



# Status and Conspicuousness on Sustainable Fashion Products

*Examining the role of conspicuousness between status motives and consumers' sustainable fashion valuations*

Carolina Martins

Dissertation written under the supervision of Prof. Vera Herédia Colaço

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the MSc in Management with Specialization in Strategy, Entrepreneurship and Impact, at the Universidade Católica Portuguesa, January 2023.

**Title:** Status and Conspicuousness on Sustainable Fashion Products. Examining the role of conspicuousness between status motives and consumers' sustainable fashion valuations

**Author:** Carolina Martins

## **ABSTRACT**

---

The fashion industry is believed to be the second-largest polluting industry worldwide. Hence, understanding the underlying reasons motivating socially and environmentally responsible consumption behaviors is crucial to implement the necessary changes in this industry.

The present dissertation aims to examine the effect of social motivations, such as activating status motives, on consumers' attitudes and perceptions towards sustainable fashion products. Based on an academic literature review regarding sustainable fashion, conspicuousness and status consumption, an experimental design study was conducted. The purpose was to examine the impact of status and prestige motivations on consumers' sustainable fashion valuations, such as purchasing behaviors, product, and brand perceptions.

Results show that activating status motives enhance status and prestige motivations. In turn, conspicuously signaling a sustainable fashion product moderates the effect that status and prestige motivations have on consumers' valuations. Findings show that a desire for status is capable of inciting self-sacrifice and consequently motivating sustainable consumption decisions. Additionally, brand iconicity perceptions indirectly explain the process through which conspicuous consumption orientation impacts sustainable fashion valuations. Therefore, consumers tend to use the symbolic value of iconic brands to express their social identity and communicate their desires and aspirations with others.

This study provides valuable consumer behavior insights, suggesting brands' approach to sustainability should not disregard society's predisposition for consumption. Forthwith, researchers, managers, and marketers trying to incite sustainable consumption might obtain more effective and long-lasting results if they factor in individual traits and predispositions since these are able to influence consumption behavioral patterns within the fashion context.

**Keywords:** sustainable fashion, social status, conspicuousness, conspicuous consumption orientation, consumer behavior, iconicity

## RESUMO

---

A indústria da moda é considerada a segunda maior indústria poluidora do mundo. Assim sendo, é fundamental compreender as razões que motivam os comportamentos social e ambientalmente responsáveis para implementar as mudanças necessárias nesta indústria.

A presente dissertação tem como objetivo examinar o efeito de motivações sociais nas preferências e percepções dos consumidores em relação a produtos sustentáveis. Com base em literatura acadêmica sobre moda sustentável, consumo conspícuo e *status*, foi realizado um estudo experimental para testar o impacto das motivações por *status* nas atitudes e percepções dos consumidores, em relação a produtos de moda sustentáveis.

Os resultados mostram que, altos níveis de conspicuidade em produtos de moda sustentáveis, impactam positivamente o efeito que motivações por *status* têm nas atitudes e percepções dos consumidores. Tal efeito resulta de as motivações por *status* serem capazes de incitar altruísmo e motivar comportamentos pró-sociais e ambientais. Adicionalmente, as percepções de iconicidade do consumidor sobre o produto, relacionam a orientação de consumo conspícuo do consumidor com os comportamentos e percepções de consumo sustentável, uma vez que os consumidores tendem a usar o valor simbólico de marcas icônicas para expressar a sua identidade social e comunicar as suas ambições.

Concluindo, este estudo fornece conhecimento sobre o comportamento do consumidor, sugerindo que a abordagem das marcas à sustentabilidade não deve desconsiderar a predisposição da sociedade para o consumo. Deste modo, profissionais que procurem incentivar consumo sustentável, poderão obter resultados mais eficazes e duradouros se considerarem características e predisposições individuais capazes de influenciar os padrões de consumo.

**Palavras-chave:** moda sustentável, estatuto social, conspicuidade, orientação de consumo conspícuo, comportamento do consumidor, iconicidade

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

---

Although being by definition an individual project, this academic dissertation is the culmination of the last few years of work, which would not have been possible without the support of several people. Every kind word from each and every one of them made a difference.

Firstly, I would like to express my deep gratitude to my supervisor, Vera Herédia Colaço, for all her advice and knowledge while guiding me throughout this process. Her support, continuous availability and insightful feedback were fundamental in getting me this far, and I will forever be thankful for that. In addition, I would like to thank professor Dr Griskevicius for so willingly sharing with me the manipulations used on his past research. My gratitude also extends to my seminar colleagues, Inês, David, Cyrine, and Sofia for their valuable help and reassurance through this journey.

Às minhas companheiras de licenciatura, Carolina Batista, Mariana Byrne, Jéssica e Sara, e de mestrado, Diana, Carolina Leal e Mariana Botelho, pela companhia nas maratonas de estudo e por me motivarem a fazer sempre mais e melhor, obrigada!

Aos meus amigos, Bia, Ana, João, Hugo e João Miguel. Não há palavras para descrever o quão incrivelmente sortuda sou por vos ter ao meu lado durante estes anos. Obrigada ao Hugo por ter sempre as palavras certas. Ao João, por ser a pessoa menos julgadora e por me mostrar sempre novas formas de encarar a vida. À Bia, por acreditar sempre em mim e me fazer rir mesmo nos momentos mais tristes. À Ana, obrigada pelas intermináveis conversas sobre tudo e mais alguma coisa, e por estar sempre do meu lado. Finalmente, pelas caminhadas, pela comida e por me consolar durante os meus *breakdowns* na Suíça, obrigada ao João Miguel.

Ao meu primo Jorge, obrigada pela companhia tanto nos jantares em que a Mariana decidia ignorar-nos, como em todas as pausas de estudo no nosso sofá azul. És o melhor colega de casa que podia ter pedido.

À minha irmã Mariana que, mesmo com todas as suas incertezas e indecisões, me consegue sempre amparar nas escolhas mais difíceis. Por me inspirares todos os dias a ser uma melhor pessoa e por partilhares comigo todas as caminhadas da tua vida, obrigada.

Aos meus pais, por me apoiarem incondicionalmente em todas as minhas decisões, por me encorajarem a nunca desistir, e por estarem dispostos a correr o mundo para tornar todos os meus sonhos possíveis. Nenhum obrigada alguma vez será suficiente.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>RESUMO .....</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1. Problem Definition and Relevance .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2. Objective and Research Questions .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2.1. Sustainable development, Sustainability and Sustainable fashion .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2.2. The Triple Bottom Line and Sustainable Consumption Behaviors.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2.3. (In)Conspicuous Consumption.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.4. Brand Coolness .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>4. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORK .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>4.1. Research Method.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>4.2. Sampling.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>4.3. Research Instruments .....</b>	<b>17</b>
4.3.1. Pilot Study .....	17
4.3.2. Main Study .....	17
<b>4.4. Design and Procedure .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>4.5. Stimuli Development .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>4.6. Variable Descriptions.....</b>	<b>20</b>
4.6.1. Dependent Variables .....	20
4.6.2. Independent Variables .....	21

<b>5.</b>	<b>ANALYSIS AND RESULTS</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>5.1.</b>	<b>Sample Characterization</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>5.2.</b>	<b>Scales Reliability and Factor Analysis</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>5.3.</b>	<b>Manipulation Check Results</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>5.4.</b>	<b>Main Results</b> .....	<b>27</b>
5.4.1.	The effect of status and prestige motivations on consumers’ sustainable fashion valuations .....	27
5.4.2.	The moderating effect of type of fashion .....	29
5.4.3.	The moderating effect of CCO .....	33
5.4.4.	Further Analysis .....	34
<b>6.</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS</b> .....	<b>38</b>
<b>6.1.</b>	<b>Theoretical Implications</b> .....	<b>39</b>
<b>6.2.</b>	<b>Practical Implications</b> .....	<b>40</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH</b> .....	<b>42</b>
	<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	<b>44</b>
	Appendix 1: Stimuli .....	44
	Appendix 2: Pilot Stimuli.....	46
	Appendix 3: Survey Questionnaire .....	47
	Appendix 4: Sample Characteristics .....	53
	<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>56</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

---

<b>Figure 1</b> Conceptual Framework .....	13
<b>Figure 2</b> Type of fashion product as a moderator on the effect of status and prestige motivations on purchase intention .....	31
<b>Figure 3</b> Type of fashion product as a moderator on the effect of status and prestige motivations on sustainability perceptions .....	31
<b>Figure 4</b> Type of fashion product as a moderator on the effect of status and prestige motivations on brand coolness perceptions.....	32
<b>Figure 5</b> Conceptual Model 2 .....	34

## LIST OF TABLES

---

<b>Table 1</b> Conspicuous Consumption Orientation Scale Items .....	23
<b>Table 2</b> Brand Coolness Factor Analysis .....	23
<b>Table 3</b> Reliability Test for Multi-Item Scales .....	24
<b>Table 4</b> Correlation Test for 2-Item Measures .....	25
<b>Table 5</b> Correlation Test for 2-Item Measures .....	25
<b>Table 6</b> Manipulation Check using t-test for Status Motives .....	26
<b>Table 7</b> Manipulation Check using t-test for Type of Fashion.....	26
<b>Table 8</b> Manipulation Check using t-test for Sustainability .....	26
<b>Table 9</b> Linear Regression Summary Output of WTP .....	27
<b>Table 10</b> Linear Regression Summary Output of Brand Coolness Perceptions .....	28
<b>Table 11</b> Two-Way Interaction Status and Prestige Motivations x Type of Fashion Product	30
<b>Table 12</b> Conditional Effects of the status and prestige motivations at values of the moderator .....	30
<b>Table 13</b> Iconicity as a Mediator on the Effect of CCO and Purchase Intention .....	35
<b>Table 14</b> Iconicity as a Mediator on the Effect of CCO and Quality Perceptions .....	36
<b>Table 15</b> Iconicity as a Mediator on the Effect of CCO and Sustainability Perceptions .....	36
<b>Table 16</b> Iconicity as a Mediator on the Effect of CCO and WTP .....	37
<b>Table 17</b> Iconicity as a Mediator on the Effect of CCO and Brand Coolness Perceptions .....	37

# **1. INTRODUCTION**

---

## **1.1. PROBLEM DEFINITION AND RELEVANCE**

The global fashion industry is worth 2.4 trillion US Dollars and employs more than 300 million workers across the value chain worldwide (UN, 2021). A 2019 report released by the United Nations (UN, 2019), states that the fashion and textile industry is believed to be the second-largest polluting industry, after the oil industry. Indeed, it takes approximately 7,500 liters of water to manufacture a pair of jeans, which is equivalent to one person drinking for seven years. (UN, 2019). In addition, it is responsible for 2-8% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, 20% of the world's wastewater, 100 billion dollars lost due to underutilization and lack of recycling, and 9% of annual microplastics losses to the ocean (UN, 2021). Textile consumption (including clothing, domestic carpets, household fabric, and footwear) is estimated to produce 2 million tones of waste (a value of \$28 billion) per annum in the UK, of which 50% is destined for landfill. (DEFRA, 2010).

However, the impact of the fashion industry on the planet is not only environmental but also social. While fast fashion developments have contributed to democratizing fashion, allowing consumers to be able to afford previously exclusive and expensive designs; it has also fostered a culture of waste, allowed unethical sourcing practices, and contributed to an increase in human right issues, such as child labor and poor working conditions (Park & Kim, 2016; Brewer, 2019). In addition, according to a McKinsey & Company report (Remy, Speelman & Swartz, 2016), it is becoming increasingly common for clothing factory workers to suffer hazardous working conditions, sometimes resulting in death cases.

Undoubtedly, the problems hereby presented are not just the result of the fashion industry's challenges, but also of consumer behavior trends and patterns (Hur & Cassidy, 2019). Whereas human development benefits from the increase in leisure activities and the overall wider range of goods supplied, the consequent rise in production and consumption of goods is environmentally unsustainable (Dupré, 2005). Thereupon, in recent years the fashion industry has been under pressure from governmental and institutional parties, such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or Greenpeace, to shift towards a more sustainable approach. In addition, there is evidence that the growing consumer social responsibility movement has been driving more consumers to look for products and services from brands that are clearly and

legitimately interested in the well-being of society (Podoshen & Andrzejewski, 2012). Notably, research has shown an increase in environmental and social concerns in recent years (Laroche, Bergeron & Barbaro-Forleo, 2001), which has resulted in consumers taking into consideration environmental and social issues in their purchases. For instance, 37% of consumers have a 10% higher willingness to pay for sustainable fashion products, when compared with mainstream fashion (Statista, 2020). Nonetheless, as research suggests, despite the general consensus on the importance of pro-environmental behaviors and ethical consumption, particularly in fashion, this awareness does not always translate into sustainable actions, a concept titled the attitude-behavior gap (Carrington, Neville & Whitwell 2010; Joy, Sherry, Venkatesh, Wang & Chan, 2012; Griskevicius, Tybur & Van der Bergh, 2010).

Even so, according to the literature, now more than ever, consumers have the ability and responsibility of communicating to brands their needs and, thus, becoming increasingly more demanding about the positive impact that the fashion industry should have on the planet. However, the current abundance of goods and services seems to be a consequence of the increasing levels of consumption driving production and productivity levels (Pohoata, Crupenschi & Diaconasu, 2018; Amatulli, De Angelis, Korschun & Romani, 2018). As discussed by Gasper, Shah and Tankha (2019), while growth is crucial in ending global poverty, the asymmetry between consumption patterns across the different hierarchies of society, allows room for discussion about consumption levels. Consequently, understanding the underlying reasons motivating socially and environmentally responsible consumption behaviors is vital for the necessary changes in the fashion industry to be put into practice.

As stated by Joergens (2006), personal needs tend to motivate consumers to purchase goods and take precedence over ethical issues in fashion, thus increasing the attitude-behavior gap in sustainable fashion. However, researchers have reflected on how consumers' predisposition for conspicuous and status consumption can influence consumers' behaviors (Pohoata et al., 2018; O'Cass & Frost, 2002). In spite of the amount of research on status, conspicuous and sustainable consumption, research examining the links between these concepts is still relatively scarce (Griskevicius et al., 2010). Thus, examining the need for status and the effectiveness of conspicuousness leading behavioral changes becomes essential. That is, it is fundamental to further investigate the individual characteristics and behaviors, such as conspicuous consumption orientation, that can drive consumers to be more socially and environmentally responsible.

## 1.2. OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In line with the aforementioned factors, the evident excessive consumption of fashion has a considerable impact on the environment and the future of livelihood. As such, the present study aims to develop a greater understanding of the effect of individual characteristics of consumers towards the fashion industry. More precisely, the main objective of the present research is to understand how status and prestige motivations, via the activation of status motives, can influence consumers' preferences, attitudes, and perceptions towards sustainable fashion products. Based on the stated research problem and objective, the present study intends to analyze the following research questions:

***RQ1: Can activating status motives be a viable strategy for promoting sustainable fashion consumption?***

The main purpose of this research is to understand the possible effects that certain individual characteristics can have on consumers' behaviors towards a more sustainable fashion consumption. Assuming, from existing research, that achieving a higher status in a group motivates people to be altruistic and to act pro-social and pro-environmentally (Griskevicius et al., 2010), the first research question seeks to answer whether a consumer's sustainable fashion consumption can be increased by activating status motives. As such, to get a better understanding of the factors that might moderate the effect of status motives on consumer engagement in sustainable fashion consumption, the following research questions are presented:

***RQ2: How do conspicuousness and the type of fashion product enhance consumers' sustainable fashion consumption?***

The second research question withdraws from the researched suggestion that consumers prefer certain types of products that convey their desired characteristics (Belk, 1988). Therefore, consumers tend to engage in conspicuous consumption to communicate their distinctive individualities (Chaudhuri et al., 2011). In fact, researchers have suggested that consumers motivated by their social position tend to spend more on conspicuous consumption in order to boost the perception of their status and social position (Ordabayeva & Chandon, 2011). Accordingly, consumers' wanting to communicate a higher social status might increase their sustainable fashion consumption if the product conspicuously signals to others their desired pro-social status.

***RQ3: To what extent does conspicuous consumption orientation influence the relationship between status motivations and sustainable fashion consumption?***

The third research question highlights the fact that individuals are not equally prone to the effects of activating status motives. Notably, research has suggested that constructs such as conspicuous consumption, defined as the behavioral propensity towards explicit consumption of goods as a way to communicate status (O’Cass & McEwen, 2004), is an “innate trait level and individualistic variable” (Chaudhuri, Mazumdar & Ghoshal, 2011, p.217). Thus, there might be individual differences, such as the individual level of conspicuous consumption orientation, that account for the higher or lower likelihood of engaging in sustainable fashion consumption. Therefore, solving these research questions is essential in understanding more about consumers behavioral and consumption patterns in the fashion industry.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

---

### **2.1. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE FASHION**

Sustainability can be defined as an activity that can be continued indefinitely without causing harm; while meeting a current generation's needs without compromising those of future generations (Fletcher, 2008; WCED, 1987). As Seidman (2007) suggests, a sustainable future goes beyond our relationship with the environment. It involves a relationship with ourselves, our communities, and our institutions.

As a result of the population's current overexploitation of resources and unfeasible economic growth, there is a pivotal need for a new growth era, one that is simultaneously economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable. Thus, sustainable development emerges as a process of transformation in the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, and the orientation of technological advancement. It implies all institutional changes are consistent with each other and with current and future human needs. Moreover, it implies limitations invoked by the current state of technology and social organization on environmental resources, and by the capacity of the biosphere to take in the repercussions of human activity (WCED, 1987).

As stated in the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987), in order to change the quality of growth there needs to be a change in our approach to development so that it considers all of its effects and outcomes. Nonetheless, economic, social, and environmental development should be mutually reinforced, which can at times imply a rejection of financial activities that are only feasible in the short term (WCED, 1987). Forthwith, in 2015, an agenda for sustainable development was proposed by the United Nations, defining seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the aim of ending poverty (economic sustainability), protecting the planet (environmental sustainability), and ensuring prosperity for all (social sustainability). While changes towards a more sustainable approach have been reported in several industries, as a result of the pressure instilled by the UN and other institutional parties, the fashion industry continues to be overwhelmingly unsustainable (UN, 2020).

The fashion industry is linked with exceptionally complex supply chain systems and fast cycles of production and consumption processes, making it one of the highest resource consuming industries. For this reason, environmental and social challenges arise, such as the substantial overuse of natural resources, the use of chemicals and toxic substances, worker exploitation,

etc. (Fletcher, 2008). In addition, the complexity of sourcing materials and manufacturing processes can become a challenge when differentiating a sustainable material from an unsustainable one. Such an effect is caused by the contamination of organic materials and resources, during manufacturing processes, such as dyeing, bleaching, and printing. Thus, consumers' and retailers' ability to distinguish what is considered sustainable in order to make ethical choices is forcefully tainted (Hur & Cassidy, 2019).

Along with the aforementioned reality, the fashion industry overwhelmingly embraces obsolescence, as fashion products offer consumers immediate and short-lived gratification (Joy et al., 2012). Provided that fashion has an ever-changing nature, with designs and products constantly shifting to fit-of-the-moment trends, the concept of pursuing durability or associated ideas of sustainability seems to contradict fashion in its essence. In fact, research has shown that unless people change their consumption patterns to maximize the utility of longer-life products, it is idle to extend the products' life cycle (Fletcher, 2012).

Furthermore, there is a social nature in fashion, in which what each person decides to wear is deeply influenced by others' decisions and reactions (Fletcher, 2012). As stated by Finkelstein (1991), if our sense of identity is dependent on the characteristics of procured goods, then we are bound to search for it indefinitely.

Accordingly, the concept of sustainable fashion is still dubious as it is arguable whether the concept of sustainability can be applied in the fashion industry. Undoubtedly, "as the nature of fashion is based inherently on the continuous process of change and the pressure to become new or be perceived as new, the fashion industry always strives for novelty, producing new garments in response to fast-moving consumer demand" (Hur & Cassidy, 2019, p.5).

Furthermore, research has found that challenges in incorporating sustainability into the fashion industry go beyond the complexity of sustainability issues, manufacturing roadblocks, or insufficient incentives for businesses to implement sustainable design strategies. In fact, some of these challenges are linked to barriers from consumers practicing sustainable consumption (Hur & Cassidy, 2019). These challenges are comprised of individual, social and cultural levels. At the individual level, consumers have a personal desire for new products since it is impossible to completely eradicate the hedonistic behaviors and needs related to consumption. At the social level, consumers tend to feel jealousy or inadequacy from the constant comparison and influence of their peers and reference groups. At the cultural level, consumers tend to feel

distress and incapacity from the inescapable triggers of fashion marketing and social media tactics (Joyner Armstrong et al., 2016).

Nonetheless, 71% of millennials, which represent 25% of the world's population and notably engaged in social and environmental issues, have conveyed a desire for brands to be more environmentally friendly and ethical. Regarding social issues, 61% of millennials express the same desire (Keeble, 2013). To that purpose, research has suggested that consumers are prone to reflect and willingly change their behavior when offered with information on environmental effects (Fisher et al., 2008).

On the one hand, consumers seem to be creating a paradigm shift in business models as the desire and demand for "high value, performance and smart ethical fashion" increases (Farrer & Fraser, 2011, p.1). Young consumers are aware of the importance of design for behavioral change, as well as the true cost of producing goods in material and human terms. Therefore, it is evident that these consumers expect brands to innovate and create opportunities through supply chain transparency, business integrity, and sustainable design practices (Farrer & Fraser, 2011). On the other hand, according to existing research, even though consumers are concerned with the social and environmental impact of their purchasing decisions, such beliefs don't apply to their consumption of fashion (Joy et al., 2012).

## **2.2. THE TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE AND SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION BEHAVIORS**

When it comes to sustainable and moral consumption behavior, the question is raised on the reasons behind it. From an environmental concern perspective (Bamberg, 2003), it is assumed that people have an intrinsic and inherent preoccupation with the planet's well-being. Thus, it is expectable for people to behave in a way that ensures the planet's prosperity, such as engaging in acts of sustainability that display altruism.

In addition, according to the self-perception theory (Bem, 1967), people make inferences about themselves from the different choices and decisions they make. Consequently, consumers might use their product and brand decisions and related consumption behaviors to self-signal their character and personality, in order to reinforce beliefs and moral-related self-identity (Rogers, 2014). Besides, from a self-congruity theory standpoint (Sirgy et al., 1997), an individual's consumption behavior is partially conditioned by their needs for self-consistency and self-esteem. Accordingly, in the context of conspicuous consumption, when consumers self-signal

their moral-related self-identity, it is anticipated that their subsequent behavior will be consistent with their created self-concept (Rogers, 2014).

Accordingly, if consumers' environmental concern is in fact truthful, it is presumable that consumers will show sustainably conscious behaviors, which in turn, will self-signal certain characteristics linked with sustainability. In other words, it will reinforce the consumer's self-identity as a sustainably conscious person. Finally, to ensure the consumer's self-esteem and to remain consistent with their created sustainable self-identity, it is presumed that consumers will continue to be motivated to engage in sustainable consumption. Thereby, it seems that consumers are driven to choose sustainable products due to an authentic environmental concern.

However, from an economic perspective (Cone & Hayes, 1980), people are inclined to increase sustainable consumption behaviors if products are cheaper, more affordable, and more efficient. Only then, it will be economically viable. Nevertheless, research has suggested that a socially oriented perspective might have a greater influence on people's sustainable consumption behaviors (Griskevicius et al., 2010). In other words, if people engage in pro-social behavior, such as sustainable consumption, there is the possibility of an increased social status consequent to a pro-social reputation (Semmann, Krambeck & Milinski, 2005). This can be explained by the researched effect in which individuals who self-sacrifice for the group observe a status increase in that group (Milinski, Semmann & Krambeck, 2002). Subsequently, engaging in sustainable behaviors, such as consuming more expensive sustainable products, can be seen as a sacrifice for the greater good of the planet, and ergo the social status of that consumer rises (Griskevicius et al., 2010).

Furthermore, according to the cost-signaling theory (Grafen, 1990; Zahavi, 1975; Zahavi & Zahavi, 1997), an altruistic act signals an individual's pro-sociality and their capacity and willingness to spend time, energy, money, or other resources, for the society's well-being. Thereby, purchasing a sustainable product or service, which is usually more expensive, can signal self-sacrifice and altruism to others which will consequently mean attaining a social status. Therefore, from a cost-signaling perspective, people might be motivated to engage in conspicuous pro-social behavior, such as environmentally responsible consumption, for the sake of gaining and/or communicating social status (Griskevicius et al., 2010).

### 2.3. (IN)CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION

The way consumers tend to communicate certain desired characteristics through what they dress, and the value attributed to personal belongings have been previously referred to in Veblen's (1899) seminal literature *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, introducing the concept of conspicuous consumption. Conspicuous consumption is here defined as a fundamental construct of an evolutionary framework in which the position of individuals in the social hierarchy dictates social preferences, such that individuals in lower social classes mimic the consumption patterns and behaviors of individuals in higher social classes.

It has been suggested that conspicuous consumption has evolved both as a necessity and as a consequence of human evolution (Pohoata et al., 2018). According to Trigg (2001), as the economy and its social fabric change over time, the social standards, customs, and preferences also change. To maintain social order, a sense of distinction is needed, and, consequently, it encourages more conspicuous consumption patterns to emerge (Pohoata et al., 2018). As such, alongside Veblen's evolutionary theory of conspicuous consumption, the concept of cultural capital emerged. It is defined by Thornton (1996, p.25) as "the linchpin of a system of distinction in which cultural hierarchies correspond to social ones and people's tastes are predominantly a marker of class", or as knowledge gained through education and social upbringing about the artistic and intellectual properties of products (Trigg, 2001). Notably, according to Chaudhuri et al. (2011), consumers engage in conspicuous consumption when they purchase, possess, and use products and services imbued with scarce economic and cultural capital with the intention of communicating a distinctive self-image.

Yet, Dubois and Duquesne (1993) state that some consumers are more susceptible to conspicuousness than others, showing that different individual levels of conspicuous consumption may co-exist, also referred to as Conspicuous Consumption Orientation - CCO (Chaudhuri et al., 2011). Accordingly, a consumer is more or less likely to behave conspicuously and consume a product, based on how visible that product is, according to their individual and innate proneness to conspicuous consumption. Therefore, a consumer's CCO is considered a complex construct that can influence product preferences and decisions differently among different oriented consumers (Dubois & Duquesne, 1993).

Along with the CCO theory, authors have suggested that the conspicuousness level in which customers engage is not only related to preference but social class. For instance, Brooks (2010) suggests that the educated upper class turns down status symbols in order to avert materialism,

engaging in more modest consumption choices than the *nouveau riche*. Such behavior can be explained by Berger and Ward's (2010) studies which found that subtle signaling affects consumer preferences and decision-making. Interestingly, high-end products tend to have subtler brand identification symbols, like logos, as a way only to be identifiable to insiders. As a consequence, researchers have coined the term inconspicuous consumption to explain how brand signaling may be understated, or not easily visible to most consumers, as a way of avoiding an explicit display of social and economic status (Berger & Ward, 2010; Wu, Luo, Schroeder & Borgerson, 2017).

Based on Smith's (2007) concept of reflective identity, which is defined as the identity that consumers assign to themselves, and which comprises components of self-awareness that are somewhat public. People's identity might start off as a projection of the individual's idealized identity but will undoubtedly be affected by others' reactions and volitions as it reaches the public realm. In other words, even if unaware of it, the individual self-awareness and identity are influenced by others' perception of that projection. Therefore, people build and exhibit self-awareness through consumption decisions, as consuming conspicuously and inconspicuously echoes one's identity.

Consequently, according to Berger and Ward (2010), group members are able to identify even inconspicuous ingroup markers that outsiders might overlook due to insider knowledge. Such an effect might also be a consequence of cultural capital, as consumers that have the cultural capital to identify such subtleties can differentiate themselves from mainstream consumers. In this sense, inconspicuous consumption might signal not a denial of the practices of the global capitalist consumer, but rather an inward hedonistic approach and a concern for impressing others 'in the know'. However, it is arguable whether the rise of inconspicuousness is due to a preference for access rather than ownership, resulting in consumers' attitudes shifting towards immaterial consumption (Eckhardt, Belk & Wilson, 2015) as the movement of consumer social responsibility develops.

Undoubtedly, the acts of conspicuous and inconspicuous consumption are infused with social symbolism at their very core. It could symbolize success, power, intimidation, and philanthropy, among other symbols. In fact, research has shown that possessions and behaviors can be identity signals (Berger & Heath, 2007). Therefore, one can argue that (in)conspicuous consumption is able to connect or disassociate symbolic borders among different groups of

consumers (Berger & Ward, 2010), depending on the consumption patterns and behaviors they engage in, and the symbolic value attached to these (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001).

Therefore, people tend to choose products, brands, or have consumption behaviors similar to groups of consumers from which they wish to mimic (Berger & Ward, 2010). For instance, if popular students in a given university usually wear a certain brand, then other students will associate that brand with that social group. As a consequence, students at the given university aiming to be a part of, or be associated with, that specific social group, will tend to buy from that specific brand. Notably, these dynamics are also true towards brands. Prior research in this domain suggests that a consumer's fascination and propensity towards certain brands is related to the desire and expectation of acquiring the status and identity that the brand conveys, not to the utilitarian and practical purpose the brand offers (Podoshen & Andrzejewski, 2012).

At an individual level, a person's conspicuous consumption may be focused on continuously adding value to their personal belongings motivated by the desire to achieve a perceived status from society (Podoshen & Andrzejewski, 2012; O'Cass & McEwen, 2004). Additionally, consumption can not only serve as a tool to hinder others' perception of us, but also act as a tool that infers about people's social identities and social status (Berger & Ward, 2010). Indeed, past research in this domain suggests that individuals concerned with their social position, and thus with high motivations for status, are more prone to spend more on conspicuous consumption (Ordabayeva & Chandon, 2011).

Conspicuous consumption behaviors and patterns entail a mindset with strong attachments to visible displays of products as a proxy for one's social status and prestige (Hammad, Muster, El-Bassiouny & Schaefer, 2019). As such, consumption is said to be driven in large part by the desire to achieve status (Eastman, Goldsmith & Flynn, 1999). Also, the extent to which a product is more visible than others can in turn influence fashion consumption decisions (Berger & Ward, 2010).

#### **2.4. BRAND COOLNESS**

In a prevailing climate of conspicuous consumption, consumers are more likely to evaluate brands' social desirability and choose brands and associated products that communicate the desired social status (Podoshen & Andrzejewski, 2012). In other words, brands and their attached symbolism have the ability to create an identity, a sense of achievement, and a sense of belonging for consumers (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004).

In particular, researchers have coined the term iconic brands as high-ranked brands carrying an understanding and a consensus of specific values held by some members of society due to their high levels of symbolism (Holt, 2004; Torelli, Chiu, Keh & Amaral, 2009). Forthwith, brand iconicity emerges as the level to which a brand is culturally significant and representative of a certain group's values, needs, and aspirations (Torelli et al., 2009). Similarly, brand coolness is a subjective social construct in which cultural objects, i.e., brands, are credited with positive and autonomous attributes (Warren & Campbell, 2014).

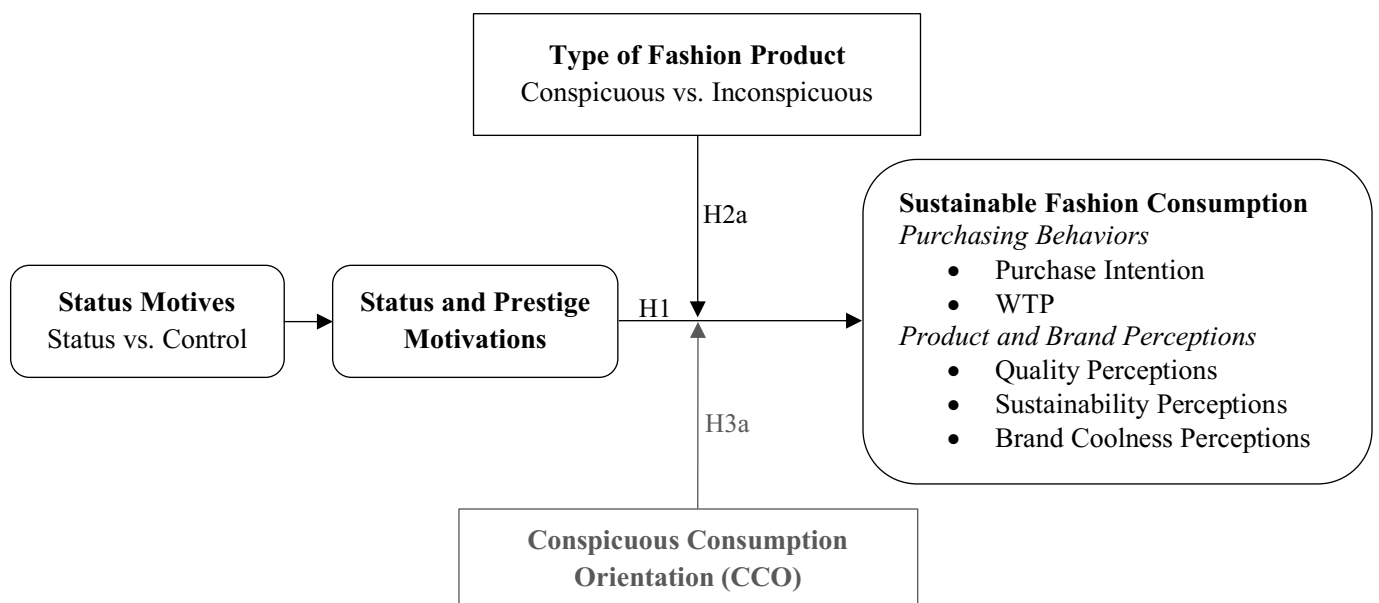
Brand coolness is a perceived attribute of a brand, which consumers view as a desirable trait (Dar Nimrod et al., 2012). Likewise, researchers have studied the different dimensions of brand coolness and the consequences it can have on consumers' behaviors and perceptions (Bagozzi & Khoshnevis, 2022; Warren, Batra, Loureiro & Bagozzi, 2019; Dar Nimrod et al., 2018; Warren & Campbell, 2014). Since brand coolness can be associated with several brand characteristics, it has been suggested that it may influence consumers' overall attitudes towards the brand (Warren et al., 2019). That is, research on brand coolness suggests that it positively influences consumers' behaviors and perceptions, such as self-brand connections, willingness to pay, product quality, brand attitudes, positive emotions, and word of mouth (Bagozzi & Khoshnevis, 2022; Warren et al., 2019). This is due to the fact that several sub-dimensions of brand coolness emerge, such as desirability, autonomy, high status, rebellious, subcultural, popular, and iconic (Warren et al., 2019). In particular, brand coolness and brand iconicity are socially constructed concepts, and have been shown to be indicators of brand success which enables consumers, researchers, managers, and society in general, in determining a brand's relevance, desirability, attractiveness, and transcendence (Warren et al., 2019).

### 3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS

Based on the literature review provided about status, conspicuous and inconspicuous consumption, consumers' drivers for sustainable consumption, and sustainability in fashion, this chapter presents the conceptual model and the hypotheses tested in this research.

The current study aims to get a better understanding of the influence of status on the likelihood of engaging in sustainable fashion consumption, and how the type of fashion product (conspicuous vs. inconspicuous) and the level of conspicuous consumption orientation (CCO) influence this relationship, independently from one another. That is, to understand how conspicuousness moderates the relationship between status and prestige motivations on sustainable fashion consumption decisions, when manipulated and when measured as an individual difference variable.

Therefore, this study examines how activating (vs. not activating) status motives affect the consumers' status and prestige motivations (independent variable). Further, how status and prestige motivations impact the consumers' sustainable fashion consumption valuations, namely purchase intention, willingness to pay, quality perceptions, sustainability perceptions, and brand coolness perceptions (dependent variables). The study also tests the moderating role of the type of fashion product (conspicuous vs. inconspicuous) on this relationship. Additionally, the moderating role of CCO in the aforementioned relationship is further tested; all conceptually framed in the model presented below (Figure 1).



*Figure 1 Conceptual Framework*

As discussed in the aforementioned literature, researchers have suggested that consumers choose products that can communicate their desired characteristics (Belk, 1988). As such, existing research proposed that consumers driven by their social position and status are motivated to spend more on conspicuous consumption, as it enhances the perception of their social position (Ordabayeva & Chandon, 2011). In addition, a consumer's likelihood of behaving conspicuously and consuming a product based on its visibility to others, is an individual quality (Dubois & Duquesne, 1993), resulting in some consumers being more prone to choosing products conspicuously than others. Therefore, an individual's innate conspicuous consumption orientation might also be an influential factor when considering sustainable fashion consumption. Forthwith, it is hypothesized that priming status motives may enhance status and prestige motivations, which in turn may be influenced by the conspicuousness of the fashion products or brands. Furthermore, the latter effect may also be driven by the level of conspicuous consumption orientation of the consumer, when measured as an individual difference and thus, without being manipulated.

Therefore, it is hypothesized that status and prestige motivations will positively impact sustainable fashion valuations, such as consumers' perceptions and paying behaviors. More formally, the following set of hypotheses is suggested:

H1: When activated, status and prestige motivations will positively impact consumers' sustainable fashion valuations, such as:

H1a: Purchase intention and willingness to pay (WTP).

H1b: Quality, sustainability, and brand coolness perceptions.

H2: The impact of status and prestige motivations on consumers' sustainable fashion valuations will be moderated by the type of fashion product (conspicuous vs. inconspicuous), so that:

H2a: When the type of fashion product is conspicuous, the impact of status and prestige motivations on the likelihood of engaging in sustainable fashion consumption is higher (vs. lower) than when the type of fashion product is inconspicuous.

H3: The impact of status and prestige motivations on consumers' sustainable fashion valuations will be moderated by an individual's level of conspicuous consumption orientation (CCO), so that:

H3a: The higher the level of CCO, the higher the likelihood of engaging in sustainable fashion consumption for consumers with high status and prestige motivations.

## **4. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORK**

---

The main objective of this chapter is to address the research methodology utilized, the procedures for data collection, and to provide a detailed description of the variables used in the study to answer the stated research questions.

### **4.1. RESEARCH METHOD**

Subsequent to examining the secondary data presented in the Literature Review chapter, which is mainly comprised of scientific academic journals and articles, primary data was gathered to answer the research purposes of the current study. As such, an online survey using the Qualtrics platform was conducted. Qualtrics is an online platform that allows reaching a large number of individuals, with minor associated costs. Not only is this an extremely time efficient method of data collection, but it also allows an efficient distribution to a wide population. Besides, along with the ease of data entry and analysis, Qualtrics offers a wide-ranging variety of tools and features in order to customize the survey according to the research purpose (Evans & Mathur, 2005). In addition, collecting data online offers greater flexibility and convenience for participants as the survey can be accessed at any given time or place. Likewise, participants have an equal chance to enter the survey, while guaranteeing their privacy and personal boundaries, which is suggested to improve an individual's willingness to participate in online studies.

However, there are risks associated with online based surveys such as Qualtrics. Particularly, the investigator does not have the possibility to control participants' focus and surroundings, as well as give detailed orientation and directions to the survey's completion. Moreover, this data collection method may result in a non-representative sample of the research's target population. As a result, to minimize possible drawbacks, and avoid misinterpretations and survey abandonment, the questions were clear focused precise arguments.

### **4.2. SAMPLING**

Given the present research needs, the non-probability convenience sampling method was chosen. From all the sampling techniques available, convenience sampling seemed the most appropriate as the current study intends to address a specific theoretical matter which is not yet expected to be generalized to the general population. Moreover, some of the advantages of this sampling method are the cost and time efficiency, the easiness of measurement, and the wide accessibility to the participants (Evans & Mathur, 2005).

The survey was shared on social media websites, such as LinkedIn and Facebook. Since young, well-educated, and tech-savvy people are assumed to be the next generation of consumers, capable of shaping future patterns of consumption (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2008), and therefore the target population chosen for this study.

### **4.3. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

Two main studies were conducted using the previously mentioned online software, Qualtrics: the pilot study and the main study. In both studies, participants accessed the survey through an anonymous link shared within different social media channels (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and WhatsApp). The survey was conducted anonymously, as a means of minimizing the social desirability bias that is likely to occur when ethical intentions are at stake (Carrington et al., 2010).

#### **4.3.1. PILOT STUDY**

The pilot study was conducted prior to launching the main study, in order to test that all manipulations and questions were properly understood by the participants. Simultaneously, this pilot study was crucial to ensure the survey flow for the different experimental conditions (status motives and type of fashion product) was set to be adopted in the main study. The pilot study gathered a total of thirty-four responses.

Manipulation check items on status and prestige motivations, the type of fashion product, and sustainability perceptions were conducted. In particular, the type of fashion product manipulation was not validated, and thus further changes were made (see Appendix 2).

#### **4.3.2. MAIN STUDY**

The main study was created in English and Portuguese. It collected 300 responses, of which 210 were fully completed. The completion rate is considered acceptable for a web-based survey, as participants tend to be easily interrupted and frequently demonstrate an absence of commitment in these circumstances (Reips, 2002).

The sample dimension was considered sufficient, with approximately 52 subjects participating in each section of the four experimental conditions, thus conforming with the required number of answers needed for a randomized experimental-design study (Maxwell & Delaney, 2004).

#### **4.4. DESIGN AND PROCEDURE**

The data was gathered between November 15 and November 19, 2022. All participants were randomly allocated to one single condition and were first presented with a brief introduction of the survey's scope, however without revealing its main purpose. The study design followed a 2 (Status motives: control, status) x 2 (Type of Fashion Product: conspicuous, inconspicuous) between-within subjects' design. Additionally, CCO was also used as a measured variable instead of manipulating it. Therefore, and according to the conceptual model, the study design also followed a 2 (Status motives: control, status) between-within subjects' design, with CCO as a measured (continuous) variable. Participants were introduced to different manipulations for both status motives and type of fashion product. The status motives variable included two conditions: control and status. In the control condition, participants were exposed to a stimulus using a neutral written text, whereas, in the status condition, they were exposed to a written text (short story) manipulation intended to elicit the desire for high status and a motivation to have more prestige. The type of fashion product variable was also experimentally manipulated, using advertisements as a stimuli that exposed participants to either a conspicuous or inconspicuous advertisement for a fashion product of a well-known designer brand of clothing.

After being exposed to the manipulations, participants were asked to answer questions that were used as manipulation check measures. The first and second questions asked about the participant's motivations for social status and prestige after being presented with the status stimuli. The third and fourth questions followed, in which participants were asked about their perception of the advertisement regarding its conspicuousness and sustainability nature. Afterwards, participants responded to a series of multi-item measures evaluating their likelihood to engage in sustainable fashion consumption, namely purchase intention and willingness to pay, quality, sustainability, and brand coolness perceptions. After, participants were exposed to self-measure items regarding their conspicuous consumption orientation (Chaudhuri et al., 2011). In the end, all participants were asked to answer a set of demographic questions and thanked for their participation (see Appendix 2).

#### **4.5. STIMULI DEVELOPMENT**

The stimuli used for the purpose of this study were a short story eliciting status and fictional fashion product advertisements.

Stimuli for status motives were adapted from the study of Griskevicius et al. (2010). The participants assigned to the control condition read a story concerning a situation in which the

protagonist loses the tickets for an anticipated and important concert that they were going to with their friend. After realizing this, the main character searches the entire house until their friend shows up with said tickets. Thus, the protagonist feels adrenaline and relief as they realize they can attend the concert after all. Contrarily, participants assigned to the status condition were exposed to a story in which the protagonist heads to their first day in a new job in a prestigious and well-known company that offers the opportunity to move up in their career. Participants are presented with numerous aspects of the company's environment, such as the upscale building decorations and the luxurious clothing of their colleagues. After being impressed by this work environment, they were told they would either receive a great promotion or lose the job, depending on their performance. Finally, the protagonist was asked to imagine themselves moving up and increasing their social status. Whereas the status story intended to manipulate the participants to desire prestige and a rise in their status position, as a means to test the formulated hypothesis, the control story was neutral and aimed to assess the differences between the conditions. Both stories presented to the participants were summarized versions of the official stories written by Griskevicius et al. (2009), so that the time spent by respondents reading them decreased. However, contrarily to Griskevicius et al. (2010), which used the status motives variable as the independent variable to test their hypothesis, the author decided to use status motives as a priming variable for status and prestige motivations. According to the literature, priming effects include the stimulation of a person's mental representation of social norms, events, or situations, i.e., stored social knowledge, which then influences subsequent judgments or actions (Molden, 2014; Higgins & Eitam, 2014). Therefore, when status motives are activated (antecedent variable), it is expected that participants' motivations for high status and prestige to increase and thus influence their perceptions and intentions towards the subsequent manipulations and questions.

In order to elicit (in)conspicuousness, two experimental conditions concerning the fashion product advertisement were randomly presented. In order to minimize differences between the groups, the advertisements had the same structure and shared the same brand characteristics' description and informational details regarding the sustainability of the product. Specifically, the brand chosen was *Emporio Armani* because of its believed recognition, prestige, and iconicity perceptions among consumers. In order to signal the sustainability of the product, besides the description of the product using sustainable materials and having a sustainable supply chain, a paper bag with the brand's name accompanied by "Eco" was placed in the advertisement next to the product (a blazer). Furthermore, the conspicuous advertisement used

gold text color, while the inconspicuous one used black text color. Additionally, in the advertisement for the conspicuous condition, a gold brand logo with a “Be glamorous” tagline was also placed. Contrarily, no tagline was placed in the advertisement for the inconspicuous condition. The stimuli used in the survey can be found in Appendix 1.

#### **4.6. VARIABLE DESCRIPTIONS**

*Manipulation Checks.* Manipulation check items asked participants their level of agreement on a 7-point Likert scale (1 - Disagree very strongly, 7 - Agree very strongly) regarding the sentences “I am motivated to have higher social status” and “I am motivated to have higher prestige”. These two questions aimed at testing whether the stories read elicited the expected feelings in each scenario (i.e., desire to have status with the status story, and no specific feeling with the control story). Additionally, participants were asked “How noticeable do you perceive this product to be?” on a 7-point Likert scale (1 – Very discreet, 7 – Very noticeable) to test their (in)conspicuousness perceptions of the advertisement, and “How sustainable do you perceive this product to be?” on a 7-point Likert scale (1 – Not sustainable at all, 7 – Extremely sustainable) to test their perceptions of the sustainable features of the advertisement.

Once participants were exposed to the experimental manipulations and corresponding manipulation check questions, the remaining dependent and independent variables were assessed on a 7-point Likert scale.

##### **4.6.1. DEPENDENT VARIABLES**

*Purchase intention:* measured by asking participants how likely they would buy the product they were exposed to (1 – Extremely unlikely, 7 – Extremely likely). This method was adapted from previous literature (Juster, 1966; Loebnitz & Grunert, 2018).

*Quality perceptions:* measured by asking participants to evaluate their perceptions of the product’s quality (1 – Low quality, 7 – High quality), adapted from Erdoğan and Büdeyri-Turan (2012).

*Sustainability perceptions:* measured by asking participants to evaluate their perceptions of the product’s environmentally-friendliness (1 – Not environmentally-friendly at all, 7 – Extremely environmentally-friendly), adapted from Florez, Castro and Irizarry (2013).

*Willingness to pay (WTP)*: measured by asking participants how much they were willing to pay for the product (from 0 to 500 euros), adapted from Lusk, McLaughlin and Jaeger (2007).

*Brand Coolness Perceptions*: measured by asking participants their perceptions (1 – Not at all, 7 – Very much) with ten items concerning the product they were exposed to (e.g., Aesthetically pleasing; Iconic), adapted from Warren et al. (2019).

#### **4.6.2. INDEPENDENT VARIABLES**

*Status and Prestige Motivations*: measured after participants were exposed to one of the two status motives scenarios and used as an independent variable and as a manipulation check.

*Type of Fashion Product – conspicuous versus inconspicuous*: manipulated and randomly presented to participants and used as a moderator.

*Level of Conspicuous Consumption Orientation – CCO*: measured by asking participants for their level of agreement (1 - Disagree very strongly, 7 - Agree very strongly) with seven items concerning their individual conspicuous consumption behavior (e.g., I buy some products because I want to show others that I am wealthy; I always buy top-of-the-line products), adapted from Chaudhuri et al. (2011). This variable will be measured and manipulated throughout the study, using different methods and frameworks.

All variables' descriptions are presented in more detail in Appendix 3.

## **5. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

---

The main objective of this chapter is to present and analyze the data collected through the online questionnaire.

### **5.1. SAMPLE CHARACTERIZATION**

Several descriptive statistical analyses were run with the intention of outlining the attributes of the sample and checking for equality between the four experimental conditions in terms of demographics, since sample homogeneity ensures more reliable results.

The sample was composed of 210 participants, with a higher number of women (77.6%) than men (22.4%). The nationality distribution displayed a majority of Portuguese participants (94.3%), with the remaining participants from Brazil, Germany, France, Cape Verde, Ireland, Spain, and Tunisia. With regard to age, the majority of participants were aged between 19 to 24 years old (26.7%), followed by participants aged 25 and 34 (23.3%) and 45 to 54 (23.3%). Concerning the educational level, the majority of participants hold a Bachelor's degree (53.3%) or a Master's degree (31.9%) and are currently working (76.2%) or studying (21.9%). Lastly, the annual income for most of the sample is between 10,000 and 19,999€ (35.7%), between 20,000 and 29,999€ (22.9%), or below 10,000€ (13.3%). Please see appendix 4 for more complete information and detailed graphics.

### **5.2. SCALES RELIABILITY AND FACTOR ANALYSIS**

Even though the scales used in this study were adapted from previous research, it is still important to test for the scales' reliability so that the findings are as accurate as possible.

The Cronbach' alpha method is an extensively used statistical measure of reliability for Likert scales, in which interconnected items are a measure of internal consistency. Therefore, the alpha value tells us whether all items reliably measure the same variable and should thus be averaged into one single scale. This measure is expressed on a scale from .1 to 1, and according to DeVellis (1991), Cronbach's alpha values below .6 are considered unacceptable, between .65 and .7 are minimally satisfactory, between .7 and .8 are good, and between .8 and .9 are very good. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each multi-item scale intended to measure the same construct, which were Conspicuous Consumption Orientation (CCO) and Brand Coolness. Forthwith, a factor analysis procedure with a principal component analysis and a varimax rotation, as well as a reliability analysis were conducted for the aforementioned scales.

The conspicuous consumption orientation scale was adapted from Chaudhuri et al. (2011) however a factor analysis was conducted, and the Cronbach's alpha of the items used was measured. Only one component was extracted and the Cronbach's alpha for the seven-item scale of CCO was .842. Additionally, no improvement of the alpha measure would be attained if any of the items were deleted. Thus, the scale suffered no modifications, and the seven items were averaged into one scale for the later data analysis (see table 1).

*Table 1 Conspicuous Consumption Orientation Scale Items*

<b>Item</b>	<b>Item Description</b>
1	It says something to people around me when I buy a high-priced brand.
2	I buy some products because I want to show others that I am wealthy.
3	By choosing a product with unique characteristics, I show others that I am different.
4	I choose products or brands to create my own style that everybody admires.
5	I always buy top-of-line products.
6	I want to show others that I enjoy being original.
7	I want to show others that I am sophisticated.

The brand coolness scale was adapted from Warren et al. (2019). Similarly, the CCO scale went under a factor analysis and a reliability analysis. The results showed three components were extracted (see table 2).

*Table 2 Brand Coolness Factor Analysis*

<b>Item</b>	<b>Item Description</b>	<b>Component</b>		
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
1	Extraordinary	.73	-.08	-.44
2	Aesthetically appealing	.74	.11	-.23
3	Energetic	.69	-.08	-.10
4	Original	.73	-.38	.05
5	Authentic	.75	-.20	.05
6	Rebellious	.51	-.46	.39
7	High Status	.40	.63	-.06
8	Subcultural	.31	.31	.79
9	Iconic	.66	.18	.14
10	Popular	.39	.61	-.06

According to Warren et al. (2019), this scale may be subdivided into seven sub-dimensions of brand coolness: *desirability*, which included the characteristics extraordinary, aesthetically appealing, and energetic; *positive autonomy*, which included original and authentic; *rebellious*; *high status*; *subcultural*; *iconic*; and *popular*. Therefore, the author adapted the mentioned criteria to disaggregate the items: the first component is composed of items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, representing Brand Coolness; and the second component is composed of items 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10, representing Brand Iconicity. Additionally, to ensure internal consistency, the Cronbach's alpha was assessed (see table 3).

**Table 3 Reliability Test for Multi-Item Scales**

<b>Scale</b>	<b>Initial number of items</b>	<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>	<b>Cronbach's alpha if items deleted</b>	<b>Items deleted</b>	<b>Final number of items</b>
Coolness	5	.821	.798	-	5
Iconicity	5	.546	.561	1	4

Accordingly, the Iconicity's Cronbach's alpha can be optimized if item 6 "Rebellious" is deleted. Thus, item 6 was deleted from the scale and, the Iconicity variable was modified, being now composed of items 7, 8, 9, and 10. However, the new four-item scale reports a Cronbach's alpha value below .6, with no improvement of the alpha measure if any of the items were deleted.

Therefore, the author considered including only two variables in the Iconicity construct. However, as the alpha coefficient is supposedly likely to underestimate reliability if the number of items is too small (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011), a correlation analysis was calculated to estimate the strength and direction of the relationship between the different combinations of two variables (high status, subcultural, iconic, popular). The Pearson Correlation coefficients can range from -1 to +1, such that the stronger the relationship between the two variables, the closer the coefficient will be to either -1 or +1, depending on whether the relationship is negative or positive, respectively. The interpretation of the Pearson coefficient is suggested by Cohen (1988) as small if  $.10 < r < .29$  or  $-.29 < r < -.10$ , medium if  $.30 < r < .49$  or  $-.49 < r < -.30$ , and large if  $.50 < r < 1.0$  or  $-1.0 < r < -.50$ . The results from the Pearson Correlation demonstrated a medium correlation between the items high status and iconic ( $r = .329$ ,  $N = 210$ ,  $p < .01$ ) (see table 4), whereas all other two-items combinations reported a small correlation. Thus, items 7 and 9 were averaged into one scale for the later data analysis.

**Table 4** Correlation Test for 2-Item Measures

		High Status	Iconic
High Status	Pearson Correlation	1	.329**
	<i>p-value</i>		< .001
Iconic	Pearson Correlation	.329**	1
	<i>p-value</i>	< .001	

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

### 5.3. MANIPULATION CHECK RESULTS

Status motives, type of fashion, and sustainability manipulation checks were performed by conducting independent samples *t-tests* at a 95% confidence level.

Regarding the status motives manipulation check, two questions were asked to the participants about their status and prestige motivations. Thus, a Pearson Correlation test was conducted to verify the correlation between the two items used (see table 5). The results demonstrated a large correlation between the two items measuring status and prestige motivations ( $r = .724$ ,  $N = 210$ ,  $p < .01$ ), resulting in them being averaged into one scale for the later data analysis.

**Table 5** Correlation Test for 2-Item Measures

		Item 1	Item 2
Item 1	Pearson Correlation	1	.724**
	<i>p-value</i>		< .001
Item 2	Pearson Correlation	.724**	1
	<i>p-value</i>	< .001	

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

The results obtained from the independent sample *t-test* for the status and prestige motivations variable demonstrated the status condition elicited higher motivations for status and prestige than the control condition, as predicted ( $M_{\text{Control}} = 4.02$  vs  $M_{\text{Status}} = 4.83$ ;  $t(210) = -3.91$ ,  $p < .001$ ), showing a statistically significant difference in the means and thus, validating the manipulation check (see table 6).

**Table 6** Manipulation Check using *t*-test for Status Motives

	Status Motives Condition				<i>t</i> -test
	Control		Status		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
<b>Manipulation check</b>	4.02	1.53	4.83	1.48	-3.91***

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

Note: Equal variances assumed

For the type of fashion manipulation check, the results of the *t*-test also showed to be statistically significant. The conspicuous clothing related advertisement was perceived by the participants to be more noticeable than the inconspicuous clothing related advertisement ( $M_{\text{Inconspicuous}} = 3.88$  vs  $M_{\text{Conspicuous}} = 4.88$ ;  $t(210) = -4.48$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Thus, the type of fashion product was successfully manipulated (see table 7).

**Table 7** Manipulation Check using *t*-test for Type of Fashion

	Type of Fashion Condition				<i>t</i> -test
	Inconspicuous		Conspicuous		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
<b>Manipulation check</b>	3.88	1.63	4.88	1.58	-4.48***

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

Note: Equal variances assumed

For the sustainability manipulation check, which aimed to confirm participants were perceiving the advertisement as a sustainable product in all conditions, the results of the *t*-test showed significance. Thus, sustainability was successfully manipulated (see table 8).

**Table 8** Manipulation Check using *t*-test for Sustainability

	Mean	SD	<i>t</i> -test
<b>Manipulation check</b>	4.90	1.57	45.16***

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

## 5.4. MAIN RESULTS

After characterizing and validating all variables of the model and successfully computing the manipulations for the experimental conditions, all sets of hypotheses were tested.

### 5.4.1. THE EFFECT OF STATUS AND PRESTIGE MOTIVATIONS ON CONSUMERS' SUSTAINABLE FASHION VALUATIONS

*H1: When activated, status and prestige motivations will positively impact consumers' sustainable fashion valuations, such as:*

*H1a: Purchase intention and willingness to pay (WTP).*

*H1b: Quality, sustainability, and brand coolness perceptions.*

The first hypothesis tests for the impact of status and prestige motivations on consumers' sustainable fashion consumption valuations (purchase intention and willingness to pay, quality, sustainability, and brand coolness perceptions). Therefore, a simple linear regression was conducted.

The results show a significant main effect of status and prestige motivations on WTP ( $R^2 = .02$ ,  $F(1,209) = 4.72$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and brand coolness ( $R^2 = .06$ ,  $F(1,209) = 12.87$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Accordingly, for every unit increase in status and prestige motivations, the average willingness to pay increases by 8.68 units, holding all other variables constant (see table 9). Likewise, for every unit increase in status and prestige motivations, the average brand coolness perceptions increase by .19 units, holding all other variables constant (see table 10).

However, no significant main effects of status and prestige motivations were obtained on purchase intention ( $p = .06$ , NS), on quality perceptions ( $p = .3$ , NS), nor on sustainability perceptions ( $p = .6$ , NS), partially validating H1.

*Table 9 Linear Regression Summary Output of WTP*

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	.15
R Square	.02
Adjusted R Square	.02
Standard Error	89.75
Observations	210

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F-test</i>
Regression	38005.33	1	38005.33	4.72*
Residual	1675366.23	208	8054.65	
Total	1713371.57	209		

	<b>Coefficients</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t Stat</b>	<b>Lower CI</b>	<b>Upper CI</b>
Intercept	49.96	18.77	2.66**	12.96	86.95
Status and prestige motivations	8.68	3.99	2.17*	.80	16.56

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

**Table 10** Linear Regression Summary Output of Brand Coolness Perceptions

<b>Regression Statistics</b>	
Multiple R	.24
R Square	.06
Adjusted R Square	.05
Standard Error	1.16
Observations	210

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F-test</i>
Regression	17.23	1	17.23	12.87***
Residual	278.51	208	1.34	
Total	295.74	209		

	<b>Coefficients</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t Stat</b>	<b>Lower CI</b>	<b>Upper CI</b>
Intercept	2.99	.24	12.36***	2.51	3.47
Status and prestige motivations	.19	.05	3.59***	.08	.29

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

#### 5.4.2. THE MODERATING EFFECT OF TYPE OF FASHION

*H2: The impact of status and prestige motivations on consumers' sustainable fashion valuations will be moderated by the type of fashion product (conspicuous vs. inconspicuous), so that:*

*H2a: When the type of fashion product is conspicuous, the impact of status and prestige motivations on the likelihood of engaging in sustainable fashion consumption is higher (vs. lower) than when the type of fashion product is inconspicuous.*

The second hypothesis tests for the moderating effect of the type of fashion product (conspicuous vs. inconspicuous) on the relationship between status and prestige motivations and consumers' valuations of sustainable fashion (purchase intention and willingness to pay, quality, sustainability, and brand coolness perceptions). To test for moderation, Hayes' PROCESS macro (2013, 2015) regression test was performed with model 1. In this regression model, if the confidence intervals include zero, there is no significant moderating effect (Hayes, 2013, 2015). In other words, there is 95% confidence that there is a moderating effect if the confidence intervals do not comprise zero. The social and prestige motivations variable was used as a continuous (mean-centered) variable while the type of fashion product (conspicuous vs. inconspicuous) was dummy coded.

Again, linear regression analysis revealed a main effect of status and prestige motivations on WTP ( $R^2 = .02$ ,  $F(1,209) = 4.72$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and on brand coolness ( $R^2 = .06$ ,  $F(1,209) = 12.87$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Yet, there was no significant main effect of status and prestige motivations on purchase intention ( $p = .06$ , NS), quality perceptions ( $p = .3$ , NS), and sustainability perceptions ( $p = .6$ , NS). Results also show that there is a significant but negative effect of the type of fashion product on purchase intention ( $b = -.58$ ,  $SE = .23$ ,  $p < .05$ , 95% CI = [-1.03, -.14]), suggesting there is a higher purchase intention for inconspicuous products. However, interaction results seem to reverse this. That is, the results show a significant and positive two-way status and prestige motivations x type of fashion product interaction effect on purchase intention ( $b = .42$ ,  $SE = .14$ ,  $p < .01$ , 95% CI = [.13, .71]), on sustainability perceptions ( $b = .39$ ,  $SE = .13$ ,  $p < .01$ , 95% CI = [.13, .65]), and on brand coolness ( $b = .29$ ,  $SE = .10$ ,  $p < .01$ , 95% CI = [.09, .49]), despite a non-significant interaction effect found on quality perceptions ( $p = .8$ , NS), and on willingness to pay ( $p = .2$ , NS) (see table 11).

**Table 11** Two-Way Interaction Status and Prestige Motivations x Type of Fashion Product

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Interaction effect</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Lower CI</b>	<b>Upper CI</b>
Purchase Intention	.42**	.15	.13	.71
Willingness to pay	9.74	7.98	-6.00	25.48
Quality Perceptions	-.02	.10	-.22	.18
Sustainability Perceptions	.39**	.13	.13	.65
Brand Coolness	.29**	.10	.09	.49

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

To examine these effects further, and to validate H2a, the conditional effects of status and prestige motivations at -1 SD and +1 SD values of the type of fashion product moderator for each dependent variable, were analyzed (see table 12). Specifically, a slope analysis (Aiken & West, 1991; Fitzsimons, 2008) was conducted, which revealed that differences emerged at one standard deviation above the mean.

**Table 12** Conditional Effects of the status and prestige motivations at values of the moderator

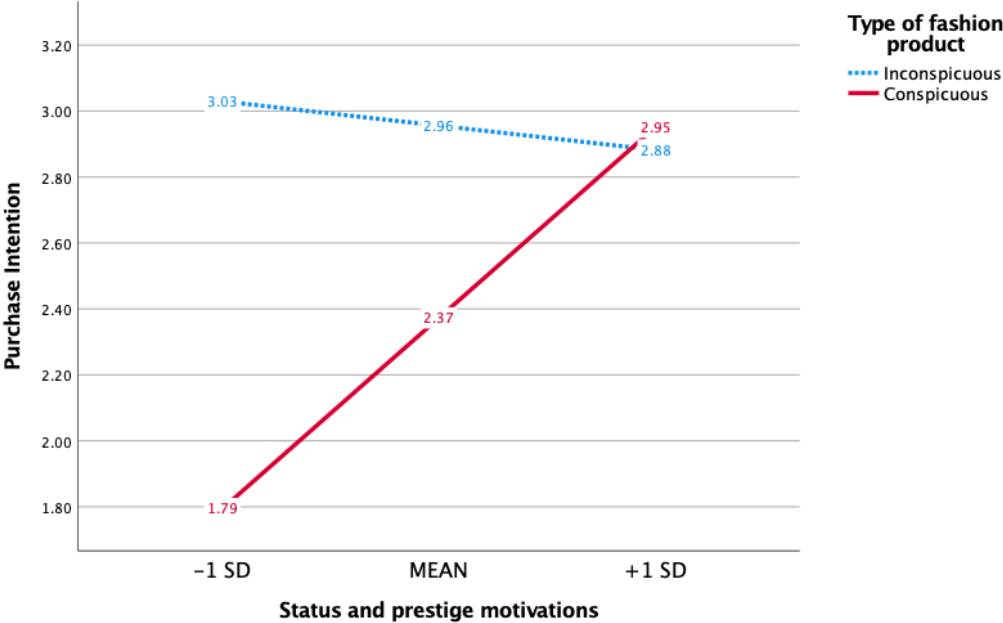
	<b>Conditional Effect</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Lower CI</b>	<b>Upper CI</b>
<b>Purchase Intention</b>				
Inconspicuous (-1 SD)	-.05	.10	-.25	.15
Conspicuous (+1 SD)	.37***	.10	.17	.58
<b>Sustainability Perceptions</b>				
Inconspicuous (-1 SD)	-.15	.09	-.34	.03
Conspicuous (+1 SD)	.24**	.10	.05	.43
<b>Brand Coolness</b>				
Inconspicuous (-1 SD)	.04	.07	-.09	.19
Conspicuous (+1 SD)	.34***	.07	.19	.48

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

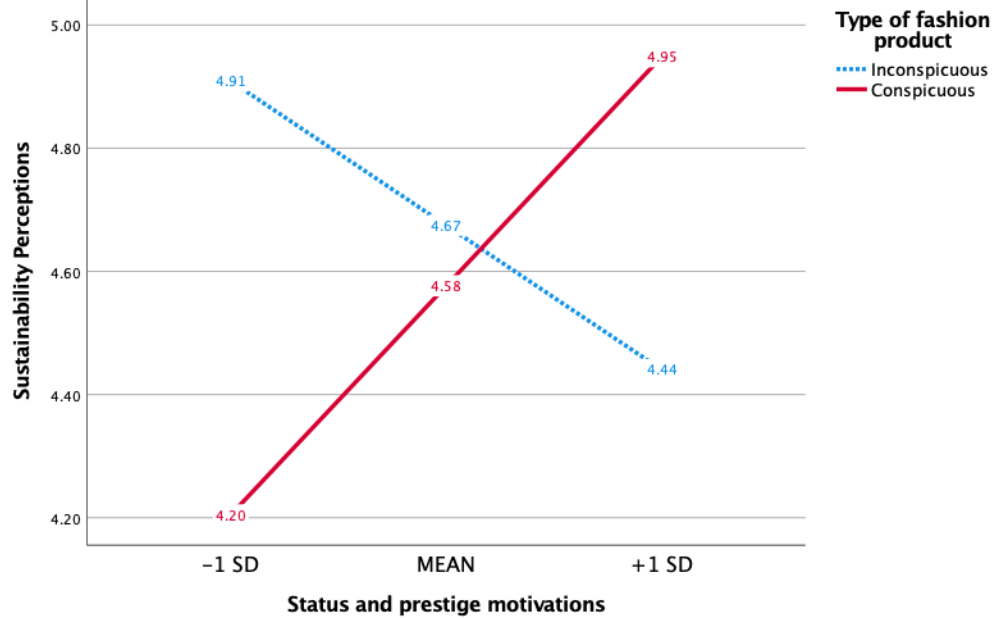
Further examining this interaction, slope analysis revealed that at +1 SD on the centered type of fashion variable (conspicuous condition), the relationship between status and prestige motivations and consumers' valuations is positive and significant. Namely for purchase intention ( $b = .37$ ,  $SE = .10$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = [.17, .58]), sustainability perceptions ( $b = .24$ ,  $SE = .10$ ,  $p < .01$ , 95% CI = [.05, .43]), and brand coolness perceptions ( $b = .34$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = [.19, .48]).

The results indicate that the conditional effects of status and prestige motivations become increasingly significant and positive with increases in fashion conspicuousness at +1 SD, and

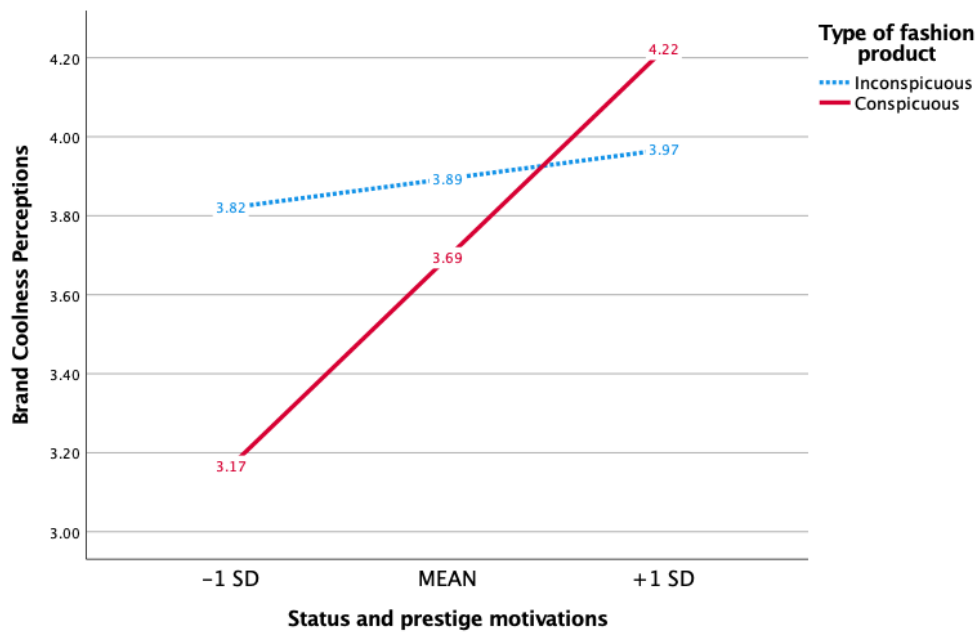
non-significant at -1 SD at the inconspicuous level of the moderator, for all three dependent variables.



*Figure 2 Type of fashion product as a moderator on the effect of status and prestige motivations on purchase intention*



*Figure 3 Type of fashion product as a moderator on the effect of status and prestige motivations on sustainability perceptions*



*Figure 4 Type of fashion product as a moderator on the effect of status and prestige motivations on brand coolness perceptions*

Overall, results show that the impact of status and prestige motivations on consumer valuations, namely on purchase intentions, and on sustainability and brand coolness perceptions, is moderated by the type of fashion product. More specifically, results indicate that increases in status and prestige motivations increase purchase intention, and sustainability and brand coolness perceptions for conspicuous fashion products, yet partially supporting H2a.

### 5.4.3. THE MODERATING EFFECT OF CCO

*H3: The impact of status and prestige motivations on consumers' sustainable fashion valuations will be moderated by an individual's level of conspicuous consumption orientation (CCO), so that:*

*H3a: The higher the level of CCO, the higher the likelihood of engaging in sustainable fashion consumption for consumers with high status and prestige motivations.*

The third hypothesis tests for the moderating effect of conspicuous consumption orientation on the relationship between status and prestige motivations and consumers' valuations of sustainable fashion (purchase intention and willingness to pay, quality, sustainability, and brand coolness perceptions). Therefore, following the methodology from Keinan and Kivetz (2011), the author aims to test for the manipulation effect of the type of fashion product and the CCO as a measured variable. As such, the author expects that both CCO as an individual construct (measured using an individual difference scale), and a situational CCO (manipulated using a "conspicuous vs. inconspicuous" clothing-related advertisement), show similar consumers' sustainable fashion valuations.

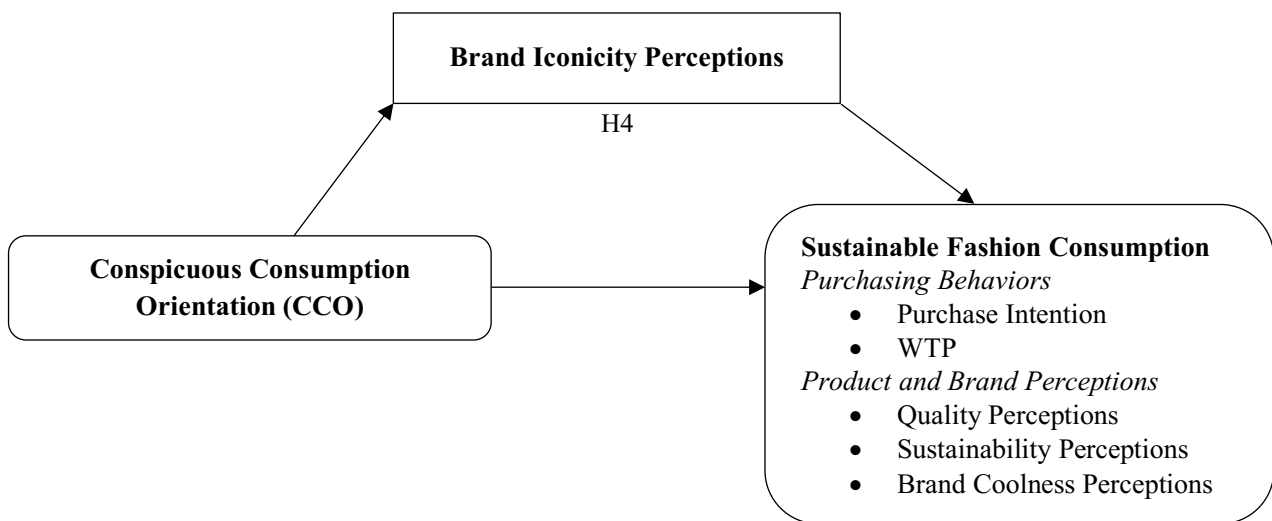
Similarly to the previous hypothesis, Hayes' (2015) regression test was performed with model 1. Contrary to our expectations, the results show a non-significant status and prestige motivations x CCO interaction effect on purchase intention ( $p = .6$ , NS), willingness to pay ( $p = .3$ , NS), quality perceptions ( $p = .3$ , NS), sustainability perceptions ( $p = .2$ , NS), and brand coolness ( $p = .6$ , NS). Thus, H3 is not validated, suggesting that CCO does not have a significant impact on the relationship between status motivations and consumers' valuations of sustainable fashion. These findings could be related to the individualistic and innate nature of the CCO construct and the prior exposure to the type of fashion and status motives manipulations. As the aforementioned literature has suggested (Chaudhuri et al., 2011; Shukla, 2008), consumers with high conspicuous consumption orientation tend to have their consumption behavior strongly influenced by personal factors (such as exhibiting their uniqueness), rather than societal factors such as the motivation to gain respect or status.

#### 5.4.4. FURTHER ANALYSIS

As aforementioned in the literature, consumers choose certain products/brands not only for what they do, i.e., their utilitarian purpose, but also for what they represent and mean in society, i.e., their symbolism (Levy, 1999). According to Torelli et al. (2009, p.108), “the degree to which a brand symbolizes the values, needs, and aspirations of the members of a particular group” is denoted as brand iconicity. As such, consumers frequently rely on brands and their level of iconicity to communicate their (desired) social status to others (Torelli et al., 2009).

Accordingly, considering iconicity in specific, and following the methodology by Keinan and Kivetz (2011), the author decided to test the mediating role of CCO as a measured variable on the relationship between conspicuous consumption orientation and the dependent variables (purchase intention and willingness to pay, quality, sustainability, and brand coolness perceptions) through consumers’ perceptions of the brand’s iconicity. More formally, an additional hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Brand iconicity perceptions will mediate the relationship between the consumers’ conspicuous consumption orientation (CCO) and sustainable fashion consumption valuations.



*Figure 5 Conceptual Model 2*

The conceptual framework presented above proposes that for different levels of conspicuous consumption orientation, consumers’ sustainable fashion valuations will be mediated by consumers’ brand iconicity perceptions.

To test the fourth hypothesis, a mediation analysis was conducted using Haye’s PROCESS macro (2013, 2015; model 4). Using bootstrap analysis results indicate that, if the confidence

intervals comprise zero, a non-significant mediating effect is observed (Hayes, 2013, 2015). In addition, mediation can either be full or partial depending on the relationship between the independent variable and the outcome variable, in this case, the relationship between CCO and the different dependent variables. As such, a full mediation occurs when this relationship disappears, i.e., if the direct effect is no longer significant; and a partial mediation occurs if this relationship is significantly reduced (Hofmann, Curtiss & Hayes, 2020).

The results demonstrate that the consumers' iconicity perceptions fully mediate the effect of CCO on the purchase intention variable (*indirect effect* = .07, *SE* = .03, *p* < .05, 95% CI = [.02, .14]). Both the impact of CCO on iconicity (*b* = .25, *SE* = .07, *p* < .001, 95% CI = [.11, .38]) and the impact of iconicity on purchase intention (*b* = .30, *SE* = .09, *p* < .01, 95% CI = [.11, .49]) are significant, while the direct effect is non-significant (*b* = .08, *SE* = .09, *p* = .43, 95% CI = [-.12, .27]) (see table 13).

**Table 13** *Iconicity as a Mediator on the Effect of CCO and Purchase Intention*

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Indirect Effect Paths</b>	<b>Indirect Effect</b>	<b>Lower CI</b>	<b>Upper CI</b>
1	CCO → Iconicity	.25***	.11	.38
2	Iconicity → Purchase Intention	.30**	.11	.49
3	CCO → Iconicity → Purchase Intention	.07*	.02	.14
<b>Direct Effect Paths</b>		<b>Direct Effect</b>	<b>Lower CI</b>	<b>Upper CI</b>
4	CCO → Purchase Intention	.08	-.12	.27

\**p* < .05; \*\**p* < .01; \*\*\**p* < .001

Moreover, it was tested whether consumers' iconicity perceptions mediate the effect of CCO on the quality perceptions variable. Again, both the impact of CCO on iconicity (*b* = .25, *SE* = .07, *p* < .001, 95% CI = [.11, .38]) and the impact of iconicity on quality perceptions (*b* = .40, *SE* = .06, *p* < .001, 95% CI = [.28, .51]) are significant, while the direct effect is non-significant (*b* = .06, *SE* = .06, *p* = .35, 95% CI = [-.06, .18]). This analysis shows that consumers' iconicity perceptions fully mediate the effect of CCO on quality perceptions (*indirect effect* = .09, *SE* = 0.03, *p* < .05, 95% CI = [.05, .15]) (see table 14).

**Table 14** Iconicity as a Mediator on the Effect of CCO and Quality Perceptions

Outcome	Indirect Effect Paths	Indirect Effect	Lower CI	Upper CI
1	CCO → Iconicity	.25***	.11	.38
2	Iconicity → Quality Perceptions	.40***	.28	.51
3	CCO → Iconicity → Quality Perceptions	.09*	.05	.15
Direct Effect Paths		Direct Effect	Lower CI	Upper CI
4	CCO → Quality Perceptions	.06	-.06	.18

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

Further analysis tested if consumers' iconicity perceptions mediate the effect of CCO on the sustainability perceptions variable. Both the impact of CCO on iconicity ( $b = .25$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = [.11, .38]) and the impact of iconicity on sustainability perceptions ( $b = .20$ ,  $SE = .09$ ,  $p < .05$ , 95% CI = [.03, .36]) are significant, while the direct effect is non-significant ( $b = .09$ ,  $SE = .09$ ,  $p = .29$ , 95% CI = [-.08, .27]). It is demonstrated that consumers' iconicity perceptions fully mediate the effect of CCO on sustainability perceptions (*indirect effect* = .05,  $SE = .02$ ,  $p < .05$ , 95% CI = [.01, .10]) (see table 15).

**Table 15** Iconicity as a Mediator on the Effect of CCO and Sustainability Perceptions

Outcome	Indirect Effect Paths	Indirect Effect	Lower CI	Upper CI
1	CCO → Iconicity	.25***	.11	.38
2	Iconicity → Sustainability Perceptions	.20*	.03	.36
3	CCO → Iconicity → Sustainability Perceptions	.05*	.01	.10
Direct Effect Paths		Direct Effect	Lower CI	Upper CI
4	CCO → Sustainability Perceptions	.09	-.08	.27

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

It can be seen that consumers' iconicity perceptions also mediate the effect of CCO on the WTP variable. Both the impact of CCO on iconicity ( $b = .25$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = [.11, .38]) and the impact of iconicity on WTP ( $b = 13.95$ ,  $SE = 5.05$ ,  $p < .01$ , 95% CI = [3.98, 23.92]) are significant, while the direct effect is non-significant ( $b = 7.62$ ,  $SE = 5.23$ ,  $p = .15$ , 95% CI = [-2.70, 17.93]). The results of the analysis show that consumers' iconicity perceptions fully mediate the effect of CCO on WTP (*indirect effect* = 3.45,  $SE = 1.62$ ,  $p < .05$ , 95% CI = [.84, 7.00]) (see table 16).

**Table 16** Iconicity as a Mediator on the Effect of CCO and WTP

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Indirect Effect Paths</b>	<b>Indirect Effect</b>	<b>Lower CI</b>	<b>Upper CI</b>
1	CCO → Iconicity	.25***	.11	.38
2	Iconicity → WTP	13.95**	3.98	23.92
3	CCO → Iconicity → WTP	3.45*	.84	7.00
<b>Direct Effect Paths</b>		<b>Direct Effect</b>	<b>Lower CI</b>	<b>Upper CI</b>
4	CCO → WTP	7.62	-2.70	17.93

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

Lastly, it was analyzed whether consumers' iconicity perceptions mediate the effect of CCO on the brand coolness variable. The impact of CCO on iconicity ( $b = .25$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = [.11, .38]) and the impact of iconicity on brand coolness ( $b = .45$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = [.33, .57]) are significant, while the direct effect is non-significant ( $b = -.04$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $p = .53$ , 95% CI = [-.16, .08]). This analysis shows that consumers' iconicity perceptions fully mediate the effect of CCO on brand coolness (*indirect effect* = .11,  $SE = .03$ ,  $p < .05$ , 95% CI = [.05, .18]) (see table 17).

**Table 17** Iconicity as a Mediator on the Effect of CCO and Brand Coolness Perceptions

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Indirect Effect Paths</b>	<b>Indirect Effect</b>	<b>Lower CI</b>	<b>Upper CI</b>
1	CCO → Iconicity	.25***	.11	.38
2	Iconicity → Brand Coolness	.45***	.33	.57
3	CCO → Iconicity → Brand Coolness	.11*	.05	.18
<b>Direct Effect Paths</b>		<b>Direct Effect</b>	<b>Lower CI</b>	<b>Upper CI</b>
4	CCO → Brand Coolness	-.04	-.16	.08

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

Overall, these findings suggest that consumers' iconicity perceptions of the product presented in the advertisement fully mediate the relationship between individuals' level of conspicuous consumption orientation (independent variable) and all dependent variables (consumers' sustainable fashion valuations). Thus, H4 is fully supported.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

---

The present research aimed to address a first research question on whether activating status motives can be a viable strategy to promote sustainable fashion consumption (RQ1). Equally, individual traits such as the conspicuous consumption orientation, and individual perceptions regarding the conspicuousness of the product, were measured and empirically tested due to their prevailing influence on consumers' behaviors. Therefore, two additional research questions were addressed to understand the extent to which a product conspicuousness (RQ2) and a consumer's conspicuous consumption orientation (RQ3) impact the relationship between status motivations and sustainable fashion consumption.

The current paper's findings suggest that status motives positively impact consumers' valuations of sustainable fashion (RQ1). In particular, status and prestige motivations were shown to have a significant and positive direct effect on consumers' willingness to pay and brand coolness perceptions. In addition, the moderating role of conspicuousness as a manipulated factor was tested on this relationship, which indicates that conspicuousness in products can be a significant incentive for the adoption of sustainability within the fashion context (RQ2). That is, the impact of status and prestige motivations on purchase intention, and on sustainability and brand coolness perceptions is significant and positive for conspicuous products. This supports previous research on the relationship between status motives and sustainable behavior (Griskevicius et al., 2010), as a desire for status is capable of inciting self-sacrifice and consequently motivating sustainable fashion consumption behaviors.

According to the literature, socially oriented purchasing behavior, such as sustainable consumption, is externally driven, reflecting a desire to impress others (Truong, 2010). In addition, conspicuous consumers, i.e., with higher levels of conspicuous consumption orientation, are suggested to be strongly motivated by their desire for status and prestige (Eastman, Fredenberger, Campbell & Calvert, 1997; O'Cass & Frost, 2002; Ordabayeva & Chandon, 2011). That is, the influence that status and prestige motivations have on consumers' sustainable fashion behaviors and perceptions, might be influenced by consumers' level of conspicuous consumption orientation. This effect was possible when priming participants by including an antecedent variable such as status motives. When examining conspicuous consumption orientation as an individual difference, this did not impact the relationship between status motivations and consumers' valuations of sustainable fashion products (RQ3). Accordingly, the findings in this study are not compatible with those obtained in the foregoing

investigations. Thus, regarding the second research question, our study did not meet the predicted expectations.

To the best of the author's knowledge, little research has been devoted to understanding the mediating role of brand perceptions on the relation between conspicuous consumption orientation and consumers' valuations, thus creating a very novel framework. We propose that our findings can shed some light on these processes. Thereby, further analysis was made to verify the indirect impact of individual traits on consumers' decisions and perceptions. In particular, concerning conspicuous consumption orientation and brand iconicity perceptions. Indeed, the relation was shown to be strong and revealed important additional insights. Primarily, brand iconicity perceptions are revealed to explain the process through which conspicuous consumption orientation and sustainable consumption behaviors and perceptions are related. These findings confirm previous research observations, in regard to the implications of brand iconicity. According to several authors (Torelli et al., 2009; Holt, 2004; O'Cass & McEwen, 2004), consumers tend to use the symbolic value/meaning of iconic brands to direct their social identity and communicate their desires and aspirations with others. Therefore, the iconicity of a brand may itself persuade highly conspicuous consumers to purchase sustainable products in view of its associated meaning of prestige and status, regardless of their environmental and social concerns.

### **6.1. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS**

This research contributes to the literature on status motivations, conspicuousness, and sustainable consumption in the fashion context since our studies unambiguously tested the impact of status motivations and (in)conspicuous products on sustainable consumption behavior. Moreover, the studied stimuli were carefully manipulated to resemble advertisements that marketers commonly use, ensuring external validity and perceived credibility.

Our findings offer several insights into consumers' attitudes toward sustainable fashion products, and how different consumer-related characteristics can impact purchasing behaviors and product/brand perceptions, as manifested by purchase intention, willingness to pay, and quality, sustainability, and brand coolness perceptions. In addition, it extends the application of status motives activation to sustainable consumption namely in the fashion industry, building on prior literature in this domain (Griskevicius et al., 2010). The present paper also suggests that a product's conspicuous signaling can be a significant stimulus and play a moderation effect

on consumers' valuations. That is, products with conspicuous characteristics signal to status-seeking consumers the desired attributes they wish to grasp, contrary to inconspicuous products. These findings confirm previous research observations suggesting individual's identity and self-concepts can cause this behavioral consumption pattern (Belk, 1988; Rogers, 2014).

Finally, conspicuous consumption orientation did not show any significant impact, and thus it did not support previous research on the matter. Driven by the conviction that an individual's conspicuous consumption orientation would play a role in consumers' valuations of sustainable fashion, alternative analyses were conducted. Linking conspicuousness to brand iconicity to test consumers' behavioral traits is a novel approach, which responds to past researchers' appeals for further research in this domain.

## **6.2. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**

Status motives have usually been linked with egocentrism and self-centered behaviors, yet our study suggests that activating status motives can be a viable strategy for promoting pro-social and pro-environmental behavior. In fact, as previously mentioned, some theories defend that mostly economic and environmental concerns can encourage sustainable consumption behaviors. However, our results support other researchers in that status might be an effective tool to promote this type of behaviors.

This research provides some significant practical and managerial implications on the importance of status and conspicuous signaling in persuading consumers to adopt sustainable behaviors. The results emphasize that managers and marketers should consider the level of status signaling and iconicity in their products, based on consumers' conspicuous consumption orientation. For instance, in fashion clothing campaigns, brands can use status and conspicuous appeal by visibly advertising the sustainable features that their product offers while showing how owning their products can impress others.

Moreover, on the previously explained assumption that purchasing sustainable products can confer social status and prestige, it is of the utmost importance to businesses to understand how to appeal to status seekers. Accordingly, effective marketing strategies should induce consumers to increasingly purchase sustainable fashion products by leveraging the attached symbolism and conspicuousness of the product or brand. In addition, the present study demonstrated that consumers are susceptible to social status cues, even if they were not initially

motivated to gain status, as proven by the manipulation check results. Therefore, businesses could also seek ways to encourage or influence consumers to be status-oriented.

To conclude, this study provides valuable consumer behavior insights that suggest brands' approach to sustainability should not disregard society's predisposition for consumption. Forthwith, researchers, managers, and marketers trying to incite sustainable consumption might obtain more effective and long-lasting results if they factor in individual traits and predispositions that have the ability to influence consumption patterns in the fashion context.

## 7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

---

Undoubtedly, the present research contributes to a more in-depth understanding of the concepts of social status, conspicuousness, sustainable fashion, and the connections between them. Nevertheless, there are still limitations associated with the nature and scope of the research, the data collection process, the research approach, and time and monetary constraints, and thus research findings should be viewed in light of these.

Firstly, the research instrument used, an online survey, was distributed among different social media platforms. While self-administered surveys, such as this one, are considered less invasive and therefore better suited for personal matters (Evans & Mathur, 2005), research has suggested that often intentions are expressed instead of actual behaviors, as a consequence of a social desirability bias (Carrington et al., 2010), which creates a significant limitation in ethical consumerism or sustainable consumption literature. Thus, further research is recommended to test consumers' behaviors, for example, using field experiments. Additionally, this method of data collection process increased the challenges of the researcher to control the conditions and environment of participants, such as concentration and commitment, which can possibly affect the results obtained.

As previously mentioned, time and money constraints also contribute to this study's limitations. In particular, a larger data collection period could allow for a larger sample, which in turn could possibly increase the significance of the research findings and increase external validity. Moreover, limitations arise in the sample characterization, as the majority of participants are female (77.6%), from Portugal (94.3%), and aged between 19 to 34 years old (50%). As a result, results could be biased, and a wider and more varied sample would enable clearer and broader conclusions. Furthermore, due to time constraints, the study only focuses on one type of fashion product from a designer brand. Therefore, further research should be conducted to study how different products from different or non-designer fashion brands influence the different effects studied in this research.

Moreover, even though the current results did not evidence a significant impact of status motivations on all dependent variables considered, these findings should not be discarded as there might be reasonable explanations behind them. For instance, a consumer's behavior regarding sustainable consumption could be connected to alternative perspectives. Environmentally friendly products/brands are associated with uniqueness, fashionable, and innovation, and people desiring those attributes might be encouraged to its consumption,

regardless of the status attained (Griskevicius et al., 2010). Likewise, a consumer's willingness to pay extra for sustainable products may not be associated with conspicuous reasons, such as the aspiration for social status, but with the benefit of obtaining a product with quality (Truong, 2010).

Additionally, it has been demonstrated that individuals are more likely to choose sustainable products, and act altruistically, pro-socially, and environmentally responsible in a public context (vs. private) (Griskevicius et al., 2010; White & Peloza, 2009). Likewise, altruistic behaviors must be observable (Hardy & Van Vugt, 2006). However, participants were not briefed on where they should imagine themselves to be when answering the survey (private vs. public space). Yet, self-administered online surveys are individual and confidential ("All information provided will be anonymous and confidential"), which could have influenced participants in the status story condition to demonstrate a smaller preference for sustainable and conspicuous products, as there was not anyone to whom they could signal their pro-social decisions.

To conclude, these topics and their impact on sustainable consumption deserve attention and further research as they have increasingly expanded their impact on consumers' consumption and behavioral patterns and consequently in the fashion industry context. Therefore, further knowledge on these topics can help managers in developing strategies to attract consumers who are status seekers.

## APPENDICES

---

### APPENDIX 1: STIMULI

#### Control Story

It's Friday afternoon, after a long week of work. Tonight, you and one of your friends are going to a sold-out concert and your friend has been talking about it every day for weeks now, so you know she's excited.

Just so you don't forget later, you decide to get the tickets from your drawer. As you open it, you realize they're not there. You start rushing through the house to find the tickets: drawers, backpack, pockets, closet, wallets, but no tickets. Now you start getting worried. What if you lost the tickets? What if they fell out somewhere? What's your friend going to think?

Your thoughts are interrupted by a knock on the door... Your friend is early! She's eager to get going and will be crushed. As you open the door, ready for the worst, she yells: "Are you ready?" - and pulls out the 2 tickets from her back pocket.

Your friend has the tickets! She's had them the whole time. You think back and remember that she took them the other day, so you wouldn't forget them. After all the stress, you begin to laugh. You and your friend will get to go to the show after all. As you try to forget what happened, you're even more thrilled about the concert than before.

#### Status Story

Imagine you recently applied to a job position for a well-known and powerful company. Besides paying well, this job offers you the chance of moving up.


As you enter the lobby on your first day, you're impressed by how luxurious everything is, and how well-dressed everyone is. You're thrilled to be working at such a prestigious company and you feel this is the kind of job you deserve.

As you wait for your boss, your two new colleagues look nervous, and you feel a sense of competition in the air. Your new boss finally appears:

“You are all very fortunate to be here, you were chosen out of thousands of applicants!” – Hearing that sends a rush of pride through your body. – “However, after 6 months, only one of you will keep the job...” – You try to suppress any look of concern and remind yourself you deserve a spot at the top, so you show your confident expression. – “... and the person who does the best not only will get a promotion, but also a large bonus. You have 6 months to show everyone what you are made of.”

You know in 6 months your boss will call all three of you into the office. You’re both anxious and excited. Seeing your two colleagues, you walk out of the office with hopes of achieving something that few people will ever have a chance to do.

### Conspicuous Advertisement



**The Glamorous Black Blazer**

Sustainably-made blazer. Shawl collar and long sleeves. Button fastening on the front.

**Be glamorous.**

Select a size


XS S M L XL

ADD TO BAG

Details

- 100% made from **organic fabrics**
- Created and produced using **local suppliers**
- Packaging from **recycled materials**

### Inconspicuous Advertisement



**The Black Blazer**

Sustainably-made blazer. Shawl collar and long sleeves. Button fastening on the front.

Select a size

XS S M L XL

ADD TO BAG

Details

- 100% made from **organic fabrics**
- Created and produced using **local suppliers**
- Packaging from **recycled materials**

## APPENDIX 2: PILOT STIMULI

### Conspicuous Advertisement



#### The Glamorous Black Blazer

Sustainably-made blazer. Shawl collar and long sleeves. Button fastening on the front.

**Be glamorous.**

Select a size

XS S M L XL

ADD TO BAG

Details

- 100% made from **organic fabrics**
- Created and produced using **local suppliers**
- Packaging from **recycled materials**

### Inconspicuous Advertisement



#### The Black Blazer

Sustainably-made blazer. Shawl collar and long sleeves. Button fastening on the front.

Select a size

XS S M L XL

ADD TO BAG

Details

- 100% made from **organic fabrics**
- Created and produced using **local suppliers**
- Packaging from **recycled materials**

### APPENDIX 3: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

#### *Introduction to the survey*

Dear participants,

Welcome and thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

The survey is part of a master thesis. Your participation is very important and contributes to its completion. This survey takes approximately 5 minutes to complete.

All information provided will be anonymous and confidential. Therefore, I ask you to answer honestly and spontaneously. There are no right or wrong answers. If you have questions or feedback regarding the survey, please contact: [s-carsanmartins@ucp.pt](mailto:s-carsanmartins@ucp.pt)

Thank you in advance.

Carolina Martins

For the next part of the study, we will present a scenario. Please read it carefully. Try to imagine yourself as the protagonist of this episode and feel the emotions that the protagonist is experiencing.

#### *Randomized Stimuli for Status Motives (Example: status condition)*

Imagine you recently applied to a job position for a well-known and powerful company. Besides paying well, this job offers you the chance of moving up.

As you enter the lobby on your first day, you're impressed by how luxurious everything is, and how well-dressed everyone is. You're thrilled to be working at such a prestigious company and you feel this is the kind of job you deserve.

As you wait for your boss, your two new colleagues look nervous, and you feel a sense of competition in the air. Your new boss finally appears:

“You are all very fortunate to be here, you were chosen out of thousands of applicants!” – Hearing that sends a rush of pride through your body. – “However, after 6 months, only one of you will keep the job...” – You try to suppress any look of concern and remind yourself you deserve a spot at the top, so you show your confident expression. – “... and the person who does the best not only will get a promotion, but also a large bonus. You have 6 months to show everyone what you are made of.”

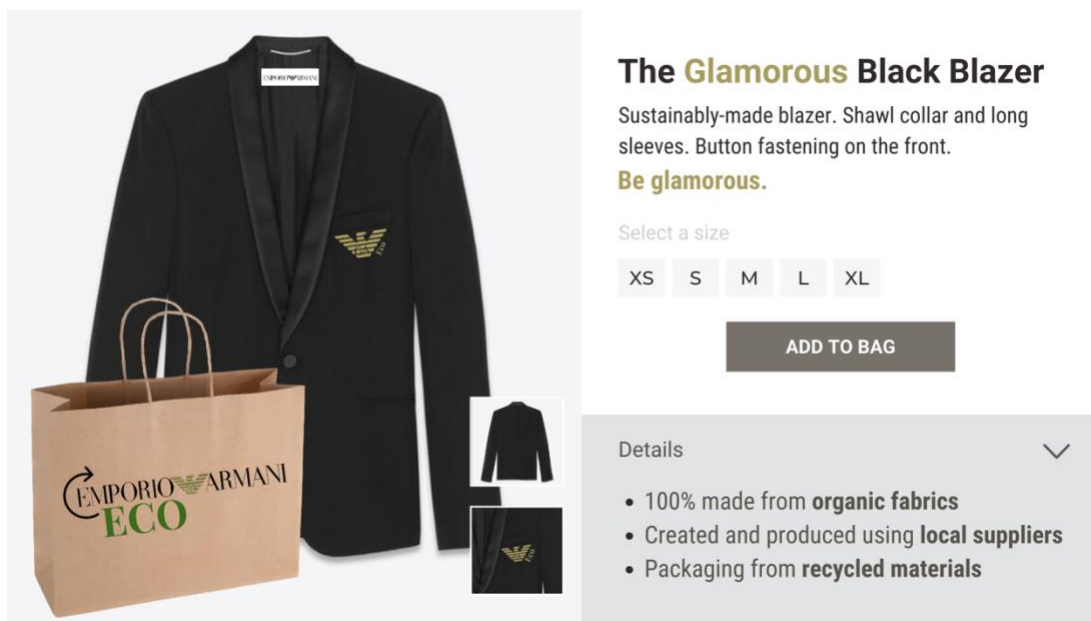
You know in 6 months your boss will call all three of you into the office. You're both anxious and excited. Seeing your two colleagues, you walk out of the office with hopes of achieving something that few people will ever have a chance to do.

**Q1:** Based on the scenario you just read, please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

	1 – Disagree very strongly	2	3	4 – Neither disagree nor agree	5	6	7 – Agree very strongly
I am motivated to have higher social status.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am motivated to have higher prestige.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

For the next part of the study, we will ask you a few questions regarding product preferences. Take a careful look at the presented product.

*Randomized Stimuli for Type of fashion product (Example: conspicuous condition)*



**The Glamorous Black Blazer**

Sustainably-made blazer. Shawl collar and long sleeves. Button fastening on the front.

**Be glamorous.**

Select a size

XS S M L XL

ADD TO BAG

Details

- 100% made from **organic fabrics**
- Created and produced using **local suppliers**
- Packaging from **recycled materials**

**Q2:** How noticeable do you perceive this product to be?

- 1 – Very discreet
- 2
- 3
- 4 – Neither discreet nor noticeable
- 5
- 6
- 7 – Very noticeable

**Q3:** How sustainable do you perceive this product to be?

- 1 – Not sustainable at all
- 2
- 3
- 4 – Neutral
- 5
- 6
- 7 – Extremely sustainable

**Q4:** In terms of quality, how do you perceive this product to be?

- 1 – Low quality
- 2
- 3
- 4 – Neither low nor high quality
- 5
- 6
- 7 – High quality

**Q5:** How would you describe this product to be?

	1 – Not at all	2	3	4 – Somewhat	5	6	7 – Very much
Extraordinary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aesthetically pleasing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Energetic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Original	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Authentic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rebellious	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High status	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Subcultural	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Iconic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Popular	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q6:** How environmentally friendly do you perceive this product to be?

- 1 – Not environmentally friendly at all
- 2
- 3
- 4 – Neutral
- 5
- 6
- 7 – Extremely environmentally friendly

**Q7:** How likely would you buy this product?

- 1 – Extremely unlikely
- 2
- 3
- 4 – Neutral
- 5
- 6
- 7 – Extremely likely

**Q8:** How much would you be willing to pay for this product?



**Q9:** Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

	1 – Disagree very strongly	2	3	4 – Neither disagree nor agree	5	6	7 – Agree very strongly
It says something to people around me when I buy a high-priced brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I buy some products because I want to show others that I am wealthy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
By choosing a product with unique characteristics, I show others that I am different.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I choose products/brands to create my own style that everybody admires.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I always buy top-of-the-line products.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to show others that I enjoy being original.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to show others that I am sophisticated.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## *Demographics*

Now, please answer some demographics about yourself.

**Q10:** What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

**Q11:** What is your age?

- Under 19 years old
- 19 to 24 years old
- 25 to 34 years old
- 35 to 44 years old
- 45 to 54 years old
- 55 to 64 years old
- 65 years and over

**Q12:** What is your occupation?

- High School Student
- University Student
- Employed
- Unemployed
- Retired

**Q13:** What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than High School
- High School
- Bachelor's degree
- Masters' Degree
- Doctoral Degree
- Professional Degree

**Q14:** Where do you come from?

✓ Drop down menu for all countries

**Q15:** What is your current annual income?

- Under €10,000
- €10,000 - €19,999
- €20,000 - €29,999
- €30,000 - €39,999

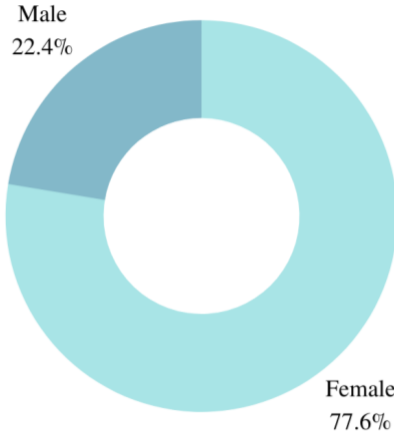
- €40,000 - €49,999
- €50,000 - €74,999
- €75,000 - €99,999
- €100,000 - €150,000
- Over €150,000
- N/A

Thank you for participating in the survey today.

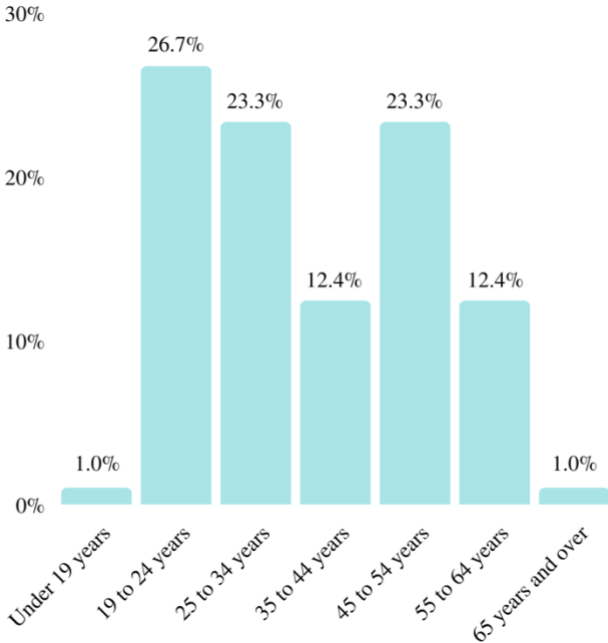
Please do not discuss the nature of the study with any other participants, as it may bias future results. Please click on the button below to end the study.

**APPENDIX 4: SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS**

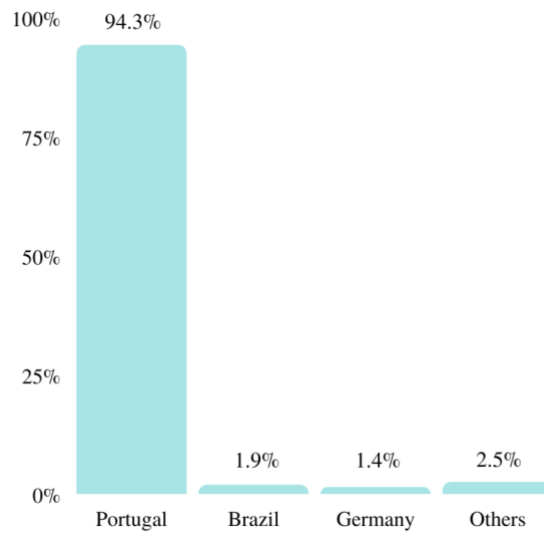
**Gender**



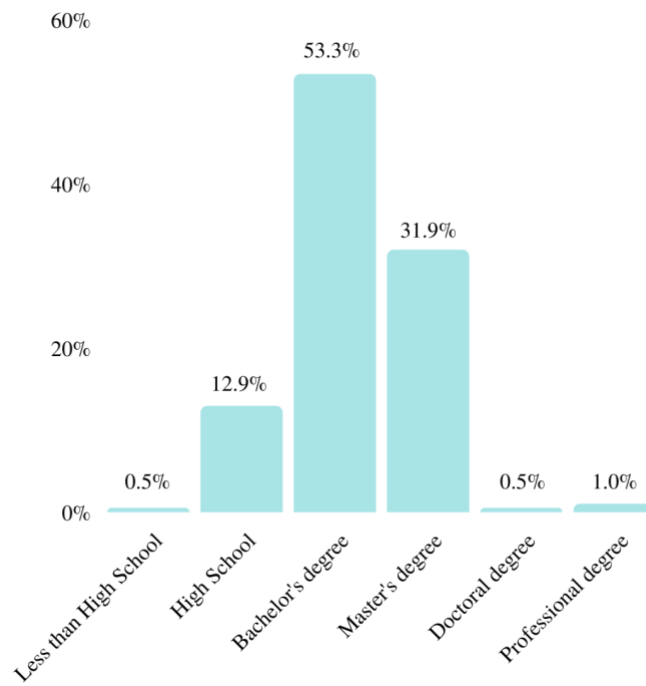
**Age**



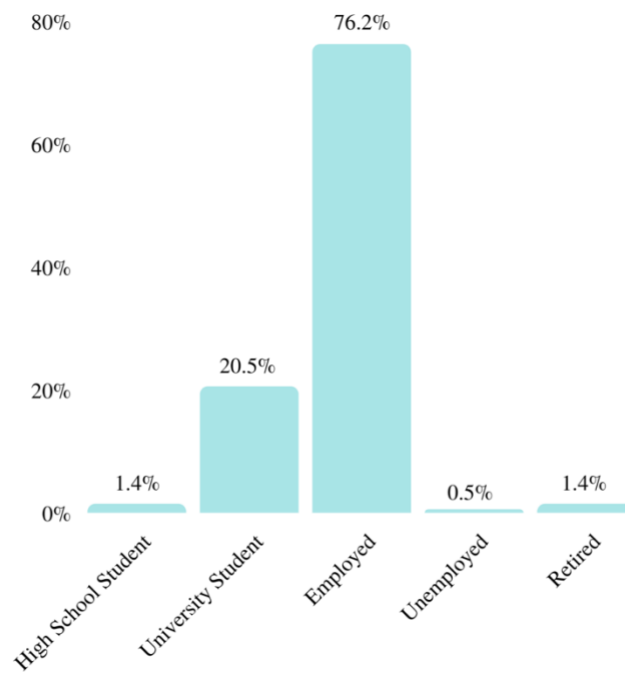
### Nationality



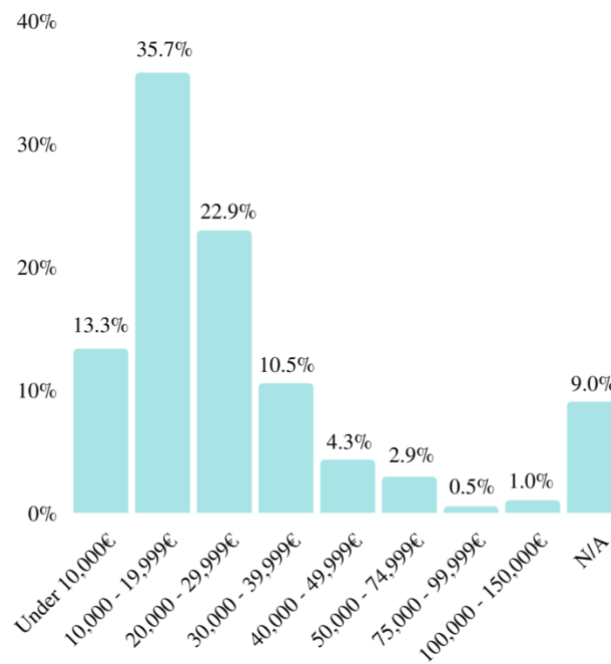
### Education Level



## Occupation



## Annual Income



## REFERENCES

---

- Aiken, L. S. and West, S. G. (1991). *Multiple Regression: Testing and Interpreting Interactions*. Sage.
- Amatulli, C., De Angelis, M., Korschun, D., & Romani, S. (2018). Consumers' perceptions of luxury brands' CSR initiatives: An investigation of the role of status and conspicuous consumption. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 194, 277-287.
- Bagozzi, R. P., & Khoshnevis, M. (2022). How and when brand coolness transforms product quality judgments into positive word of mouth and intentions to buy/use. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 1-20.
- Bamberg, S. (2003). How does environmental concern influence specific environmentally related behaviors? A new answer to an old question. *Journal of environmental psychology*, 23(1), 21-32.
- Belk, R.W. (1988). Possessions and the extended self. *Journal of consumer research*, 15(2), 139-168.
- Bem, D. J. (1967). Self-perception: An alternative interpretation of cognitive dissonance phenomena. *Psychological Review*, 74(3), 183–200.
- Berger, J., & Heath, C. (2007). Where consumers diverge from others: Identity signaling and product domains. *Journal of consumer research*, 34(2), 121-134.
- Berger, J., & Ward, M. (2010). Subtle signals of inconspicuous consumption. *Journal of consumer research*, 37(4), 555-569.
- Brewer, M. K. (2019). Slow fashion in a fast fashion world: Promoting sustainability and responsibility. *Laws*, 8(4), 24.
- Brooks, D. (2010). *Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There*. Simon and Schuster.
- Carrington, M. J., Neville, B. A., & Whitwell, G. J. (2010). Why ethical consumers don't walk their talk: Towards a framework for understanding the gap between the ethical purchase intentions and actual buying behaviour of ethically minded consumers. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 97(1), 139–158.
- Chaudhuri, H., Mazumdar, S., & Ghoshal, A. (2011). Conspicuous consumption orientation: Conceptualisation, scale development and validation. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 10(4), 216-224.
- Cohen, J. (1988). Set Correlation and Contingency Tables. *Applied Psychological Measurement*, 12(4), 425–434.

- ComRes. (2010). General Environment Survey, 19-21.
- Cone, J. D., & Hayes, S. C. (1980). *Environmental problems/behavioral solutions*. Cambridge University Press.
- Dar Nimrod, I., Ganesan, A., & MacCann, C. (2018). Coolness as a trait and its relations to the Big Five, self-esteem, social desirability, and action orientation. *Personality and Individual Differences, 121*(15), 1–6.
- Dar Nimrod, I., Hansen, I. G., Proulx, T., Lehman, D. R., Chapman, B. P., & Duberstein, P. R. (2012). Coolness: An empirical investigation. *Journal of Individual Differences, 33*(3), 175.
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs [DEFRA] (2010). Sustainable clothing action plan. The Department for Environment. London: Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Retrieved October 2022, from:  
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/business/products/roadmaps/clothing/index.html>
- DeVellis, R. F. (1991). Scale Development: Theory and Applications. In *Applied Social Research Methods Series*. Sage Publications.
- Dubois, B., & Duquesne, P. (1993). The market for luxury goods: Income versus culture. *European Journal of marketing*.
- Dupré, S. (2005). *Talk the walk: Advancing sustainable lifestyles through marketing and communications*. United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP).
- Eastman, J. K., Fredenberger, B., Campbell, D., & Calvert, S. (1997). The relationship between status consumption and materialism: A cross-cultural comparison of Chinese, Mexican, and American student. *Journal of marketing theory and practice, 5*(1), 52-66.
- Eastman, J. K., Goldsmith, R. E., & Flynn, L. R. (1999). Status consumption in consumer behavior: Scale development and validation. *Journal of marketing theory and practice, 7*(3), 41-52.
- Eckhardt, G.M., Belk, R.W., & Wilson, J.A. (2015). The rise of inconspicuous consumption. *Journal of Marketing Management, 31*(7-8), 807-826.
- Erdoğan, İ., & Büdeyri-Turan, I. (2012). The role of personality congruence, perceived quality and prestige on ready-to-wear brand loyalty. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*.
- Evans, J. R., & Mathur, A. (2005). The Value of Online Surveys. *Internet Research, 15*(2), 195–219.
- Farrer, J., & Fraser, K. (2011). Sustainable 'v' unsustainable: articulating division in the fashion textiles industry. *Anti-po-des Design Research Journal, 1*, 1-18.

- Finkelstein, J. 1991. *The Fashioned Self*. Oxford: Polity Press.
- Fitzsimons, G.J. (2008), Death to dichotomizing: figure 1, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35(1), 5-8.
- Fisher, T., Cooper, T., Woodward, S., Hiller, A., & Goworek, H. (2008). Public understanding of sustainable clothing: a report to the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs. London: Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).
- Fletcher, K. (2008). *Sustainable Fashion & Textiles: Design Journeys*. Oxford.
- Fletcher, K. (2012). Durability, fashion, sustainability: The processes and practices of use. *Fashion practice*, 4(2), 221-238.
- Florez, L., Castro, D., & Irizarry, J. (2013). Measuring sustainability perceptions of construction materials. *Construction innovation*.
- Gasper, D., Shah, A., & Tankha, S. (2019). The framing of sustainable consumption and production in SDG 12. *Global Policy*, 10, 83-95.
- Grafen, A. (1990). Biological signals as handicaps. *Journal of theoretical biology*, 144(4), 517-546.
- Griskevicius, V., Tybur, J. M., Gangestad, S. W., Perea, E. F., Shapiro, J. R., & Kenrick, D. T. (2009). Aggress to impress: Hostility as an evolved context-dependent strategy. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95(5), 980–994.
- Griskevicius, V., Tybur, J. M., & Van den Bergh, B. (2010). Going green to be seen: status, reputation, and conspicuous conservation. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 98(3), 392.
- Hammad, H., Muster, V., El-Bassiouny, N. M., & Schaefer, M. (2019). Status and sustainability: can conspicuous motives foster sustainable consumption in newly industrialized countries?. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*.
- Hardy, C. L., & Van Vugt, M. (2006). Nice guys finish first: The competitive altruism hypothesis. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 32(10), 1402-1413.
- Hayes, A. F. (2013). An introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach. *New York: Guilford Press*.
- Hayes, A. F. (2015). An index and test of linear moderated mediation. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 50(1), 1-22.
- Higgins, E. T., & Eitam, B. (2014). Priming... Shmiming: It's about knowing when and why stimulated memory representations become active. *Social Cognition*, 32, 225- 242.

Hofmann, S. G., Curtiss, J. E., & Hayes, S. C. (2020). Beyond linear mediation: Toward a dynamic network approach to study treatment processes. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 76, 101824.

Holt, D. B. (2004). *How brands become icons: The principles of cultural branding*. Harvard Business Press.

Hur, E., & Cassidy, T. (2019). Perceptions and attitudes towards sustainable fashion design: challenges and opportunities for implementing sustainability in fashion. *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*.

Joergens, C. (2006). Ethical fashion: myth or future trend? *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*.

Jørgensen, U., Olsen, S. I., Jørgensen, M. S., Lauridsen, E. H., Hauschild, M. Z., Hoffmann, L. & Knudsen, H. H. (2006). Waste prevention, waste policy and innovation. Lyngby: Technical Institute of Denmark, Department of Manufacturing Engineering and Management (IPL).

Joy, A., Sherry Jr, J. F., Venkatesh, A., Wang, J., & Chan, R. (2012). Fast fashion, sustainability, and the ethical appeal of luxury brands. *Fashion theory*, 16(3), 273-295.

Joyner Armstrong, C. M., Connell, K. Y. H., Lang, C., Ruppert-Stroescu, M., & LeHew, M. L. (2016). Educating for sustainable fashion: Using clothing acquisition abstinence to explore sustainable consumption and life beyond growth. *Journal of consumer policy*, 39(4), 417-439.

Juster, F. T. (1966). Consumer buying intentions and purchase probability: An experiment in survey design. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 61(315), 658-696.

Keeble, J. (2013). Young consumers hold the key to sustainable brands. *The Guardian*, 18.

Keinan, A., & Kivetz, R. (2011). Productivity orientation and the consumption of collectable experiences. *Journal of consumer research*, 37(6), 935-950.

Laroche, M., Bergeron, J., & Barbaro-Forleo, G. (2001). Targeting consumers who are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 18(6), 503–520.

Levy, S. J. (1999). Symbols for sale. *Brands, Consumers, Symbols and Research: Sidney J Levy on Marketing*, 203-212.

Loebnitz, N., & Grunert, K. G. (2018). Impact of self-health awareness and perceived product benefits on purchase intentions for hedonic and utilitarian foods with nutrition claims. *Food Quality and Preference*, 64, 221-231.

Lusk, J. L., McLaughlin, L., & Jaeger, S. R. (2007). Strategy and response to purchase intention questions. *Marketing letters*, 18(1), 31-44.

Maxwell, S. E., & Delaney, H. D. (2004). Designing experiments and analyzing data: A model comparison perspective. GEN, Psychology Press.

Milinski, M., Semmann, D., & Krambeck, H. (2002). Donors to charity gain in both indirect reciprocity and political reputation. *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London. Series B: Biological Sciences*, 269(1494), 881-883.

Molden, D. C. (2014). *Understanding priming effects in social psychology*. Guilford Publications.

Muniz, A. M., & O'Guinn, T. C. (2001). Brand community. *Journal of consumer research*, 27(4), 412-432.

O'Cass, A., & Frost, H. (2002). Status brands: examining the effects of non-product-related brand associations on status and conspicuous consumption. *Journal of product & brand management*.

O'Cass, A., & McEwen, H. (2004). Exploring consumer status and conspicuous consumption. *Journal of consumer behaviour: an international research review*, 4(1), 25-39.

Park, H., & Kim, Y. K. (2016). An empirical test of the triple bottom line of customer-centric sustainability: The case of fast fashion. *Fashion and Textiles*, 3(1), 1-18.

Ordabayeva, N., & Chandon, P. (2011). Getting ahead of the Joneses: When equality increases conspicuous consumption among bottom-tier consumers. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 38(1), 27-41.

Podoshen, J. S., & Andrzejewski, S. A. (2012). An examination of the relationships between materialism, conspicuous consumption, impulse buying, and brand loyalty. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 20(3), 319-334.

Pohoata, I., Crupenschi, V. M., & Diaconasu, D. E. (2018). A Reinterpretation of Sustainability under the Sign of Conspicuous Consumption. *Ecoforum Journal*, 7(1).

Rahman, K. (2013). "Wow! It's cool!": The meaning of coolness in marketing. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 31(6), 620-638.

Reips, U.D. (2002). Standards for Internet-Based Experimenting. *Experimental Psychology*, 49(4), 243-256.

Remy, N., Speelman, E., & Swartz, S. (2016). *Style that's sustainable: A new fast-fashion formula*. McKinsey Global Institute. Retrieved November 2022, from: <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/sustainability/our-insights/style-thats-sustainable-a-new-fast-fashion-formula>

Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. (1987). *Our Common Future. The Brundtland Commission to the United Nations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rogers, Z. F. (2014). *Wearing your heart on your sleeve: The effects of conspicuous compassion on identity signaling and charitable behavior*. City University of New York.

Saicheua, V., Knox, A., & Cooper, T. (2012). Sustainability in clothing supply chain: Implications for marketing. *Proceedings of the 37th annual macromarketing conference*, 284-307.

Secretary-General, U.N. (2017). *Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Report of the Secretary-General*.

Seidman, D. (2007). *How: Why how we do anything means everything... in business (and in life)*. John Wiley & Sons.

Semmann, D., Krambeck, H., & Milinski, M. (2005). Reputation is valuable within and outside one's social group. *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology*, 57, 611–616.

Sirgy, M.J., Grewal, D., Mangleburg, T.F., Park, J., Chon, K., Claiborne, C.B., Johar, J.S. & Berkman, H. (1997). Assessing the predictive validity of two methods of measuring self-image congruence. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 25 No. 3.

Shukla, P. (2008). Conspicuous consumption among middle-age consumers: psychological and brand antecedents. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*.

Smith, M. L. (2007). Inconspicuous Consumption: Non-Display Goods and Identity Formation. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory*, 14, 412–38.

Statista (2020). Extra amount global consumers were willing to pay for sustainable clothing. Retrieved November 2022, from: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1010137/premium-consumers-willing-to-pay-for-sustainable-fashion-products-by-amount-worldwide/>

Tavakol, M., & Dennick, R. (2011). Making sense of Cronbach's alpha. *International journal of medical education*, 2, 53.

Textile Outlook International (2009). Textiles and Clothing: Opportunities for Recycling. *Textile Outlook International*, 139, 94–113.

Thornton, S. (1996). *Club cultures: Music, media, and subcultural capital*. Wesleyan University Press.

Torelli, C., Chiu, C. Y., Keh, H. T., & Amaral, N. (2009). Brand iconicity: A shared reality perspective. *ACR North American Advances*.

Trigg, A. B. (2001). Veblen, Bourdieu, and conspicuous consumption. *Journal of economic issues*, 35(1), 99-115.

Truong, Y. (2010). Personal aspirations and the consumption of luxury goods. *International Journal of Market Research*, 52(5), 655-673.

United Nations. (2015). *Transforming Our World: The 2020 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. A/RES/70/1. New York: United Nations.

United Nations. (2019). *UN launches drive to highlight environmental cost of staying fashionable*. New York: United Nations.

United Nations. (2020). *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020*. New York: United Nations.

United Nations. (2021). *UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion*. New York: United Nations. Retrieved October 2022, from: <https://unfashionalliance.org/>

Veblen, T. (1899). *The theory of the leisure class: an economic study of institutions*. Penguin.

Vermeir, I., & Verbeke, W. (2008). Sustainable food consumption among young adults in Belgium: Theory of planned behaviour and the role of confidence and values. *Ecological Economics*, 64, 542–553.

Warren, C., & Campbell, M. C. (2014). What makes things cool? How autonomy influences perceived coolness. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 41(2), 543-563.

Warren, C., Batra, R., Loureiro, S. M. C., & Bagozzi, R. P. (2019). Brand coolness. *Journal of Marketing*, 83(5), 36-56.

WCED (1987). *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our common future*. Geneva: World Commission on Environment and Development.

White, K., & Peloza, J. (2009). Self-benefit versus other-benefit marketing appeals: Their effectiveness in generating charitable support. *Journal of Marketing*, 73(4), 109-124.

Wu, Z., Luo, J., Schroeder, J. E., & Borgerson, J. L. (2017). Forms of inconspicuous consumption: what drives inconspicuous luxury consumption in China?. *Marketing Theory*, 17(4), 491-516.

Zahavi, A. (1975). Mate selection - a selection for a handicap. *Journal of theoretical Biology*, 53(1), 205-214.

Zahavi, A., & Zahavi, A. (1997). *The Handicap Principle: A Missing Piece of Darwin's Puzzle. Working Papers of the Institute for Empirical Research in Economics No.* New York: Oxford University Press.