

**The Influence of Brands on Purchase Behavior:
An Empirical Study on the Branded Clothing in
Lebanon**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the current study is to identify the key factors of branded clothing that effect the purchase behavior, more over the study examined the relative importance of these factors in explaining the purchase behavior, based on the data set collect from 384 respondents at kidzmondo, that is a Lebanese concept indoor theme park following the conceptual approach “Edutainment”, through personal interview, factor analysis, cronbach’s alpha – value assessed the validity of the research constructs and generated five key factors of branded clothing described as status branding, brand attitude, willingness to pay premium for branded clothes, self-concept and reference group. The results of the regression analysis found that these factors have positive effect on the purchase Behavior of the branded clothing. More over the results also concluded that status branding exhibits the most influence on the purchase behavior. The study concludes with recommendation for the marketers of branded clothing as well as the direction for the future researches context.

Key Words: *Brands; Brand Status; Brand attitude; Willingness to pay premium, Self-concept; Reference group; Purchase Behavior; Branded Clothing; Kidzmondo; Lebanon.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Today's customers are very brand conscious. They are aware of various brands, related to different products and they preferred different branded products to gain different benefits like status, symbol, high quality, no bargaining. etc.

Many researchers believe that customers buy branded products to represent themselves, and their personality (Fennis and Dryne, 2006) A brand can be defined as symbol, word, an object and a concept of all at one at the same time. (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010). A brand hold meaning behind it, symbol stimulates the cognitive process.

Brands figurative aspects like packaging, colour, logo, elements, design are signs used by producers to communicate their intention to the customers (Lamba, 2016).

American Marketing association defines brand as "A name, Term, sign, symbol, design, or a combinations of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers to differentiate them from these of competition" (Lamba, 2016).

According to Chernive and Kotler, (2011) Brands can differentiate the offer in two main ways: by creating unique brand identity and by associating the brand with a meaning that resonate with potential buyers.

The difference may be rational and tangible related to the product's performance, or more symbolic and emotional related to what brands represent (Keller, 1998), and related to the brand image (Chernive and Kotler, 2011).

Brands hold a significant Importance in consumer's life, customers selected the brands and trust them to avoid the problems related to uncertainty and quality related issues (Elliot and Yannopouloa, 2007).

Kotler (1999) Expanded the concept of the brand to include six different dimensions of the brand, that are, attributes: A brand communicates specific attributes, such as prestige and status; benefits: a brand communicates a set of benefits that makes it more attractive; values, a brand presents a company's core values and believes system; culture: A brand targets a target audience's socio cultural characteristics; personality, a brand projects behavioral personality patterns of targeted customers and user, the brand can emulate the end user.

According to Kotler (1999) a brand contains a mental and emotional dimensions, this is consistent to the consumer buying behavior, which refers to the mental and emotional process, during searching, purchasing and consumption of a product or Service (Addo, 2012). Thus brands play an

important role in the buying behavior. The purpose of the current study is to identify the factors behind the adoption of branded clothing and their relationship with consumer buying behavior in Lebanon.

1.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Brands are very important to the customer as well as the marketers, marketers depend on the brands to achieve a competitive advantage (Wood, 2004). Strong brands can achieve competitive advantage in two ways, by identifying and differentiating the company's offer from its competitors, and create value to customers, the company and its collaborators (Chernive and Kotler, 2011).

Customers consider brands as an important part of their life, personality and social class, especially for products that hold an expressive dimensions, like jewels, carpets, cars and clothes.

Many researchers believe that the brands have a significant high influence on consumer's choice (OgbuJi et al., 2011).

Strong brands generate loyal customers, which increases sales and profit (Hess, Story and Danes, 2011). Many researchers suggest that branded clothing is the prime focus in the modern world since the decade ago, loads of work has been done in the developed countries, however in the developing countries such as Lebanon, the field is not yet to be investigated and the results are to be formalized (Zeb, Rashid and Javeed, 2011). Thus there is a need to specify the brands dimensions that influence the consumer's purchase behavior. Considering the above discussion, the research is designed to identify the brand elements that influence consumer purchase behavior for the branded clothing, and their relative importance with this regard.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the current research are as follows:

1. To identify the clothing brands that are mostly preferred by customers.
2. To specify the sources of information that customers depend on, when choosing the brands.
3. To specify the relative importance of the factors that affect purchase behavior.
4. To explore the factors of the branded clothing that affect the purchase behavior and their relative importance with this regard.

1.3 RESEARCH IMPORTANCE

Current research may provide both practical and academic contribution into branding literature, the academic and practical importance could be discussed as follows:

1.3.1 SCIENTIFIC IMPORTANCE

The study will add to the academic knowledge in the area of brand management, customers are now prefer branded products all over the world, especially the Lebanese citizen who are famous for their preference to the fashion products, style. The study is one of the first to address the issues of the branded clothes (to the knowledge of the researcher).

1.3.2. PRACTICAL IMPORTANCE

There are two main practical contributions of the current study as follows:

First: The results of the current study is expected to benefit the producers and marketers of branded clothes to know the brand dimension that most affect consumer's purchase decision, which producers and marketer should focus on, in order to increase sales and profits.

Second: The study provides a meaningful tool for segmenting the branded clothes market in Lebanon, depending on the relative importance of the brands elements that influence the purchase behavior.

Third: The study will identify the most preferred brands and the most important factors that affect the purchase decision such as price, quality. In addition to that, the study will explore the source of information that customers depend on when choosing the branded clothes, which will help marketers to develop their marketing strategy.

1.4 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Current study is conducted under the following boundaries:

First: The study is limited to the branded clothes and did not extended to the other products and services, despite that, the clothes is the right choice since the Lebanese citizens are very interested in fashion and branded products.

Second: The process of the data collection is limited to the period of time between 10/2/2016- 30/3/2016.

Third: The study is limited to the Middle and High social class and High level of income customers. So that it can't be generalized to customer from different social classes and levels of income.

To achieve the research objectives, current research is organized as follows: section 2 surveys the relevant literature, Section 3 represents research methodology, which includes research hypothesis, the proposed model, research sampling, and data collection procedure. Section 4 describes data analysis and hypothesis test and section 5 represents the results discussion and recommendations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review will address previous studies that cover the variables of interest of the current study as follows:

2.1. UNDERSTANDING BRANDS

Brands represent an entire picture captured in the mind and soul of customers, they are considered as the promise of the firm's bundle of attributes that consumer buy and provide satisfaction. A brand attributes could be real or deceptive, rational or emotional, tangible or intangible (Ambler, 1992).

A brand is not just a symbols, it is a central variable in the organization's relationship to customers or consumers. It represents a perception and feelings about the products and its performance (Baba, 2014). Thus brands are important assets for customers and companies.

According to Kapfarrer (2008) a brand contains everything that makes products more than just a product. It contains emotional and mental assumptions that customers have about brands, which enhance the product's perceived valued from customer's perspectives. A brand is a name of reliability and quality of the products and services (Romer et al, 2005). Branding is a process, a tool, a strategy and orientation to build the relationship with customer, it is used as a differentiation strategy when the products can't be distinguished in terms of tangible features and a Conscious customer satisfaction orientation process (Ahuja, 2015). The successful brands are totally different in nature but they can Share common aspects, such as quality, will- priced products (Murphy, 1998).

According to Levitte (1983) there are four elements for building a successful brand, that are, tangible products, augmented brand, basic brand and potential brand. When a company builds a successful brand name it could differentiate it's products and services from others.

To achieve a competitive advantage one important factor in the Company's strategy to increase its market share and profit is to strengthen their Brands. Thus Brands are important to both customers and Companies.

2.2. CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR

Consumer buying behavior can be defined as the "process and activities people engage in when searching for, selecting, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services so as to satisfy their needs and desires" (Belch and Belch, 2012). Purchasing results of along detailed process (Belch and Belch, 2014).

Many factors affect consumer purchasing decision, culture and subculture are a crucial factors affect consumer buying behavior, culture's affect is varying from one country to another.

In addition to the culture, social environment affects the perception, Habits, believes and expectations of the customers, so that marketers should consider the differences in each market in order to adopt their brands and strategies (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010).

Social class, which refers to a group of customers that are homogeneous, and have similar needs, lifestyle, and social perception affects purchasing decision of the Brands (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010).

Culture trend, like Facebook, Social network, Tablets, I-Pad, Galaxy Tab, have become a global culture trend leading customers and affect Brands purchasing (Rani, 2014).

Reference group also affect consumer purchasing Behavior, customer choose the Brands that make them look like the group member of the aspirational group, and avoid the Brand that make them look like the associative group members. (Churnive and Kotler, 2011).

Family affects consumer buying behavior, many brands have been perceived by creating an attitudes, and opinions on various dimensions of life. Family members affect the buying behavior, for example wife, children. Marketers should try to know the roles and influence of the family members and try to target them in the advertisement. (Kotler, 1999).

The position of the individual with his family work, group friends, affect buying behavior, many brands have been understood by creating an image that reflects an important social role or status (Rani, 2014).

Personal factors such as age, life stage, occupation, economic circumstances, life style (interests, activities, opinion leaders and demographics), personality and self- concept influence decision buying

behavior. In addition to previous factors that affect purchase decision, numerous researches suggest that brands affect purchasing behavior, the following section deals with the studies that discuss this issues.

2.3 THE EFFECT OF BRANDS ON CONSUMER BUYING DECISION

The results of several studies agree on the impact of brands on consumer purchasing decision. The study conducted by Lamba (2016) indicated that the brand has an effective influence on consumer's behavior, and there were no significant differences between the age and gender regarding the purchase decision of branded products, while laoviwat suppapanya and yousapron (2014) indicated the effect of demographic on consumer behavior and attitude towards Brand equity of optical business, the study showed that gender, education and income influenced consumer behavior. Education influenced brand loyalty, and the income influenced Brand awareness (Loaviwat et al., 2014). Brand awareness effects on consumer decision making (Macdonald and sharp, 2000).

Leighton and Bride (2012) conducted a research to examine the role of branding on decision making in the three specific areas, that are, the impact of reduced branding on consumer choice; the impact of increased non-branded information on consumer choice, and the impact of copycat branding on consumer choice; (when a brand is perceived similar to another well-established brand).

The results suggested that reducing branding on packaging could have a detrimental effect on consumer's attention to the brands as well as their ability to recognize them, this detrimental affect has strong effect on consumer's ability to recognize and find the brands they are looking for. The study also indicated that the amount of non-branded information on packaging have small effect on consumer recognition of brands. As for the effect of Copycat brands on brand recognition, they can cause consumer to make errors, mistakenly selecting the copycat brand in place of the established brands and they slowdown recognition of the key brands, this results indicate that presence of a copycat brand has a detrimental affect on the established brand, that has copied.

Ogbuji, Anyanwu and Onah (2011) concluded that branding influence on consumer choice of bottled water. Thus popescu (2014) agree with these results and has revealed that the brand is an important element in selecting the tourist agencies.

Macdonald and sharp (2000) found that the subjects who are aware of the brand tend to sample fewer brands across a series of product trials.

Zeb et al., (2011) found that female are involved in decision making for fashion clothing and thus have positive attitudes toward the brands. These results are not consistent with Sharpe (2012), she found that age and Gender do not make much differences on consumer's opinion, while choosing a brand, the purchasing decision depends on the monetary value of the brand, and the position in consumer's mind. Riaz, (2015) found that males are more brand conscious than females, Laoviwat et al., (2014) found that education, Gender, income influenced consumer behavior.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

H1: Brand status has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase behavior.

H2: Brand attitude has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase behavior.

H3: customer willingness to pay premium has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase behavior.

H4: Self-concept has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase behavior.

H5: Reference group has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase behavior.

H6: There are significant differences related to the effect of brand status brand attitude, customer willingness to pay premium, self-concept and group reference on consumer purchase behavior.

3.2 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Based in the analysis of previous studies, Figure (1) is elaborated to represent the research framework:

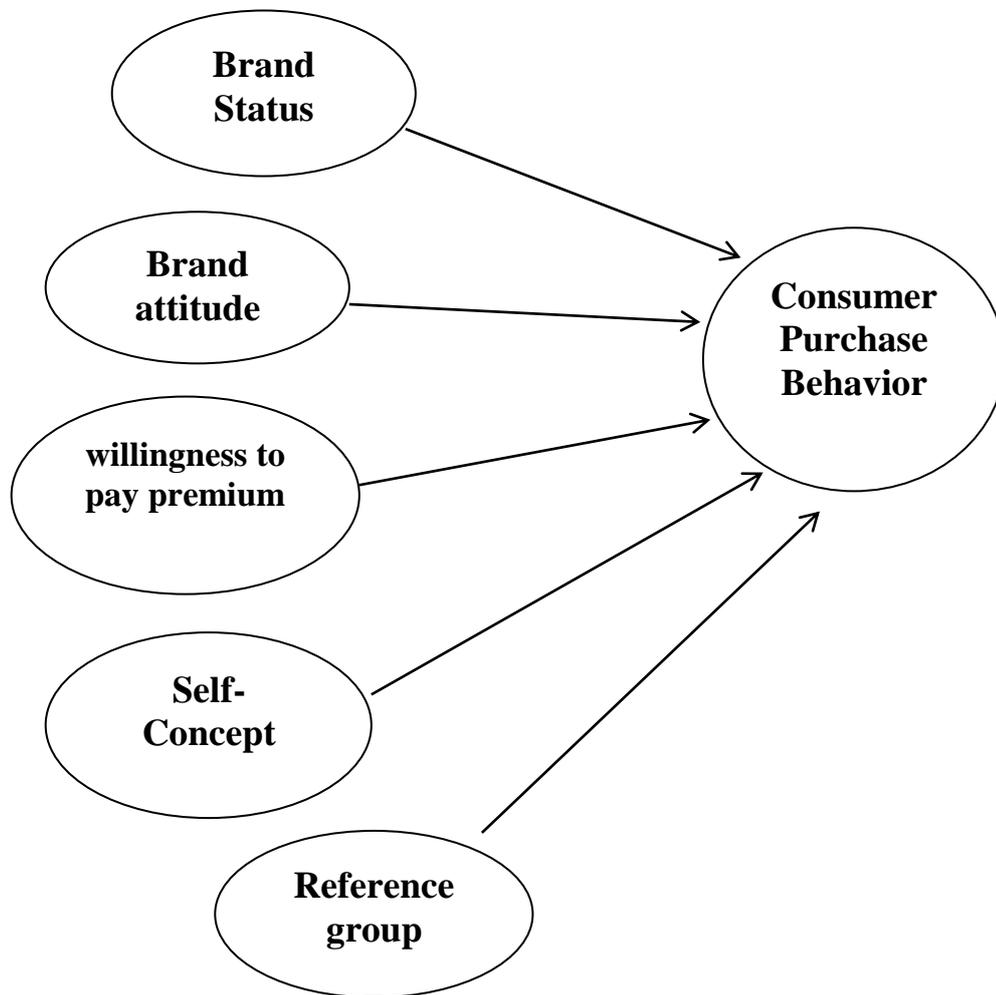


Figure 1: Theoretical framework of the relationship between research variables.

3.3 RESEARCH VARIABLES AND MEASUREMENT:

Table (1) represents the research variables, their definition and measurement items:

Table (1)
Research variables and measurement

Variables	Definition	Measurement items
1-Independent variables: 1-1- Brand status	The brand driving force in enhancing social standing through evident consumption. (O'cass and Frost, 2002).	Items 5, 7, 8 in the first part of the questionnaire.
1-2- Brand attitude	The consumer's attitude toward a brand refers to the consumer's overall assessment of the brand, and forms the basis for consumer behavior towards that brand (Wu and Lo, 2009).	Items 1, 2, 11, 13, 14, 20, 21, in the first part of the questionnaire.
1-3- Consumer willingness to pay premium	Consumer's willing to pay extra money for a brand with a symbolic value, which refers to the benefits that customer may receive via possession of the branded clothes, perceived as containing the required and assessed attributes (Wu and Hsing, 2006).	Items 9, 10, 14 in the first part of the questionnaire.
1-4- Self-concept.	Self-concept refers to self-perception and self-image, It is one determinant of self determinates and self-interdependence (Forney, Park and Brandon, 2005; piamphongs and mandhachitar, 2008)	Items 3, 4, 12, 16, 17 in the first part of the questionnaire
1-5- Reference group	Siblings and friends who play role models for each other and could act a significant peer group for evaluation and modeling (Cotte and Wood, 2004).	Items 15, 18, 19 in the first part of the questionnaire.
2-Dependent Variable consumer purchase behavior	Process and activities people engage in when searching for selecting, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services so as to satisfy their needs and desires", (Belch and Belch, 2014).	Items 22, 23, 24 in the first part of the questionnaire.
3-Demographic Aspects: - Age. - Gender. - Monthly Income. - Education. - Residency.		Items (1-5) in the third part of the questionnaire.

3.4 SAMPLING

Sampling includes population definition, specifying sampling units, determining sample type and size.

Population consists of all Lebanese citizen who visit Kidzmondo, during the period from 10-2-2016 to 30-3-2013.

Kidzmondo by definition is a Lebanese concept in door theme park following the conceptual approach of “Edutainment” kidzmondo uses many communication channels to attract customers all years long, the intrance fees to kidzmono is 40000L.B.P. for each children, and 20000 L.B.P. for each parent. So, the target customers are the high-income Families to have the full experience, the reason behind choosing this entertainment organization is that the visitors are from middle and high social class and high level of income, they are supposed to be aware of the most branded clothing and they can contribute to the study, sampling unit is the kidzmono organization at which the researcher met the respondent and distributed questionnaires to collect data. The respondents are the parents accompanying their children in kidzmono, from different Lebanese district. The sample type is a systematic traffic random sample, because there is no available sampling frame; science one questionnaire requires ten minutes to be filled, the researcher select customer number one, then number Twelve and soon.

Sample size: According to many marketing studies, (e.g. Tull and Hawkins, 1993), when a population is large enough (100000 or more), the size of the sample that can be reliable estimated at about 384. Subjects, under the following conditions:

- Confidence level is to be at 95%.
- The value of stander normal variable is 1.96.
- Stander deviation is 30%.
- Stander error is to be not more than 3%.

According to the equation is as follows:

$$n = (s \times z)^2 / e^2$$

$$n = (1.96 \times 0.3)^2 / 0.03^2$$

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

A self – administrated questionnaire is developed to collect Data. The questionnaire is developed based on several previous studies (Zeb, Rashid and Javeed, 2011; Ahuja, 2015), in addition to the personale interviews conducted by the research with five persons working in kidzmondo. The questionnaire is devided into three parts.

Part one of the questionnaire concentrates on the brand elements, 21 elements that influence the clothing purchase decision, all which have been drawn from the study proposed by zeb, Racid and Javeed (2014), in addition to three items that measure purchase behavior, proposed by Fianto, et al., (2014), all of these elements were measured using a five- point likert type scale.

The second part of the questionnaire includes three questions that measure the factors affect on the brands purchase decision, the most preferred brands and the source of information about the brands, all which have been drawn from the study conducted by Ahuja (2015).

The third and last part of the questionnaire has been allocated to measure that demographics, which includes Gender, age, income, education and place of residence in Lebanon, all in all questionnaire were distributed were 400, the researcher got back filled 390 forms which equivalent to 97%. The study was conducted on 384 which is the sample size. Appendix (1) represents the questionnaire.

3.6 STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

Statistical package for social studies SPSS, version 20 and MINITAB were both used to work on the following statistical methods:

- Cronbach's Alpha.
- Correlation Matrix.
- Factor Analysis.
- Simple regression.
- Multiple regression.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 SAMPLE PROFILE

Characteristics of the respondents sample are shown in table (2) according to table (2) the respondents are formed of 60% females and 40% males, aging between 20 to 60 and above, 75% of them hold a bachelor or and post graduate degrees; while the other had an education level of either elementary, intermediate or secondary, the respondents has a personal monthly income ranging between 2000\$ to 4000\$ and above as shown in table (2) the respondents are living in seven different districts in Lebanon, hence this sample is representative of the community of Lebanon.

Table (2)
Sample profiles

Respondents profile	Items	Frequency	Percentage
1-Gender	• Male	154	40%
	• Female	230	60%
Total		384	
2-Monthly Income (\$)	• < 2000	31	0.08
	• 2000-3000	45	11.7
	• 3001-4000	98	25.5
	• > 4000	197	0.51
	- Missing	13	0.034
Total		384	
3-Education	• Bachelor	230	0.598
	• Postgraduate	53	0.138
	• Secondary	50	0.130
	• Intermediate	36	0.094
	• Elementary	10	0.026
	• Missing	5	0.0130
Total		384	
4-Age	• 20-25	30	0.078
	• 26-31	45	0.117
	• 32-37	45	0.117
	• 38-43	60	0.156
	• 44-49	70	0.182
	• 50-55	18	0.047
	• 56-61	11	0.0287
Total		384	
5-Residency	• Beirut	105	0.27
	• Bekka	25	0.065
	• North Lebanon	55	0.143
	• North Mount Lebanon	45	0.117
	• South Lebanon	50	0.130
	• South Mount Lebanon	44	0.115
	• Kesserwan/ Jbeil	60	0.156
Total		384	

4.2 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY TEST

4.2.1 RELIABILITY TEST

Measuring reliability is the first and foremost way to assess the quality of any scale (Churchil, 1991), it measures the degree that the scales used are free of error (Zikmund, 2000), coefficient alpha is used to measure the reliability of the variables. According to Nunnly (1995), the minimum level for this coefficient ranges between 50% and 60%, for the initial testing of the scales used in this study, the alpha coefficients used to measure the consistency in the current study ranged between 57.8% - 85.9% which represents good internal consistencies and well passed the thresholds recommended by Nannally (1995).

4.2.2 VALIDITY TEST

4.2.2.1 CONTENT VALIDITY

The content validity is measured by sending the questionnaire to a group of professor at the faculty of business administration, at Beirut Arab University, based on their feedback and comments, some elements are added to the questionnaire, other elements are dropped, and the formulation of some others is modified.

4.2.2.2 CONSTRUCT VALIDITY

Construct validity, specifically convergent and discriminate, was assessed using factor analysis and cronbach's Alpha (Straube et al., 2004), factor analysis, principles component and Varim with Kaiser normalization rotation Method, is used which, is considered one of the most effective method used to run a factor analysis (Allam, 2000: 317-314).

This analysis is based on two measures, namely:

First: the value of Kaiser – Meyar Olikin (KMO), which reflects the appropriateness of the Scale. The minimum acceptable range according to this parameter is between 0.50 and 0.60.

Second: Bartlett of sphericity, which must achieve a certain level of significance, where the P-Value are less than or equal to 0.05 (Nannly, 1995).

The results of the factor analysis, principles component indicate that there are five factors explained 85.538% of the total variance the first one is brand status, this factor explains 20,96% of this variance, the second is brand

attitude which explains 9.20% of the variance, third factor is willing to pay premium, this factor explained 8.956% of the total variance, fourth factor is self-concept, which explains 7.281% of the total variance. The fifth and last one is the group of reference, which explains 6.921% of the total variance. Table (3) shows the factors, items and factor loadings.

Table (3)
The results of factor analysis

Items	Component				
	Brand status	Brand attitude	Willing to pay premium	Self-concept	Reference group
1-	0.215	0.627	0.224	0.158	0.012
2-	0.251	0.716	0.244	0.194	0.012
3-		0.384	0.3857	0.856	0.084
4-	0.136	0.364	0.333	0.760	0.007
5-	0.715	0.260	0.278	0.011	0.087
6-	0.218	0.717	0.162	0.030	0.077
7-	0.686	0.095	0.225	0.018	0.008
8-	0.642	0.012	0.368	0.125	0.218
9-	0.045	0.137	0.840	0.144	0.312
10-	0.232	0.001	0.813	0.094	0.031
11-	0.047	0.735	0.170	0.128	0.071
12-	0.057	0.031	0.180	0.724	0.221
13-	0.055	0.599	0.181	0.140	0.321
14-	0.029	0.383	0.712	0.303	0.374
15-	0.392	0.179	0.064	0.095	0.665
16-	0.338	0.052	0.074	0.770	0.028
17-	0.393	0.107	0.140	0.836	0.077
18-	0.327	0.221	0.239	0.174	0.770
19-	0.224	0.261	0.072	0.018	0.660
20-	0.25	0.669	0.297	0.112	0.061
21-	0.039	0.725	0.293	0.181	0.248

As shown in table (3) all items loadings are greater than 0.5 (as recommended by Churchill 1995) so the instrument demonstrates construct validity.

The Cronbach's A-value is used to measure the within construct validity (Straube et al, 2004) as shown in table (5) the Cronbach's α – a value ranged from 0.85 for Brand Status to 0.92 for Brand attitude which represents good internal consistencies and well passed the thresholds recommended by Nunnally (1995). Thus the study's instrument passed the test of construct validity.

Discriminate validity was assessed using the technique suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981). This technique requires that the correlation between items in any two constructs should be lower than the square root of the average variance shared by the items within a construct.

Table (4) shows the square root of the average variance shared by items within a construct, for all constructs is greater than the correlation between the construct and any other construct in the model, confirming criteria for discriminate validity suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981). In addition to the above, the researcher realized a factor analysis for each variable of the study model. Table (5) shows a synthesis of the results for both factor analysis and reliability.

Table (4)
Discriminate Validity

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1-Brand Status		0.645				
2-Brand attitude	0.454**		0.643			
3-Willing to pay premium	0.445**	0.304**		0.712		
4-Self-Concept	0.452**	0.535**	0.342**		0.597	
5-group of reference	0.436**	0.329**	0.332**	0.470**		
6-Purchase Behavior	0.556**	0.429**	0.434**	0.446**	0.417	0.844

1. ** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level.
2. Bold elements (the square root of the average variance).

Table (5)
Synthesis results for factor analysis and reliability

Variables	KMO	Test of Bartlett	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
1-Brand Status	0.844	$\chi^2= 688.211$ P= 0.000	3	72.4%
2-Brand attitude	0.880	$\chi^2= 229.659$ P= 0.000	7	66.4%
3-Willing to pay premium	0.604	$\chi^2= 374.505$ P= 0.000	3	57.8%
4-Self-Concept	0.597	$\chi^2= 141.812$ P= 0.000	5	67.1%
5-Group of reference	0.549	$\chi^2= 540.848$ P= 0.000	3	70.2%
6-Purchase Behavior	0.567	$\chi^2= 225.463$ P= 0.000	3	85.9%

As shown in table 5, all variables present good internal consistencies. The above results therefore confirm that the research instrument encompassed satisfactory construct validity.

4.2.2.3 NOMOLOGICAL VALIDITY

The Nomological validity refers to the ability of the scales used in the study to show a positive and statistically significant relationship between the study variables. This is achieved through the analysis and study of the correlation matrix between the variables, which showed a positive relationship and statistically significant evidence between the independent variables on one hand (brand status, brand attitude, willing to pay premium, self-concept, group of reference), and the purchase behavior on the other hand, as evidenced by the correlation matrix, there is no problem of multicollinearity between the independent variables, and the correlation between them doesn't exceed 0.8, which refers to the possibility of using the multiple regression analysis to test the Hypothesis.

Table (6) represents the correlation Matrix between the variables of the study.

Table (6)
The correlation matrix between the study variables

Variables	Brand Status	Brand Attitude	Willingness to pay premium	Self-concept	Reference group	Purchas behavior
Brand Status Sig (2- Tailed)	1	0.454** 0.000	0.445** 0.000	0.452** 0.000	0.340** 0.000	0.586** 0.000
Brand attitude Sig. (2-tailed)	0.454** 0.000	1	0.304** 0.000	0.532** 0.000	0.329** 0.000	0.429** 0.000
Willingness to pay premium sig. (2 tailed)	0.445** 0.000	0.304** 0.000	1	0.342** 0.000	0.332** 0.000	0.434** 0.000
Self-concept Sig. (2-tailed)	0.452** 0.000	0.535** 0.000	0.342** 0.000	1	0.470** 0.000	0.446** 0.000
Reference group Sig. (2-tailed)	0.430** 0.000	0.329** 0.000	0.332** 0.000	0.470**	1	0.417** 0.000
Purchase behavior Sig. (2-tailed)	0.586** 0.000	0.429** 0.000	0.434** 0.000	0.466** 0.000	0.417** 0.000	1

Note: ** Signals symbolize to a correlation with statistical significance at the 1% level of significance.

4.2.2.4 FREQUENCIES TEST

To achieve the first objective of the current study, frequency test was used to identify the clothing brands that are mostly preferred by customers, The results indicate that Gucci is the most preferred brand (Frequency= 179, Percentage= 46.6) followed by Salsa (Frequency= 91, percentage= 23.6, then Hugo Boss (frequency= 33, the percentage= 0.083), followed by others.

The most important source of information that customers depend on, when choosing the brands is the online media advertising (Frequency= 136, the percentage= 32.1, followed by TV. Or Radio (Frequencies= 127 and the percentage is 30.0, then printed media (Frequency= 86 and the percentage= 20.3).

The most important factor affect purchase decision is the brand name (Frequency= 234, percentage= 55.3) followed by the quality (Frequencies= 161, percentage= 38.1). Then the price (Frequencies= 136 and the percentage= 32.3).

Table (7): Represents the frequencies and percentage of the clothing brands that are most preferred by customers, the source of information about brands and the relative importance of factors that affect purchase behavior.

Table (7)
The frequencies test results

	Items	Frequency	Percentage
1-The Most Preferred Brands	• GUCCI	179	46.6
	• Salsa.	91	23.6
	• United colour	7	0.018
	• of Benettor.	7	0.018
	• Hugo Boss.	33	0.083
	• True religion.	14	0.036
	• wills life style.	12	0.031
	• Zodiac.	10	0.026
	• Louis Vitton.	6	0.016
	• Allen Solly.	4	0.010
	• Others (Lacost, Levis)	12	0.031
• missing.	9	0.023	
2-The source of information	• TV or Radio	127	30.0
	• Printed media (Newspaper/ Magazines).	86	20.3
	• Online Media Advertising	136	32.1
	• Word of Mouth	28	6.6
	• Missing	7	1.8
3-Factors affect purchase decision: - Quality	1- Very important	161	38.1
	2- Important	150	35.5
	3- Neutral	27	13.3
	4- Unimportant	10	2.4
	5- Unimportant at all	1	0.02
	6- Missing	5	1.2
	- Trend	1- Very important	9
	2- Important	15	3.5
	3- Neutral	100	23.6
	4- Unimportant	162	39.6
	5- Unimportant at all	85	20.1
	6- Missing	14	0.036
- Price	1- Very important	136	32.3
	2- Important	133	31.4
	3- Neutral	34	8.0
	4- Unimportant	72	17.0
	5- Unimportant at all	2	0.05
	6- Missing	7	1.7
- Brand name	1- Very important	234	55.3
	2- Important	119	28.1
	3- Neutral	23	5.4
	4- Unimportant	2	0.0
	5- Unimportant at all	1	0.2
	6- Missing	5	1.2
- Convenient Location	1- Very important	17	18.2
	2- Important	123	29.1
	3- Neutral	130	30.7
	4- Unimportant	39	9.2
	5- Unimportant at all	8	1.9
	6- Missing	7	1.5

4.2.2.5 HYPOTHESIS TEST

Multiple regression analysis is used to test the hypothesis. At this stage the researcher used a full model multiple- regression analysis. So that, the assumptions of multicollinearity, normality and linearity were Tested.

The correlation matrix represented in table (6) indicates that person correlation coefficient between all the independent variables is less than 0.8 which eliminates the possibility of multicollinearity, also the independent variables represents significant relationship with the dependent variable (Above 0.3). The collinearity statistics also confirm that multicollinearity assumption is not violated. The tolerance value for the variables is more than 0.10 and the variance influence factor (VIF) range from 1.312 to 1.689, ensuring the normality of the data.

The results of regression analysis show that the independent variables explained 42.3% of the variance in the purchase behavior. The brand status is an important predictor of the purchase behavior ($R^2 = 0.34.39$; adjusted $R^2= 0.34.22$ and $p= 0.00$) it influences positively the purchase behavior ($B= 0.367$; $T= 7.376$ and $sig.= 0.00$). Thus H1 is supported.

Similar to the brand status, the brand attitude plays an important role in influencing the purchase behavior (R^2 changed to 0.38.47; adjusted $R^2= 0.38.15$ and $P= 0.00$). The results supported that the brand attitude positively influence the purchase behavior ($B= 0.208$; $T= 2.504$ and $P= 0.003$). Then H2 is supported.

Willingness to pay premium has a positive effect on the purchase behavior (R^2 changed too. 41.05% and adjusted R^2 Changed too. 40.58%, $P=0.000$). The results supported that the willingness to pay premium has positive effect on the purchase behavior ($B= 0.194$, $T= 3.618$ and $P= 0.000$). Thus as predicted H3 is supported.

Self-concept has a positive effect on the purchase behavior (R^2 changed to 42.08% and adjusted $R^2= 0.41.47\%$, $P = 0.050$). The results supported that self-concept positively influence the purchase behavior ($B=0.178$, $T= 2.129$ and $P= 0.010$). Thus H4 is supported.

Reference group plays an important role in the increase of purchase behavior, R^2 changed to 0.43.03% and adjusted R^2 changed to 0.42.271% ($B= 150$; $T= 2.565$ and $P= 0.011$).

The five factors contribute by 42.27% to the explained variance in the purchase behavior. Table (8) shows the full model multiple regression results.

Table (8)
The results of the full model multiple regression

Variables	B	Standard Error	Standard coefficients			Co-Linearity Statistics	
			Beta	T	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1-Brand Status	0.367	0.050	0.316	7.367	0.000	0.628	1.592
2-Brand attitude	0.208	0.038	0.120	2.504	0.013	0.655	1.527
3-Willingness to pay premium	0.194	0.054	0.161	3.618	0.000	0.762	1.312
4-Self-Concept	0.178	0.084	0.107	2.129	0.010	0.592	1.689
5-Reference Group	0.150	0.059	0.118	2.565	0.011	0.708	1.412
R= 0.656 R ² = 0.430 Adjusted R ² = 0.423 F- Value= 57.078 F- sig= 0.000							

Steps wise regression analysis is also used to test H6, in order to specify the relative importance of the brand factors in explaining the purchase behavior. The results indicated that brand status is the most important factor in explaining the purchase behavior, then the self-concept allowed by the willingness to pay premium, then the reference group and the last factor was the brand attitude.

Thus results supported H5. Table (9) shows the results of the stepwise regression.

Table (9)
The Results of the Stepwise Regression

Step	1	2	3	4	5
Constant	1.4146	0.5768	0.2926	0.2079	-0.1637
C1 Brand status	0.596	0.424	0.424	0.396	0.367
T-Value	14.15	10.74	8.87	8.14	7.37
P- Value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
C4 Self-concept	0.735	0.322	0.257	0.257	0.117
T- Value	5.03	4.33	3.30	3.30	2.12
P- Value	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.001	0.34
C3 Willingness to pay premium			0.20	0.202	0.195
T- Value			4.08	3.75	3.63
P- Value			0.000	0.000	0.000
C5 Reference group				0.153	0.150
T- Value				2.60	2.56
P- Value				0.010	0.011
C2 Brand attitude					0.208
T- Value					2.51
P- Value					0.013
S	0.777	0.753	0.738	0.733	0.728
R ²	0.34.39	0.38.47	0.41.05	0.42.08	0.43.00
Adj. R ²	0.34.22	0.38.15	0.40.58	0.41.47	0.42.27
Mallows C-P	55.3	30.2	15.1	10.3	6.0

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Current study aimed to identify the clothing brands that are mostly preferred by customers, the source of information that the customers depend on, when choosing the brands, and the most important factors affecting their purchase decision.

The study also aimed to identify the brand factors that influence the purchase behavior, as well as their relative importance with this regard.

The study found that Gucci, Salsa and Hugo Boss are the most preferred brands from customer's point of view. Followed by other brands. The results revealed that online media advertising, T.V. and radio, and printed media are the most important source of information customers depend on when choosing the branded clothing followed by other sources. The study also found that the

brand name, quality and the price are the most important factors that affect the purchase decision of the branded clothes followed by other factors.

These results are consistent with the results of recent study (Ahuja, 2015), which indicated that the price and the brand name were the major attributes that customers gave most important to, when purchasing readymade garment.

However, the results disagreed with the study of Ahuja (2015) regarding the most important source of information customer depend on when purchasing the products, as his study revealed that printed Media is the most important source of information followed by advertising through Radio and T.V, then the online media. His study also found that price and brand are the most important factors affecting purchase the decision making, while current study found that the brand name followed by the quality and the price are the most important factors affecting branded clothing purchase decision, followed by other factors.

Based on these results, the current study recommends marketers to focus on online media, advertising through T.V. and Radio, and printed media to promote their products.

They should consider the quality, prices well as the brand while developing their marketing strategy.

Consistent with prior studies, present study identified many brand factors affect the branded clothing purchase behavior. (Zeb. et al., 2011) that are, brand status, brand attitude, willingness to pay premium, self-concept and reference group.

The results of study support all of the hypothesis and have revealed the impact of brands on purchase behavior, in this regard the study agreed with the results of several studies, (Foxall et al., 2005; Fianto et al., 2014; Fouladivando, 2013, Baba, 2014; Ahuja, 2015).

The results have revealed that brand status is the most important factor influence on the purchase behavior, followed by the self-concept, then willing to pay premium, group of reference and finally brand attitude, this results reflect the relative importance of the branded clothing factors in affecting the purchase behavior, which is consistent with Zeb. et al., (2013).

The research finding suggest that producers and marketers should consider all factors that affect branded clothing purchase behavior, when designing their marketing strategy, they should place more emphasis on brand status which reflects the ability of the brand to enhance customer's status or improve his success, customers preference to use feverable brands regulary, and the role of the branded clothes in customer's life. They should also focus on self-concept; this factor reflects customers preference to use branded

clothing only, the importance of brand when purchasing clothing products, the brand as a success symbol for the customers, and the importance of the price in purchasing decision, customers judgment of the people's personality by branded clothes they are wearing.

Marketers should also focus on customer's willingness to pay premium, which includes, customer willingness to pay premium for the branded clothes if it enhance his status, the importance of the price when purchasing branded clothing, while they should place less emphasis on the brand attitude and the group of reference factors, according to the study's results, when they develop their communication mix and marking mix that satisfy their customers.

Further researches are needed in order to examine other factors that may influence the branded clothes purchase behavior.

Cross – cultural differences may influence the branded clothing purchase behavior, so the researches should be conducted in different Arab or developing countries in order to access generalizability of the results. More specific analysis for the items underlying each factor to specify the most important items in each factors that affect the purchase behavior.

Researches also are needed in order to specify the relative importance of the five factors in effecting the purchase behavior across different developing countries, it may an important base for the market segmentation and communication strategy. More researches are also needed to explain why customers prefer some brands over others. The results may help the producers and marketers to develop the marketing mix that satisfy their customers.

Further replicated studies are needed for other products in order to assure that the brand status, self-concept and willingness to pay premium have the highest relative importance, and the brand attitude and group of reference has the lowest relative importance in affecting on the purchase behavior, as the results of the current study indicate.

More researches are needed on the influence of demographic variables in effecting the branded clothing purchase behavior, because the demographic aspects in the most important and dominant factors in segmenting consumer market, which will help the marketers in developing the market segmentation strategy.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Dear Respondents:

The following questionnaire is being used for the purpose of a survey on “The influence of Brands on consumer purchase behavior with respect to branded clothing in Lebanon”. The results of the analysis done on the basis of the responses will be used for Research purposes only.

***Thank you for your
time***

The researcher

Kindly tick the box that represents the degree to which you agree with the statements below. There is no right or wrong answer.

Key: Select 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for neutral, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree.

First Part:

A-

Statement	strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
	5	4	3	2	1
1- For me, personally fashion clothing is important.					
2- I think a lot about which fashion clothing to buy.					
3- I prefer wearing branded clothing products only.					
4- Brand name is important for me when I purchase clothing products.					
5- If my brand enhances my status or improve my success, I favor that brand a lot.					
6- I prefer using my favorable brands regularly.					
7- Branded clothes play important role in my life.					
8- If my brand enhances my status will be willing to pay more for that.					
9- I can pay any price for branded clothing products.					
10- Do you agree with the following statement "You are what you wear"?					
11- My brand name is not a success symbol for me.					
12- Brands do not add quality to my life					
13- Price is very important to me when purchase clothing products.					
14- I'm not easily influenced by anyone's opinion about branded clothing products.					
15- I judge people's personality by branded clothes they are wearing.					
16- I do not prefer a branded clothing product that improves my personality.					
17- My family & friends influences me a lot when I purchase clothing products.					
18- Celebrities influence me a lot when I purchase clothing products.					
19- Making purchase decision for fashion clothing is not important.					
20- Reliable and trusted brands are important to me when I purchase clothing products.					
21- I feel comfortable in buying counterfeit (duplicate or local) clothing products/ brands					

B-

22- I am willing to pay more for the Branded clothes.					
23- I am willing to support the Branded clothes.					
24- I am willing to recommend the Branded clothes to others.					

Second Part:

1. Which of the following fashion brands do you prefer?

- True Religion Gucci Hugo Boss
 Salsa Levi's Louis Vuitton
 United Colors of Benetton Wills Lifestyle Lacost Other please specify

2. How did you hear about the brand?

- TV or Radio Online Media advertising
 Print media (Newspaper/magazines) word of month

3. How important are the following factors of a shopping experience to you?

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Unimportant at all
Price					
Trend					
Brand Name					
Quality					
Convenient location					

Third Part: Demographics Information

Age:

- 20 - 25 44 - 49
 26 - 31 50 - 55
 32 - 37 56 - 61 and above.
 38 - 43

Gender:

- Male Female

Education: (tick one)

- Bachelor Intermediate
 Postgraduate Elementary
 Secondary
 Other (Please Specify).

Monthly Household Income:

- <2000 2000 - 3000 3001- 4000 > 4000

Residency In Lebanon: