

**LUXURY FASHION CLOTHES AND ACCESSORIES: THE
ROLE OF ENVY ON DESIRE TO PURCHASE**

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Abstract

The strongest and most prevalent emotional consequence of perceiving superior competitors is envy. On one hand, envy is a powerful motivator that may cause socially harmful behavior, on the other hand, it may also increase the desire to move upward. It is difficult to change physique, or personality, but it is relatively easy to change consumption, especially in a world of unlimited choices.

The following dissertation seeks to comprehend and delimit to what extent the feeling of Envy has an impact on the desire to purchase luxury fashion clothes and accessories from luxury brands such as Gucci, Chanel and Christian Dior. There has been considerable research into the phenomenon of envy in the Psychology field, but relatively few studies have explored this feeling as a driver to desire to buy. It was created a conceptual model that test the relationship between envy and other emotions such as Admiration, Affiliation and Moral Disengagement that drive consumption desire. Moreover, the paper focuses on the effect of Self-Esteem as moderator of the proposed relationships in the model. After collecting quantitative data, the conceptual model and the corresponding hypothesis, have been tested with a partial least squares modelling approach.

The results revealed that Admiration, Affiliation and Moral Disengagement play an important role as influencers of Desire to Buy. Furthermore, it could be seen that Benign Envy has indeed a more significant impact on consumption desire when compared with Malicious Envy.

Key-words: Social comparison, luxury, need for acceptance, superiority, self-improvement, social undermining

JEL: M310, M390

Resumo

A consequência emocional mais predominante e forte depois de uma comparação social é a inveja. Por um lado, a inveja é uma poderosa motivação que pode desencadear em comportamentos socialmente prejudiciais, por outro lado, pode ser a força impulsionadora do auto-melhoramento. É difícil mudar o aspecto físico e a personalidade, no entanto é relativamente fácil mudar o consumo, especialmente num mundo de escolhas ilimitadas.

A seguinte dissertação procura compreender e delimitar em que medida o sentimento de inveja influencia o desejo de compra de roupas e acessórios de marcas de luxo como Gucci, Chanel e Christian Dior. O tema da inveja tem sido pesquisado com alguma frequência no domínio da Psicologia, no entanto foram poucos os estudos que exploraram o sentimento da inveja como motor de desejo de compra. Deste modo, foi criado um modelo conceptual que testou o impacto da inveja noutras emoções como Admiração, Afiliação, e “Moral Disengagement” (propensão para comportamentos destrutivos), que posteriormente levariam a um desejo de compra. Este modelo também testou o efeito da auto-estima como moderadora das relações presentes neste. Após obtidos os dados quantitativos, o modelo e as correspondentes hipóteses foram testados através da ferramenta “partial least squares”.

Os resultados revelaram que tanto a Admiração, como a Afiliação e o “Moral disengagement” desempenham um papel importante como influenciadores do desejo de compra. Além disso, observou-se que a inveja positiva tem um impacto mais significativo no desejo de consumo do que a inveja maliciosa.

Palavras-chave: comparação social, luxo, necessidade de aceitação, superioridade, auto-aperfeiçoamento, comportamentos destrutivos

JEL: M310, M390

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1. Introduction

1.1. Relevance and Interest

Whether it is a friend's fancy apartment, a neighbor's expensive car, a celebrity's stylish shoes, a colleague's new smart phone, or the delicious cookies that a stranger is eating – we often find ourselves in situations in which we lack the superior fortunes that others possess. Undoubtedly, modern societies provide abundant opportunities to compare our own possessions to those of other people. Social media brings a whole new level to consumption, friends sharing all kinds of details of their lives from great meals, social events, new purchases, and vacations. How does this make anyone feel? One thing is absolutely undeniable, everyone had already felt a bit of consumption envy while scrolling their personal Facebook, or Instagram feeds.

As one of the seven deadly sins in the catholic tradition, is an unpleasant emotion that arises from comparisons with superior standards (Crusius and Musswiler, 2012).

This emotion flourishes even in wealthier societies, because of the competitive nature, and the consequent desire to exceed others, or not to be exceeded by them.

It is how others evaluate a person that determines whether they will prefer to interact with him, be associated to him and be influenced by his judgement and behavior. Therefore, people are interested both in knowing how others evaluate them and in receiving positive evaluations. An individual's position in the social hierarchy arises from those comparative evaluations such as merits, reputation and prestige. Hence, the aim of attaining superiority, or at least non-inferiority, is related to the objectives of having a good self-image. (Miceli and Castelfrenchi, 2007)

This feeling has many manifestations, and some of them are mysteriously hidden. For example, it is possible to confuse attraction to another person with the real object of envy. In this sense, an individual “falls in love” for what another has - status, money, power, family ties, or intelligence - rather than with who that person really is. Besides, he can imagine that he will get what he needs by being attached to someone who has it. However the fate of an initial idealization is usually later a reason of disappointment.

1.2 Research Questions and objectives

Never before have expectations been so high about what human beings can accomplish with their lives. People were told, from many sources, that anyone can achieve anything and rise to any position they please.

Nowadays, many people are worried about their social status and inequality. We live in what it's called a culture of envy. In a wealthy society, envy can quickly become the driving force. It is not about meeting the basic needs, but about achieving an envious position. In fact, people seek to be better than everybody else, in whatever game they are playing.

Envy arises when a person feels unhappy about the success of someone else, or about what they have and, at the same time, secretly feeling inferior or not good enough. Instead of finding his own success and motivation to improve, he is envious and wants what another has, wishing that the other person would lose that quality or possession in order to make things seem fair. He really can't know what another person's life is like, but an envious person just assumes that the other is happier or better. So in a strange way, when the person envies someone, he is giving a compliment. However a compliment that can harm the way he feels about himself.

Another interesting fact is that envy does not always belong to someone. His own envy of others can come from what his parents envied or admired. For instance, if his parents struggled financially and wished for more money, he might envy those who have it. Or if a parent idealized a college education that was impossible to obtain, he might admire intellectual pursuits.

People idealize when they are envious. They can imagine that a quality or something possessed by someone else would bring them happiness or fulfillment.

The Luxury Brands provide tangible, intangible, functional and emotional benefits, but certainly the intangible and emotional are those which create demand and drive success. The search for experiences, sensations, identity, desires and cravings, is ultimately the need to feel better through consumption.

Taking into account the importance of social status and the opinion of reference groups for this type of consumption, the implications of envy and social comparison will be studied.

Envy has not been one of the most addressed emotions in academic literature, perhaps because of its negative nature, but it is evident that it clearly influences in the desire of possession, in the characteristics of purchased goods and in the assigned role of acquired brands (Ferrer and Carlos, 2016).

By understanding the provocation of this feeling, marketers can take advantage of its effects in the desire to buy, by designing aspirational and desirable products.

Envy's painful nature is associated with anxiety, depression and low self-esteem, being one of the most hidden and denied feelings (Ferrer and Carlos, 2016).

Therefore, it is very difficult to detect in market research although being a concept analyzed a lot in the field of psychology.

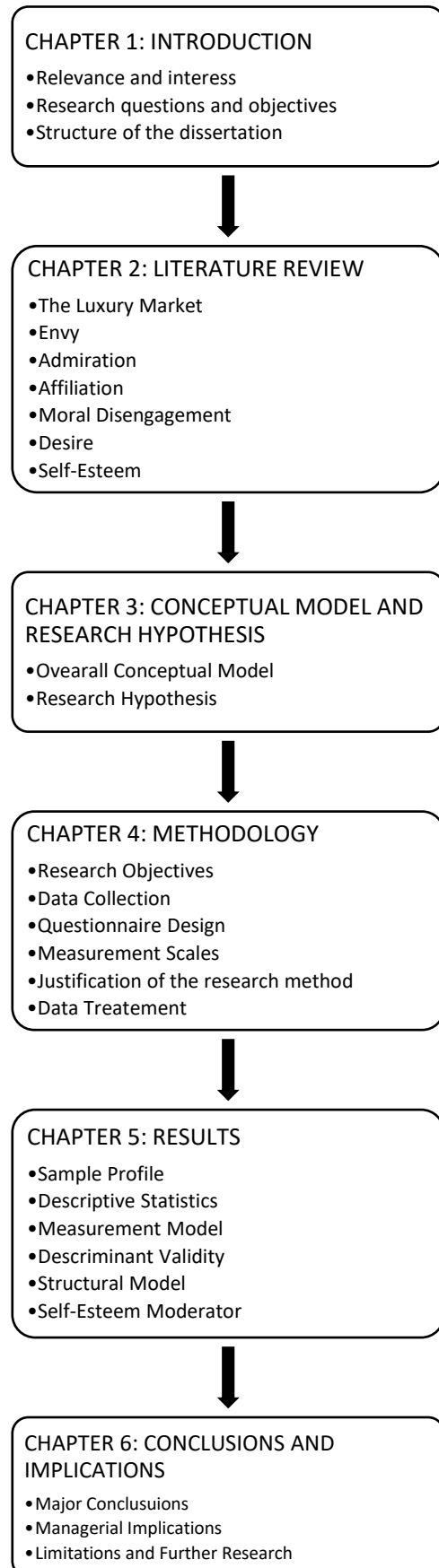
This project mainly examines how the feeling of envy makes a person desire to obtain something and how marketers can take advantage of it as a method of marketing, "feeding" from customer's low self-esteem.

Based on the considerations mentioned above, and in all the literature review presented in the next session of this dissertation, two main research questions arise: Could Admiration, Affiliation and Moral Disengagement contribute for the relationship between Envy and Desire to Buy? How does Self-Esteem influence the relationship between Envy and Desire to Buy?

In order to answer such research questions and to guide the statistical approach of this dissertation, the research objectives have been formulated as follows:

- Explore how Envy influence the Desire to Buy luxury fashion items;
- Explore the mediate effect of Admiration and Affiliation on the relationship between Envy and Desire to Buy;
- Explore the mediate effect of Moral Disengagement on the relationship between Envy and Desire to Buy;
- Analyze the moderation effect of Self-Esteem on the relationship between Envy and Admiration, Admiration and Affiliation, and Envy and Moral Disengagement.

1.3. Structure of the Dissertation



The dissertation is composed by several chapters as following (see figure 1):

Chapter 1: Introduction. The first chapter introduces the background of the study, defines the objectives and research problems. Structure of this paper will be generally mentioned in this opening chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature Review. The second chapter deals with theory about Envy. First, a brief context about the Luxury Market. In further details of the chapter, other emotions are studied such as Admiration, Affiliation and Moral Disengagement. There is also a theoretical explanation about Desire and Self-esteem.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Model and Research Hypothesis. Here the conceptual model and the research hypotheses are presented.

Chapter 4: Methodology. At this stage, it is explained the research methodology and data collection process. As such, the composition of the questionnaire is presented in detail as well as the measurement scales. Finally, the data treatment procedure is introduced to the reader.

Chapter 5 Results: Results section has the role of showing and analyzing all the findings for this thesis project.

Figure 1 - Structure of the thesis
Source: Own elaboration

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Implications. This last chapter provides critical overview of the results of the investigation which are linked with managerial and theoretical implications, while analyzing the limitations and guidelines for future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Luxury Market

The luxury market is very significant, not only in terms of its market value, but also in terms of its impressive growth rate, it keeps increasing even in a crisis context. According to the “Luxury Goods Worldwide Market Study”, the overall market exceeded €1 trillion, in 2015. (Bain & Company, 2015)

The global luxury consumption comprises several categories, namely, cars, personal luxury goods (includes accessories such as shoes and leather goods), apparel (women’s ready-to-wear and men’s ready-to-wear), hard luxury (jewels and watches), beauty (perfumes and cosmetic) luxury hospitality, luxury cruises, designer furniture, fine food, wines and spirits, yachts, private jets and fine art. (Bain & Company, 2015)

A study of the Nielsen Company (Ruiz, 2008) has found that Gucci, Chanel, Calvin Klein, Louis Vuitton and Christian Dior belong to the five most luxury fashion brands worldwide. Moreover, brands such as Versace, Giorgio Armani, Ralph Lauren, Prada as well as Yves Saint Laurent scored to be highly luxurious brands.

This thesis will only focus on the segment of personal luxury goods and apparel, specifically in the brands previously mentioned.

2.1.1. Luxury Consumption

Mass production and information overload from the 21st century, have made consumers look for individuality and exclusivity in everyday life. This increase in the demand for luxurious goods is a consequence of the recent economic development, which has provided an opportunity for ordinary consumers to afford products conventionally tagged to upper classes (a social paradigm shift to “Luxury for the Masses”) (Kang and Bae, 2016). “*With the growing prosperity of the emerging markets, people’s purchasing power is growing.*” (Chen et al., 2016:84).

Individuals pursue uniqueness in order to develop and enhance their self-image and social image. It is through brands that they express themselves.

The term “luxury” is used in our daily life to refer to different products, brands and lifestyles. Still, the meaning of “luxury” varies from person to person mainly because it

is based on individual perceptions and personal interpretations, making it a hard concept to define.

The word 'luxury' is derived from the word 'luxus' which suggests opulence, exuberance and sumptuousness. According to the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2006), luxury is something inessential but conducive to pleasure and comfort or something expensive or difficult to obtain.

Looking into specific product characteristics, luxury goods such as Cartier watches, Hermes handbags and Chanel suits, possess features that include exclusivity, high-priced, well-known brands, high quality, brand awareness and customer loyalty. (Phau and Prendergast, 2000; Chen et al., 2016).

2.1.2. Motivations for Luxury

Nowadays, advertising, store displays, and mass media provide us with tempting views of consumer goods and services as well as images of those who use them. The Internet not only provides opportunities to buy these goods and services, but also to see what others have bought and what they have to say about them.

Endless pictures of cars, yachts, shoes, mansions and swimming pools, are a daily presence in everyone's life, and after seen a few of dozen, it becomes disorienting, even distressing. These pictures are, of course, intended to incite envy.

Publicity can be seen as a process of manufacturing glamour. It promises happiness, the happiness of being envied. (Belk, 2011)

Over time, higher classes had demonstrated their power and status via extravagance (Baudriallard, 1998). Consumers use luxury goods to show their wealth and social status. These goods are used as a symbol to be recognize and belong to the upperclass of the society (Chen et al., 2016). Besides, they can provide a better sense of self and boost a person's self-esteem. Moreover, individuals tend to engage in materialistic behavior when their self-esteem is low. For instance, some individuals believe that having luxury goods will make them happier and more fulfilled. (Belk, 1985).

In the modern society it is almost impossible to distinguish the social position via product itself, people are judged via the brand (e.g. logo) that they consume, "you are what you consume" (Twitchell, 2002). In this sense, consuming luxury goods is an opportunity to

evaluate one's financial capability as well as professional competence (Kang and Bae, 2016).

Regarding consumer's motivations for purchasing luxury goods, Truong and McColl (2011) suggest as extrinsic goals: financial success (money), social recognition (fame), and appealing appearance (image). As intrinsic goals they suggest self-acceptance (growth), affiliation (relatedness), community feeling (helpfulness), and physical fitness (health).

2.2. Envy

2.2.1. What is envy?

The traditional interpretation of envy refers to the secret desire of wishing what someone else has but one does not, and the resultant suffering reaction.

Belk (2008), suggest the feeling of envy as a painful feeling which appears when people covet superior possessions of others or are aware of their good fortunes. Envy is an emotion that "*occurs when a person lacks another's superior quality, achievement, or possession and either desires it or wishes that the other lacked it*" (Parrott and Smith, 1993:906).

In this way, why would someone desire the lack of another's achievement, if in reality it doesn't increase his own possibility to reach that achievement? This can be seen as the real object of envy. (Miceli and Castelfrenchi, 2007)

Many researchers have stressed that envy is an extremely anti-social and destructive emotional state, but at the same time, it is the most completely socially oriented. This feeling is considered a negative emotion, associated with a desire to reduce the gap between oneself and the superior other (Van de Ven et al., 2011). This gap is a result from social comparison with people that are superior in a domain that is important to oneself. As such, this feeling stems from the human propensity to see his own well-being outshined by someone else's, since his standard of reference is not his integral value and worth, but how it compares with others' well-being (Lange and Crusius, 2015).

2.2.2. What and who is envied?

In the past, while men competed for food and shelter, today they contest for job promotions, social status, luxury goods, and fancy cars.

The object of envy can take many forms, from material goods to abstract needs. The most common forms are luxury goods, social status, job positions, and perfect body image.

Sometimes, a particular goal (or object) achieved by the envied person (advantaged person) turns into one of the envier's goal (envious person) a posteriori, once the envied has been seen happy and satisfied with the object. That is, one become to envy another without even know or actually need the object, he just wants it because the other (who is a reference for him) possess it. (Miceli and Castelfrenchi, 2007)

People frequently envy those who are close to them in terms of time, space, age and reputation. Though, that proximity often suggests the fact of knowing the advantaged person, his qualities, goals, skills, resources. On the other hand, the closeness can be explained by similarity in goals, interests, aspirations and values. This proximity enables more opportunities for social comparison (Smith, 2004).

2.2.3. Envy and social comparison

If “we did not compare ourselves to others, there would be no envy.” (Belk, 2011:120).

In its essence, envy is always based on an upward social comparison. Such a comparison is particularly likely to result in envy if it is directed toward similar others and if it concerns domains of high relevance to the self (Smith, 2004)

According to Hill and Buss (2010), envy results from social comparative processes, which often determines how individuals evaluate themselves.

The circumstances in which someone might be envious will always involve a social comparison or competition between himself and another person. Such competition and comparison with others are a part of the yardstick by which a person measure himself – his self-evaluation.

Young children and adults quickly notice when something “is not fair”, but with time they learn how to keep those feelings to themselves. The perception of another's advantage and success, frequently are followed by feelings of unfairness and hostility, all part of what it truly means to be human (Miceli and Castelfranchi, , 2007).

Over the course of evolutionary time, envy has played a significant role in human's pursuit for the basic resources for reproduction and survival. Individuals experiencing envy as a reply to advantages possessed by others, would have been more disposed to invest effort in achieving the same advantages for themselves comparing to those that didn't experience envy. (Hill and Buss, 2010)

When this sort of evaluation is favorably, the individual experience a positive affective response, as it always feels good to overtake competitors, and it evolves to benign envy. On the other hand, when social comparisons weaken the individual's performance, the reaction will eventually be negative and it develops into malicious envy (Lange and Crusius, 2015).

2.2.4. Benign and malign envy

Envy signals to people that they miss something attractive that someone else does have. Pulling the other down by engaging in negative behavior is one way to level this difference between oneself and the superior other, but another possible behavioral approach exists. Instead of wanting to pull down the other, the difference can also be leveled by moving oneself up. If this is the case, envy could be a motivating force as well (Belk, 2011).

Researchers have identified two distinct forms of envy: benign and malicious envy. Both are considered negative and frustrating, however they comprise distinct patterns of cognition and behavior. The "good" side of envy involves more positive thoughts and the expression of praise and goodwill toward someone else's admirable talent or achievement. Yet, it's also related with a greater effort and desire to get the other's advantage. On the other hand, malicious envy is associated with negative thoughts about the envied person. It also motivates damaging consequences such as animosity, hostile resentful feelings, social undermining within groups and cheating (Lange and Crusius, 2015).

For instance, when the envier appraises the other's advantage as fair and deserved, the situation evolves into benign envy. In contrast, when the envier appraises the other's advantage as unmerited and unfair, the situation evolves to malicious envy (Van de Ven, 2011).

Both forms of envy seek to level the difference between the self and the superior standard. To achieve this, the envier can either try to increase personal effort to level up and become as successful as the envied person or he can damage the other's success and level the envied person down (Belk, 2011).

2.2.5. Envy and social undermining

Regarding envy feelings, people often like to keep them in privacy. For instance, if a girl thinks that her friend's fashion style is more attractive than hers and she's making an effort in order to be like her, she will somehow hide this information to herself. It would be embarrassing to admit her insecurity as well as her lack of self-esteem.

As explained by Hill and Buss (2010), keeping this sort of feeling private is important not only for preserving one's reputation, credibility and dignity, but also to avoid future competitive failures. However, the admission of this feeling emits a signal to all the interested parties that the envious has been surpassed by a rival. In this line, if a person is envious of someone it is unlikely that he admit it to anyone, except perhaps to someone who might also be envious of that other person and will participate with him in "destroying" the envied. As a result, this persuasive attitude prompts social damage and destructive relationships.

Moreover, economists have studied that workers in the United States usually react to a coworker's job promotion, income and social status by encouraging to improve themselves. In other realities, societies with scarce resources and conditions have a tendency to weaken or destroy their competitors' advantage as a response to envy (Smith, 2004).

Envy is often associated to a harmful distortion of the human well-being. The feeling of distress is common after seeing a friend, a coworker, family, anyone achieve an advantage that a person would like for himself. Feelings of resentment, disappointment, hostility have set families apart, destroyed friendships and divested work relations. Such reactions can be so visceral and unpleasant that the individual would gladly end the relationship rather than continue experiencing this painful reminder of the other's superiority (Miceli and Castelfranchi, 2007).

2.3. Admiration

As we seen before, when the envier appraises the others' superior advantage as fair and deserved, the situation evolves into benign envy. *“Rather than resent or feel maliciously envious toward this person, we might regard them as a role model or consumption hero.”* (Alicke and Zeel, 2008; Belk, 2011:124). This kind of “level-up” reaction is called admiration.

2.3.1. The concept of Admiration

Historically, admiration had been used to indicate amazement, wonder and surprise. However, the term had evolved and changed its meaning over time. (Schindler et al., 2013). Nowadays, this concept is often associated to esteem, delight, affection, appreciation, recognition and praise. There are a few emotions that can be addressed to admiration such as moral elevation, respect and the state of being inspired by (Algoe and Haidt, 2009). By moral elevation the authors refer to emotional responses toward goodness or excellence in any domain.

It is commonly regarded that this emotion is perceived as a strong positive relationship with a particular other, requiring closeness, friendliness, trust and respect. Given these implications, admiration is an other-focused emotion, elicited by individuals of skill or talent exceeding standards. (Onu et al., 2016). Besides, admiration results from a positive feeling about the accomplishment of a superior other, as well as elevation, gratitude, awe, adoration. Due to that reason, it is important to know how it differs from related emotions. Onu et al. (2016) summarize the differences in a table. (See table 1).

Some researchers suggest that admiration is considered an emotional response to an upward social comparison, where the admired other can trigger goals associated to skill and knowledge acquisition. (Schindler et al., 2013). In this line, *“Admiration is thought to have essential functions for social interaction: it inspires us to learn from excellent models, to become better people, and to praise others and create social bonds.”* (Onu, et al., 2016: 218)

Table 1- Admiration and related emotions: Summary (Source Onu et al., 2016)

Distinction from admiration			
	Theoretical predictors		
Related emotion	Valence	Elicitors	Actions
Elevation	Same valence (positive)	Elevation is elicited by moral excellence, while admiration by nonmoral excellence (Algoe & Haidt, 2009)	Elevation motivates being kind to others, while admiration motivates self-improvement (Algoe & Haidt, 2009)
Gratitude	Same valence (positive)	Gratitude is elicited by being beneficiary of another's moral excellence, while admiration and elevation are elicited by excellence witnessed, but not targeted to the self (Algoe & Haidt, 2009)	Gratitude motivates repaying the benefactor, while admiration only motivates praising the admired to others (Algoe & Haidt, 2009)
Awe	Same valence (positive)	Admiration is elicited by excellence in others, while awe is elicited by ability so extraordinary that it is difficult to grasp (Keltner & Haidt, 2003)	While admiration motivates self-improvement, awe motivates passive contemplation and submission (Keltner & Haidt, 2003)
Envy	Opposite valence (envy has a negative valence)	Authors agree that both envy and admiration are elicited by the competence of others, but some authors believe that admiration is triggered by believing the admired target's ability is attainable for the self (e.g., Smith, 2000), while others support the opposite view (van de Ven et al., 2011)	Admiration is either viewed as an energizing emotion, motivating self-improvement, as opposed to envy (Immordino-Yang, 2011; Smith, 2000); or as a passive emotion, opposed to envy which motivates improvement (van de Ven et al., 2011).
Adoration	Same valence (positive)	Admiration elicited by attainable excellence, while adoration by excellence not attainable or fully understood (Schindler et al., 2013)	Admiration leads to emulation, while adoration elicits the desire to affiliate and unite to the target (Schindler et al., 2015)

2.3.2. Admiration and social comparison

Admiration can be a positive force in our lives. Having people to look up to, gives us a clear idea of the traits and talents we value and point the way for our own growth and development.

Upward social comparisons can either make people feel good about themselves or insecure and unhappy. For instance, a bachelor student who attends to a master class of a renowned physician might either feel inferior and threatened or feel inspired and amazed. According to Johnson and Stapel (2007), only in a situation where an individual feels threatened after an upward social comparison, its performance is likely to improve.

It is possible to choose the other with whom to compare. That is, in conditions that allow improvement, an individual tends to compare to those who are superior; whereas in situations where progress is not possible, he prefers downward comparisons (Van de Ven et al., 2011).

In the emotions field, admiration is assumed as an energizing sensation that stimulates modeling and working harder towards one's success (Onu et al., 2016).

But how exactly can this pleasant emotion turn into negative feelings?

2.3.3. Admiration and Envy

Two “*key emotions people can experience when someone else is better than them are envy and admiration*”. (Van de Ven, 2017: 193)

Taking in consideration the emotion of admiration, Rivera (1977; Schindler et al, 2013) found that the admired person owns certain qualities that are coveted, qualities that encourage the admirer to find purpose and realize his own ideals. Therefore, the admirer identifies the ideal self in the other.

According to Hareli and Weiner (2002) admiration results when another's success or superiority comes from effort and hard work, rather than a personal ability or luck. When the success is linked to personal ability or luck, envy arises in the place of admiration. Besides, these successes and superiorities should be perceived as deserved (legitimacy of prestige) when it comes to the actions taken to produce this outcome. They should also be in accordance with the individual's ideals and standards, since that admiration only occurs in the domains that are significant and important to the self (Smith, 2004). The

self-relevance of the goal is what makes the difference. Meaning that, when accomplishing a specific goal that is not self-definitional, admiration arises without suffering. For instance, I may admire an individual's ability to play chess and recognize my inferiority with no particular suffering or affecting self-esteem (Miceli and Castelfranchi, 2007).

On one hand admiration seems to play the role of stimulus do to better (self-improvement). On the other hand, apart from the inspirational effect, no research has actually proved whether admiration triggers behavioral changes in order to improve performance.

Commonly, people associate the word admire to a virtue and envy to a vice. However that is hardly a settle truth. According to Van de Ven et al. (2011:784), "admiring someone feels positive but may not lead to a motivation to improve oneself, whereas being (benignly) envious of someone feels frustrating and as such may promote a motivation to improve oneself". In other words, admiration is unlikely to encourage performance, while benign envy is. For instance, if an individual feels positive after an upward social comparison, the resultant effect will probably be inspiration, yet if negative feelings come following an upward social comparison, the outcome will be to work harder and perform better. It is possible to say that a negative emotion like envy leads to a motivation to enhanced oneself after an upward social comparison (Lange et al., 2016). But why does envy drive self-improvement? As previously mentioned in this chapter, envy arises when an individual's social status is threatened by another person who is superior in a domain relevant to the self. The findings of Van de Ven et al. (2011) are particularly interesting, they found that neither admiration nor malicious envy would stimulate people to enhance their performance but only benign envy. To support that argument, they explained that admiration equals admitting defeat (the feeling that the other is so good at something that one can only look with appreciation at how great the other is). In their study, when the participants were confronted with an upward social comparison situation where improvement was under their control, they experienced benign envy and consequently planned to develop their capacities. Conversely, when confronted with a situation where improvement was outside of their control, admiration was the clear reaction and as a result, participants did not become motivated. It should be noted that admiration have other positive consequences, for instance inspiration to

achieve one's goals, strengthen of bonds between people, affection, appreciation (Onu et al.).

Van de Ven et al. (2011) suggest that, if the advantage of another is deserved it is likely to prompt benign envy, if it is undeserved, it is likely that malicious envy arise. Benign envy only arises when the situation allows improvement, after all undeserved advantages imply that working hard might not be sufficient to reach the desired goals. However, we also admire people who earned their achievements, contrary to those who had luck. Due to that reason, being worthy of an advantage of another person is clearly not sufficient to trigger motivation to do better, whereas benign envy works as the driving force.

Given these implications, is benign envy more beneficial than admiration? We know that on one hand admiration is a pleasant emotion, on the other benign envy increases performance. Therefore it depends on what is more important: feeling better or performing better. (Van de Ven et al., 2011)

Still on the subject of envy and admiration, some researchers' perspectives do not always go hand to hand with what it is observed in reality. Recently, the findings of Van de Ven (2017) reveal that both admiration and benign envy have a central role in self-improvement. This contradicts his last conclusions where he found that admiration did not stimulate a better performance.

Miceli and Castelfranchi (2007) suggest that a benign form of envy is in fact not a form of envy but rather a form of admiration. In other words, envy must be linked with the impossibility of improvement, it is exactly this gap that fuels envy. If emulation (a desire to equal or excel others) is experienced, then yes it is a form of admiration, where the individual believes that is able to reduce the discrepancy.

Van de Ven (2017) point of view regarding admiration as trigger to enhancement, therefore, is somehow in tune with Miceli and Castelfranchi, in the way that people who admire someone feel motivation to improve. The study also showed that benign and malicious envy had an influence on behaviors, while the benign form encouraged self-improvement, the malicious form led to a stronger motivation to pull down the superior other. (Van de Ven, 2017)

Finally Van de Ven et al. (2011) argue that admiration is most likely to prompt motivation to affiliate with the other, contrary to benign envy. Maybe this is not surprising since benign envy, perceived as a negative and frustrating experience, does not nurture the

desire to affiliate. Besides, the idea of spending much time with someone with superior qualities makes anyone uncomfortable.

2.4. Affiliation

Affiliation “*is the desire or tendency to be with others of one’s own kind.*” (Weber and Schafer, 2016: 56)

As defined by Weber and Schafer (2016), affiliation is the tendency to seek the company of others. Several animal species join in groups to migrate or search for food and shelter. Regarding human affiliation, it is not ruled by instinct or nature but is affected by specific causes. One of these is fear, when an individual feels anxious and frightened he seeks the company of others. Their presence have a comforting and supportive effect. Moreover, people favor the company of others who are equally scared compared to the company of strangers. Due to that reason, the preference for similar others indicate that affiliation is a source of information and reassurance.

Apart from calming fear and fulfilling the need for information or social comparison, affiliation enables a specific form of attraction to other individuals. This attraction typically evolves into friendship, love or other forms of intimacy. Conjugating the two aforementioned factors, interpersonal attraction is acknowledged as the preference to interact with specific others, which is influenced by several factors. For instance, the aspect of propinquity that is, the proximity or nearness of other individuals. People tend to form friendship bonds with those who live nearby and have frequent contact (Dunn and Hoegg, 2014). Propinquity increases attraction since it increases familiarity, meaning that an individual is attracted by a stimulus only because he had been exposed to that stimulus more frequently than others. “*The more familiar a person is, the more predictable that person seems to be.*” (Weber and Schafer, 2016: 57) Therefore, predictability and familiarity are two factors that work as reassurance and reliability when it comes to engage in affiliation.

An equally important factor is the physical attractiveness. It is a common stereotype that people physically good-looking are assumed to be great and valuable in other domains. For instance, a physically attractive individual is frequently perceived as skilled, intelligent and socially succeed. Thus, it is understandable that the fear of rejection has a

direct impact on physically attractiveness. When it comes to choose friends and partners, people tend to select others who match their own levels of physical attractiveness and qualities.

The principle of matching emphasizes the importance of similarity in attitudes, values, ideals and background. People with common interests, hobbies and goals are more likely to become friends. Likewise, similar values and ideals bring people closer, nurturing trust and commitment in relationships. (Um, 2016)

2.4.1. Social Comparison Theory

The experience of obtaining information through affiliating with others is comprehended as social comparison theory. “*Social comparison is the process of comparing oneself with others in determining how to behave*” (Weber and Schafer, 2016: 56).

Each individual has their own beliefs and place value on the validity of their ideals. On one hand some beliefs are objective and can be confirmed by consulting a reference such as an Encyclopedia. On the other hand, subjective beliefs can only be verified by consensual validation (finding a general agreement among other people), in order to validate their beliefs.

The less secure and certain someone feels about the correctness of their beliefs, the more they depend and trust on social comparison as a source of validation. If the ideals of one individual are accepted and followed by numerous others, then his opinion is appraised as correct and trustworthy (Festinger, 1954; Weber and Schafer, 2016).

This clarifies the attractiveness of group membership. People join groups such as organizations, clubs and churches to support each other in shared beliefs (Um, 2016).

2.4.2. Need for social affiliation

People tend to affiliate with outstanding others that they admire or adore. It include any effort to make or maintain contact with the other, in reality or in one’s imagination. The other is seen as a role model, for that reason, individuals seek to affiliate with him, create a close relationship where one benefits from the other’s excellence. Sometimes, the desire to become part of his world is so palpable in the individual’s mind that somehow he conceives an imaginary relationship – parasocial interactions. (Schindler et al., 2013)

Verroff and Veroff (1980; Um, 2016) define need for social affiliation as a personality trait corresponding to an individual's desire for social contact or belongingness. In general, individuals search for social gratification (rewards) from harmonious relationships and from a sense of community.

Bloemer *et al.* (2003) study the impact of need for social affiliation on behavioral intentions in a hairdresser's context. They define the need for social affiliation as “*a preference to be with other people and to engage in relationships*” (Bloemer *et al.*, 2003: 232). From a commercial friendship perspective, the notion of need for social affiliation is mentioned as sociability, that is, the preference of being with others rather than remaining alone. In their study, they suggested that the need for social affiliation directly influences behavioral intentions. Specifically, the authors argued that affiliation is a strong determinant of three behavioral intentions: word-of-mouth, repeat purchase or price sensitivity (a customer maintains a relationship with a service provider even if prices increase). There have been evidences that people in search for human interaction are willing to engage in long-term relationships (Forman and Sriram, 1991). Moreover, the consumer satisfaction is positively related to the efforts made by the retailer. Given these implications, the authors believed that satisfaction is a path for commitment and in turn a motivation to act. Commitment is perceived as the combination of the buyer's desire to continue a relationship with a seller and the seller's willingness to make efforts to maintain it (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Fig.2 is a visual representation of Bloemer *et al.* (2003) conceptual model.

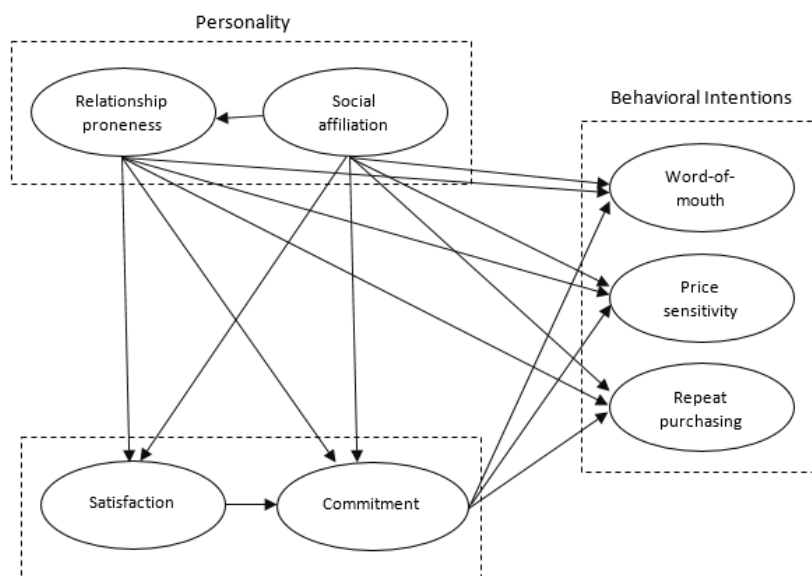


Figure 2 - Conceptual Model (Source: Bloemer *et al.*, 2003)

2.4.3. Digitized Affiliation

Technology has been changing our lives completely. Nowadays people are able to choose who they meet, how and when to pursue friendships and relationships or seek affiliation with groups. The new digital tools provide means other than propinquity for people to meet and contact others with common interests. The internet allowed instant access to other cultures and realities regardless of physical distance. Smartphones and wearables offered ways to communicate despite location or time. This remotely communication affected social relationships in the way that people focused on text messages and video calls instead of real and face-to-face interaction.

According to Weber and Schafer (2016), individuals formed affiliation by participating in online forums, virtual chat boards and social networks. This digital world enabled the creation of anonymous profiles, which in turn allowed people to embody in different roles, often improved versions of themselves. Performing a fake self might improve the self-esteem and provide a momentary sensation of pleasure, however this represents a physical and emotional danger.

2.5. Moral Disengagement

People use several mechanisms that allow them to live in accordance with moral standards – social cognitive theory. Such moral standards formed and conveyed by the society, work as guides and deterrents for behaviors. An individual's conduct is regulated by the consequences he apply to himself. People enjoy things that give them satisfaction and a sense of self-worth, and for that reason, they avoid behaviors that infringe their moral standards, since that will cause self-condemnation. In this way, preventive self-sanctions play an important role as inhibitors for deviant behavior, thus keeping a right conduct – self-regulatory mechanisms. (Bandura et al., 1996)

According to Moore et al. (2012), Bandura in 1980's proposes the theory of moral disengagement as an extension of his social cognitive theory.

2.5.1. The Mechanisms of Moral Disengagement

Moral disengagement refers to “*a set of cognitive justifications (referred to as mechanisms) that allow an individual to commit acts such as social undermining while avoiding the self-sanctions (e.g., self-condemnation, self-loathing) that ordinarily deter such behavior.*” (Duffy et al., 2012).

In other words, it involves a process of cognitive re-construing or re-framing of destructive behavior as being morally acceptable without changing the behavior or the moral standards. The same behavior might be perceived as wrong and reprehensible in one circumstance and as adequate or necessary in another context. In this line, self-sanctions of transgressive conduct may be deactivated by moral disengagement mechanisms (Fida et al., 2015). People abstain from a transgressive conduct until they have found a rightful justification for their actions. That is, culpable acts can be converted to decent ones through cognitive reconstrual (Bandura et al., 1996).

Bandura et al. (1996) state that moral disengagement occurs through a set of three broad mechanisms and eight specific examples of disengagement that facilitate unethical behavior.

The first broad mechanism – re-construing the conduct – includes moral justification, use of euphemistic language or labeling and advantageous comparison. The second – obscuring or distorting consequences – includes displacement of responsibility, diffusion of responsibility and distortion of consequences. The third – devaluing the target – involves dehumanizing or attributing blame to victims. (Duffy *et al.*, 2012). Table 2 explains in detail each mechanism.

Table 2 - The mechanisms of moral disengagement. (Source: Own adapted from Bandura et al., 1996 and Moore et al., 2012)

Re-construing the conduct	Moral justification	The act of portraying unethical behavior as though it has a moral purpose in order to make it socially acceptable. On a daily basis, aggressive behaviors get justified in the name of honor and reputation. For instance, the act of torture, in order to obtain crucial information to protect the nation's citizens, is seen as acceptable.
	Euphemistic language	The use of sanitized language to describe reprehensible conduct. Language shapes individual's thoughts, which constitute the basis for their actions. Activities can earn different "appearances" depending on what names are given or attached to them. With the help of tricky rephrasing, harmful behavior is made innocuous and acceptable, and people who are part of it are liberated from feeling guilty. For example, a terrorist attack is painted as "clean, surgical strikes," and the victims are eloquently listed as "collateral damage."
	Advantageous comparison	This process exploits the contrast between a behavior under consideration and an even more reprehensible one. That is, people contrast their conduct with other examples of more immoral behavior and in doing this comparison their own conduct will appear trivial, with little consequences. The more immoral the contrasting behavior is, the more likely that the other will seem inoffensive.
Obscuring or distorting consequences	Displacement of responsibility	Distortion of the relationship between actions and its consequences. People do things that normally wouldn't do (according to their moral standards) if a legitimate authority accepts responsibility for the consequences of that behavior. Under these circumstances individuals view their actions as orders of authorities rather than their own actions. The perception of not being the true agents of their actions, save them from self-condemnation.
	Diffusion of responsibility	Distributing responsibility for one's action across members of a group. In general, a person feels less responsible when others are also equally responsible. Tasks that are subdivided seem harmless and easy to carry out. Decision making in groups is a common practice that persuade even polite people to behave inhumanely. This group behavior provides the sense of anonymity, which weakens moral values and self-control.
	Distortion of consequences	Describes the minimization of the seriousness of the outcomes of one's actions. When people engage in harmful behaviors for personal gains, or because of social incentives, they tend to diminish the consequences in order to avoid facing the real harm they caused. As long as the outcomes of one's conduct are ignored or disbelieved there is no reason for self-censure to be triggered.
Devaluing the target	Dehumanization	The process through which a person or group of people are deprived of human attributes and undeserved of basic human consideration. These individuals, perceived as unworthy of moral regard are placed on a separate group, apart from the society. They are no longer regarded as individuals with feelings, hopes and worries, but as objects. Due to those reasons, it become viable to treat others with less moral concern and empathy, and even violence. For instance, the way that Nazis treated Jews can be explained by this mechanism.
	Attribution of blame	The responsibility of the acts is attributed to the victims themselves, who are described as deserving all that befalls them. By associating the blame on others or on circumstances, an individual is released from his own injurious action but he also feels a sense of proud by thinking that he is doing the right thing. An example of this behavior is present on white-collar crimes.

Many studies have demonstrated the desinhibitory power of moral disengagement and its strong association with negative behaviors across different contexts (Fida et al., 2015). According to Bandura *et al.* (1996) moral disengagement influences unethical behavior once that people have little reason to be concerned by guilt, shame or remorse. In their study, they predicted that high moral disengagement would be followed by low guilt as well as weak anticipatory self-restraints against immoral behavior. In other words, these eight mechanisms lead people to behave more aggressively.

But why individuals engage in unethical behaviors?

2.5.2. From envy to moral disengagement

In a workplace environment, employees have several opportunities to compare their advantages, performance, standing and benefits with colleagues. In one hand, favorable social comparison fills the individual with pleasure, on the other hand, unfavorable comparison leads to a focus on what is lacking relatively to his colleagues (Hogg, 2000). In the last case, the felling of envy (when one lacks and desires other's superior qualities, successes or possessions) may arise. In work context, this feeling may have positive outcomes, for instance a motivation to improve performance. However, it is known to have a negative nature. For that reason, employees should be highly motivated in order to lower feelings of envy. When this can't be achieved and envy prevails, several consequences might emerge, such as schadenfreude, aggression and even crime. The core intention is often to reduce the gap between the envier and envied, or fully remove the envied's advantage.

Duffy et al. (2012: 644) state that: "*the link between envy and social undermining is mediated by a disengagement of the self-regulatory mechanisms that would otherwise constrain such behavior.*" Envy intensifies moral disengagement, allowing employees to 'forget' their cognitive barriers and consequently engaging in harmful interpersonal behaviors. In this way, the authors predicted that envy stimulates moral disengagement which in turn disables self-sanctions against injurious actions.

Given these implications, it is likely that envy is a strong predictor of social undermining. The process of social undermining involves intentional behavior, designed to gradually weaken the target. This concept represents one possible way for reducing other's

perceived superiority and enhance their own gap between the real state and the desired one while, relieving hostility and frustration feelings (Moore et al., 2012)

To elaborate this construct, the researchers studied the impact of social identification on moral disengagement. Social identification is described as common bonds, closeness, and similarity of interests. They expected that envious with low social identification, that is, less psychologically connected, will certainly moral disengage which in turn leads to social undermining (Duffy et al, 2012).

There have been evidences that team undermining norms also work as an antidote to the negative effects of envy, by shaping each individual's conduct. The social influence play an important role in conditioning the relationship between moral disengagement and social undermining. Meaning that, when these social norms are strong, individuals are inserted in an environment that encourage them to forget self-sanctions and engage in social undermine. This can be explained by the fact that people take these norms or the typical behavior exhibited by others, as heuristic, a short-cut for behavioral decision making (Duffy et al., 2012).

Figure 3 represents the theoretical model proposed by Duffy et al., 2012.

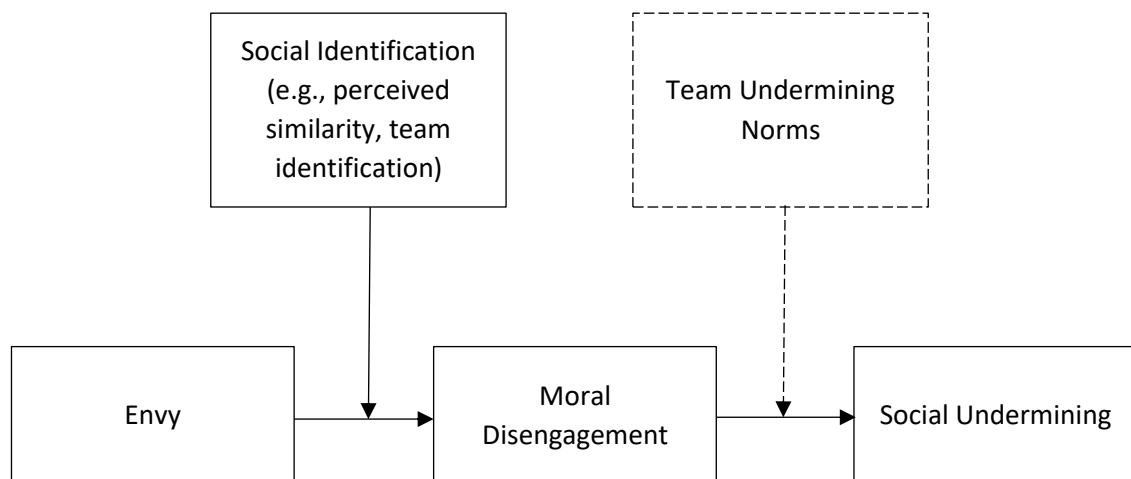


Figure 3 - Proposed Theoretical Model (Source: Duffy et al., 2012)

2.6. Desire

In economically developed societies, consumers are mainly moved by their desires. According to Belk et al. (2003: 329) “*it is the source of our life energy*”. A desire is commonly seen as the driving force behind consumption. (Boujbel and d’Astous, 2015) “*To desire is to live, to hope, to be alive.*” (Belk et al. 2003: 345).

Perugini and Bagozzi (2001) state that desires constitute important motivators in decision-making. It represents a regular aspect of daily life. In the psychological field, the concept of desire is comprehended as a fundamental human motive (Irvine, 2006) which is in accordance with the adaptation theory. Such theory says that when a desired state is accomplished, the individual feels comfort and satisfaction. Subsequently the level of expectations changes creating a gap between the present state and the desired state. This gap generates dissatisfaction and a sense of discomfort which in turn prompts a new desire to act upon the situation – the cycle of desire (Belk et al., 2003).

In this line, the state of desire begins when an individual thinks or comes across a valued object not possessed. External sources such as advertising, retail displays, films, television, word-of-mouth and social media also stimulate the experience of desire.

2.6.1. Needs, wants and desires

“*Consumer desire is a passion born between consumption fantasies and social situational contexts. Consumer imaginations of and cravings for consumer goods not yet possessed can mesmerize and seem to promise magical meaning in life.*” (Belk et al., 2003: 327).

The act of desire is regarded as hot, passionate and intense, contrary to wants and needs that are perceived as dispassionate, premeditated and mechanical. Only specific things can satisfy particular needs, when it comes to desires the possibilities are endless – “*...anything can potentially become the object of desire.*” (Belk et al., 2003: 328)

The social context and historical circumstances shape each ones’ desires. As expected the object of desire is a certain woman, car, watch, house, not just any other person, vehicle or accessory. The society provide symbolic meaning to objects and life styles. People try to follow those standards in order to feel included and valued, as a mean to attain social recognition (Crusius and Mussweiler, 2012).

It should be noted that aspects like scarcity and inaccessibility shape the way we desire things. The more unreachable an object is, the more fanatically we desire it. When someone desires a certain object, everything else fades in importance and he will hardly rest or change his mind until he obtains it (Simmel, 1978). Table 3 present the differences between Desire, Want and Need.

Table 3 - Desire versus need and want (Source: Belk et al., 2003)

	Need	Want	Desire
Initial state	Fixed	Open	Open
Relation to object	Open	Open or fixed	Fixed
Cartesian relation	Body	Mind	Body and mind
Mode of expression	Necessity	Wish	Passion
Root	Naturalization of social institutions	Personal preferences	Strategy of modern governance

A desire is generally perceived as pleasurable, however it can also be discomforting.

2.6.2. The discomfort side of desire

“When we desire, we visualize an exciting world of wonder.” (Belk et al., 2003: 333). The act of desiring implies the activation of cognitive thinking. This subjective experience is emotionally contradictory, a combination of pleasurable and discomforting emotions.

When a consumer is confronted with an object, instantly start to think of the pleasure it would give or the discomfort that may arise if the desire is not satisfied. It is likely that he will fantasize about it. (Boujbel and d’Astous, 2015)

The subjective nature of this process makes sense in the way that each individual feels and lives at different levels of intensity. Meaning that, the emotional outcomes associated with consumption desires differ from one person to another.

From a consumption perspective, different financial resources, moral standards or life circumstances could incite consumers to control themselves when desire arise (Crusius and Mussweiler, 2012).

There have been evidences that culture has also an important role on consumption, once that discriminates the boundaries for what should be desirable and the means by which desire should be satisfied. For that purpose, consumers must be reasonable and make conscious decisions, knowing that they cannot satisfy all their desires. Some of them must

be ignored or controlled in order to conform to personal values and norms of society (Schueler, 1995).

Conjugating the two aforementioned factors, it is possible to say that a consumption is almost a battle between emotion (feelings) and cognition (rational thinking) (Irvine, 2006).

Sometimes, individuals end up succumbing to desires that in their minds should be forbidden. As a result, feelings of guilt, disappointment and frustration emerge (Lazarus, 1991). The simple act of imagining the ‘moral reprehensible desire’ is sufficient to feel guilty. This feeling leads consumers to reflect about the relevance and the necessity of the desired object. For instance, the desire for expensive and ostentatious objects that are out of reach. The act of surrendering to desires is also associated to impulsive purchasing – the sudden, powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately. (Rook, 1987; Belk et al., 2003)

2.6.3. Desire as a product of envy

Desires “*can be seen as a bridge between the actual self and ideal self*” (Boujbel and d’Astous, 2015: 226). Dreams and hopes about ideal selves contribute for the gap between both states and the incapacity to reach them leads to dissatisfaction, frustration and discomfort. The greater the gap the lower the self-esteem.

Envy is a complex emotion that results from an upward social comparison. As a consequence, the experience of envy may arise other emotions like discontentment, anger, the sense of inferiority or even ill will. (Miceli and Castlefranchi, 2007).

Desire is commonly regarded by several authors as a shared aspect of many envy experiences. Such an intense desire might be a product of two types of envy: benign and malign. (Explained in detail in the envy chapter). Both forms have different motivations, whereas benign envy leads to a moving-up motivation aimed at improving one's own position, malicious envy leads to a pulling-down motivation aimed at damaging the position of the superior other (Van de Ven et al., 2009).

It is clear that wanting what the other has is a crucial element of envy. In this line, a desire is a pre-requisite in the experience of envy, because we typically envy others who possess things that we want/desire for ourselves. (Crusius and Mussweiler, 2012)

2.7. Self-esteem

People's core self-evaluations can determine their orientations through life events (Shu and Lazatkhan, 2017). It is almost impossible for an individual to be indifferent to a self-threat especially when someone calls him incompetent and unworthy (Baumeister et al., 2003).

Self-esteem is defined as a global, personal judgment of one's own worth. It is the evaluative component that enables the perception of someone as capable, significant, successful and worthy (MacDonald and Leary, 2013).

Sirgy (1982) suggest that our self-esteem is a product of the existing gap we feel exists between our real self and our ideal or social selves.

Despite the different notions regarding this concept, there are two that seem to be key: self-love (i.e., regard for one's own well-being and happiness) and self-confidence (i.e., a feeling of trust in one's abilities, qualities, and judgement) (Buss, 1995).

It is commonly observed that self-esteem increases when someone wins a competition, an award, solves problems or achieves social acceptance and recognition. Conversely, failures cause the decrease of self-esteem. Meaning that, the level of self-esteem depends on the cause instead of the outcome. (Baumeister et al., 2003)

Many studies have provided information about the nature of this concept, according to which low self-esteem is related to negative and unwanted characteristics such as depression, shyness, fearfulness and loneliness, while high self-esteem is related to positive feelings and well-being. (Salmivalli, 2001)

But what does it mean to have high or low self-esteem?

2.7.1. High and Low self-esteem

According to Baumeister et al. (2003:2), "*high self-esteem refers to a highly favorable global evaluation of the self. Low self-esteem, by definition, refers to an unfavorable definition of the self*".

High self-esteem exists when we believe we are valued, competent, worthy, loved, and accepted. Low self-esteem exists when we believe ourselves to be incompetent, rejected, unworthy, unloved, and lacking in value to others.

Low self-esteem individuals are characterized as deeply unhappy and dissatisfied with themselves. However, other studies indicate that rather than being discontent with their performance, they are confused – with low self-concept clarity (lack of consistency and confidence) (Campbell, 1990). For that reason they take a neutral position in self-esteem questionnaires. That is, these individuals typically give midpoint responses in self-esteem scales. Only few show clear dislike and dissatisfaction with themselves (Kernis, 2003).

Nowadays there is a certain controversy regarding high self-esteem, whether it is a good or a bad quality to possess. Thus, on one hand high self-esteem may imply a justified, balanced and accurate acknowledgment of one's worth, and on the other hand it can also refer to an arrogant, overstated, and undeserved sense of superiority (e.g. a narcissist). A narcissist has high positive views of itself, in his mind he thinks he is brilliant, special and deserves unique privileges and admiration by others. (Baumeister et al., 2003)

Kernis (2003) believes that there are forms of high self-esteem better than others, for instance one more fragile and other more secure. The first one reflects self-positive feelings that are weak and vulnerable to a threat, also linked to self-protective or self-enhancement strategies. It is usual for fragile high self-esteem individuals to hide or deny any of their failures and at the same time emphasize with pride anytime they succeed (“I am so intelligent”). They also denigrate anyone who threatens their value or worth, and take unnecessary risks by overestimating their skills. Usually, these individuals feel the necessity to self-promote, and thus take measures in order to maintain and boost their self-feelings.

The second perspective represent self-positive feelings that are solid and secure. Individuals with secure high self-esteem recognize their value and worth, they accept themselves with all their flaws. They do not feel the need to show their superiority towards others, neither require continual validation. (Kernis, 2003)

“Self-esteem is thus perception rather than reality. It refers to a person's belief about whether he or she is intelligent and attractive, for example. And it does not necessarily say anything about whether the person actually is intelligent and attractive.” (Baumeister et al., 2003: 2)

How can we know if the person is telling the truth?

2.7.2. The need for high self-esteem

The importance of self-esteem is that it influences how people behave and interpret the world around them. Self-esteem affects how individuals think, feel and make decisions in matters that relate to them. People's beliefs shape their actions and in turn, their actions shape their social reality. It affects whether they choose healthy partners and relationships, a career that they enjoy or whether they even feel emotional well-being on a day to day basis.

In a digital world where we have free access to many different information sources, it becomes possible to undercover our true self, without the effects of face-to-face interactions. For that reason, the concept of authenticity is more than ever crucial (Kernis, 2003).

Sometimes having to cope with reality can be a complex challenge and the desire to feel good about oneself and prove that they are worthy to others surpasses the truth.

Over the last years, due to social media and the new digital world, the need for high self-esteem has increased from individual motives to a social concern (Baumeister et al., 2003). Under these circumstances, people engage in every possible strategy to justify their worthiness, and for that reason they give unrealistic answers to make a good impression. These individuals are so afraid that others will reject them if they admit their fragilities that they present themselves positively, yet falsely (Kernis, 2003). Most of the times, they buy things in order to be and feel accepted, and approval by others is seen as fundamental for self-esteem.

Being an easily manipulated topic, the main goal of self-esteem advertising is to create positive feelings about the consumer's self. (Solomon et. al., 2005).

Nevertheless can high self-esteem make life better?

2.7.3. The outcomes

The benefits of high self-esteem can be easily distinguished from those of low self-esteem, however these remain somewhat speculative.

High self-esteem individuals in opposite to those with low self-esteem, have greater autonomy, purpose in life, self-acceptance, healthy relationships and personal growth. (Ryff, 1989). Individuals with high self-esteem are commonly considered more popular,

happy physically attractive, successful, and more valued by others. They also set higher aspirations, are willing to persist in case of failure, are generally more optimistic and hardly ever succumb to feelings of incompetence or insecurity (Shu and Lazatkhan, 2017).

From a workplace perspective, individuals who feel better about themselves are likely to perform better and make decisions under pressure. On a relational context, high self-esteem improve interpersonal relations, once that people prefer to interact with confident and proactive individuals. In contrast, individuals with low self-esteem are more negative, anxious, and avoid social contact. Under some circumstances they are more prone to depressions and physical illness.

In the field of food disorders, a high self-esteem may prevent bulimia and anorexia, once that these illnesses are frequently preceded by obsession with diets and body dissatisfaction, which in turn are directly related to low self-esteem. (Baumeister, 2003)

2.7.4. The optimal self-esteem

Kernis (2003) believes that the optimal self-esteem is achieved by the positive feelings of self-worth that come from the daily life challenges; by being authentic and true towards behavioral choices; by having healthy relationships where one is valued for who he is and not for what he attains. It is characterized by the absence of the necessity to feel superior to others, or have continual validation and it is not vulnerable to threats. The awareness of each individual's needs, values and core inner standards provides the basis for the optimal self-esteem.

Salmivalli (2001:376) stressed that *“a healthy self-esteem consists not only of seeing oneself in as positive a light as possible, or as perfect, but also of feeling intrinsically worthwhile, or accepting oneself as one is.”*

3. Conceptual model and research hypothesis

Many studies approached the effects of envy on the psychology field. However, research on its connection to the marketing domain, namely the direct influence on customer consumption desire is relatively scarce. This gap in the literature is the starting point of this paper. The proposed model for this investigation was based on several studies previously developed. From those studies important information was retrieved and selectively used to adequately match the aims of the present investigation.

The Figure 3.1. is an illustration of the proposed conceptual model with a central point on envy. It denotes the hypothesis generated in this paper and their links between the different constructs that will be studied:

3.1. Overall conceptual model

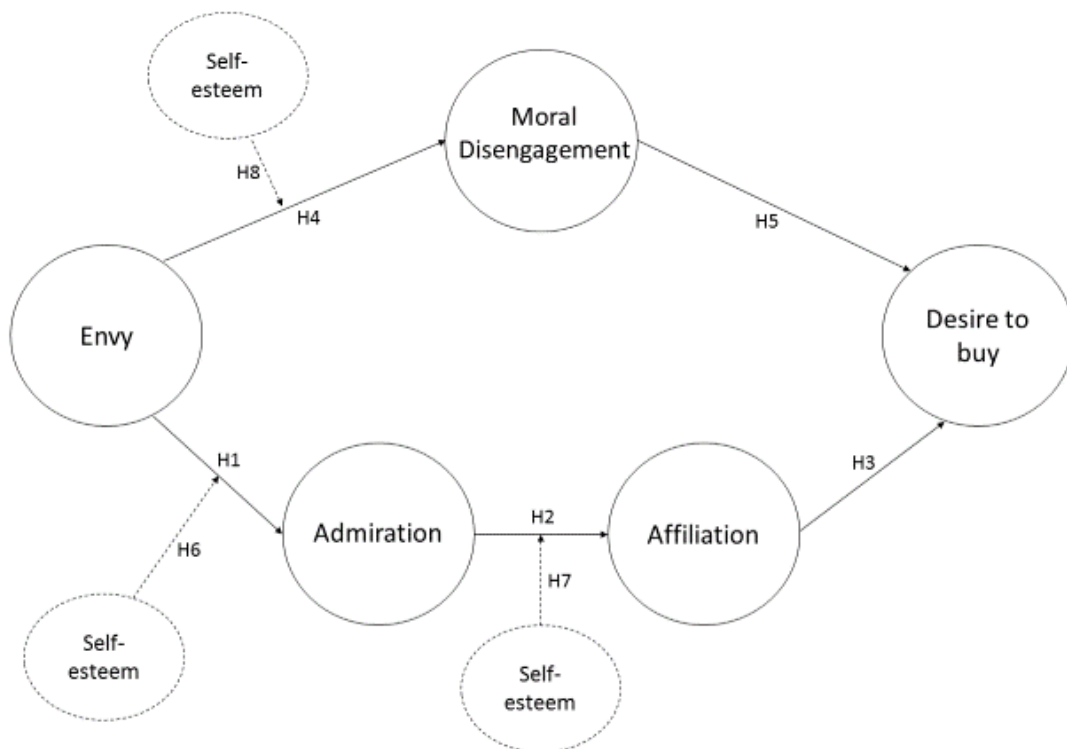


Figure 4- Overall conceptual model (Source: own elaboration)

3.1.1. Sub-model 1

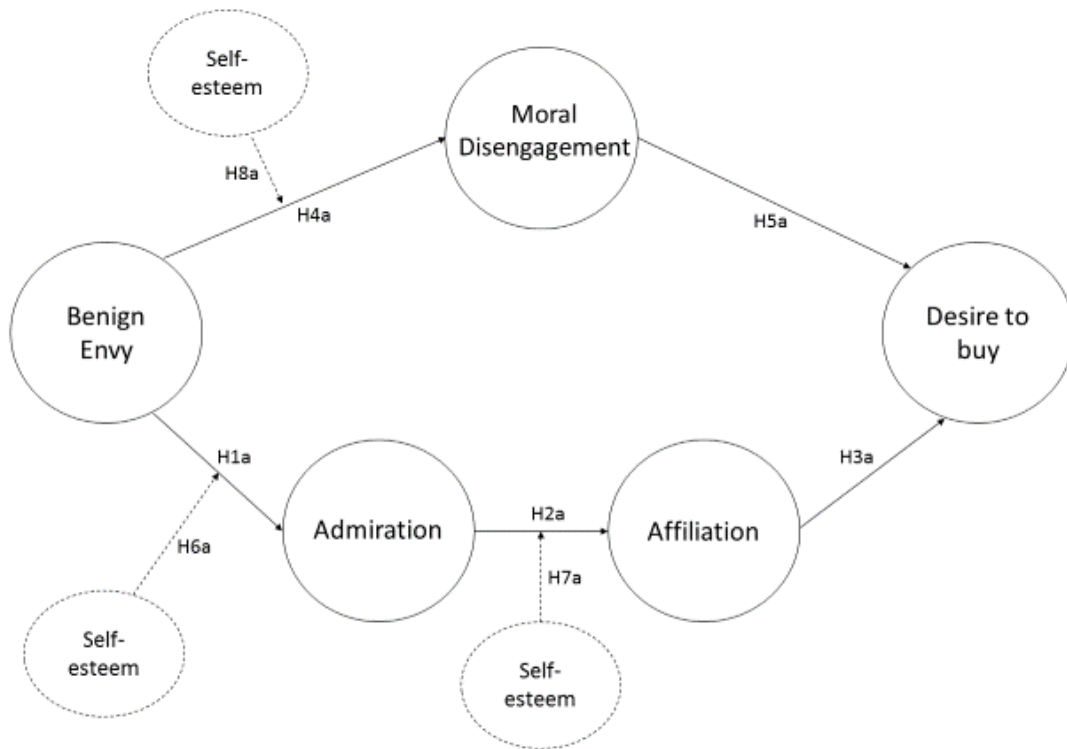


Figure 5- Sub-model 1 (Source: own elaboration)

3.1.2 Sub-model 2

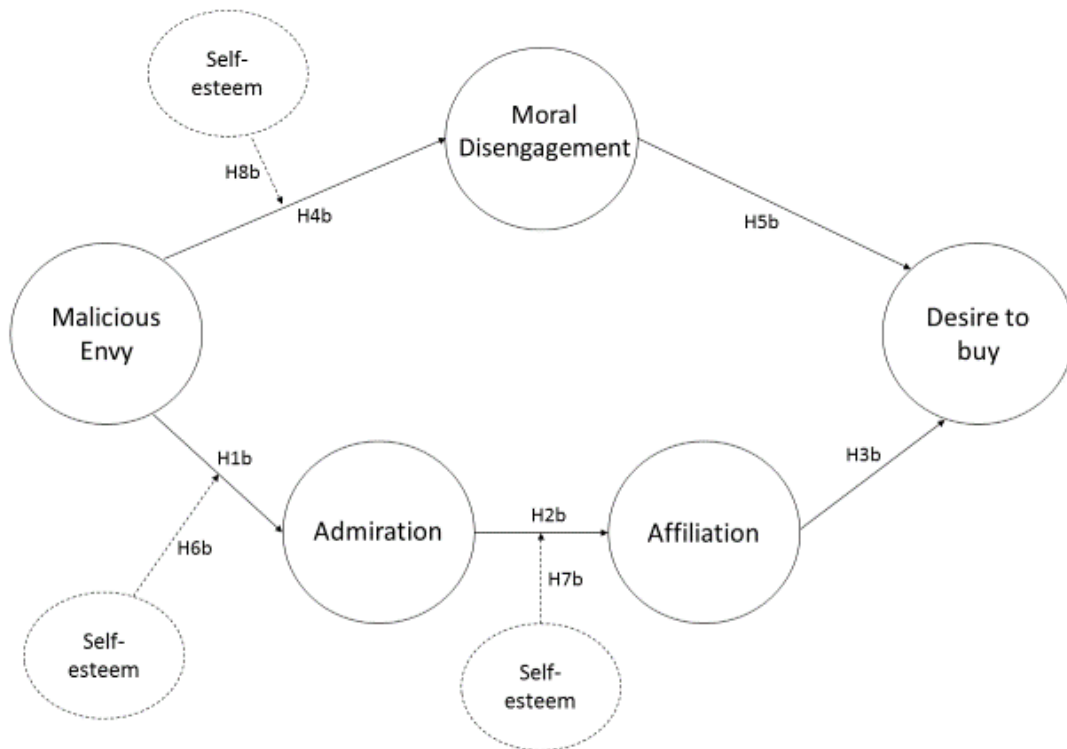


Figure 6 - Sub-model 2 (Source: own elaboration)

3.2. Research Hypothesis

As depicted previously, Envy has been known as a painful and negative feeling. However, it is also a key motivator for customers to buy things. There are two forms of the feeling of envy, benign and malicious envy. While the benign form encourage self-improvement, the malicious form leads to a stronger motivation to pull down the superior other (Van de Ven, 2017). Both concepts of Benign Envy and Admiration are very close. Miceli and Castelfranchi (2007) suggest that a benign form of envy is in fact not a form of envy but rather a form of admiration. In this sense, it is expected that people who feel benign envy, would feel in turn a kind of closeness, respect, appreciation and recognition towards the envied person and therefore it would develop into Admiration.

Nevertheless, we expect that both type of envy could influence Admiration. In the case of Benign Envy and Admiration, the strength of the relationship should be higher whereas in the case of Malicious Envy and Admiration we expect to find the opposite.

Thus, the following hypothesis are formulated (for both sub-model 1 and sub-model 2):

→ H1a: Benign Envy has a positive influence on Admiration.

→ H1b: Malicious Envy has a positive influence on Admiration.

Furthermore, it was reviewed that admiration is likely to prompt motivation to affiliate. According to Schindler et al. (2013) people tend to affiliate with outstanding others that they admire or adore. The other is seen as a role model and for that reason, individuals seek to affiliate with him, creating a close relationship. Consequently the following hypothesis are proposed:

→ H2a: Admiration has a positive influence on Affiliation.

→ H2b: Admiration has a positive influence on Affiliation.

People tend to affiliate with a superior other with the aim of getting closer to his world. They imagine that they will get what they need by just being attached to him. In their minds, possessing the qualities of the superior other would bring them happiness and fulfillment. This search for experiences, sensations, identity, desires, cravings and the need to feel better is somehow accomplished through consumption.

The need for social affiliation directly influences behavioral intentions, specifically word-of-mouth, repeat purchase and price sensitivity (Bloemer et al., 2003). Given this conceptualization, the following hypothesis are proposed:

→ H3a: Affiliation has a positive influence on Desire to Buy.

→ H3b: Affiliation has a positive influence on Desire to Buy.

Based on previous considerations on literature review, envy signals to people that they miss something attractive that someone else does have. Pulling the other down by engaging in negative behavior is one way to level this difference between oneself and the superior other, but another possible behavioral approach exists. Instead of wanting to pull down the other, the difference can also be leveled by moving oneself up.

When the envier appraises the other's advantage as fair and deserved, the situation evolves into benign envy. In contrast, when the envier appraises the other's advantage as unmerited and unfair, the situation evolves to malicious envy (Lange and Crusius, 2015). Malicious envy intensifies moral disengagement, allowing people to 'forget' their cognitive barriers and consequently engage in harmful interpersonal behaviors. Besides, enviers with low social identification, that is less psychologically connected, are more expected to moral disengage (Duffy et al, 2012). However, we expect that both type of envy could influence Moral Disengagement. In the case of Benign Envy and Moral Disengagement, the strength of the relationship should be lower whereas in the case of Malicious Envy and Moral Disengagement we expect to find the opposite. Thus, the following hypothesis are proposed:

→ H4a: Benign Envy has a positive influence on Moral Disengagement.

→ H4b: Malicious Envy has a positive influence on Moral Disengagement.

It is further assumed that the process of moral disengagement involves intentional behavior, designed to gradually weaken the target, and thus reduce the other's perceived superiority.

Beyond the fact that envy is on the "grey zone" (an area of uncertainty or indeterminacy) it is still a human feeling, with its negative and positive sides. Due to its level of ambiguity, it is almost impossible to predict and control. In this sense, negative feelings

may trigger the desire to purchase luxury goods. In result, the following hypothesis are proposed:

→ H5a: Moral disengagement has a positive influence on Desire to Buy.

→ h5b: Moral disengagement has a positive influence on Desire to Buy.

Regarding literature Review, our self-esteem is a product of the existing gap we feel exists between our real self and our ideal or social selves (Sirgy, 1982). It influences how people behave, think, feel and make decisions. Sometimes, having to cope with reality can be a complex challenge and the desire to feel good about oneself and prove that they are worthy to others surpasses the truth. In order to feel accepted, people engage in every possible strategy to justify their worthiness, giving unrealistic answers to make good impression (Baumeister et al., 2003). Many times, they buy things in order to be social recognized, in these cases approval by others is seen as fundamental for self-esteem.

Generally speaking, an individual with high self-esteem, feels secure and confident. Consequently, he does not feel much threatened by social comparison, nor the necessity to be valued and accepted. Thus, the higher the self-esteem the lower is the strength between Envy (benign and malicious) and Admiration. The same happens to the relationship between Admiration and Affiliation; and the relationship between Envy (benign and malicious) and Moral Disengagement. As such, the following hypothesis are proposed:

→ H6a: Self-esteem moderates the relationship between Benign Envy and Admiration.

→ H6b: Self-esteem moderates the relationship between Malicious Envy and Admiration.

→ H7a: Self-esteem moderates the relationship between Admiration and Affiliation.

→ H7b: Self-esteem moderates the relationship between Admiration and Affiliation.

→ H8a: Self-esteem moderates the relationship between Benign Envy and Moral Disengagement.

→ H8b: Self-esteem moderates the relationship between Malicious Envy and Moral Disengagement.

4. Methodology

This chapter is dedicated to the research design and sampling methodology employed to study how the feeling of envy affects customer buying decisions. More specifically, this is an exploratory study based on a questionnaire that will allow testing a specific set of variables, such as envy, self-esteem, admiration, affiliation, desire and moral disengagement.

4.1. Research Objectives

The main purpose of this study is to explore how Envy influence the Desire to Buy luxury fashion items; explore the mediate effect of Admiration and Affiliation on the relationship between Envy and Desire to Buy; explore the mediate effect of Moral Disengagement on the relationship between Envy and Desire to Buy and finally to analyze the moderation effect of Self-Esteem on the relationship between Envy and Admiration, Admiration and Affiliation, and Envy and Moral Disengagement.

4.2. Data collection

The research conducted in this paper will take an empirical approach to the theme of the role of envy on desire to purchase luxury fashion clothes and accessories. In order to test the aforementioned hypothesis and to extract primary data with the purpose of comparing existing results in literature, this research will be quantitative natured.

Secondary Data

An initial exploratory research phase took place while reviewing the literature, in order to better understand the current topic.

Moreover, the gathering of secondary data was conducted with caution and only the most reliable sources were used. External sources such as academic journals from advertising, marketing, management, consumer research and psychology areas; books; other topic related articles and dissertations.

Primary Data

The primary data used on this dissertation consists of the online questionnaire.

In order to test the hypotheses and to gather the data required, this study followed a quantitative approach. An online survey questionnaire was employed as the data collection instrument. The purpose of using the quantitative research is to approach a large group of participants. Once the questionnaire was established, a survey link was provided that could be distributed online.

Therefore, an online survey was created and launched, being available from January 19 until July 17. The link to the survey was sent randomly to different kinds of people on Facebook and via email to friends and family members. Furthermore, snowball sampling was used by giving respondents the opportunity to share the link with other people. The proportionality and representativeness of the sample was not forgotten, hence the questionnaire was spread in different Portuguese cities, with greater focus on Lisbon, and through people with different backgrounds in terms of level education, areas of expertise and ages.

During that time, each participant who clicked on the survey link was redirected to the beginning of the questionnaire and could immediately start to answer the questions, regardless of time or location. Moreover, the online survey was mobile friendly, which ensured that every device could be used to answer the questionnaire.

4.3. Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was divided into eight sections, being each of them related to different variables. The complete questionnaire is annexed in the Appendix 1.

1. The first section began with an introduction to the theme and the main purpose of the study. The respondents were asked to take in consideration luxury brands such as Prada, Chanel and Christian Dior during the questionnaire.
2. The second section was related to the construct of envy. The respondents were asked to answer ten questions concerning different situations in an envy context. The purpose was to find their tendency to feel either benign or malicious envy according to each proposed situation.

3. The third section was related to the constructs of admiration and affiliation. For admiration, respondents were asked to think about one person that they admire, for the way he/she dresses and then answer to four questions. The aim was to perceive the level of esteem and appreciation towards the admired person.

For affiliation, respondents were asked to consider one person that they admire, not only for the way he/she dresses but also for his/her personality, ideals, values and attitudes, and then answer to eight questions. The answers reflected whether the participant shared a close bond with the target person and perceived this person as part of his/her identity.

4. The fourth section was related to the construct of moral disengagement. The respondents were asked to answer eight questions regarding different situations where ill will was explicit. The purpose was to measure the participants' propensity to moral disengage.

5. The fifth section was related to the construct of desire. The respondents were asked to answer to three statements where they assumed their level of accordance. The aim was to identify the strength and deepness of the participants' desire.

6. The sixth section was related to the construct of self-esteem. Respondents were asked to answer six self-evaluation questions. The objective was to find how they regard themselves in terms of self-worth, personal values and image.

7. Finally, the last section of the questionnaire contained socio-demographic questions such as gender, age and profession.

While designing the questionnaire it was paid attention to always be clear about what the participant was expected to do. Thus, whenever it seemed to be necessary, short descriptions were provided to explain question blocks and how the items needed to be rated. Furthermore, the wording of the statements was made as simple and precise as possible to diminish ambiguity. Additionally, as some items of the same construct tend to be quite similar, the statements were slightly randomized within question blocks to reduce boredom and inattention.

4.4. Measurement scales

The variables in the structural model emerged from the literature review. The measurement instrument was based on various valid and reliable scales. All the items had been taken from existing measurement scales that were found in literature. As the measurement-scales were taken from different research papers, the item wording had to be adapted to the specific context of luxury fashion clothes and accessories.

A full list of the original items can be found in Appendix 2.

Self-esteem

Many scales are available for measuring self-esteem, and different studies have used different ones, which compounds the difficulty of comparing results from different investigations (especially if the results are inconsistent).

Self-esteem scales, also called as “lie scales” are contaminated by unrealistic and distorted answers in order to make a good impression. To overcome these measurement problems, this study used the appearance self-esteem items from the state self-esteem scale (Heatherton and Polivy, 1991). This scale was made upon the notion that self-esteem is open to momentary changes, taking into consideration its volatile effect. Self-esteem was indicated by six items, for instance, “I feel satisfied with the way my body looks right now”, followed by a 7-point scale from “does not describe me at all” to “describes me extremely”.

Admiration

Admiration was measured with the 4-item factor of Schindler et al. (2015). The scale was adapted to the fashion and luxury context. For example, participants were asked to think about one person that they admire, for the way he/she dresses and then answer the item “The way he/she dresses impress and elate me”. Each response was measured on a 7-point scale reaching from “completely disagree” to “completely agree”.

Affiliation

In response to the eight items developed by Schindler et al. (2015) and modified for use in the current study, affiliation was measured on a 7-point scale was used reaching from “does not describe me at all” to “describes me extremely”. For instance, participants were

asked to consider one person that they admire, not only for the way he/she dresses but also for his/her personality, ideals, values and attitudes and then answer the item "I feel connected and closed to him/her in a very special way."

Desire

Desire was operationalized within Perugini and Bagozzi's (2001) framework by using an adaptation of the three items from the scale. For instance, the first item was "I desire to buy fashion clothes and accessories to feel more fashion", followed by an 7-point scale from "completely disagree" to "completely agree". The second item was "My desire for buying luxury fashion clothes and accessories can be described as:", followed by an 7-point scale from "very weak desire" to "very strong desire". Finally the third item asked participants to respond on an 7-point scale from "does not describe me at all" to "describes me very much" to the statement: "I want to buy fashion clothes and accessories to be more respected".

Moral Disengagement

The motivation to moral disengage was measured with the eight items adapted from the Propensity to morally disengage scale of Moore et al., (2012). For example, the first item was "It is okay to spread rumors to defend those I care about" where participants answered on a 7-point scale ranging from "does not describe me at all" to "describes me extremely".

Envy

To assess both benign and malicious envy, ten items developed by Lange and Crusius (2015) were adopted and modified in accordance with the purpose of this study. Responses were made on a 7-point scale anchored with "does not describe me at all" and "describes me extremely".

Table 4 - Measurement Scales (Source: own elaboration)

Construct	Adapted from
Envy (Benign and Malicious)	Lange and Crusius (2015)
Admiration	Schindler, Paech and Löwenbrück (2015)
Affiliation	Schindler, Paech and Löwenbrück (2015)
Desire	Perugini and Bagozzi (2001)
Moral Disengagement	Moore, Detert, Trevi, Baker and Mayer (2012)
Self-esteem	Heatherston and Polivy (1991)

4.5. Justification of the Research Method

The urgency of gathering enough answers in order to guarantee the success of the present study had a significant role in the sampling method chosen.

Besides, this method was chosen because it allows a quick response, it raises the level of honesty of the respondents due to the absence of an interviewer, it makes it possible to reach a higher number of people in a small period of time (in a cost-efficient way) and respondents have less time pressure to answer the questions.

4.6. Data treatment

To test the structural model concerning the relationships among the study variables, a path analysis was performed using SPSS Statistics 23.0 version.

The first step was to analyze variables under study across descriptive statistics, focusing on mean, median and standard deviation. Also, Cronbach's Alpha test was used to test the internal consistency of the research tool used in the data collection process – the questionnaire.

Moreover, another data treatment technique was used to test the hypotheses of the study, the partial least squares (PLS), using the SmartPLS 2.0 program. With the aim of evaluating the adequacy of the measures, item reliability is assessed by examining the loadings of the measures on their corresponding construct.

In addition, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) method was conducted, in order to indicate if most of the variance of each indicator is explained by its own construct. Composite reliability was performed as well to test the reliability of the construct.

Then, a nonparametric procedure known as bootstrapping with 500 re-samples was used to test if the past coefficients are significantly different from zero and thus the proposed hypothesis can be supported or not.

Finally, the influence of the moderating effect of Self-esteem was assessed.

5. Results

5.1. Sample Profile

The target population includes all male and female who love to buy luxury fashion clothes and accessories, follow the latest trends and seek status and sophistication.

The data was collected through an online questionnaire ran in Portugal. In order to achieve the target population, an online survey was spread through Facebook and via e-mail with URL embedded that lead the respondents to the survey. Thereby, it was gathered a convenience sample of 202 respondents, who were randomly approached through social networks. There were respondents in all age groups (minimum age=18, maximum age=over 50). The sample was relatively young since more than half of the participants were aged between 21 and 25 (123 participants). (Fig. 7 - age of the respondents)

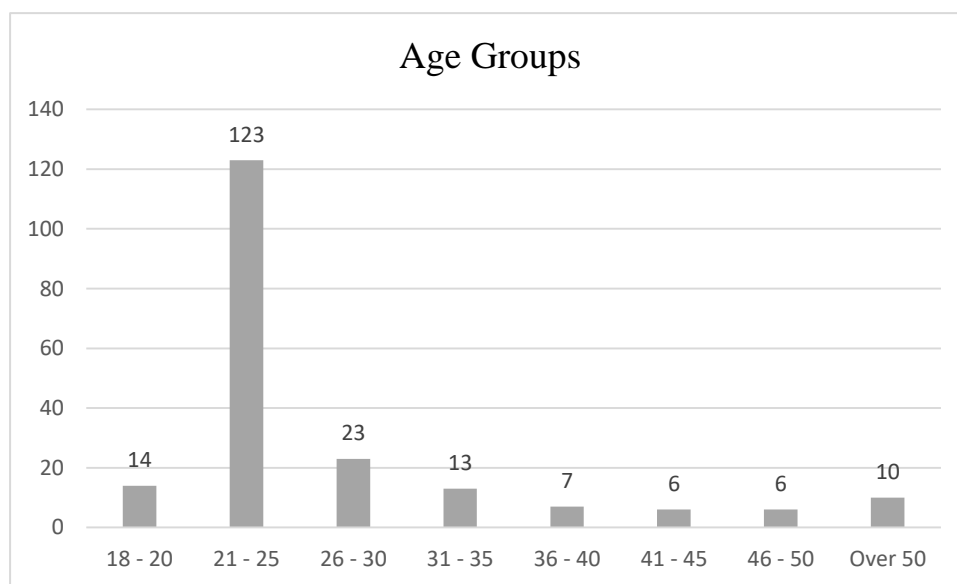


Figure 7 - Age Groups (Source: own elaboration based on SPSS output)

The proportion of male and female was quite different, the majority of the respondents are female individuals (80%). (Fig. 8 - gender of the respondents)

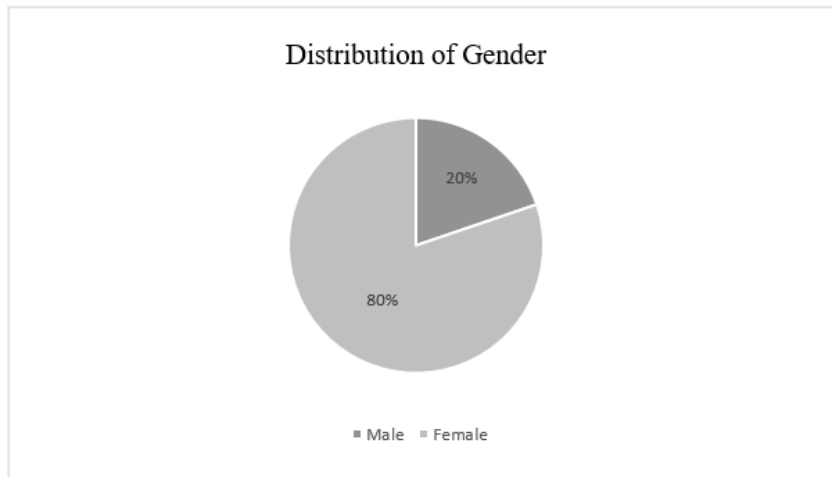


Figure 8 - Distribution of gender (Source: own elaboration based on SPSS output)

Globally, females are more fashion conscious than males and show higher levels of fashion clothing involvement. (Hourigan and Bougoure 2012)

Finally, in terms of the occupation of the sample, it was considered the professions of the respondents. This specific question was not mandatory, the participants who had answered were mostly students (71), followed by several different professions such as Marketer, Sales Manager, Events Manager and others.

5.2. Descriptive Statistics

The following paragraphs will present the results of the descriptive statistics that have been computed with the software IBM SPSS statistics 23. Each construct is analyzed by calculating the mean and standard deviation of all the items that compose the different variables.

In this study, it was applied a Likert-scale to the obtained data, and in this cases, it is more appropriate to examine the median, as the mean can deliver unclear results when it comes to numbers with a decimal place (Sullivan and Artino, 2013).

Standard Deviation is used to estimate how the data values are spread around their central tendency (Saunders et al., 2009; Mooi and Sarstedt, 2011)

Table 5 - Descriptive Statistics for Benign Envy (BE) (Source: own elaboration based on SPSS)

Benign Envy Items	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
BE1: When I envy others' fashion style and luxury goods, I focus on how I can become equally fashionable and afford those goods in the future.	3.0	3	2.17
BE2: If I notice that another person is always wearing the expensive and newest fashion trend, I try to improve myself, in order to be more fashionable and stylish.	3.6	4	2.22
BE3: Seeing others wearing luxury goods motivates me to buy new goods and be trendier.	3.6	4	2.23
BE4: I strive to reach other people's fashion accessories and clothes.	3.1	3	2.10
BE5: If someone has the accessories or clothes from the luxury fashion brands that I love, I try to attain them for myself.	2.8	3	1.86

For the construct Benign Envy, respondents could rate their accordance with the statements from 1 to 7, 1 being completely disagree and 7 being completely agree.

As we can see on table 5, the mean values are close, suggesting that respondents assumed a neutral position towards the statements. BE5 has the lowest rate with 2.8. Moreover, standard deviation values range from 1.86 to 2.23, which are the highest values from all analysis section. Thus, meaning that respondents' answers are quite spread from the mean, in other words, they have different feelings and opinions about benign envy behaviors.

Table 6 - Descriptive Statistics for Malicious Envy (ME) (Source: own elaboration based on SPSS)

Malicious Envy Items	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
ME1: I wish that people who can afford luxury fashion brands lose their purchase power advantage.	1.3	1	0.82
ME2: If other people have the luxury item that I want for myself, I wish to take it away from them.	1.2	1	0.61
ME3: I feel hostility and antipathy towards people I envy for their luxury belongings.	1.2	1	0.65
ME4: Envious feelings toward people that have a luxury accessory that I can't afford, cause me to dislike them.	1.1	1	0.60
ME5: Seeing other people's luxury possessions makes me resent them.	1.4	1	0.91

Concerning the Malicious Envy construct, it is possible to see on table 6, that the items show the lowest agreement rates from all the section, especially ME4 with 1.1. The weak rates suggest that respondents are sure about their disagreement towards malicious envy behaviors.

In terms of variability, it ranges from 0.60 to 0.91, also the lowest values from all the constructs, meaning that participants' answers are close to the mean.

Table 7 - Descriptive Statistics for Admiration (A) (Source: own elaboration based on SPSS)

Admiration Items	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
A1: The way he/she dresses impress and elate me.	4.7	5	1.89
A2: I admire him/her for his/her impeccable taste for clothes and accessories.	4.6	5	1.88
A3: I am continually impressed by the way that he/she perfectly combines the colors and textures.	4.5	5	1.87
A4: I feel that his/her fashion style is admirable	4.9	5	1.88

The variable Admiration shows the highest values of mean, specifically A4 with 4.9, demonstrating the participants' agreement with the statements. However, values from Standard Deviation range between 1.87 and 1.89, being spread from the mean. (See table 7).

Table 8 - Descriptive Statistics for Affiliation (AF) (Source: own elaboration based on SPSS)

Affiliation Items	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
AF1: I feel connected and close to him/her in a very special way.	3.1	3	1.93
AF2: Somehow I feel related to him/her.	3.6	4	1.87
AF3: When others talk badly about him/her, I feel personally offended or hurt by it.	3.3	3	2.13
AF4: My special relationship with him/her is essential to who I am.	2.4	2	1.84
AF5: I have adopted those values and ideals that he/she stands for.	3.0	3	1.81
AF6: I want to be part of his/her world and I'm willing to make efforts to achieve that.	2.6	3	1.76
AF7: Very often, I do something that allow me to get a little closer to his/her world.	2.7	3	1.74
AF8: I try hard to share his/her world, even though I will never truly succeed at this.	2.3	2	1.67

From table 8, we can analyze that mean values go from 2.3 to 3.6. The lowest mean value belongs to the item AF8 and the higher one belongs to the item AF2. Thus, meaning that participants feel related to the admired person, however don't aspire to share their world. The values of standard deviation vary between 1.67 and 2.1, meaning that some answers are closer to the mean, while some other are more spread.

Table 9 - Descriptive Statistics for Moral Disengagement (MD) (Source: own elaboration based on SPSS)

Moral Disengagement Items	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
MD1: It is okay to spread rumors to defend those I care about.	1.4	1	1.06
MD2: Taking something (fashion luxury things) without the owner's permission is okay as long as you're just borrowing it.	1.4	1	1.08
MD3: When I go shopping with my friends I tell them that I only buy the best, when in fact I can't afford luxury goods. Little lies don't hurt anyone when we're under social pressure.	1.2	1	0.84
MD4: I can't be blamed for using animal fur once that my favorite celebrity is often seen using it.	1.3	1	1.02
MD5: I can't be blamed for buying things that I can't afford easily when all my friends are doing it too.	1.4	1	1.03
MD6: Taking personal credit for fashion ideas (for instance I took from my favorite blogger) that are not mine is no big deal.	1.9	2	1.42
MD7: People who enjoy using animal fur (or other material that cause environmental problems) don't deserve to be treated like human beings.	2.2	2	1.73
MD8: People who do not have good taste and dress badly can only blame themselves.	2.3	2	1.75

For this construct, the values of the mean goes from 1.2 to 2.3, suggesting that respondents tend to disagree with the statements.

Therefore, all the items are rated very similarly, showing the highest mean for the item MD8 with also the highest standard deviation value (1.75), and the lowest mean for MD3, again with the lowest standard deviation value (0.84). (See table 9)

Table 10 - Descriptive Statistics for Desire to Buy (DTB)) (Source: own elaboration based on SPSS)

Desire to buy Items	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
DTB1: I desire to buy luxury fashion clothes and accessories all the time to feel more fashionable.	3.6	4	2.06
DTB2: My desire for buying luxury fashion clothes and accessories can be described as:	3.6	4	2.01
DTB3: I want to buy fashion clothes and accessories to be more respected.	2.4	2	1.85

Concerning the construct Desire to Buy, it is visible a concentration of answers over the middle numbers, from 2.4 to 3.6. It seems that the participants do not have a clear opinion about the statements. Standard Deviation values are high ranging from 1.85 to 2.05, meaning that respondents' answers are quite spread from the mean. (See table 10)

Table 11 - Descriptive Statistics for Self-Esteem (SE) (Source: own elaboration based on SPSS)

Self-esteem Items	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
SE1: I feel satisfied with the way my body looks right now.	4.3	4	1.63
SE2: I feel that others respect and admire me.	4.3	4	1.57
SE3: I am dissatisfied with my weight.	3.2	3	1.90
SE4: I feel good about myself.	4.7	5	1.66
SE5: I am pleased with my appearance right now.	4.5	4	1.59
SE6: I feel unattractive.	2.7	3	1.54

For the last construct – self-esteem – table 11 shows the mean range between 2.7 and 4.7. The lowest mean belongs to SE6 and the highest belongs to SE4 suggesting that participants do not feel unattractive, instead they feel good about themselves. Standard Deviation Values go from 1.54 to 1.90, being spread from the mean.

5.3. Sub-model 1 Analysis

In the following paragraphs are presented the results of the estimation of the conceptual sub-model 1 and the hypotheses. In order to analyze and interpret the cause-effect relationships, the PLS approach was used in two stages. First, the suitability of the measurements was assessed by evaluating the reliability of the individual measures, the convergent validity and the discriminant validity of the constructs. Second, the structural model is evaluated.

PLS (partial least squares) is based on an interactive combination of principal component analysis and regression to explain the variance of the constructs in the model (Chin, 1998). This method allowed researchers in avoiding biased and inconsistent parameter estimates, as it is an effective analytical tool to test interactions by reducing Type II errors and enabling analysis using a small sample size (Chin et al., 2003; Echambadi et al., 2006). Tenenhaus et al. (2005) proposed the geometric mean of the average communality (outer model) and the average R^2 (inner model) as overall goodness of fit (GoF) measures for the PLS, which range from 0 to 1. The proposed model in the current study presents a large number of variables and formative factors and therefore PLS is the appropriate method to treat data (Chin et al., 2003).

5.3.1. Measurement Model for sub-model 1

Table 12 - Reliability and convergent validity of the measurement sub-model 1 (Source: Own elaboration based on SmartPLS 2.0 output)

Construct/item	LVmean	Item Loading Range	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Benign Envy	3.2	0.852-0.924	0.943	0.957	0.815
Admiration	4.7	0.915-0.956	0.956	0.968	0.884
Affiliation	2.9	0.712-0.880	0.942	0.949	0.702
Moral disengagement	1.4	0.749-0.839	0.796	0.868	0.621
Desire to buy	3.2	0.905-0.932	0.908	0.942	0.844
Self-esteem	4.4	0.772-0.948	0.922	0.941	0.801

To begin, the adequacy of the measurements was assessed by evaluating the reliability of the individual measures and the discriminant validity of the constructs (Hulland, 1999). Item reliability was assessed by examining the loading of the measures on their corresponding construct. Items with loadings of 0.707 or higher should be accepted, which indicates that over 50% of the variance in the observed variable is explained by the construct (Carmines and Zeller, 1979). In this study, the lowest item loading value is equal to 0.712 for *Affiliation* and the highest one is equal to 0.956 for *Admiration*. Therefore, all values exceed 0.707, meaning that each indicator is significant in describing the corresponding variable (See table 12).

The reliability of the constructs was analyzed using the Cronbach's Alpha. In order to estimate the internal consistency within PLS path model, it is more appropriate to study the composite reliability instead of the usual Cronbach's Alpha value (Henseler, Ringle and Sinkovics, 2009). The reason is that the Cronbach's Alpha tends to undervalue the internal consistency reliability of latent variables, while the composite reliability distinguishes different indicator loadings and provides a more suitable result (Henseler, Ringle and Sinkovics, 2009). The internal consistency reliability is acceptable, when the composite reliability value (which varies between 0 and 1) exceeds 0.70 (Nunnally and Bernsetin, 1994; Hair et al., 2014).

All Cronbach's Alpha values are above 0.7, with a minimum value equal to 0.796 for *Moral Disengagement* and the highest one equal to 0.956 for *Admiration*. Composite reliability values are above 0.8, slightly higher than Cronbach's Alpha values, ranging from 0.868 to 0.968. Therefore, all constructs are found to be reliable. (See table 12).

The next step is the evaluation of convergent and discriminant validity. The convergent validity is defined as the extent to which a measure correlates positively with other measures of the same construct (Hair et al., 2014). Conventionally, the AVE measure (average variance extracted) is used to test the convergent validity. This measure offers a more comprehensive examination of the shared variance in a measurement model as it shows how much variance is captured by a particular construct (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). If AVE is 0.5 or higher it means that a construct explains at least half (or more) of the variance of its indicators. Table 12 shows that all AVE values are at least 0.5, ranging from 0.621 to 0.884, indicating that most of the variance of each indicator is explained by its own construct.

5.3.2. Discriminant validity sub-model 1

Table 13 - Discriminant validity of the measurement sub-model 1 (Source: own elaboration based on SmartPLS 2.0 output)

	Benign Envy	Admiration	Affiliation	Moral Disengagement	Desire to Buy	Self-esteem
AVE ^{1/2}	0.903	0.940	0.838	0.788	0.919	0.895
Benign Envy	1.000					
Admiration	0.703	1.000				
Affiliation	0.457	0.496	1.000			
Moral Disengagement	0.294	0.266	0.324	1.000		
Desire to Buy	0.839	0.574	0.446	0.323	1.000	
Self-esteem	0.153	0.206	0.163	0.099	0.165	1.000

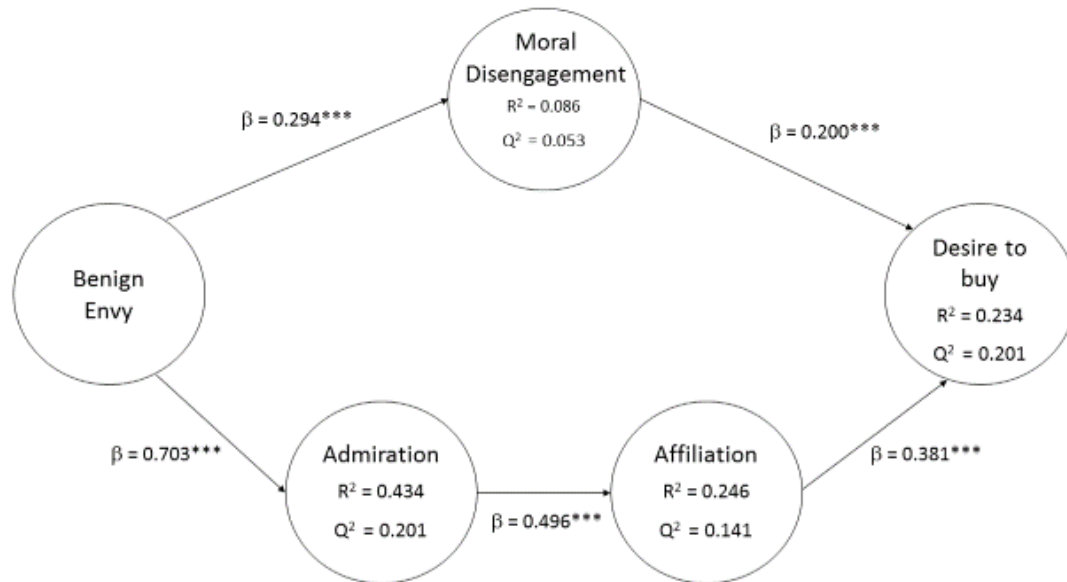
Diagonal elements in the 'correlation of constructs' matrix are the square root of AVE. For adequate discriminant validity, diagonal elements should be greater than corresponding off-diagonal elements.

Regarding discriminating validity, Fornell and Larcker (1981) proposed a criterion used to assess discriminant validity of the constructs: the square root of AVE should be greater than the correlation between the construct and other constructs in the model.

To assess the Fornell-Larcker criterion in statistical terms, the square root of the AVE of every latent variable is computed and compared with the correlation this variable has with any other construct in the research model. The results presented in table 13 demonstrate

that this criterion has been met, once that the \sqrt{AVE} of each construct is indeed greater than the highest corresponding correlation value with the other latent variables.

5.3.3. Structural model for sub-model 1



* $p < 0.5$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$; GOF = 0.45

Figure 9 - Structural model for sub-model 1 results (Source: own elaboration based on SmartPLS 2.0 output)

Fig. 9 shows the structured results for the Sub-model 1. In this study. It takes several steps to analyze and evaluate how well it supports the hypothesized connections between the different variables.

First, the path coefficients that represent the theorized relationships between two constructs, vary between -1 and +1. When closer to +1 the stronger the positive connection between two constructs and vice versa for values closer to -1 (Hair et al., 2014). In Fig. 9 it is possible to see that all paths show strong positive values, the lowest connection is 0.200 between *Moral Disengagement* and *Desire to Buy*. Yet, even if a path coefficient holds a positive value, it is still necessary to determine if the relationship is significant (Hair et al., 2014).

Then a nonparametric approach known as bootstrapping with 500 re-samples was used to estimate if the path coefficients are significantly different from zero and thus the proposed hypothesis can be supported or not. (Chin, 1998; Fornell and Larcker, 1981). All path

coefficients are found to be significant at the 0.001, 0.01 or 0.05 level, and so Hypothesis 1-5 are supported. The findings demonstrated that *Benign Envy* has a positive and significant influence on *Admiration* ($\beta=0.703$). In turn feelings of *Admiration*, generate *Affiliation* ($\beta=0.496$). Consequently, *Affiliation* exercises a positive impact on *Desire to Buy* ($\beta=0.381$). However, it is possible to see, that the aforementioned connections (*Benign Envy* \rightarrow *Admiration* \rightarrow *Affiliation* \rightarrow *Desire to Buy*) show a stronger relationship than the top (*Benign Envy* \rightarrow *Moral Disengagement* \rightarrow *Desire to Buy*). The overall strongest effect in the structural model can be found for the relationship between *Benign Envy* and *Admiration* with $\beta= 0.703$.

As models yielding significant bootstrap, statistics can be invalid in a predictive sense (Chin et al., 2003), measures of predictive validity (such as R^2 and Q^2) for focal endogenous constructs should be employed. Values of R^2 range between 0 and 1, whereas it is recommended to have values closer to 1. The model demonstrates a good level of predictive power (R^2) as the modeled constructs explained 43.4% of the variance in *Admiration*, 24.6% of the variance in *Affiliation* and 23.4% of variance in *Desire to Buy* (see fig.9). Regarding Q^2 (Chi-square of the Stone-Geisser criterion), if its values are greater than zero, it indicates that the model shows predictive relevance for a certain endogenous variable (Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2014). In this study, all values of Q^2 are positive, so the relations in the model have predictive relevance (see fig.9).

The final step is the evaluation of a goodness of fit (GoF) criterion. Its values range between 0 and 1. According to Wetzels et al. (2009), a GoF greater than 0.35 indicates a very good fit. In this case, the GoF value is 0.45, revealing a good overall fit of the structural model.

5.3.4. Self-esteem moderator for sub-model 1

The results of testing the moderating effect of Self-esteem are presented table 14, table 15, table 16, and fig. 10.

Table 14 - Moderating Effect of Self-Esteem (Source: own elaboration based on SPSS)

Path	β	t-value	Test Result
Benign Envy → Admiration	0.697	27.569***	H1a: Supported
Admiration → Affiliation	0.496	15.390***	H2a: Supported
Affiliation → Desire to buy	0.381	8.175***	H3a: Supported
Benign Envy → Moral Disengagement	0.294	6.959***	H4a: Supported
Moral Disengagement → Desire to buy	0.200	4.016***	H5a: Supported
Benign Envy * Self-esteem → Admiration	-0.148	2.774	H6a: Supported
Self-esteem → Admiration	0.085	1,567***	

Significant at * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

H6a proposed that self-esteem moderates the relationship between Benign Envy and Moral Disengagement. The results of testing H6a show that Self-esteem moderates the relationship between the two variables (H6a is supported, $\beta = -0.148$). (See table 14)

Table 15 - Moderating Effect of Self-Esteem (Source: own elaboration based on SPSS)

Path	β	t-value	Test Result
Benign Envy → Admiration	0.704	29.713***	H1a: Supported
Admiration → Affiliation	0.483	13.826***	H2a: Supported
Affiliation → Desire to buy	0.380	8.102***	H3a: Supported
Benign Envy → Moral Disengagement	0.294	7.126***	H4a: Supported
Moral Disengagement → Desire to buy	0.200	3.900**	H5a: Supported
Admiration * Self esteem → Affiliation	-0.007	1.098 ^{ns}	H7a: not supported
Self-esteem → Affiliation	0.058	0.074 ^{ns}	

Significant at * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. Ns= not significant

Regarding H7a, Self-esteem does not exercises a moderating effect between Admiration and Affiliation. Thus H7a is not supported, $\beta = -0.007$. (See table 15)

Table 16 - Moderating Effect of Self-Esteem (Source: own elaboration based on SPSS)

Path	β	t-value	Test Result
Benign Envy \rightarrow Admiration	0.704	29.775***	H1a: Supported
Admiration \rightarrow Affiliation	0.496	14.942***	H2a: Supported
Affiliation \rightarrow Desire to buy	0.381	7.516***	H3a: Supported
Benign Envy \rightarrow Moral Disengagement	0.303	5.660***	H4a: Supported
Moral Disengagement \rightarrow Desire to buy	0.199	3.660**	H5a: Supported
Benign envy * Self-esteem \rightarrow Moral Disengagement	-0.151	1.987*	H8a: Supported
Self-esteem \rightarrow Moral Disengagement	0.020	0.236 ^{ns}	

Significant at * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. Ns = not significant

Self-esteem was found to moderate the relationship between Benign Envy and Moral Disengagement (H8a is supported, $\beta = -0.151$). (See table 16)

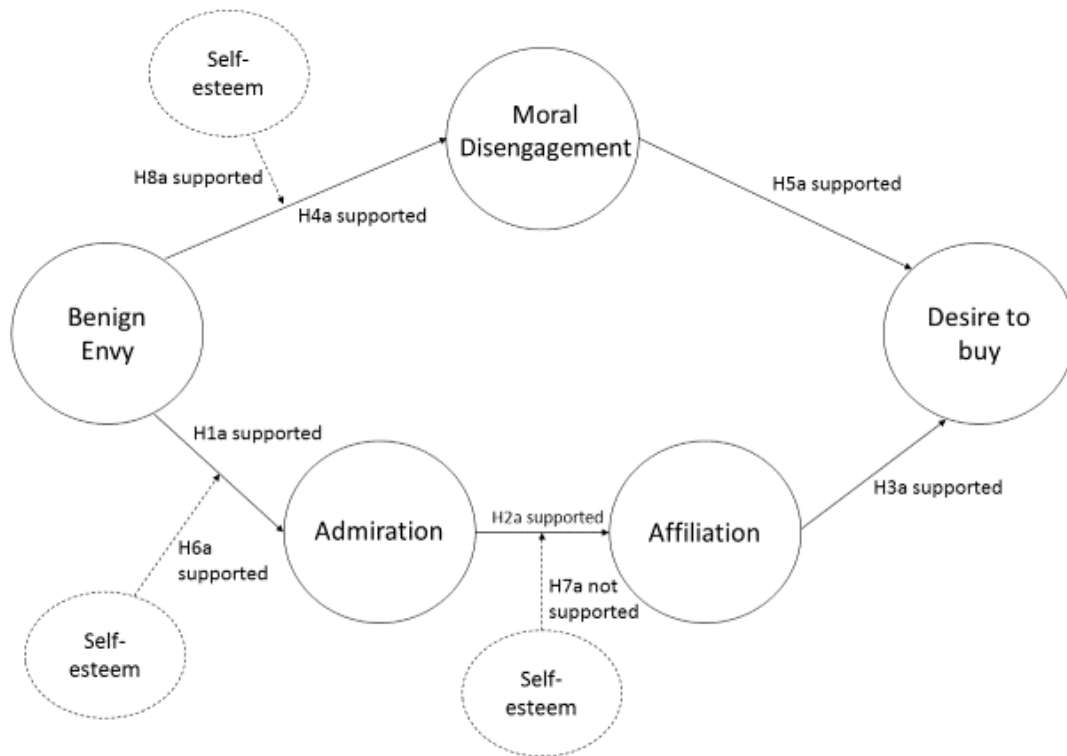


Figure 10 - Hypothesis for sub-model 1 (Source: own elaboration)

5.4. Sub-model 2 Analysis

5.4.1 Measurement Model for sub-model 2

Table 17 - Reliability and convergent validity of the measurement sub-model 2 (Source: Own elaboration based on SmartPLS 2.0 output)

Construct/item	LVmean	Item loading range	Cronbach alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Malicious Envy	1.2	0.803-0.908	0.882	0.917	0.734
Admiration	4.7	0.915-0.956	0.956	0.968	0.884
Affiliation	2.9	0.712-0.880	0.942	0.949	0.702
Moral Disengagement	1.4	0.734-0.823	0.796	0.867	0.621
Desire to buy	3.2	0.906-0.932	0.908	0.942	0.844
Self-esteem	4.4	0.589-0.967	0.922	0.885	0.665

Regarding the structural Sub-model 2, the item loading values range between 0.712 and 0.956, thus above the threshold of 0.707, which indicates that over 50% of variance in the observed variable is explained by the construct (Carmines and Zeller, 1979). (See table 18)

All Cronbach's Alpha values are above 0.7, with a minimum value equal to 0.796 for *Moral Disengagement* and the highest one equal to 0.956 for *Admiration*. Composite reliability values are above 0.8, slightly higher than Cronbach's Alpha values, ranging from 0.867 to 0.968. Therefore, all constructs are found to be reliable. (See table 18)

Finally, the lowest AVE value is 0.621 for *Moral Disengagement* and the highest is 0.884 for *Admiration*, meaning that most of the variance of each indicator is explained by its own construct.

5.4.2. Discriminant validity for sub-model 2

Table 18 - Discriminant validity of the measurement sub-model 2 (Source: own elaboration based on SmartPLS 2.0 output)

	Malicious Envy	Admiration	Affiliation	Moral Disengagement	Desire to Buy	Self-esteem
AVE ^{1/2}	0.857	0.940	0.838	0.788	0.919	0.816
Malicious envy	1.000					
Admiration	0.212	1.000				
Affiliation	0.350	0.497	1.000			
Mora Disengagement	0.547	0.264	0.329	1.000		
Desire to Buy	0.242	0.574	0.446	0.321	1.000	
Self-esteem	0.089	0.179	0.164	0.107	0.210	1.000

When looking at table 19 it is possible to observe that the square root of AVE is greater than the correlation between the construct and other constructs in the model, being in consistency with the Fornell's and Larcker's (1981) discriminant validity criterion.

5.4.3. Structural model for sub-model 2

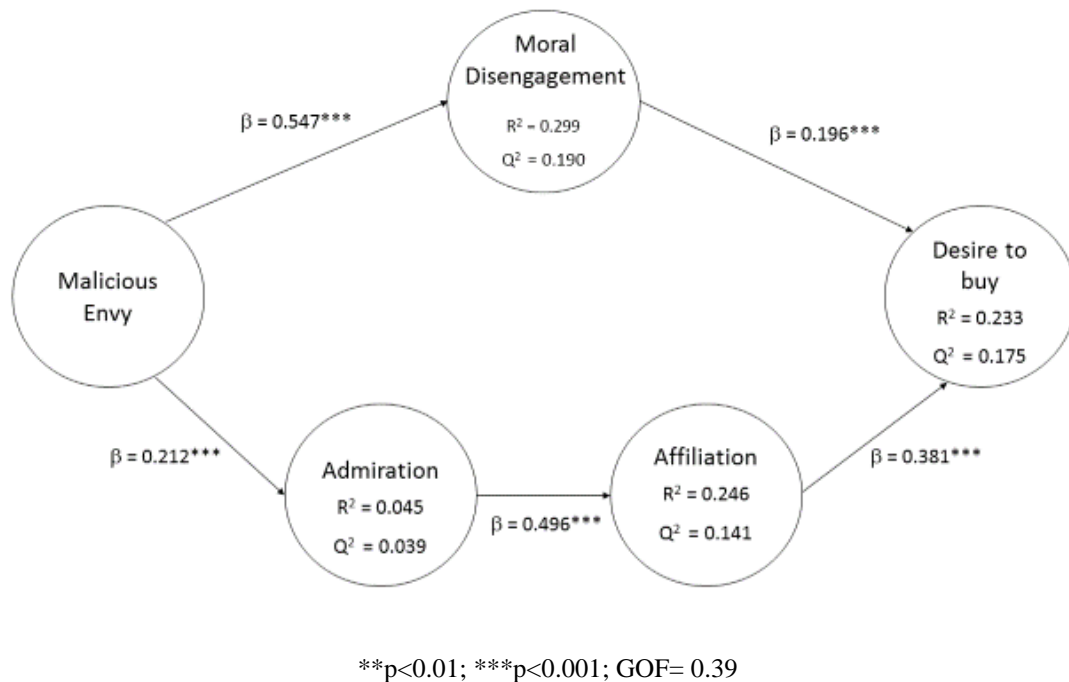


Figure 11 - Structural model for sub-model 2 results (Source: own elaboration based on SmartPLS 2.0 output)

Fig. 11 shows the structured results for the Sub-model 2. In comparison with sub-model 1, almost all paths from this model show weaker positive values. The lowest connection is 0.196 between *Moral Disengagement* and *Desire to Buy*. Along with sub-model 1, all path coefficients are found to be significant at the 0.001, 0.01 or 0.05 level, and so Hypothesis 1-5 are supported.

The findings demonstrated that *Malicious Envy* has a positive and significant influence on *Moral Disengagement* ($\beta=0.547$) but a low impact on *Desire to Buy* ($\beta=0.196$). On the other hand, *Malicious Envy* has a positive but weak influence on *Admiration* ($\beta=0.212$). In turn *Admiration* has a significant impact on *Affiliation* ($\beta=0.496$), which in turn generates a positive impact on *Desire to Buy* ($\beta=0.381$). The overall strongest effect in the structural model can be found for the relationship between *Malicious Envy* and *Moral Disengagement* with $\beta= 0.547$.

The model also demonstrates a good level of predictive power (R^2) as the modeled constructs explained 24.6% of the variance in *Affiliation*, 23.3% of variance in *Desire to Buy* and 29.9% of the variance in *Moral Disengagement* (see fig. 11). Regarding Q^2 , all values are positive, so the relations in the model have predictive relevance (see fig. 11). Lastly, the GoF value is 0.39, revealing a satisfactory fit of the structural model.

5.4.4. Self-esteem moderator for sub-model 2

Table 19 - Moderating Effect of Self-esteem (Source: own elaboration based on SPSS output)

Path	β	t-value	Test Result
Malicious Envy → Admiration	0.200	6.915***	H1b: Supported
Admiration → Affiliation	0.496	16.775***	H2b: Supported
Affiliation → Desire to buy	0.381	7.971***	H3b: Supported
Malicious Envy → Moral Disengagement	0.547	5.885***	H4b: Supported
Moral Disengagement → Desire to buy	0.196	3.872**	H5b: Supported
Malicious Envy * Self-esteem → Admiration	-0.113	2.360**	H6b: Supported
Self-esteem → Admiration	0.208	4.136***	

Significant at * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Self-esteem was found to moderate the relationship between Malicious Envy and Admiration (H6b is supported, $\beta = -0.113$). (See table 19)

Table 20 - Moderating Effect of Self-esteem (Source: own elaboration based on SPSS output)

Path	β	t-value	Test Result
Malicious Envy → Admiration	0.212	7.480***	H1b: Supported
Admiration → Affiliation	0.483	13.862***	H2b: Supported
Affiliation → Desire to buy	0.381	8.701***	H3b: Supported
Malicious Envy → Moral Disengagement	0.547	5.722***	H4b: Supported
Moral Disengagement → Desire to buy	0.196	3.962***	H5b: Supported
Admiration * Self esteem → Affiliation	-0.007	0.074 ^{ns}	H8b is not supported
Self-esteem → Affiliation	0.058	1.084 ^{ns}	

Significant at * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. Ns = not significant

Regarding H7b, Self-esteem does not exercises a moderating effect between Admiration and Affiliation. Thus H7b is not supported, $\beta = -0.007$. (See table 20)

Table 21 - Moderating Effect of Self-esteem (Source: own elaboration based on SPSS output)

Path	β	t-value	Test Result
Malicious Envy → Admiration	0.212	7.468***	H1b: Supported
Admiration → Affiliation	0.497	14.795***	H2b: Supported
Affiliation → Desire to buy	0.382	8.082***	H3b: Supported
Malicious Envy → Moral Disengagement	0.493	4.742***	H4b: Supported
Moral Disengagement → Desire to buy	0.196	4.020***	H5b: Supported
Malicious envy * Self-esteem → Moral Disengagement	0.229	0.972 ^{ns}	H8b: not supported
Self-esteem → Moral Disengagement	0.059	1.165 ^{ns}	

Significant at * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. Ns = not significant

Self-esteem does not exercises a moderating effect between Malicious Envy and Moral Disengagement. Thus H8b is not supported, $\beta = 0.229$. (See table 21)

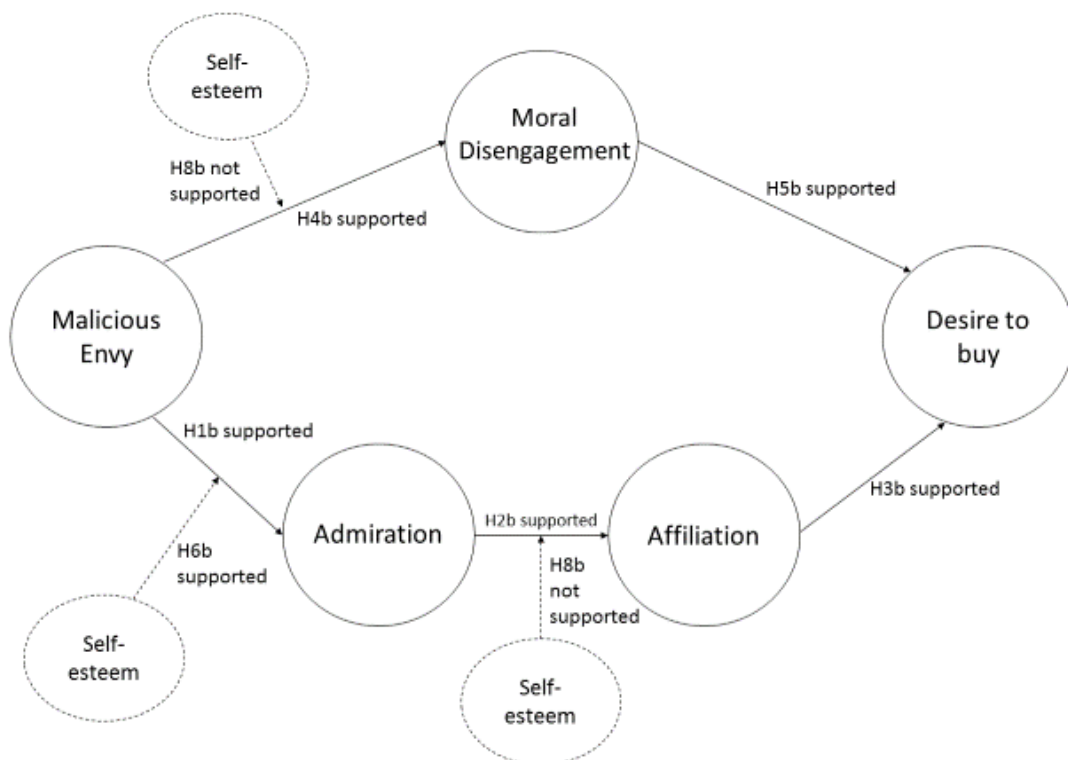


Figure 12 - Hypothesis for sub-model 2 (Source: own elaboration)

6. Conclusions and Implication

6.1 Major Conclusions

The present research had the intention to go further in understanding the role of envy on the desire to purchase luxury fashion clothes and accessories and to contribute to the existing literature in the area of envy and consumer behavior.

To do so, a model was developed based on the literature review. The relationship between constructs emerge from previous studies but, as far as I know, have not been empirically tested. The model was tested in the luxury fashion context.

In sum, the major objective of this study was to understand to what extent the emotion envy influenced consumer's tendency towards the luxury fashion consumption.

The results imply a number of theoretical and practical implications that should be discussed.

First of all, the results seem to indicate that all of the proposed variables of the path model, are in fact drivers of Desire to Buy.

According to the literature review, envy is a frustrating feeling that arises from comparing oneself to a superior other (Lange and Crusius, 2015). The two types of envy have different connotations, whereas malicious envy is associated with negative thoughts about the envied person, the benign form involves more positive thoughts and the expression of praise and goodwill toward someone else's admirable talent or achievement.

Due to those reasons, the main conceptual model was divided in two (sub-model 1 and sub-model 2), one for each type of envy.

When discussing the sub-model 1, the construct Benign Envy is suggested by several authors (e.g. Smith and Kim, 2007; Van de Ven et al., 2011) to be a key factor in customer's buying desire. This emotion that lead to self-improvement has a close relationship to Admiration (Miceli and Castelfranchi, 2007), in the way that a person who feels benign envy somehow feels respect and appreciation towards the envied person. As such, it was proposed that Benign Envy has a positive impact on Admiration. In this study the path Benign Envy → Admiration shows the highest path coefficient among all the proposed drivers with a β -value of 0.703 ($p < 0.001$) and thus the **hypothesis H1a** is accepted. Consequently, it can be concluded that Benign Envy has a great impact on

Admiration. One possible reason for the results is that an individual only benignly envy another's superior characteristics (e.g. his taste to choose outfits, his luxury accessories or his fancy lifestyle), when in fact he admires those characteristics. He represents a role model, a sort of "consumption hero" (Alicke and Zeel, 2008). Both variables are interconnected, one directly influences the other. For instance, someone who loves Angelina Jolie for her beauty and luxury style, feels appreciation and affection for her qualities and secretly desires to have a little or all of her glamour.

In literature, Admiration had been proposed as a driver for Affiliation, as Shindler et al. (2013) suggest that people tend to affiliate to outstanding others that they admire. This is in line with the Broaden-and-Build theory of emotions, which suggest that positive emotions promote social bonds while negative emotions have the opposite effect (Fredrickson, 2001). Besides, when it comes to the act of affiliate, people tend to select others with similar values, ideals and interests (Weber and Schafer, 2016). The results of the path model evaluation in this study indicate that there exists a significant positive relationship between Admiration and Affiliation ($\beta=0.496$, $p<0.001$), which supports **hypothesis H2a**. As such, admiring someone for his fashion style or his taste for luxury clothes stimulates the establishment of social bonds. An individual that feels inspired by another's superiorities, make an effort to make or maintain contact with him, create a close relationship where one benefits from the other's excellence. Any human being strongly desires to fit in the society's norms and being attached to a "fashion influencer" allows him to get a little closer to his world. This goes hand in hand with the previous assertions from Shindler et al. (2013), Fredrickson (2001) and Weber and Schafer (2016). Moreover, **hypothesis H3a** is supported as a significant path coefficient ($\beta=0.381$, $p<0.001$) can be observed for Affiliation→Desire to Buy. This findings contribute to the examinations of the authors Bloemer et al. (2003) who suggest that the need for social affiliation influences behavioral intentions, in particular word-of-mouth, repeat purchase and price sensitivity. The social networks have been responsible for the big change in the way brands and consumers communicate. Companies make use of these tools creating desires and aspirations on consumers. Thus, this study supports those assumptions by showing that consumers feel the necessity to affiliate with others with superior qualities in order to be influenced by those qualities. This necessity comes from the basic need of being valued and feeling included (Belk et al., 2003). In this sense, the desire for luxury goods has its basis on the final goal of attaining social recognition.

Furthermore, it was proposed that Benign Envy has influence on Moral Disengagement., As it was expected, the strength of this proposed connection of Benign Envy→Moral Disengagement, is low ($\beta= 0.294$, $p<0.001$), thus **hypothesis H4a** is supported. This result might be explained because of the ambiguity of human feelings. As it was said before, envy belongs to a “grey zone” (an area of uncertainty or indeterminacy) and as a human feeling it is almost impossible to predict or control. In result, even when envy is present in her benign form, an individual still feel the need to pull the other down. This is consistent with Belk (2011:14) that defend “Although benign envy lacks the destructive nature of malicious envy, it is equally rivalrous and competitive.” Besides, this form of envy has been metaphorical associated to a cancerous tumor. The fact that being a benign tumor is a great relief, it does not mean that it is a good thing. The same happens with envy.

The weakest impact can be observed for coefficient path Moral Disengagement→Desire to Buy with $\beta= 0.200$ ($p<0.001$). **Hypothesis H5a** proposed a positive impact of Moral Disengagement on Desire to Buy, and equally to what happened to H4a this hypothesis is supported. In this case, the results may rely on the self-regulatory mechanisms that allow people to forget their cognitive barriers by turning of feelings of guilt, shame or remorse (Duffy et al., 2012; and Bandura, 1996). Without self-sanctions, they find moral justifications for their destructive conduct. As such, this can be translated in a greater desire to buy in order to reduce the discrepancy between the envier and the envied, or even to surpass it and become the object of envy. For instance, someone who wants to destroy a social influencer just because she does not deserve the expensive gifts that brands send her (to try and show to her followers), might still desire to buy those gifts in order to find out what is so special about them and why everybody is being influenced. In the same way, a person who constantly gives bad restaurant reviews, but insists in returning there, even if it is only to have another opportunity to criticize again.

In this sense, an interesting conclusion to be withheld from this study is that envy impacts the desire to buy in any of her forms (benign and malicious envy).

In regard to the moderation effect of self-esteem in sub-model 1, it was observed that from the **hypothesis H6a, H7a and H8a**, only H7a was not supported. Analyzing the proposed connection $\text{Admiration} * \text{Self-esteem} \rightarrow \text{Affiliation}$ reflects this result, as the path is not found to be significant ($\beta= -0.007$). It can be concluded that Self-esteem does not

influence the impact of Admiration on Affiliation. In other words, Self-esteem has no effect on the strength of the relationship between Admiration and Affiliation. As such, a person who admires other for his fashion style will likely affiliate, and having high or low self-esteem does not change it. The way people evaluate their's own worth does not play a relevant role in a context in which feelings of admiration develop into feelings of affiliation.

The same is no longer the case of **H6a** and **H8a** in which self-esteem was proposed to moderate the paths Benign Envy→Admiration and Benign Envy→Moral Disengagement. The results demonstrated that both hypothesis are supported, in these cases, Self-Esteem has the power to change the strength of the relationship between the aforementioned constructs. For instance, an individual with low self-esteem feels insecure about himself. His insecurity leads him to believe that he is far from reaching the desired state. He perceives the gap between his actual self and his ideal self as being huge and almost impossible to overcome. As a result, he might feel the need to destroy anyone who is superior in any field. On one hand, his frustration of not being able to level or surpass the discrepancy of the gap, makes him disappointed and negative, which in turn leads to harmful behaviors (H8a). On the other hand, when compared to someone superior, he might feel inspired and encouraged to improve himself (H6a). In this cases, low self-esteem increases the strength between the relationships.

When it comes to an individual with high self-esteem it happens the opposite. When feeling secure and worthy, an individual is hardly affected and overwhelmed by others with superior qualities, he recognizes his value and accepts himself with all his flaws. He does not feel the need to show his superiority to others, neither require continual validation (Kernis, 2003). In this cases, high self-esteem weakens the strength between the relationships. This is line with Smallets et al. (2016), people engage in social comparison when they evaluate the extent to which they are better or worse than another individual. This impacts on everyday life by influencing people's self-evaluations, affect, goal-pursuit and interpersonal relations. Sirgi (1982) defends that our self-esteem is product of the existing gap we feel exist between our real selves and their ideal or social selves (Sirgi, 1982). Thus, those with low or high self-esteem strive to fill this gap by trying to attain qualities that they know it will grant them social recognition. The Luxury goods have the power to hypothetically help to get the desired position, goal, or lifestyle.

When discussing the sub-model 2, the main differences can be observed on the variables where Malicious Envy has a direct impact.

Hypothesis H4b is supported once the path Malicious Envy \rightarrow Moral Disengagement shows the strongest impact in the model with $\beta = 0.547$ ($p < 0.001$). Interestingly, this result is the opposite of what happens on sub-model 1. Therefore, when an individual appraises another's advantage as unfair and unmerited, feelings of malicious envy emerge (Lange and Crusius, 2015). Envy is a result of motivational goals that result from upward comparisons, its functional goal is to level the difference between the self and envied person. In this case, the malicious envy is fueled by a pessimistic fear of not living up to level up to the standard of excellence of such goal. For that reason the envier aims to pull the superior down. Consequently malicious feelings develop into negative behaviors (moral disengagement). This can also be support by Duffy et al. (2012) who stated that malicious envy intensifies moral disengagement by allowing people to forget their self-sanctions and engage in destructive behaviors. For instance, if a teenager sees her colleague being spoiled by her parents, that always buy her the most expensive clothes, she feels the urge to put her down by taking away her goods.

Moreover, another difference from sub-model 1 can be observed in **hypothesis H1b** which is supported. The path Malicious Envy \rightarrow Admiration shows a low path coefficient ($\beta = 0.212$, $p > 0.001$). As previously mentioned, people can have the most illogical behaviors. Therefore negative thoughts can have influence on Admiration, meaning that it is possible to feel both dislike/disapproval and admiration for the same person. It is usual to have that friend that speak ill of someone but continue to follow him on social networks, he secretly and almost unconsciously admires him.

Concerning the moderation effect of self-esteem in sub-model 2, it was observed that from the **hypothesis H6b, H7b and H8b**, only H6b was supported. From this results it should be noted that **H8b**, with a path coefficient $\beta = 0.229$ (Malicious Envy * Self-esteem \rightarrow Moral disengagement) shows a different result comparing to sub-model 1, as the value is not found to be significant. In this case, Self-Esteem does not exercise effect on the intensity of the strength of the relationship between Malicious Envy and Moral Disengagement). One possible reason lies on the high tendency of an individual who feels malicious envy to present immoral behaviors towards another, even with different levels of self-esteem. This assumption leads us to believe that the negative connotation of

malicious envy cannot be separated from its true nature. In consistency with with Duffy et al. (2012), enviers with low social identification (common bonds, closeness and similarity of interests) will certainly moral disengage, which in turn leads to social undermining.

When taking a more closer look into the descriptive statistics, the results regarding Benign Envy, as well as Admiration, Affiliation and Desire to Buy, show that respondents have the tendency to agree more to items referring to a positive emotions and behaviors compared to items describing ill will, negativism and destructive behaviors (constructs of Moral Disengagement and Malicious Envy).

Summing up, it can be said that this dissertation contributes to the literature on the role of envy as a determinant of desire to buy.

Envy is a complex and multifaceted emotion that follows from an upward social comparison and results in a variety of thoughts and feelings, such as inferiority, frustration, and self-improvement. However, a common phenomenological component of many envy experiences is desire. A desire to have what another person has. A desire to have social recognition.

In the end of the day, people just want to feel accepted and valued, feel that are appreciated and that belong to somewhere. As such, the purchase of luxury items is the consequence of seeking for social status and for the glamour of being envied.

6.2. Managerial implications

The envy feeling has an important role in the customers' buying behavior. Under its effect, consumers are more likely to purchase an item, and to pay more for it (Van de Van et al., 2011). The purpose of the purchase is based on the consumer's desire instead of their need. The discomfort and frustration in the feeling of envy forces a customer to take action in order to obtain the coveted product. The objective of an envious purchase can be from the desire to improve at aesthetic and personal level, compete with the envied other or seek for self-esteem and social status.

Due to those reasons and to the results from the conceptual model, it is undeniable that Envy plays an important role in customer buying desire. In this line, several managerial implications should be considered when making marketing decisions.

First, a recommendation for the luxury fashion market, in order to take appropriate action from the advantages of the envy feeling, is that the companies should invest on the design and aesthetic characteristics of the products. That is, the crucial impact is on delivering a differentiating factor, one that would overwhelm the customer's expectations. In these way, they would feel special, carrying a unique object, an object that others will envy. However, the product should not be very popular, it cannot be in everyone's reach, otherwise it loses its effect of exclusivity.

Second, by understanding the provocation of the envy feeling, marketers can improve customer buying behavior by designing products that create desire and inspiration and, therefore, can produce envy. Through this method, marketers can shape the buying behavior of customers.

Third, strategies where different reference groups are taken into consideration can be very effective. This reference groups such as groups of friends, colleagues, family members or coworkers, have in common the propinquity and personal identification factors, which have impact on customer's buying desires. Besides, public figures and other role models should be also taken into account, once that consumers feel related to them, a relation that comes from feelings of Admiration and Affiliation.

It should be noted that Malicious Envy can have a tremendous negative impact on brands. To illustrate, a person that for some reason feels hostility, disapproval or even hate for a celebrity, may want to denigrate his image. Being a celebrity makes it difficult to get

close, and for this reason, consumers seek for other ways to reach it. One possible way which is often used, is to unload the frustration on the brands that celebrities stand for. As spokespersons, these figures are instantly associated to the brands' values and identity. As a result, a bad review or a false rumor about them will directly impact the brands' reputation. However, it happens the opposite if someone holds the spokesperson in high regard. In this case, he will gladly spread his support and approval for the products used by his role model. Therefore, brands must be actively present in the platforms used by its customers. In this online platforms (social networks) they can easily find reviews and opinions about specific products, brand activations, campaigns, advertisements and celebrities endorsements. With these tools, it becomes possible to predict, adapt and create marketing strategies to meet the customers' expectations and desires.

Fourth, self-esteem plays a very important role in the desire to buy. People with low self-esteem engage in every possible strategy to justify their worthiness. Most of the times, they buy things in order to be and feel accepted. Thus, advertisement campaigns can follow two different approaches: feeding from consumers' low self-esteem that is, focusing on what frightens their self-image. For instance, "If you take these vitamins you will feel less hungry, and in two months you will reach the weight you always dreamed!" When reading this, someone unhappy with his self-image will feel the urge to buy the product, as mean to prevent a horrifying end. The other possible strategy is to create positive messages about the consumer's self (e.g. the dove campaign for real beauty, which inspired women to have the confidence to be comfortable with their bodies).

Finally, the huge concern of customers to fit within the society standards require a method to analyze, as fast as possible, what is "in" and what is "out", what has the confidence of consumers and what needs improvement. In this kind of market, following trends is a vitally factor, which the companies should place sufficient efforts on. For this reason, the new digitalized world should not be overlooked. In this sense, the social networks present important tools that can be used to explore the customer's urgent needs and behaviors.

6.3. Limitations and future research

Even though this study provides useful insights into the topic the role of envy on desire to purchase, it is not without limitations.

This study did not examine the differences between groups related to geographic or psychographic features, such as nationality, educational background or personality. Also, the group “gender” did not show an exactly equal proportion of male and female participants, therefore it is harder to generalize the findings to the male demographic. In the future, studies could address those points and reveal further insights depending on the characteristics of the envious.

Since the survey was conducted among Portuguese, it is valid for Portuguese culture only. However, there are many differences among different countries. For instance, the Russians call “white” to the benign envy and “black” to the malicious envy (Belk, 2011). The difference in this study is not only a difference in language but also the meaning of envy under that language. Moreover, the questionnaire was applied to a small sample size of 202 individuals, which is clearly not representative of the Portuguese population. Consequently the values obtained from the statistical tests are considered to be true within the sample used but not to be extrapolated to the universe. Hence, a suggestion for further research is to expand the population samples in Portugal as well as in other countries, and examine the differences of envy in different cultures.

Another limitation lies on the focus of this thesis on the luxury fashion industry, however some theoretical analysis about the role of envy in general had been made. Different industries have different characteristics, in this sense the final result of this paper is valid to the luxury fashion industry only. Therefore, in the future, to enhance generalization of the research results, the examination could be extended to other industries.

In addition, the research method can be limitative in terms of the answers given by the respondents. The use of quantitative research, and in particular the usage of closed answer questions, doesn't allow the respondents to express their opinion about the topics under study. In this sense, this method may also limit the degree of understanding of the issues being addressed, since there might be some doubts about the questions that cannot be answered by the researcher. There are times when the respondents answer according to the needs of the researchers, not taking the questionnaire on a serious note. As such, future research should try to combine the online questionnaire with face-to-face interviews, to

try to deepen the analysis, as it is a very complex subject. This method will be helpful on obtaining consumers thoughts and beliefs.

It would also be of interest to further study the impact of the desire in the actual intentions of purchase.

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8. Appendix

Appendix A – Online Questionnaire

The Desire of Luxury Consumption

Hi, I am a student of ISCTE Business School and this online survey is the main experiment of my master thesis in Marketing. The purpose is to investigate the causes that drive the desire to purchase luxury fashion clothes and accessories.

The type of brands that will be addressed in this study are Prada, Chanel and Christian Dior. The products of interest will only be fashion products, namely clothes and accessories (handbags, shoes, watches and jewelry).

Please read the questions carefully, remember that there are no right or wrong answers and just give your honest opinion. The collected data will be used for academic purposes only and will be treated confidentially.

SEGUIENTE

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Please indicate your degree of agreement. *

	1- Does not describe me at all	2	3	4	5	6	7- Describes me extremely
I feel hostility and antipathy towards people I envy for their luxury belongings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seeing other people's luxury possessions makes me resent them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wish that people who can afford luxury fashion brands lose their purchase power advantage.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Envious feelings toward people that have a luxury accessory that I can't afford, cause me to dislike them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If I notice that another person is always wearing the expensive and newest fashion trend, I try to improve myself, in order to be more fashionable and stylish.

If someone has the accessories or clothes from the luxury fashion brands that I love, I try to attain them for myself.

If other people have the luxury item that I want for myself, I wish to take it away from them.

Seeing others wearing luxury goods motivates me to buy new goods and be trendier.

I strive to reach other people's fashion accessories and clothes.

When I envy others' fashion style and luxury goods, I focus on how I can become equally fashionable and afford those goods in the future.

Considering the fashion world...

Think about one person that you admire, for the way he/she dresses (could be a model, a singer, an actor or other public person). Please answer the following thinking about such person: *

	1- Completely disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7- Completely agree
The way he/she dresses impress and elate me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I admire him/her for his/her impeccable taste for clothes and accessories.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am continually impressed by the way that he/she perfectly combines the colors and textures.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that his/her fashion style is admirable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Think about one person that you admire, not only for the way he/she dresses but also for his/her personality, his/her ideals, values and attitudes. Please answer the following thinking about such person: *

	1- Does not describe me at all	2	3	4	5	6	7- Describes me extremely
I feel connected and close to him/her in a very special way.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Very often, I do something that allow me to get a little closer to his/her world.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My special relationship with him/her is essential to who I am.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to be part of his/her world and I'm willing to make efforts to achieve that.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I try hard to share his/her world, even though I will never truly succeed at this.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Somehow I feel related to him/her.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have adopted those values and ideals that he/she stands for.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When others talk badly about him/her, I feel personally offended or hurt by it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate your degree of agreement. *

	1- Completely disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7- Completely agree
I can't be blamed for buying things that I can't afford easily when all my friends are doing it too.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Taking personal credit for fashion ideas (for instance I took from my favorite blogger) that are not mine is no big deal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Taking something (fashion luxury things) without the owner's permission is okay as long as you're just borrowing it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People who do not have good taste and dress badly can only blame themselves.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is okay to spread rumors to defend those I care about.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People who enjoy using animal fur (or other material that cause environmental problems) don't deserve to be treated like human beings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I can't be blamed for using animal fur once that my favorite celebrity is often seen using it.

When I go shopping with my friends I tell them that I only buy the best, when in fact I can't afford luxury goods. Little lies don't hurt anyone when we're under social pressure.

I desire to buy luxury fashion clothes and accessories all the time to feel more fashionable. *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Completely disagree Completely agree

My desire for buying luxury fashion clothes and accessories can be described as: *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Very weak desire Very strong desire

I want to buy fashion clothes and accessories to be more respected *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Does not describe me at all Describes be extremely

Please indicate your degree of agreement. *

	1- Does not describe me at all	2	3	4	5	6	7- Describes me extremely
I feel good about myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that others respect and admire me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am pleased with my appearance right now.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel unattractive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am dissatisfied with my weight.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel satisfied with the way my body looks right now.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Socio-Demographic

Gender *

- Male
- Female

Age *

- 18 - 20
- 21 - 25
- 26 - 30
- 31 - 35
- 36 - 40
- 41 - 45
- 46 - 50
- Over 50

Profession

A sua resposta

Appendix 2 – Full list of the original items of each construct

Construct	Items	Source
<p>Envy Benign Malicious</p>	<p>Benign1: “When I envy others, I focus on how I can become equally successful in the future.” Benign2: “If I notice that another person is better than me, I try to improve myself.” Benign3: “Envyng others motivates me to accomplish my goals.” Benign4: “I strive to reach other people’s superior achievements.” Benign5: “If someone has superior qualities, achievements, or possessions, I try to attain them for myself.”</p> <p>Malicious1: “I wish that superior people lose their advantage.” Malicious2: “If other people have something that I want for myself, I wish to take it away from them.” Malicious3: “I feel ill will towards people I envy.” Malicious4: “Envious feelings cause me to dislike the other person.” Malicious5: “Seeing other people’s achievements makes me resent them.”</p>	<p>Lange and Crusius, 2015.</p>
<p>Admiration</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Things that he/she accomplishes or has accomplished impress and elate me.” 2. “I admire him/her for his/her characteristics or abilities.” 3. “I am continually impressed by something which he/she does or has done.” 4. “I feel that his/her ability or behaviour is admirable.” 	<p>Schindler, Paech and Löwenbrück, 2015.</p>
<p>Affiliation</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “I feel connected and close to him/her in a very special way.” 2. “Somehow I feel related to him/her.” 3. “When others talk badly about him/her, I feel personally offended or hurt by it.” 4. “My special relationship with him/her is essential to who I am.” 5. “I have adopted those values and ideals that he/she stands for.” 6. “I want to be a part of his/her world and would incur quite a bit to accomplish this.” 7. “I very often do something that could allow me to get a little closer to his/her world.” 8. “I try hard to share his/her world, even though I will never truly succeed at this.” 	<p>Schindler, Paech and Löwenbrück, 2015.</p>
<p>Moral Disengagement</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is okay to spread rumors to defend those you care about. 2. Taking something without the owner’s permission is okay as long as you’re just borrowing it. 3. Considering the ways people grossly misrepresent themselves, it’s hardly a sin to inflate your own credentials a bit. 4. People shouldn’t be held accountable for doing questionable things when they were just doing what an authority figure told them to do. 5. People can’t be blamed for doing things that are technically wrong when all their friends are doing it too. 6. Taking personal credit for ideas that were not your own is no big deal. 7. Some people have to be treated roughly because they lack feelings that can be hurt. 8. People who get mistreated have usually done something to bring it on themselves 	<p>Moore, Detert, Trevi, Baker and Mayer, 2012.</p>

Continuation of Appendix 2 - Full list of the original items of each construct

Construct	Items	Source
Desire	<p>a. I desire to buy fashion clothes and accessories all the time to feel more fashionable. 1-completely disagree, 7 completely agree</p> <p>b. My desire for buying fashion clothes and accessories can be described as: 1-very weak desire, 7- very strong desire</p> <p>c. I want to buy fashion clothes and accessories with my friends all the time 1-“does not describe me at all, 7-describes me very much”)</p>	Perugini and Bagozzi (2001)
Self-esteem	<p>1. I feel satisfied with the way my body looks right now 2. I feel that others respect and admire me 3. I am dissatisfied with my weight 4. I feel good about myself. 5. I am pleased with my appearance right now. 6. I feel unattractive</p>	Heatherston and Polivy (1991).