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An empirical investigation of the relationship between personality traits, prestige sensitivity, and fashion consciousness of Generation Y in Australia

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the personality traits of Generation Y consumers, their degree of fashion consciousness, and prestige sensitivity in the context of fashion brands. Data were collected using a convenience sampling method involving university students. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed and 251 usable responses were returned with the sample falling between the ages of 18-25. The results revealed that certain personality traits were found to be significantly associated with fashion consciousness and prestige sensitivity. Furthermore, fashion consciousness was found to perform a mediating role in the relationship between personality traits and prestige sensitivity. Personality traits were found to perform an important role in affecting people's attitude towards prestige fashion brands. It is crucial for marketers to understand the significance of certain personality traits on fashion consciousness and prestige sensitivity to enhance the effectiveness of brand appeals. This study has extended the scope of personality research in marketing by utilising the Big Five construct to examine the phenomenon of fashion consciousness and prestige sensitivity among Gen Y consumers.

1. Introduction

The growth of fashion industry in recent years can be attributed to consumers' changing attitudes towards fashion. Consumers are becoming more fashion-conscious and keeping themselves updated with the latest fashion trends (D'Aveni, 2010). Generation Y, in particular, was found to have a distinctive approach to shopping than any other generational cohorts (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003).

Previous studies have examined the fashion shopping behaviour of Generation Y in the U.K (Cathy et al., 2006), Asia (Rathnayake, 2011; Aron and Eric, 2008), and North America (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003; Sullivan and Heitmeyer, 2008). Few studies have examined the fashion shopping behaviour of Generation Y in Australia (Hourigan and Bougoure, 2012). As argued by Srinivas & Steven (2008), the distinctive characteristics of Generation Y differ across cultures. Consequently, the findings of previous studies may not essentially be generalisable to an Australian context. Generation Y represents a large demographic group in Australia, possessing more than half of Australia's discretionary spending power, and is predicted to become the most significant retail spending group in Australia by 2015 (Daniels, 2007). Therefore, an in-depth understanding of the fashion shopping behaviour of Generation Y in Australia is essential for marketing researchers and practitioners alike.

This paper seeks to examine the significance of 'personality traits' in affecting 'prestige sensitivity' and 'fashion consciousness' among the Australian Gen Y consumers. With prestige sensitivity as the focal construct, this study seeks to accomplish two objectives:

- (i) To examine the relationship between personality traits, fashion consciousness, and prestige sensitivity, and
- (ii) To assess the *mediating role* of fashion consciousness on the relationship between personality traits and prestige sensitivity.

Despite a plethora of research in the respective domain of consumer personality, fashion consciousness, and prestige sensitivity, no empirical studies have been done to examine the relationship between the three constructs, particularly in the context of fashion brands. The findings of this study will be of significant relevance for marketing practitioners and

researchers. The study also contributes to the holistic understanding of Gen Y consumers in Australia, particularly the psychological factors affecting their fashion shopping behaviour.

2. Literature

2.1 Personality traits: the Big Five

Personality traits play an important role in fashion marketing as it is argued that consumers, particularly young people, are highly influenced by their personality when it comes to fashion shopping behaviour (Piacentini and Mailer, 2004). The marketing literature reveals mixed results in regard to the relationship between Personality traits and fashion consumption. Some studies suggested that personality traits moderate individual behaviour in fashion consumption (Goldsmith, 2002; McIntyre and Miller, 1992). Another study, however, found no significant relationship between personality and purchase intention within the context of luxury fashion products (Summers et al., 2006).

The Big Five model is regarded as one of the primary benchmarks in the trait theory of personality. The model allows researchers to examine individual differences based on different trait factors that correlate each other within five distinct personality dimensions, which are as follows (McCrae and Costa, 1990).:

- *Neuroticism*: Assesses emotional instability (e.g. calm vs. worried)
- *Extroversion*: Assesses the quantity and intensity of interpersonal interaction (e.g. reserved vs. sociable)
- *Openness to Experience*: Assesses the extent of proactive seeking and appreciation of experience (e.g. conventional vs. curious)

- *Agreeableness*: Assesses the quality of one's interpersonal orientation (e.g. suspicious vs. trusting)
- *Conscientiousness*: Assesses an individual's degree of organisation, persistence, and motivation in goal-directed behaviour (e.g. aimless vs. organised)

A limited number of previous studies have used the Big Five construct to predict consumer behaviour. Aaker (1997) and Tsu Wee's (2004) utilised the Big Five construct to develop a brand personality construct whereas Mulyanegara, et.al (2009) used the Big Five construct to examine the relationship between the Big Five personality traits and brand preferences. An extensive review of the literature found that none of the previous studies in this area have examined the relationship between the Big Five personality traits, fashion consciousness and prestige sensitivity. This study aims to contribute to this research gap to provide a better understanding of the role of personality traits in Gen Y fashion shopping behaviour.

2.2 Prestige Sensitivity

Prestige sensitivity is defined as "favourable perceptions of price, based on the feelings of prominence and status that higher prices signal to other people about the purchaser" (Lichtenstein et al., 1993, p.236). Moore and Carpenter (2006) found that prestige sensitivity positively impacts patronage for the upscale department store and deters patronage for mass merchants. Within the fashion market, prestige sensitivity was found to be significantly associated with 'brand preferences' and perform a mediating role on the relationship between consumer values and brand preferences (Mulyanegara and Tsarenko, 2009).

Studies in the past have attempted to examine the role of culture and demographic factors in affecting prestige sensitivity. Studies by Sternquist (2004) and Meng & Nasco (2009) found

that Chinese consumers were significantly more prestige-sensitive as compared to American and Japanese consumers. 'Boomers' (1943-1960) were found to be significantly less prestige-sensitive in their purchase behaviour while 'Gen Y' (1982-2004) and 'Silents' (1925-1942) are more likely to perceive this cue positively in the retail shopping context (Moore and Carpenter, 2008). None of the previous studies on this topic have looked at Australian Gen Y segment and thus this is a research gap in which this study aims to cover.

2.2.1 *The Big Five – Prestige Sensitivity*

An overview of the literature found that at least two studies have been conducted to examine the significance of personality traits on prestige sensitivity. Xu et.al (2004) found that the higher the consumers' self-confidence, the greater their purchase intention of prestige product apparels. Mandrik (2005) found that consumers with high ATSCI (Attention to Social Comparison Information) tend to be highly prestige-sensitive due to their tendencies to maintain favourable impressions among their peers.

Personality research in marketing over the past decades was dominated by the *self-congruity theory*. This theory suggests that consumers prefer to buy products and brands that best reflect their ideal or actual personality (Dolich, 1969). Marketing researchers, however, differ in their findings relating to this theory. Some researchers (Birdwell, 1968; Helgeson and Supphellen, 2004) support the theory whereas other researchers (Rice, 1988; Shank and Langmeyer, 1994) found little empirical evidence to confirm the relationship between personality and behaviour. *Self-completion theory* suggests that the possession and use of symbols contributes heavily to the development and protection of a person's self- image. A symbol can be defined as "any facet of the person that has the potential to signal to others (who understand the symbol as related to the identity) that one possess the identity in

question" (Braun and Wicklund, 1989, p.164). The self-completion theory lends support to the notion that consumers use brands as a means to protect their self-identity.

On the basis of the self-congruity theory and self-completion theory, this study postulates that personality traits are significantly associated with prestige sensitivity. Certain personality traits of the Big Five construct possess unique characteristics which can be reflected in consumers' brand preferences (Mulyanegara and Tsarenko, 2009). Consumers with preferences for prestigious brands may have tendencies to prefer brands that reinforce their actual/desired self-image and communicate this image to relevant others. For instance, highly 'conscientious' individuals may have high level of prestige sensitivity to reflect their 'reliable', 'hardworking', and 'successful' image which is consistent with their self-concept.

This leads us to the first hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between personality traits and prestige sensitivity

2.3 Fashion Consciousness

Fashion consciousness refers to "a person's degree of involvement with the styles or fashion of clothing...characterized by an interest in clothing and fashion, and in one's appearance" (Nam et al., 2007, p.103). Fashion consciousness has been identified as an important dimension of a person's lifestyle that affects purchase decision and consumption behaviour (Lee et al., 2009; Zhou et al., 2010). People who are highly fashion-conscious may pay more attention to the image portrayed by prestige brands and therefore may be more prestige-sensitive than those who are less fashion-conscious.

Studies in the past found that highly fashion-conscious consumers possess traits such as 'health conscious', 'brand conscious', 'innovative', and 'self-confident' (Wan et al., 2001). Further, highly fashion-conscious consumers were found to be 'younger', and embrace social values such as 'respect', 'excitement', and 'fun/enjoyment' (Goldsmith and Stith, 1990). Stranforth (1995) identified traits such as 'sensation seeking', 'adventure seeking', 'susceptibility', and 'clothing individuality' to be significantly related with high degree of fashion consciousness.

Despite an extensive research on the topic of 'fashion consciousness', studies in the past have never used the Big Five traits to examine whether certain personality traits are significantly related to a high degree of fashion consciousness. Indeed, very few studies have examined the fashion consciousness of Australian Gen Y consumers. This study seeks to contribute to this research gap by providing an in-depth understanding of the relationship between the Big Five traits and fashion consciousness among Australian Gen Y consumers.

2.3.1 The Big Five – Fashion Consciousness

In lights of the findings of previous studies that linked personality traits to fashion consciousness (Wan et al., 2001; Stranforth, 1995) , this study proposes to examine the relationship between personality traits and fashion consciousness. It is postulated that certain personality traits may be significantly associated with high level of fashion consciousness. For instance, highly extrovert people value social interaction and thus may be more concerned with how others perceive the way they dressed. People who are highly conscientious may want to reflect their 'successful' image through the way they dressed and thus may see fashion shopping as a high involvement purchase decision. This leads us to the second hypothesis

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between personality traits and fashion consciousness

2.3.2 Fashion Consciousness – Prestige Sensitivity

People who are highly fashion-conscious see fashion shopping as a high involvement purchase decision. Prestige brands provide a means in which consumers can express their ideal self-concept. Thus, highly fashion-conscious consumers may pay more attention to the prestigious image portrayed by fashion brand than those who are less fashion-conscious, leading us to the third hypothesis

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between fashion consciousness and prestige sensitivity

2.3.3 Fashion Consciousness as the mediating variable

This study proposes ‘fashion consciousness’ as the mediating variable between ‘personality traits’ and ‘prestige sensitivity’. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), a variable performs a mediating role if it *accounts for* the relationship between the antecedents and the outcome variables. Accordingly, it can be argued that although certain personality traits may be significantly associated with high level of prestige sensitivity, it is consumers’ level of fashion consciousness that accounts for the relationship between personality traits and prestige sensitivity. A person who is highly conscientious may have tendencies to prefer prestige brands because of the ‘successful’ image portrayed by the brands. However, with fashion as the research context, this argument will only be relevant if the person also has high level of fashion consciousness. A highly conscientious person with low level of fashion

consciousness may express their self-concept through other means of possessions (such as cars and houses) and lifestyle. This leads us to the fourth hypothesis

Hypothesis 4: Fashion consciousness mediates the relationship between personality traits and prestige sensitivity

2.4 The research context: Gen Y in Australia

The research context for the study was the Generation Y segment in Australia. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) categorise people born between 1983 and 2000 as Generation Y (ABS, 2005). Generation Y presents a particular challenge for marketers because they are resistant to marketing efforts and less loyal to brands (Bush et al., 2004). Despite these challenges, their growing numbers and spending power makes this generation a lucrative and attractive segment in fashion industry. In Australia alone, Generation Y accounts for 24% (\$3 billion) of the market segment for clothing retailers (IBISWorld, 2010).

3. Methodology

3.1 Sample and data collection

The respondents in the study were 251 undergraduate students (150 females, 101 males) enrolled within the business faculty of one of the leading universities in Australia. University students were purposefully chosen as the study participants in order to be consistent with the research context (Gen Y). Most of the participants were aged between 18-20 (67%) and 21-25 (33%) years old. There were 168 local and 83 international students. More than 70% of the respondents had been studying in Australia for at least 24 months.

3.2 Measures of construct

Two hundred and sixty questionnaires were administered and 251 were completed in full. The questionnaire comprised sections related to personality traits (The Big Five), prestige sensitivity, fashion consciousness, and demographic information.

Personality – The Big Five. The Big Five personality scale was adapted from the ‘Big Five Trait Factors and Illustrative Scales’ (McCrae and Costa, 1990). Respondents were asked to rank themselves on a 7 point semantic-differential scale which contained the adjectives related to each of the Big Five dimensions.

Prestige Sensitivity. This study adopted the ‘brand’ dimension of the PRECON scale (Deeter-Schmelz et al., 2000) to measure prestige sensitivity. For the purpose of this study, only the ‘brand’ dimension of the PRECON scale is examined to measure respondents’ level of prestige sensitivity.

Fashion Consciousness. This study adopted items from the ‘Fashion Consciousness Scale’ (FCS) developed by Gould and Stern (1989) to measure respondents’ level of fashion consciousness.

3.3 Reliability and validity of measures

The reliability of the constructs was measured using ‘composite reliability’ (C.R) (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Table 1 show the refined items used in the analysis. As depicted in the table, with the exception of ‘openness to experience’, all constructs possess good level of reliability.

The validity of the measures was assessed through the measurement model in AMOS. Table 2 shows means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of all of the measurement variables. As depicted in the table, the AVE for each construct is greater than all related

correlations, thus indicating discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The final measurement model demonstrated acceptable fit with the data as reflected in the fit indices including χ^2 (116) = 268.32, Normed Chi-Square (NC) of 1.996, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) of .902, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of .913, and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) of .063.

4. Analysis of structural model

A structural equation model was employed using AMOS 17 to examine the relevant hypotheses under examination. An observation of the GOF indices suggests that the structural model is statistically significant and possesses construct validity. The overall fit indices of the proposed model revealed a Chi-Square of 742.52 (df=382, $p \leq .001$). Other indicators of model fit include NC (1.944), GFI (0.844), CFI (.856), and RMSEA (.061). The GFI and CFI values were marginally acceptable fits and the RMSEA and NC values were good fits to the data. Therefore it was determined that the model is statistically adequate to test the research hypotheses. The bootstrapping method was used to estimate the standard error. The effects were calculated at a confidence level of 95% and the bootstrap was set to equal to 300.

4.1 Tests of hypotheses

Our structural model aims to examine whether FCS mediates the relationship between ‘personality traits’ and ‘prestige sensitivity’. In order to examine the mediating effects, we followed Baron and Kenny’s (1986) criteria to establish whether the conditions for mediation exist. First, we ran a structural model to determine that there is a relationship between the antecedents (‘personality traits’) and the outcome variable (‘prestige sensitivity’), thus testing the first hypothesis in the process. As can be seen in Table 3 under: ‘Mediation test stage I: independent to dependent variable’, the first structural model found significant associations between ‘openness to experience’ ($\beta = -.076$, $p < .05$), ‘agreeableness’ ($\beta = -.234$, $p < .05$),

and ‘conscientiousness’ ($\beta = -.233, p < .05$) with ‘prestige sensitivity’. Thus, support was found for the first hypothesis and the first condition of mediation is fulfilled for the three personality traits.

Next, we ran a second structural model to examine the relationship between the independent variable (Big 5) and the mediator variable (FCS), thus testing the second hypothesis at the same time. In the second structural model, ‘extraversion’ ($\beta = .192, p < .05$), ‘agreeableness’ ($\beta = -.253, p < .01$) and ‘conscientiousness’ ($\beta = .248, p < .05$) were found to be significantly associated with FCS. Thus, support was found for the second hypothesis. At this stage, only ‘agreeableness’ and ‘conscientiousness’ have met Baron and Kenny’s (1986) first and second condition of mediation and thus only these two variables are subject to further tests of mediation.

The third condition of mediation specifies that the mediator must have significant relationship with the dependent variable. We ran another structural model to examine the relationship between FCS and ‘prestige sensitivity’. As can be seen in table 3, the test found a significant relationship between FCS ($\beta = .531, p < .01$) and ‘prestige sensitivity’, thus lending support to the third hypothesis.

4.2 Mediation structural model

The mediation structural model depicted in Figure 1 was employed to examine the mediating role of FCS. Based on the approach suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986), the mediation effects were assessed through an examination of the size and significance of the *indirect effects*. The indirect effects on the structural model were measured as the product of the structure coefficients involved (Kline, 2005). As shown in Table 4, ‘agreeableness’ ($\beta = -$

.152, $p < .05$) and ‘conscientiousness’ ($\beta = .190$, $p < .05$) were found to have significant indirect effects on ‘prestige sensitivity’ through FCS as the mediating variables, thereby lending support to the fourth hypothesis. An examination of the *total effects* suggests that ‘agreeableness’ ($\beta = -.346$, $p < .01$) and ‘conscientiousness’ ($\beta = .347$, $p < .01$) are significantly associated with ‘prestige sensitivity’ through the mediating effect of FCS.

In order to determine the extent of mediation (full or partial), we examined the relationship between ‘agreeableness’, ‘conscientiousness’ and ‘prestige sensitivity’ before FCS was incorporated as the mediating variable. For *full mediation* to occur, the direct paths from the independent variable to dependent variable should be non-significant when the mediating variables are included in the model (Baron and Kenny, 1986). A comparison of the structural model in ‘mediation test stage I’ (Table 3) and the ‘mediation structural model’ (Figure 1) lends support to full mediation effects, as the associations between ‘agreeableness’ and ‘conscientiousness’ with ‘prestige sensitivity’ were significant before FCS is incorporated as the mediating variable.

5. Discussion

The results provide several interesting observations. First, the study found that ‘extraversion’ personality trait is significantly associated with ‘fashion consciousness’. It seems that highly extrovert individuals value social interaction, and thus pay considerable attention to the way they dressed. The analysis, however, found no significant relationship between ‘extraversion’ and ‘prestige sensitivity’. This may be attributed to the ‘sociable’ nature of the trait and the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Whilst prestige brands are often regarded as a symbol of status, highly extrovert individuals may not want to ‘stand out’ among their peers and thus may prefer brands that are consistent with the socio-economic level of their peers.

The analysis found significant negative associations between ‘openness to experience’ and ‘prestige sensitivity’. This may be attributed to the fact that those with high degree of ‘openness to experience’ may like to experiment with new fashion brands and thus are less prestige-sensitive when it comes to fashion brand selection. Similarly, the analysis found that individuals who are dominant in the ‘agreeableness’ trait tend to be less prestige-sensitive. A prestige brand can be perceived as a guarantee of quality or as a form of ‘insurance’ against poor product quality (Phau and Leng, 2008). However, this ‘guaranteed quality’ factor may be less appealing to individuals with high degree of trust as they may have formed positive perceptions on the quality of less prestigious brands. Interestingly, this study also found that individuals who are dominant in ‘agreeableness’ dimension tend to be less fashion-conscious.

Consistent with the research hypotheses, the analysis found that those who are dominant in ‘conscientious’ trait tend to be highly fashion-conscious and prestige-sensitive. This implies that highly conscientious individuals are very involved with the way they dressed and prefer prestige brands to express an image of ‘success’ and ‘achievement’ to their peers. The results lend further empirical support to the ‘self-congruity’ theory within the context of Gen Y consumers’ fashion market (O’Cass and Choy, 2008; O’Cass and Frost, 2002).

Finally, fashion consciousness was found to perform full mediation effects on the relationship between two personality traits (agreeableness and conscientiousness) and prestige sensitivity.

As proposed, the results suggest that:

- (i) highly fashion-conscious individuals place high importance on the image portrayed by prestige brands, and
- (ii) the effects of the ‘agreeableness’ and ‘conscientiousness’ traits on prestige sensitivity are only significant if the individuals are highly fashion-conscious.

6. Conclusion and Implications

6.1 Conclusion

The major findings of this study were listed as follows:

- There is a significantly positive relationship between extroversion personality trait and fashion consciousness.
- There is a significantly negative relationship between agreeableness personality trait and fashion consciousness.
- There is a significantly positive relationship between conscientiousness personality trait and fashion consciousness.
- There is a significantly negative relationship between openness personality trait and prestige sensitivity.
- There is a significantly negative relationship between agreeableness personality trait and prestige sensitivity.
- There is a significantly positive relationship between conscientiousness personality trait and prestige sensitivity.
- Fashion consciousness mediates the relationship between agreeableness personality trait and prestige sensitivity.
- Fashion consciousness mediates the relationship between conscientiousness personality trait and prestige sensitivity.

6.2 Theoretical implications

This study confirms that consumers with different personality traits have different fashion shopping behaviour, particularly relating to their level of fashion consciousness and prestige sensitivity. In doing so, this study is the first to provide empirical evidence on the relationship between the Big Five personality traits, fashion consciousness, and prestige sensitivity. The

dynamic associations between certain personality traits and prestige sensitivity in this study have substantiated the application of self-congruity theory (O'Cass and Choy, 2008; O'Cass and Frost, 2002) and self-completion theory (Braun and Wicklund, 1989) in the context of fashion brands. The tendencies to prefer prestige brands suggest that consumers of certain personality traits use brands as a means to protect their self-identity and to express their self-concept.

The findings of this study have also contributed to the holistic understanding of Australian Gen Y consumers. Previous studies have overlooked Australian Gen Y consumers, focusing instead on British (Cathy et al., 2006), Asian (Rathnayake, 2011; Aron and Eric, 2008), and American Gen Y consumers (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003; Sullivan and Heitmeyer, 2008). As suggested by Srinivas & Steven (2008), the generalisability of previous studies on prestige sensitivity and fashion consciousness may not be applicable across cultural context. The findings of these studies have contributed to the body of literature by providing an empirical support on the links between personality traits, fashion consciousness, and prestige sensitivity in the Australian Gen Y context. Future research could further explore the relationship between the three constructs in other cultural settings.

6.3 Managerial implications

Gen Y consumers across the globe are becoming more fashion-conscious and keeping themselves updated with the latest fashion trends (Cathy, 2006; Rathnayake, 2011). Fashion marketers need to have an in-depth understanding of Australian Gen Y consumers to be able to serve this segment effectively.

The findings of this study could offer useful insights for managers. Personality-based segmentation can be implemented by devising and promoting different types of brand appeals to target different personality traits. For example, positioning a brand with a 'successful' or 'exclusive' image may attract people with 'conscientious' tendencies (Mulyanegara et al., 2009). On the other hand, highly extrovert individuals tend to be less attracted to brands that can make them 'stand out' from their peers. Thus, managers of prestige brands targeting these individuals should portray 'fun' or 'sociable' image that, despite the prestigious appeals of the brand, can be relevant to the extrovert individuals without making them feeling 'stand out' from their peers.

There is also a managerial implication for marketers of non-prestige brands. Consumers who are dominant in 'openness to experience' and 'agreeableness' personality traits tend to be less fashion-conscious and less prestige-sensitive. These consumers might pay more attention to attributes such as price, quality and comfort rather than brand luxury image. Marketers of non-prestige brands should take these consumers as the main target segment. Marketing strategies for non-prestige brands should focus on delivering good quality product with affordable price rather than emphasising on brand image.

Consumers who are dominant in 'extraversion' and 'conscientiousness' tend to have high level of fashion consciousness. Due to the nature of 'extraversion' personality trait, marketers can make effective use of WOM advertising and peer group influence in promoting the latest fashion products to this type of consumer. Similarly, those who are dominant in 'conscientiousness' personality trait can be targeted by emphasising on the 'exclusive' image of the newest fashion trend which is consistent with the consumers' self-concept.

Another important set of findings was the full mediating role of fashion consciousness in the structural model. This suggests that brand appeals to ‘extraversion’ and ‘agreeable’ personality traits are *only* effective if the target segments have high level of fashion consciousness. Therefore, brand managers should carefully examine the fashion consciousness level of their target segment before implementing any brand positioning strategies. Directing prestige brand appeals towards those with low level of fashion consciousness could have adverse effects on the effectiveness of marketing campaign as they might not have favourable attitude towards prestige brands.

6.4 Research limitations

There are a number of limitations worthy of improvement and future research. The study used a self-report instrument to measure respondents’ personality. Pervin and John (1997) argue that self-report instruments in personality measurement have weaknesses, since respondents tend to report positively about themselves. Although the survey was anonymous, respondents may have scored themselves high on certain dimensions conventionally perceived as ‘desirable characteristics’. Future research could employ triangulation by asking significant others to report on individuals in concert with self-report by respondents. The use of convenience sampling with undergraduate students as participants is another limitation of this research. The group was relatively homogeneous and their incomes were low. Those on higher incomes might have higher level of prestige sensitivity. Older consumers might have stronger brand loyalty or consider other factors when it comes to brand preferences due to their previous experience. Another limitation of this study is the lack of examination of socio-demographic effects on the model. The study did not have control variables for education level, social status, and income level. Consequently, future research should replicate this study using probability sampling techniques with a heterogeneous sample which takes into

account the socio-demographic control variable. Other factors such as brand appeals, buyer motives, and cultural influences should also be considered in assessing the relationship between the constructs involved in this study.

In conclusion, the present study has provided useful insights into the role of personality traits in the fashion context. The results presented in this study suggested that personality traits play an important role in affecting fashion consciousness and prestige sensitivity, and that brand managers should design brand appeals that are relevant to the personality traits of the target segments. It is expected that the study will be a catalyst to draw further attention on research in this important topic.

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