



FULL TIME WITH INTERNATIONAL ORIENTATION

**“I AM, THEREFORE I BUY: Symbolic and Status Consumption in the Clothing industry.”**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the master’s degree in marketing & communication.

BY

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### CERTIFICATE OF DISSERTATION PREPARATION

I hereby declare that the present dissertation is a result of my own work, except where otherwise stated. Other sources in the text giving explicit references. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other qualification to any other University.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Consumers' goods and products in addition to their functional value, have a deep symbolic value. The idea that consumers use products to feel good about themselves constitutes a basis for marketing science. Many different factors lead people to symbolic consumption. Focusing on the psychological assets, this study aims to examine and identify if self-discrepancies and self-esteem influence symbolic and status consumption of clothes. Clothes are chosen as the content of the present research due to their strong symbolic value and their accessibility to most consumers.

The literature review of this study emphasizes on symbolic consumption and its complementary components, thus self-concept, self-discrepancies and compensatory behavior and self-esteem theories. Additionally, literature about clothes as symbols and status consumption of clothes has also been included.

Regarding the methodology that was followed, a quantitative research was conducted in the form of an online survey. Adult consumers completed a 34 questions' questionnaire, consisted by several scales. These scales pre-existed but the researcher proceeded to some modifications and adaptations accordingly to the needs of the research. After checking the reliability of the new scales, they were used to examine the consumers' self-discrepancies (ASP-ar revised scale of Slaney et al., 2001), consumer's levels of self-esteem (RSES the Rosenberg self-esteem scale) and their relationship with symbolic and status consumption scale (Eastman, Goldsmith, and Flynn 1999) in the apparel industry.

SPSS program was used for the statistical analysis of the results. The findings of the analysis rejected any relationship between self-esteem or self-discrepancy with symbolic or status consumption of clothes. However, they revealed a great association among self-esteem and self-discrepancies. The results of the analysis also confirmed a correlation between status and symbolic consumption.



The analysis and interpretation of the insights obtained from the research follows conclusions, discussion, recommendations for future research and managerial implications for fashion retailers.

**Key words:** symbolic consumption, status consumption, self-concept, self-discrepancies, self-esteem.



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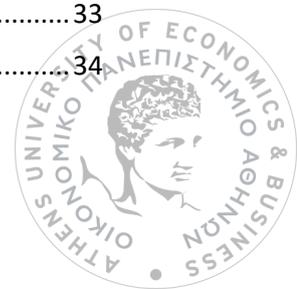
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# 1.INTRODUCTION

## 1.2 GENERAL BACKGROUND

It is an undeniable fact that in postmodern societies consumption plays a crucial role in consumers everyday life. In the age of materialism, consumption is not only about buying essential products that help individuals to cover their everyday functional needs. On the contrary, it is increasingly common for consumers to choose to buy products for their symbolic value. This is what researchers define as symbolic consumption.

Symbolic consumption is the purchase of products not for their utility but for the socially shared and idiosyncratic meanings that these products express to others. Consumption goods are symbols that represent several emotions and interpretations (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton, 1981). Nowadays, products have been converted into a mean of communication among consumers and other members of society as well as between consumer and his/her own self (Noth, 1988).

Many researchers have diligently dealt with symbolic consumption and all have agreed on its catalytic importance in the identity creation process and self-expression. A great body of literature approves and supports a dynamic association between symbolic consumption and self-concept construction. According to Belk (1988) our material possessions contribute and reflect our identity, so they incorporated into our self-concept.

Self-concept is the individual's considerations about himself, the picture he has of himself and the picture he thinks others have of himself. Self-concept has a dominant role in our overall wellness. It affects the ways we look at ourselves, how we convey ourselves to other people, how we behave in our interpersonal relationships and how we make decisions. The construction and expression of self-concept is a meaningful and lasting process (Giddens,1992).



Self-concept is divided by the majority of researchers in two broad categories, the actual self which is our view for who we really are and the ideal self, which is our aspirations of who ideally, we would like to be. When there is no congruency between our actual and ideal self, we experience a self-discrepancy. The greater the distance between the two kind of selves the larger is the self-discrepancy. Furthermore, self-discrepancies influence individuals' self-esteem thus the attitudes towards themselves.

It has been shown in the literature that both self-discrepancies and low self-esteem have negative consequences in human's psyche. People strive to feel good about themselves and as a result, they turn to symbolic consumption in order to cope with these negative consequences, reduce their self-discrepancy and enhance their self-esteem. Consequently, self-incongruency and low self-esteem are strong motivators for consumption. The idea that consumers use products to feel good about themselves constitutes a basis for marketing science.

In order to examine and analyze consumers' behavior regarding symbolic and status consumption, the researcher chose the clothing industry as a context of the present study. It is a fact that clothes have a strong symbolic value, and they are purchased by most of consumers. In addition, they permit people to express their creativity and uniqueness, they reveal social status and identity (Kaiser et al., 2001), they allow people to be recognized as members of a group and constitutes an important social tool that interfaces our body with society (Bernard, 2001).

The present research examines the influence of psychological assets such as self-discrepancies and self-esteem in symbolic and status consumption of clothes.



## 1.2 PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

The rapid growth of consumerism in recent years has led a plethora of research in the field of consumer behavior and consumers' habits. A great body of literature concerns symbolic consumption thus the process through which consumers buy and dispose products and goods on a symbolic basis. Consumers are proved to care more about what the products represent than their utility. This fact leads researchers to conduct several studies that correlate symbolic consumption with materialism, luxury branding, social comparison etc. However, there is not enough literature referring to the association between symbolic and status consumption with consumers' psychological assets such as self-discrepancies and self-esteem.

The present research aims to contribute to this premise of exploring symbolic consumption. Another innovation of this research is that it is conducted in the context of clothing consumption. Clothes are chosen as the content of the present research due to their strong symbolic value and their accessibility to most consumers.

Furthermore, several studies have been conducted about status consumption and luxury branding or technological devices etc., identifying status with the concept of money. It would be very interesting to investigate how status can be attributed symbolically through the consumption of clothes.

## 1.3 PURPOSE

Focusing on the psychological assets of consumer behaviour, this study aims to examine and identify how self-discrepancies, thus the incongruity between actual and ideal self, and self-esteem which is one of the most motivational drivers of consumer behaviour and decision making, influence symbolic and status consumption in the clothing industry. Consumers strive to feel good about themselves and the research' assumption is that they purchase or reject products to protect or enhance their self-esteem and reduce their self-discrepancies.



Specifically, by developing the research hypotheses, the researcher aims to examine whether the levels of an individual's self-esteem influence symbolic, status consumption, how self-discrepancies affect self-esteem levels, how self-discrepancies affect symbolic -status consumption of clothes and how the quantity, the quality, the price, and the frequency that a consumer buys clothes are related to his self-esteem.

Understanding why consumers purchase or reject products and brands is a topic of high interest for marketing managers. The secondary goal of the study is also to provide managerial implications for fashion retailers and marketing managers through the examination of the influence of consumers' self-discrepancies and self-esteem in symbolic consumption of clothes. Hoping that this research will contribute to the development of more effective and targeted marketing plans and actions.

#### 1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To examine the hypotheses raised, the researcher followed a descriptive approach, and a quantitative research design was adopted. An online structured questionnaire was constructed to collect the necessary data for the confirmation or rejection of the hypotheses. To collect the sample needed, the snowball sample technique was used. The questionnaire was spread through social media in friends, other relatives, and acquaintances. After the collection of a great number of usable responses, the SPSS statistical program was used to compare, analyze and correlate the data provided. Specifically, exploratory factor analysis and internal consistency estimates were used to confirm the validity of the measures, whereas correlation and regression analysis were used to test the links among the research variables (symbolic consumption, status consumption, self-esteem, self-discrepancies, demographics).



## 1.5 AN OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

The last part of the introduction chapter describes the thesis structure. Chapter 1 constitutes the Introduction of the thesis and includes general information about the topic, the statement of the problem and the purpose of the study. It also provides some information about the methodology and the dissertation's structure. Chapter 2 is the literature review which includes all the theoretical background regarding the topic of the study. Specifically, symbolic consumption and other concepts surrounding such as self-concept, self-discrepancies, self-esteem, and clothes as symbols are reviewed in this part of the dissertation. In the next part, thus Chapter 3 the scope of the study and the research hypotheses are presented in detail. Chapter 4 introduces the methodology that has been followed in order the hypotheses to be tested as well as some information about the sample and the participants. Chapter 5 includes the analysis and the discussion of the results. Finally, in the last part of the dissertation, the main conclusions as these are derived from the previous analysis and their contribution to theory are presented. In addition, this chapter also includes managerial implications, research limitations and recommendations for future research.



## 2.LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION

#### 2.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Symbolic consumption is the purchase of products not for their utility but for their culturally shared and idiosyncratic meanings they express to society.

This kind of consumption is based on the idea that purchasing and possession of products is not only a problem-solving process. Products, goods, and services, except from their functional value, they also have a deep psychological value which is most of the times more significant for consumers (Ariely & Norton, 2009; Arndt, Solomon, Gao, Wheeler, & Shiv, 2009; Kasser, & Sheldon; Rucker & Galinsky, 2008). Objects are viewed symbolically when potential consumers care more about the meanings beyond them than their tangible characteristics (Levy, 1959). They act as signs that convey meanings beyond their visible characteristics via interpretation or emotion (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton, 1981).

This is because consumers consider their possessions as part of themselves. According to James, people are the sum of their possessions, their self consists of whatever they consider theirs. (William James 1890, pp. 291-292). This view is decisive for all consumer behavior theories. Previous literature also supports the idea that we are exactly what we have (e.g., Van Esterick 1986; Feirstein 1986; Rosenbaum 1972).

Solomon (1983) argues that product symbolism functions in two ways, either as a response or a stimulus. It is a kind of communication among consumers and other members of society but also between consumers and themselves (Noth, 1988). Grubb and Grathwohl, (1967) confirmed this view, supporting that goods are social tools which constitute a way of interaction and contact with individuals' significant references (Grubb and Grathwohl, 1967, p. 24).



In order this communication to be possible, the product meaning should be socially known and continuously reproduced through social interactions (Dittmar, 1992). So, products can be utilized by consumers as symbols of individuality and uniqueness (Hoyer and MacInnis, 1997), autonomy, social distinction (Simmel, 1904; Gronow, 1997) and also as symbols of affiliation and social identification.

### 2.1.2 THE MEANINGS OF PRODUCTS

Elliot and Wattanasuwan (1998), supported that consumers purchase symbolic goods to creatively construct individual meanings relevant to their identities, (Elliot and Wattanasuwan 1998) life circumstances, aspirations. Objects also symbolize the consumers' qualities, way of being, way of feeling and living (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton, 1981).

According to Richins' (1994b) study about symbolic consumption there are four different types of product meanings: utilitarian, enjoyment, presentation of interpersonal ties and identify or self-expression (Richins,1994b). The utilitarian meanings are associated with the functionality of products that facilitate people in daily use needs (Sheth et al.1991). Enjoyment is related to the satisfaction (Kleine et al., 1995), positive experiences and feelings that some products can offer to their owners (e.g., sensory stimulation, enjoyment, arousal) (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982, p135). Products also denote social relationships with our significant others (Hirschman and LaBarbera, 1990; Noble and Walker, 1997). Some people' identity is defined by their connection with their loved ones. As a result, they proceed to purchases and lifestyles that are acceptable and preferable to their aspirational groups (Kleine et al., 1995). Furthermore, some products, especially those which symbolize status and prestige have the capability to enhance self-concept and express one's position in the social hierarchy (Car and Vignoles, 2011).

To sum up, the purchase of symbolic goods is such an important process to people because it serves three significant purposes: Firstly, the symbolic material goods reflect and create our sense of self.



Secondly, they contribute to the expression of status and power, so they enhance the individual's self-view. Thirdly, they contribute to individuals' social integration or differentiation.

Even if the meanings of products are not stable as they change among the different social groups, cultures (Shrum et al., 2013) or consumers with specific psychological characteristics (Fenollar & Ruíz, 2006; Lerman & Maxwell, 2006), there are some products in the market such as wedding rings, college, diplomas etc that have special and stable meanings, as they represent a specific situation, status, success, religion (Zang & Kim, 2013). The meanings of this kind of products are comprehensible and common to all people.

### 2.1.3 SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION IN THE MARKETING SCIENCE

The topic of symbolic consumption has been examined from different perspectives. The first references on this topic appeared in the literature review at the end of the 19th century (Flugel, 1930; James, 1890; Simmel, 1903). However, symbolic consumption had not concerned marketers until the middle of the twentieth century that Levy, (1959) pointed out that managers and companies should be aware of the fact that they are not only selling tangible products with functional value, but products and objects are viewed symbolically as potential consumers care more about the meanings beyond them than their physical characteristics (Levy, 1959). Marketers should recognize and take advantage of product symbolisms when constructing their marketing strategies and activations. (Levy, 1959).

Most research about symbolic consumption as a marketing concept examine two main variables: the symbolism of products in society and the consumers' identity (Belk, 1984; Clammer, 1992; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Dittmar, 1992; Edson & Bettman, 2005; Fenollar & Ruíz, 2006; Ger & Belk, 1996; Landon, 1974; Lee, 2013; Lorenzi, 1991; McCracken, 1987; Park, Deborah, Priester, Eisingerich, & Iacobucci, 2010; Sun, Wang, Lepp, & Robertson, 2014). Some authors support



that consumers give specific meanings in products according to other people's opinions about these products (Dittmar, 1992; Fenollar & Ruíz, 2006). Whereas other authors believe that through the purchase of specific symbolic products consumers achieve to express their personal identity (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Ger & Belk, 1996; Lee, 2013; McCracken, 1987).

In today's marketplace, most brands, even the smallest and the lower involvement ones, have realized the importance of symbolic consumption. Managers and marketers reinforce the public meanings of goods (Richins, 1999a) and use them to their marketing and promotion activities to achieve their goals and increase their sales.

It is a fact that the research that has been conducted so far on symbolic consumption focuses on the interaction between consumers and the tangible – physical products they choose to buy (Belk, 1984; Clammer, 1992; Dittmar, 1992; Fenollar & Ruíz, 2006; Ger & Belk, 1996; Landon, 1974; Lorenzi, 1991). The present study accepts the symbolic value of products and aims to focus on the deeper psychological human traits that can lead individuals to symbolic consumption. Specifically, we are going to analyze all the different components of the human psyche, self-concept, self-discrepancies, and self-esteem that have a crucial role in consumer behavior and examine their correlation with symbolic consumption.

After all, as Tuan supports "Our fragile sense of self needs support, and this we get by having and possessing things because, to a large degree, we are what we have and possess" (1980, p. 472). Thus, in order to understand the concept of symbolic consumption we must firstly examine the self and all its aspects. Marketing managers need to understand consumers in depth to be able to anticipate and guide their consumer behavior.



## 2.2 SELF CONCEPT

### 2.2.1 SELF CONCEPT DEFINITIONS

Self-concept is the cognitive and affective understanding of who we are and what we are (Schouten 1991). Previous literature has identified a wide range of self-concepts (Belk 1988; Morgan 1993; Markus and Ruvolo 1989; Ogilvie and Fleming 1996). Most of the researchers have approved the definition of self-concept as the totality of people' thoughts and feelings about themselves, including their actual experiences and the interpretations of these experiences.

The construction and the presentation of self-concept is a lasting process (Giddens,1992). Some researchers view self-concept as a one-dimensional construct whereas others support that it is multi-dimensional. Recent theories support the incorporation of multiple selves in the understanding of the relational nature of self-concept (Gergen, 1991).

According to Carl Rogers' (1959) theory there are three basic components of self-concept. These are self-image which is the way we see ourselves including our knowledge about our physical characteristics, our social roles, and our personality traits. Self- esteem thus the way we evaluate, and we value ourselves after social comparison. The last component of self is the ideal self, the self which ideally, we would like to be.

According to Allyn (2007), the actual self is people' actual perception of self. People tend to verify their actual self through social comparison, specifically they examine how their image is seen by others around them (Allyn, 2007).

### 2.2.2 SELF CONCEPT AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

In order to understand consumers' behavior, it is very important to understand consumers' self-concept as it has been shown in the literature that most of consumers' purchases are strongly related to how they see and perceive themselves.



Symbolic consumption permits people to buy and use products that consist of their self-concept. (Belk 1988; Escalas and Bettman 2003, 2005). It is a fact that in modern societies we cannot differentiate the self from consumption (Elliot 1997; Gabriel and Lang 1995; Gergen 1991; White and Hellerich 1998). This is because all our social life operates in the sphere of consumption (Firat and Venkatesh 1994; Giddens 1991; Slater 1997).

Shenk and Holman (1980) introduced the situational concept as the meaning of self that an individual wishes other to have of him (Shenk and Holman 1980). The situational self is the ideal self in a situational basis. It is the part of the self that combines the ideal with the actual self and helps people to behave accordingly in order to reach a specific goal (Halstead, 2006).

As a result, the situational self, captures the notion of the interdependency between self and consumption as it is linked with the psychological and sociological aspects of consumers' views of self and product images. This relationship affects consumer behavior and influence product evaluation (Shenk and Holman 1980). Consequently, people choose to buy products and brands that are congruent with specific elements of their actual or ideal self-concept aiming to maintain their self-consistency (Niedenthal et al., 1985).

The self is not given to us as a fixed entity, it is something that we gradually form partially through consumption (Gabriel and Lang 1995). In the postmodern societies physical appearance is a central aspect to identity definition. The self is defined more of how an individual looks than of what he does (Negrin,1999). For this reason, consumption is considered a meaningful process.

Recent research revealed that people tend to shape the view they have for themselves accordingly to their material possessions, especially those that express self-relevant symbolic attributes. Possessions, as symbols of one's position, empower and enhance one's self-concept (Dubois and Duquesne, 1993) as they convey the consumers' qualities, values, and personal history (Dittmar,

1992, p.89). In addition, material possessions can ease the psychological anxiety caused by negative feelings of self-worth or uncertain self-views (Naguti and Bokeyar, 2014; Park and John, 2011).

Everything we choose to buy embodies several meanings through which we create ourselves, express our identities and communicate with others (Dittmar 1992; Douglas and Isherwood 1996; Gabriel and Lang 1995; McCracken 1988a). Much literature confirms this view and suggests that our material possessions are part of our extended self (Belk 1988a; Dittmar 1992; James 1892; Satre 1998).

So we tend to buy products that have meanings we aspire to and represent our ideal selves or verify our actual selves, whereas we resist to products we find undesirable and sometimes we avoid to purchase specific products in order to create ,maintain and advance the self (Gould et al 1997; Hogg and Michell 1996).The negative drive of consumption, thus understanding why consumers resist on buying some specific products, is as important for the consumer behavior research as to understand how consumers attempt to approach their ideal self through consumption. (Erickson and Sirgy, 1992; Dolich, 1996). Therefore, individuals may usually change their consumption context accordingly to which aspect of their self they want to express.

In conclusion, material symbolic goods contribute and express the aspects of our identity, so they are incorporated to our self-concept (Belk, 1988)

## 2.3 SELF DISCREPENCIES

### 2.3.1 SELF DISCREPANCIES: DEFINITION, CAUSES AND EFFECTS

When a person feels that there is an incongruity between his actual and ideal self, he experiences a self-discrepancy. Thus, there is a difference and inconsistency between how he perceives himself and how he desires other people to view him (Higgins, 1987).

When a self-discrepancy is activated, it has negative cognitive, affective, and psychological consequences to individual. Specifically, it can cause undesirable emotions such as dissatisfaction, anxiety, and depression (Higgins, 1987; Packard & Wooten, 2013). The experience of a self-discrepancy is psychologically painful resulting unhappiness and affliction (Heine, Proulx, & Vohs, 2006). Additionally, it can cause negative feelings and reaction such as shame guilt or embarrassment (Tangney, 1999).

Self-discrepancies can be activated by a comparison of an individual's skillset or dimension with another's, especially when making an upward comparison with someone's ideal skills (Mussweiler, 2003). In addition, due to the fact that people want to establish and maintain social relationships (Baumeister & Leary 1995), self-discrepancies can occur when they feel social excluded from an important social group.

Humans unconsciously try to maintain constant levels of several psychological assets such as self-esteem, sense of belongingness, feelings of power and control over their environment (Crocker & Park, 2004; Kay et al., 2008; Leary et al., 1995; Whitson & Galinsky, 2008). The process where individuals try automatically to reduce the distance between their actual and ideal self to keep their psychological state stable is named self-regulation process (Carver & Scheier, 1990; Higgins, 1987). To mitigate the negative effects caused by the distance between the real and the ideal self, people perform various actions such as consumption.

### 2.3.2 SELF DISCREPANCIES AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR: THE COMPENSATORY CONSUMER BEHAVIOR MODEL

Self-discrepancy leads people to engage consumer behavior (Carver & Scheier, 1990; Custers & Aarts, 2007; Sela & Shiv, 2009). That is why a self-discrepancy can be characterized as strong motivator for symbolic consumption. Galinsky, Levav, Mandel and Rucker (2016) introduced the Compensatory Consumer Behavior Model to indicate any purchase of goods or services driven by



the need to moderate the self-discrepancy. (Gronmo, 1997; Rucker & Galinsky, 2008; Woodruffe, 1997). Several studies have already confirmed the compensatory consumer behavior.

Rucker and Galinsky (2008,2009) have supported that when self-discrepancies come from social comparison and an individual feels less powerful than others, he tends to buy high status products to restore the feeling of power. Furthermore, when an individual cope with a self-discrepancy due to excluding from a referent group, he tends to buy products that have a symbolic meaning of status or membership in the social group (Dommer & Swaminathan 2013; Duclos et al., 2013; Lee & Shrum 2012; Mead et al. 2011; Wan et al, 2014, Wang et al., 2012). Lee and Shrum (2012) have found that consumers that were ignored, is likely to proceed to conspicuous purchases to get noticed. As another example, Park and Maner (2009) consider that when an individual's appearance was threatened, he or she prone to buy appearance-enhancing clothes.

In brief, regardless of its source (individual, interpersonal or group related source), when a self-discrepancy is activated motivates people to eliminate it. The Compensatory Consumer Behavior Model proposes five basic strategies that help people to cope with self-discrepancies and affect consumption. The first strategy is direct resolution. This is a goal-directed behavior, where consumers buy products that can immediately resolve a self-discrepancy. The second strategy is the symbolic self-completion (Wicklund and Gollwitzer's 1981-1982) where the consumer eliminates the discrepancy when buying a product- symbol which represents his ideal self (Rucker and Galinsky 2013). The third strategy is the Dissociation where the consumer keep distance from products and goods that strengthen his discrepancy. The next one is escapism which distracts consumer from the discrepancy and lead him to consumption actions to turn his attention elsewhere from the discrepancy, "retail therapy" (Ataly and Meloy 2011). The last proposed strategy of the Compensatory Consumer Behavior model is the fluid compensation that helps people to find meaning in another aspect of their self.

To sum up, the compensatory consumption literature (Gao et al. 2009; Lisjak et al. 2015; Rucker and Galinsky 2008) supports that consumers purchase products symbolically for positive self-views to repair positive self-views after threat.

## 2.4 SELF ESTEEM

### 2.4.1 INTRODUCTION-DEFINITION

Self-esteem is a central concept in psychology because of its relationship with several behavioral and psychological results such as depression, well-being and in group favoritism (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, Solomon, Arndt and Schimel, 2004). The most common definition of self-esteem is the “individuals’ attitudes towards themselves”. Self-esteem is the way we evaluate ourselves in comparison with other people (Rogers, 1959), it is also the motive to actions and behaviors that enhance or protect humans’ self-concept. Rosenberg, (1965) supported that self-esteem is an evaluative element of self-concept associated to one’s positive or negative thoughts about the self as a totality. For this reason, he considers self-esteem in combination with self-consistency, thus, to behave in consistency with your self-views, the two most important driving factors in self-concept and self-congruency theory (Rosenberg, 1979).

More recently, Bearden, Hardesty and Rose (2001, p.122) have entered the term global self-esteem to describe “the overall affective evaluation of one’s own worth, value or importance (Bearden, Hardesty and Rose 2001). According to the current literature there are two kinds of self-esteem, the explicit and the implicit. The explicit self-esteem is the type of individual’s self-esteem which includes his thoughtful and reflective self-evaluations, whereas the implicit self-esteem represents the mandatory and uncontrolled self-evaluations (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995).

As both types are a result of a different evaluative process (deliberate or automatic), there is a risk someone to experience an inconsistency among his explicit and implicit self-esteem (Nosek, 2007).

This inconsistency in self-esteem results a discrepancy and a lack of integration in self-concept and activates self-affirming activities. This is the reason why self-esteem is one of the most significant drivers of consumer behavior and decision making. Therefore, consumer decisions are often made to enhance or protect self-esteem, in recognition of the value of self (Grubb and Grathwolh, 1967).

#### 2.4.2 SELF ESTEEM AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Symbolic consumption is the material expression of one's identity. Symbolic products, goods and services can be used to enhance one's sense of self (Dittmar,1992; Elliot,1997; Levy,1959). Symbolic consumption permits individuals to constitute their self-views through buying behavior (Belk 1988; Escalas and Bettman 2003, 2005). The compensatory consumption literature supports that consumers choose products to symbolize their positive self-views or to restore their self-views after threat (Gao et al. 2009; Lisjak et al. 2015; Rucker and Galinsky 2008).

People try to maintain stable the level of psychological assets such as self-esteem (Crocker & Park, 2004; Kay et al., 2008; Leavy et al., 1995; Higgins, 1987). To maintain stable self-esteem levels, people, tend to protect and enhance the sense of self by purchasing symbolic goods with positive meanings and simultaneously avoid self-abasement by declining specific kinds of products that don't match their self (Sirgy, 1982). Consumers (especially those with low self-esteem) are very sensitive to the product signal, thus what a product symbolize about the self (Berger and Heath,2007). Consequently, both approach and avoidance behaviours fortify self-consistency and enhance or verify self-esteem (Sirgy, 1982).

Approach behaviours aim to maintain and enhance the sense of self –esteem, whereas avoidance behaviours aim to protect self-esteem by avoiding negative possibilities (Power, 1997, p.6). This fact confirms Shavitt's (1989) point of view that individuals usually distance themselves from specific products and brands to protect their self-view and self-esteem (Shavitt, 1989; 1990).

Self-esteem is one significant drive for purchasing or rejecting symbolic goods because its maintenance is related to the function of people's social identity and adjustment (Shavitt, 1989; 1990 Greenwald, 1989). People make every effort to feel good about themselves (Allport 1937; Baumeister 1998). In the capitalist societies the consumers' motive to sustain balanced their self-esteem has converted to a motive for continuous consumption (Wadman 2020). Consequently, as it is shown in the demonstration effect, people in order to avoid the loss of self-esteem, tend to increase their consumption behavior (Duesenberry,1949).

#### 2.4.3 THE SELF ENHANCEMENT AND SELF VERIFICATION MOTIVE

Through the consumption of symbolic goods, consumers try either to self-enhance or to self-verify. These are the two basic motivations for consumption that enable people to boost or maintain stable the level of their self-esteem.

The self enhancement motive aim to boost someone's self-view (Baumeister, 1998), whereas the self-verify to confirm his self-view. To have a positive view about yourself is definitely a pleasurable characteristic (Robins and Beer, 2001). Consumers need to self-enhance because that way they manage to increase even more the positivity of their self-views (Taylor and Brown 1988). Previous literature has linked self enhancement with feelings of happiness and wellbeing (Robins and Beer 2001).

In addition to the desire to self-enhance through consumption, people want to confirm their existing self-views, thus, to self-verify (Leary 2007). The verification process also offers significant psychological benefits (Robinson and SmithLovin 1992; Swann and Read 1981a 1981b) as it gives people the sense of control (Heider 1946, Lecky 1945) and stability and the feeling that consumers live in a safe and predictable world. Self-verification helps individuals to avoid further drops in their self-esteem (Baumeister et al. 1989). We come up to the conclusion that both motives guide everyday behavior, therefore purchasing Behavior.

According to Blaine and Crocker (1993), consumers with high levels of self-esteem tend to be optimistic about the environment they live in and they believe that they will be successful in life (Blaine and Crocker, 1993). Purchasing attractive products serve them the desire to self-enhance, boost their self-views, help them to avoid threats and add positive qualities to their self and others (Braun and Wicklund 1989; Rucker and Galinsky 2008). Truong and McColl (2011) found out a dynamic association between high self-esteem and purchasing of luxury goods (Truong and McColl 2011).

Due to the fact that consumers with high self-esteem are confident, they feel competent and likeable compared to others, they can live up to those positive self-views. (Taylor and Brown 1988). These consumers find pleasurable to achieve gains for their self-views (Robins and Bear, 2001). So, as it is confirmed from previous research, consumers with high self-esteem doggedly pursue self enhancement because even if it is risky and entails some costs, it definitely provides them many benefits. High-self-esteem consumers buy products that make them feel good about themselves, this is the reason why they are more likely to choose superior products that boost even more their self-views and self-esteem. (Stuppy, Mead, Van Osselaer, 2020)

On the other hand, consumers with low self-esteem levels, perceive the world as something hostile and threatening (Baumeister, Tice, and Hutton 1989; Leary, Cottrell, and Phillips 2001; Tice 1991). They do not have optimistic self-views and they fear a future failure or rejection as they believe that they do not live up to their own and other expectations (Anthony, Wood, and Holmes 2007; McFarlin and Blascovich 1981; Murray et al. 2000).

Even if an important body of literature supported that consumers' insecurities and self-doubts make them want to ensure and enhance themselves, especially after threat (Dodgson and Wood 1998; Shrauger 1975; Song, Huang, and Li 2017; Swann et al. 1987), a meta-analysis showed that finally

consumers with low self-esteem were more likely to avoid compensatory consumption, mainly due to the psychological threats it involves (van Dellen et al. 2011).

On the contrary, it is more possible for this kind of consumers to try to confirm themselves and want to self-verify. Self-verification provides them significant psychological benefits as it offers a sense of self protection, predictability, and safety. It is also very possible for consumers with low self-esteem to purchase inferior products that confirm their negative self-views (Stuppy, Mead, Van Osselaer, 2020). Sivanathan and Pettit (2010) identified that consumers with low self-esteem prefer to buy conspicuous products in order to alter their status (Sivanathan and Pettit 2010). An example that verifies this view has been identified by Sontag and Lee (2004) who supported that people who feel bad about themselves usually choose clothes that express and represent their feelings. Clothing has an effect on consumers' self-views about their abilities, qualities, features and their general performance (Sontag and Lee, 2004).

## 2.5 SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION OF CLOTHES

As it has been mentioned before, consumers usually choose to buy products not for their functional but for their symbolic value. They tend to invest to products with positive meanings while rejecting goods with negative ones. The clothing industry consists the context of this study. Clothing and fashion are accessible to most of consumers and have strong symbolic properties as they can deliver a lot of meanings to both the owners and the observers. These meanings are sometimes widely shared and known by everyone in society whereas other times are idiosyncratic and relevant only to the wearer's identity.

Clothing does not only cover physiological needs of survival along food and shelter, but it also satisfies psychological needs as it contributes to the perceived life quality. The fulfillment of the need of clothing is dominant for the person as it provides him a sense of safety and positive quality

in life (Bubolz and Sontag ,1993). Sontag and Lee (2004) have developed the proximity of clothing to self-scale to explain the deep psychological association of people with clothes.

A great body of literature has confirmed that clothes have strong symbolic value, and they are used from consumers as a medium to express meanings about themselves (Sontag and Lee, 2004). They are also used as a means of constructing and expressing aspects of consumers' identity. The self-expressive capability that clothes give to people can lead them to pleasurable experiences and positive feelings (Guy and Banim, 2000). This is because when we purchase and use clothes our senses and imagination is stimulated. The sensory input in combination with others' reaction about our appearance significantly affect our emotional state (Banim et al.,2001).

We cannot see clothing separately from the person as it reflects consumers' aspects of self-concept, personalities, moods, values, and beliefs. Clothing constitutes a mean to validate the self and simultaneously to present the self to others (Sontag and Lee 2004, 2010). In addition, clothing gives consumers the opportunity to enact and represent different identities and social roles to others. (Sontag and Lee, 2004).

Furthermore, the appearance-related social comparison is the context where self-esteem is strongly related to, as it affects someone's self-image and self-worth. When an individual compares his clothes to others' either on a basis of a personal or social taste, he automatically evaluates and criticize himself. This process influences his thoughts about his abilities, his qualities, and his general performance.

Many people identify the concept of clothing with fashion however there is a slight variation in their definition. Kaiser, (1997) has defined clothing as tangible objects strongly related to the human body. The clothing consumption involves the individual's tastes and his accessibility to others values (Kaiser, 1997). Fashion's definition refers both to the process by which clothes and styles are



introduced and accepted by the public (Sproles, 1979) and a specific style presented and followed by a large group of people at a specific time (Kefgen and Touchie-Specht, 1986).

According to Gronow (1997), fashion constitutes a universal standard of taste, so it has a strong social value. Social comparison is a very strong driver for consumption decisions as it has been shown numerous times from the Bandwagon effect (Duesenberry, 1949). Wong, (1997) has supported that consumers buy products according to their considerations of what is considered as approved for their reference groups and according to the product satisfaction that comes from other people' reactions (Wong,1997).

The literature has confirmed that fashion provides two functions simultaneously as it incorporates both social identification and subjectivity of consumer tastes (Georg Simmel, 1904; Gronow, 1997). It offers a way to secure yourself from others but also to social adapt and imitate others. Clothes are usually purchased to help people construct and maintain the individuality of their identity through the uniqueness of their consumption choices (Thompson and Haytko, 1997). However, clothing symbolism also helps people to affiliate and fit in social groups (Piaceniti and Mailer, 2004).

Fashionability is related to an object's design and style and satisfies more an aesthetic than a functional role (Rahman, Jiang and Liu, 2010). Consequently, consumers use clothing and fashion to indicate who they are (Kaiser et al., 1997) and who they are not (Freitas et al., 1997). Through brands consumers express their identities (Belk, 1988; McCracken, 1986; Richins, 1994), so when clothing is visible to others is a means of expressing identity (Sontag & Schlater, 1982; Hwan Lee, 1990; Sontag & Lee, 2004). Previous research's findings have also confirmed that clothing plays a crucial role in the identity creation process and symbolic consumption research (Belk et al., 1982, 1984; Elliott, 1994; Freitas et al., 1997; Holman, 1981).

Through the consumption of symbolic goods, specific groups manage to show wealth, recognition, status (Chen et al., 2008; Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2014), high self-concept (Sirgy, 1982; Kastanakis

and Balabanis, 2014) and uniqueness (Tepper-Tian et al., 2001). According to Sirgy (1982) and the self-congruity theory, people tend to purchase these clothes that their attributes are considered congruent with their own self-image (Sirgy,1982). Clothing expresses the identity and feelings, it reflects the self and the material practice that people engage in daily life (Lynch, 2007; Woodward, 2008).

For example, in a survey that Wicklund and Gollwitzer (1982) had conducted, it had been revealed that MBA students who were feeling that they did not sufficiently meet the requirements for professional success, they were more likely to purchase symbolic indicators of business success, such as expensive suits. The overlap of the problem with the purchase of clothing -symbols did not change the actual levels of the students' performance but it contributed to the elimination or the mitigation of the perceived self-discrepancy (Wicklund and Gollwitzer ,1982).

Clothing can serve several meanings about the individual's social identity incorporating status, gender, religion, and occupation. There are many different examples supporting this view. Firstly, professions such as doctors, nurses, policemen, soldiers are defined by their attire proving that as soon as clothes are worn on the body, they can influence one's mood (Tiggemann and Lacey,2009). It has been also observed that people who often wear formal clothes, they tend to follow norms (Slepian , Ferber, Gold and Rutchick ,2015). They seem more professional and unapproachable (Butler and Roesel ,1989; Lukavsky , Butler and Harden 1995) and they describe themselves as competent and rational (Slepian et al.,2015). Formal clothing is also related to social distance and psychological formality. On the other hand, people who purchase and wear more casual clothes are characterized more familiar and intimate. Consequently, we could say that our wardrobe is an extension of the different aspects of our self-concept and constructs our social identity (Hill, 2005; Woodward, 2008).



Elliot and Wattanasuwan (1998) supported that the existing stereotypes about clothing, express the different positive or negative “readings” that there are about clothing items. Due to these stereotypes some consumers would purchase some products whereas others would reject these specific products (Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998). According to Belk (1982), different social categories of consumers would interpret clothing in a different way (Belk, 1982). For Kaiser (1985) the varying interpretations of the clothing meanings are a result of consumers’ different social or private experiences (Kaiser, 1985). In the case of private experience, clothing pieces have a strong sentimental value for the consumer and this kind of value is not obvious to other people (Campbell 1996).

In conclusion, clothes serve many purposes. In addition to protecting and keeping us safe, they are closely linked to the creation of our identity, our self-esteem, our self-image, and the expression of our uniqueness. At the same time, they actively participate in our social integration and in representation of different social roles. We end up that clothes have a strong symbolic value and help consumers’ differentiation and socialization. In the present study, clothes are going to be used as the content to examine symbolic consumption and its association with self-esteem and self-discrepancies, and this is the reason why we have focused on the psychological impact of clothing.

## 2.6 STATUS CONSUMPTION

### 2.6.1 INTRODUCTION

It has been already mentioned that products, goods, and services have symbolic value and uses (Levy,1959; 1978). People choose to purchase and use products to construct and enhance their self-concept, to express an image of what they like, to represent their aspirations about themselves and to show off the type of relationships they wish to have (Goffman ,1959; Belk ,1988; Even, 1988; Braun and Wicklund,1989).

Some of the main meanings that consumers look for in the products they purchase is status. Status consumption is incorporated in symbolic consumption and it can be defined as the motivational process by which consumers attempt to enhance their social standing through the symbolic purchase of status products. The products should convey status both for the individual and his social groups (Eastman, Goldsmith, Flynn,1999).

Status is defined as an individual's group or social standing awarded to him by significant others (Bierstedt,1970; Dawson and Cavell,1986). According to Donnenwearth and Foal (1974) status is "an expression of evaluative judgement that conveys high or low prestige, regard, or self-esteem (Donnenwearth and Foal ,1974). A great body of literature confirms that most people desire to gain the power that status offers to its owners, so they consume a lot of energy to acquire it. According to the scholars, status can be achieved on three ways: by definition (ex: royalty), by achievement (ex: job advancement) and by consumption (Hayakawa,1963; Brown,1991). In the present research our focus is on the last type of status which is gained through symbolic consumption.

Status consumption was firstly associated with high income and prestigious occupation and considered only a privilege of wealthy people. Over the years it gradually considered inappropriate to equate the consumption of status with wealth (Freedman,1991; Miller,1991). Belk (1988, pp 104-105) strongly supported that even the poorest consumers who live in third world are often indulge in consumption of status products (Belk,1988). Status consumption exists all over the world and in all communities and societies where the value and the need of a product is measured by the social advantage it offers to its owner (Mason, 1992). However, it should be mentioned that consumers differ in how much they seek to purchase status products.



## 2.6.2 STATUS CONSUMPTION MOTIVES

Although humans are by nature social beings, they strive to feel unique and different from the others. It has been confirmed that the consumers' need for uniqueness and differentiation is one of the strongest drivers for status consumption (Mason,1992). Individuals that prefer to be more independent and unique seek to achieve their personal ambitions and succeed in life (see Schwartz,1994). Success enhance the self-esteem of the independent people and it also constitutes a mean to gain status and further freedom (see Clark et al.,2007). Consequently, individuals with high status tend to be more independent whereas individuals with low status are more cooperative and collective (Lee and Tiedens,2001). Many researchers support that independent self-construal is positively associated with a preference for status consumption of clothes (Clark et al. 2007; Millan and Reynolds, 2011).

Except from people's sense for independency, self-esteem level is also an attribute that affects consumers tendency to purchase products with status meaning. According to the self-completion theory, incomplete people try hard to earn recognition among their social groups and their significant others by "compensatory maneuvers" (Wickland and Gollwitzer, 1982). It has been shown in the literature that individuals with higher self-esteem than low self-esteem have a stronger motive to express the positive aspects of their self-concept and identity. In order to achieve this, they may purchase status products for "promotion" reasons (Baumeister, Tice and Hutton, 1989). On the other hand low self-esteem individuals seem to not care to purchasing status symbols as they generally avoid to represent themselves and their deficiencies in public (Banaji and Prentice, 1994). Conversely, another group of researchers examined the motivational aspects of self-esteem and ended up that low self-esteem consumers is more likely to resort to status consumption in order to self-enhance and express their ideal self-image (Malar, Krohmer, Hoyer and Nyffenegger,2011), whereas high self-esteem consumers who feel self-assured are less likely to purchase status symbols

to feel self-worth. In conclusion, one way or another, self-esteem seems to have a leading role in consumption and status consumption behavior.

According to the literature, another motive for status consumption is the consumers' public self-consciousness. Publicly self-conscious people are really interested in other people perceptions, judgements and responses to their self-image and self-presentation (Markus and Cross, 1990). They usually adjust their behavior to manage and control what others believe for themselves (Nezlek and Leary,2002). As they are well aware of their high reputation, they consider status products a medium to enhance their image in their own eyes and in the eyes of their significant others (Richins,1999). Furthermore, publicly self-conscious individuals care a lot about their self-presentation and are constantly motivated to re-construct themselves to make a good impression (Feningstein,1987). They also strive to construct their ideal identities, mitigate social anxieties, and bolster their self-confidence through status consumption.

### 2.6.3 STATUS CONSUMPTION OF CLOTHES

In the present study clothes are chosen as the product context to examine and analyze status consumption. This product category is chosen for several reasons. Firstly, clothes are universally consumed by women and men and their ownership is accessible to everyone. Clothes are products that people usually replace with new ones to get in touch with the latest fashion trends and to expand the variety of them in their wardrobe. Secondly by purchasing clothes, each gender can express different styles and convey different personalities and status. Furthermore, clothing constitutes the most visible way to express identity, self-image, social class and status to others (Crane,2000).

There is a great body of literature referring to clothes and fashion. This fact leads us to believe that a part of our clothing purchases is motivated by our desire for status (Dichter,1985; Millenson,1985; Sproles,1985; O'Shaughnessy,1987). When our basic need for clothing is covered, many of us keep



purchasing a diversity of clothing styles and brands for symbolic reasons. This is because consumers identify clothing purchases with status connotations.

Products' symbolisms are learned to people by their culture, media, their significant others etc. (McCracken,1990). As for clothing, which is visible product, the status meaning is learned through observation and acceptance of others' taste and advice about clothing. This observation drives them to shopping aiming to purchase similar attires. As a result, group conformity is a basic component of status consumption. Consumers choose to buy clothes that give them prestige and status in order to maintain and enhance their self-image in interpersonal relations (Li and Su, 2007). A need for identification and fitting into a significant social group simulate a strong interest in the clothes that are popular among the members of this group.

It has been confirmed by the literature that consumers who are well aware of social recognition, place a great importance in stylish clothing (Vinson, Scott and Lamont, 1977). Jolson (1981) revealed that achievement and prestige drive people to purchase fashionable signature products (Jolson,1981). Consequently, status-concern is a human attribute that motivates people to purchase clothes not for their basic utilitarian value but for the perceived status value.

It has been observed that some people have a greater interest in clothing than the average person, as they believe that clothes occupy an enormous importance in their life. These people gain satisfaction and gratification by consuming and owning new clothes. For this reason, they spend more time and money on investing in new clothing pieces. They are more knowledgeable and have a strong involvement in new fashions, so they are expected to be more related to higher status consumption.

New fashions convey status and prestige to their owners because of their newness, uniqueness, and sometimes high price. Their consumption expresses also financial ability. According to Briley (2009) individuals who early adopt new fashions and styles are usually trying to maintain or gain social

status (Brilay, 2009; Rogers, 2003). Nowadays the production and promotion of new fashion pieces exists more than ever before. As a result, consumers who have a stronger preference in status clothing consumption may proceed more frequently and spend more money in attire purchases.

To conclude, status is considered a motivating force for consumer behavior and it also constitutes the driving factor behind fashion interest and consumption of status-clothes.



## 3.SCOPE OF THE STUDY

### 3.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the postmodern consumer societies, new consumption patterns have been revealed, causing the need for further research in consumer behaviour. Consumption research in general focuses on the assumption that consumption is not only a problem-solving process. Products except from their functional value, have a strong symbolic value which is dominant for consumers. People choose to purchase products, goods and services that carry specific meanings and represent different qualities, features, status, and abilities for themselves. Consequently, symbolic consumption appears when consumers use consumption of symbolic goods to communicate something about themselves (Lee,2013).

Researchers have analysed symbolic consumption from many different perspectives since 1980s and they have all agreed to its outstanding contribution in the identity creation process and the influence of social comparison to this kind of consumption. There are many different definitions for symbolic consumption with the most contemporary of them to be the “Acquisition, creation, preservation and presentation of our existential identity through consumption” (Sun et al. ,2014).

Most research on symbolic consumption focuses on issues of materialism, social comparison, reference groups, social approval, self-congruency, and the interaction between them. In this research our goal is to identify the deepest psychological characteristics that lead individuals to symbolic consumption. Specifically, we will study how symbolic consumption is related to the creation of self-concept, the alleviation of self-discrepancies and the maintenance of self-esteem. Symbolic consumption in the apparel industry is chosen as the context of the study because of the established and strong symbolic meaning of clothes to human and the easy access that all consumers have to them.

### 3.2 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

This study aims to answer in some main questions and some other sub-questions. The main questions of the study are:

- 1) whether the individual's level of self-esteem push him in symbolic consumption of clothes.
- 2) Do self-discrepancies affect the self-esteem levels?
- 3) Do self-discrepancies increase or decrease symbolic consumption of clothes?
- 4) How the quantity, the quality, the price, and the frequency that a consumer buys clothes are related to his self-esteem?
- 5) How the individual's level of self-esteem is associated with the status symbolic consumption.

Therefore, the following hypotheses were formed for the above research questions:

**H1:** Our assumption for the first question is that self-esteem is negatively correlated to symbolic consumption. The lowest the individual's self-esteem the more possible is for him to be led to symbolic consumption of clothes for several reasons. Through the symbolic consumption of clothes, the low self-esteem consumer would manage to reduce the discrepancy between his actual and ideal self which lowers his self-esteem. At the same time, the purchase of clothes-symbols, implies the "purchase of status" that would enhance and alleviate the consumer.

**H2:** About the second question we suppose that self-discrepancy is negatively associated with self-esteem. The larger the self-discrepancy the lower the self-esteem. As confirmed by the literature review, the long distance between actual and ideal self affects consumer's psychology. The individual suffers from depression and negative feelings about himself, so we assume that the self-incongruence has also a negative effect on his self-esteem level.

**H3:** Regarding the third sub-question, we assume that self-discrepancies are negatively correlated with symbolic consumption of clothes. People strive to feel good about themselves and self-incongruity fulfils them with negative emotions. It is very possible these negative emotions to lead

people to symbolic consumption of clothes. Compensatory symbolic consumption of clothing helps them to conceal their negative feelings and restore their self-image.

**H4:** Regarding the fourth research' sub-question our assumption is that self-esteem is negatively correlated with the frequency, the quantity and the money that consumers spend to purchase symbolic goods. Consumers with low self-esteem tend to buy clothes in a greater frequency and quantity than high self-esteem consumers do. We also suppose that they invest more money in symbolic clothing purchases.

**H5:** The last hypothesis of our study has to be with status consumption. In this case we consider that consumers with self-discrepancies and low self-esteem are more vulnerable to status consumption.

Many consumers purchase clothing that is not representative of their actual social class but of their ideal social situation and the status that they ideally like to have. Through status consumption they feel that they approach their ideal self.

### 3.3 RESEARCH SUB-QUESTIONS

Some sub- questions that are also going to be clarified in the context of this research are:

- If respondents have made status purchases and the amount of money, they have spent on them over the last two years.
- How important is for individuals to buy products that represent their status.
- The relationship between status and symbolic consumption.
- If symbolic consumption is associated with consumers' interest to purchase goods that promote and enhance their social status.
- If symbolic consumption is correlated with the importance that individuals give in purchasing goods that represent their social status.
- The relationship among the importance of individuals for status consumption and the status related purchases that they have done over the last two years.

Either the confirmation or the rejection of the hypotheses of this research will provide useful results in the study of consumer behavior. The analysis and the examination of the research' results will provide important information for marketers and retail managers. The results will help them to decode consumers' thinking and build targeted and effective marketing strategies.



## 4. METHODOLOGY

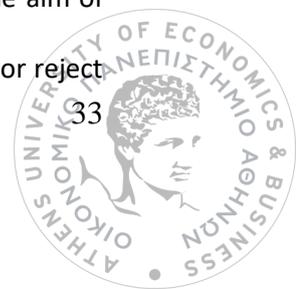
### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

A method can be defined as the process on how to obtain increased knowledge of a specific subject or how to verify the knowledge obtained within the study of a social science (Craig & Douglas, 2005). This chapter of the dissertation refers to the basic components of the methodology that the researcher organized and followed in order to investigate and analyze the answers of respondents and provide the appropriate results by confirming or rejecting the research's hypotheses. General information about the research approach and design, the developing measures and the questionnaire, the sample and response rate and the procedure are provided in the following sections.

### 4.2 THE RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

Research methods can be divided into two major categories, qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative research provides no-numerical data and seeks to answer questions about why and how consumers behave and the way they do and aim to reveal in depth information about human behavior. On the other hand, quantitative research is used to explain phenomena by collecting and statistically analyzing numerical data. Quantitative research focuses on numbers and frequencies more than on meanings and experiences. It is more structured than a qualitative one and suitable to denote a larger number of representative cases (Malhotra, 2004; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000). This is the reason why its results are considered more reliable and valid. A quantitative type of research is chosen for this study accordingly its purpose and its research questions.

Firstly, it should be mentioned that the present research follows a deductive approach, which is theory- testing. Specifically, in this scientific approach the researcher usually starts from some hypotheses, thus some ideals drawn from other observations that may be true or false. The aim of the study in general is to test these hypotheses against the existing knowledge and confirm or reject



them. In the deductive reasoning approach a theoretical framework is taken from previous studies and tested in the specific context.

The research design is descriptive. Descriptive studies reveal the research' variables by answering the "who", "what", "why" and "how" questions (Yin, 1989). The majority of descriptive studies are surveys in which respondents are asked questions relevant to the variables aimed to be examined. This method is appropriate when the researcher wants to underline that one variable cause and determines the other variables (Saunders et al., 2000).

In this study the type of descriptive method that was used is a survey that was conducted through an online structured questionnaire with the intention to gather information from consumers. Their answers were collected through the standardized procedure to every respondent answer the same questions in the same order and way.

The questionnaire was constructed to collect primary data. Primary data is the specific data gathered for the first time by the researcher (Malhotra, 2004). The main advantage that the collection of primary data provides in contrast to the secondary, is that it is completely focused on the context and the topic of the study as it is collected at this specific time for the specific reason the researcher wants to analyze. As a result, it is accurate, available, suitable, and sufficient but it can cost in terms of time to obtain and sometimes money.

#### 4.3 DEVELOPING MEASURES- THE QUESTIONNAIRE

As it has been already mentioned, quantitative data is gathered and utilized in order to address the needs of this master thesis. Specifically, a structured questionnaire was developed in order to examine the research hypotheses. The first form of the questionnaire was designed in the English language (APPENDIX 1). However, it was translated and transformed into a Greek version in order to be easier to be completed by Greek consumers. Translation quality was assessed through the back-

translation method. The use of a back-translation process involves a native Greek speaker to ensure that the meaning of an item statement was not altered (Craig and Douglas,2005). Before being notified in its official form the questionnaire was given to 30 respondents for pretesting who indicated grammar and language related comments. After its correction, the questionnaire was communicated through the researcher's Facebook account and it could be freely filled in by anyone who wanted to.

The questionnaire consists of 34 questions and it is separated into three basic sections (APPENDIX 2). Each section examines a different research variable in order to lead the researcher in the appropriate analysis and confirm or reject the research' hypotheses. All respondents were asked the same questions in the same order. In the beginning of the questionnaire there is a short introduction about the context and the purpose of the study.

The first part of the questionnaire includes measures about symbolic and status consumption of clothes which is the dependent variable of the study. The symbolic consumption scale is a 9-item scale developed by the researcher and it includes statements regarding the consumers' feelings and attitudes when buying new clothes (ex. "new clothes boost my self-esteem", "Buying new clothes lifts my spirits"). Furthermore, it incorporates questions related to the quantity, frequency and the money that the respondent dispose in purchasing new clothes. Respondents complete the most relevant answer to their opinion on those statements in terms of agreement or disagreement in a 5-point Likert scale.

Before proceeding to the basic analysis of the variables, the researcher tested the reliability of all the scales' items, thus the degree in which measurements are free from error and, consequently, provide consistent results. The Alpha reliability analysis is conducted any time we have scaled data and we want to make sure that the different items of the scale are correlated with each other and hang together as they should. (APPENDIX 3- SPSS tables)



The first scale of the questionnaire consists of 9 items each of them examines a different aspect of symbolic consumption. The Cronbach's Alpha of this scale is .771. Scores above 0.7 are of acceptable reliability for research purposes. So, in this case the internal consistency of the scale items is acceptable and can be proceed to further analysis.

Using alpha reliability analysis, the researcher managed to form an average or a composite of the scale items in order not to be forced to compare each item separately. In this case, the researcher, by computing the means of all 9 scale's items, created a new variable the MEAN\_SYBOLIC CONSUMPTION SCALE.

In the same section the Status Consumption Scale has also used. Status consumption scale, developed by Eastman, Goldfish and Flynn in 1999, is a short reliable and valid self-report tool that measures the tendency of consumers to buy products for the status and the social prestige that they provide to their owner (Eastman, Goldfish and Flynn, 1999). It consists of five questions that measure self-ratings of status consumption behavior. However, the goal of this specific study is to investigate status consumption behavior across the clothing industry. To manage this goal, we adapted the five elements of the original status consumption scale which are generally referred to products so that to referred specifically to clothes (ex. "I would pay more for a product if it had status." Was converted to "I would pay more for a piece of cloth if it had status.").

For each of these five questions, participants selected an answer from a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". Additionally, three more specific items were added to identify deeply consumers' relationship with status clothes. These questions are time-limited in the last two years and refer to whether status-oriented purchases have done, to the money the consumer has spent on these purchases and the importance that consumers attach to reflect through their purchases their social status. The answers in these questions range from strongly agree to strongly disagree in the first case, from 0 to over 701 euros in the next, and from not at all to very much in the last statement.

A reliability analysis was also conducted for the seven numeric variables of the scale, excluding the missing one. The resulted Cronbach Alpha .901 proved an excellent internal consistency among the items of the status consumption scale. After obtaining the reliability of the scale via Cronbach Alpha analysis, the researcher proceeds to computing several variables. Thus, to create a new scale measure that combines existing items into a single variable MEAN\_ STATUS CONSUMPTION SCALE to summarize status consumption as a phenomenon of interest. This new summarized variable describes the mean, the average from the answers of the status consumption scale in the questionnaire.

The second part of the questionnaire aims to measure and examine the consumers' distance between actual and ideal self and their self-esteem levels. This is achieved using two preexisting survey scales, each of which measures one of the mentioned characteristics.

In order to examine the consumers' self-discrepancy, the revised version of Slaney's et al. (2001) Almost Perfect Scale was used. Discrepancy is defined as the difference between the standards one has for himself and his actual performance and it is considered as the negative aspect of perfectionism (p133) (Slaney et al., 2001). In this research was used only the ASP-R subscale that concerns the discrepancy. Specifically, the brief subscale developed by Rice, Richardson, Tueller (2014), which include the 4 most basic questions for the evaluation of self-discrepancies (Rice, Richardson, Tueller ,2014). Participants make 5-point Likert-type ratings with options ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree.'. The Cronbach Alpha in this case is .793, meaning that there is an acceptable internal consistency between the variables of the scale. So self-discrepancy scale is also reliable for the research purposes. Additionally, the researcher created a new summarized variable MEAN\_SELF DISCREPANCY SCALE by computing the means of the answers of the four items of the scale, to use it in the analyses.

In the same part of the questionnaire, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was used to measure participants' level of self-esteem which is also one of the independent variables of the study. The

RSES scale developed by the sociologist Morris Rosenberg in 1965 as a measure to global self-esteem ,thus the individual's overall sense of his worth and value as a person, including statements such as "I feel I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others," (Rosenberg, 1965).It is a widely used self-esteem measure in the social science research and it is designed similarly to all social survey questionnaires.

It consists of 10 items and respondents answered on a four-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree (1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= agree, 4=strongly agree). In the RSES there are some reversed statements and the final result regarding the self-esteem of the respondent is calculated by adding his answers. The total score of the scale is at 30 and a score below 15/30 indicates a problematic low self-esteem. The Rosenberg self-esteem scale was used in the specific study as it constitutes a reliable and valid quantitative tool for the evaluation of self-esteem. However, in this research has been used a 5-point Likert scale instead of a 4-Point one. The neutral category was added to expand the respondent's choices and achieve uniformity among all the questionnaire scales.

The researcher examined the reliability of this scale too. The Cronbach alpha in this case is .842. This fact proves that there is a good internal consistency among its ten items. He also computed the means of the ten items and created a new summarized variable the MEAN\_SELF ESTEEM SCALE. The creation of this new variable makes it easier for the researcher to compare and analyze the dependent and independent variables and reveal interesting findings.

The last section of the study includes demographic information about participants. Demographics is the collection and the analysis of broad characteristics about groups of people. They also provide data regarding research participants and they are necessary in order to determine if the study has a representative target sample of the general population. Furthermore, demographics are essential for any study as they give the researcher the opportunity to form a general overview about the characteristics of the respondents and the sample. The demographic questions included in the

questionnaire are related to the gender, age and monthly income of the participants. Consequently, the last three questions which participants were asked to complete in the third section of the questionnaire were demographics.

#### 4.4 SAMPLE FRAME AND TECHNIQUE

A target population is defined as the entire group of people, that the researcher intends to study (Cavana, et al., 2001). In the present research a non-probability snowball sample was used to collect the appropriate data. In the non-probability sampling technique, the researcher chooses in a way the participants based on who they are ease and suitable to participate in the study.

The major advantage that the non-probability sampling has – compared to the probability one – is that it is cost effective and time efficient. It enables the researcher to collect a great number of answers in a very little time. However, there are some doubts about the representativeness and the validity of this sampling technique. In spite of the disadvantages, nowadays more and more researchers and polling companies tend to leave the expensive probability samplings for less expensive and time effective non-probability ones (Wisniowski et al., 2020).

In this research a snowball sample method has followed. The snowball sample method makes it possible to recruit hidden populations in the study. It also offers the capability to collect primary data easily, effortlessly and time effectively. However, as all non-probability methods, the risk of biased findings and ethical concerns for respondents is involved. Furthermore, the representativeness of the study is not guaranteed.

The questionnaire was spread in a form of an online survey among the researcher’s Facebook list of “friends”. This list includes friends, peers, relatives, and acquaintances. Then some of them share and promote the survey in their own list of friends. That way heterogeneity and generalizability of the findings was achieved. Male and female consumers over the age of 18 were asked to complete

the questionnaire posted on the researcher's personal account. A total amount of 280 questionnaires was completed. The duration of the data collection process was one week.

#### 4.4.1 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Respondents are Greek consumers from 18 years old and above
- Respondents who agreed to participate in the study were forced to answer all the questions to complete the survey.
- Respondents come in their majority from the researcher's Facebook list of friends.

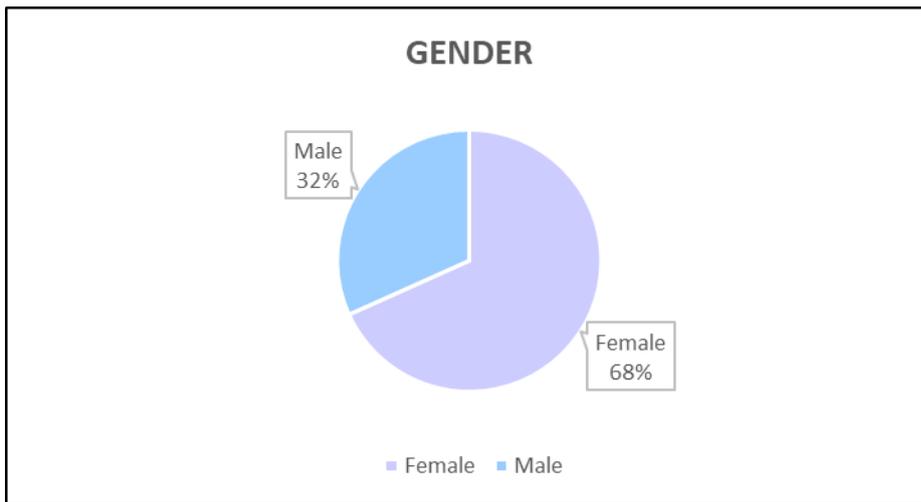
#### 4.4.2 SAMPLE

In the present research 280 people participate and click to complete the questionnaire. Although 6 of them, stopped the completion and left the form. As a result, the final an integral number of answers is 274. Consequently, the response rate of the study is 97,8% which is a very satisfying percentage.

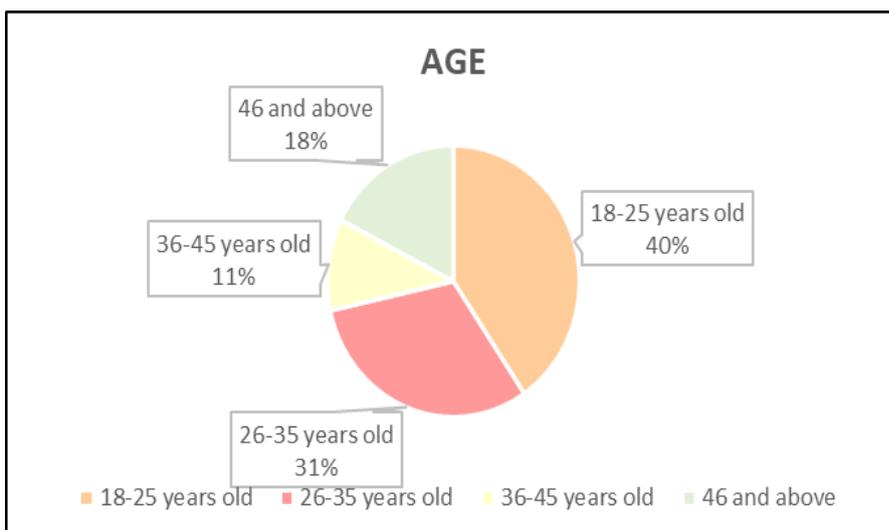
Prior to the model testing, a preliminary analysis was conducted to obtain descriptive statistics about the participants' demographics. Specifically, information about respondents' gender, age and monthly income will be presented in this part of the dissertation. Two hundred seventy-four valid answers were collected about the demographic variables without any missing answer.

The ideal and most preferable for each research concerning both sexes, is to gather an equal or almost equal number of participants from each sex. To guarantee this as much as possible but without being biased, the researcher spread the questionnaire through social media via personal messages, posts in several pages and notifications. That way it was ensured that participants from both genders would be exposed to it. However, from the 274 responses the 187 came women and only 87 from men. The results of the survey show that 68,2% of the sample is female whereas the 31,8% is male.

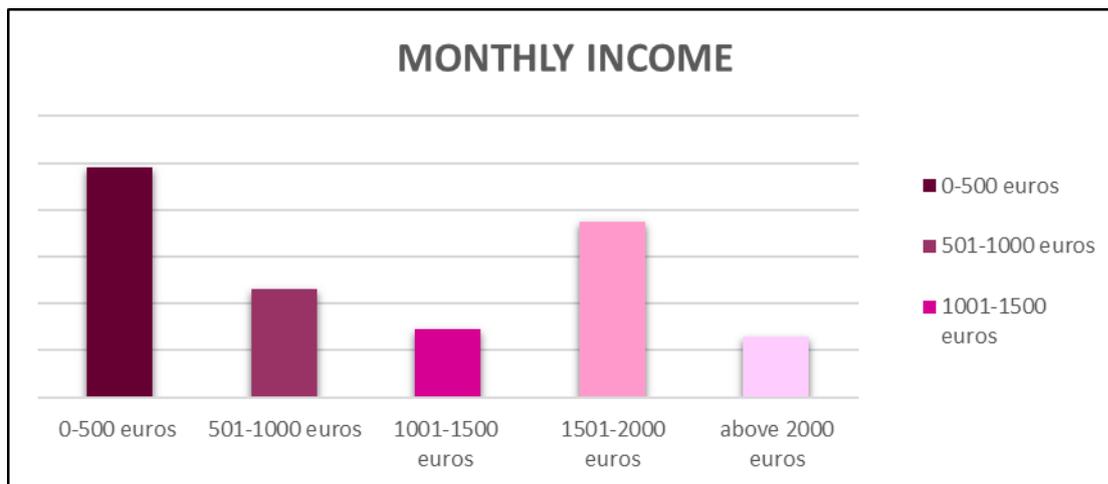




As far as it concerns the participants' age, we observe that in their majority participants belong to the young generation and they are young adult consumers. Specifically, 40,5% of respondents are between 18- 25 years old. The next superior age group is 26-35 years old gathering a percentage of 31%. Furthermore, only the 10.9% of the participants were among 36-45 years old, whereas the 17.5% of the respondents were above 46 years old.



Another demographic characteristic which could influence participants' consumption decisions is their personal monthly income. Regarding the sample of the present study, most people surveyed (35,8%) mentioned to have a household monthly income ranging from 0 to 500€. The 27,4% of respondents have a monthly income ranging from 501-1000€. The 16.8% of participants gains 1501-2000€. Not many respondents (10.6%) have a monthly income between 1501-2000€ while only the 9% of the sample gains more than 2000€ per month.



In conclusion, if we want to give a general characterization regarding the sample of the present research, we will say that it consists mainly of young female consumers (18-25 years old), who in their majority receive 0-500€ per month.

#### 4.5 PROCEDURE

This part refers to the procedure that the respondent follows during the completion of his questionnaire and the provision of his answers.

Participants were asked to participate in an online survey with the title “Symbolic consumption in the apparel industry”. They were informed that the survey constitutes a part of an academic study which aims to examine several aspects of consumer behavior. Before starting to complete the

questionnaire, respondents were assured about the confidentiality and the anonymity of their answers. The questionnaire was structured in three sections.

The first part of the questionnaire consists of several statements related to symbolic consumption and status consumption oriented in the clothing industry and the consumption of clothes. In these questions' respondents were asked to answer on the basis of agreement or disagreement with the statements. In addition, they were asked to specifically declare the amount of money they have spent on purchases of status related clothing, the percentage of their clothing purchases that was influenced by their need to show off their values or their identity.

In the next section of the questionnaire, they were asked to state honestly and unbiased (effortlessly) their degree of agreement or disagreement with specific statements. These statements comprise part of scientific scales and aim to examine and measure the self-discrepancies and the level of consumers' self-esteem.

In the last section of the questionnaire, participants were asked to provide general demographic information such as their gender, their age and income.



## 5. ANALYSIS

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter of the dissertation focuses on the analysis and interpretation of the gathered data as well as the delivery of statistical results. The research revealed many reliable findings. Data collected via the completion of an online questionnaire. To interpret this conceptual model, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25) and a series of different analyses were used. Specifically, correlation analyses were conducted to test the research hypotheses. Multiple linear regression analysis was also used to determine the effects between the independent and dependent variables. Finally, descriptive statistics and correlation analyses were also used to examine and analyze the research sub questions regarding status consumption.

### 5.2 HYPOTHESIS TESTING

In this phase of the analysis, Pearson correlation was used to examine the research hypothesis and confirm or reject them. Pearson correlation is used to estimate the association between two variables. Pearson's  $r$  can express a positive, negative or zero relationship among the analyzed variables.

#### 5.2.1 HYPOTHESIS 1

The first assumption of this study is that self-esteem is negatively correlated to symbolic consumption. Thus, the researcher considers that the lower the consumers' self-esteem, the higher their need to purchase symbolic goods and specifically clothes to eliminate the loss of self-esteem and feel more confident. To examine this hypothesis, Pearson correlation was used between the two computed variables, the mean scores of the symbolic consumption scale and the mean scores of the self-esteem scale.

Surprisingly, the first research hypothesis is not confirmed as proven by the following table, the correlation coefficient is very close to zero **-.059** ( $r = -.059$ ) meaning that there is a weak relationship

between the two variables. This weak negative correlation between self-esteem and symbolic consumption is of no significance as the p-value is **.332** ( $p=.332$ ).

Table 1.1: Correlation results for Hypothesis 1

VARIABLES		MEAN_SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION SCALE	MEAN_SELF ESTEEM SCALE
MEAN_SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION SCALE	Pearson	1	-.059
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.332
MEAN_SELF ESTEEM SCALE	Pearson	-.059	1
	Correlation		
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.332	

After finding no significant correlation between the computed variables, thus the mean scores of symbolic consumption scale and self-esteem scale, the researcher conducted numerous correlation analyses among the self-esteem scale and each item separately of symbolic consumption scale. The findings revealed that there is no significant correlation of self-esteem with most symbolic consumption items except from the variable referring to social comparison and specifically to *others opinion about what an individual wear*.

As it can be shown from the table below, the correlation coefficient is **-.204** ( $r=-.204$ ) so there is a quite weak negative correlation between the variables. These variables are moving in opposite directions, the higher the self-esteem, the less the individual's interest in others opinion about his clothes. Respectively, the lower the self-esteem, the more the individual's interest about other people' opinion on what he wears. Furthermore, the weak positive correlation among these variables is significant as the p- value is **.001**. ( $p=.001$ ).

Table 1.2: Correlation results for Hypothesis 1

VARIABLES		MEAN_SELF ESTEEM SCALE	9. I am interested in others opinion on what I wear
MEAN_SELF ESTEEM SCALE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.204**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
9. I am interested in others opinion on what I wear	Pearson Correlation	-.204**	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.001	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

### 5.2.2 HYPOTHESIS 2

The second research assumption is that there is a negative correlation between self-discrepancy and self-esteem. The researcher used Pearson correlation to confirm the validity of this hypothesis. As it is confirmed from the table below, there is a moderate negative correlation between these two variables. The correlation coefficient is **-.633** ( $r=-.633$ ) meaning that the lower the self-esteem the greater the self-discrepancy or the higher the self-esteem the less the self-discrepancy. The correlation is significant as the p-value is **.000** ( $p=.000$ ), thus there is enough evidence that this relationship between the two variables exists in the general population.

Table 2: Correlation results for Hypothesis 2

VARIABLES		MEAN_SELF ESTEEM SCALE	MEAN_SELF SELF DISCREPANCY SCALE
MEAN_SELF ESTEEM SCALE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.633**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
MEAN_SELF DISCREPANCY SCALE	Pearson Correlation	-.633**	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

### 5.2.3 HYPOTHESIS 3

Regarding the third research hypothesis which supports that self-discrepancy is positively correlated with symbolic consumption, the results of the Pearson correlation analysis are not the expected this time either. Even if the researcher considers that the greater the discrepancy between actual and ideal self the larger the tendency to purchase symbolic goods, the  $r$  is **.098** ( $r=.098$ ), which indicates that there is almost zero relationship between these two variables. Additionally, the  $p$ -value is greater than  $.001$  ( $p=.106$ ) so there is not a significant correlation between self-discrepancy and symbolic consumption.

Table 3: Correlation results for Hypothesis 3

VARIABLES		MEAN_SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION SCALE	MEAN_SELF SELF DISCREPANCY SCALE
MEAN_SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION SCALE	Pearson	1	-.098
	Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)		.106
MEAN_SELF DISCREPANCY SCALE	Pearson	-.098	1
	Correlation Sig.(2-tailed)	.106	

To ensure that there is zero correlation between self-discrepancy and symbolic consumption, the researcher conducted Pearson correlation analysis among self-discrepancy and each item of symbolic consumption scale. The findings confirm that generally there is no correlation, but a weak positive correlation has been found among self-discrepancy and others opinion about what an individual choose to wear. The weak positive correlation is shown by the correlation coefficient **.159** ( $r= .159$ ) meaning that there is a thin relationship in these variables. Although the correlation is not statistically significant **.159** as the model's  $p$ -value **.008** ( $p= .008$ ) is greater than the acceptable.

Table 3.2: Correlation results for Hypothesis 3

VARIABLES		MEAN_SELF DISCREPANCY SCALE	9. I am interested in others opinion on what I wear
MEAN_SELF DISCREPANCY SCALE	Pearson Correlation	1	.159**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.008
9. I am interested in others opinion on what I wear	Pearson Correlation	.159**	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.008	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

#### 5.2.4 HYPOTHESIS 4

Regarding the next hypothesis of the research, the researcher considers that there is a negative correlation among consumers' self-esteem and the quantity, the frequency, and the amount of money that he spends to buy clothes. According to the researcher the lower the individual's self-esteem the more clothes, the more often and a greater amount of money he spends in his clothing purchases. Three Pearson correlation analyses conducted to examine the relationship between these variables.

In the first case the  $r$  is **.093** ( $r=.093$ ), so there is a weak positive correlation between one's self esteem and the quantity of clothes he purchases. This weak correlation is of no significance as the  $p$  value of the model is **.127** ( $p=.127$ ).

Table 4.1: Correlation Results for Hypothesis 4

VARIABLES		MEAN_SELF ESTEEM SCALE	5. When I do not feel good with myself, I buy more clothes
MEAN_SELF ESTEEM SCALE	Pearson Correlation	1	.093
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.127
5. When I do not feel good with myself, I buy more clothes (quantity)	Pearson Correlation	.093	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.127	

Regarding the money an individual spends on symbolic purchases of clothes, the outcome of the analysis shows that there is a weak negative correlation among the two variables **-.062**. ( $r=-.062$ ). However, this correlation is not significant as the p value of the model is **.305** ( $p=.305$ ).

Table 4.2: Correlation Results for Hypothesis 4

VARIABLES		MEAN_SELF ESTEEM SCALE	6. I spend more money in buying clothes when I do not feel good with myself
MEAN_SELF ESTEEM SCALE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.062
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.305
6. I spend more money in buying clothes when I do not feel good with myself (Money)	Pearson Correlation	-.062	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.305	

The correlation coefficient among self-esteem and the frequency individual buys clothes is **-.007**. ( $r=-.007$ ). This almost zero negative correlation is of no significance as the p-value is **.914**. ( $p=.914$ ).

Table 4.3: Correlation Results for Hypothesis 4

VARIABLES		MEAN_SELF ESTEEM SCALE	7. I shop more frequently when I do not feel good with myself
MEAN_SELF ESTEEM SCALE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.007
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.914
7. I shop more frequently when I do not feel good with myself (frequency)	Pearson Correlation	-.007	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.914	

### 5.2.5 HYPOTHESIS 5

The last research assumption is that self-discrepancies and self-esteem levels can influence people to buy clothes that express status. To examine this hypothesis, the researcher conducted a multiple linear regression analysis. Multiple linear regression is an extension of simple linear regression and we use it to predict the value of the dependent variable, status consumption, based on the value of

the two independent variables, thus self-esteem and self-discrepancy. The accuracy of the prediction depends on the strength of the correlation between the three analyzed variables.

The first table describes the descriptive statistics and the analysis results. Starting from the correlation table it is proved by the results that there is no multicollinearity between the predictors as no value is greater than 0.7. However, examining the predictor variables we conclude that they are weakly correlated with the outcome variable, because all their values are very close to zero ( $r=.007$ ), ( $r=.058$ ). So even if self-esteem and self-discrepancies are moderate negatively correlated - **.633** with each other, they do not seem to have a relationship with the dependent variable thus status consumption. Additionally, the p-values **.169** **.453**, ( $p=.169$ ), ( $p=.453$ ), make the weak correlations among the dependent and the predictor variables insignificant.

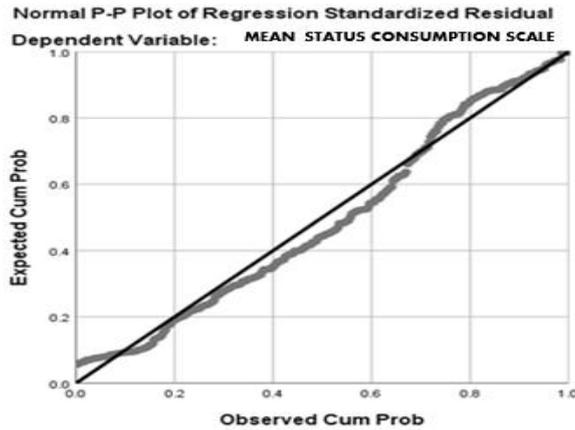
Table 5.1: Multiple Regression analysis results for Hypothesis 5: Descriptive statistics

VARIABLES	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
MEAN_STATUS CONSUMPTION SCALE	2.2701	.91920
MEAN_SELF DISCREPANCY SCALE	2.4699	.87797
MEAN_SELF ESTEEM SCALE	3.9197	.68290

Table 5.2: Multiple Regression analysis results for Hypothesis 5: Correlations

CORRELATIONS	VARIABLES	MEAN_STATUS CONSUMPTION SCALE
Pearson Correlation	MEAN_STATUS CONSUMPTION SCALE	1.000
	MEAN_SELF DISCREPANCY SCALE	.058
	MEAN_SELF ESTEEM SCALE	.007
Sig. (1-tailed)	MEAN_STATUS CONSUMPTION SCALE	.
	MEAN_SELF DISCREPANCY SCALE	.169
	MEAN_SELF ESTEEM SCALE	.453

In order to test normality a normal probability plot was designed in SPSS. Normal probability plot is a graphical technique that enable us to identify departures from normality. In a normal probability plot the resulting image of the scored data is a straight line. In the present plot we could say that our data are approximately normally distributed as they follow the slope of the line without kurtoses or skewness. However, there are some outliers which indicate deviation from normality.



In the following model summary table, we can focus and evaluate the most important values of this multiple regression analysis. The R square indicates the percentage in which the regression model fits the observed data. In this case where the R square is **.007** ( $R=.007$ ) it means that only 0,7% of the data fit the regression model. Such low numbers do not indicate a good fit for the model. Additionally, there is no statistical significance in the model as the p value is **.408** ( $p=.408$ ) which is very far from the ideal P value ( $P \leq 0.05$ ). So, this multiple regression model has no explanatory power in the real population as it is not statistically significant.

Table 5.4: Multiple Regression Analysis Results for Hypothesis 5: Model Summary

MODEL SUMMARY	R square	Adjusted R square	R square change	F change	Sig. F change
Model 1	.007	-.001	.007	.900	.408

Continually, in the coefficient table, focusing on the standardized coefficients we can see that self-esteem has Beta value **.073** (*Beta=.073*) whereas the self-discrepancy **.105**. (*Beta=.105*). As a result, self-esteem seems to have almost zero contribution on status consumption while self-discrepancy has a low positive relationship with the dependent variable. However, none of the predictor variables are statistically significant as their p-values are **.183, .349** ( $p=.183$ ), ( $p=.349$ ).

Table 5.5: Multiple Regression Analysis Results for Hypothesis 5: Coefficients (MEAN\_STATUS CONSUMPTION SCALE)

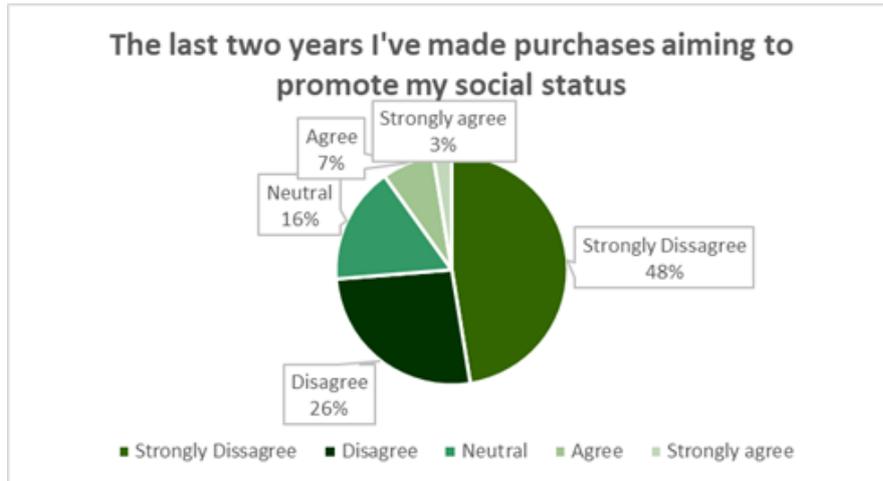
COEFFICIENTS	Standardized Beta Coefficients	T-value	Significance
MEAN_SELF DISCREPANCY SCALE	.105	1.336	.183
MEAN_SELF ESTEM SCALE	.073	.937	.349

## 5.6 EXTRA FINDINGS

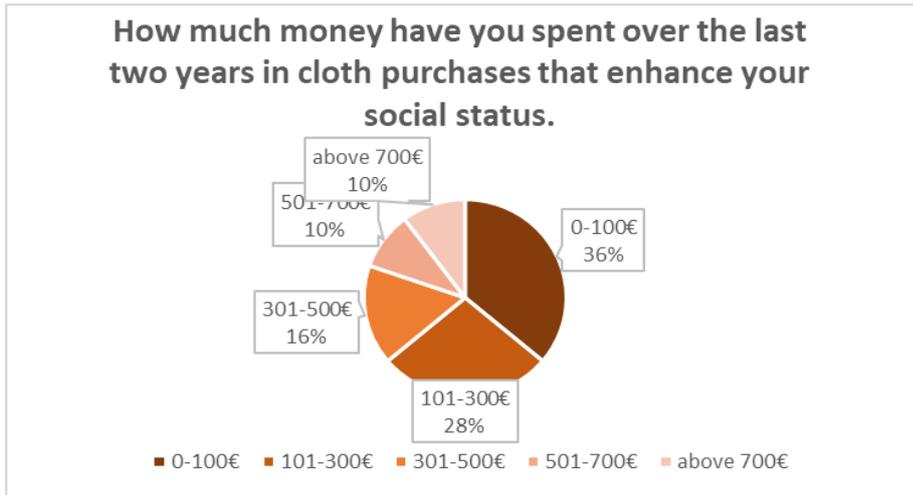
### 5.6.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

After testing the research hypotheses, the researcher proceeded to more analyses to provide some extra interesting findings that could contribute to literature and future research. Specifically, a series of analysis has done in the field of status consumption to examine the relationship of the three added variables from the researcher in status consumption scale.

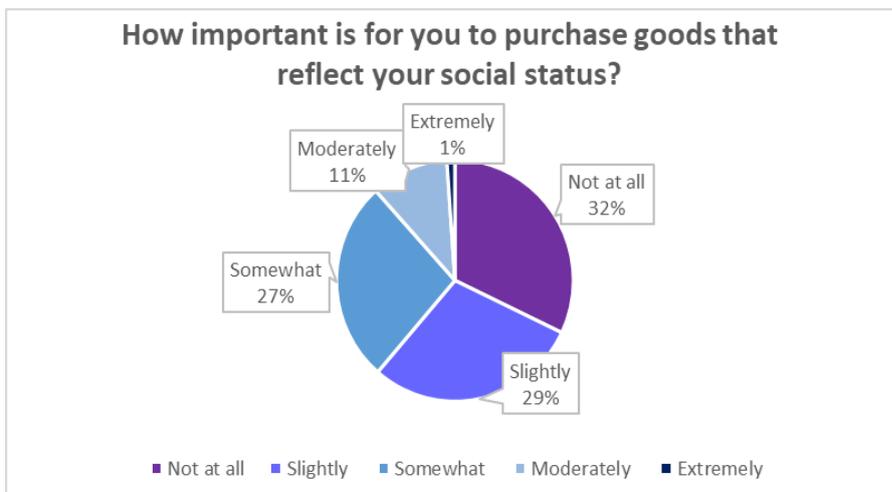
Starting with descriptive statistics in the first added question in status consumption scale “The last two years I’ve made purchases aiming to promote my social status”, it is observed that the one hundred thirty (130) respondents answered that they strongly disagree with this statement. Seventy-two (72) participants seem to disagree that they have made purchases to promote their status whereas forty-five (45) gave a neutral response. Over 274 respondents, the twenty (20) agreed that they have bought goods to elevate their status while only 7 have strongly agreed with the given statement. Therefore, looking at the graph below it is confirmed that the majority of respondents have not done acquisitions to boost their social status.



After examining if respondents have done status purchases over the last two years, the next added question in the status consumption scale “How much money have you spent over the last two years in cloth purchases that enhance your social status”, aims to inspect the specific amount of money that the respondents have spent. Most participants (99) denoted to have spent 1-100€. Seventy-six (76) respondents answered that they have spent 101-300€ in clothes that enhance their social status. Forty-five (45) people have mentioned to spend 301-500€. Additionally, twenty-six (26) of respondents answered that they have spent 501-700€ whereas twenty-eight have given more of 700€ in cloth purchases that promote their status. Consequently, in their majority the research respondents (36%) have spent over the last two years 0-100€ in status related clothing pieces. The graph below demonstrates the distribution of participants’ answers in percentages.



Continuing with the next question regarding status consumption “How important is for you to purchase clothes that reflect your social status”. From a total of 274 respondents, only three (3) answered that find extremely important to express their social status through their cloth purchases. For twenty-nine (29) participants this fact is of moderate importance, for a great number of people (74) is somewhat important, for eighty (80) respondents is slightly important. Surprisingly, most of the research sample (88), answered that it is not at all important for them to reflect their social status via their cloth purchases. In the following graph-pie the deviation of the answers can be visually seen. The conclusion that emerges is that for most of respondents (32%) is not at all important to purchase goods that reflect their social status.



## 5.6.2 CORRELATIONS

Pearson correlation analyses were used to identify the relationship among several variables and scales and provide significant results in the study. In the first case the researcher aims to examine the association of status consumption with symbolic consumption. As it can be seen in the table below the two scales have a low positive correlation with each other ( $r=.383$ ) and the model has a strong explanatory power as it is statistically significant ( $p<.001$ ). This means that the more an individual cares in symbolic clothes the more he also cares for status clothes and vice versa. So, the higher the score one collects on the scale of symbolic consumption, the greater will be his interest in buying new clothes that give status. However, this finding is justified by the fact that status consumption is considered a part of symbolic consumption.

Table 6.1: Correlation results

VARIABLES		MEAN_SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION SCALE	MEAN_STATUS CONSUMPTION SCALE
MEAN_SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION SCALE	Pearson	1	.383**
	Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
MEAN_STATUS CONSUMPTION SCALE	Pearson	.383**	1
	Correlation Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

In order to ensure the relationship between symbolic and status consumption, the researcher conducted a Pearson correlation analysis among symbolic consumption scale and the added items in the status consumption scale. As a result, there is a low positive correlation among symbolic consumption, and both added variables ( $r=.386$ ), ( $r=.316$ ). Thus, the higher the score one collects in symbolic consumption scale the more possible is for him to have done purchases over the last two years that reflect his social status and the more important is for him to represent his status via his clothing purchases. Additionally, this correlation is significant as the p values ( $p=.000$ ) are acceptable in both cases and the models have strong explanatory power.

Table 6.2: Correlation results

VARIABLES		MEAN_SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION SCALE	15. The last two years I have made purchases aiming to promote my social status.
MEAN_SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION SCALE_	Pearson Correlation	1	.386**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
15. The last two years I have made purchases aiming to promote my social status.	Pearson Correlation	.386**	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 6.3: Correlation results

VARIABLES		MEAN_SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION SCALE	17. How important is for you to purchase goods that reflect your social status?
MEAN_SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION SCALE_	Pearson Correlation	1	.316**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
17. How important is for you to purchase goods that reflect your social status?	Pearson Correlation	.316**	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Furthermore, comparing these two added variables with each other it is revealed that they have a moderate positive correlation. The correlation coefficient  $r$  is **.641** ( $r=.641$ ), meaning that the more important is for an individual to represent his social status through clothing purchases the possible is for him to have proceeded to status acquisitions over the last two years. This correlation is statistically significant as P-value is **.000** ( $p=.000$ ), so the sample provides enough evidence that this correlation exists in the population.

Table 6.4: Correlation results

VARIABLES		15. The last two years I have made purchases aiming to promote my social status.	17. How important is for you to purchase goods that reflect your social status?
15. The last two years I have made purchases aiming to promote my social status.	Pearson Correlation	1	.641**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
17. How important is for you to purchase goods that reflect your social status?	Pearson Correlation	.641**	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

## 6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In the last part of the dissertation, the results of the study will be discussed as well as the conclusions drawn from the preceding analysis. In particular, the confirmation or the rejection of the hypotheses and the research' sub questions along with their contribution to the existing theory will be noted. Furthermore, in this section of the thesis, the researcher will propose managerial implications. A reference in the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research will also take place in the last thesis' chapter.

### 6.1 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The first research assumption was that **symbolic consumption is negatively correlated with self-esteem**. Thus, the lower an individual's self-esteem the greater his interest to purchase clothes that act as symbols. This hypothesis was formed by the researcher based on the pre-existing literature on this topic of interest.

The existing literature about symbolic consumption and self-esteem supports that the human psyche attempts to maintain stable the level of self-esteem (Crocker & Park, 2004; Kay et al., 2008; Leavy et al., 1995; Higgins, 1987). According to Sirgy, (1982) to achieve this maintenance, people tend to enhance and protect self-esteem by purchasing symbolic goods with positive meanings (Sirgy,1982). Additionally, self-esteem has been shown in the literature a significant drive for symbolic consumption (Shavitt, 1989; 1990 Greenwald, 1989). Moreover, symbolic consumption is strongly related with the self enhancement and self-verification motive. It has been confirmed by previous literature that people buy symbolic goods to self-enhance and boost their self-views (Baumeister, 1998). In addition to the desire to self-enhance through consumption, people want to confirm their existing self-views, thus, to self-verify (Leary 2007). Self-verification via symbolic consumption helps individuals to avoid further drops in their self-esteem (Baumeister et al. 1989).

However, from the analysis of the first research hypothesis in the previous part of the dissertation, it is revealed that there is no significant correlation between self-esteem and symbolic consumption. Even if the researcher based on the self enhancement and self-verification motive theory assumed that symbolic consumption would help the individual to enhance his self-esteem and self-perception, the hypothesis is rejected, and no relationship seem to exist among these two variables in the provided sample. As a result, self-esteem as a psychological asset does not seem to influence on its own the symbolic purchasing of clothes.

However, a significant negative correlation has found among self-esteem and the item of symbolic consumption scale that refers to one's interest about others' opinion on what he wears. Specifically, the less one's self esteem the greater his interest in others' opinions about his clothes. This finding comes in alignment with previous literature that others' reaction about our appearance significantly affect our emotional state (Banim et al.,2001). Clothes constitute a mean to validate yourself and present it to others (Sontag and Lee 2004, 2010). In addition, clothing gives consumers the opportunity to enact and represent different identities and social roles to others. (Sontag and Lee, 2004) so the association between one's clothing and his interest on others opinion about his clothing is reasonable and expected.

In conclusion, the first research hypothesis is declined as in the present study no significant correlation between symbolic consumption of clothes and self-esteem was found. However, even if self-esteem does not seem to influence symbolic consumption generally, it has been shown in this analysis that self-esteem levels affect one's interest in others opinion about his clothes.

Regarding the second research hypothesis, **“There is a negative correlation between self-esteem and self-discrepancy”** was confirmed. A significant moderate negative correlation emerged from the analysis of these two variables, meaning that the larger one's the discrepancy between his actual and ideal self, the lower his self-esteem.

This finding comes in alignment with the results of previous studies and the existing theories about this topic. Specifically, according to Higgins, (1987) when a self-discrepancy is activated it has negative cognitive, affective, and psychological consequences and it can cause undesirable feelings such as dissatisfaction and anxiety (Higgins, 1987; Packard & Wooten, 2013). The discrepancy of an individual's actual and ideal self is psychologically painful resulting unhappiness and loss of self-esteem (Heine, Proulx, & Vohs, 2006).

In conclusion, after this study's results and the confirmation of the previous literature, we have come to understand that there is a strong relationship between these two variables. This is because self-esteem and self-discrepancy are two synonymous concepts that have a causal relationship.

The third research hypothesis referred to the correlation between self-discrepancies and symbolic consumption. Specifically, the researcher assumed that **there is a positive correlation among self-discrepancies and symbolic consumption of clothes**. Thus, the larger the discrepancy between an individual's actual and ideal self, the greater his interest in buying clothes with positive symbolic meanings. This assumption arose based on the existing theory about the association of symbolic consumption and self-discrepancies.

Specifically, the hypothesis was formed accordingly to the Compensatory Consumer Behavior Model. Galinsky et al. (2016) introduced the Compensatory Consumer Behavior Model to indicate any purchase of goods or services driven by the need to moderate the self-discrepancy (Gronmo, 1997; Rucker & Galinsky, 2008; Woodruffe, 1997). Self-discrepancy leads people to engage consumer behavior (Carver & Scheier, 1990; Custers & Aarts, 2007; Sela & Shiv, 2009). This is the reason why a self-discrepancy can be characterized as a strong motivator for symbolic consumption. Furthermore, the Compensatory Consumer Behavior Model proposes as a strategy to eliminate or distract the individual of the discrepancy the "retail therapy" (Ataly and Meloy 2011). Regarding clothing symbolic consumption, it has been proved by the literature that when an individual's

appearance was threatened, he was more prone to purchase appearance-enhancing clothes (Park and Maner 2009). To sum up, the existing literature considers that people buy products and clothes with positive meanings to repair their self-views after threat.

However, in the present research the analysis for the examination of the hypothesis in the previous part of the thesis showed that this assumption was rejected. No correlation has found between self-discrepancies and symbolic consumption of clothes in the sample that participated in the study. In conclusion, according to this research findings about this topic, self-discrepancy as human psychological asset does not seem to influence the symbolic purchases of clothes.

However, a significant correlation has been found among self-discrepancies and the item of symbolic consumption scale referring to others opinion' about one's clothes. The positive correlation between these two variables means that the larger the distance among an individual's actual and ideal self the greater will be his interest on what other people believe for his clothes and appearance.

This correlation is justified from the previous literature that supports that self-discrepancies can be activated by a comparison of an individual's skillset or dimension with another, and especially when making an upward comparison with someone's ideal skills (Mussweiler, 2003). Rucker and Galinsky (2008,2009) have proved that when self-discrepancies come from social comparison and an individual feels less powerful than others, he tends to buy high status products and clothes to restore the feeling of power (Rucker and Galinsky 2008,2009). Our appearance and clothes are easily visible, so they constitute the first thing to compare with others and evaluate ourselves accordingly.

In conclusion, the third research hypothesis is rejected accordingly to the analysis of the study. However, even though there is no association between symbolic consumption and self-discrepancies, a positive correlation has been found among one's self-discrepancy and his interest in others' opinion about what he wears.

In the next hypothesis of this thesis the researcher has assumed that that **there is a negative correlation between self-esteem and the amount of clothes one buys, the frequency in which he goes shopping and the money he spends on new clothing purchases.** This hypothesis resulted based on observations in the existing theory.

It has been supported that some people have a greater interest in fashion and clothing pieces than others. This is because clothes and new fashions convey status, financial ability and other positive qualities to their owners (Brilay, 2009; Rogers, 2003). So, people who show an involvement with fashion are supposed to go shopping more frequently, purchase more new clothes and spend a lot of money to buy new trends. As it has been already mentioned, this “retail therapy” can be considered a strategy to reduce bad feelings that come from low self-esteem (Ataly and Meloy 2011). Frequent shopping therapy help people to boost their self-views and add positive qualities in their life through consumption.

Although it would make a lot of sense to find out a relationship among the investigated variables in this study too, this did not happen. The examination and the analysis of the third research hypothesis revealed that there is no significant correlation among self-esteem and the frequency, the quantity, and the money an individual spends in symbolic consumption of clothes.

The last hypothesis of the research is related to status consumption, a category of symbolic consumption that is mainly linked to the goal of consumers to gain prestige through their clothing purchases. In this case the researcher assumed that the psychological assets of **self-esteem and self-discrepancies influence status consumption.** Specifically, the researcher wanted to examine whether self-discrepancy and self-esteem level can predict or lead to status consumption of clothes. Self-esteem has been claimed an attribute that strongly affect consumers tendency to buy status products. According to the self-completion theory, people who feel incomplete try hard to gain recognition among their social groups via consumption (Wickland and Golliwitser,1982). The existing



literature supports that high self-esteem consumers have a stronger tendency to purchase status goods and express the positive aspects of their identity than low self-esteem consumers. This is because they achieve to promote themselves through consumption (Baumeister, Tice and Hutton,1989). Low self-esteem consumers are supported to avoid representing themselves and their deficiencies to public, so they do not seem to care a lot about status consumption (Banaji and Prentice,1994).

Another group of scholars does not seem to agree with the above theory and supports that low self-esteem consumers are more likely to be led in status consumption in order to gain recognition, self-enhance and express their ideal self-image (Malar, Krohmer, Hoyer and Nyffenegger,2011). One way or another self-esteem and self-discrepancy have been considered motivational factors for status consumption.

According to the existing theory about status consumption of clothes it has been confirmed that when the basic need for clothing is covered many people continue to purchase several clothing styles for symbolic reasons. This fact leads to the conclusion that a part of our clothing purchases is motivated by the desire for status. (Dichter,1985; Millenson,1985; Sproles,1985; O'Shaughnessy,1987).

Li and Su, (2007) supported that consumers usually choose to buy status clothes to maintain their self-esteem and self-views and enhance their self-image in interpersonal relationships. Status consumptions help some people to feel closer to their ideal self and reduce the active discrepancy between their actual and ideal self (Li and Su, 2007). Based on these studies the researcher made the last hypothesis of the present study.

Multiple regression analysis was conducted in the previous part of the thesis, to examine if self-esteem and self-discrepancy can predict and influence status consumption. The assumption was

totally rejected by the regression results. Neither self-esteem nor symbolic consumption seem to contribute in a way in status consumption of clothes regarding the examined sample.

## 6.2 RESEARCH SUB-QUESTIONS FINDINGS: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The researcher run various other analyses to confirm or reject the research' sub-questions, which are mainly related with status consumption and its components. These analyses revealed several interesting findings that could contribute to the existing literature or set up the field for further future research.

Starting with the conclusions drawn from descriptive statistics, the majority of respondents denoted that over the last two years have not done purchases aiming to promote their social status and they have spent only 0-100€ in status cloth acquisitions. Additionally, most of the sample signified that they do not find at all important to purchase clothes that reflect their status.

Subsequently, the relationship between status and symbolic consumption of clothes was investigated and the analysis came up to the conclusion that there is a significant positive correlation between these two variables. Thus, the more an individual's interest in symbolic consumption, the greater his interest for status consumption of clothes. This is justified by the fact that many people identify status with symbolic consumption or consider each a part of the other.

As a result from the strong association of symbolic with status consumption it was also revealed that there is a positive correlation between symbolic consumption and respondent's interest in purchasing goods that promote their status. The higher score one collected in symbolic consumption scale, the greater his interest in buying things that enhance his social status.

Symbolic consumption was also revealed to strongly related with the importance that individuals give in purchasing goods that represent their status. In this case too, the greater one's tendency to



buy clothes for their positive symbolic meanings, the more the importance that he gives in purchasing goods that represent his social prestige.

The researcher also wanted to investigate the relationship among the importance of individuals for status consumption and the status related purchases that he has done over the last two years. The results shown that there is also a positive correlation among these two variables.

### 6.3 SUM UP OF CONCLUSIONS

To sum up the main conclusions of the present research, the study found out that neither self-esteem nor symbolic consumption seem to influence or contribute to symbolic consumption of clothes. Additionally, these psychological assets of human psyche were not revealed to be able to predict cloth status consumption. So, by examining the hypotheses of this survey study we conclude that self-esteem and self-discrepancies are not correlated with status or symbolic consumption.

Most of the research hypotheses are rejected after the analysis. However, the study revealed some interesting findings. Firstly, there is a strong negative correlation between self-esteem and self-discrepancy revealing a causal relationship. Furthermore, the study discovered a correlation of self-esteem and self-discrepancies with others opinion about what an individual wear. This finding indicates the influence that social comparison can have in the construction of self-esteem and self-view as well as it can increase the distance between an individual's actual and ideal self.

In addition, there is also a powerful association of symbolic with status consumption, fact that denies that these two concepts can be considered almost identical concepts.

### 6.4 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR FASHION RETAILERS

The ultimate goal of this research is to provide results that could contribute to fashion retailers marketing strategy. Unfortunately, the rejection of the majority of the research' hypotheses make it

difficult to suggest meaningful and specific propositions to fashion retailers. However, there are some suggestions that they could take into consideration.

Even if in this study self-esteem and self-discrepancies do not seem to have any relationship with symbolic or status consumption of clothes, the existing literature has repeatedly confirm the opposite. According to this fact, it is proposed to fashion retailers and managers to always take into account the potential consumers' personality traits when constructing their offers and marketing communications. Everyone has a different personality and in order for a clothing marketing campaign to be successful it must be tailored to the needs of each individual consumer.

The study revealed that self-esteem levels are strongly correlated with self-discrepancies. This fact means that lower self-esteem consumers have a greater distance between their actual and ideal self than the higher self-esteem consumers. Fashion managers should construct different strategies to attract the low self-esteem consumers and the high ones. This differentiation would help them to target better more personalities hence a larger number of consumers. This fact would contribute to achieve brand loyalty and increase profits.

Another key finding that fashion managers and retailers should take into consideration is the strong relationship among consumers' self-views and self-esteem with others' opinions about their clothes. Social comparison was confirmed to have a crucial role in the self-view construction and in the consumption patterns. Retailers maybe should choose more basic, trendy, up-to-date and commonly accepted clothes that will be worn by everyone. This will reduce the risk that consumers who care about what others believe about their attire, to wear something that is reprehensible. As a result, even people who do not have a positive self-view will shop more clothes without hesitation for others' opinion.

The latter proposition arises from the finding of research concerning the close correlation of symbolic consumption with static consumption. Managers need to take advantage of the fact that

consumers who want to express and upgrade their social status through their cloth purchases, generally look for positive symbolisms and meanings behind the products. Fashion retailers should design, choose, and sell products that represent a specific social status or indicate several positive meanings. This kind of clothes would be attractive for all people.

## 6.5 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Although a very diligent effort was made to ensure the validity of this study, several limitations exist that should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results of the study. The limitations that the researcher coped with during his research as well as propositions for further research will be discussed below. Future research can be conducted in order to achieve what the present one failed or was not able to do due to various reasons.

The first limitation that the researcher had to deal was the time and budget constraints involved, which caused a relatively small sample. As a result, the number of the collected questionnaires was not big enough ( $n=274$ ) to provide generalized results and conclusions. Future research in the same topic could invest more time, money, and effort to collect a larger number of questionnaires that would probably lead to more generalized results.

Secondly, the sample can be characterized nonprobability and even a convenience, non-random sample since the collected data gathered mainly through social media. This fact obviously limits the generalizability of the findings. Specifically, the population of the sample did not significantly vary as the vast majority of participants were women of the lowest age group (18-25). This limitation could be corrected with further research which could conduct the same study gathering a larger sample from all over Greece and following a random sample technique that would obtain a more representative sample from the country and more generalized results.



Furthermore, all respondents in the present study were Greek so there are also cultural limitations in terms of respondents' national background and monthly household income. It would be very interesting future research to gather data from other countries too and examine cross cultural differences of the samples in symbolic and status consumption of clothes. A big sample with various demographic characteristics could provide more valid findings.

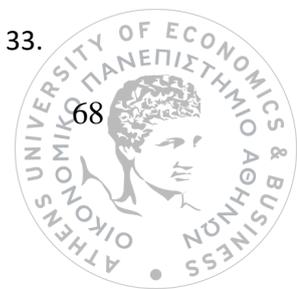
Another very important limitation of this research is the method used to collect and analyze the data. In research topics related to consumer behavior and consumer psychology, such as self-esteem and self-discrepancies, it is more efficient to use a combination of qualitative and quantitative method to decode the respondents' thoughts, words, and action. This combination of research methods could not be carried out in this research, but it is proposed to be applied in future research to ensure the validity of the participants' answers.

Finally, in the present study there was a relatively small number of hypotheses. Further research could focus on the examination and analysis of other related variables. In particular, future research could take advantage of the finding of this study relatively with the relationship between self-esteem and self-discrepancy with the opinion of others about what an individual wears (H2) and conduct a study about social comparison and its association with symbolic and status consumption of clothes.

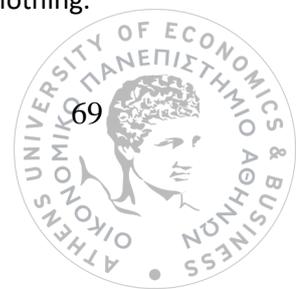


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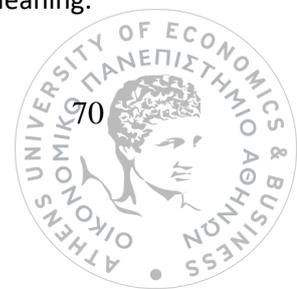
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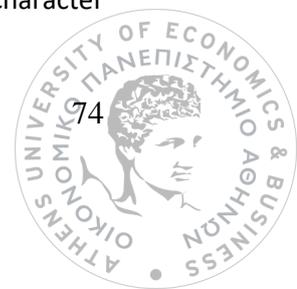
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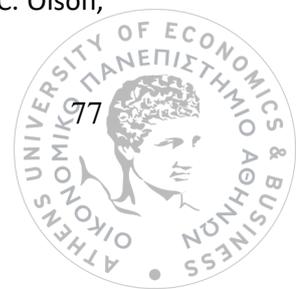


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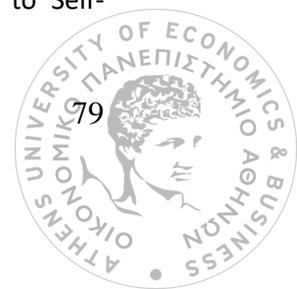
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## 8.APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: The first English form of the questionnaire.

#### 1<sup>ST</sup> SECTION (5- point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree)

##### Symbolic consumption scale

1. I believe that my clothing purchases represent who I am.
2. I buy clothes that make me approach my ideal self.
3. Buying new clothes lifts my spirits.
4. New clothes boost my self- esteem.
5. When I do not feel good about myself, I buy more clothes. (Quantity)
6. I spend more money in buying clothes when I am not very well. (Money)
7. When I'm not feeling well, I go shopping more often. (Frequency)
8. When I feel that I have not done well, I do not feel the desire to go shopping.
9. I am interested others' opinion about what I wear.

##### Status Consumption Scale

10. I would buy an article of clothing just because it has status.
11. I am interested in new clothes with status.
12. I would pay more for a garment if it had status.
13. The status of a garment is irrelevant to me.
14. An article of clothing is more valuable to me if it has some snob.
15. The last two years I have made clothing purchases aiming to promote my social status.
16. How much money have you spent over the last two years in cloth purchases that enhance your social status (0-100€, 101-300€, 301-500€, 501-700€, above 700€)
17. How important is for you to purchase goods that reflect your social status?  
(Not at all, Slightly, Somewhat, Moderately, Extremely)



**2<sup>nd</sup> SECTION** (5- point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree)

Self- discrepancy scale (Asp-ar questionnaire)

- 18. Doing my best never seems to be enough.
- 19. My performance rarely measures up to my standards.
- 20. I am hardly ever satisfied with my performance.
- 21. I am hardly ever satisfied with my performance.

Self-esteem scale (Rses questionnaire)

- 22. Overall, I am satisfied with myself.
- 23. At times I think I am no good at all.
- 24. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
- 25. I am able to do things as well as most other people
- 26. I feel I do not have much to be proud of
- 27. I certainly feel useless at times.
- 28. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.
- 29. I wish I could have more respect for myself.
- 30. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
- 31. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

**3<sup>rd</sup> SECTION** Demographics

- 32. Gender (*man, woman*)
- 33. Age (*18-25, 26-35, 36-45, above 46 years old*)
- 34. Personal Monthly Income (*0-500€, 501-1000€, 1001-1500€, 1501-2000€, above 2000€*)



## APPENDIX 2: The formal version of the questionnaire

### ΕΡΩΤΗΜΑΤΟΛΟΓΙΟ

#### ΕΙΣΑΓΩΓΗ .

Αγαπητέ/ή Συμμετέχοντα/ούσα,

Το παρόν ερωτηματολόγιο αποτελεί μέρος έρευνας διπλωματικής εργασίας που διεξάγεται στα πλαίσια του μεταπτυχιακού προγράμματος σπουδών «MSc in Marketing & Communication: Specialization in International Marketing (PRIMA)» του Οικονομικού Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών (ΟΠΑ).

Σκοπός της συγκεκριμένης έρευνας, η οποία αφορά στη Συμπεριφορά του Καταναλωτή, είναι να εξετάσει διάφορες πτυχές της συμπεριφοράς του καταναλωτή όσον αφορά στην επιλογή και την αγορά ειδών ρουχισμού.

Το ερωτηματολόγιο που ακολουθεί έχει σχεδιαστεί ώστε να συλλεχθούν τα απαραίτητα δεδομένα για την διεξαγωγή της έρευνας και η συμμετοχή σας είναι εντελώς εθελοντική. Οι πληροφορίες που θα παρέχετε είναι ανώνυμες, εμπιστευτικές και θα χρησιμοποιηθούν εξ 'ολοκλήρου για ερευνητικούς σκοπούς.

**Δεν υπάρχουν σωστές και λάθος απαντήσεις. Μας ενδιαφέρει η προσωπική σας γνώμη και κρίση. Σας παρακαλούμε να απαντήσετε με τη μέγιστη δυνατή ειλικρίνεια και ακρίβεια.**

Η διαδικασία συμπλήρωσης θα διαρκέσει περίπου 15 λεπτά.

Σας ευχαριστώ εκ των προτέρων για το χρόνο σας και την προθυμία σας να συμμετέχετε στην έρευνα και να συμπληρώσετε το παρόν ερωτηματολόγιο.

Με εκτίμηση,

## ΕΡΩΤΗΣΕΙΣ.

Παρακαλώ σημειώστε το βαθμό συμφωνίας η διαφωνίας σας με τις ακόλουθες προτάσεις.

### 1<sup>η</sup> Ενότητα:

Η πρώτη ενότητα του ερωτηματολογίου περιλαμβάνει ερωτήσεις που αφορούν στην καταναλωτική σας συμπεριφορά όταν επιλέγετε και αγοράζετε νέα ρούχα. Οι ερωτήσεις αφορούν μόνο στα ρούχα και όχι σε άλλα είδη ένδυσης (πχ παπούτσια, αξεσουάρ κα.). Παρακαλώ σημειώστε το βαθμό συμφωνίας η διαφωνίας σας με τις ακόλουθες προτάσεις.

1. Πιστεύω ότι τα ρούχα που επιλέγω αντικατοπτρίζουν το ποιος είμαι .

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα    Διαφωνώ    Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

2. Ψωνίζω ρούχα που με κάνουν να προσεγγίζω την καλύτερη εκδοχή του εαυτού μου.

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα    Διαφωνώ    Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

3. Το να αγοράζω καινούργια ρούχα μου φτιάχνει τη διάθεση.

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα    Διαφωνώ    Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

4. Τα καινούργια ρούχα μου ανεβάζουν την αυτοπεποίθηση.

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα    Διαφωνώ    Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

5. Όταν δεν αισθάνομαι καλά με τον εαυτό μου ψωνίζω περισσότερα ρούχα. (ποσότητα)

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα    Διαφωνώ    Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

6. Διαθέτω περισσότερα χρήματα στην αγορά ρούχων όταν δεν είμαι πολύ καλά. (χρήματα)

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα    Διαφωνώ    Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

7. Όταν δεν αισθάνομαι καλά με τον εαυτό μου, πηγαίνω για ψώνια πιο συχνά. (συχνότητα)

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα    Διαφωνώ    Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

**8.** Όταν αισθάνομαι ότι δεν τα έχω καταφέρει καλά ,δεν νιώθω την επιθυμία να αγοράζω καινούργια ρούχα.

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα    Διαφωνώ    Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

**9.** Με ενδιαφέρει η γνώμη των άλλων για το τι φοράω.

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα    Διαφωνώ    Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

(\***status:** Οι ερωτήσεις που ακολουθούν αφορούν στο στάτους. Με την έννοια στάτους εννοείται η κοινωνική θέση ,υπόσταση και αξία ενός ανθρώπου.)

**10.** Θα αγόραζα ένα ρούχο μόνο και μόνο επειδή προσδίδει στάτους .

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα    Διαφωνώ    Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

**11.**Με ενδιαφέρουν τα καινούργια ρούχα που έχουν στάτους.

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα    Διαφωνώ    Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

**12.**Θα έδινα περισσότερα χρήματα για ένα ρούχο που προσδίδει κύρος.

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα    Διαφωνώ    Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

**13.**Το στάτους των ρούχων είναι κάτι που δεν με αφορά .

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα    Διαφωνώ    Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

**14.**Ενα ρούχο είναι πιο πολύτιμο για μένα όταν αναβαθμίζει το στάτους μου.

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα    Διαφωνώ    Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

**15.**Τα τελευταία δύο χρόνια έχω κάνει αγορές με στόχο να προβάλλω το κοινωνικό μου στάτους.

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα    Διαφωνώ    Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

16.Τι ποσό έχετε ξοδέψει τα τελευταία δύο χρόνια σε αγορές ρούχων που επιδεικνύουν στάτους.

0-100      101-300      301-500      501-700      701 και πάνω

17.Πόσο σημαντικό είναι για σας το να αντικατοπτρίζουν οι αγορές σας το κοινωνικό σας στάτους;

Καθόλου      Λίγο      Μέτρια      Πολύ      Πάρα πολύ

## **2<sup>η</sup> Ενότητα:**

Οι ερωτήσεις που ακολουθούν αφορούν στο πως αντιλαμβάνεστε τον εαυτό σας. Παρακαλώ σημειώστε το βαθμό συμφωνίας ή διαφωνίας σας με τις ακόλουθες προτάσεις.

18. Το να κάνω ό,τι καλύτερο μπορώ δεν είναι ποτέ αρκετό .

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα      Διαφωνώ      Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ      Συμφωνώ      Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

19.Η απόδοση μου σπάνια ανταποκρίνεται στις προσδοκίες μου .

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα      Διαφωνώ      Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ      Συμφωνώ      Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

20..Δεν είμαι σχεδόν ποτέ ευχαριστημένος με την απόδοση μου.

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα      Διαφωνώ      Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ      Συμφωνώ      Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

21.Συχνά νιώθω απογοήτευση μετά την ολοκλήρωση μιας εργασίας γιατί ξέρω ότι θα μπορούσα να τα είχα πάει καλύτερα.

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα      Διαφωνώ      Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ      Συμφωνώ      Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

22.Συνολικά είμαι ικανοποιημένος με τον εαυτό μου .

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα      Διαφωνώ      Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ      Συμφωνώ      Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

23.Μερικές φορές δεν αισθάνομαι καθόλου ικανός/-ή.

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα      Διαφωνώ      Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ      Συμφωνώ      Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

**24.** Αισθάνομαι ότι έχω πολλές καλές ιδιότητες / χαρακτήρα.

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα    Διαφωνώ    Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

**25.** Είμαι σε θέση να κάνω πράγματα όπως ακριβώς και οι άλλοι άνθρωποι.

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα    Διαφωνώ    Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

**26.** Νιώθω ότι δεν έχω πολλά για τα οποία πρέπει να είμαι περήφανος/-η.

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα    Διαφωνώ    Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

**27.** Αισθάνομαι κατά καιρούς άχρηστος/-η.

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα    Διαφωνώ    Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

**28.** Νιώθω ότι αξίζω σαν άνθρωπος τουλάχιστον στον ίδιο βαθμό με τους άλλους.

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα    Διαφωνώ    Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

**29.** Μακάρι να είχα περισσότερο σεβασμό-εκτίμηση στον εαυτό μου.

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα    Διαφωνώ    Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

**30.** Συνολικά τείνω να νιώθω ότι είμαι αποτυχημένος .

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα    Διαφωνώ    Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

**31.** Έχω θετική άποψη για τον εαυτό μου.

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα    Διαφωνώ    Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ    Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

### 3<sup>η</sup> Ενότητα

#### Γ. ΔΗΜΟΓΡΑΦΙΚΑ ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΑ

32. ΦΥΛΟ  ΑΝΤΡΑΣ  ΓΥΝΑΙΚΑ

33. ΗΛΙΚΙΑ  18-25  
 26-35  
 36-45  
 46 και άνω

34. Προσωπικό μηνιαίο εισόδημα:  0-500  
 501-1000  
 1001-1500  
 1501-2000  
 2001 και άνω

## APPENDIX 3: SPSS TABLES

**FREQUENCY TABLES (DEMOGRAPHICS)****Statistics**

		32. Φύλο.	33. Ηλικία.	34. Εισόδημα
N	Valid	274	274	274
	Missing	0	0	0

**32. Φύλο.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Άνδρας	87	31.8	31.8	31.8
	Γυναίκα	187	68.2	68.2	100.0
	Total	274	100.0	100.0	

**33. Ηλικία.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-25 ετών	111	40.5	40.5	40.5
	26-35 ετών	85	31.0	31.0	71.5
	36-45 ετών	30	10.9	10.9	82.5
	άνω των 45 ετών	48	17.5	17.5	100.0
	Total	274	100.0	100.0	

**34. Εισόδημα**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-500€	98	35.8	35.8	35.8
	1001-1500€	46	16.8	16.8	52.6
	1501-2000€	29	10.6	10.6	63.1
	501-1000€	75	27.4	27.4	90.5
	άνω των 2000€	26	9.5	9.5	100.0
	Total	274	100.0	100.0	

**SCALES RELIABILITY ANALYSIS****Scale: SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION SCALE****Case Processing Summary**

		N	%
Cases	Valid	274	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	274	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.771	9

**Item-Total Statistics**

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1. Πιστεύω ότι τα ρούχα που επιλέγω αντικατοπτρίζουν το ποιος είμαι .	24.88	29.806	.400	.758
2. Ψωνίζω ρούχα που με κάνουν να προσεγγίζω την καλύτερη εκδοχή του εαυτού μου.	24.85	29.779	.369	.761
3. Το να αγοράζω καινούργια ρούχα μου φτιάχνει τη διάθεση.	24.74	27.621	.539	.738
4. Τα καινούργια ρούχα μου ανεβάζουν την αυτοπεποίθησή μου.	24.89	26.787	.591	.730
5. Όταν δεν αισθάνομαι καλά με τον εαυτό μου ψωνίζω περισσότερα ρούχα.	26.68	24.520	.676	.711
6. Διαθέτω περισσότερα χρήματα στην αγορά ρούχων όταν δεν είμαι πολύ καλά.	26.80	24.730	.665	.714
7. Όταν δεν αισθάνομαι καλά με τον εαυτό μου, πηγαίνω για ψώνια πιο συχνά.	26.77	25.912	.601	.726

8. Όταν αισθάνομαι ότι δεν τα έχω καταφέρει καλά, δεν νιώθω την επιθυμία να αγοράζω καινούργια ρούχα.	26.02	30.710	.116	.807
9. Με ενδιαφέρει η γνώμη των άλλων για το τι φοράω.	26.02	29.622	.246	.781

### Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
28.96	34.108	5.840	9

### Scale: STATUS CONSUMPTION SCALE

#### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	274	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	274	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.901	7

### Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
10. Θα αγόραζα ένα ρούχο μόνο και μόνο επειδή προσδίδει στάτους .	2.22	1.156	274
11. Με ενδιαφέρουν τα καινούργια ρούχα που έχουν στάτους.	2.28	1.178	274
12. Θα έδινα περισσότερα χρήματα για ένα ρούχο που προσδίδει κύρος.	2.54	1.273	274
13. Το στάτους των ρούχων είναι κάτι που δεν με αφορά.	2.54	1.278	274
14. Ένα ρούχο είναι πιο πολύτιμο για μένα όταν αναβαθμίζει το στάτους μου.	2.21	1.095	274
15. Τα τελευταία δύο χρόνια έχω κάνει αγορές με στόχο να προβάλλω το κοινωνικό μου στάτους.	1.91	1.076	274

17. Πόσο σημαντικό είναι για σας το να αντικατοπτρίζουν οι αγορές σας το κοινωνικό σας στάτους;	2.19	1.039	274
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### Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
10. Θα αγόραζα ένα ρούχο μόνο και μόνο επειδή προσδίδει στάτους .	13.67	30.155	.781	.879
11. Με ενδιαφέρουν τα καινούργια ρούχα που έχουν στάτους.	13.61	29.505	.821	.874
12. Θα έδινα περισσότερα χρήματα για ένα ρούχο που προσδίδει κύρος.	13.35	29.248	.765	.880
13. Το στάτους των ρούχων είναι κάτι που δεν με αφορά.	13.35	32.579	.493	.913
14. Ένα ρούχο είναι πιο πολύτιμο για μένα όταν αναβαθμίζει το στάτους μου.	13.68	31.390	.719	.886
15. Τα τελευταία δύο χρόνια έχω κάνει αγορές με στόχο να προβάλλω το κοινωνικό μου στάτους.	13.98	32.380	.642	.894
17. Πόσο σημαντικό είναι για σας το να αντικατοπτρίζουν οι αγορές σας το κοινωνικό σας στάτους;	13.70	31.164	.789	.879

### Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
15.89	41.402	6.434	7

**Scale: ASP-AR SELF DISCREPANCIES SCALE****Case Processing Summary**

		N	%
Cases	Valid	274	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	274	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.793	4

**Item Statistics**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
18. Το να κάνω ό,τι καλύτερο μπορώ δεν είναι ποτέ αρκετό .	2.82	1.181	274
19. Η απόδοση μου σπάνια ανταποκρίνεται στις προσδοκίες μου .	2.35	1.076	274
20. Δεν είμαι σχεδόν ποτέ ευχαριστημένος/-η με την απόδοση μου.	2.27	1.103	274
21. Συχνά νιώθω απογοήτευση μετά την ολοκλήρωση μιας εργασίας γιατί ξέρω ότι θα μπορούσα να τα είχα πάει καλύτερα.	2.44	1.109	274

**Item-Total Statistics**

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
18. Το να κάνω ό,τι καλύτερο μπορώ δεν είναι ποτέ αρκετό .	7.06	7.546	.523	.784
19. Η απόδοση μου σπάνια ανταποκρίνεται στις προσδοκίες μου .	7.53	7.459	.632	.728
20. Δεν είμαι σχεδόν ποτέ ευχαριστημένος/-η με την απόδοση μου.	7.61	7.191	.664	.711
21. Συχνά νιώθω απογοήτευση μετά την ολοκλήρωση μιας εργασίας γιατί ξέρω ότι θα μπορούσα να τα είχα πάει καλύτερα.	7.44	7.470	.600	.743

**Scale Statistics**

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
9.88	12.333	3.512	4

**Scale: RSES SELF ESTEEM SCALE****Case Processing Summary**

		N	%
Cases	Valid	274	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	274	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's	
Alpha	N of Items
.842	10

**Item Statistics**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
22. Συνολικά είμαι ικανοποιημένος/-η με τον εαυτό μου .	3.7920	.81457	274
23.Μερικές φορές δεν αισθάνομαι καθόλου ικανός/-ή.	3.3504	1.19272	274
24. Αισθάνομαι ότι έχω πολλές καλές ιδιότητες / χαρακτήρα.	4.1460	.81236	274
25. Είμαι σε θέση να κάνω πράγματα όπως ακριβώς και οι άλλοι άνθρωποι.	4.1606	.90366	274
26. Νιώθω ότι δεν έχω πολλά για τα οποία πρέπει να είμαι περήφανος/-η.	4.1095	1.07709	274
27.Αισθάνομαι κατά καιρούς άχρηστος/-η.	3.8905	1.25607	274
28. Νιώθω ότι αξίζω σαν άνθρωπος τουλάχιστον στον ίδιο βαθμό με τους άλλους.	4.2372	.96378	274
29.Μακάρι να είχα περισσότερο σεβασμό-εκτίμηση στον εαυτό μου.	3.1898	1.44766	274
30. Συνολικά τείνω να νιώθω ότι είμαι αποτυχημένος .	4.2226	1.07829	274
31. Έχω θετική άποψη για τον εαυτό μου.	4.0985	.89430	274

## Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
22. Συνολικά είμαι ικανοποιημένος/-η με τον εαυτό μου .	35.4051	39.773	.603	.824
23.Μερικές φορές δεν αισθάνομαι καθόλου ικανός/-ή.	35.8467	36.863	.577	.824
24. Αισθάνομαι ότι έχω πολλές καλές ιδιότητες / χαρακτήρα.	35.0511	42.723	.306	.845
25. Είμαι σε θέση να κάνω πράγματα όπως ακριβώς και οι άλλοι άνθρωποι.	35.0365	41.317	.387	.840
26. Νιώθω ότι δεν έχω πολλά για τα οποία πρέπει να είμαι περήφανος/-η.	35.0876	37.751	.584	.823
27.Αισθάνομαι κατά καιρούς άχρηστος/-η.	35.3066	34.865	.687	.812
28. Νιώθω ότι αξίζω σαν άνθρωπος τουλάχιστον στον ίδιο βαθμό με τους άλλους.	34.9599	41.577	.332	.845
29.Μακάρι να είχα περισσότερο σεβασμό-εκτίμηση στον εαυτό μου.	36.0073	34.879	.565	.829
30. Συνολικά τείνω να νιώθω ότι είμαι αποτυχημένος .	34.9745	36.325	.704	.811
31. Έχω θετική άποψη για τον εαυτό μου.	35.0985	38.294	.681	.817

## Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
39.1971	46.635	6.82898	10

**EXAMINATION OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESES****H1: Self-esteem is negatively correlated to symbolic consumption.****Correlations**

		MEAN_ΣΥΜΒΟΛΙΚΗ_ΚΑΤΑΝΑΛΩΣΗ	MEAN_ΚΛΙΜΑΚΑ_ΑΥΤΟΕΚΤΙΜΗΣΗΣ
MEAN_ΣΥΜΒΟΛΙΚΗ_ΚΑΤΑΝΑΛΩΣΗ	Pearson Correlation	1	-.059
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.332
	N	274	274
MEAN_ΚΛΙΜΑΚΑ_ΑΥΤΟΕΚΤΙΜΗΣΗΣ	Pearson Correlation	-.059	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.332	
	N	274	274

**Correlations**

		MEAN_ΚΛΙΜΑΚΑ_ΑΥΤΟΕΚΤΙΜΗΣΗΣ	9. Με ενδιαφέρει η γνώμη των άλλων για το τι φοράω.
MEAN_ΚΛΙΜΑΚΑ_ΑΥΤΟΕΚΤΙΜΗΣΗΣ	Pearson Correlation	1	-.204**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	274	274
9. Με ενδιαφέρει η γνώμη των άλλων για το τι φοράω	Pearson Correlation	-.204**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	274	274

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**H2: Self-discrepancy is negatively associated with self-esteem.****Correlations**

		MEAN_ΚΛΙΜΑΚΑ_ΑΥΤΟΕΚΤΙΜΗΣΗΣ	MEAN_ΑΥΤΟΔΙΑΦΟΡΑΣ
MEAN_ΚΛΙΜΑΚΑ_ΑΥΤΟΕΚΤΙΜΗΣΗΣ	Pearson Correlation	1	-.633**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	274	274
MEAN_ΑΥΤΟΔΙΑΦΟΡΑΣ	Pearson Correlation	-.633**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	274	274

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**H3: Self discrepancies are positively correlated with symbolic consumption of clothes.**

**Correlations**

		MEAN_ΣΥΜΒΟΛΙΚΗ ΚΑΤΑΝΑΛΩΣΗ	MEAN_ΑΥΤΟΔΙΑΦ ΟΡΑΣ
MEAN_ΣΥΜΒΟΛΙΚΗ_ΚΑΤΑΝΑΛ ΩΣΗ	Pearson Correlation	1	.098
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.106
	N	274	274
MEAN_ΑΥΤΟΔΙΑΦΟΡΑΣ	Pearson Correlation	.098	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.106	
	N	274	274

**Correlations**

		MEAN_ΑΥΤΟΔΙ ΑΦΟΡΑΣ	9. Με ενδιαφέρει η γνώμη των άλλων για το τι φοράω
MEAN_ΑΥΤΟΔΙΑΦΟΡΑΣ	Pearson Correlation	1	.159**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.008
	N	274	274
9. Με ενδιαφέρει η γνώμη των άλλων για το τι φοράω	Pearson Correlation	.159**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	
	N	274	274

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**H4: Self-esteem is negatively correlated with frequency, quantity and amount of money spent in cloth purchases.**

**Correlations**

		MEAN_ΚΛΙΜΑΚΑ_ ΑΥΤΟΕΚΤΙΜΗΣΗΣ	5. Όταν δεν αισθάνομαι καλά με τον εαυτό μου ψωνίζω περισσότερα ρούχα.
MEAN_ΚΛΙΜΑΚΑ_ΑΥΤΟΕΚΤΙΜ ΗΣΗΣ	Pearson Correlation	1	-.093
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.127
	N	274	274
5. Όταν δεν αισθάνομαι καλά με τον εαυτό μου ψωνίζω περισσότερα ρούχα.	Pearson Correlation	-.093	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.127	
	N	274	274



**Correlations**

		MEAN_ΚΛΙΜΑΚΑ_ΑΥΤΟΕΚΤΙΜΗΣΗΣ	6. Διαθέτω περισσότερα χρήματα στην αγορά ρούχων όταν δεν είμαι πολύ καλά.
MEAN_ΚΛΙΜΑΚΑ_ΑΥΤΟΕΚΤΙΜΗΣΗΣ	Pearson Correlation	1	-.062
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.305
	N	274	274
6. Διαθέτω περισσότερα χρήματα στην αγορά ρούχων όταν δεν είμαι πολύ καλά.	Pearson Correlation	-.062	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.305	
	N	274	274

**Correlations**

		MEAN_ΚΛΙΜΑΚΑ_ΑΥΤΟΕΚΤΙΜΗΣΗΣ	7. Όταν δεν αισθάνομαι καλά με τον εαυτό μου, πηγαίνω για ψώνια πιο συχνά.
MEAN_ΚΛΙΜΑΚΑ_ΑΥΤΟΕΚΤΙΜΗΣΗΣ	Pearson Correlation	1	-.007
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.914
	N	274	274
7. Όταν δεν αισθάνομαι καλά με τον εαυτό μου, πηγαίνω για ψώνια πιο συχνά.	Pearson Correlation	-.007	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.914	
	N	274	274

**H5: Consumers with self-discrepancies and low self-esteem are more vulnerable to status consumption.**

**MULTIPLE LINEAR REGRESSION****Descriptive Statistics**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
MEAN_ΚΑΤΑΝΑΛΩΣΗ_ΣΤΑΤΟΥΣ	2.2701	.91920	274
MEAN_ΑΥΤΟΔΙΑΦΟΡΑΣ	2.4699	.87797	274
MEAN_ΚΛΙΜΑΚΑ_ΑΥΤΟΕΚΤΙΜΗΣΗΣ	3.9197	.68290	274

**Correlations**

		MEAN_ΚΑΤΑΝΑΛΩΣΗ_ΣΤΑΤΟΥΣ	MEAN_ΑΥΤΟΔΙΑΦΟΡΑΣ	MEAN_ΚΛΙΜΑΚΑ_ΑΥΤΟΕΚΤΙΜΗΣΗΣ
Pearson Correlation	MEAN_ΚΑΤΑΝΑΛΩΣΗ_ΣΤΑΤΟΥΣ	1.000	.058	.007
	MEAN_ΑΥΤΟΔΙΑΦΟΡΑΣ	.058	1.000	-.633
	MEAN_ΚΛΙΜΑΚΑ_ΑΥΤΟΕΚΤΙΜΗΣΗΣ	.007	-.633	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	MEAN_ΚΑΤΑΝΑΛΩΣΗ_ΣΤΑΤΟΥΣ	.	.169	.453
	MEAN_ΑΥΤΟΔΙΑΦΟΡΑΣ	.169	.	.000
	MEAN_ΚΛΙΜΑΚΑ_ΑΥΤΟΕΚΤΙΜΗΣΗΣ	.453	.000	.
N	MEAN_ΚΑΤΑΝΑΛΩΣΗ_ΣΤΑΤΟΥΣ	274	274	274
	MEAN_ΑΥΤΟΔΙΑΦΟΡΑΣ	274	274	274
	MEAN_ΚΛΙΜΑΚΑ_ΑΥΤΟΕΚΤΙΜΗΣΗΣ	274	274	274

**Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
					F Change	df1	df2	
1	.081 <sup>a</sup>	-.001	.91954	.007	.900	2	271	.408

a. Predictors: (Constant), MEAN\_ΚΛΙΜΑΚΑ\_ΑΥΤΟΕΚΤΙΜΗΣΗΣ, MEAN\_ΑΥΤΟΔΙΑΦΟΡΑΣ

b. Dependent Variable: MEAN\_ΚΑΤΑΝΑΛΩΣΗ\_ΣΤΑΤΟΥΣ

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.522	2	.761	.900	.408 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	229.146	271	.846		
	Total	230.668	273			

a. Dependent Variable: MEAN\_ΚΑΤΑΝΑΛΩΣΗ\_ΣΤΑΤΟΥΣ

b. Predictors: (Constant), MEAN\_ΚΛΙΜΑΚΑ\_ΑΥΤΟΕΚΤΙΜΗΣΗΣ, MEAN\_ΑΥΤΟΔΙΑΦΟΡΑΣ

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error				Beta	Zero-order	Partial
1	(Constant)	1.613	.566		2.852	.005			
	MEAN_ΑΥΤΟΔΙΑΦΟΡΑΣ	.109	.082	.105	1.336	.183	.058	.081	.081
	MEAN_ΚΛΙΜΑΚΑ_ΑΥΤΟΕΚΤΙΜΗΣΗΣ	.099	.105	.073	.937	.349	.007	.057	.057

a. Dependent Variable: MEAN\_KATANALΩΣΗ\_ΣΤΑΤΟΥΣ

**Residuals Statistics<sup>a</sup>**

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	2.0086	2.5517	2.2701	.07465	274
Std. Predicted Value	-3.502	3.772	.000	1.000	274
Standard Error of Predicted Value	.056	.227	.092	.029	274
Adjusted Predicted Value	2.0335	2.5061	2.2703	.07464	274
Residual	-1.45839	2.56738	.00000	.91617	274
Std. Residual	-1.586	2.792	.000	.996	274
Stud. Residual	-1.612	2.815	.000	1.003	274
Deleted Residual	-1.50608	2.60910	-.00023	.92787	274
Stud. Deleted Residual	-1.617	2.851	.001	1.005	274
Mahal. Distance	.001	15.609	1.993	2.213	274
Cook's Distance	.000	.158	.004	.011	274
Centered Leverage Value	.000	.057	.007	.008	274

a. Dependent Variable: MEAN\_KATANALΩΣΗ\_ΣΤΑΤΟΥΣ

EXTRA FINDINGSDESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

**16. Τι ποσό έχετε ξοδέψει συνολικά τα τελευταία δύο χρόνια σε αγορές ρούχων που θεωρείτε ότι μπορούν να προβάλλουν το κοινωνικό σας στάτους.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-100€	99	36.1	36.1	36.1
	101-300€	76	27.7	27.7	63.9
	301-500€	45	16.4	16.4	80.3
	501-700€	26	9.5	9.5	89.8
	πάνω από 700€	28	10.2	10.2	100.0
	Total	274	100.0	100.0	

**15. Τα τελευταία δύο χρόνια έχω κάνει αγορές με στόχο να προβάλλω το κοινωνικό μου στάτους.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Διαφωνώ απόλυτα	130	47.4	47.4	47.4
	Διαφωνώ	72	26.3	26.3	73.7
	Ούτε διαφωνώ ούτε συμφωνώ	45	16.4	16.4	90.1
	Συμφωνώ	20	7.3	7.3	97.4
	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα	7	2.6	2.6	100.0
	Total	274	100.0	100.0	

**17. Πόσο σημαντικό είναι για σας το να αντικατοπτρίζουν οι αγορές σας το κοινωνικό σας στάτους;**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Καθόλου	88	32.1	32.1	32.1
	Λίγο	80	29.2	29.2	61.3
	Μέτρια	74	27.0	27.0	88.3
	Πολύ	29	10.6	10.6	98.9
	Πάρα πολύ	3	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	274	100.0	100.0	

**CORRELATIONS****Correlations**

		MEAN_ΣΥΜΒΟΛΙΚΗ_ΚΑΤΑΝΑΛΩΣΗ	MEAN_ΚΑΤΑΝΑΛΩΣΗ_ΣΤΑΤΟΥΣ
MEAN_ΣΥΜΒΟΛΙΚΗ_ΚΑΤΑΝΑΛΩΣΗ	Pearson Correlation	1	.383**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	274	274
MEAN_ΚΑΤΑΝΑΛΩΣΗ_ΣΤΑΤΟΥΣ	Pearson Correlation	.383**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	274	274

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Correlations**

		MEAN_ΣΥΜΒΟΛΙΚΗ_ΚΑΤΑΝΑΛΩΣΗ	15. Τα τελευταία δύο χρόνια έχω κάνει αγορές με στόχο να προβάλλω το κοινωνικό μου στάτους.
MEAN_ΣΥΜΒΟΛΙΚΗ_ΚΑΤΑΝΑΛΩΣΗ	Pearson Correlation	1	.386**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	274	274
15. Τα τελευταία δύο χρόνια έχω κάνει αγορές με στόχο να προβάλλω το κοινωνικό μου στάτους.	Pearson Correlation	.386**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	274	274

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## Correlations

		MEAN_ΣΥΜΒΟΛΙΚΗ ΚΑΤΑΝΑΛΩΣΗ	17. Πόσο σημαντικό είναι για σας το να αντικατοπτρίζουν οι αγορές σας το κοινωνικό σας στάτους;
MEAN_ΣΥΜΒΟΛΙΚΗ_ΚΑΤΑΝΑΛΩΣΗ	Pearson Correlation	1	.316**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	274	274
17. Πόσο σημαντικό είναι για σας το να αντικατοπτρίζουν οι αγορές σας το κοινωνικό σας στάτους;	Pearson Correlation	.316**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	274	274

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## Correlations

		15. Τα τελευταία δύο χρόνια έχω κάνει αγορές με στόχο να προβάλλω το κοινωνικό μου στάτους.	17. Πόσο σημαντικό είναι για σας το να αντικατοπτρίζουν οι αγορές σας το κοινωνικό σας στάτους;
15. Τα τελευταία δύο χρόνια έχω κάνει αγορές με στόχο να προβάλλω το κοινωνικό μου στάτους.	Pearson Correlation	1	.641**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	274	274
17. Πόσο σημαντικό είναι για σας το να αντικατοπτρίζουν οι αγορές σας το κοινωνικό σας στάτους;	Pearson Correlation	.641**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	274	274

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).