Abstract

Different people have different personalities, thoughts and points of view and these differences affect how people do their purchase. Some commodities are bought for their applications, some for making distinctive and uniqueness and some for making social esteem. In this study, we have focused on need for uniqueness (Creative choice counter conformity, Unpopular choice counter conformity, Avoidance of similarity) and status consumption pattern, then we have studied the relationship between need for uniqueness and status consumption. This study includes 384 students in Islamic Azad University – Science and research branch. For examining hypothesizes we used correlation Spearman and SPSS software. The results show direct relation between "Creative choice counter conformity, Unpopular choice counter conformity, Avoidance of similarity" and "status consumption".

Keywords: Status consumption, Need for uniqueness

1. Introduction

In today’s societies many individuals try to buy commodities which demonstrate themselves as people who are in upper levels of society with financial affordability. For example, someone who use Mercedes Benz can meet his/her need by a cheaper car, but he/she buy an expensive one to show his/her social position and uniqueness. It should be noted that uniqueness is not necessarily demonstrated by purchasing expensive commodities, but people can make uniqueness by using commodities which are not common though they are not expensive.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Need for uniqueness

Despite norms push many consumers don’t follow majority. Some individuals intentionally behave against social norms to distinct themselves from other people. People demonstrate their uniqueness through buying products and brands which have not been acceptable in the society. This tendency points to a viable personality characteristic that show uniqueness (Clark et al, 2007, 48). Some people obtain properties and demonstrate them to make distinctive personal and social image before others (Tian, Mckenzie, 2001, 171). Tendency to uniqueness is willing to dissimilarity with reference group individuals through purchasing products and brands to make distinctive personal and social image (Clark et al, 2007, 48). Individuals who are willing to be unique don’t like similarity with other people and they try to distinct themselves (Bertrandias, goldsmith, 2006, 29). General characteristic of a consumer who tends to be unique is that they don’t like following other people. These people are exposed to social norms but they actively avoid accepting those norms. Individuals who see themselves very similar to other people are not happy about this condition. Being similar with other people has benefits such as social support and acceptability though it is negative since the individual should follow ordinary people (Clark et al, 2007, 48). Need for uniqueness has three dimensions:

1- Creative choice counter conformity
2- Unpopular choice counter conformity
3- Avoidance of similarity (Tian et al, 2001, 52).

3. Creative choice counter conformity
Creative choice counter conformity means that consumer is willing to make social distinctiveness but his/her choices are accepted by people (Tian et al, 2001, 52). Creative choice counter conformity is a general tendency to choose products and brands which are not conformed with consumer’s reference group norms but yet acceptable for the group (Clark et al, 2007, 48).

4. Unpopular choice counter conformity

Consumers may choose products which are not acceptable for the group so they are following unpopular choice (Tian, McKenzie, 2001, 171). Unpopular choice counter conformity is related to choosing products and brands which are against the norms so these consumers are not supported in the society (Tian et al, 2001, 52). Unpopular choice counter conformity is related to choosing products and brands which are against norms and in order to make distinctiveness for consumers (Clark et al, 2007, 48).

5. Avoidance of similarity

Avoidance of similarity means that consumer do not prefer to buy products which are chosen by majority of people (Tian et al, 2001, 53). Avoidance of similarity is consumer willing to avoid those products which are bought by reference group (Clark et al, 2007, 48). Avoidance of similarity happens because consumer prosperity to make personal and social distinctiveness is short term and then consumer should use another product (Tian et al, 2001, 53). Different people show wide range of tendency to uniqueness in different situations and this has important role on their decisions to purchase (Latter et al, 2010, 207). People who have much tendency to be unique execute all above mentioned items simultaneously.

6. Status consumption

An important motivation force which has strongly affected consumer’s behaviour is obtaining respect and social prestige by purchasing and using specific products (Ocass, 2004, 26). Status is a situation in a group or society that is given to a person by other people. Status is a type of power that includes respect and attention and it shows objectives of a culture. Many people tend to status and they allocate much energy for obtaining it (Eastman et al, 1990, 42). Using specific kind of goods for demonstrating status has been made very important from when Veblen presented luxury consumption idea (Eastman et al, 1999, 42). Status consumption is so closed to luxury consumption idea (purchasing expensive goods to show affordability, richness and status to other people) (Goldsmith, Clark, 2008, 312). Eastman et al (1999) have defined status consumption as below:

Motivation process in which people try to promote their position and status in the society through consuming goods which make esteem and prestige for them (Eastman et al, 1999, 42). Latter et al stated that social consumption directly related to consumers personality. Status consumers and consumers with high need for uniqueness buy luxury products to promote their images before other people (Latter et al, 2010, 208). General characteristic of consumers who want to be unique is that they don’t like to be similar in shape and colour. Consumers with high level of need for uniqueness (Creative choice counter conformity, Un popular choice counter conformity, Avoidance of similarity) prefer to make themselves distinct. Status consumers tend to be unique and distinct and one way for reaching this is status consumption (Clark et al, 2007, 48). In emerged economies, need for uniqueness is really the need for esteem and prestige (Latter et al, 2010, 205). Clark et al stated that there is positive relation between need for uniqueness and status consumption (Clark et al, 2007, 45).
7. Proposed Design

![Proposed Design Diagram]

8. Research hypotheses

Regarding previous studies, research hypotheses are defined as below:
1. There is a relation between creative choice counter conformity and status consumption among Azad university’s Science and research branch students.
2. There is a relation between unpopular choice counter conformity and status consumption among Azad university’s Science and research branch students.
3. There is a relation between avoidance of similarity and status consumption among Azad university’s Science and research branch students.

9. Research Methodology

The methodology is descriptive since variables are not manipulated. Furthermore, the methodology is survey because we collected data by questionnaires. Also, the methodology is correlation because we study the relationship between variables.

10. Research domain

The research domain of this study is Islamic Azad University, Science and Research branch, Tehran, Iran, September 2012.

11. Determining sample size

Since we have 29202 students in the university, we use the below formula to calculate sample size:

\[ n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot q}{e^2} \]

in which:
- \( Z \) = normal curve level
- \( n \) = research sample size
- \( e \) = research limit error
- \( p \) = existing rate of the variable
- \( q \) = non-existing rate of the variable

By maximum fluctuation \( p=0.5 \) and \( q=0.5 \) and certainty level 95 percent and accuracy 5 percent (\( e=0.05 \)) the volume of sample is:
12. Instrument

We used questionnaire for collecting data for this research. For uniqueness motivation index we use Ruvio et al questionnaire (2008) and for status consumption index Eastman et al questionnaire (1999).

13. Validity

Validity of status consumption questionnaire (Eastman et al, 1999), (Goldsmith and Clark, 2008), (Bearden et al, 1999), (Bearden et al, 2000), (D’Rozario, 2001), and need for uniqueness index (Tian and McKenzie, 2001), (Ruvio et al, 2008) have been ratified in previous researches. In this study we use two methods: Content validity and face validity.

14. Content validity

After receiving information of email addresses of 60 university professors of marketing, we sent the questionnaire to their emails and we asked them for their opinion about the questions. 20 of them replied and confirmed the questionnaire. So we can claim that the questionnaire has content validity.

15. Face validity

We distributed 50 questionnaires among students and they are asked to read the questions and tell researchers if they don’t understand or if they see any ambiguity. They confirmed the questions so we can claim face validity of the questionnaire.

16. Reliability

Internal consistency method by using Cronbach’s alpha has been used. We distributed 60 questionnaires and statistical analysis showed Cronbach’ alpha 0.85 and since it is bigger than 0.7 we can claim reliability of the questionnaire.

17. Data analysis method

Since the data distribution is not normal we used Spearman correlation index.

18. Research hypothesis test

18.1. Test for the first hypothesis

The first hypothesis is: there is a relation between Creative choice counter conformity and status consumption among Azad university- science and research branch- students.

We write statistical hypothesis as below:
H0: There is no relation between Creative choice counter conformity and status consumption among Azad university’s students.
H1: “There is a relation between Creative choice counter conformity and status consumption among Azad university- science and research branch- students.

The result for analyzing for first hypothesis is:
Table 1. Results of the data analysis for the first research hypothesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spearman correlation coefficients</th>
<th>Significant level</th>
<th>Probability of error</th>
<th>Conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.479</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>The sig &lt;0.05 so H0 hypothesis is rejected.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By refusing H0, it means that there is a relation between Creative choice counter conformity and status consumption among Azad university’s – science and research branch- students and since Spearman index is positive the relation is positive so the first hypothesis is approved.

18.2. Test for the second hypothesis

The second hypothesis is: “There is a relation between Unpopular choice counter conformity and status consumption among Azad university’s – science and research branch- students. So we write statistical hypothesis as below:
H0: There is no relation between Unpopular choice counter conformity and status consumption among Azad university’s – science and research branch- students.
H1: There is a relation between Unpopular choice counter conformity and status consumption among Azad university’s – science and research branch- students.
The result for analyzing for the second hypothesis is:

Table 2. Results of the data analysis for the second research hypothesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spearman correlation coefficients</th>
<th>Significant level</th>
<th>Probability of error</th>
<th>Conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.222</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>The sig &lt;0.05 so H0 hypothesis is rejected.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By refusing H0, it means that there is a relation between Unpopular choice counter conformity and status consumption among Azad university’s – science and research branch- students and since Spearman index is positive the relation is positive so the second hypothesis is approved.

18.3. Test for the third hypothesis

The third hypothesis is: “There is a relation between Avoidance of similarity and status consumption among Azad university– science and research branch- students. So we write statistical hypothesis as below:
H0: There is no relation between Avoidance of similarity and status consumption among Azad university– science and research branch- students.
H1: There is a relation between Avoidance of similarity and status consumption among Azad university–science and research branch- students.
The result for analyzing for the third hypothesis is:

Table 3. Results of the data analysis for the third research hypothesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spearman correlation coefficients</th>
<th>Significant level</th>
<th>Probability of error</th>
<th>Conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.364</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>The sig &lt;0.05 so H0 hypothesis is rejected.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By refusing H0, it means that there is a relation between Avoidance of similarity and status consumption among Azad university’s – science and research branch- students and since Spearman index is positive the relation is positive so the third hypothesis is approved.
19. The results

The results of tests are summarized in below table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Testing result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The relationship between &quot;Creative choice counter conformity&quot; and &quot;Status consumption&quot;</td>
<td>the research hypothesis is Confirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The relationship between &quot;Unpopular choice counter conformity&quot; and &quot;Status consumption&quot;</td>
<td>the research hypothesis is Confirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The relationship between &quot;Avoidance of similarity&quot; and &quot;Status consumption&quot;</td>
<td>the research hypothesis is Confirmed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. Discussion and Conclusion

Since the tests for hypothesis showed that there is a positive relation between "Creative choice counter conformity, Unpopular choice counter conformity, Avoidance of similarity" from one hand and "status consumption" from the other hand, we can conclude that prestige products are better for consumers who willing to "Creative choice counter conformity, Unpopular choice counter conformity and Avoidance of similarity", so for these consumers marketers should focus more on prestige of the products than their applications.

References