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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Consumer Self-Efficacy, Consumer Brand Identification, Consumer Vanity, Brand Personality, Social Cognitive Theory	<p>This study aims to examine influence of consumer self-efficacy on consumer brand identification, with a focus on the mediating role of consumer vanity and the moderating role of brand personality. A total of 384 participants, encompassing consumers of diverse brands, were included in the study. The variables of interest, consumer self-efficacy, consumer brand identification, consumer vanity & brand personality, were analyzed via PLS-SEM software. The results reveal a significant direct impact of consumer self-efficacy on consumer brand identification, highlighting the importance of individuals' belief in their abilities in fostering strong connection with a brand. Moreover, the study proves that consumer vanity acts as a mediator between consumer self-efficacy & brand identification, indicating that individuals with higher self-belief are more likely to engage in vanity-related behaviors, thereby enhancing their identification with brand. The study uncovers moderating effect of brand personality by strengthening relationship between consumer self-efficacy and brand identification.</p> <p> 2023 Journal of Social Research Development</p>
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INTRODUCTION

Brands play vital roles in offering the quality, satisfaction, and prestige. Essentially, brands serve as identifiers for a company's products or services. They simplify consumer choices, provide a certain level of quality assurance, reduce risks, and instill confidence (Bozkurt, Gligor, Locander & Rather, 2023). The brands are formed through the product itself, marketing activities, and consumer usage. Consequently, brands encompass the overall experience consumers have with products. Moreover,

brands significantly influence marketing efforts, including advertisements and channel placement (Keller & Lehmann, 2006; Ibrahim, Aljarah & Ababneh, 2020). To reach a larger consumer base, businesses create social media accounts for brands on platforms like Facebook, Instagram & Twitter. In social media marketing, interactions between brands and consumers are direct and interactive. These interactions facilitate development of new products/services with unique models and ideals (Ibrahim, Aljarah & Ababneh, 2020). Brands hold huge spiritual value for organizations (Lassar, Mittal & Sharma, 1995; Pappu, Quester & Cooksey, 2005). Creating meaning for customers over association with their favorite brands is exciting aspect of brand management (Aaker & Fournier, 1995; Golder & Irwin, 2001).

Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) describe how customers identify themselves with brands that reflect and reinforce their self-identities, extending concept to organizations with membership structures rather than traditional paying clients (Ahearne, Bhattacharya & Gruen, 2005). The process of identification involves consumers learning to regard themselves as part of a social system (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000). The level of brand awareness determines extent to which a brand interacts with and reinforces a customer's identity (Kim, Han & Park, 2001; Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006; Bergkvist & Bech, 2010), defining brand identity as "extent to which consumers perceive own personality overlapping with the brand image." Consumer brand identification refers to emotional recognition, affection, and evaluation of relationship between consumer and brand (Lam, Ahearne, M, Mullins, Hayati & Schillewaert, 2013). This definition encompasses the cognitive, emotional, and affective components of identification (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The brands are thus important for customers and helps in creating desired values. Identification is considered an active and purposeful behavior driven by fulfillment of the personality-defining desires, influenced by the central and enduring characteristics of identified object (likewise a brand) as perceived by user (Bhattacharya, Rao & Glynn, 1995).

High levels of customer-brand identification contribute to the creation and maintenance of long-term customer behaviors (Büyükdag & Kitapci, 2021). Enhancing the brand identification through consumer self-efficacy is concept that explores how individuals' belief in own abilities influences identification with particular brand (Ibrahim, Aljarah & Ababneh, 2020). Brand identification refers to degree to which individuals associate themselves with brand, considering it a part of their self-concept and identity (Bozkurt, Gligor, Locander & Rather, 2023). The purpose of this research is to investigate relationship between customer's sense of self-efficacy and their identification with a particular brand, with expectation that consumer vanity will play role of a mediator and brand personality will play role of a moderator. Businesses require human resources to meet demand, and consumer self-efficacy helps bridge this gap. In today's era, customers value brand distinctiveness and outward presence. This research contributes to addressing this aspect. Vanity, from the buyer's perspective, aids in maintaining brand image. Companies strive to attain viable advantage, and brand personality represents a potential long-term advantage, as it encompasses a range of human characteristics associated with the products. The personality of brand can be a source of sustainable competitive advantage.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer Brand Identification

Social identity theory and notion of customer-company identification underpin the idea of brand identification (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Research on organizational identification (Stokburger et al., 2012) and fulfillment of identity via brands (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000) are consistent with the concept of brand identification, which relates to a customer's perceived feeling of oneness with a brand. Many aspects of consumer brand identification stem from social identity theory, is grounded in social psychology (Tukej et al., 2013). According to Kim et al. (2001), degree of consumer brand identification is determined by extent to which the brand communicates and reinforces customer's identity, distinguishing between personal identity as well as social identification (Rio et al., 2001; Carlson et al., 2008).

Consumer Vanity

The concept of vanity has emerged from various sociological, psychological, and consumer theories (Wong & Malone, 2016). The vanity encompasses four distinct characteristics: a preoccupation with physical appearance, a positive view (which may be inflated) of one's physical appearance, a focus on material possessions and accomplishments, and positive view (which may be inflated) of personal achievements. Individuals who show these features are often fashion trendsetters or influencers who play a role in shaping fashion preferences. Concerns about physical appearance and doubts about personal successes are psychological factors that affect consumer behavior in marketing contexts (Netemeyer et al., 1995). Customer vanity is complex, including both physical vanity and triumph vanity, as stated by Netemeyer et al. (1995). Those who suffer from physical vanity have unhealthy fixation with their physical appearance and unrealistically high opinion of how attractive they are. On other hand, achievement vanity involves excessive concern for one's personal accomplishments and the positive (the possibly inflated) perception of them (Sharda & Bhat, 2019). Netemeyer et al. (1995) developed measurement scales for the vanity that are widely used in the fields of marketing, economics, and anthropology.

Brand Personality

Brand Personality is defined as set of human characteristics associated with a brand (Aaker, 1997). It plays crucial role in establishing connection between consumers and businesses (Jafarnejad et al., 2012). Brand personality encompasses human-like traits that are linked to a specific brand (Aaker, 1997). It serves as a vital driver of brand identity (Kuenzel & Halliday, 2010), enhancing consumer appeal, purchase intentions, and brand loyalty (Mengxia, 2007). Consumer desires and choices are unfair by brand personality (Biel, 1993), thereby driving consumer demand (Aaker, 1991; Aaker, 1996). Aaker et al. (2004) found that a strong connection between a brand and its clients may be established when the former enables latter to express themselves via latter. Managers may increase customer loyalty by developing a distinct identity for their brand. The ability to express oneself via one's brand preferences is facilitated by powerful brands with well-defined imagery (Karjaluoto et al., 2016). Customers use brand's identity to place themselves and discover how own identities mesh with brands. Based on research of Huber et al. (2015) and Tho et al. (2016), this alignment is what makes a business successful.

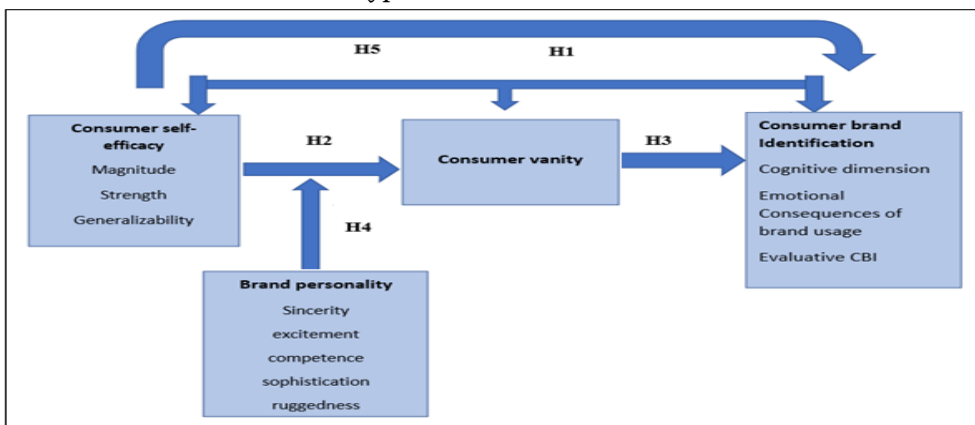
The five possible dimensions or the sets of brand-related human characteristics identified by Aaker (1997) to measure the brand's personality are excitement, sincerity, competence, sophistication, and

ruggedness. Most of variation in brand personality assessments may be attributed to sincerity and excitement (Aaker, 1997; Aaker et al., 2004). Brands in fashion industry (Ismail & Spinelli, 2012) use variety of channels (including product design, marketing, & in-store atmosphere) to share their identities with consumers. Guarantees may make customers feel more confident in the reliability of company. Genuine brand associations are formed via consumers' positive experiences with product that meets or exceeds quality requirements. The companies with distinct characters may draw from shared traits to inform their product development and advertising. If a product's creators believe that its brand's honesty is important, they could make a version of the product suitable for children (Maehle et al., 2011). Brands in the clothing, cosmetics, and luxury sectors are often associated with sophistication (Maehle et al., 2011). Use of brand envois and celebrity endorsements communicates the desired image of the sophistication and contributes to brand individuality (McCracken, 1989; Rossiter & Percy, 1987).

Consumer Self-Efficacy

According to Bandura (1997) and Wilson et al. (2007), self-efficacy is defined as individual's view of their own capacities and talents in a certain domain in order to attain a particular objective. As per research by Markman et al. (2002), people are driven not by their desired potential but rather by their acknowledged self-efficacy. This understanding effects both their actions and emotional states (Bandura, 2006). Aim commitment and mission status have an effect on a person's conviction in their own effectiveness, and amount of effort put in accomplishing objectives, tenacity in the face of hurdles, adaptation to problems, general well-being, degree of stress, and the capacity to cope with the demanding environmental demands. As per Ben-Ami et al. (2014), research in self-efficacy marketing has focused upon common concept that by enhancing customers' self-efficacy, marketers may drive people to overcome reluctance and participate in consuming goods via effortful projects. Effortful projects might include things like working out, learning a new skill, or participating in a group activity. Researchers in the field of marketing have recently been interested in the concept of self-efficacy. Specifically, they are interested in determining whether or not boosting the customers' self-efficacy makes them likely to buy items (Luszczynska & Schwarzer, 2005; Mukhopadhyay & Johar, 2005).

Figure 1 Theoretical Framework & Hypothesis



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

There are two main types of studies: qualitative and quantitative. According to [Creswell \(2013\)](#), quantitative analysis involves the use of closed-ended questionnaire questions. This type of analysis starts with testing hypotheses by moving from general to exact measures & developing hypotheses and research questions. The fundamental components of quantitative research are reliability and validity. In the current study, quantitative analysis is being used to examine the effects of consumer self-efficacy on consumer brand identification. This type of analysis aims to identify the causes and consequences of variables and provides deeper understanding of the issue, known as explanatory or causal research. Data collection from respondents was necessary to achieve the study's objectives, and an online version using Google Forms was created for this purpose. Respondents were provided with the web link that directed them to the questionnaires, which were distributed individually to the customers. Thus, the target population for this research is located in Punjab, Pakistan, as the data collection city is Punjab.

Study focuses on fashion industry and its use of technology to improve product quality. Variables examined are related to customers and their interaction with markets. The target audience consists of people in Pakistan who use clothing brands such as Alkaram Studio, Junaid Jamshed, Khaadi, Nishat Linen, and Gul Ahmed. Convenient sampling was used to collect data, and customers from various shopping malls were surveyed. Two types of sampling techniques are probability sampling and non-probability sampling, with this study employing simple non-probability method to gather information. Measurement in this study was conducted using a five-point Likert scale. Scale ranges from one, indicating "strongly disagree," to five, indicating "strongly agree." Consumer self-efficacy, the independent variable, was measured using 3-items and adopted Consumer Self-Efficacy Scale developed by [Garnier and Macdonald \(2009\)](#). Another scale of self-efficacy, consisting of 5-items, was used in a study by [Ji et al. \(2017\)](#).

Consumer brand identification, dependent variable, was measured using eight items and adopted scale developed by [Punjaisri et al. \(2013\)](#). Consumer vanity, taken as a mediator between consumer self-efficacy and consumer brand identification, was measured using eight items and adopted the scale developed by [Wang and Waller \(2006\)](#). Brand personality moderates' relationship between consumer self-efficacy, brand identification. Brand personality refers to set of human-like features and traits associated with brand. Brand personality, considered a moderator amid consumer self-efficacy and consumer vanity, was measured using eight items and adopted the scale developed by [Thomas and Sekar \(2008\)](#). Data collection process involved distributing total of 768 questionnaires to customers of clothing company. Still, due to incomplete or incorrectly filled-out questionnaires, only 450 responses were received. Based on table provided by [Krejcie and Morgan \(1970\)](#), a sample size of 384 was determined.

RESULTS OF STUDY

The study's findings indicate that a significant proportion of the respondents were male (66.9%). Additionally, the results reveals that the majority of the participants fell within the age range of 25 to 35 years old (61.3%) and in this connection, held a master's degree as their highest qualification (53.4%).

Measurement Model

Table 1 indicated that four constructs were calculated and defined in the model as latent variables: consumer self-efficacy, consumer vanity, consumer brand identification and brand personality. As a result, a reliability analysis was used to assess the reliability of the data. In this connection, results indicated the value of CA for consumer self-efficacy is 0.740. The value of α for consumer brand identification is 0.841. The value of the consumer vanity for α is 0.725 and lastly the value of α for brand personality is 0.771.

Table 1 Construct Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Brand Personality	0.771	0.792
Consumer Vanity	0.725	0.790
Brand Identification	0.841	0.886
Consumer Self Efficacy	0.740	0.799

Structural Equational Model

The primary objective of the first hypothesis (H1) was to investigate the direct impact of consumer self-efficacy on brand identification. The coefficient of path for this particular relationship is 0.462, which indicates a statistically significant and positive correlation. The statistical significance of the relationship has been confirmed by t-statistic of 4.541** and the p-value of 0.000, thereby leading to the acceptance of H1. The second hypothesis (H2) examined the direct impact of consumer self-efficacy on consumer vanity. The coefficient of path is 0.580, indicating a statistically significant positive correlation. Statistical analysis reveals a high t-statistic of 7.113*** and a p-value of 0.000, which provides strong evidence for significance of relationship and supports the acceptance of H2. The third hypothesis, denoted as H3, investigated the direct impact of consumer vanity on brand identification. The calculated path coefficient of 0.401 denotes a statistically significant positive correlation. Obtained t-statistic of 4.142** & corresponding p-value of 0.000 indicate a statistically significant relationship, thereby supporting acceptance of H3. Fourth hypothesis (H4) pertained to the moderating impact of brand personality on the correlation between consumer self-efficacy and brand identification.

The coefficient of the path is 0.289, indicating a statistically significant positive interaction. The obtained t-statistic of 3.411** and corresponding p-value of 0.000 provide evidence for statistical significance of moderating effect, thereby supporting acceptance of H4. Hypothesis 5 investigated the potential mediating role of consumer vanity in association between consumer self-efficacy and brand identification. The calculated path coefficient is 0.184, indicating a statistically significant positive mediation effect. The obtained t-statistic of 7.339*** and corresponding p-value of 0.000 indicate a robust statistical significance of mediation effect, thereby supporting acceptance of H5. In summary, results obtained from the evaluation of the structural model confirm all the hypotheses, demonstrating substantial associations and impacts among variables. The findings presented herein offer the empirical validation for the theoretical framework and enhance our comprehension of the interconnections between consumer self-efficacy, consumer vanity, brand personality, and brand identification in the research.

Assessment of Structural Model

Table 2 Path Coefficients

	OS	T Statistics	P Values	Hypothesis
Direct Effect				
Consumer Self-Efficacy -> Brand Identification	0.462	4.541**	0.000	H1-Accepted
Consumer Self-Efficacy -> Consumer Vanity	0.580	7.113***	0.000	H2-Accepted
Consumer vanity -> Brand identification	0.401	4.142**	0.000	H3-Accepted
Moderating Effect				
Consumer Self-Efficacy -> Brand Personality, -> Brand Identification	0.289	3.411**	0.000	H4-Accepted
Mediation Effect				
Consumer Self-Efficacy -> Consumer Vanity, -> Brand Identification	0.184	7.339***	0.000	H5-Accepted

DISCUSSIONS

The present study's results offer significant insights into the interconnections among consumer self-efficacy, consumer vanity, brand personality, and brand identification. The study demonstrates the noteworthy impact of consumer self-efficacy upon brand identification, which aligns with the prior research in field. This implies that individuals with elevated levels of self-efficacy are more prone to identifying with and establishing a connection to a specific brand. These findings support and enhance the current knowledge base regarding the subject matter (Bozkurt et al., 2023). Besides, present study investigates the influence of consumer self-efficacy on consumer vanity, and results are consistent with prior research. Research has indicated that there is a positive correlation amid consumer self-efficacy and consumer vanity. This suggests that individuals who possess a high level of confidence in their abilities are more inclined to participate in behaviors related to vanity. The consistency observed with prior research serves to augment reliability and validity of the present findings (Patrick et al., 2021). Moreover, the study underscores the significant impact of consumer vanity on brand recognition, which reinforces prior research in the domain. The results suggest that individuals with elevated levels of self-admiration are inclined to establish robust affiliations and bonds with a specific brand.

This discovery contributes to increasing amount of evidence that underscores the impact of vanity on consumer behavior and outcomes related to brands (Krukowski, 2021). Additionally, the study reveals the moderating influence of brand personality on the correlation between consumer self-efficacy and brand identification. The results are in line with prior research, indicating that brand personality has a notable impact on reinforcing the connection between consumer self-efficacy and brand identification. This highlights the significance of taking into account the brand personality as determinant that can influence consumers' association with a brand (Indrawati et al., 2015). Finally, study reveals mediating function of consumer vanity in correlation between consumer self-efficacy and brand identification. These results are consistent with previous studies, showing that consumer

vanity serves as a means by which self-efficacy affects brand identification. This finding reinforces idea that consumer vanity can act as conduit for personal beliefs to materialize in brand-related results (Kim & Minseong, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The present study's results are consistent with and strengthen prior research in domain, augmenting understanding of connections among consumer self-efficacy, consumer vanity, brand personality, and brand identification. The coherent results obtained from various studies offer a strong basis for marketers and brand managers to take into account these factors while formulating the plans to improve brand recognition and customer involvement. This study makes a valuable contribution to the field of product and brand management by investigating consumer perceptions and processing of brands. However, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations that should be addressed in future research. Like any study, this research has its own set of limitations. Firstly, the study's scope is limited to only five specific brand firms. This restricted focus may affect the generalizability of the findings to a broader range of the brands and industries. Future studies should consider including a more diverse set of brand firms to ensure greater representativeness. Secondly, this study focuses on three specific elements: consumer self-efficacy (CSE), consumer vanity (CV), and consumer brand identification (BI), along with one moderating variable like (brand personality, BP). While these variables provide valuable insights, future research could explore additional variables that may influence consumer brand processing.

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