

Impact Of Consumer Need For Uniqueness On Purchasing Intention In The Lebanese Aesthetics Clinics: The Mediating Effect Of Brand Attitudes

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how consumers' value awareness, receptivity to normative influence, and need for novelty affect their propensity to buy in the Lebanese beauty industry. Brand attitudes are being investigated as a potential moderator of the connection between buyer personality factors and willingness to buy. Three hundred and fifty participants from Lebanon's aesthetics clinics were surveyed for this study. The data was analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM), and the hypotheses were verified via that process. The results suggest that customer psychological qualities greatly effect purchase intention, with consumer desires for uniqueness favorably influencing positively impacting it. According to the study's findings, brand attitudes also play a mediating role between consumers' underlying personality qualities and their propensity to make a purchase. This study adds to the literature by illuminating the function of brand attitudes in moderating the effect of consumer psychological factors on purchase intent in the Lebanese aesthetics industry. The research results may help cosmetic clinics in Lebanon and other comparable settings better understand their target audiences' personality types and brand preferences.

Keywords: Consumer Need for Uniqueness, Brand Attitudes, and Purchasing Intention.

Introduction

Intentions to buy are heavily influenced by a customer's personality type. Among the many factors that go into a consumer's final choice, value awareness, receptivity to normative influence, and the need for individuality stand out as the most influential (Jayne et al., 2019). Consumers that care deeply about receiving their money's worth are said to be "value conscious." Value-conscious shoppers are more likely to shop around before making a final decision (Wadsworth et al., 2022). Some customers place a premium on being able to openly display their personality via the things they buy, and this might affect their desire to do so. These buyers may be less inclined to follow the crowd and instead look for unique items (Gundala et al., 2022; M. El Houry et al., 2023; Sadeli et al., 2023) in their product searches. Consumers' attitudes and actions may be influenced by these elements. A customer that is very price-conscious may be more inclined to buy a product that provides excellent value. However, societal pressures and the need for self-expression may also factor into their final choice. Marketers and companies may improve sales and customer

satisfaction by catering to customers' wants and needs by studying these aspects (Budiarani & Nugroho, 2022; Hmoud et al., 2022; Karuppiah & Ramayah, 2022).

Definition of the Issue

In Lebanon, there is a burgeoning market for aesthetic treatments and products that attempt to improve both outward appearance and inner health. Despite the sector's expansion, little is known about how consumers' personality characteristics affect their decisions to spend money in this area. Understanding these psychological features is vital for firms in the Lebanese aesthetics industry, as it may assist them to better target their audience and produce more successful marketing efforts that eventually lead to greater purchase inclinations. The difficulty of identifying the function of openness to normative influence in the Lebanese aesthetics industry is another obstacle. Some buyers may be swayed much by popular opinion and current fashions, while others may place a premium on their own sense of originality and authenticity. Companies could create advertising campaigns that target both sorts of buyers by, for example, emphasizing the goods' distinctive qualities or releasing special editions.

Literature Review

Kastanakis & Balabanis (2012) found that customers who are exposed to a high level of NFU are more likely to express an interest in switching brands. In addition, high NFU customers are less likely to transfer brands if the recommended items continue to uphold a distinct brand identity and provide a restricted number of variants. To counter this, Kaytaz & Gul (2014) postulated that consumers' social demands, such as the desire for uniqueness (NFU) and the need for self-monitoring, play a significant impact in shaping their choices of brand prominence (Kumar et al, 2022). According to the findings of the research, consumers with high levels of self-monitoring and NFU are more likely to engage in status purchasing intention when faced with social situations, where they are more likely to rely on the use of brand logos to enhance their sense of individuality and self-image (G. Sun et al., 2017). Even more so, consumers with high NFU tend to look for unique company logos because they provide them with a sense of sanctioned social difference (Alozian & Shatila, 2023). According to the findings of Valášková & Klieštk (2015) CNFU indicate a moderately significant relationship with customers' propensity to buy. Bayraktaroğlu & Alimen (2011) find that a substantial positive association exists between customers' demand for uniqueness as a behavioural feature and consumers' opinions toward the most well-known companies. Thereby, a new hypothesis is formulated:

H1: There is a relationship between CNFU and their attitudes towards purchasing intention

Brands provide customers more than just practical benefits; they also give them a range of subjective emotions (Wang et al., 2021). The term "emotional value" is used to describe the satisfaction and enjoyment that customers feel after making a purchase or becoming an owner of a product, as well as the feelings or moods that are induced by the product (Hamza et al. 2022). Emotional brand experiences can strengthen consumer-brand identification,

according to Grazzini et al. (2021). Consumers' emotional attitudes toward brands are influenced by thoughts like " brands make me happy" and " brands make me feel good". As a result, has the potential to provide buyers with a wealth of ostentatious sensory pleasures (Alozian & Shatila, 2023). An additional factor in customers' emotionally invested relationships with brands is the degree to which their perceptions of the brands' and the individuals' personalities align (Ushakov & Shatila, 2022). What customers have come to anticipate from premium brands in terms of higher product quality (including product availability, dependability, and longevity) and distinctive services is referred to as "functional value". -goods buyers tend to have higher expectations because they link high-end labels with higher-quality wares and services (Louridas & Spinellis, 2021). This had led to the development of the following hypothesis:

H2: Brand Attitudes mediates the relationship between Need for Uniqueness and Purchasing Intention for Products

Methodology

In 2022, the research population targeted in the addressed Lebanese Aesthetics Clinics was expected to be 210,000 respondents. The research population was designated as all Lebanese Aesthetics Clinics. Employees, managers and clients with various academic degrees, including a Bachelor's, a Master's, Doctorate, and a Ph.D., were recruited for the research. The clinics will be chosen for this research because of their ability to do high-quality, internationally competitive research. Cochran's formula is considered especially appropriate in situations with large populations. The formula is $n=N/[1+N(e)^2] = 210,000/[1+210,000(0.05)^2] = 350$. As a result, the research's sample size was 350 customers. This research relied on closed-ended questions to provide a clear picture of the thoughts and feelings of the participants. The questionnaire design contained a 5-points Likert scale, with "1" representing "Strongly Disagree" and "5" representing "Strongly Agree."

Demographic Variables

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics on Gender

Item	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	166	47.4	47.4	47.4
Male	184	52.6	52.6	100.0
Total	350	100.0	100.0	

The 350 respondents included 166 females, or 47.4 percent of the whole sample, and 184 men, or 52.6 percent of the total sample, according to this research.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics on Age

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18 less than 24 years old	33	9.4	9.4	9.4
24 less than 34 years old	95	27.1	27.1	36.5
34 less than 44 years old	158	45.1	45.1	81.6
44 less than 54 years old	54	15.4	15.4	97
54 less than 64 years old	7	2	2	99
64 less than 74 years old	3	0.9	0.9	100
Total	350	100.0	100.0	

Furthermore, the descriptive data indicated that 33 respondents constitute 10.7 percent of the sample, 95 respondents constitute 23.2 percent of the sample, and 158 respondents constitute 44.6 percent of the sample addressed, all of whom were between the ages of 25 and 44. In addition, there were 84 respondents, or 18.8%, who were aged 45 to 54, and 12 respondents, or 2.7%, who were aged 55 to 64.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of Employment Status

Employment type	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Full-time employment	202	58.4	58.4	58.4
Part-time employment	124	35.8	35.8	94.2
Self-employed	24	5.8	5.8	100.0
Total	350	100.0	100.0	

Referring to the above table, 252 respondents constituting 56.3% have full time job, 166 respondents which constitutes 37.1% of the sample have part-time job whereas 30 respondents constituting 6.7% are self-employed.

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics of Monthly Income

Salary	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
above USD2000	25	6.6	6.6	6.6
Less than USD50	17	4.9	4.9	11.5
USD1000 to USD2000	52	14.9	14.9	26.4
USD300 to less than USD500	124	35.6	35.6	62.3
USD50 to less than USD300	50	14.4	14.4	76.7
USD500 to less than USD1000	82	23.6	23.6	100.0
Total	350	100.0	100.0	

Referring to the above table, it can be noticed that 40 respondents constituting 8.9% have monthly income above than \$2,000, 24 respondents have monthly income less than \$50, 88 respondents have monthly income between \$1,000 to \$2,000, 120 respondents have monthly income from \$300 to less than \$500, 58 respondents have monthly income from \$50 to less than \$300, and 118 respondents constituting 26.3% have monthly income from \$50 to less than \$1,000.

Table 5 Path Analysis

Item	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
BA <--- CNFU	.286	.046	8.328	.014
PI <--- BA	.747	.153	4.890	.012
PI <--- CNFU	.312	.025	12.48	.012

The results revealed that VC positively influences BA ($\beta = 0.142$, p-value = 0.018). Thus, H1 is supported. The results demonstrated that SNI showed positive influence on BA ($\beta = 0.319$, p-value = 0.004). Hence, H2 is supported.

The results indicated that CNFU has a positive significant influence on BA ($\beta = 0.286$, p-value = 0.014). Consequently, H3 is supported.

The results showed that BA positively influence PI ($\beta = 0.747$, p-value = 0.012).

The results showed that VC positively influence PI ($\beta = 0.736$, p-value = 0.023). Thus, H2 is supported.

The results showed that CNFU positively influence PI ($\beta = 0.312$, p-value = 0.012). Thus, H3 is supported.

Mediation Analysis

In this part, the researcher will illustrate the mediator role of Brand Attitudes. In this regard, the below table shows direct beta without mediation, direct beta with mediation, and indirect effect with 95% bias-corrected bootstrapped confidence intervals (CI). After checking the direct impact of VC, SNI, and CNFU on PI. The results revealed are:

Table 6 Mediation Analysis

Hypothesis Model	Beta (β)	Direct Effects	Indirect Effects	Total Effect	P-Value	Result
CNFU \rightarrow BA	0.813	0.469	0.369	0.838	0.049	X
BA \rightarrow PI	0.536	0.236	0.436	0.672	0.036	X
CNFU \rightarrow BA \rightarrow PI	0.713	0.859	0.559	1.418	0.023	Partial Mediation

According to the results of the path analysis, CNFU tends to have a relationship with BA since the ($\beta = 0.813$, $P=0.049$). However, it showed a direct effect of 0.469 and indirect effect of 0.369,

BA tends to have a relationship with Purchasing Intention since the ($\beta = 0.536$, $P=0.036 < 0.05$). However, it showed a direct effect of 0.236 and indirect effect of 0.436.

CNFU tends to have a relationship with purchasing intention since the ($\beta = 0.713$, $P=0.023$). However, it showed a direct effect of 0.859 and indirect effect of 0.559,

In all the hypothesis models, the results show a partial mediation effect, which means that the brand attitudes (BA) have a partial role in mediating the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. In other words, the brand attitudes are contributing to the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, but not completely explaining it.

Hypotheses Testing Results

The following table summarizes the validation of the hypothesis based on the previous statistics and structure equation models.

Table 23 Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis Number	Hypothesis Statement	Validation
H1	Need for Uniqueness affects positively Purchasing Intention	Supported
H2	Brand Attitudes mediate the relationship between need for uniqueness and Purchasing Intention towards	Supported

This table presents two hypotheses related to the impact of various factors on purchasing intention. The variables studied are Need for Uniqueness (CNFU), Brand Attitudes (BA) and Purchasing Intention.

For H1, the hypothesis states that Need for Uniqueness affects positively on purchasing intention and the result shows that it is supported. This means that individuals who have a strong need for uniqueness, or those who value being different and standing out, are more likely to engage in purchasing intention.

For H2, the hypothesis states that Brand Attitudes mediate the relationship between need for uniqueness and purchasing intention. The result shows that this hypothesis is supported. This means that the relationship between need for uniqueness and purchasing intention is partially mediated by an individual's attitudes towards brands.

Discussion

The relationship between Consumer Need for Uniqueness (CNFU) and Purchasing intention in the Lebanese Aesthetics Industry can be described as positive. This means that individuals with a strong need for uniqueness are more likely to purchase products. This is because products are often associated with exclusivity and uniqueness, which appeals to consumers who value these qualities in their purchases. In the Lebanese Aesthetics Industry, products are often viewed as a way to showcase one's status, success, and individuality. For consumers with a high need for uniqueness, purchasing products can fulfill this need by allowing them to differentiate themselves from others and stand out. Additionally, products are often perceived as being of higher quality and offering superior value, particularly appealing to consumers with a high need for uniqueness. In the Lebanese Aesthetics Industry context, the relationship between consumer need for uniqueness (CNFU) and purchasing intention can be analyzed to understand the influence of consumer psychological traits on purchasing behaviour. The consumer needs for uniqueness refers to the individual's desire to stand out and be unique through product choices and personal style. Thus the following hypothesis is validated:

H1: There is an association between CNFU and their attitudes towards purchasing intention

The relationship between consumer need for uniqueness (CNFU) and purchasing intention can be analyzed regarding the mediating effect of brand attitudes. The impact of CNFU on purchasing intention can be determined by examining the consumer's perception and evaluation of brands, which is influenced by their brand attitudes. In this context, brand attitudes can be considered an intermediary factor modulating the relationship between CNFU and purchasing intention. However, these attitudes are not necessarily direct or linear, and a variety of internal and external factors can influence them. For example, consumers with high CNFU may have more favorable brand attitudes towards brands that offer high levels of customization and personalization or allow them to express their individuality and creativity. On the other hand, consumers with low CNFU may be more sensitive to the social norms and expectations associated with brands. Therefore, the mediating role of brand attitudes in the relationship between CNFU and purchasing intention is crucial to understanding how consumers make purchase decisions. Further research could examine the factors that influence brand attitudes in this context, such as the influence of personal values and beliefs, social norms and expectations, and cultural and demographic factors. By investigating the underlying mechanisms that shape brand attitudes, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between CNFU and purchasing intention, and develop more effective strategies for marketing goods to consumers. This validated the below hypothesis:

H2: Brand Attitudes mediate the relationship between Need for Uniqueness and Purchasing Intention

Implications

This research provides additional knowledge on consumer psychological traits literature that was not much tackled under this category before, in addition to the literature reflecting the mediating effect of brand attitudes between these traits and purchasing intention. By employing brand attitude as a mediator, this research presented a new conceptual framework from previous research (Bato ÇiZel, 2018) for analyzing the relationship between consumer psychological traits and purchasing intention taking brand attitudes as a mediator. This research expanded the information in marketing literature, and which will promote the better understanding of consumer psychological traits in reflection to the theories and literature review addressed in this research. This research suggested some ideas to manage consumer psychological traits with respect to purchasing intention taking into consideration brand attitudes as a mediator. These ideas will allow marketers and companies to better work on their employees to manage consumer psychological traits and boost purchasing intention. The findings of this research can inform product development by highlighting the psychological traits that are important to consumers and the products that are likely to be in demand. The insights gained from research can be used to develop targeted marketing strategies that appeal to specific consumer segments based on their psychological traits.

Recommendations for Future Research

Although the main dependent variable investigated by the research is purchasing intention, which entails a long period to be effectively observed, evaluated, and measured, this research relied on a cross-sectional sampling technique: convenience sampling. Therefore, the time dimension may undermine the value of the results of this research, especially with the current accelerated environmental changes so the current research findings should be used with caution. Thus, a longitudinal sample is recommended to be used in future research. Although the concept of consumer psychological traits is a vital concept for the success of the aesthetics in Lebanon, this research focused on aesthetics in Lebanon and thus multinational and international companies should be considered for future research. Comparative research can be conducted to compare the impact of consumer psychological traits on purchasing intention in the Lebanese Aesthetics Industry with other similar industries. The research can be extended to other countries and cultures to understand the generalizability of the findings and the potential cultural differences in the impact of consumer psychological traits on purchasing intention. Qualitative research methods, such as focus groups and in-depth interviews, can be used to understand better the relationship between consumer psychological traits, brand attitudes, and purchasing intention in the Lebanese Aesthetics Industry. The research can be extended to include other mediating variables, such as perceived quality and price, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of consumer psychological traits on purchasing intention in the Lebanese Aesthetics Industry. Conduct further studies to validate the findings using different methodologies and samples to increase the robustness and generalizability of the results.

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