The Role of Self Concept in Consumer Behavior

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### Introduction

Understanding the processes that underlie consumer behavior has become an increasingly important area of research, especially for businesses and marketers. One of the most commonly studied variables believed to impact consumer behavior is self-concept.

The purpose of the current study is to examine the influence of self-concept in consumer behavior and identity factors that influence the relationship. Specifically, what is the relationship between different aspects of the self-concept and the consumption of publicly and privately consumed luxuries and necessities? Furthermore, how will this relationship be affected by the level of self-monitoring an individual displays?

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### Method

#### Pretest 1

The objective of the first survey, Pretest 1, was to identify products that were familiar to the demographic sampled and that varied in the public/private, luxury/necessity dimensions. Eight products, ten for each condition, were included for use in the main study. Ninety-nine responses were recorded and used in analysis.

- **Public Luxury**: Ray Ban Sunglasses, Range Rover SUV
- **Private Luxury**: Baldwin Piano, Brunswick Pool Table
- **Private Necessity**: Dryer, Soap, Giant Toothpaste

#### Pretest 2

The objective of the second survey, Pretest 2, was to obtain dimensions on which image for low self-monitors will rely on ideal self image; but only for those who are high self-monitors. Low self-monitors will rely on ideal self image and actual self-image.

**Self Monitoring**

- **Self-monitoring** was assessed using Snyder’s self-monitoring. This scale consists of 25 true/false statements which describe: concern with social presentation; attention to social comparison information; concern with social control and modify one’s self in accordance with that information as cues to situational appropriate expressive self-concept.

**Product Evaluation**

- **Product evaluation** was determined relevant to all eight of the brands and were included in the main study. One hundred and fifty monitors will rely on ideal self image for low self-monitors will rely on ideal self image and actual self-image.

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### Main Study

One pretest survey completed, the brands and image dimensions were plugged into the main survey. The main survey consisted of three sections: 1) product evaluation; 2) image measures (both product and self); and self-monitoring scale. Two hundred and fifty-four responses were recorded and used in analysis.

**Image Measures**

- **Image Measures** were determined relevant to all eight of the brands and were included in the main study. One hundred and fifty monitors will rely on ideal self image for low self-monitors will rely on ideal self image and actual self-image.

**Self Monitoring**

- **Self-monitoring** was assessed using Snyder’s self-monitoring. This scale consists of 25 true/false statements which describe: concern with social presentation; attention to social comparison information; concern with social control and modify one’s self in accordance with that information as cues to situational appropriate expressive self-concept; ability to control and modify one’s self presentation and expressive behavior; and the use of this ability in particular situations.

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### Further Information

For more information about this study, or to read the thesis in its entirety, please contact the author, Marisa Toth at tothrm2@unlv.nevada.edu.

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### Works Cited