INTERACTIVE EFFECTS OF MATERIALISM AND ANTECEDENTS OF BRAND JEALOUSY

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: This study focuses on theorizing and testing new conceptual linkages between various antecedents of brand jealousy grounded in Jealousy theory. This study tested the conceptual linkage for antecedents of brand jealousy such as brand attachment, brand aspiration, and self-esteem with brand jealousy. This study further investigated the moderating role of materialism between antecedents and brand jealousy.

Methodology: Using cross-sectional field data of (N = 512) brand savvy individuals from the cultural context of Pakistan. The data were analyzed using process macros by Hayes.

Major Findings: Results revealed that brand attachment and brand aspiration significantly predicted brand jealousy. At the same time, a negative association of self-esteem with brand jealousy was not proved in the hypothesized direction. Results also revealed that materialism did not moderate between brand attachment and brand jealousy. On the other hand, materialism significantly moderated between brand aspiration and brand jealousy. Similarly, materialism also moderated significantly between self-esteem and brand jealousy.

Implications of the study: This study provides key theoretical and practical insights for marketing scholars, marketers, brand managers, and policymakers. Numerous future research directions are also suggested to help further the field grow in the upcoming era.

Novelty/Originality: This study contributed to the body of knowledge by theorizing and testing several new and unexplored relationships to advance the research in the field of brand jealousy, brand management, and consumer behaviour.

Keywords: Brand Attachment, Brand Aspirations, Self-esteem, Materialism, Brand Jealousy.

INTRODUCTION

In marketing, customer's perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes play a vital role in determining their brand choice and loyalty. Many authors have studied various factors that influence how consumers attach themselves to brands from affiliations and long-term relationships with specific brands (Loh et al., 2021; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002). Many studies have also explored brand personalities to determine how interactions between brands and customers occur (Kashif et al., 2021; Tak, 2020). The importance of emotions in choosing or associating with a brand has been considered critical, as brand-customer relationships are developed over a longer period. Hence customer emotions play a vital role in determining the relationship with a specific brand; these emotions can be either positive or negative but are part of the customer's self-concept that he associates and transmit through the brand he chooses.

One of the interesting factors that lead to choosing a certain brand and brand's association is Brand jealousy, which we will explore in this study to understand which factors affect it and how customer's behaviour is shaped through it. It is an important factor, and few studies have explored how it interacts through materialism, Self-esteem, Brand attachment, and brand aspiration, which we will explore in this study as they have not been explored previously.

Brand jealousy relates to the concept of potential customers who can not afford the desired brand at a specific time but possess a very strong relationship with brands and hence view all of the brand's potential customers as their competitors (Meijani et al., 2021). It is a kind of emotion that is similar to a brand desire to gain the same status as other brand users that are perceived to be brand rivals by the customers. Brand jealousy has emerged as a new concept in consumer behaviour (Andriuzzi et al., 2020). Jealousy has always been associated with being a strong emotion in any interpersonal relationship, as is referred to as a mix of behaviours, emotions, and thoughts resulting from perception of harm or threat to the romantic interpersonal relationship by a real or potential rival (Dawood & Kashif, 2021). In terms of brands, the consumer desires to have possession of brands based on fantasy, getting brand-jealous towards people owning the brand. In this study, however, we will explore how brand jealousy is influenced by Brand attachment, Brand Aspiration, Self-esteem, and materialism as these factors have not been explored together in previous literature to understand customer emotions.

Hence in this study, we will explore Brand Attachment, which is referred to an emotional connection between humans and brands based on a long-term interpersonal relationship with that brand. Literature supports that just as people attach with others as friends, loved ones, and soul mates, the same kind of attachment can be observed in terms of brands (David et al., 2020). A person exhibiting this emotion usually associates feeling for consumption of that brand, such as affection, desire, and aspiration. Brands that want to create brand attachment create content that triggers strong emotions

and feelings that their customers can relate to (Rabbanee et al., 2020). For example, if you prefer sports activities, Nike and Adidas promote their collection names such as Adidas Gazelle, Ultra boost, etc., to promote outdoorsy and powerful emotions and personalities. Consumers that have strong emotions to exhibit brand attachment will be more likely to exhibit Brand jealousy as they are better able to relate to that brand.

Whereas, Brand aspiration relates to a brand that people believe is of good quality and will make them feel successful if they own it. It is defined as a brand identity that appeals to people on a personal basis. Brand aspirations can occur due to various reasons such as values, style, brand preference, etc. most luxurious brands are marketed in such a way as to promote feelings of pride, self-fulfillment, and esteem in consumers (Lim et al., 2020). Marketers work hard to promote their brands in such a way that they become most desirable by triggering into emotions and feelings of their consumers, such as beauty brands that promise to remove signs of ageing in older consumers, especially females (Philip et al., 2021). Hence these brands aspire their consumers to purchase them to create a positive and meaningful change in their life. Hence, we will explore brand aspirations and their impact on brand jealousy, which has not previously been explored in literature.

Then we will investigate the role of self-esteem and its impact on Brand jealousy. Self-esteem relates to a consumer's confidence in his worth or abilities based on self-respect. In marketing, it is used in advertising as an attempt to alter consumer's attitudes and behaviour towards products by stimulating positive feelings, such as a sense of pride due to the purchase behaviour of a specific brand (Baur, 2020). It is an inclusive part of consumer behaviour and is a primary consideration for marketing activities targeted at various brands. People with low levels of self-esteem try to find shelter in the brand, which allows them to control the self-aspects they want to make Public (Sipahi, 2020). Hence, we will explore the impact of self-esteem on brad jealousy, which has not been previously explored in the literature.

Finally, we will explore the moderating effect of materialism and how it impacts consumer's emotions through Brand Aspirations to engage in Brand jealousy, which has not been previously explored in literature. Materialism relates to the attribute of the customer that is displayed with a luxury brand label and its brand information (Styśko-Kunkowska & Kwinta, 2020). Materialism expresses one's desire for social status based on extrinsic benefits, such as Brand name, symbol, logo, etc. Customers who are highly materialistic sometimes buy forge products to showcase their preference for the brand while being unable to financially purchase it, such as shoes, bags, cosmetics, and clothing (Lee et al., 2020). As luxury or high-end brands are usually quite expensive due to providing unique and quality products established over a certain time. Hence in this study, we will explore how materialism can impact brand jealousy in customers.

This study is conducted in Pakistan, which is a developing economy, and most of the people do not have financial access to high-end luxury brands (Aftab, 2020). But due to strong cultural and social ties, people desire to purchase and consume various luxury brands, and when they are unable to do so due to financial inability, social norms, lack of resourcefulness, and brand availability, etc. (Bhatti & Memon, 2016). Luxury in Pakistan is usually defined by consumer possession of expensive and high-end branded cars, furniture, clothing, and eatery (Abrar et al., 2020). The country doesn't own many brands and industries, and most consumer products, including luxury cars, clothing, cosmetics, are imported from other countries such as Europe, America, China, and the Middle east (Mazahir et al., 2020). The data in this study will be collected from various consumers that aspire to, show a preference for, and buy or consume luxury brands in Pakistan. Pakistani customers have developed a great sense of using luxury and self-expressive brands (Dawood & Kashif, 2021). The upper-middle and elite classes have increased their purchasing power enormously in recent years. They feel prestigious by buying desirable brands to show off disposable income. As Pakistani society operates on collectivism, they strongly exhibit social affiliation and the need for belongingness. They continuously seek the desire to be approved by their friends, peers, and other society members. Therefore, they possess strong emotions towards certain brands (Abrar et al., 2020). Hence this study is highly incremental in exploring how Pakistanis express brand jealousy based on the above-mentioned factors.

In Addition to the theory of jealousy, this study utilizes Goffman's theory of self-presentation, also known as impression management, to explain how people want to present themselves to others to be liked. In this study, we will explore it in terms of Self-presentation of Brand, which relates the connection of the self with a brand in which the consumer utilizes the brand as a means of self-presentation to create a positive impression in the social world (Baur, 2020). It is a behaviour in which consumer attempts to convey information about one 'self-motivated by the evaluative presence of others and their potential behaviour.

Significance of the Study

This study is highly incremental because, for the first time, it explores brand jealousy for various luxury brands in Pakistan and antecedents of such behaviour. Secondly, this study explores the role of self-esteem and Brand aspiration, which have not been previously explored in literature. Then this study utilizes the moderating role of materialism to explain its viable influence on Brand jealousy which have not been previously investigated. Finally, this study aims to investigate the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between brand attachment and brand jealousy?

2. What is the relationship between brand aspirations and brand jealousy?

3. What is the relationship between self-esteem and brand jealousy?

4. What is the relationship between materialism and brand jealousy?

5. Does materialism moderate the relationship between brand attachment and brand jealousy?

6. Does materialism moderate the relationship between brand aspirations and brand jealousy?

7. Does materialism moderate the relationship between self-esteem and brand jealousy?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

This study follows the theory of jealousy by White (1981) and the theory of self-presentation, also referred to as "impression management", which advocates that all individuals are actors, and they try to present their best self in front of others (Wang et al., 2019). Previously this theory has been investigated in terms of tourism studies to explore how tourists present themselves in relation to other tourists based on feelings of envy and social on the intention to visit tourist destinations (Nichols, 2020). The self-presentation theory is based on the idea that social interaction occurs based on an individual's attempt to control or guide the impressions that others might make of them by changing or fixing their appearance and manner (Yashima, 2010). Individuals in social interaction are engaged in practices to avoid getting embarrassed or embarrassing others in search of getting social approval. Therefore, they will alter their behaviour to please their peer, friends, etc., or engage in such actions that earn other's approval, praise, and acceptance. Individuals try to project the positive idea of self as desired or seen appropriate by others.

In the context of this study, the self-presentation relates to an individual's self-esteem as represented by the brands it chooses and consumes. And the social interaction between other potential consumers of the brands that they perceive as rivals, for the brands that they desire but cannot purchase due to their price, availability, or some other reason. The brand aspiration influences which brands customers look upon to and relate to, and feel inclined to consume to present themselves socially, whereas brand attachment impacts how individuals develop their social interactions and interpersonal relationships with the brand.

Relationship between Brand Attachment and Brand Jealousy

Literature has explored brand jealousy as the outcome of a perceived threat to attachment relationships within the context of interpersonal relationships (Sarkar et al., 2014). Brand jealousy is previously studied as a tactic used by luxury brands to make customers pay a premium price, to arrive at a certain social status that can increase customer's willingness to buy that brand (Joshi & Yadav, 2020). Therefore, individuals that exhibit high attachment anxiety are more likely to develop feelings of jealousy towards other individuals that they perceive as threatful towards their object of intimacy (Sreejesh, 2015). Research shows that consumers develop an attachment with the brand over a period with the frequency of purchase (Park et al., 2010). If a consumer develops an emotional attachment with a brand, he or she strengths the bond between the self and the brand within the context of brand-self connections (Dolbec & Chebat, 2013). This leads to the development of romantic attachment between the customer and the brand in the form of human-brand relationship. So, as in human-brand relationship, consumers can be jealous when he or she sees that the brand that he/she develops emotional attachments has been purchased or used by others. The customers perceive other potential customers as rivals, and hence feel jealous towards them. Hence, we can propose that,

H1: Brand attachment is positively associated with Brand Jealousy.

Relationship between Brand Aspiration and Brand Jealousy

Brand aspiration has been studied in terms of perceptions, judgments, and customers' behaviour (Fritscher-Ravens et al., 2002; Lant, 1992). It relates to compassion, attention, trust, and companionship built over time with specific products that translate into these psychological needs of the customers (Sreejesh, 2015). Customers who are aspiring to a brand will desire to gain prestige from acquiring that brand. Brand aspirations have usually been linked to the desire to consume luxury brands (Sreejesh et al., 2016). These aspirations are built over a longer period that customer expects to attain, to satisfy their psychological needs. Based on these aspirations, the consumer can fall in love with particular products and develop an emotional attachment to them (Fritscher-Ravens et al., 2000). Hence, when they see others consuming such products or services are being purchased by others, they can feel jealous due to the reason of not currently being able to purchase the product themselves. Hence, Brand jealousy can create positive outcomes such as customer engagement and purchase intention (Leventhal et al., 2014). The self-presentation theory also supports that individuals try to act in ways that they perceive will earn them regard from others, therefore brands are presenting and defining their personality that individuals aspire to (İlter et al., 2016). This is because individual's belief these brands help improve their self-image in front of others. Hence, we can propose that,

H2: Brand aspiration is positively associated with Brand Jealousy.

Relationship between Self-Esteem and Brand Jealousy

The theory of self-presentation also suggests that to avoid social anxiety individuals will engage in such actions to minimize self-guilt and promote self-esteem(Sani et al., 2016). Individual's high self-esteem have high respect towards themselves to cause their happiness (Lisjak et al., 2012). Self-esteem and consumption values are important in determining consumption behaviour because consumers attempt to buy and use the products, which gave them self-confidence and makes them happy (Banet-Weiser, 2012). Previous studies also support that self-esteem plays an essential role in creating an emotional brand attachment (Sarkar et al., 2014). Few brands are highly self-expressive, and the individual perceives them to be reflective of their self-identity (Escalas & Bettman, 2009). As explained in jealousy theory (White,1981), customers with low self-esteem are more concerned about the thoughts of relationship loss, and they are more worried about their partner's evaluation and approval. In marketing, a stream of modern researchers (Le, 2021) has talked much that individuals with low self-esteem develop a stronger bond with luxury brands as compared to individuals with high self-esteem. They argued that customers with high self-esteem are less interested in buying a specific expensive brand (Wang et al., 2021). Hence, we can propose that,

H3: There is a negative association between Self-esteem and Brand Jealousy.

Relationship between Materialism and Brand Jealousy

Materialism in research has been linked to a broad range of theoretical aspects such as possessions in one's life, orientation towards material goods, social progress, and social status based on material goods in life (Sangkhawasi & Johri, 2007). Materialism has thus been related to extrinsic benefits and motivates monetary and financial rewards that serve as motivators for individuals to engage in a certain behaviour (Kim & Kramer, 2015). Individuals that exhibit materialism place high importance over possessions in their life to earn satisfaction (Handa & Khare, 2013). According to one study, materialism includes character traits such as jealousy, possessiveness, ambition, and stinginess (Joung, 2013). Also, some authors explain materialism based on acquisition centrality, acquisition as a pursuit of happiness, and possession- defined success (Fitzmaurice & Comegys, 2006; Hudders & Pandelaere, 2012). Under this configuration, materialists are expected to place possessions and acquisitions at the centre of their lives. Hence these customers will go to any length to make sure that they possess the brands they desire and consider important to enhance their self-presentation, according to Goffman (Rindfleisch & Burroughs, 2004). Thus, brand jealousy is stimulated by the intense impulse to possess the desired brand.

H4: Materialism is positively associated with Brand Jealousy.

The moderating role of Materialism between Brand Attachment and Brand Jealousy

Brand Attachment reflects the stability of the relationship between a consumer and a brand, which is illustrated by the perceived facility of accessibility and recognition in the consumer's mind. Individual's emotional attachment predicts their commitment towards a relationship (Park et al., 2007). Materialism increases the customer's attachment with a specific brand, as it operates on the notion of possessiveness (Hudders & Pandelaere, 2012). Literature also supports that brand attachment leads to attitudinal loyalty and commitment towards the brand (Dunn & Hoegg, 2014). Hence consumers that develop a strong attachment with a specific brand will be inclined to feel more jealous, as they do not intend to share their unique self and brand which defines their self-concept with others (İlter et al., 2016). Jealousy is identified by intensive emotional distress, including anxiety, depression, and anger (Sarkar et al., 2014). In the interpersonal relationship literature, jealousy increases when an individual feels that a valuable relationship is threatened by other individuals, and the feeling of being under danger evokes anxiety at individuals (Sadh, 2019). Whereas materialism is also related to an increased level of anxiety and depression, hence both in this context, both brand jealousy and materialism encourage possessiveness (Kamineni, 2005). Hence, we can propose that,

H5: Materialism moderates the association between Brand Attachment and Brand jealousy among luxury brand consumers.

The moderating role of Materialism between Brand Aspiration and Brand Jealousy

When a brand starts offering resources that relate to the consumer's self-expansion and self-presentation then the consumer will start becoming aspired and impressed towards that brand (Tee et al., 2007). Individuals who have strong aspirations towards objects are generally committed towards them and will show persistence towards consumption of that product (Fritscher-Ravens et al., 2001). Research shows that a strong aspiration towards an object is characterized by the perception that the object is not replaceable because it is deeply rooted in consumers' internal memory as a goal to achieve the object soon (Fritscher-Ravens et al., 2002). Materialism leads individuals to pay more attention to possessions, as they evaluate themselves in the sense of quantity and quality of products and brands possessed that they could showcase in the society to enhance and reflect their social status according to self-presentation theory (Trinh & Phau, 2012). Individuals who are driven by strong brand aspirations are influenced by situations that shape their behavioural intentions towards that object (Kamal et al., 2013). Thus, when an individual feels jealous, it is likely to strongly aspire to achieve that product and will strongly feel towards others having it (Sangkhawasi & Johri, 2007). Hence we can propose that;

H6: Materialism moderates the association between Brand Aspiration and Brand Jealousy among luxury brand consumers.

The moderating role of Materialism between Self-Esteem and Brand Jealousy

Consumers usually utilize brands to enhance their self-image and build their self-esteem especially luxury brands (Wei & Yu, 2012). Self-esteem has been explored in previous literature to be associated with the effect of embarrassment for formulating preferences for various products and in developing brand connections (Rosita & Ratnandika, 2019). In brand consumption, a consumer feels a threat to itself-esteem when he sees that an esteemed and highly desired brand is owned by a friend or neighbor that can lower his/her self-worth (Moloney, 2007). When people feel threats to their self-esteem, the motivational intention to maintain and efforts to protect the same will be high(Jennifer Edson Escalas & James R Bettman, 2009). Materialist consumers place high importance on the acquisition of products and brands and feel that their self-esteem is shattered when they are unable to do so (Rindfleisch et al., 2006). Hence feelings of jealousy prevail for the consumers of that brand that are in current possession of the brand products and services (Hudders & Pandelaere, 2012). Materialist consumers place their self-esteem with possession of products and relate their constraint to unable to purchase or consume any brand with negative feelings towards existing customers (Rindfleisch & Burroughs, 2004). Hence, we can propose that;

H7: Materialism moderates the association between Self-Esteem and Brand Jealousy among luxury brand consumers.
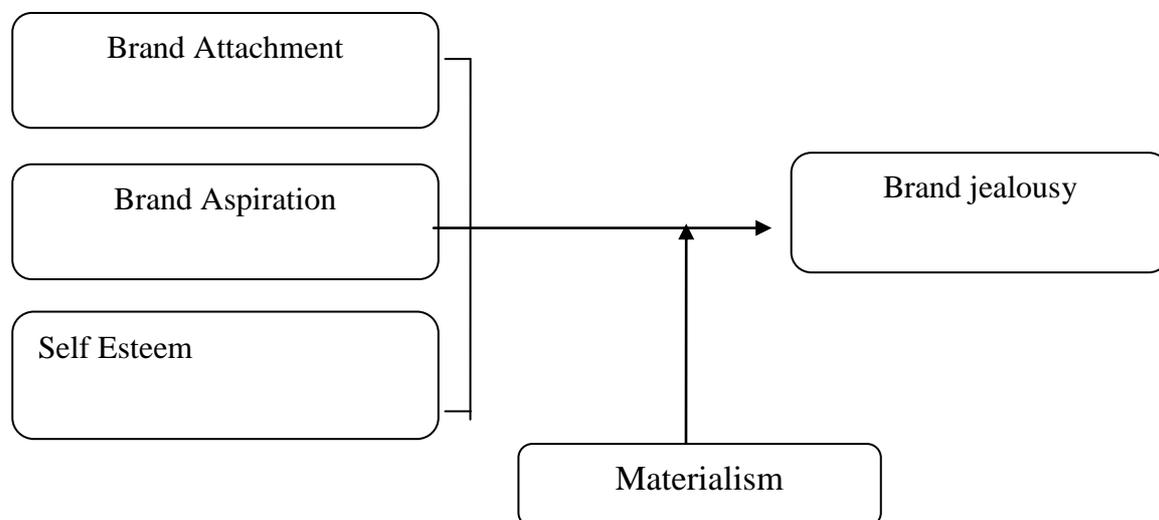

Figure 1: Theoretical Model of the Study

Source: Author analysis

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted in Pakistan a south Asian nation with collectivist culture. The population of this research includes corporate and business executives from well-known organizations about the following industries – i- Airline ii-Telecommunication iii-oil and gas, along with teenagers of affluent lifestyle. Due to numerous constraints, it was impossible to study the whole population in selected industries. Therefore, a sample of 800 individuals ranging from 19 - 69 years of age group with a ratio of 45% males and 55% females was selected as representative of the whole population, was chosen based on judgmental sampling technique. Both working professionals and teenage university students comprised the target population and based on judgmental sampling, survey forms were distributed electronically among individuals.

Data Collection Procedures

For collecting data, personal and professional connections were used to collect responses. An online questionnaire was filled by the target respondents as the link of the online survey was sent to them using email and other social media applications. This method was very helpful due to social distancing and Covid-19 restrictions so the same was adopted in this study. The respondents were well informed about the purpose and usage of the research. The survey forms distributed were in the English language as English is the official language of all educational institutions and offices. Previous studies conducted in the Pakistani context that used English language surveys reported good reliabilities (Noor et al., 2021; Naseer et al., 2016).

All participants were informed at the time of survey distribution that their participation would be voluntary. To achieve the desired sample size of 550 individual responses in total, 800 individuals from various sectors were contacted, and survey link was shared using social media references of study author and friends. In total 03 months, the period was received 550 filled responses. These filled questionnaires were scrutinized further, and noticed that some of them were

partially filled, unengaged, and not qualified to be included in the final data analysis. Thus a total of 38 questionnaires were excluded from the study, and we left with 512 filled useable responses. These were further analyzed in the study.

Instruments

The following scale was used for data collection, and the responses were taken on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree.

1. **Brand Jealousy:** 8-item brand Jealousy questionnaire by Sarkar and Sreejesh (2014) was adopted to measure brand jealousy. The reliability value calculated in this study for brand jealousy was (α = 0.959).

2. **Brand Attachment**: 4-item scale by Thomson et al. (2005) was used to measure emotional brand attachment. The reliability value calculated in this study for brand attachment was (α= 0.867).

3. **Brand Aspiration:** 11-item scale by Sreejeshet al. (2015) was used to measure brand aspiration. The reliability value calculated in this study for brand aspiration was (α = 0.956).

4. **Self-Esteem:** 10–item scale by Rosenberg (1965) was used to measure self-esteem. The reliability value calculated in this study for self-esteem was (α = 0.840).

5. **Materialism:** The most widely used Materialistic Value Scale by (Richins, 2004) was adapted sto measure materialism. Scale comprising of 7 items. The reliability value calculated in this study for materialism was (α = 0.852).

Data analysis method: Correlation and regression analysis has been used for the analysis

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Data were analyzed using SPSS 25 software and hierarchical regression analysis by process macros methodology. Descriptive analysis revealed that gender means the value was (M = 1.57) with standard deviation was (S. D = 0.498), showing that almost 45% percent of respondents were male and remaining 55 % percent are female. The mean for age was (M = 37.85) with a standard deviation of (S.D 7.47), showing that the mean age of this research respondents was on average 38 years. The mean value for marital status was (M = 1.68), and the standard deviation was (S.D = .47), which showed that 32% of the respondents were married while 68% of the respondents were not married. The mean value for income of this was (M = 57359), with a standard deviation of income was (S.D = 35498), showing that most of the sample were in middle-income ranges. 44% of the respondents lies in the initial bracket, and 54% were in the middle range of the income bracket, other 2% of the respondents were in the higher range bracket of the compensation. Other values are presented in Table1below.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gender	501	1	2	1.57	.498
MaritalStatus	501	1	2	1.68	.467
Age	479	19	69	37.85	7.466
Qualification	501	1	4	2.62	.708
Income	422	1	4	1.70	1.20
Brand Jealousy	505	1.00	7.00	2.8349	1.69969
Materialism	504	1.14	7.00	4.3938	1.34075
Self-esteem	505	1.33	7.00	5.1633	1.08891
Brand Aspiration	505	1.00	7.00	4.3947	1.58626
Brand Attachment	505	1.00	7.00	4.6050	1.51305
Valid N (listwise)	433				

Correlation Analysis

Table 2: Correlation Values for Study Variables

S.No	Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Brand Attachment	1							
2	Brand Aspiration	.676[**]	1						
3	Self-esteem	.392[**]	.442[**]	1					
4	Materialism	.465[**]	.574[**]	.438[**]	1				
5	Brand Jealousy	.326[**]	.432[**]	.118[**]	.542[**]	1			

*$p<0.05$, ** $p< 0.01$, *** $p<0.001$N = 512

Correlations

The correlation results offer a significant association between most of the study variables. Brand attachment was positively associated with brand jealousy ($r = .32$ $p< 0.01$), and materialism ($r = .465$ $p< 0.01$)respectively.

Table 3: Regression Analysis Values for Study Variables

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error		
1	(Constant)	.562	.314	1.790	.074
	BAT	.036	.040	.562	.000
	BAS	.460	.040	4.216	.000
	SE	.180	.060	4.945	.007
	MAT	.620	.058	10.684	.000

*$p<0.05$, ** $p< 0.01$, *** $p<0.001$N = 512

Similarly, the second independent variable of the theoretical framework in this research, brand aspiration, shows a positive association with brand jealousy ($r = .43$ $p< 0.01$) and materialism ($r = .57$ $p< 0.01$), respectively.

Moreover, the third independent variable of the theoretical framework in this research was self-esteem which shows a weak but positive association with brand jealousy ($r = .118$ $p< 0.01$). Materialism found to be positively and strongly associated with brand jealousy($r = .438$ $p< 0.01$).

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was run to test the relationship between predictors and Brand jealousy. Out of 4 direct hypotheses, 3 direct hypotheses have been accepted. Hypothesis H3, which predicted a negative association between self-esteem and brand jealousy, was not accepted, while the remaining hypothesis has been proved in the proposed direction. Table -3 shows a positive association between brand attachment and brand jealousy is β =.036 at p<.000. table 3 further shows a positive association between brand aspiration and brand jealousy,

β=.036 at p<.000. Table 3 also shows that H3, a negative association between self-esteem and brand jealousy, was not proved as β =.180 at p<.007. A direct positive relationship between materialism and brand jealousy was proved as β=.620 at p<.000.

Moderation Results of Materialism between Brand Attachment and Brand Jealousy

To test the stated hypotheses for the moderation of materialism between brand attachment and brand jealousy, this research implemented the process macros procedure developed and recommended by Hayes. According to this procedure, the interaction between independent and moderator variables is regressed on dependent variables. The results should reveal significant variance in results by fluctuating the strength or direction of the present normal association between predictor and criterion variables.

Table 4 below shows results for moderated regression. To test the moderation effect of brand attachment and materialism on brand jealousy, an interaction term was created for brand attachment and materialism (Brand Attachment X Materialism). The demographic variables which have a significant influence on brand jealousy were entered as control variables in moderation analysis.

Hypothesis 5 proposed that materialism moderates the relationship between brand attachment and brand jealousy. According to this proposed hypothesis direction, it was expected that a higher level of materialism will strengthen the relationship between brand attachment and brand jealousy.

As shown in table (4) interaction term between Brand attachment and materialism is found positive but insignificant. Hence, based on these findings, we don't have support for hypothesis no 5.

Table 4a: Results for Moderating Role of Materialism between Brand Attachment and Brand jealousy

Brand Jealousy		
	β	ΔR²
Gender	-0.55***	
Marital Status	.28*	
Income	.0*	
Brand Attachment	-0.08	

Materialism	0.44**	
Brand Attachment X Materialism	0.04	.36***

Note: N = 505.

*** $p< .001$, ** $p< .01$, * $p< .05$, † $p< .10$

Table 4 b: Conditional effects of the brand attachment on brand jealousy at values of the materialism

Results for Moderating Role of Materialism between Self Esteem and and Brand jealousy

Materialism	Effect	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
3.0531	0.0554	0.0565	0.9802	0.3274	-0.0556	0.1663
4.3938	0.1247	0.0482	2.5882	0.0099	0.03	0.2193
5.7346	0.194	0.068	2.8529	0.0045	0.0604	0.3276

Moderation Results of Materialism between Brand Aspiration and Brand Jealousy

To test the hypothesis, 6 interaction between brand aspiration and materialism was regressed on brand jealousy, and results showed that hypothesis was proven in the predicted direction.

Table 5a below shows results for moderated regression. To test the moderation, an interaction term was created between brand aspiration and materialism on brand jealousy. The demographic variable which had some influence was controlled.

As shown in table 5, an interaction term between brand aspiration and materialism has a positive effect on brand jealousy. As shown in table 5b conditional effect of brand aspiration on brand jealousy in low case materialism was not significant. But in the case of higher materialism, the brand aspiration shows a significant positive relationship with jealousy. Thus it provides ample support for hypothesis 6 of this study.

Table 5a: Results for Moderating Role of Materialism between Brand Aspiration and Brand jealousy

Brand Jealousy		
	β	Δ*R²*
Gender	-0.59***	
Marital Status	.28*	
Income	.0†	
Brand Attachment	-0.15	
Materialism	0.22	
Brand Aspiration X Materialism	0.07**	.38***

Note: N = 505. *** $p< .001$, ** $p< .01$, * $p< .05$, † $p< .10$

Table 5 b: Conditional effects of the brand Aspiration on brand jealousy at values of the materialism

Materialism	Effect	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
3.0531	0.1055	0.0566	1.8638	0.0629	-0.0056	0.2166
4.3938	0.2172	0.0483	4.4974	0.0000	0.1223	0.3120
5.7346	0.3289	0.0632	5.2044	0.0000	0.2047	0.4530

Moderation Results of Materialism between Self-esteem and Brand Jealousy

Table 6a below shows results for moderated regression. To test the moderation effect of self-esteem and materialism on brand jealousy, an interaction term was created for self-esteem and materialism (Self-esteem X Materialism). According to this proposed direction, it was forecasted that a high level of materialism would weaken the relationship between self-esteem and brand jealousy. As shown in table **6b** conditional effect of self-esteem on brand jealousy in case low materialism was significant. However, in the case of higher materialism, the relationship between the both becomes significant. Hence, providing ample support for hypothesis 7 of this study.

Table 6a: Results for Moderating Role of Materialism between self esteem and Brand jealousy

Note: N = 505.*** $p< .001$, ** $p< .01$, * $p< .05$, † $p< .10$

Table 6 b: Conditional effects of the Self-esteem on brand jealousy at values of the materialism

	β	Δ*R²*
Gender	-0.54***	
Marital Status	.19	
Income	.0*	
Self Esteem	-0.75***	
Materialism	0.00	
Self Esteem X Materialism	0.14***	.39***

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3.0531	-0.3762	0.0734	-5.1214	0.0000	-0.5205	-0.2319
4.3938	-0.1691	0.0652	-2.4945	0.0098	-0.2972	-0.0411
5.7346	0.0379	0.0632	0.4098	0.6822	-0.1437	0.2195

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to investigate how brand jealousy occurs in Pakistani customers for various luxury brands. In Pakistan, the buying power of the average person is restrained due to low income and poverty, but those that are earning well in major industries such as airline, telecommunication, and oil and gas show a great preference for various luxury brands (Aftab, 2020). The luxury brands among study participants were found to be for Cell phones, apparel, and other accessories. Most of the study participants were found to be females that felt greatly attach to certain brands of clothing, shoes, and makeup and felt jealous when they are not able to purchase the specific brand due to financial restrictions, product availability, or cultural norms. But they aspire to certain brands and see their potential customers as rivals (Mazahir et al., 2020). These brands include some local and most international brands, such as Ferrari and Audi in cars, Huda Beauty, and NARS in Makeup, M&S (marc and spencer), Khadi, Sapphire, Crimson, Suffuse by Sana Yasir for women clothing (Abrar et al., 2020).

The study results showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between Brand Jealousy and Brand attachment. This is also in line with previous literature (Park et al., 2010; Shang et al., 2020). Customers that associate strongly with the brand, search for information regarding its latest products and service, follow-up on ads, and other important information develop a long-term relationship with the brand and hence feel attached to it (Japutra et al., 2018). Whether it be a clothing brand, an automotive brand, or a furniture brand if a customer feels attach to it and desires to consume it and finds it difficult to do so. Then, that customer feels jealous towards its potential buyers, whether they are friends, neighbors, or unknown strangers. As customer feels a possessive feeling towards that brand and strongly wishes to own it by himself.

Then the study results showed a strong and positive association between brand aspiration and Brand Jealousy. As discussed in the study, brand aspiration relates to any product or brand that the customer wishes to own but, for economic reasons, cannot. The purchase decision for these types of brands is made on an emotional level to enhance self-concepts. The study shows that Pakistani consumer aspires to various luxury brands due to their perceived quality, brand image, and to enhance one's self-concept to impress others. The brand aspiration is usually to earn the social status and approval of others (Sreejesh, 2015). As supported by the self-presentation theory of impression management that people act in a way to aspire to others, therefore they reduce their social anxiety through adopting such brands that earn the approval of others and make them look valued and respectful (Sreejesh et al., 2016). This study shows that consumers base their purchase or desire to consume a brand based on their sense of financial achievement beyond what is realistic.

Then the study results show that there is an insignificant relationship between self esteem and brand jealousy, as low confidence is related to low self-esteem, which shows that when the consumer is unable to purchase a brand that he /she desires, then that causes low self-esteem. This low self-esteem leads to Brand jealousy. And as the study results show, customers who fall high on self-esteem do not feel less jealous towards other customers who purchase their desired brand because doing so hurts their ego. The study results indicate that higher self-esteem instils a feeling of pride and arrogance in customers, and they become defensive towards other actions that might provoke their self-worth. Such is the case of potential customers perceived as rivals that purchase the desired brand preferred by the customer in our study, leading to the brand's jealousy. Hence, the proposed negative relationship between self-esteem and brand jealousy was rejected.

Finally, the role of materialism was explored with study variables as a moderator. The study results show that there is a positive and significant relationship between materialism and brand jealousy, as materialistic customers who prefer a monetary value of things, and utilize brands as a symbol of social status in the society, are profound to be more brand jealous (Andriuzzi et al., 2020). The study results also found that there is a positive relationship between brand attachment and jealousy, but in the case of interaction, the study results showed that in low materialism, the relationship becomes insignificant. This shows that consumers that are attached to the brand are doing so due to its perceived quality, the value of money, and brand loyalty; therefore materialism does not affect it. That means that a consumer who is emotionally attached to the brand will remain so regardless of the monetary value attached with it. In contrast, all the other moderations were found to be significant between brand aspiration and Brand Jealousy and Self -esteem, and Brand jealousy. This shows that materialistic consumers associate brands with enhancing their own self-concept and hence place great aspiration and esteem towards it (Bıçakcıoğlu et al., 2017).

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the literature in various ways. First, this study explores the role of Brand Jealousy in Pakistani consumers for various luxury brands, which has not been studied before. Secondly, this study contributes to the literature by exploring the moderating role of materialism between study variables, including brand aspiration, self-esteem, and brand attachment, which has not been explored previously. Then this study investigates the role of self-esteem and its impact on Brand jealousy, which has also not been studied before. As self-esteem formulates the consumer's self-concept and defines how he perceives himself in the brands he or others close to him consume. Also, researchers can make use of this study to further strengthen their knowledge of how materialistic customers feel more aspire and brand jealous. Then this study utilizes the theory of self-presentation, which supports that individuals act in a way to earn the gratification and approval of society.

Practical Implications

There are various Practical implications of this study. As many consumers in Pakistan lack buying power, but due to the reason of being part of a collectivist society, they aspire to certain luxury brands. Therefore, policymakers and marketers can strategize their promotion efforts towards enhancing brand jealousy among their consumers and hence increasing the likelihood of Brand attachment among their consumers. Then this study indicates that most females are brand jealous; hence brands targeted towards this gender, such as makeup, clothing, shoes, and skincare products, can increase their sales and brand aspiration by enhancing brand jealousy among targeted customers. Marketers can conduct surveys to better understand the character of their target population and hence formulate promotional activities that target materialistic customers. Also, marketers can utilize this study to enhance their brand aspiration and increase the emotional attachment towards it by creating such advertisement that makes the brand more attractive to be consumed in society.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Although this study explored in detail the antecedents of Brand Jealousy, there are still a few limitations that future studies can address. First of all, this study targeted luxury brands to understand factors relating to brand jealousy; future studies can explore whether affordable brands that do not charge a lot have the same effect on consumers. Secondly, this study explored brand jealousy and its antecedents; future studies can explore how brand jealousy can trigger certain consumer behaviours and brand loyalty. Finally this study, the target sample was representative of high-earning employees and students belonging to elite families. Still, future studies can explore how an average income person aspires towards luxury brands and becomes jealous for being unable to purchase them.

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AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

Saqib Mehmood contributed to writing the research and designing the organization of the article. Naveed Altaf performs the statistical analyses, interpretations, and technical parts. All the author(s) have a significant contribution to the research article.

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