provided informed consent, which specified the voluntary nature of their participation, their right to withdraw at any time, and the confidentiality of their responses (American Psychological Association, 2017). Ethical norms were strictly followed, assuring the confidentiality of participants' personal information and that no participant was coerced into participation (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Demographic Information

Alongside the psychological measures, demographic data was gathered from participants to enable a more comprehensive examination of how various demographic factors such as age, gender, educational attainment, and family composition affect luxury consumption and the psychological characteristics of vanity, materialism, and narcissism (Workman & Lee, 2013). Research indicates that demographic considerations substantially influence consumer behavior, especially for luxury items, with younger

customers and women being more swayed by social status and self-image (Stokburger-Sauer & Teichmann, 2013).

The demographic variables of family structure (nuclear versus joint family) were also examined, as family systems might influence an individual's values and decision-making process (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015). Comprehending the impact of familial factors on luxury consumption can yield further insights into consumer purchasing intentions and their connection to luxury goods (Richins & Dawson, 1992). This demographic data will inform further analyses to discern patterns and disparities in luxury consumption and the influence of psychological factors across diverse customer categories.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Analysis

Providing critical insights into the central tendency, variability, and internal consistency of the study's core variables consumer vanity, materialism, narcissism, and luxury consumption descriptive statistics are an important part of the research process. The information that was gathered from the sample can be summarized and interpreted with the assistance of these statistics, which show underlying patterns and trends.

The following table provides the means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alpha values for each important variable. These values are essential for comprehending the distribution of the data as well as the dependability of the information.

Variable	Mean	SD	Cronbach's Alpha
Consumer Vanity	3.8	0.7	0.74
Materialism	3.6	0.6	0.71
Narcissism	3.9	0.8	0.80
Luxury Consumption	4.1	0.65	0.74

The fact that the mean score for consumer vanity is 3.8 shows that, on average, individuals display a moderate amount of vanity is not surprising. According to LeBel (2003), these persons have a tendency to exhibit a moderate obsession with their

own appearance, what they have accomplished, and the desire to receive validation from other people. Despite the fact that the majority of participants exhibit comparable levels of vanity, there is considerable diversity in the degree to which

individuals place importance on looks and performance, as indicated by the standard deviation value of 0.7. This finding is consistent with the findings of past studies that highlighted consumer vanity as a significant factor in luxury purchasing. This is especially true for persons who aim to improve their self-image through the acquisition of high-status items (LeBel, 2003; Workman & Lee, 2013).

An average score of 3.6 indicates that the participants have a moderate level of materialistic values, which suggests that they associate material goods with happiness and personal success (Richins & Dawson, 1992). This is indicated by the fact that the participants' mean score for materialism is 3.6. It may be deduced from the fact that the standard deviation is 0.6 that there is less variation in the materialistic values of the participants. A significant proportion of the sample believes that material items are necessary for adequately satisfying their own personal requirements. Richins and Dawson (1992) and Wiedmann, Hennigs, and Siebels (2007) found that persons with materialistic inclinations regard luxury products as markers of success and self-worth. This conclusion is consistent with the findings that materialism is frequently related with luxury purchasing.

According to the mean score for narcissism, which was 3.9, the individuals who participated in this research project displayed moderate levels of narcissistic characteristics. According to Ames and Kammrath (2004), narcissism, which is characterized by a need for admiration from others as well as a desire to be admired by oneself, is strongly connected to the practice of luxury consumption as a means of bolstering one's self-image. There are significant individual variances in narcissistic tendencies, as indicated by the fact that the standard deviation of 0.8 is the greatest among the variables. According to Durvasula and Lysonski (2014), the sample contained a wide variety of self-admiration and entitlement characteristics, which was reflected in the fact that certain participants scored much higher on the narcissism scale. According to Ames and Kammrath (2004), these findings provide more evidence that narcissism plays a large role in the process of individuals choosing to purchase luxury products. This is because persons who are narcissistic

are frequently driven by a desire to be recognized by their peers.

A mean score of 4.1 shows that the participants, on average, have a high tendency to consume luxury items. This is shown by the presence of a high tendency to consume luxury products. Despite the fact that the majority of participants are inclined to indulge in luxury consumption, there is still some diversity in the degree to which they value luxury things, as indicated by the standard deviation value of 0.65. According to Kapferer and Bastien (2009), individuals who are brand-conscious tend to identify luxury items with social identity, self-expression, and achievement. These findings are in line with the findings of study conducted on brand-conscious customers. Individuals who are motivated by vanity, materialism, and narcissism are more likely to view luxury things as means for signaling status and identity (Wiedmann et al., 2007). This high mean for luxury consumption lends support to the hypothesis that these characteristics have a significant impact on the purchasing of luxury goods.

Cronbach's alpha values for all scales were found to be greater than 0.70, which is a threshold that indicates good internal consistency and confirms the reliability of the instruments that were utilized in this study (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). According to Ames and Kammrath (2004), the Narcissism Scale (0.80) had the highest internal consistency, which suggests that it is very reliable. This finding is in line with the findings of prior studies that utilized this particular measure. According to Richins and Dawson (1992) and Doğan, Yalçın, and Doğan (2018), the Materialism and Luxury Consumption scales exhibited alphas of 0.71 and 0.74, respectively, showing that these constructs were also measured in a reliable manner. Although Consumer Vanity had the lowest alpha (0.74), it was still within the acceptable range for psychometric reliability, which ensured that confidence could be placed in the measure of vanity (LeBel, 2003).

Correlation Analysis

A Pearson's correlation study was carried out in order to investigate the connections that exist between consumer vanity, materialism, narcissism, and luxury spending. These psychological characteristics are interconnected, and they

collectively drive luxury consumption, since the analysis revealed substantial positive correlations between all of the major variables. This confirms that these psychological features are interconnected. The following is a list of the results:

- Relationship between consumer vanity and materialism: $r = 0.94$, $p < 0.001$
- Relationship between Consumer Vanity and Narcissism: $r = 0.74$, $p < 0.001$
- The correlation coefficient between consumer vanity and luxury consumption is 0.76, with a p-value of less than 0.001.
- Relationship between Materialism and Luxury Consumption: $r = 0.87$, $p < 0.001$
- Relationship between Narcissism and Luxury Consumption: $r = 0.93$, $p < 0.001$

In the analysis, the correlation between Consumer Vanity and Materialism ($r = 0.94$, $p < 0.001$) was the most robustly found. This indicates that there is an extraordinarily strong positive association between these two factors. This research implies that those who are more concerned with their personal image and achievements are also more likely to place a high value on material items as fundamental to their happiness and success (Richins & Dawson, 1992). This finding was published in the journal Richins & Dawson. According to Wiedmann et al. (2007), materialistic persons perceive luxury products as vital for indicating success and supporting their self-image. This is one of the reasons why materialism is a well-established predictor of luxury purchasing.

The link between Consumer Vanity and Narcissism is likewise significant, with a correlation coefficient of 0.74 and a p-value of less than 0.001. This suggests that persons who score higher on vanity are more likely to display narcissistic character traits. It is common for narcissistic consumers to purchase luxury items as a means of projecting superiority and uniqueness (Durvasula & Lysonski, 2014). Narcissistic consumers are driven by a need for self-affirmation and validation. Ames and Kammrath (2004) discovered that narcissism is highly associated to the consumption of luxury objects. This is because narcissistic persons have a tendency to equate luxury goods with status and self-esteem. This finding is consistent with the findings of Ames and Kammrath (2004).

A further support for the notion that vanity plays a substantial role in driving luxury expenditure is provided by the link between consumer vanity and luxury consumption ($r = 0.76$, $p < 0.001$). Individuals who are more concerned with their personal image are more likely to consider luxury things as a vital element of their identity and a way to express achievement (LeBel, 2003). Luxury items are also more likely to be valuable investments. According to previous research on luxury consumption, which places an emphasis on the importance of self-image in motivating the demand for high-status products (Workman & Lee, 2013), our findings are in line with the findings of that research.

Additionally, the link between materialism and luxury consumption ($r = 0.87$, $p < 0.001$) is shown to be significant, providing further evidence to support the contention that materialism serves as a powerful driving force behind luxury consumption. According to Richins and Dawson (1992), consumers who are materialistic and who believe that their belongings are essential to their accomplishments and happiness are more likely to go for luxury items that are in line with their core beliefs. Materialistic people have a tendency to select luxury things that reflect their social standing and achievement, according to a number of studies that have been conducted (Wiedmann et al., 2007). This association has been proven in an assortment of studies.

Last but not least, the correlation between narcissism and luxury consumption was the strongest, with a coefficient of 0.93 and a p-value of less than .001. This indicates that there is a very significant and positive association between narcissism and luxury consumption. This shows that people who have higher narcissistic tendencies are more attracted to purchase luxury goods because these items assist reinforce their sense of superiority and social significance (Campbell & Foster, 2007). Luxury goods are commodities that are seen as extravagant and expensive. Luxury goods are utilized by narcissistic individuals not only for the purpose of achieving personal happiness but also for the purpose of demonstrating to others their higher social standing (Durvasula & Lysonski, 2014).

These associations bring to light the complex web of psychological characteristics that are responsible for the consumption of luxury goods. Notably,

materialism and narcissism serve as essential mediators in the interaction between vanity and luxury consumption (Bodenhausen et al., 2011). These findings lend support to the hypothesis that vanity-driven individuals are more inclined to engage in luxury consumption.

DISCUSSION

Interpretation of Results

This study's conclusions offer significant insights into the psychological motivations behind luxury spending, with consumer vanity identified as a primary predictor. Previous research has shown a clear association between consumer vanity and luxury consumption, and our findings corroborate that persons with elevated degrees of vanity are more inclined to purchase luxury goods (LeBel, 2003). Vanity, as a character characteristic, is linked to an intensified preoccupation with self-image and a quest for social affirmation, frequently manifested through ostentatious consumption (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). Individuals motivated by vanity pursue external affirmation through the procurement of luxury products, frequently viewing these possessions as emblems of achievement and identity (Workman & Lee, 2013).

The research indicates that materialism and narcissism serve as crucial mediators in the connection between consumer vanity and luxury consumption. This discovery corroborates the dual mediation concept, indicating that materialism and narcissism collectively enhance the influence of vanity on consumer purchasing behavior (Richins & Dawson, 1992). Materialism, the conviction that goods are vital for happiness and social achievement, reinforces the connection between vanity and luxury purchasing by correlating the consumer's self-esteem with financial affluence (Richins & Dawson, 1992). Individuals with elevated materialistic tendencies are more inclined to perceive luxury items as indicators of social achievement, hence augmenting their self-

esteem and social status (Wiedmann, Hennigs, & Siebels, 2007).

Narcissism significantly positively influences luxury consumption, underscoring vanity's significance in the acquisition of high-status products. Narcissistic persons, characterized by an exaggerated feeling of self-importance and an incessant desire for praise, are especially predisposed to utilize luxury products to exhibit their superiority and distinctiveness (Ames & Kammrath, 2004). The robust positive correlation between narcissism and luxury consumption ($r = 0.93, p < 0.001$) signifies that narcissistic characteristics are a principal motivational factor for individuals who perceive luxury consumption as a method of reinforcing their social superiority and augmenting their personal brand (Durvasula & Lysonski, 2014).

Alongside materialism and narcissism, psychological factors like self-esteem and self-concept may significantly influence luxury consumption behaviour. Self-esteem may affect consumers' perceptions of luxury products, as those with elevated self-esteem are more inclined to utilize luxury objects to bolster their already favourable self-image (Tian, Bearden, & Hunter, 2001). Moreover, customers possessing a robust self-concept may pursue products that resonate with their values and identities, utilizing luxury items to cultivate a preferred persona (Eastman & Liu, 2012). Future research should investigate the influence of these supplementary features in comprehending the intricate psychology of luxury consumption.

The interrelation of vanity, materialism, and narcissism offers a sophisticated comprehension of luxury consumption. The findings substantiate the theoretical framework indicating that consumer vanity directly affects luxury consumption and enhances the impact of materialism and narcissism on consumer behaviour (Pavlovic et al., 2008). Consequently, these characteristics must to be fundamental to marketing tactics aimed at luxury buyers.

Table 1: Psychometric Properties of Scales

Scales	M	SD	Range	items	Cronbach's α
NPI	48.36	10.21	24-73	16	.80
MS	54.94	8.27	36-79	18	.71
UQ	12.13	3.24	4-20	4	.80

EX	12.35	2.38	6-20	4	.75
SM	12.13	2.52	6-19	4	.84
CV	90.10	13.01	58-133	30	.74

Note: NPI* = narcissistic personality trait. MS* = materialism, UQ* = uniqueness, EX* = expensiveness, SM* = Symbolic Meaning, LC* = luxury consumption, CV* = consumer vanity

Table 2 reveals psychometric properties for the scales used in the present study. Cronbach's value for NPI was .80 (>.70) which indicated high internal consistency. Cronbach's value for MS was .71 (>.70) which indicated medium internal consistency. The Cronbach's α value for LC .74 (>.70). Cronbach's α value for UQ. 80 (>70), EX .75 (>70), SM .84 (>.70) which indicates lower medium internal consistency. Cronbach's value for CV was .74 (>.70) which indicated medium internal consistency.

Table 2
Pearson Correlation in Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
NPI	-	-	-	-	-	-
MS	.88**	-	-	-	-	-
UQ	.84**	.62**	-	-	-	-
EX	.34**	.49**	.33**	-	-	-
SM	.62**	.63**	.59**	.14**	-	-
CV	.70**	.87**	.46**	.40**	.61**	-

Note: *NPI= narcissistic personality trait. *MS= materialism, *LC=luxury consumption, *CV= consumer vanity ***p < .001.

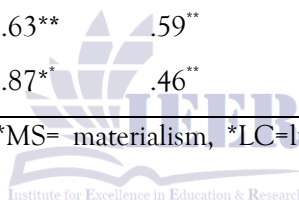


Table 3 shows The correlation table indicates that Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) has significant positive relationships with Materialism (MS; $r = .88, p < .001$), Uniqueness (UQ; $r = .84, p < .001$), Expensiveness (EX; $r = .34, p < .001$), Symbolic Meaning (SM; $r = .62, p < .001$), and Consumer Vanity (CV; $r = .70, p < .001$). Similarly, MS is positively correlated with UQ ($r = .62, p < .001$), EX ($r = .49, p < .001$), SM ($r = .63, p < .001$), and CV ($r = .87, p < .001$). UQ shows significant positive associations with EX ($r = .33, p < .001$), SM ($r = .59, p < .001$), and CV ($r = .46, p < .001$). Moreover, EX is positively related to SM ($r = .14, p < .001$) and CV ($r = .40, p < .001$), while SM also correlates positively with CV ($r = .61, p < .001$). These findings suggest strong and significant interrelationships among all variables.

Table 3
Linear Regression Showing the Effect of CV on LC

Variables	B	β	SE
Constant	5.0***		2.19
CV	.55***	.71	.024
R ²	.51		

Note. N = 500 p<.001.

Table 4 revealed the Effect of LC on CV. The R² value is .51 for the predictor variable and it explain 51% variance in the outcome variable $F(1,498) = 695.54, p < .001$. The findings revealed that LC positively predicted CV ($\beta = .71, p < .001$).

Table 4

Linear Regression Showing the Effect of CV on UQ

Variables	B	β	SE
Constant	1.56		.92
CV	.11***	.46	.01
R ²	.21		

Note. N = 100. ***p<.001.

Table 5 revealed the Effect of Luxury Consumption on luxury consumption. The R² value is .21 for the predictor variable and it explain 21% variance in the outcome variable. The findings revealed that consumer vanity positively predicted luxury consumption ($\beta = .46, p < .001$).

Table 5

Linear Regression Showing the Effect of CV on EX

Variables	B	β	SE
Constant	5.5		.70
CV	.07***	.40	.008
R ²	.16		

Note. N = 100. ***p<.001.

Table 5 revealed the Effect of luxury consumption on Expensiveness. The R² value is .16 for the predictor variable and it explain 16% variance in the outcome variable. The findings revealed that consumer vanity positively predicted luxury consumption ($\beta = .40, p < .001$).

Table 4: *Linear Regression Showing the Effect of CV on SM*

Variables	B	β	SE
Constant	1.00		.63
CV	.12***	.61	.007
R ²	.38		

Note. N = 100. ***p<.001.

Table 5 revealed the Effect of luxury consumption on Symbolic Meaning. The R² value is .38 for the predictor variable and it explain 61% variance in the outcome variable. The findings revealed that consumer vanity positively predicted luxury consumption ($\beta = .61, p < .001$).

Table 6: *Mediation analysis of Narcissistic traits between consumer vanity and luxury consumption (N =500).*

Variable	B	LL - UL 95% CI	SEB	β	R ²
Step 1					
Constant	-2.60	(-7.208- 1.99)	2.34		.49
CV	.565	(.051 - .61)	.02	.09	
Step 2					
Constant	7.12	(4.93- 9.31)	1.11		.87
CV	.092	(.058 - .125)	.01	.155	

NPI	.808	(0.76 - 0.85)	.02	.818
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Note: NPI = Narcissistic personality trait, CV = Consumer vanity LC = luxury consumption

A mediation analysis using PROCESS macro-Model 4, mcwas conducted to examine whether NPI mediates the relationship between CV (independent variable) and LC (dependent variable) in a sample of 500 participants. Results revealed that CV significantly predicted NPI, $B = 0.584$, $SE = 0.024$, $\beta = .744$, $t(498) = 24.82$, $p < .001$, accounting for 55.3% of the variance in NPI ($R^2 = .553$). CV also significantly predicted LC when NPI was not included, $B = 0.580$, $SE = 0.022$, $t(498) = 26.37$, $p < .001$, indicating a significant total effect. When both CV and NPI were entered as predictors of LC, the model remained significant, $R^2 = .882$, $F(2, 497) = 1860.19$, $p < .001$. Both CV and NPI significantly predicted LC: CV, $B = 0.118$, $SE = 0.018$, $\beta = .155$, $t(497) = 6.72$, $p < .001$; and NPI, $B = 0.792$, $SE = 0.022$, $\beta = .818$, $t(497) = 35.53$, $p < .001$. The direct effect of CV on LC remained significant after including NPI, indicating partial mediation. These findings indicate that NPI partially mediates the relationship between CV and LC.

Table 7

Mediation analysis of Materialism between consumer vanity and luxury consumption (N = 500).

Variable	B	LL - UL 95% CI	SEB	β	R^2
Step 1					
Constant	3.52	[.98 - 6.07]	0.9097		
CV	.57	[.54 - .59]	0.0098	.763	.76
Step 2					
Constant	.80	[-2.28 - 3.88]	1.57		.75
CV	-.132	[-.201 - -.062]	.035	-0.427	
MS	1.19	[1.08 - 1.30]	.053	1.268	

Note. CV= Consumer Vanity, MS= Materialism

To examine the mediating role of MS in the relationship between CV and LC, a two-step regression-based mediation analysis was conducted. In Step 1, CV was found to be a significant positive predictor of LC, $B = 0.5971$, $SE = 0.0098$, $\beta = .763$, $p < .001$, with a 95% Confidence Interval [0.5779, 0.6164]. The model explained a substantial amount of variance in LC, $R^2 = .8815$. In Step 2, when MS was added to the model as a mediator, the direct effect of CV on LC turned negative and remained statistically significant, $B = -0.3246$, $SE = 0.0471$, $\beta = -0.427$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.4172, -0.2320]. Additionally, MS significantly predicted LC, $B = 1.5150$, $SE = 0.0741$, $\beta = 1.268$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [1.3694, 1.6606]. The second model explained $R^2 = .7733$ of the variances, with an additional R^2 change (ΔR^2) of .1905, indicating a substantial contribution by the mediator. These findings suggest that MS partially mediates the relationship between CV and LC.

Table 8

Mean, Standard Deviation and t-Values for gender on Variables

Variables	Female		Male		t (298)	p	95%CI	
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL
NPI	47.85	10.35	49.43	9.87	-1.62	.104	-3.49	.328
MS	54.54	8.39	55.77	8.00	-1.57	.117	-2.78	.310

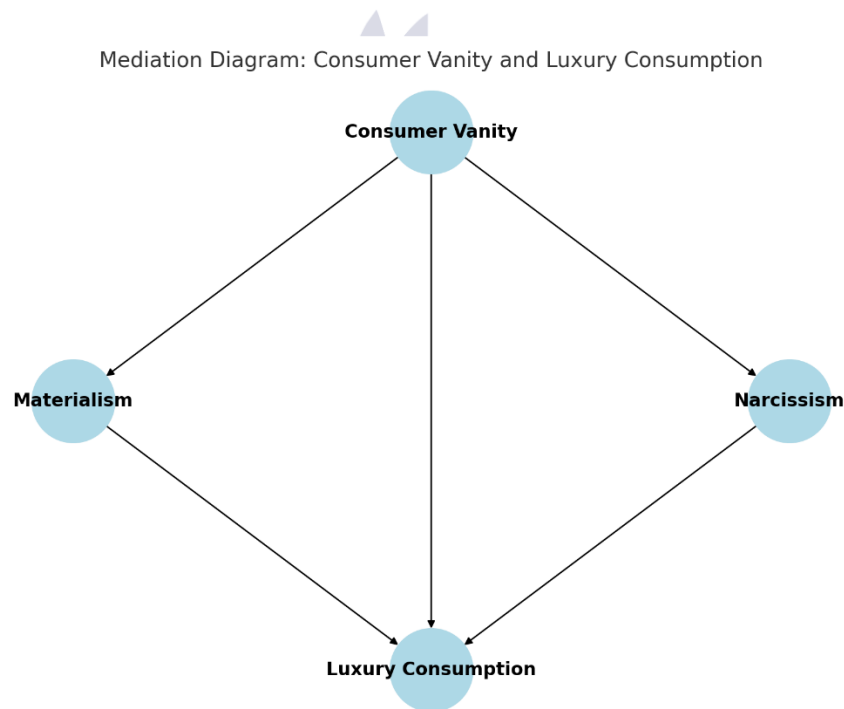
LC	54.09	9.80	56.05	9.96	-2.08	.038	-3.80	-.11
CV	91.29	13.15	92.86	12.70	-1.26	.208	-4.00	.873

Note: NPI= narcissistic personality trait, MS= materialism, LC= luxury consumption, CV= consumer vanity
 The table 8 showed that slight differences were reported between LC of male with (M= 56.05, SD= 9.96) and female with (M=54.09, SD=9.80). There is no significant mean difference between NPI, MS and CV among genders.

Table 9
 Mean, Standard Deviation and t-Values for education on Variables

Variables	Inter		BS		t (298)	p	95%CI	
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL
NPI	45.21	9.38	48.77	10.26	-2.49	.013	-6.37	-.75
MS	53.22	7.03	55.16	8.40	-1.66	.096	-4.22	.348
LC	51.92	8.67	55.09	9.98	-2.28	.023	-5.88	-.44
CV	89.28	10.71	92.13	13.25	-1.83	.119	-6.44	.738

Note: NPI = narcissistic personality trait, MS= materialism, LC= luxury consumption, CV= consumer vanity
 The table 9 showed that slight differences were reported between NPI of BS with (M= 48.77, SD= 10.26) and inter with (M=45.21, SD=9.38). Furthermore, the results also showed that significant differences were reported between LC with BS (M=55.09, SD= 9.98) as compared to inter (M=51.92, SD= 8.67). There is no significant meaning difference on MS and CV in education.



Practical Implications

These findings hold considerable significance for marketers and brand strategists in the luxury goods industry. Primarily, comprehending the psychological drivers of luxury purchasing enables firms to design

marketing tactics that profoundly align with consumer aspirations for status, self-expression, and social approval. Given that consumer vanity significantly predicts luxury purchasing, marketers can customize their advertising strategies to highlight

how luxury goods elevate consumers' self-image and social status.

Luxury firms can leverage the notion of vanity in their advertising strategies by portraying products as status symbols that elevate the consumer's public persona and validate their personal accomplishments (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). Brands can effectively attract persons driven by vanity by appealing to their need to project an idealized self-image (LeBel, 2003). Marketing communications emphasizing exclusivity, prestige, and individual achievement are likely to appeal to these consumers, who perceive luxury items as a pathway to social standing (Wiedmann et al., 2007).

The study underscores the significance of materialism and narcissism in luxury consumption, alongside consumer vanity. Brands aiming at materialistic consumers should emphasize the symbolic significance of their products, showcasing how luxury objects signify success, happiness, and social standing (Richins & Dawson, 1992). Materialistic persons are predisposed to acquire luxury products that function as public indicators of success (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). Consequently, highlighting concrete benefits linked to the luxury experience, such as exceptional quality, distinction, and exclusivity, will resonate with these buyers.

Luxury brands can create messaging for narcissistic consumers that emphasize uniqueness and distinctiveness. Narcissistic persons are motivated by a desire for adoration and self-validation, and they tend to perceive luxury products as an extension of their elevated self-image (Durvasula & Lysonski, 2014). Marketers can highlight the exclusivity of their items, fostering a sense of rarity and distinction that caters to narcissistic consumers' aspiration to differentiate themselves and express their social superiority (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). Customized or limited-edition luxury items may also attract these consumers, reinforcing their desire for distinctive status markers.

Furthermore, digital marketing tactics must be congruent with these psychological findings. Social media platforms, which increasingly promote luxury items, provide an optimal environment for addressing brand-conscious consumers who seek validation through social media interaction (Lee &

Workman, 2017). Influencer marketing, especially via those who exemplify vanity, narcissism, and materialism, can effectively engage luxury buyers. Influencers that depict luxury as a representation of success, beauty, and exclusivity might facilitate the formation of aspirational brand connections (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009).

Limitations and Future Directions

This study offers useful information, however it has its limitations. A significant restriction is that the sample was sourced from a singular geographic area, namely Sargodha, Pakistan, thus constraining the applicability of the findings to different cultural contexts (Wiedmann et al., 2007). Cultural disparities can profoundly affect consumer behavior, especially with luxury consumption. In collectivist cultures, the pursuit of social validation via luxury products may be less emphasized than in individualistic cultures, which prioritize personal achievement and self-expression (Eastman & Liu, 2012). Consequently, subsequent study should investigate these associations in cross-cultural settings to corroborate the findings and examine potential cultural variances in reasons for luxury spending.

This study is limited by its concentration on a certain demographic group, primarily young individuals aged 16 to 29. This demographic is significantly pertinent to the luxury market, especially given the dominance of social media and digital consumption; yet, age may affect the intensity and orientation of the correlations among vanity, materialism, and narcissism. Older demographics may have distinct reasons for luxury consumption, maybe attributable to shifts in life goals or financial conditions (Stokburger-Sauer & Teichmann, 2013). Subsequent research may broaden the participant age range to investigate whether these associations persist across various age demographics and life phases.

This study highlights psychological traits such as vanity, materialism, and narcissism; however, elements like self-esteem, social comparison, and peer influence may also significantly affect luxury consumption behaviours (Tian, Bearden, & Hunter, 2001). Future study may incorporate these further psychological and social aspects to develop a more holistic model of luxury consumption.

Conclusion

This study offers an in-depth examination of the impact of consumer vanity on luxury consumption, with materialism and narcissism acting as mediating factors in this dynamic. The findings underscore the intricate relationship among these psychological features, indicating that persons motivated by vanity are more inclined to partake in luxury consumption due to their pursuit of social acceptance, status, and self-expression. The research provides significant practical insights for marketers, indicating that luxury companies can successfully engage these consumers by addressing their psychological desires for status, exclusivity, and self-enhancement.

The findings enhance comprehension of the psychological factors driving luxury consumption, offering significant direction for subsequent research. Investigating these associations across various cultural contexts and demographic groups, while incorporating other psychological constructs, could enhance the comprehension of the factors influencing luxury spending in today's intricate, image-centric culture (Pavlovic et al., 2008).

This study examines the psychological drivers of vanity, materialism, and narcissism, facilitating the development of more effective marketing tactics that align with the aspirations and self-perception of brand-conscious consumers. It is imperative for luxury firms to comprehend these fundamental motivators and develop marketing tactics that resonate with consumers' aspirations for recognition, success, and identity through the acquisition of high-status products.

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