



How Identity-Based Consumption Drives Fashion Overconsumption: An experimental study on Identity, Group Belonging and Status

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Abstract

Fashion overconsumption extends beyond excessive purchasing and is closely linked to identity-based consumption, through which individuals express themselves and negotiate social belonging. This study examines the influence of identity-driven consumption motives on fashion overconsumption using an online experiment. The findings indicate that exposure to identity-relevant cues lead to significantly higher levels of fashion overconsumption compared to an identity-neutral context. This effect is partly driven by the desire for group belonging, highlighting the role of social affiliation in linking identity motives to excessive consumption. Moreover, individual differences in status-consumption motives amplify this relationship, with identity-based cues yielding a stronger influence on overconsumption among consumers who place greater importance on status. Overall, this study demonstrates the central role of identity processes in shaping fashion overconsumption and provides practical insights for fashion brands and consumers regarding the psychological mechanisms driving excessive fashion consumption.

Key words: Fashion Overconsumption, Identity-Based Consumption, Group Belonging, Status Consumption, Consumer Behaviour

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Abstract (Versão Portuguesa)

O excesso de consumo na indústria da moda vai além da compra excessiva e está fortemente associado a processos de consumo baseado na identidade, através dos quais os indivíduos constroem, expressam e validam o seu sentido de identidade e pertença social. O presente estudo analisa o impacto dos motivos de consumo baseados na identidade no excesso de consumo de moda, recorrendo a um estudo experimental *online*. Os resultados indicam que a exposição a estímulos de identidade está associada a níveis significativamente mais elevados de excesso de consumo de moda, em comparação com um contexto neutro em termos de identidade. Este efeito é parcialmente explicado pelo desejo de pertença social, evidenciando o papel da afiliação social como mecanismo explicativo da relação entre motivos identitários e consumo excessivo. Adicionalmente, diferenças individuais nos motivos de consumo associados ao estatuto reforçam esta relação, verificando-se que os estímulos de identidade exercem um impacto mais pronunciado no excesso de consumo entre consumidores com maior orientação para o estatuto. O estudo evidencia o papel central dos processos identitários no excesso de consumo na indústria da moda, apresentando contributos práticos relevantes para marcas de moda e consumidores, ao clarificar os mecanismos psicológicos que impulsionam padrões de consumo excessivo.

Palavras-chave: Excesso de Consumo de Moda, Consumo baseado na Identidade, Pertença Social, Consumo Orientado para o Estatuto, Comportamento do Consumidor

Título: Como o consumo baseado na identidade impulsiona o excesso de consumo de moda: Um estudo experimental sobre identidade, pertença social e estatuto

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List of Abbreviations

DV – Dependent Variable

H1/H2/H3 – Hypothesis 1/2/3

M – Mean

SD – Standard Deviation

UNEP - United Nations Environment Programme

1 Introduction

The fashion industry has become one of the most visible domains of overconsumption, raising growing concerns among scholars, policymakers, and environmental organisations. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) defines fashion overconsumption as “consumption that is a) beyond the physical and core social needs of an individual, b) primarily driven by peripheral social needs (e.g., personal image and identity), and c) inconsistent with all other people on earth having the same level of consumption while ensuring planetary sustainability” (UNEP, 2023, p. 47). This definition highlights that fashion overconsumption is not merely a matter of excessive quantity, but a phenomenon deeply tied to social and psychological motives, particularly identity-related motives.

Consumption has long been recognised as central to how individuals create, affirm and confirm their identity (Campbell, 2004). Through repeated interaction with material goods, individuals derive pleasure and self-understanding, internalising their shared cultural significance into the extended self (Belk, 1988; McCracken, 1986). Consumption has evolved into a primary stage for negotiating personal and group identities, in which the consumer is positioned as an identity-seeker (Gabriel & Lang, 2006). Identity, therefore, is not a fixed set of essential features (Thompson & Haytko, 1997), but rather an ongoing project that individuals continually work on throughout life (Jenkins, 2008), often performed and stabilised through consumption (Larsen & Patterson, 2018).

Fashion occupies a key position within these identity processes, shaping how individuals construct, express, and negotiate their identities (Belk, 1988). However, these identity expressions are not static, and as identities evolve and as social contexts shift, consumers often feel compelled to update or replace their wardrobes to remain aligned with their desired selves (Holt, 2002; Larsen & Patterson, 2018). Because fashion operates through constant cycles of valuation and devaluation and the perpetual renewal of desire (Garcia, 2021), this need for identity alignment is intensified, thereby transforming the identity-driven motives that make fashion meaningful into drivers of overconsumption.

Collectively, these dynamics motivate the present study, which seeks to understand how identity-driven consumption motives influence fashion overconsumption, exploring the psychological mechanisms through which this relationship operates.

1.1 Current State of Research

Existing research has extensively examined the problem of overconsumption in the fashion industry, highlighting its economic, environmental, and psychological consequences (e.g., Niinimäki et al., 2020; Anguelov, 2015; Garcia-Ortega et. al, 2023). Prior studies have shown that fashion business models, characterised by accelerated production, rapid trend turnover, and planned obsolescence, encourage frequent purchasing and short product lifecycles, reinforcing unsustainable consumption patterns (Becker-Leifhold & Heuer, 2018; Cline, 2012). At the consumer level, research has emphasised emotional and hedonic drivers of fashion overconsumption, such as impulse buying (Rosely & Syed Ali), compensatory consumption (Koles et al., 2018), and retail therapy (Ataly & Meloy, 2011), framing excessive purchasing as a way of coping with emotions and seeking short-term gratification.

In parallel, a substantial body of literature conceptualises consumption as a symbolic and identity-relevant practice. Within this stream, fashion is frequently highlighted as a key resource for identity construction due to its visibility, cultural meaning, and role in self-expression (Slater, 1997; McCracken, 1986). Clothing has been shown to function both as a private tool for defining the self and as a public signal through which individuals communicate identity to others (Slater, 1997).

Current research has yet to fully link identity-based explanations to fashion overconsumption. The present study builds on and connects these research streams by examining the identity-related mechanisms that shape excessive fashion consumption.

1.2 Contribution of this Study

Building on the identified literature gap, this dissertation contributes to the literature by deepening the understanding of how identity-driven motives lead to fashion overconsumption and the psychological processes that may explain or condition this relationship. To address this aim, the study is guided by three research questions.

First, the research examines the direct relationship between identity-driven consumption motives and fashion overconsumption. While prior literature has established the importance of consumption in identity construction (Belk, 1988; Dittmar, 1992; Sartre, 1943), limited research has examined whether and how identity-driven motives translate into excessive fashion consumption. Accordingly, the first research question asks: “How do identity-driven consumption motives affect fashion overconsumption?”.

Second, recognising that identity construction is not solely an individual process but also a social one, this study investigates the role of group belonging as a key psychological mechanism shaping consumption behaviour. Fashion, besides expressing a unique sense of being, simultaneously serves as a marker of group identity and membership (Belk, 1988), suggesting that the desire for belonging may explain why identity-driven motives result in increased consumption. Therefore, the second research question examines: “How does the desire for group belonging mediate the relationship between identity-driven consumption motives and fashion overconsumption?”.

Lastly, this study acknowledges that individuals differ in how strongly identity-driven motives influence their consumption behaviour, particularly, consumers with stronger orientations towards status consumption. Status-seeking consumers may experience heightened pressure to manage social standing through fashion items (Packard, 1959), which can amplify the tendency to buy beyond functional needs. Hence, the last research question explores: “How does variation in status-consumption motives moderate the effect of identity-driven consumption motives on fashion overconsumption?”.

Based on the findings, this study offers practical insights into how identity-related motives shape consumer behaviour, supporting more mindful fashion consumption. By increasing awareness of the core psychological drivers of excessive fashion consumption, the research provides relevant considerations for both fashion brands and consumers seeking to address overconsumption.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Overconsumption in Fashion

The rise of consumerism has transformed the act of consumption into a centrepiece of our everyday culture, in which individuals pursue self-fulfilment through the acquisition of material goods. Nearly all aspects of existence, including our social practices, relationships, leisure activities, celebrations, and even health and safety concerns (Wilk, 2017), have become consumption opportunities. (Brown et al., 2017)

The nature of modern consumerism is characterised by Campbell (2004) as the gratification of wants rather than the meeting of needs, while wants are artificial, subjective and are only able to satisfy individuals momentarily, leading to a feeling of constant insatiability (Anderton, 2000; McConnell, 1981), needs are rooted in human nature and essential for growth (Fromm, 1976).

The fashion industry is an evident example of an industry that plays on the self-indulgent nature of consumers' wants, fuelling continuous consumption, with global apparel consumption expected to increase by 63 percent by 2030, reaching 102 million tons (McKinsey & Company & The Business of Fashion, 2024). While clothing production doubled between 2000 and 2015, there has been a 36% decrease in the number of times a garment was worn before being discarded, with some thrown away after just seven to ten wears (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017).

The fast fashion phenomenon is the biggest contributor to the current disposal clothing mentality (Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009), as its business model, based on escalating levels of demand, production, and consumption (Garcia-Ortega et al., 2023). Fast fashion retailers actively foster consumerism and encourage impulse buying through low prices, rapid product cycles, and mass production (Becker-Leifhold & Heuer, 2018). The rising prices of quality clothing items have made low-cost shopping a constrained choice rather than a genuine preference (Cline, 2012).

Fashion brands offer consumers frequent novelty by constantly introducing new collections, often on a weekly or even daily basis, creating a sense of urgency when shopping. Trends quickly become obsolete, creating yet another opportunity for brands to design the next trend for consumers to buy and wear. The lifespan of trends is strategically controlled by the fashion industry, and as soon as an item loses its perceived appeal, it is discounted and replaced by newer collections (Cline, 2012; Anguelov, 2015; Becker-Leifhold & Heuer, 2018).

With trends evolving at unprecedented speed (Cline, 2012; Anguelov, 2015), the competition within the fast-fashion industry is expected to intensify in the coming years, with new generation fast-fashion retailers, like Shein and Temu, redefining speed and affordability, accelerating trend-to-production cycles, and undercutting traditional players with extremely low prices (McKinsey & Company & The Business of Fashion, 2023).

Consumers have become “hooked on a cheap fashion treadmill” (Cline, 2012, p. 13), trapped in repetitive cycles of consumption beyond functional need, and while overconsumption is rooted in cultural and economic structures (Greenpeace Germany, 2017; Jackson, 2005), individual psychological and emotional factors (Kumar et al., 2025) also play a significant role in sustaining it.

Compensatory consumption refers to the purchase and use of goods as a means of emotional compensation, functioning as a short-term mechanism to mitigate self-discrepancies, emotional

distress, or identity threats (Cao et al., 2025). In this context, individuals engage in consumption to compensate for failure or perceived weaknesses (Woodruffe, 1997), with compensatory consumption constituting a response to be physical, emotional, individual, or social threats to the self (Koles et al., 2018).

A closely related phenomenon is impulse buying, which, like compensatory consumption, is often driven by affective states rather than rational decision-making (Koles et al., 2018), characterised by an irresistible urge to buy (Shoham & Brençîc, 2003). Impulsive purchases can reduce negative feelings, like stress, while simultaneously heighten feelings of excitement, pleasure, and hedonistic arousal. The fast fashion model exploits this by creating a sense of urgency through recurrent and impulsive purchases, playing on the feeling of deprivation consumers get when introduced to new designs or collections, leading to excess buying as a strategy to overcome negative emotions (Rosely & Syed Ali).

In this context, fashion consumption has also evolved into a form of cheap entertainment (Niinimäki et al., 2020; Cline, 2012), where shopping is not only about fulfilling practical needs but also an act of self-indulgence that offers emotional relief and quick mood repair. This therapeutic form of purchasing is known as “retail therapy” (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017; Campbell, 2004; Ataly & Meloy, 2011).

Fast fashion consumption, in particular, functions as a dopamine-driven cycle, triggering emotional pleasure and providing consumers with a sense of immediate satisfaction. Since the pleasure effect of dopamine is transient, it drives consumers to engage in repeated purchasing to recapture that dopamine high, thereby creating a rapid feedback loop that reinforces habitual buying and sustains the fashion industry's accelerated production (Ciocodeică et al., 2025). As a result, consumers become locked into a vicious cycle of desire and consumption that is “unsettling at best and unsatisfying at its core” (Cline, 2012, p. 14).

2.2 Identity-Based Consumption

Beyond its emotional and hedonic functions, fashion consumption also serves as a symbolic resource for identity construction (Belk, 1988). In this sense, overconsumption is shaped not only by impulsive, emotion-based pursuits of pleasure but also driven by the search for meaning and identity that modern humans crave (Campbell, 2004), thereby opening the discussion towards identity-based consumption.

Identity has been widely recognised as a fundamental human need essential for living a fulfilling life, with scholars like Max-Neef (1991) highlighting it as one of the nine basic

existential requirements of human development, and Fromm (1955) emphasising the need to construct a sense of self as a unique individual, while maintaining connections with others. According to Giddens (1991), individuals continually construct their identities through everyday choices, many of which are consumption choices, such as what to wear.

Building on this perspective, Belk (1988, p. 160) argues that possessions play a central role in shaping identity, noting that “we learn, define, and remind ourselves of who we are by our possessions”. Similarly, Dittmar (1992) argued that consumption is ultimately existential and symbolic, rather than just utilitarian, emphasising its role in self-definition and affirmation. Likewise, Sartre (1943) conceptualised consumption as a strategy to give substance to the self, where the desire “to have” reflects a deeper drive “to be”. Collectively, these perspectives position material possessions as integral to the extended self, serving as anchors of identity that strengthen and protect one’s sense of self against feelings of loss and instability. In line with this view, research on psychological ownership refers to the state in which an individual develops feelings of ownership over objects, integrating them into their self and expressing their self-identity to others (Pierce et al., 2003).

Therefore, consumption is the necessary path to self-discovery, making the marketplace indispensable to the process of discovering who we are (Campbell, 2004). Individuals are then, by force of circumstances, required to continually choose, construct, and display who they are through material artifacts (Slater, 1997), with fashion taking on particular importance within identity projects. Roach-Higgins and Eicher (1992) argue that it functions as a central component of identity, acting as both an internal resource that shapes self-perception and an external symbol of identity. Drawing on symbolic interactionism, Stone (1962), similarly positions appearance, which includes clothing as well as other visible cues, as a means through which individuals establish and maintain a sense of self. A similar argument has been made by Belk (1988), who notes that clothing, as a meaningful possession, can become part of the extended self, enabling individuals to construct and express who they are. Fashion is, thus, an important part of human culture, as it plays a crucial role in the communication of self-concept and the cultivation of identity (UNEP & UNFCCC, 2023).

However, the capacity of fashion to construct identity must be understood alongside its contribution to an increasingly unstable sense of self. As Campbell (2004, p. 30) observes, “the activities of consumers should be understood as both a response to a postulated crisis of identity and an activity that in effect only serves to intensify that very crisis”. In a similar perspective,

“consumerism”, according to Slater (1997, p. 85), “simultaneously exploits mass identity crisis by proffering its goods as solutions to the problems of identity, and in the process intensifies it”. Extending this argument, Holt (2002) argues that postmodern branding encourages consumers to continually construct identity through ongoing acts of consumption, such that identity becomes a market-mediated, permanent project (Larsen & Patterson, 2018), sustained through continuous symbolic displays of goods like clothing.

2.2.1 Relationship between Identity-Based Consumption and Fashion Overconsumption

In a consumer culture where identities are assembled through possession, the pursuit of self-discovery reinforces repetitive and excessive purchasing. When possessions no longer fit consumers’ ideal self-images, whether due to changes in their self-image or shifts in the possession’s symbolic meaning, consumers neglect or discard these objects (Belk, 1988; La Branche, 1973). Consumers then turn to acquiring new items that better align with their evolving identities, fuelling a cycle of consumption that supports self-recreation and is reinforced by the instability of the self (Campbell, 2004).

The fashion industry amplifies this identity-consumption dynamic by operating through ongoing cycles of novelty and the frequent introduction of new trends (Garcia, 2021), fuelling identity insecurity and locking individuals into a cycle of consumption in search of a lost sense of self, while continually redefining which identities are desirable (Cline, 2012). As new styles replace those deemed obsolete, one’s notion of self is in constant change, leading to a creation of a temporary identity, a postmodern phenomenon in which individuals struggle to maintain their identity's shape or stay on course for long (Becker-Leifhold & Heuer, 2018).

Because identity is never fully secured, consumers often feel compelled to acquire new possessions that re-anchor their sense of self (Belk, 1988). As identity expression becomes increasingly dependent on material markers, such as clothing (Thompson & Haytko, 1997), patterns of repeated and excessive purchasing are reinforced to sustain the desired self-representation. Consequently, identity-driven self-expression emerges as a key driver through which fashion overconsumption is intensified, motivating this study’s first hypothesis.

H1: *Identity-driven consumption motives are positively associated with fashion overconsumption.*

2.3 Identity Social Signalling and Group Belonging

The analysis thus far has considered identity-driven consumption motives in terms of self-expression, illustrating how individuals utilize possessions, particularly clothing, to construct

and reinforce their personal sense of self, and potentially contributing to overconsumption. Building on this perspective, the discussion now shifts the focus to the social dimension of identity, examining how fashion can communicate group belonging and may further encourage overconsumption.

Jenkins (2008) follows an interactionist perspective, arguing that the “self” is a person’s reflective understanding of their identity, which is socially constructed and shaped by interaction. Identity, therefore, is defined as “our understanding of who we are and who other people are, and, reciprocally, other people’s understanding of themselves and of others” (Jenkins, 2008, p. 18). It emerges between the individual and the collective, being both reflexive, involving how one sees oneself, and social, involving how others perceive and validate that self-definition (Larsen & Patterson, 2018). Accordingly, individual self-identity and collective social identity are interdependent and mutually constitutive (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998), as individuals develop a sense of self-identity through the perceived views of others (Pierce et al., 2003).

Given this social basis of identity, material possessions serve as markers of social groups (Douglas & Isherwood, 1996) that communicate and interpret identity (Dittmar, 1992; Berger, 2008), mediating and expressing personal, social, and cultural meaning (Slater, 1997; McCracken, 1986). These symbolic meanings embedded in possessions operate in two directions: outward, expressing who we are to others (“social-symbolism”), and inward, in developing our self-identity (“self-symbolism”) (Elliott, 1997). Because possessions publicly signal identity, individuals make social inferences about others based on their belongings, and in turn, adjust their own consumption to align with what they believe will be considered desirable (Calder & Burnkrant, 1977; Miller et al., 1993). Through consumption, individuals actively reproduce and negotiate socially shared interpretations, using goods to construct a social identity (Slater, 1997; Richins, 1994).

Stone (1962) extends the interactionist approach to include appearance as a symbolic system through which individuals establish a social identity. According to Stone, the self acquires identities when it becomes socially situated, and dress plays a central role in communicating these identities. Through clothing, individuals are positioned as social objects; that is, they are assigned and recognised as having particular identities. Moreover, dress shapes expectations, influencing how others anticipate the wearer will act, as well as encouraging the wearer to

behave in accordance with the identity they present. In this sense, clothing shapes the wearer's value in their own eyes and in others'.

Roach-Higgins and Eicher (1992) add that only through social interaction and cultural context can individuals learn to interpret and correctly use socially constructed meanings of dress, and, consequently, communicate personal and social identities. In line with this perspective, Stone (1962) distinguishes between two functions of appearance: "identification of" and "identification with". The first relates to how identity is read by observers, and their recognition of who others are, while the second concerns how identity is constructed by the individual, as people align their self-images with groups and identities. Thus, through clothing, individuals can signal aspects of personal identity such as age and gender, but also group belonging, like social class and religion (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992).

According to Belk (1988), clothing can distinguish an individual from others and express individual identity; however, it can also signal group identity and belonging. This reflects the relational nature of identity, which depends on comparison, understanding similarity and difference relative to others (Jenkins, 2008; Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992). And despite trends towards a greater individualistic culture and more fluid group affiliations, group identity remains a central component of self-definition (Belk, 1988), with individuals often relying on symbolic forms for social relatedness, like consumption (Elliott, 1997). Therefore, individuals consume not only to differentiate from others, but also to identify themselves with a social group, and to position themselves within that group and reinforce social ties (Douglas & Isherwood, 1996; Jackson, 2005; Miller et al., 1993).

Fashion, as material culture, mediates social interactions by oscillating between individuality and conformity (Garcia, 2021). Its meanings can be used to forge distinction or affiliation with others, affirming a sense of social belonging (Brewer, 1991). By dressing in accordance with the standards of valued reference groups, individuals create a sense of social identity and belonging (Leigh & Gabel, 1992). Accordingly, fashion becomes a salient marker of the social situations in which one feels in or out of place, producing nuanced social and symbolic distinctions (Thompson & Haytko, 1997). Identities communicated by dress are then uniquely personal, and, at the same time, completely social, since they are shaped through individual yet socially learned experiences (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992).

2.3.1 Relationship between Identity-Based Consumption and Fashion Overconsumption via Group Belonging

Since fashion meanings are fluid rather than static, the symbolic value attached to clothing continually shifts as garments take on new interpretations across groups, societies, contexts, and time (Garcia, 2021; Douglas & Isherwood, 1996; Miller et al., 1993). Because identity is continuously negotiated through socially shared meanings, consumers repeatedly re-evaluate who they are in relation to others, using fashion to position themselves within social groups (Thompson & Haytko, 1997; Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998).

Thus, fashion serves as a social screening device, enabling people to distinguish among different “types” and seek affiliation with desirable groups (Pesendorfer, 1995; Yoganarasimhan, 2012). Therefore, individuals are motivated to choose garments that will be interpreted consistently with how they wish to be seen, facing heightened pressure to “get it right”, and risking stigma if they make the “wrong” aesthetic choices (Larsen & Patterson, 2018). Stone (1962) helps clarify this dynamic by describing dress as a “program” that others interpret through “review”. When the two align, identity is validated, but misalignment threatens one’s sense of self, often prompting individuals to engage in identity-correcting consumption.

The tension between personally constructed meanings and socially imposed ones demands active negotiation from consumers (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998). As public meanings of dress shift or become associated with undesirable groups, these items may lose symbolic fit, encouraging their abandonment and replacement with the “correct” new designs, leading consumers to over-buy to maintain identity alignment (Richins, 1994; Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992; Berger, 2008). Because tastes expressed through visible goods, such as clothing, make group membership easily recognisable, they are also easily imitated by outsiders, shortening their lifecycle and accelerating the turnover of fashion meanings (Berger, 2008; Berger et al., 2005). Moreover, as group belonging is “reduced to identities one puts on and takes off at whim” (Slater, 1997, p. 88), individuals must continually adjust their appearance to maintain desired social affiliations and avoid misclassification and exclusion (Mead et al., 2011; Berger & Heath, 2008). Thus, the desire to fit in and secure group belonging motivates repeated purchasing, ultimately contributing to fashion overconsumption and supporting the second hypothesis.

H2: *Identity-driven consumption motives increase fashion overconsumption via the desire for group belonging.*

2.4 Role of Status in Consumption Behaviour

The process of defining one's identity, involves positioning the individual within social relations by affiliating with certain groups while simultaneously distinguishing oneself from others (Stone, 1962). According to optimal distinctiveness theory, individuals strive to balance the need for belonging with desire for distinctiveness (Brewer, 1991). Within this process of self-definition, Scitovsky (1992) argues that status becomes an important social dimension, as it assures group membership, but also distinguishes individuals within those same groups.

Accordingly, status refers to the relative position an individual holds within a social group, typically awarded by others based on evaluative judgements of prestige, regard or esteem. It is a socially conferred form of power, that embodies the respect and recognition that individuals seek within their cultural context (Eastman et al., 1999). Status can be ascribed (through inherited titles), achieved (through personal success), or acquired through material possessions, known as status consumption. In this context, consumption becomes a means of publicly expressing social distinction, as individuals purchase products that confer status in the eyes of significant others, thereby reinforcing their position within the social hierarchy (Mazzocco et al., 2012; Eastman et al., 1999). According to Packard (1959), individuals consume to affirm a superior level of status both to themselves and other group members.

The concept of conspicuous consumption, introduced by Veblen (1899), further explains how individuals engage in consumption not out of necessity but in pursuit of recognition, acquiring costly items with significant signalling value to display status. Richins (1994) expands this idea, arguing that possessions function as markers of prestige that communicate an individual's social position and shape how others perceive and interact with them.

Status consumption is driven by a combination of psychological needs, social pressures, and identity-related motives that push individuals towards acquiring goods that signal prestige or enhanced social standing. At its core, pursuit of status in consumption reflects a motivation to gain self-respect and social approval (Eastman et al., 1999). A substantial body of research also connects this behaviour to compensatory consumption processes (Mazzocco et al., 2012), whereby individuals purchase high-status goods to cope with perceived deficiencies in the self (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1981), such as low self-esteem (Topçu, 2018) and powerlessness (Rucker & Galinsky, 2008). Thus, individuals consume high-status goods for their affirmational properties, for their reparative effects on the ego, and protection from future self-threats (Sivanathan & Pettit, 2010).

Veblen (1899) argues that fashion serves as a key indicator of conspicuous consumption, functioning as a highly visible and socially meaningful status symbol because it communicates identity, cultural capital, and social position in easily recognisable ways (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992; Rafferty, 2011; Lasswell & Parshall, 1961). Historically, clothing has been one of the most convenient markers of class distinction (Packard, 1959), and, in modern days, fashion continues to operate “as a tool of distinction, identification and segregation for social collectivities” (Rafferty, 2011, p. 257). Thus, dress not only enables individuals to express identity but also negotiate worth, rank ordering identities based on their perceived social value (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992). Ultimately, the meanings attached to clothing arise not only from its material qualities but also from socially shared definitions of its status, making fashion a central medium through which individuals manage reputation, claim distinction, and navigate their position within social hierarchies (Shavitt & Nelson, 1999).

2.4.1 Status-Consumption Motives and their Moderating Effect on Fashion Overconsumption

Veblen (1899) highlights two mechanisms that drive a cycle of status-oriented consumption: “invidious comparison”, in which higher-status groups consume conspicuously to dissociate from others, and “pecuniary emulation”, where lower-status individuals consume conspicuously to seek upward identification. Hirsch (1977) later described this as positional consumption, a strategy aimed at positioning the consumer in relation to other fellow consumers. The problem, as Hirsch notes, is that such status competition generates “social limits to growth”: “it is a case of everyone in the crowd standing on tiptoe and no one getting a better view. Yet at the start of the process some individuals gain a better view by standing on tiptoe, and others are forced to follow if they are to keep their position. If all do follow ... everyone expends more resources and ends up with the same position” (Hirsch, 1977, p.49). Simmel (1904) argues that such status-driven imitation and differentiation dynamic creates an inherent cycle of obsolescence that drives ongoing consumption.

Symbolic self-completion theory (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1981) further explains why consumption intensifies under conditions of status threat, as individuals rely on self-symbols to construct and stabilise their self-definitions. Symbols of completeness function as recognisable indicators of one's standing with respect to a self-defining goal, often taking the form of widely understood status symbols that provide immediate social acknowledgment. When connected to the psychology ownership theory (Pierce et al., 2003), this framework suggests that individuals who feel their identity or social image is not sufficiently validated are especially likely to

compensate through additional consumption to “complete” or reinforce that identity symbolically.

As Cooley (1902) suggests, self-definitions rely on the acknowledgment of others, meaning that the value of a status symbol increases as it becomes visible to a wider audience. Fashion, as a highly public and socially observable domain, intensifies these dynamics. Because it spans from staple and necessity products to items seen as markers of high social standing, its social meaning is a matter of perception based on trends (Anguelov, 2015). The fashion industry capitalizes on this visibility by continually reclassifying which garments function as symbols of social status, a process driven by ever-changing trends that reinforce the need for consumers to update their wardrobes frequently to maintain social status (Anguelov, 2015; Cline, 2012).

Consumers differ in how much they seek to buy goods to gain status in the eyes of significant others (Han et al., 2010). Packard (1959) defines those who continually strive to display visible evidence of the higher rank they aim to signal as “status seekers”. Importantly, because status symbols are especially significant markers of completeness (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1981), individuals with strong status-oriented motives are likely to rely even more heavily on identity-based consumption, such as fashion items, to maintain social visibility, affirm self-image, and gain recognition from others. The tendency for status-affirmational needs thereby amplifies an individual’s propensity for fashion overconsumption (Sivanathan & Pettit, 2010), leading to the development of the third hypothesis.

H3: *The relationship between identity-driven consumption motives and fashion overconsumption is stronger among individuals with high status-consumption motives.*

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The following conceptual framework outlines this study’s proposed relationships among identity-driven consumption motives, desire for group belonging, high status-consumption motives, and fashion overconsumption.

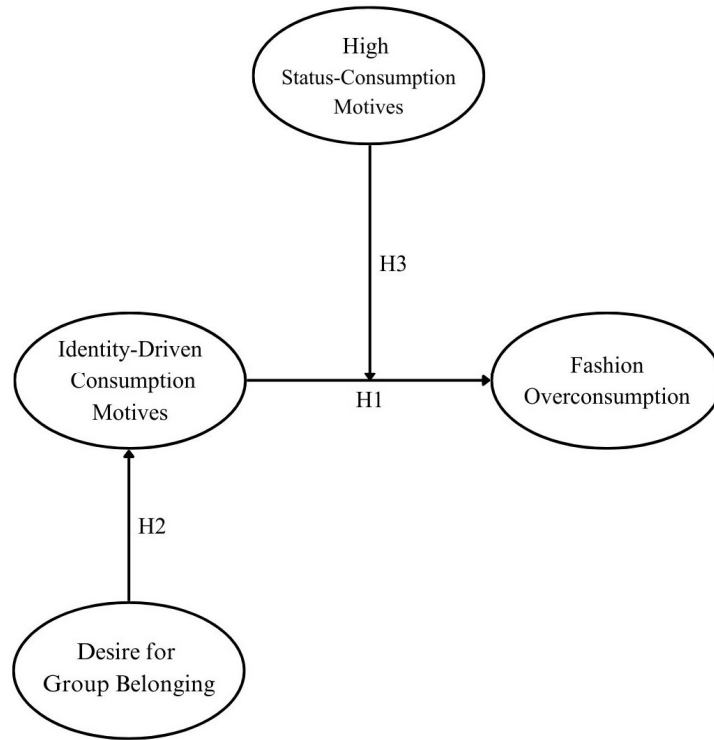


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3 Methodology and Data Collection

This chapter presents the quantitative methodology employed in the study, which involves a vignette experiment administered via an online survey. It details the research design, the operationalization of the constructs, and the structure of the questionnaire. The chapter concludes with an overview of the data collection process and a reliability check performed on the constructs, forming the basis for the statistical analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The choice between qualitative and quantitative research methods depends on the nature of the topic, the research questions, and the research problem (Ghanad, 2023). In this study, a quantitative approach was selected as the most appropriate methodological framework. Quantitative research enables the collection of numerical data and the application of statistical analysis to explain the relationship between variables and test the proposed hypotheses. Therefore, quantitative research provides the necessary tools to generate valid, evidence-based conclusions to the research questions (Ghanad, 2023).

Within this quantitative framework, a single-factor vignette experiment was chosen as the specific research design to examine how identity-based social signalling influences fashion overconsumption, and to test the mediating role of group belonging and the moderating role of

status-consumption motives. Vignette studies combine elements of traditional surveys and experimental designs by presenting respondents with a brief, realistic scenario (vignette) in which key contextual factors are manipulated. This method leverages the strengths of both approaches, offering higher internal validity than traditional surveys while maintaining greater ecological and external validity than classical experiments (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010), as it allows causal effects to be tested within realistic yet controlled situations (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014).

To assess the effect of identity salience on fashion overconsumption, participants were randomly assigned either an identity-relevant or identity-neutral scenario, with each respondent exposed to only one condition, enabling comparisons across participants, as required in between-person designs (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010). Participants were blind to their assigned condition, as they could not recognise which group they belonged to, increasing internal validity (Orne, 1962). The assignment was balanced so that each scenario was presented an equal number of times, ensuring comparability between conditions. Random assignment to the experimental conditions minimises person-related confounds and strengthens internal validity by ensuring that observed differences in the dependent variable can be attributed to the manipulation rather than to pre-existing individual differences (Shadish et al., 2002).

3.2 Measures

The measures used in this study were primarily derived from previously validated scales to increase reliability and ensure construct validity (Ghanad, 2023). Where necessary, these items were adapted to align with the specific context of the scenario. For two constructs, described below, for which no validated scales were available, items were developed based on peer-reviewed articles on the respective topics, ensuring conceptual grounding and theoretical consistency.

Each construct was measured using a multiple-item scale, a practice that enhances content validity, construct reliability, and convergent validity (Hulland et al., 2018). Participants responded using five-point Likert scales, ranging from 1 (“Strongly disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly agree”), a widely used format shown to provide reliable and valid measurement (Dawes, 2008).

3.2.1 Independent Variable

To operationalize the independent variable, Identity-Driven Consumption Motives, two scenario conditions were constructed.

Table 1. Identity Manipulation Scenario

Identity-Relevant Scenario	Identity-Neutral Scenario (Control)
You've been invited to a dinner where people usually dress to express their style and individuality. Guests tend to notice what others are wearing, and photos are often shared afterwards. You want to choose an outfit that reflects who you are and make a good impression.	You've been invited to a casual dinner where people don't pay much attention to what others are wearing. Everyone usually dresses comfortably, and no photos are taken. You just want something simple and practical to wear.

As recommended by Aguinis and Bradley (2014), it is important that participants receive sufficient information and contextual background to meaningfully interpret the scenario; moreover, ensuring that the scenario itself is realistic is equally important to enhance the study's external validity. Thus, the dinner scenario was chosen because it represents a common social setting in which dress naturally plays a role, making it suitable for activating identity-driven consumption motives. Through this manipulation, the study aims to induce identity-driven consumption motives by providing cues that encourage participants to consider how their clothing expresses who they are. Elements emphasising both the self-definitional and social signalling dimensions of identity expression through clothing were incorporated into the scenario text, consistent with Belk's (1988) view of the dual meaning of possessions. Additionally, the scenarios included cues related to social interaction and group contexts, as research shows that identity expression through fashion consumption is closely tied to interpersonal recognition and group belonging (Leigh & Gabel, 1992).

To ensure clarity and appropriateness of the manipulation, unstructured interviews were conducted individually with three participants. Each participant reviewed both scenarios and provided feedback on their interpretation. Based on their comments, the scenario texts were modified to better align with the intended manipulation. For instance, the original sentence "You expect people to notice what others are wearing" was revised to "Guests tend to notice what others are wearing" to more clearly activate the perception of being seen by others.

A manipulation check was also conducted using a three-item question to verify that participants accurately understood and interpreted the level of identity relevance of their randomly assigned scenario, ensuring that observed effects could be attributed to the experimental manipulation rather than confounding variables (Perdue & Summers, 1986).

3.2.2 Dependent Variable

The dependent variable (DV), Situational Fashion Overconsumption, was measured in response to the experimental scenario using items developed based on insights from Niinimäki et al. (2020).

3.2.3 Individual Traits Variables

General Overconsumption Tendency – To assess participants' baseline consumption tendencies, the original fourteen-item scale from Dimitrova et al. (2022) was shortened to five items and adapted to the fashion context. This measure allows for a more comprehensive description of the sample and supports the interpretation of situational overconsumption patterns.

Group Belonging – The items measuring the desire for group belonging were supported by Leigh and Gabel's study (1992) to measure the state-based belonging rooted in the symbolic interactionism theory.

Status-Consumption Motives – Status-driven consumption tendencies were measured using the scale developed by Eastman et al. (1999), which assesses consumers' motivations to acquire goods for status-related reasons.

3.3 Structure of the Survey

The survey design and data collection were conducted through Qualtrics, selected for its intuitive interface and efficient distribution capabilities. The survey was also appropriately translated into Portuguese to ensure clarity and accessibility for all respondents.

The survey was intentionally kept brief and straightforward to prevent misunderstanding and minimise survey abandonment, with an estimated response time of approximately four minutes.

The complete survey is provided in Appendix 1 and 2 in both its English and Portuguese versions, and its structure is outlined below:

1. Introduction text – Ensures confidentiality and encourages participants to respond spontaneously and honestly.
2. Dinner experiment and manipulation check – Participants were randomly exposed to either the identity-relevant or identity-neutral scenario.
3. Survey questions on dependent and individual traits variables – Respondents were asked to respond according to the presented scenario, but also relatively to their own clothing and shopping habits.

4. Demographics – Socio-demographic items, such as gender, age, country of residence, and estimated monthly gross income, were included to characterise the sample.

5. Closing text – Gives context on the study and allows contact with the researcher.

To provide a clear overview of how participant progressed through the study, Figure 2 presents the experimental flow of the survey.

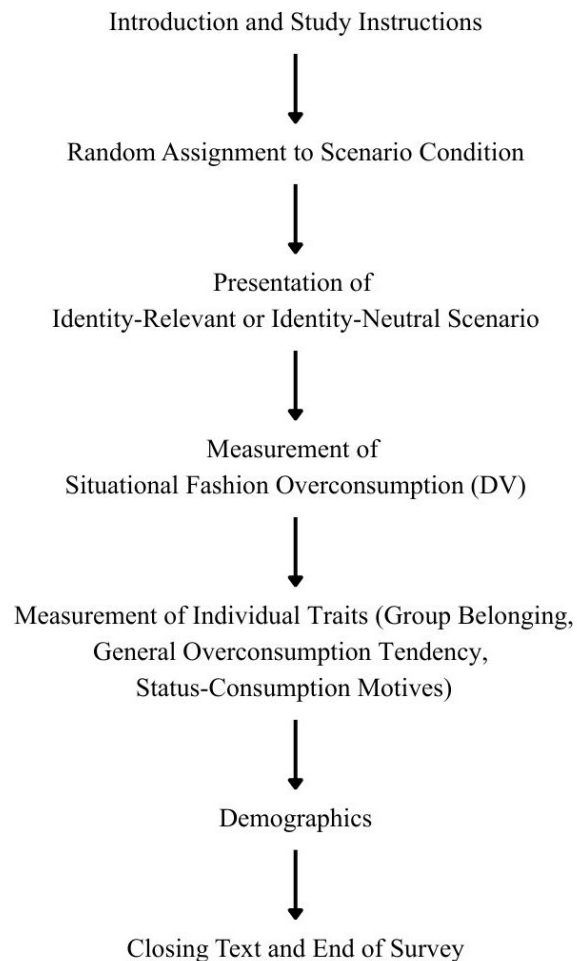


Figure 2. Experimental Flow

3.4 Data Collection and Final Sample

The online survey was conducted between the 9th and the 21st of November 2025. Once the survey was published, the generated survey link was distributed via social media channels, primarily WhatsApp and Instagram, enabling rapid, cost-free, and wide-reaching distribution.

Within that period, 140 participants initiated the questionnaire; however, 28 failed to complete it and exited before the last question, with an average completion rate of 80%. Additionally,

four responses were removed from the data set due to poor data quality. Two respondents showed evidence of straight-lining (i.e., selecting the same scale point across all items), and the other two participants completed the survey in an unrealistically short amount of time, indicating that they were unlikely to have answered the questions attentively.

Lastly, perceived identity relevance was measured using a three-item scale, and responses were averaged to create a manipulation-check score for each participant. An independent-samples t-test comparing the two experimental conditions revealed that participants exposed to the identity-relevant scenario perceived it as significantly more identity-based ($M = 4.38$, $SD = 0.73$) than those assigned the neutral condition ($M = 2.45$, $SD = 1.30$), $t(78.87) = -9.38$, $p < .001$. Confirming that the experimental manipulation operated as intended and that participants meaningfully differentiated between the two scenario conditions.

As a result, 108 valid responses were included in the analysis. Given that each participant was exposed to only one scenario, 56 responses belonged to the identity-relevant scenario and 52 to the identity-neutral scenario. For analysis purposes, the manipulation was coded in SPSS as a dichotomous variable named “Scenario” (0 = Identity-Neutral, 1 = Identity-Relevant).

Table 2. Data Cleansing Process and Final Sample

Data Cleansing	Subjects
Total Responses	140
Incompleteness	-28
Poor data quality	-4
Final Sample	108

3.5 Reliability Check with Cronbach’s Alpha

A reliability check assesses a measure’s consistency and evaluates the methodological quality of the research (Ghanad, 2023). Following the recommendations of Hulland’s et. al (2018), a reliability analysis was conducted for all constructs using Cronbach’s alpha to assess internal consistency of the measurement instruments, with alpha values of 0.7 or higher considered acceptable. As shown in Table 3, all scales demonstrated satisfactory to excellent reliability, with alpha coefficients well above the recommended threshold. The item-total correlation and “alpha if item deleted” diagnostics indicated that no item negatively affected scale reliability (the complete reliability test is attached in Appendix 3). These results confirm that all multi-item constructs used in the study are internally consistent and suitable for further analysis.

Table 3. Cronbach’s Alphas

Construct	Number of Items	α
Manipulation Check	3	0.906
Group Belonging	6	0.859
Situational Overconsumption	3	0.899
General Overconsumption Tendency	4	0.820
Status-Consumption motives	5	0.927

Moreover, the measured multi-item scales were converted into unidimensional indices by calculating the mean value of their respective items, using SPSS’s “MEAN” function. As a result, single variables such as “Group Belonging” were developed, representing the overall score for each construct.

4 Results Analysis

4.1 Sample Characterisation

The sample consisted predominantly of female respondents (64.8%), with males representing 35.2% of the participants.

Table 4. Gender Distribution of the Sample

Gender	Female	Male
N	70	38
%	64.8%	35.2%

The sample is primarily composed of young adults, with 45.4% aged 18-24 and 21.3% aged 25-34, while older age groups are represented to a smaller extent. This pattern aligns with what was anticipated based on the survey’s distribution method.

Table 5. Age Distribution of the Sample

Age	18-24 years old	25-34 years old	35-44 years old	45-54 years old	55-64 years old	65 years old or older
N	49	23	13	14	7	2
%	45.4%	21.3%	12.0%	13.0%	6.5%	1.9%

The sample is largely composed of Portuguese residents (88.9%) with a small proportion of participants living outside Portugal (11.1%). The “Other” category includes other EU countries (Germany, Italy, Denmark and Slovakia), as well as non-EU countries (the UK, Brazil, Argentina, and South-Africa).

Table 6. Country of Residence Distribution of the Sample

Country of Residence	Portugal	Other
N	96	13
%	88.9%	11.1%

Income levels varied across the sample, with the majority earning between 1,000€ and 1,999€ per month (48.1%), which is consistent with the average monthly gross earnings reported for Portuguese workers (INE, 2025).

Table 7. Estimate Monthly Gross Income Distribution of the Sample

Income Level	Under 500€	500€ - 999€	1,000€ - 1,999€	2,000€ - 2,999€	3,000€ - 3,999€	4,000€ - 4,999€	5,000€ or above
N	11	22	52	13	6	2	2
%	10.2%	20.4%	48.1%	12.0%	5.6%	1.9%	1.9%

While the sample's demographic composition is not fully balanced, the use of random assignment to the experimental conditions supports the internal validity of the study, and the existing demographic differences are not expected to undermine the core experimental effects.

4.2 Normality Assessment

Normality was checked to ensure that the assumptions required for parametric statistical tests were met. Following Tabachnick and Fidell's (2013) recommendation, normality was assessed by visual analysis of histograms with normal curves (Figure 3), in addition to a skewness and kurtosis coefficients analysis (Table 8).

The histograms indicated slight skewness for the group belonging and situational overconsumption variables, but no severe deviations from normality were observed. All variables presented skewness values between -0.624 and 0.641 and kurtosis values between -1.334 and -0.283, which fall within the recommended thresholds ($|\text{skewness}| < 2$; $|\text{kurtosis}| < 7$) (West et al., 1995). Additionally, given the adequate sample size ($N = 108$), the Central Limit Theorem supports the robustness of parametric analysis, as the sampling distribution of the mean approximates normality even when the data is not perfectly normal. Therefore, the distributions were considered adequate for the use of parametric statistical tests.

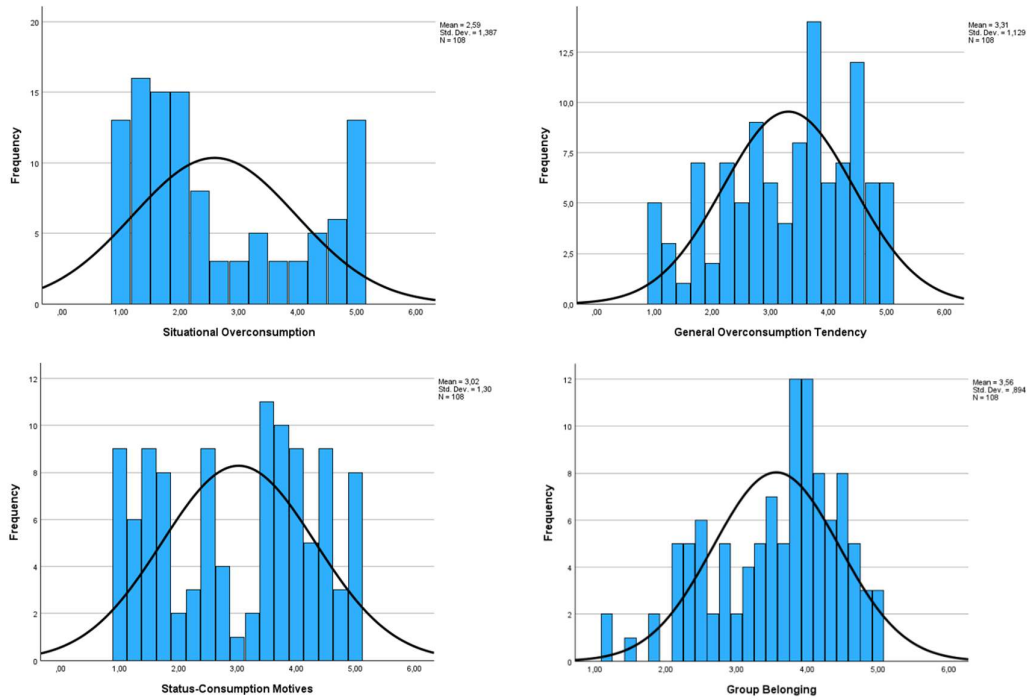


Figure 3. Normality Assessment (Histograms)

Table 8. Skewness and Kurtosis Coefficients

Construct	Skewness	Kurtosis
Group Belonging	-0.624	-0.283
Status-Consumption Motives	-0.128	-1.334
General Overconsumption Tendency	-0.401	-0.829
Situational Overconsumption	0.641	-1.080

4.3 Univariate Analysis

Univariate analysis was used to provide an overview of the distribution of the individual traits scores in the sample. A graphical representation of the distributions is presented in Appendix 4.

Participants reported moderately high levels of group belonging ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 0.89$), with most responses clustered in the upper range of the scale and relatively limited variability. Tendency to overconsume fashion showed a similar pattern ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 1.13$), although the wider interquartile range in the boxplot indicates greater dispersion and more heterogeneous habitual overconsumption tendencies within the sample. Lastly, status-consumption motives were moderate overall ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 1.30$), but exhibited substantial variability, suggesting that respondents differ in the extent to which they view fashion purchase as a means of signalling status.

4.4 Bivariate Analysis

For the bivariate analysis, Pearson correlation coefficients (r) were calculated to assess strength and direction of the associations between the individual traits variables and the DV, as well as the correlations between these variables with the two experimental conditions (Table 9). Following Cohen's (1988) conventions, absolute correlation values between 0.10 to 0.29 are considered small, 0.30 to 0.49 moderate, and 0.50 or higher indicate large effect sizes.

Situational overconsumption was positively related to all individual traits, showing the strongest correlation with group belonging ($r = 0.624$, $p < 0.001$), followed by tendency to overconsume ($r = 0.504$, $p < 0.001$) and status-consumption motives ($r = 0.486$, $p < 0.001$). Moreover, the individual traits were also significantly interrelated: status-consumption motives correlated strongly with tendency to overconsume ($r = 0.562$, $p < 0.001$) and moderately with group belonging ($r = 0.386$, $p < 0.001$), while group belonging and general tendency to overconsume were also moderately positively related ($r = 0.395$, $p < 0.001$). Notably, the positive association between general overconsumption tendency and situational overconsumption further suggests that individuals who habitually overconsume fashion are also more susceptible to identity-driven triggers of overconsumption. These correlations reveal meaningful relationships between the individual traits variables and the DV. While the correlation findings do not allow for causal conclusions, they are consistent with the proposed hypothesized framework.

In addition, the scenario variable showed a strong positive correlation with situational fashion overconsumption ($r = 0.530$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that the manipulation increased state-based overconsumption as intended. To assess whether random assignment produced equivalent groups, correlations between the scenario condition and the individual traits variables were also examined. Although, the correlation with group belonging reached statistical significance ($r = 0.339$, $p < 0.01$), the coefficient of determination was small ($r^2 \cong 0.12$), indicating that the manipulation explained only a minor variance in this trait. Similarly, status-consumption motives ($r = 0.099$, $p = 0.310$), and general overconsumption tendency ($r = 0.239$, $p = 0.013$) were small and did not reflect meaningful group differences. This suggests that random assignment produced comparable groups across dispositional traits, confirming both the effectiveness of the manipulation and the internal validity of the experiment.

Table 9. Pearson's Correlation Matrix

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Group Belonging	-	0.386**	0.395**	0.624**	0.339**
2. Status-Consumption Motives	0.386**	-	0.562**	0.486**	0.099
3. General Overconsumption Tendency	0.395**	0.562**	-	0.504**	0.239*
4. Situational Overconsumption	0.624**	0.486**	0.504**	-	0.530**
5. Manipulation Condition	0.339**	0.099	0.239*	0.530**	-

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

4.6 Hypotheses Testing

The following section presents the results of the statistical analyses performed to test the three proposed hypotheses.

H1: *Identity-driven consumption motives are positively associated with fashion overconsumption.*

To examine Hypothesis 1, the analysis first examines the distribution of the DV, Situational Overconsumption, across the two experimental groups. A boxplot was used to visually compare the distributions (Figure 4). Participants exposed to the identity-relevant scenario reported higher situational overconsumptions scores ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 1.43$), with a wider dispersion of responses and several high-value observations. In contrast, the identity-neutral scenario produced lower and more concentrated scores ($M = 1.82$, $SD = 0.83$), indicating a more constrained range of overconsumption inclination under identity-neutral conditions.

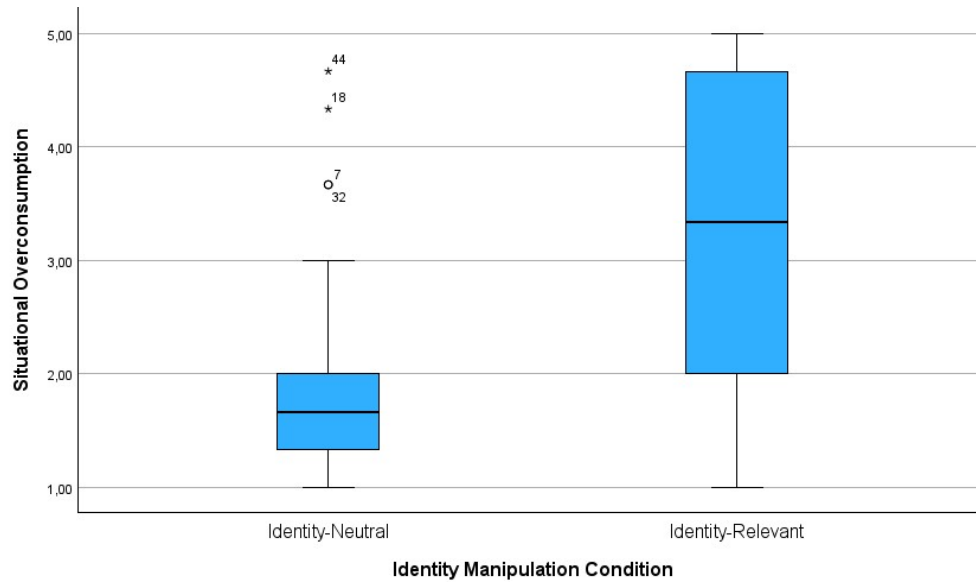


Figure 4. Boxplot of Situational Overconsumption across the Experimental Groups

Additionally, an independent-samples t-test was used, according to the procedures recommended by Pallant (2020), to determine whether the mean difference in situational overconsumption between the two experimental groups was statistically significant (the test's statistical tables are found in Appendix 5). Participants in the identity-relevant condition (Scenario = 1) reported substantially higher overconsumption scores ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 1.43$) than those in the identity-neutral condition (Scenario = 0) ($M = 1.83$, $SD = 0.83$). Levene's test was significant and indicated unequal variances ($p < 0.001$), so the adjusted t-test results were interpreted. The difference between conditions was statistically significant ($t(89.63) = -6.55$, $p < 0,001$) with a mean difference of 1.46 (95% CI [-1.91, -1.02]). The effect size was very large (Cohen's $d = 1.18$), indicating a strong influence of identity-driven consumption motives on situational fashion overconsumption. Taken together, the results provide robust support of Hypothesis 1; therefore, the hypothesis is accepted.

H2: *Identity-driven consumption motives increase fashion overconsumption via the desire for group belonging.*

A mediation analysis using PROCESS Model 4 (Hayes, 2018) was used to test whether group belonging mediates the effect of identity-driven consumption motives (scenario manipulation) on situational fashion overconsumption. Model 4 estimates the indirect effect across the four paths of a simple mediation model, pictured in Figure 5. All the statistical tables can be found in Appendix 6.

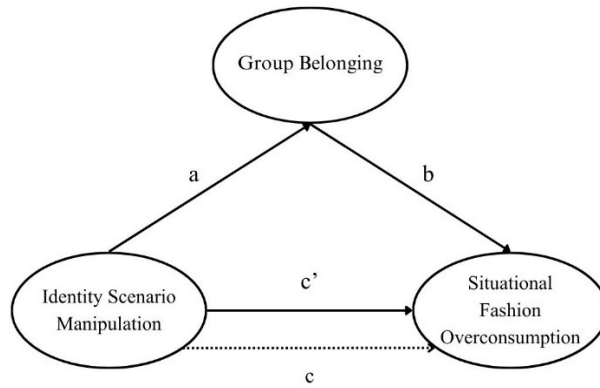


Figure 5. Mediation Model (PROCESS Model 4)

Participants in the identity-relevant condition reported significantly higher levels of group belonging compared to those in the identity-neutral condition ($B = 0.6042$, $p = 0.0003$). This indicates that the manipulation successfully influenced the mediator, confirming that path a is significant.

In turn, higher levels of group belonging significantly predicted higher situational fashion overconsumption ($B = 0.7788$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, path b is significant.

Before including the mediator (path c), the manipulation had a strong and significant effect on the DV ($B = 1.4647$, $p < 0.001$). When group belonging was added to the model (path c'), the effect of the scenario manipulation remained significant but decreased from 1.4647 to 0.9942 ($p < 0.001$). This reduction indicates partial mediation, meaning group belonging explains part of the scenario's effect on overconsumption.

The indirect effect through group belonging was statistically supported, since the bootstrapped confidence interval does not include zero ($B = 0.4705$, 95% CI [0.2254, 0.7551]). Demonstrating that participants in the identity-relevant condition exhibited higher situational fashion overconsumption partly because they experienced stronger feelings of group belonging. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is supported.

H3: *The relationship between identity-driven consumption motives and fashion overconsumption is stronger among individuals with high status-consumption motives.*

A hierarchical linear regression was conducted to test whether status-consumption motives moderated the effect of identity-driven consumption motives on situational fashion overconsumption. Hierarchical regression enables the evaluation of whether adding a new predictor significantly improves the model (Pallant, 2020). Accordingly, predictors were

entered into the model using the Enter method, that ensures they were included based on theoretical grounds, rather than an automated selection criteria.

Following Aiken and West’s (1991) recommendations, the status-consumption motives variable was mean-centred before the analysis (creating a new variable named “Status_centred”) to reduce multicollinearity and to facilitate interpretation of the main effects.

As shown in Table 10, Model 1, which included the main effects (Scenario and Status_centred), explained 47% of the variance in situational overconsumption ($R^2 = 0.470$, $p < 0.001$), with both variables being significant positive predictors to the model.

Model 2 added the interaction term (Scenario x Status), testing whether the effect of the identity-based manipulation on situational overconsumption changes depending on participants’ levels of status-consumption motives. Including the Scenario x Status interaction term resulted in a substantial increase of explained variance ($\Delta R^2 = 0.156$), explaining 62.6% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.626$).

Table 10. Hierarchical Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.686*	0.470	0.460	1.01922
2	0.791**	0.626	0.616	0.86025

* Predictors: (Constant), Status_centred, Scenario

** Predictors: (Constant), Status_centred, Scenario, ScenarioxStatus

The ANOVA table (Table 11) indicates that the overall model is statistically significant ($F(3, 104) = 58.108$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 11. Hierarchical Regression ANOVA

Model	df	F	Sig.
2	3, 104	58.108	< 0.001

In the final model (Table 12), the interaction term was highly significant ($\beta = 0.603$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the relationship between the scenario manipulation and situational overconsumption varies depending on the individual’s level of status-consumption motives. The positive coefficient shows that the effect of the identity-relevant scenario becomes stronger as status-consumption motives increase.

Table 12. Hierarchical Regression Coefficients

Model	B	Std. Error	β	Sig.
Scenario	1.365	0.167	0.494	< 0.001
2				
Status-Consumption Motives (centered)	-0.020	0.098	-0.019	0.837
Scenario x Status Motives	0.855	0.130	0.603	< 0.001

Figure 6 illustrates the significant interaction between the scenario condition and status-consumption motives. The identity-relevant scenario led to a much larger increase in situational overconsumption among participants high in status-consumption motives, whereas the effect is comparatively small among those low in status motives. Thus, Hypothesis 3 is supported.

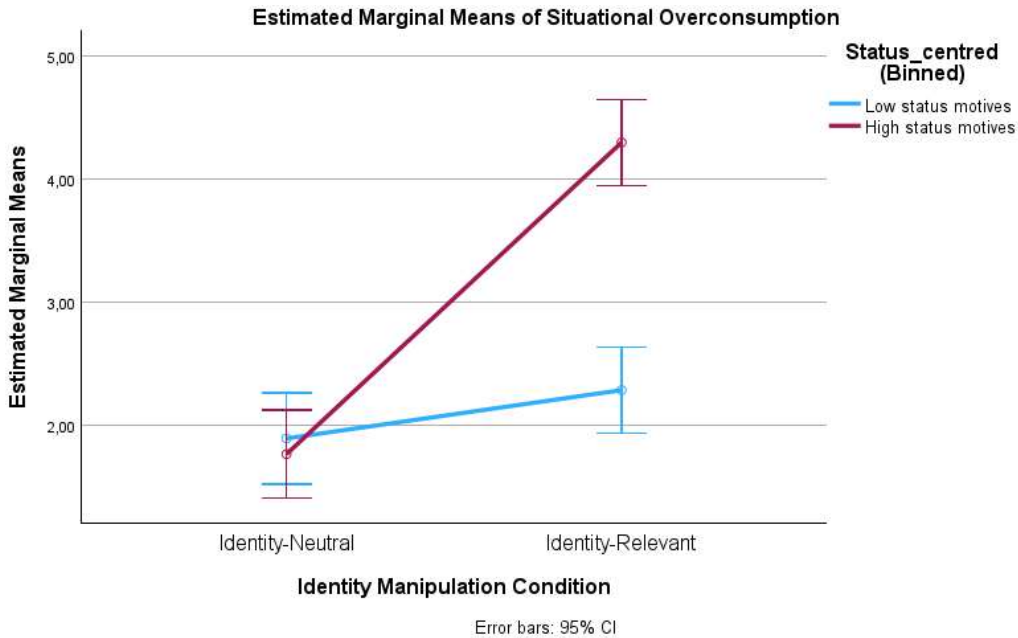


Figure 6. Interaction between Scenario Condition and Status-Consumption Motives on Situational Overconsumption

5 Discussion

This study examined how identity-driven consumption motives influence fashion overconsumption. The experimental findings supported all three proposed hypotheses (Table 13), enhancing understanding of the identity-related processes that contribute to excessive fashion consumption.

Table 13. Hypotheses Results

Hypothesis	Relationship Proposed	Statistical Test	Conclusion
H1	Identity-driven consumption motives positively influence fashion overconsumption	Independent Samples t-test	Supported
H2	Mediation via group belonging	Mediation Analysis (PROCESS Model 4)	Supported
H3	Moderating effect of status-consumption motives	Hierarchical regression	Supported

5.1 Main Findings

The experimental findings reveal a positive effect of identity-based consumption on fashion overconsumption, as participants exposed to the identity-relevant scenario reported significantly higher situational overconsumption than those in the identity-neutral condition. This result aligns with prior research conceptualising fashion as a symbolic resource through which individuals define and express their sense of self (Belk, 1988; Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992). It also complements Campbell's (2004) view that consumption is tied to self-construction, as identity-relevant situations offer individuals an opportunity to reinforce or adjust their self-concept, thereby intensifying their inclination to consume.

The study's mediation analysis revealed a significant indirect effect whereby identity relevance heightens the desire of perceived group belonging, which in turn predicted higher situational overconsumption. This suggests that when consumption is framed in identity-relevant terms, individuals perceive greater potential for social connection and acceptance through their consumption choices. These findings are consistent with theories of social identity and symbolic interactionism, which propose that individuals use consumption to obtain social recognition and secure group belonging (Leigh & Gabel, 1992; Stone, 1962). The partial mediation observed indicates that group belonging is an important mechanism, though other psychological processes likely contribute to drive identity-based overconsumption.

The moderation results showed that the impact of identity relevance is not uniform across consumers but depends on their individual level of status-consumption motives. These findings align with theoretical perspectives linking status consumption to symbolic self-completion (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1981), conspicuous consumption (Veblen, 1899), and the pursuit for social distinction (Packard, 1959). The results align with the conceptualisation of status as an identity resource that consumers manage through symbolic goods, using consumption as a means of asserting prestige or social rank (Eastman et al., 1999; Mazzocco et al., 2012). The

results extend existing literature by demonstrating that status motives not only increase overall consumption but specifically intensify identity-triggered overconsumption within fashion contexts.

Together, these findings provide empirical validation for the literature's discussion of the role of identity processes in shaping consumer behaviour. Additionally, the study fills the gap in prior research, demonstrating that identity cues increase consumers' propensity to overconsume fashion items.

5.2 Limitations

Despite the study's insights into how identity-relevant cues affect fashion consumption, several methodological and conceptual limitations should be acknowledged.

First, the sample composition limits the generalizability of findings, as most participants were female young adults living in Portugal, which may not represent broader consumer segments. Identity-driven fashion motives can vary across age groups, socioeconomic backgrounds, and cultural contexts. In addition, the overall sample size and the number of participants per condition were relatively small, which places some constraints on the generalizability of the results. A considerable number of participants did not complete the survey, suggesting that its length or structure may have contributed to respondent fatigue. To strengthen external validity, future research should increase sample size and diversity and consider shortening the survey or offering participation incentives to minimise incompleteness rates.

Moreover, the experimental manipulation relied on a written hypothetical scenario, which cannot fully replicate the complexity of real consumption situations. This limitation aligns with critiques of experimental vignette methodology, which argue that lower levels of realism can limit external validity and that outcomes observed in hypothetical settings may not necessarily occur in natural environments, leading to hypothetical bias. (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). Additionally, not all participants reported high levels of perceived identity relevance when assigned to the identity-relevant condition, indicating that the manipulation may not have consistently activated identity-driven motives across the sample, potentially reducing the strength of the observed effects.

The study also relies entirely on self-reported measures rather than actual behaviour. This is subject to limitations such as social desirability and self-presentation bias, as participants may answer in ways that are socially acceptable or consistent with their desired self-image instead of giving fully honest answers. Given the complexity of identity-related consumption motives,

respondents may not accurately recognise or report the extent to which these factors influenced their decisions, resulting in responses that diverge from actual behaviour.

Lastly, the study design does not allow conclusions about long-term effects. Although the study reflects consumer behaviour at a single point in time, identity construction and consumption practices are dynamic and continually shaped by evolving social and personal contexts (Larsen & Patterson, 2018). Therefore, longitudinal research would be valuable to examine whether the observed effects remain stable or change over time.

5.3 Implications for Future Research

Future research could deepen the understanding of identity-based fashion consumption by examining additional individual differences that may moderate the effects observed in the present study. While this study focused on status motives as a moderator, prior literature suggests that other traits, such as materialism (Richins, 1994) and self-esteem (Banister & Hogg, 2004), also shape how strongly consumers rely on fashion to construct or communicate identity. Incorporating these characteristics could help clarify for whom identity-based cues are more influential and when these identity motives are more likely to emerge.

Research could further explore how identity motives interact with, reinforce, or compete with one another. Although the current study examined self-expression, group belonging, and status independently, theoretical perspectives on identity (e.g., Brewer, 1991; Markus & Kunda, 1986; Swann, 2005) suggest that individuals often hold multiple identity goals simultaneously. For instance, expressing individuality may conflict with group-belonging pressures, or status signalling may be related to belonging efforts. Studying these potential tensions and complementarities would provide a more complete understanding of how identity processes influence consumer decision-making.

Finally, future studies could adopt longitudinal designs to understand how identity motives unfold and shape consumption behaviours over time. Rather than treating identity motives as fixed, following consumers across longer periods would allow researchers to observe how these motives may shift in response to identity threats, life transitions, evolving social environments, or changing cultural norms. Such designs could also examine how repeated exposure to identity-relevant cues influences patterns of fashion overconsumption.

5.4 Practical Implications for Marketers

The study's results demonstrated that activating identity-relevant cues can drive consumption of fashion products beyond what is needed. From a managerial perspective, these findings

imply that identity-based message framing represents an important psychological driver of consumer decision-making. As a result, brands can amplify these effects by emphasising in their communication clothing's role in expressing self-identity, signalling group belonging, and status.

At the same time, the findings also highlight the ethical responsibility of using such cues cautiously, given their potential to promote overconsumption. Because fashion communication actively shapes desire and aspiration, marketers hold significant influence in guiding consumers' mindsets towards more responsible forms of consumption. Accordingly, communicators must shift the fashion narrative to "portray alternative models of status and success, decoupling identity from newness, and recalibrating what is deemed aspirational" (UNEP & UNFCCC, 2023, p. 5). Therefore, marketers should be mindful when designing their communication strategies, balancing persuasive messaging with transparency and aligning campaigns with sustainable consumption principles, strengthening the perception of fashion items as durables, not disposable consumables, and directing consumers towards low-impact and circular alternatives that still enable identity expression.

In line with this shift, opportunities emerge for brands to explore new business models such as clothing rental, resale, and refurbishment services. These new ownership models allow consumers to express identity, novelty, and status without the need for permanent ownership. Besides lengthening product lifecycle and improving sustainability, enabling eco-efficiency by intensifying product use, and maximizing product value and the resources involved, these new business models provide access to the newness consumers desire, demonstrating how identity-based consumption can be reconciled with sustainability (Niinimäki et al., 2020; Garcia-Ortega et al., 2023; McKinsey & Company & The Business of Fashion, 2018).

Additionally, the findings provided guidance for segmentation and targeted communication strategies. Results indicated that consumers with high-status motivations respond more strongly to identity-relevant cues. These insights show how identity motives differ across consumer segments, offering guidance for more tailored message design. Moreover, by reframing sustainable choices as status symbols, marketers can effectively redirect these identity-driven motives towards lower-impact fashion choices. Marketers should therefore adapt communication to elevate sustainable behaviours as aspirational and status-enhancing, aligning commercial goals with a more responsible fashion consumption culture (UNEP & UNFCCC, 2023).

5.5 Practical Implications for Consumers

While the primary implications of this study apply to marketers, the findings are also significant for consumers. By understanding how identity-relevant cues influence fashion consumption, individuals can become more mindful in their decision-making. Recognising how brands strategically activate identity motives, such as self-expression, group belonging, and status signalling, can help consumers distinguish when purchases are driven by psychological triggers rather than actual needs.

A shift in consumer mindset is also crucial. Consumers must reconsider the meaning of fashion, moving away from viewing it as cheap entertainment towards understanding it as a functional product category (Niinimäki et al., 2020). Encouraging this shift requires consumer education that promotes more responsible fashion behaviour and raises awareness of the environmental implications of overconsumption. Strengthening consumer understanding of these dynamics can help individuals develop a “critical consciousness of the consequences of their consumption behaviour and of companies’ strategies” (Garcia-Ortega et al., 2023, p. 8).

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Full Survey (English)

Introduction Text

Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this questionnaire. This survey is part of my Master Dissertation at Católica Lisbon School of Business & Economics. The questionnaire will take approximately 4 minutes to complete. Please note the following instructions before you begin:

- Answer all questions spontaneously and honestly.
- There are no right or wrong answers, only your opinion matters.
- All responses are treated confidentially and used solely for academic purposes.

Thank you for your support!

Rita

Part 1: Dinner scenario experiment

Imagine the following scenario:

IV Manipulation (randomized):

Identity-relevant scenario

You've been invited to a dinner where people usually dress to express their style and individuality. Guests tend to notice what others are wearing, and photos are often shared afterwards. You want to choose an outfit that reflects who you are and make a good impression.

Identity-neutral scenario

You've been invited to a casual dinner where people don't pay much attention to what others are wearing. Everyone usually dresses comfortably and no photos are taken. You just want something simple and practical to wear.

Manipulation Check

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements about the situation you just read.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
In this situation, clothing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

expresses
who I am.

Others pay
attention to
what I wear.

What
someone
wears here
says
something
about who
they are.

Part 2: Individual traits and DV

Group Belonging

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements about the situation you just read.

Strongly disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

I want to feel
that I belong
to the group
of people who
attend this
event.

Feeling
accepted by
others at this
event is
important to
me.

I would feel
uncomfortable
if my
appearance
made me
stand out from
the group.

I would like
others at this
event to see

me as one of
them.

Dressing in a
way that fits
the group
helps me feel
connected to
them.

I care about
being
recognised as
part of the
group.

Situational Overconsumption

Thinking about preparing your outfit for this dinner, please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.

Strongly disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

I would buy
more clothes
than I
actually need
for this
dinner.

I would
replace
wearable
clothes I
already own
to match the
look.

I would buy
something
new even
though I
already have
similar
pieces.

General Overconsumption Tendency

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements about your usual clothing and shopping habits.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I have a lot of clothes that I have never worn.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I frequently buy more clothing than I actually need.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often end up buying clothes I hadn't planned to buy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discounts or special offers often make me buy more clothes than necessary.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Status-Consumption Motives

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements about your clothing and shopping preferences.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I would buy clothes just because they have status.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am interested in new clothes that have status.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I would pay more for clothing if it had status.

The status of a clothing brand is not important to me.

A clothing brand feels more valuable to me if it has prestige.

Part 3: Demographics

To which age group do you belong to?

- Under 18
- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 64 or older

Q7 Which gender do you identify with?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary / third gender
- Prefer not to say

Q8 In which country do you currently reside?

- Portugal
- Germany
- Brazil
- Denmark
- France
- Italy
- Netherlands
- Spain
- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- Other, please specify _____

Q9 Please select the option that best represents your estimated monthly gross income.

- Under 500€
- 500€ - 999€
- 1,000€ - 1,999€
- 2,000€ - 2,999€
- 3,000€ - 3,999€
- 4,000€ - 4,999€
- 5,000€ or more

Closing Text

Your response has been recorded.
Thank you for your time spent taking this survey!

This research examines how identity-based social signalling influences fashion overconsumption.

Participants were randomly shown one of two different scenarios (high/low identity-signalling) to understand how context shapes consumer behaviour.

If you have any questions or comments about the study, please reach me by e-mail: s-rscondessa@ucp.pt.

Appendix 2 – Full Survey (Portuguese)

Introduction Text

Caro participante,

Agradeço a sua disponibilidade para responder a este questionário. Este inquérito faz parte da minha dissertação de mestrado na Católica Lisbon School of Business & Economics.

O questionário demorará aproximadamente 5 minutos a ser preenchido.

Tenha em conta as seguintes instruções antes de começar:

- Responda a todas as questões de forma espontânea e honesta.
- Não há respostas certas ou erradas, o que importa é a sua opinião.
- Todas as respostas são tratadas de forma confidencial e utilizadas exclusivamente para fins académicos.

Obrigada pelo seu apoio!

Rita

Part 1: Dinner scenario experiment

Imagine a seguinte situação:

IV Manipulation (randomized):

Identity-relevant scenario

Foi convidado para um jantar onde as pessoas geralmente se vestem para expressar o seu estilo e individualidade. Os convidados tendem a reparar no que os outros estão a usar, e são muitas vezes partilhadas fotografias do jantar. Quer escolher uma roupa que reflita quem é e cause uma boa impressão.

Identity-neutral scenario

Foi convidado para um jantar casual, onde as pessoas não prestam muita atenção ao que os outros estão a usar. Geralmente, todos se vestem confortavelmente e não tiram fotografias. Quer escolher algo simples e prático para vestir.

Manipulation Check

Por favor, indique o quanto concorda com as seguintes afirmações sobre a situação que acabou de ler.

	Discordo totalmente	Discordo parcialmente	Discordo parcialmente	Discordo parcialmente	Discordo parcialmente
Nesta situação, a roupa expressa quem eu sou.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Os outros prestam atenção ao que eu visto.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O que alguém veste neste caso diz algo sobre quem é.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Part 2: Individual traits and DV

Group Belonging

Por favor, indique o quanto concorda com as seguintes afirmações sobre a situação que acabou de ler.

	Discordo totalmente	Discordo parcialmente	Discordo parcialmente	Discordo parcialmente	Discordo parcialmente
Quero sentir que pertença ao grupo de pessoas que participam neste evento.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sentir-me aceite pelos outros neste evento é importante para mim.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sentir-me-ia desconfortável	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

se a minha
aparência me
distinguisse
do grupo.

Gostaria que
outros neste
evento me
vissem como
um deles.

Vestir-me de
uma forma
que combine
com o grupo
ajuda-me a
sentir-me
ligado a eles.

Preocupo-me
em ser
reconhecido
como parte do
grupo.

Situational Overconsumption

Ao pensar em escolher a sua roupa para este jantar, indique o quanto concorda com as seguintes afirmações.

Discordo totalmente Discordo parcialmente Discordo parcialmente Discordo parcialmente Discordo parcialmente

Compraria
mais roupa
do que
realmente
preciso para
este jantar.

Substituiria
as roupas
que já tenho
para
combinar
com o *look*.

Compraria
algo novo
mesmo que
já tivesse

peças
semelhantes.

General Overconsumption Tendency

Por favor, indique o quanto concorda com as seguintes afirmações sobre os seus hábitos de vestuário e de compras.

	Discordo totalmente	Discordo parcialmente	Discordo parcialmente	Discordo parcialmente	Discordo parcialmente
Tenho muitas roupas que nunca usei.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Compro frequentemente mais roupa do que realmente preciso.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Muitas vezes acabo por comprar roupa que não tinha planeado comprar.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Descontos ou ofertas especiais muitas vezes fazem-me comprar mais roupa do que o necessário.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Status-Consumption Motives

Por favor, indique o quanto concorda com as seguintes afirmações sobre as suas preferências de vestuário e compras.

	Discordo totalmente	Discordo parcialmente	Discordo parcialmente	Discordo parcialmente	Discordo parcialmente
Compraria roupa só porque confere estatuto.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Estou interessado em	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

roupas novas
que tenham
estatuto.

Pagaria mais
por roupa se
transmitisse
estatuto.

O estatuto de
uma marca de
roupa não é
importante para
mim.

Uma marca de
roupa parece-
me mais
valiosa se tiver
prestígio.

Part 3: Demographics

A que faixa etária pertence?

- Menor de 18 anos
- 18 - 24 anos
- 25 - 34 anos
- 35 - 44 anos
- 45 - 54 anos
- 55 - 64 anos
- 64 anos ou mais

Com que género se identifica?

- Masculino
- Feminino
- Não binário / terceiro género

Prefiro não dizer

Em que país reside atualmente?

Portugal

Alemanha

Brasil

Dinamarca

França

Itália

Holanda

Espanha

Reino Unido

Outro, por favor especifique

Selecione a opção que melhor representa o seu rendimento bruto mensal estimado.

Menos de 500€

500€ - 999€

1,000€ - 1,999€

2,000€ - 2,999€

3,000€ - 3,999€

4,000€ - 4,999€

5,000€ ou mais

Closing Text

A sua resposta foi registada.

Obrigada pelo tempo dedicado a responder a este questionário!

Este estudo analisa de que forma comportamentos de sinalização social baseados em identidade influenciam o excesso de consumo na indústria da moda.

Os participantes foram aleatoriamente expostos a um de dois cenários (alta/baixa sinalização de identidade) para compreender como o contexto molda o comportamento do consumidor.

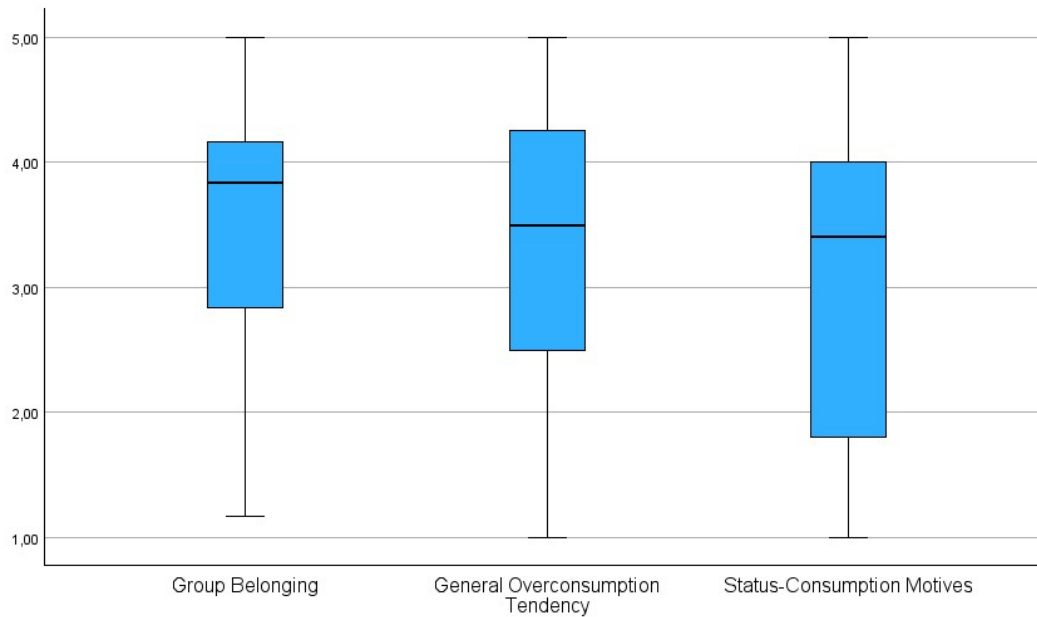
Se tiver alguma questão ou comentário sobre o estudo, pode contactar-me por e-mail: rscondessa@ucp.pt.

Appendix 3 – Reliability Test using Cronbach’s Alpha

		Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Overall Cronbach's Alpha
Manipulation Check	In this situation, clothing expresses who I am.	0.793	0.882	0.906
	Others pay attention to what I wear.	0.818	0.861	
	What someone wears here says something about who they are.	0.829	0.852	
Group Belonging	I want to feel that I belong to the group of people who attend this event.	0.633	0.840	0.859
	Feeling accepted by others at this event is important to me.	0.648	0.837	
	I would feel uncomfortable if my appearance made me stand out from the group.	0.644	0.841	
	I would like others at this event to see me as one of them.	0.657	0.836	
	Dressing in a way that fits the group helps me feel connected to them.	0.639	0.841	
	I care about being recognised as part of the group.	0.739	0.820	

Situational Overconsumption	I would buy more clothes than I actually need for this dinner.	0.821	0.837	0.899
	I would replace wearable clothes I already own to match the look.	0.795	0.861	
	I would buy something new even though I already have similar pieces.	0.787	0.867	
General Overconsumption Tendency	I have a lot of clothes that I have never worn.	0.630	0.778	0.820
	I frequently buy more clothing than I actually need.	0.743	0.723	
	I often end up buying clothes I hadn't planned to buy.	0.534	0.820	
	Discounts or special offers often make me buy more clothes than necessary.	0.665	0.762	
Status- Consumption Motives	I would buy clothes just because they have status.	0.791	0.914	0.927
	I am interested in new clothes that have status.	0.909	0.890	
	I would pay more for clothing if it had status.	0.910	0.889	
	The status of a clothing brand is not important to me. (REVERSED)	0.720	0.926	
	A clothing brand feels more valuable to me if it has prestige.	0.724	0.926	

Appendix 4 – Boxplot of Individual Trait Distributions (SPSS Output)



Appendix 5 – H1 Independent Samples T-Test (SPSS Output)

Group Statistics

	Scenario	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Situational_Overconsumption_Total	,00	52	1,8269	,83363	,11560
	1,00	56	3,2917	1,43134	,19127

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-Test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance One-Sided p	Two-Sided p	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
		Situational_Overconsumption_Total	Equal variances assumed	36,359	<,001	-6,434	106	<,001	<,001	-1,46474	,22765
	Equal variances not assumed			-6,554	89,625	<,001	<,001	-1,46474	,22349	-1,90878	-1,02071

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

	Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower	Upper
Situational_Overconsumption_Total	Cohen's d	1,18211	-1,239	-,824
	Hedges' correction	1,19056	-1,230	-,818
	Glass's delta	1,43134	-1,023	-,597

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.

Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.

Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.

Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control (i.e., the second) group.

Appendix 6 – H2 PROCESS Model 4 (SPSS Output)

Model: 4
 Y: Situational Overconsumption
 X: Scenario
 M: Group Belonging

Sample
 Size: 108

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 Group Belonging

Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
,3393	,1151	,7136	13,7918	1,0000	106,0000	,0003

Model						
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	3,2500	,1171	27,7431	,0000	3,0177	3,4823
Scenario	,6042	,1627	3,7137	,0003	,2816	,9267

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 Situational Overconsumption

Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
,7096	,5036	,9738	53,2612	2,0000	105,0000	,0000

Model						
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	-,7042	,3933	-1,7903	,0763	-1,4840	,0757
Scenario	,9942	,2020	4,9213	,0000	,5936	1,3948
Group Belonging	,7788	,1135	6,8640	,0000	,5538	1,0038

TOTAL EFFECT MODEL
 OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 Situational Overconsumption

Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
,5300	,2809	1,3974	41,3975	1,0000	106,0000	,0000

Model						
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	1,8269	,1639	11,1446	,0000	1,5019	2,1519
Scenario	1,4647	,2277	6,4341	,0000	1,0134	1,9161

TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y

Total effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
1,4647	,2277	6,4341	,0000	1,0134	1,9161	

Direct effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
,9942	,2020	4,9213	,0000	,5936	1,3948	

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:						
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI		
Group Belonging	,4705	,1347	,2254	,7551		