

Fashion consciousness, materialism and fashion clothing purchase involvement of young fashion consumers in Egypt: the mediation role of materialism

Riham Mohamed Talaat

Faculty of Commerce, Business Administration, Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt

Abstract

Purpose – Fashion clothing has always been an interesting area for scholarly research on consumer behavior. This paper seeks to gain a better understanding of the youth involvement with fashion clothing in the Egyptian context. Accordingly, the paper considers the Egyptian consumers' attitude toward fashion involvement by investigating how fashion consciousness and materialism serve as main antecedents of fashion clothing involvement, while also determining the impact of fashion clothing involvement on fashion clothing purchase involvement. This paper aims to test an extended and adapted theoretical model of fashion clothing involvement in Egypt.

Design/methodology/approach – Using non-probabilistic convenience sample, a survey method was used, and 270 valid questionnaires were collected.

Findings – The hypothesized antecedents were found to influence fashion clothing involvement among young Egyptian consumers, which in turn significantly affect its purchasing. Moreover, materialism was also found to partially mediate the relationship between fashion consciousness and fashion involvement. On the other hand, the hypothesized gender role as a moderator between all variables of the study was not supported.

Research limitations/implications – Using a wider population is one avenue future research seeking to replicate this study can pursue. Specifically, because the sample consisted of university students, generalizing the results to non-students can be restricted. Likewise, findings are mainly related to fashion clothing; hence, extending the model to include other product categories can provide more support for the results.

Practical implications – As the results confirmed that there is a partial significant positive impact of fashion consciousness on fashion clothing involvement via materialism, the paper provides practical implications for fashion marketers to achieve successful communication with fashion-conscious and materialistic young Egyptian consumers. The aim is to develop strategies that are consistent with consumers' values and communicate appeals to their aspirational lifestyle.

Originality/value – This paper contributes to the limited number of the published manuscripts on the fashion clothing marketing sector in Egypt. There is a void in literature related to the investigation of fashion clothing involvement in the developing countries. Accordingly, this paper fills this gap by examining the fashion clothing consumption behavior of young Egyptian students in Cairo University. To the best of the author's knowledge, it is among the first to investigate the antecedents and motives related to fashion clothing



involvement and its purchases among young consumers in the Egyptian context. The paper develops a comprehensive model of fashion clothing involvement to highlight the relationships between fashion involvement and Fashion consciousness, materialism, and fashion clothing purchase-involvement. The paper also contributes to the research by exploring materialism as a mediator between fashion consciousness and fashion involvement constructs, in addition to exploring the gender role as a moderator between all constructs of the study. The study makes theoretical contribution to the body of knowledge around young Egyptian consumers' fashion clothing involvement and purchase behavior toward luxury fashion clothes, which may be extended to other similar Arab non-Western developing countries. Moreover, it offers managerial insights for establishing effective communications with this potentially lucrative market segment.

Keywords Materialism, Fashion consciousness, Fashion clothing involvement, Egyptian apparel consumption

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

There is a rapid change nowadays in the consumer values within the developing countries. Because of globalization, customers are now more aware of the various international luxury brands, especially those they believe to be an extension of a self-image that they desire to heighten by constant purchasing (Handa and Khare, 2013). Although most young students are jobless, they remain a huge market segment in the view of the different products and service producers. Young consumers in developing countries are increasingly pursuing a material lifestyle, turning into global customers, exhibiting similar preferences to Western individuals, knowing about different international products, particularly related to fashion, and they considered to have higher fashion-consciousness compared to the older people (Park *et al.*, 2007). Yet, most previous research on fashion consciousness was mainly conducted within the developed countries; researchers have only recently directed their attention toward the developing countries, such as China (Lam and Yee, 2014) and Croatia (Anić and Mihić, 2015), to study fashion consciousness. Indeed, studies show that people of developing countries have dissimilar attitudes, perceptions and beliefs to those in developed ones (Rathnayake, 2011).

As societies all around have become full-fledged consuming ones, the timing could not be more appropriate for studying the drivers behind the youth consumption of luxury fashion clothing goods in an Arab non-Western context. Egypt as one of the developing countries is becoming an appealing market for international luxurious brands, as the past few years have witnessed a steady development in such industries with even more predictions of a higher growth in the future as a result of the improved economic conditions (El Din and El Sahn, 2013). Additionally, in 2018, the middle-income class encompassed over 72% of households in Egypt, which reflects potential increase in household spending. In fact, Egypt is placed as the 13th in the most attractive retail market in the world (Abdellatif, 2014).

Despite the massive changes in the market and the ongoing changes in Egyptian lifestyle under the influence of the global consumer culture, the studies that explore antecedents of luxury fashion clothing involvement in Egypt are limited. The great potential of the Egyptian market calls for more consideration for better understanding of the Egyptian fashion-clothing-involved consumers (Park *et al.*, 2007).

To fill this gap, this paper seeks to better understand the Egyptians youth involvement with fashion clothing, taking into consideration their level of fashion consciousness and materialistic tendencies in the same study. This paper adds to the literature on clothing involvement by addressing the emerging Egyptian market and signaling the key determinants of young students' fashion clothing involvement and purchase in Egypt. The study mainly focused on the students of Cairo University, because college students

represent a lucrative market segment with an increasing purchasing power and higher exposure to Western lifestyle than any other segment (Adib and El-Bassiouny, 2012). In the same vein, researchers believe that students are always the vanguard of most populations and that their characteristics usually represent the characteristics of the population (Abdelmaaboud *et al.*, 2020).

As being applied in several contexts before, fashion adoption theory (Sproles, 1979) presents the basis of this paper. The theory focuses on the fashion-oriented consumer behavior and the different variables influencing its apparel-related buying decisions. It also stresses on the role of fashionability in the selection of fashion products. The theory specifies that motivations and purchase intentions of people begins with them being aware of recent fashion. Sproles and Burns (1994) also indicate that social and psychological needs (i.e. meeting expectation, boredom, adhering to social affiliations, etc.) are the major determinant of people's adoption of fashion. Fashion adoption theory is followed in this research to study young Egyptians' fashion consciousness and level of materialistic value (i.e. psychological needs), in an effort to understand their involvement with fashion clothing and its purchases.

The current study is organized in the following sections; first section provides the review of literature and the hypotheses development; second section illustrates the research design and methodology. Data analysis and results are provided in the third section, whereas fourth section provides a discussion and the implications of the study. The final section presents the limitations and avenues of future research.

Literature review

Fashion consciousness

People in developing countries are starting to show higher levels of self-consciousness as they value the role of brands in improving one's image (Nandini and Jeevananda, 2014). Previous literature has acknowledged self-consciousness from two angles: private self-consciousness and public self-consciousness. While the private aspect reflects the latent side of a person, which is not visible to people (Bandura, 1991), the public aspect indicates the manner in which a person portrays himself/herself to others, or how others see him/her (Quoquab *et al.*, 2014).

It is argued that public self-consciousness can be related to fashion involvement (Xu, 2008) as well as to fashionability (Workman and Lee, 2013). Public self-consciousness has been highly examined from a socio-psychological angle, yet, only recently have some studies looked into it in relation to consumer behavior (Workman and Lee, 2011). More specifically, this paper considers the variable "fashion-consciousness," which refers to the public self-consciousness in context of the fashion consumption (Casidy *et al.*, 2015). In this study, fashion consciousness is defined as "a person's degree of involvement with clothing styles or fashions and implies an interest in fashion styles and someone's appearance" (Koksal, 2014, p. 434).

Previous studies show that fashion-conscious shoppers regard clothes as an extension of their own identity, and thus, they would happily spend more money on them (Kaur and Anand, 2018). They make shopping for its own sake; they are frequent buyers, more spenders and more attracted to apparel objects than those of lesser fashion-consciousness (Kim *et al.*, 2018).

Yet, some studies emphasize that spending should not necessarily be a consequence of fashion consciousness, as customers are sometimes price sensitive and restricted by a certain budget (Iyer and Eastman, 2010), which, in turn, reduces time spent on shopping. However, even then, they may keep developing positive attitude toward shopping and remain involved in clothes shopping hoping to maintain an updated wardrobe to enhance their appearance (Iyer and Eastman, 2010; Walsh *et al.*, 2001).

Materialism

Materialism as a concept has been extensively studied within several contexts, such as sociology, marketing or consumer behavior; consequently, there is not a unified definition of it (Richins and Dawson, 1992). Cass (2001) argued that materialism represents the extent to which people see possessions as involving and play a key part in their lives. Similarly, Richins and Fournier (1991) maintained that materialism represents the significance of materialistic items possessing to a person in achieving his/her goals. Despite the varied definitions, materialism conceptualizations focus mostly on objects' acquisitions/possessing (Kaur and Anand, 2018).

Kasser (2002) claims that materialists have low self-esteem and thus they rely on material items to elevate their self-worth. Accordingly, luxurious items, such as branded clothing, can be of particular interest to materialists because they can indicate status and wealth (Sharda and Bhat, 2018). Therefore, materialism can be argued to represent a factor in the involvement with the fashion clothing (Handa and Khare, 2013).

To gain a deeper insight on the way customers are involved with fashion clothing, it is crucial to fathom the role one's values play in shaping his/her behavior. It is argued that one's need for items, either for aesthetic use, identity-search or self-presentation, is affected by his/her materialistic values (O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy, 2007). Previous studies have also suggested that younger people are more susceptible to materialism, because they have a greater tendency to conform to their peers (Arthur *et al.*, 2019). Likewise, it was also argued that while materialism appears to be declining within developed markets, it is increasing in the developing ones, as people in developed countries are now adopting less materialistic goals and more abstract ones (Mai, 2019). With the variation in what materialism means across different cultures, we aim to understand the relevance of materialism to the lifestyle of the young Egyptian college students or, in other words, to what extent can the young materialistic individuals in Egypt consume fashion clothing to publicly communicate success or social status.

Fashion consciousness and materialism

Previous research has also indicated significant links between fashion consciousness and materialism. It is debated that the link between status-consumption and fashion consciousness is moderated by materialism. Accordingly, the materialists as well as the fashion-conscious individuals place more emphasis on owning prestigious branded items (O'Cass, 2004).

The vast majority of the previous studies usually focus on the role materialism plays in predicting the purchasing/possessing of the fashion items. However, the main argument of this study is that fashion-conscious individuals tend to buy luxurious fashion clothes to enhance their social status. In other words, customers with fashion consciousness are likely to consider the design and style of the fashion item as a way of enhancing the way they look. In doing so, they would choose to own more luxurious items, hence becoming materialists (Leung *et al.*, 2015).

Fashion consciousness, materialism and involvement with fashion clothing remain topics of interest to both scholars and marketers, despite being fairly mature areas of research, because of their high impacts on consumer behavior (O'Cass, 2004). Materialism and fashion consciousness have received very limited attention in the context of the Egyptian market of luxury brands. Therefore, this study is set out to fill this gap by positioning materialism and fashion-consciousness as main antecedents of the change taking place in the young Egyptian buyers' behavior. Accordingly, the researcher hypothesizes the following:

H1. Fashion consciousness has a significant positive impact on materialism.

Fashion consciousness and fashion clothing involvement

Fashion-consciousness indicates to what extent an individual is involved with the fashion of clothing (O'Cass *et al.*, 2013). The development of the concept "fashion clothing involvement" itself reveals how fashion clothing has become so vital for many people to the degree that made them become involved with it. Being involved with something is to become linked in an interaction with it, or to form a relationship variable. Likewise, involvement hereby refers to how much a person considers this specific activity as a major part of his/her life. The more the one is involved with fashion clothing, the greater the relevance to the oneself (O'Cass, 2000). Accordingly, customers with higher fashion consciousness could become more prone toward fashion clothing and, thus, could spend higher amount of time purchasing them (Khare and Rakesh, 2010). As such, this study argues that the fashion-conscious Egyptian college students will have higher level of fashion clothing involvement. Accordingly, the researcher hypothesizes the following:

H2. Fashion consciousness has a significant positive impact on fashion clothing involvement.

Materialism and fashion clothing involvement

Browne and Kaldenberg (1997) claimed that materialism is an antecedent of involvement and that both can be linked to each other on several levels. They argued that high materialistic people would exhibit higher involvement with goods that are capable of communicating public meanings. This contention is of particular importance within fashion clothing context, because it would mean that the relationship is capable of satisfying needs of happiness and acquisition and helps in formulating pleasing images.

Fashion clothing is publicly consumed, and it helps convey a perception of well-being; thus, it aids, same as materialism, in communicating certain impressions to other people. O'Cass (2004) argued that a high involvement with fashion clothing could signal a high relevance to the self. He also emphasized that materialism can result in fashion involvement; materialists would invest more time in the activities related to possessions of products/brands as they benefit from clothing by improving their impressions (O'Cass, 2004; Richins, 1994), which would result in more involvement. Accordingly, individuals' involvement in fashion clothing can be determined by their level of materialism. Therefore, the researcher hypothesizes the following:

H3. Materialism has a significant positive impact on fashion clothing involvement.

Fashion clothing involvement and fashion clothing purchase involvement

Involvement is usually experienced in relation to fashion clothing. It is often referred to as product involvement, in case of there is a high interest in a product, or also purchase involvement, in case a purchase is made (Aydm, 2017). Involvement is argued to increase when the product has the capability of satisfying the needs/values of an individual as well as his/her social acceptance (Mittal and Lee, 1989). Fashion clothes are usually regarded as products with such capabilities. Product purchase involvement thus indicates the extent to which a person is willing to go through with the purchase decision (Aydm, 2017; Mittal and Lee, 1989).

Along similar lines, fashion clothing purchase involvement (FCPI) represents how important are fashion clothes to a person. This type of clothing is considered an important antecedent for consumption of fashion clothing; hence, it can be an indicator of one's degree of fashion clothing

involvement (O’Cass and Choy, 2008). Likewise, Hourigan and Bougoure (2012) stress that people with high fashion clothing involvement devote more time on such categories of products, thus, becoming also involved in their purchasing decisions.

For a long time, apparel was considered a category of high involvement for its potentiality in addressing peoples’ personality aspects and attitudes. For example, Mittal and Lee (1989, p. 365) reiterate “product-involvement is an antecedent of purchase-decision involvement.” In line with O’Cass (2000) and O’Cass and Choy (2008), customers with high involvement in fashion clothing will likely to be involved in purchasing them. Accordingly, the researcher hypothesizes the following:

- H4.* Fashion involvement has a significant positive impact on fashion clothing purchase involvement.

Relationships between fashion consciousness, materialism and fashion clothing involvement

Only a few studies have explored how fashion consciousness, materialism and clothing involvement are correlated, despite the tendency of conscious consumers to focus on their external look and fashion (Quoquab *et al.*, 2014). Both fashion consciousness and materialism are related to fashion clothing consumption (Richins and Rudmin, 1994); they can each explain the variance of involvement with fashion clothing via different psychological mechanisms. Thus, based on the definition and function of materialism, it may be more logical that materialism takes the role of a mediator (Liao and Wang, 2009)

Further, based on relative standards theory, fashion consciousness is an outcome of comparing one’s true conditions with specific standards (Šeinauskienė *et al.*, 2016). This comparison results in satisfaction/dissatisfaction with many aspects of his/her life. People of materialistic tendencies make such comparison with closest friends/family to assess themselves. For example, Zhang *et al.* (2016) claimed that materialists have tendencies to make a financial-status comparison with their peers. Meanwhile, the social comparison leads to fashion clothing involvement to enhance one’s social status (Šeinauskienė *et al.*, 2016).

Based on the relative standards theory, the author contends that an increase in the degree of fashion consciousness would result in higher tendencies in endorsing materialistic values, which would then lead to an increased level of involvement with the fashion clothing. Thus, if the relationship between fashion consciousness and fashion clothing involvement is explained through materialism, then materialism acts as a mediator. Accordingly, materialism can be viewed as a mechanism through which fashion consciousness is linked to, or can produce changes on, fashion clothing involvement. Accordingly,

- H5.* Materialism mediates the relationship between fashion consciousness and fashion clothing involvement.

Relationships between gender, fashion consciousness, materialism, fashion clothing involvement and fashion clothing purchasing involvement

Males and females usually form different perceptions toward fashion clothing. Compared to men, women use clothing to enhance self-image (Guthrie *et al.*, 2008) as they exhibit higher need to meet social expectations; they are more anxious about having any adverse public impression (Malär *et al.*, 2011). Accordingly, it is argued that fashion self-consciousness affects females’ behavior more than it affects males (Ajitha, and Sivakumar, 2019).

Women also spend more time and money per purchase for information gathering and for being more fashion-involved (Shephard *et al.*, 2016). Symbolic perception differences may be

the reason for the dissimilarities between males and females regarding fashion clothing consumption (Dittmar, 2005). The author, thus, argues that the gender could be a determinant factor in fashion clothing involvement among the Egyptian youth. Cass (2001) also emphasizes that age and gender influence the purchase decision as well as the product involvement. Specifically, females' purchase involvement of fashion is usually higher than males. For example, some studies have shown that males are less involved with fashion compared to the females, and that females are more inclined to view themselves as more fashion innovative (O'Cass, 2004; Vieira, 2009).

Along the same lines, Rathnayake (2011) examined the effects of gender and education on fashion consciousness of the young individuals in Sri Lanka. Results revealed that fashion-consciousness is context-related, and that it differs according to education, gender and urban–rural differences. Similarly, females were also found to have higher materialistic tendencies, private self-consciousness, vanity, brand sensitivity and brand consciousness compared to males (Workman and Lee, 2011; Workman and Lee, 2013).

Likewise, previous studies have shown that gender affects the magnitude of the relationship between materialism and its antecedents (Marzouk and Mahrous, 2020). Accordingly, it is evident that judgments and perceptions of customers can differ according to their gender; thus, formulating marketing strategies and making market segmentation based on gender can yield in more favorable results in relation to fashion clothing consumption (Ajitha, and Sivakumar, 2019).

Recently, however, young men were found to have more fashion consciousness in Eastern Europe, which proves that fashion-related items should not necessarily be exceptionally related to female consumption/involvement (Khare and Rakesh, 2010). In the same vein, Khare (2014) emphasized that males in India are equally involved in fashion clothing as the females. Therefore, the researcher hypothesizes the following:

- H6.* Gender moderates the relationships between of the proposed variables of the model.
- H6a.* Gender moderates the relationship between fashion consciousness and materialism.
- H6b.* Gender moderates the relationship between fashion consciousness and fashion clothing involvement.
- H6c.* Gender moderates the relationship between materialism and fashion clothing involvement.
- H6d.* Gender moderates the relationship between fashion clothing involvement and purchase involvement with fashion clothing.

The theoretical model, consisting of this study's four constructs, is reflected in Figure 1. The interrelationships among these constructs are illustrated as well as the mediating role of materialism and the moderator role of gender.

Research design and methodology

The relationship between people and objects (i.e. clothes) is fundamentally governed by their fashion clothing involvement, which made it an important variable within consumers' purchase behavior research (O'Cass, 2000). With this in mind, a descriptive conclusive study is conducted to investigate the level of fashion consciousness, materialism, involvement with fashion clothing and FCPI of the Egyptian students in Cairo University.

In testing the aforementioned hypotheses, the researcher runs the exploratory factor analysis (EFA), using SPSSv.24, to figure out the common method bias. Followed by Pearson correlation and partial least square-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), the author used Smart PLSv.3.2.8 to test the proposed conceptual model.

Population and sample

This study used university students as subjects for the study. More particularly, primary data was collected from young adult students in Cairo University in Egypt. Accordingly, a convenience sample of 270 valid questionnaires were collected from the students in their classrooms.

Data collection methods

A structured questionnaire has been adopted to conduct the survey among undergraduate students in Cairo University.

Questionnaire design

Depending on the previous literature, the questionnaire, and its variables' measurement items, was developed. With the help of 50 business students, the questionnaire was pilot tested at first. The results of the pilot test confirmed the soundness of the instrument.

Measurement

All measurement items were assessed on a five-point Likert-type scale from 1, strongly agree, to 5, strongly disagree. The scale used for the level of fashion consciousness was adapted from the [Nam et al. \(2007\)](#) study. Materialism was measured using scale from [Richins and Dawson \(1992\)](#). Likewise, to measure consumer's involvement in fashion clothing, we adapted [O'Cass's \(2004\)](#) scale. Finally, FCPI was measured using the scale from [O'Cass and Choy \(2008\)](#).

Data analysis and results

In this study, female respondents represented 63.4%, where the rest of the sample were male respondents. The researcher will first explore the main differences in the study variables according to the respondents' gender. To test the impact of the respondents' gender on the study variables, the researcher adopts independent sample *t*-test. [Table 1](#) illustrates the results of the independent sample *t*-test of all the study variables according to the respondent's gender.

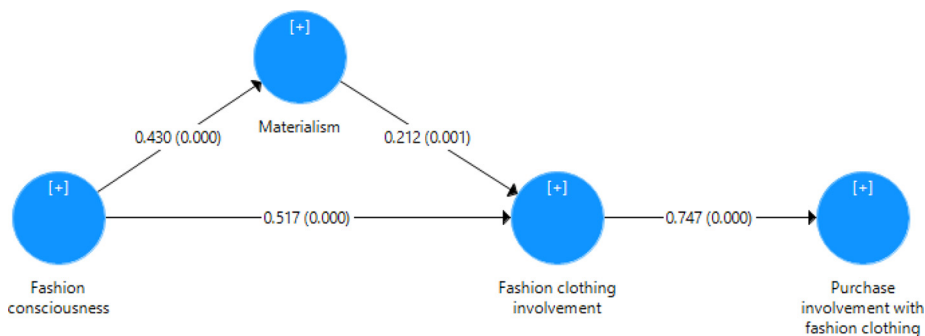


Figure 1. Proposed framework

As can be seen from [Table 1](#), the females' groups have higher means for all variables than the males. Moreover, three out of the four variables have significant differences based on the respondent's gender, namely, fashion consciousness, fashion clothing involvement and purchase involvement with fashion clothing at confidence level 95%. Only the materialism variable has non-significant differences between males' and females' groups ([Field, 2009](#); [Pallant, 2011](#)). This guides the researcher to include the gender as a moderator variable in the proposed model.

Common method bias

Before testing the research model hypotheses, the researcher runs EFA for all multi-item constructs via SPSS v.24 to remedy common method bias ([Jordan and Troth, 2020](#)). Nine components' eigenvalues are above 1, and, thus, all these components can explain the 62.082% of the total variance, whereas the first factor can only explain 31.82% of the total variance. Therefore, common method bias is not an issue in the current research based on Harman's one-factor test.

Correlation analysis

A correlation analysis was used to explore the relationships' direction and significance between the conceptual model variables, as well as to distinguish the multicollinearity issue between each pair of the independent variables. As shown in [Table 2](#), the Pearson correlation coefficients are all positive and significant. Also, the relationship between fashion consciousness and materialism is 0.44, which is below the proposed level 0.5 of the multicollinearity ([Hair et al., 2020](#)). Therefore, the multicollinearity is not an issue in the current study.

Structural equation modeling

A PLS-SEM approach was used because the aim of the study is to discover new relationships to extend the prior literature. Also, the latent scores of the variables will be used in the subsequent analyses, as in multi-group analysis, to test the moderation effect of the gender ([Hair et al., 2014, 2019](#)). The PLS-SEM has a widespread use in various disciplines, as [Hair et al. \(2012\)](#) have particularly emphasized its important application within marketing.

This paper has used PLS-SEM relying on the Smart PLS v.3.2.8 ([Ringle et al., 2015](#)). A systematic two-stage approach of SEM was followed; the first stage seeks to develop a measurement model, whereas the second stage tests the proposed relationships in the structural model ([Hair et al., 2011, 2014](#)). All variables were measured by reflective low-order

Table 1.
Independent sample
t-test results

| Variables | Gender | <i>N</i> | Mean | Mean difference | Sig. (two-tailed) |
|--|--------|----------|-------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Fashion consciousness | Male | 84 | 3.414 | -0.211 | 0.026 |
| | Female | 142 | 3.625 | | |
| Materialism | Male | 67 | 3.624 | -0.010 | 0.886 |
| | Female | 127 | 3.634 | | |
| Fashion clothing involvement | Male | 62 | 3.150 | -0.424 | 0.001 |
| | Female | 132 | 3.574 | | |
| Purchase involvement with fashion clothing | Male | 75 | 3.340 | -0.385 | 0.000 |
| | Female | 138 | 3.725 | | |

constructs (LOC) measurement level, except for the materialism which was measured by disjoint two-stage reflective–reflective high-order constructs (Sarstedt *et al.*, 2019).

First, the measurement model is assessed via multi-criteria, namely, convergent validity, discriminant validity and construct reliability. The average variance extracted (AVE) is used to measure the convergent validity of each construct. Also, the discriminant validity between construct is assessed using the heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations (Henseler *et al.*, 2015). Also, the construct reliability is assessed using composite reliability (CR). Table 3 illustrates the measurement model assessment.

As in Table 3, AVE coefficients ranges from 0.564 to 0.689. Therefore, each construct is valid according to the convergent validity threshold value of 0.5. Moreover, the HTMT ratio is less than 0.85; thus, the discriminant validity has been established for the measurement model constructs. Finally, Cronbach’s alpha test is the most commonly used to test the internal consistency. Nevertheless, Cronbach’s alpha, especially in SEM, has its shortcoming. More specifically, because it would be significantly affected by the number of indicators, the Cronbach’s alpha will be higher than 0.7 if the construct had ten indicators, even if some of these indicators were not valid, and vice versa (Pallant, 2011). Therefore, the researchers will depend on the CR as it will be more accurate (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Accordingly, because the lowest construct CR is 0.803, which is higher than the threshold of 0.7, the model constructs’ reliability is also established.

Moreover, the second stage aims to test the structural model in multi criteria (Hair *et al.*, 2014). First, the multicollinearity between the exogenous (independent) variables should be defined using variance inflation factor (VIF). Second, testing the proposed direct hypotheses should be tested using the beta coefficient. Third, the indirect hypotheses include the materialism mediation role, and the gender moderation role will be analyzed. Finally, the model predictive ability should be assessed via the coefficient of determination (R^2), the predictive relevance (Q^2) and the new PLS predict tool. Table 4 and Figure 1 show the structural model of the direct hypotheses.

As in Table 4, the VIF between the exogenous variables fashion consciousness and materialism is 1.227 toward the fashion clothing involvement, which is in the proposed range (0.2:3). This indicates that the multicollinearity in this study is not an issue as mentioned earlier from the correlation matrix in Table 2 (Hair *et al.*, 2020) (Figure 2).

Second, the path coefficient for each relationship should be significant at confidence level 95% using bootstrapping procedure of 5,000 subsamples with 300 iterations. In this regard, fashion consciousness has a significant positive effect on the materialism by 43% at confidence level 99.9%. Therefore, $H1$ is supported.

Next, the fashion consciousness has a significant positive effect on the fashion clothing involvement by 51.7% at confidence level 99.9%. Therefore, $H2$ is supported. Additionally,

| Variables | Fashion consciousness | Materialism | Fashion clothing involvement | Purchase involvement with fashion clothing |
|--|-----------------------|-------------|------------------------------|--|
| Fashion consciousness | 1 | | | |
| Materialism | 0.440** | 1 | | |
| Fashion clothing involvement | 0.654** | 0.388** | 1 | |
| Purchase involvement with fashion clothing | 0.481** | 0.273** | 0.799** | 1 |

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)

Table 2. Pearson correlation analysis

Table 3.
Measurement model
assessment

| Constructs | Construct reliability CR | Convergent validity AVE | Construct validity | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--|-----------------------|-------------|--|
| | | | Discriminant validity using HTMT _{0.85} | | | |
| | | | Fashion clothing involvement | Fashion consciousness | Materialism | Purchase involvement with fashion clothing |
| Fashion clothing involvement | 0.938 | 0.579 | | | | |
| Fashion consciousness | 0.803 | 0.577 | 0.780 | | | |
| Materialism | 0.816 | 0.689 | 0.604 | 0.694 | | |
| Purchase involvement with fashion clothing | 0.886 | 0.564 | 0.834 | 0.556 | 0.561 | |

Table 4.
Structural model of
the direct hypotheses

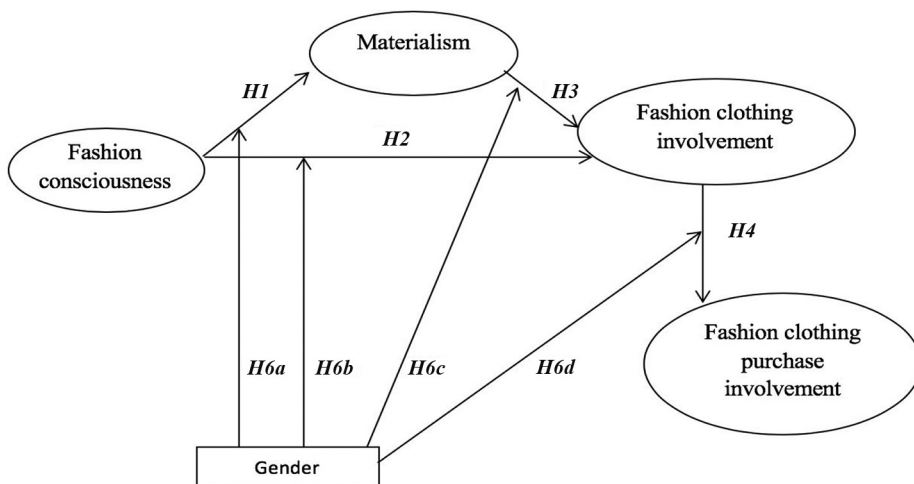
| Path | VIF | Beta | t-value | p-values |
|--|-------|-------|---------|----------|
| H1 Fashion consciousness → Materialism | – | 0.430 | 8.603 | 0.000 |
| H2 Fashion consciousness → Fashion clothing involvement | 1.227 | 0.517 | 9.855 | 0.000 |
| H3 Materialism → Fashion clothing involvement | 1.227 | 0.212 | 3.444 | 0.001 |
| H4 Fashion clothing involvement → Purchase involvement with fashion clothing | – | 0.747 | 23.232 | 0.000 |

the materialism has a significant positive effect on the fashion clothing involvement by 21.2% at confidence level 99.9%. Therefore, H3 is supported.

Indirect relationships – the mediation role of the materialism

This research contributes also by its endeavor to describe the interlined relationships between fashion consciousness, materialism and fashion clothing involvement. The author argues that materialism serves as a mechanism through which fashion consciousness is linked with fashion clothing involvement. This study followed Zhao *et al.* (2010) approach, as illustrated in Carrión *et al.* (2017) and Nitzl *et al.* (2016), to conduct the mediation test; Table 5 reports the mediation test.

As can be seen from Table 5, there is a significant positive direct relationship between the fashion consciousness and fashion clothing involvement by 51.7% at confidence level 99.9%, whereas the significant positive indirect relationship between the same constructs is 9.1% at confidence level 99%. Thus, the first path presented the positive effect of fashion consciousness on materialism, whereas the second path presented the positive effect of materialism on fashion clothing involvement (while controlling the level of fashion consciousness) and the third path presented the total positive effect of fashion consciousness on fashion clothing involvement (with absence of a mediator). The product of the first and second paths presented the indirect effect of fashion consciousness on fashion clothing involvement; as being transmitted through materialism. With respect to the mediation analysis, the study indicated a partial mediation role of materialism in the relationship between fashion consciousness and fashion clothing involvement can be achieved at confidence level 99%. Therefore, H5 is supported.



*H5: fashion consciousness → Materialism → fashion clothing involvement.

Figure 2.
Direct hypotheses testing

| Hypothesis | Indirect effect | Direct effect |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| H5 Fashion consciousness → Materialism → Fashion clothing involvement | 0.091 ^(0.002) | 0.517 ^(0.000) |

Table 5.
Mediation test

Indirect relationships – the moderation role of the gender

Table 6 illustrates the multi-group analysis (MGA) results of the proposed relationships in the conceptual model according to the two gender categories: males vs females.

As can be concluded from Table 6, fashion consciousness has a significant positive effect on the materialism by 46.9% at confidence level 99.9% in the males' group, where the same path has a significant positive effect by 44.6% at confidence level 99.9% in the females' groups. This means that the males' group has higher effect than the females' group by 2.3%. However, this difference is not significant at confidence level 95%; therefore, H6a is not supported.

Moreover, fashion consciousness has a significant positive effect on fashion clothing involvement by 58.8% at confidence level 99.9% in the males' group, whereas the same path has a significant positive effect by 44.3% at confidence level 99.9% in the females' groups. This means that the males' group has more effect than the females' group by 14.4%. However, this difference is not significant at confidence level 95%; therefore, H6b is not supported.

Additionally, materialism has a non-significant positive effect on fashion clothing involvement by 11% at confidence level 95% in the males' group, whereas the same path has a significant positive effect by 29.5% at confidence level 99.9% in the females' groups. This means that the females' group has more effect than the males' by 18.5%. However, this difference is not significant at confidence level 95%; therefore, H6c is not supported.

Finally, fashion clothing involvement has a significant positive effect on the purchase involvement with fashion clothing by 75.3% at confidence level 99.9% in the males' group,

whereas the same path has a significant positive effect by 72.2% at confidence level 99.9% in the females' groups. This means that the males' group has higher effect than the females' group by 3.1%. However, this difference is not significant at confidence level 95%; therefore, *H6d* is not supported.

Structural model predictive ability

At last, a multi criteria has to be used to assess the predictive ability (Assaf and Tsonas, 2019; Hair et al., 2014). First, coefficient of determination is to assess the dependent variable predictive power using R^2 . R^2 coefficients of 0.25, 0.5 and 0.75 reflect weak, moderate and strong predictive power, respectively. Moreover, the blindfolding procedure is to assess the dependent variable predictive relevance using Q^2 . Q^2 coefficients 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 present weak, moderate and strong predictive relevance, respectively. Finally, the $PLS_{predict}$ should be assessed by comparing the root means square error (RMSE) or mean absolute error between the PLS-SEM and the linear regression model (LM). The author can then conclude various levels of the predictive power. Table 7 demonstrates the model predictive ability.

As in Table 7, the materialism variance is $R^2 = 18.5\%$. This indicates a weak explanation factor of the materialism. Also, materialism $Q^2 = 11.8\%$, which indicates a moderate predictive relevance. Finally, because one of the two composed items of the materialism has PLS-RMSE higher than LM-RMSE, a medium predictive power of the materialism is confirmed.

Moreover, the fashion clothing involvement variance is $R^2 = 40.6\%$. This indicates moderate explanation factor of the fashion clothing involvement. Also, fashion clothing involvement $Q^2 = 21.7\%$, which indicates a moderate predictive relevance. Finally, because only one of the indicators of the fashion clothing involvement has PLS-RMSE higher than LM-RMSE and all other indicators have PLS-RMSE higher than LM-RMSE, a medium predictive power of the fashion clothing involvement is confirmed.

Finally, purchase involvement with fashion clothing variance is $R^2 = 55.7\%$, which reflects a moderate explanation factor of the purchase involvement with fashion clothing. Also, purchase involvement with fashion clothing $Q^2 = 29.1\%$, which shows a moderate predictive relevance. Finally, because only one of the indicators of the purchase involvement with fashion clothing has PLS-RMSE higher than LM-RMSE and all other indicators have PLS-RMSE higher than LM-RMSE, a medium predictive power of the purchase involvement with fashion clothing is also confirmed.

| Paths | β , Males $n = 87$ | β , Females $n = 151$ | Absolute path difference | Result |
|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| <i>H6a</i> Fashion consciousness → Materialism | 0.469*** | 0.446*** | 0.023 | Not supported |
| <i>H6b</i> Fashion consciousness → Fashion clothing involvement | 0.588*** | 0.443*** | 0.144 | Not supported |
| <i>H6c</i> Materialism → Fashion clothing involvement | 0.110 | 0.295*** | 0.185 | Not supported |
| <i>H6d</i> Fashion clothing involvement → Purchase involvement with fashion clothing | 0.753*** | 0.722*** | 0.031 | Not supported |

Table 6.
MGA according to
gender

Notes: ***Significant at confidence level 99.9%; **significant at confidence level 99%; and *significant at confidence level 95%

| Dependent variable | R^2 | $Q^2_{D=7}$ | Result | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------------|---|--------|--------|-------------------------|
| Materialism | 0.185 | 0.118 | Weak predictive power and moderate predictive relevance | | | |
| Fashion clothing involvement | 0.406 | 0.217 | Moderate predictive power and predictive relevance | | | |
| Purchase involvement with fashion clothing | 0.557 | 0.291 | Moderate predictive power and moderate predictive relevance | | | |
| PLS _{predict} | | | | | | |
| Construct | Indicators | $Q^2_{predict}$ | RMSE | RMSE | RMSE | Result |
| Materialism | Possession as defining success | 0.133 | 0.935 | 0.94 | -0.005 | Medium predictive power |
| | Possession as defining happiness | 0.107 | 0.949 | 0.936 | 0.013 | |
| Fashion clothing involvement | Q20 | 0.236 | 0.988 | 0.996 | -0.008 | Medium predictive power |
| | Q25 | 0.169 | 0.941 | 0.945 | -0.004 | |
| | Q23 | 0.259 | 0.907 | 0.913 | -0.006 | |
| | Q30 | 0.209 | 0.903 | 0.909 | -0.006 | |
| | Q19 | 0.154 | 0.89 | 0.893 | -0.003 | |
| | Q21 | 0.148 | 0.975 | 0.983 | -0.008 | |
| | Q27 | 0.171 | 0.993 | 1.001 | -0.008 | |
| | Q24 | 0.175 | 0.911 | 0.917 | -0.006 | |
| | Q22 | 0.291 | 0.921 | 0.906 | 0.015 | |
| Purchase involvement with fashion clothing | Q18 | 0.25 | 0.93 | 0.933 | -0.003 | Medium predictive power |
| | Q26 | 0.218 | 0.951 | 0.958 | -0.007 | |
| | Q36 | 0.061 | 0.999 | 1.008 | -0.009 | |
| | Q37 | 0.088 | 0.944 | 0.953 | -0.009 | |
| | Q38 | 0.121 | 0.995 | 1.003 | -0.008 | |
| | Q32 | 0.118 | 0.994 | 1.003 | -0.009 | |
| | Q33 | 0.021 | 1.011 | 1.007 | 0.004 | |
| Q35 | 0.139 | 0.929 | 0.937 | -0.008 | | |

Table 7.
Structural model predictive ability

General discussion

Nowadays, many stores of the branded clothes are opening in Egypt. Hence, fashion involvement of the young Egyptian with high-end clothes would represent an important segment with high potentials and beneficial opportunities (El Din and El Sahn, 2013). This study was designed to understand the underlying factors that influence clothing and purchasing involvement of the young Egyptian customers regarding fashion clothing. The findings indicate that psychological values (i.e. fashion consciousness and materialism) play a significant role in influencing behavior, whereas demographics (i.e. gender) play a less influential role, which implies that Egyptian consumers express their values through their consumption patterns.

First, this study found a significant positive relationship between fashion consciousness and materialism ($\beta = 0.340$; $p < 0.000$). Findings are consistent with the work of Leung *et al.* (2015), which indicated that a fashion-conscious individual most often depends on the style/design provided by the luxury brands to enhance his/her appearance. In doing so, he/she is expected to buy to increase the number of fashion-related items they own, thus becoming more materialist.

Moreover, the results reveal the prominent role fashion consciousness and materialism play as considerable contributors to one's involvement with fashion clothing. They are both leading the luxury fashion clothing involvement and consumption among young Egyptian students. Fashion-conscious Egyptian students are extremely aware and well informed of the various international fashion clothing brands. The increased role of the media, the young Egyptian's tourism activities and the entrance of foreign brands to Egypt can all justify their high consciousness of fashion clothing (Sharda and Bhat, 2018). This paper also showed that fashion-conscious Egyptian students are highly motivated by fashion, which can be explained by the way their identity within a social group can be enhanced through purchase of such items that reflect a certain taste/status.

Results showed a significant positive relationship between fashion consciousness and fashion clothing involvement with ($B = 0.517$; $p = 0.001$). The more fashion-conscious is the Egyptian student and the more clothing represents a key element in his/her day, the greater his/her involvement in fashion clothing will be. Accordingly, the results are aligned with several previous work (Browne and Kaldenberg, 1997; Khare and Rakesh, 2010).

In addition, the study sheds light on how materialism plays an important role in Egyptian students' fashion clothing involvement. It reveals a significant positive relationship between materialism and fashion clothing involvement ($B = 0.517$; $p = 0.000$).

Findings are aligned with other work emphasizing that materialists devote more time to make acquisitions as they experience its favorable effects of better self-status and decrease of one's self-threats (Arthur *et al.*, 2019; O'Cass, 2004; Richins, 2013; Shrum *et al.*, 2014), which would lead to considering fashion clothing as a main reason for happiness/success. To Egyptian young materialists, one's material objects display his/her qualifications or social acceptance (Richins and Rudmin, 1994). Materialistic values are strong drivers of Egyptian students' involvement and attachment with fashion clothing and its purchase.

The results show that fashion clothing involvement has significant and positive relationship on FCPI with ($\beta = 0.845$, $p < 0.001$). Accordingly, the more the consumer is involved in fashion clothing, the more involved he/she would be in its purchasing decisions (Casidy *et al.*, 2015; Mittal and Lee, 1989).

We believe that Egyptian students are highly involved in the purchase of fashion clothing, mostly because they think it reflects certain social/symbolic value, and thus, they may use it along with other factors (i.e. the type of schools they go to, their parents' jobs, etc.) in making comparisons with the others (Khare and Rakesh, 2010).

In addition, results revealed a partial mediation role of materialism in explaining how Egyptian youth fashion consciousness leads to their involvement with clothing. In this respect, the results showed that fashion consciousness construct provides a deep understanding of the young population consumers in Egypt. It is regarded as a vital consumer attribute that has a significant impact on their involvement with luxury fashion clothing, and it also has a significant influence on materialism, which in turn significantly impacts involvement with fashion clothing. There is a direct positive significant impact of fashion consciousness on fashion clothing involvement with 51.7% at a confidence level 99.9% (i.e. a direct effect), whereas the significant positive indirect relationship between the same constructs is 9.1% at confidence level 99% through materialism (i.e. indirect effect). Adding a mediator makes the direct effect weaker, because a part of the impact of fashion consciousness on fashion clothing involvement is being captured by materialism (the mediating variable), which would represent a partial mediation. It can be argued that characteristic of conscious and materialist Egyptian students includes an attraction to luxurious fashion clothing for obtaining happiness and success (Cass, 2001).

Finally, the research paper is considered to be among the first to analyze the moderating effects of gender in a non-Western developing country, which is a crucial variable in segmenting the fashion clothing market. While gender was proposed as a moderator variable and had a significant effect on each of the proposed model variables, except for materialism, the MGA did not show any significant results in relation to the moderation role of the gender. This supports the generalization of the direct hypotheses testing among both genders. Gender roles have become fluid and flexible. In other words, consciousness, materialism, fashion clothing involvement and its purchases hold similar significance to both genders in the Egyptian context; they are not only the privilege of the females. Involvement and shopping behavior, which were once a feminine activity, have been redesigned to suit recent masculine concepts. Results are in line with studies conducted by [Khare \(2014\)](#) and [Vieira \(2009\)](#), which suggest that males and females are now close in their shopping patterns and behaviors to each other.

These findings have very important implications for global marketers seeking to penetrate the Egyptian market with respect to segmentation, targeting and positioning strategies, marketing communications strategies and the marketing mix decisions.

Conclusions

Theoretical contribution

Most of the studies related to fashion involvement have been confined to Asian and Western cultures ([El Din and El Sahn, 2013](#)). However, there is almost none that focused on Egypt, or the Arab world, regarding fashion involvement. A major contribution of this research paper is to remedy this void in literature by considering the Egyptian context.

In addition, this paper contributes to the literature of fashion clothing involvement by ascertaining that fashion consciousness and materialism are important antecedents of the involvement with fashion clothing among the young Egyptian consumers. Our findings suggest that the students of Cairo University in Egypt are highly involved with fashion clothing because of their awareness of the latest fashion trends and styles (i.e. their fashion consciousness) and to satisfy their materialistic tendencies. This assumption is supported by the findings of other studies that reported how customers in their twenties are increasingly taking the place of the middle-aged ones in consumption of luxurious international fashion brands ([Park, 2000](#)). Moreover, young Egyptian individuals are becoming wealthier and more informed because of the globalization and the exposure to global media ([Adib and El-Bassiouny, 2012](#)). Promotional strategies designed for Western societies may no longer fully reflect the desires and motivations of the Egyptian young individuals. The results are also in line with the post-materialism theory, which indicates how underprivileged societies develop higher materialistic tendencies because of their recent experience of prosperity ([Handa and Khare, 2013](#)).

Another contribution to the materialism literature is represented in the empirical testing of the argument that materialism serves as a bridge between fashion consciousness and fashion clothing involvement. Findings revealed that materialism partially mediates the relationship between fashion consciousness and fashion clothing involvement among young consumers in Egypt. This provides a holistic understanding of motives behind Egyptian youth fashion clothing involvement.

Moreover, the results revealed a non-significant moderation role of the gender, which supported the generalization of the direct hypotheses testing among both genders. In other words, the relationships between all constructs of the study hold similar significance for both males and females among the youth in Egypt. This adds to the extant literature that the Egyptian males are evenly involved in fashion clothing as the females. Our results

indicate that the gap that was between males and females once regarding the fashionability has been tapered off.

Managerial implications

Economic development coupled with changing demographics presents opportunities for apparel manufacturers to target the younger population. This group of consumers is conscious about their self-identity and are willing to get involved with the purchase of trendy fashionable clothing that enhances their self-image. By focusing on the changing lifestyle of this increasingly affluent group of educated avid young Egyptian consumers, garment manufacturers can position and market their fashion clothing brands.

Our findings offer numerous practical implications for practitioner. First, marketers should not ignore the potentiality of fashion markets in developing countries such as Egypt, especially because their consumers exhibit similar involvement in fashion as those in developed ones, not to mention the expected growth of such markets as well.

The results also expand the domain of knowledge around fashion consciousness of young Egyptians by highlighting how those segments, when also developing materialistic tendencies, position clothing at the center of their life to reflect success, gain happiness and show-off certain social status. They show particular interest in the recent trends as they seek to update their clothing collection; they can easily be fascinated by images and styles presented in advertisements.

Accordingly, when penetrating Egyptian fashion market, marketers should tend to inform young customers of recent trends to increase fashion awareness at the very first stages of their socialization. In so doing, retailers may attempt to provide their customers with an easy accessibility to all related information on fashion and styles, advise them on their most fitting outfits and direct them toward the appropriate places of shopping.

Consequently, retailers should secure various sources of information, such as fashion magazines, conducting regular fairs, keeping an online presence and encouraging positive word-of-mouth, particularly because this targeted segment of young customers actively pursue new ideas on their appearance from different sources (Wu *et al.*, 2015).

The findings also indicate that the higher the materialistic tendencies one has, the more involved he/she will be with fashion clothing and, accordingly, the more he/she will be involved with its purchase. Along these lines, to formulate a unique image in young customers' mind, companies should consider integrating different marketing activities (i.e. distribution, advertising, pricing, etc.), which could induce higher fashion involvement. For instance, advertisements could use references of certain social classes that combine between Eastern and Western lifestyle.

Egyptian students are highly affected by advertisements, which may be explained by their need to gain insight on the most recent trends in fashion, especially those adopted by celebrities. Such knowledge would extremely benefit marketers by aiding them in developing appropriate advertising strategies that position fashion clothing in the central part of young consumers' lifestyle, all of which would increase their levels of product and purchase involvement at the end (Khare and Rakesh, 2010).

Limitations and areas for future research

Notwithstanding the number of insights this paper offers, there still exist some limitations that can serve as avenues for future research. This study used university

students as subjects for the study; accordingly, the sample is somewhat homogenous and consisting of consumers with restricted purchasing power. Further, the young consumers segment of any industry includes those of the students and the non-students as well; hence, the findings of this paper are restrained to the students of consumers only. Yet, it is worth mentioning that some involvement measures were developed by depending on students as respondents (O’Cass, 2000). Furthermore, because a major focus of the paper was on consumer involvement in fashion clothing, students constituted a proper sample for fashion clothing (Browne and Kaldenberg, 1997; O’Cass, 2000). Likewise, the product category chosen for this paper was the fashion clothing, yet, different attitudes can be formed toward different products. Accordingly, future research should consider not only a different sample (i.e. the non-students) but also different products when testing the potentiality of this model.

This study used a non-probability convenience sampling technique which was adequate for the purpose of this study. The sample was selected from one region in Egypt (i.e. Cairo) and the participants’ number was relatively small, which can undermine the possibility to generalize the results to the rest of the country. Therefore, future studies should consider widening the sampling to attain more diversification on the basis of the demographic and geographic aspects, which would increase the validity of the findings.

In conclusion, the ultimate goal for the future studies is to test this paper’s conceptualization/measures within other settings to fully understand involvement with other categories of products as well as other segments of consumers.

Future research may, for example, include variables related to values, personality and situational, social or cultural aspects to provide a more comprehensive understanding of fashion clothing involvement construct. In addition, further research should look into how new formats of the stores (i.e. online marketing, viral marketing, etc.) as well as the infrastructural developments could influence customers’ shopping styles/values or their clothing involvement.

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Corresponding author

Riham Mohamed Talaat be contacted at: reham_talaat@foc.cu.edu.eg

| Construct | Measurement items | Adopted from |
|--|---|---------------------------|
| Fashion consciousness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I usually have one or more outfits that are of the latest style – When I must choose between the two, I dress for fashion, not for comfort – Dressing smartly is an important part of my life – It is important to me that my clothes are of the latest style – One should try to dress in style | Nam <i>et al.</i> (2007) |
| Fashion clothing involvement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I think a lot about fashion clothing – Fashion clothing is important part of my life – I consider fashion clothing as a central part of my life – I have a very strong commitment to fashion clothing that would be difficult to break – I find fashion clothing is very necessary thing in my life – I am very much involved in fashion clothing – I can easily identify fashion clothing – I pay a lot of attention to fashion clothing – I am very excited about fashion clothing – Fashion clothing means a lot to me – Fashion clothing shows people’s personality – Fashion clothing is important to me – I am very interested in fashion clothing | O’Cass’s (2004) |
| Purchase involvement with fashion clothing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I am willing to spend more money for fashion clothing – Buying decisions for fashion clothing are very important to me – Buying decision of fashion clothing requires lot of thinking – I give high importance in buying fashion clothing – Buying fashion clothing is significant to me – I think a lot about my choices when it comes to fashion clothing – Making purchase decisions for fashion clothing is significant to me – I like to be involved in buying fashion clothing | O’Cass and Choy (2008) |
| Materialism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Acquisition centrality</i> – I usually buy only the things I need – I try to keep my life simple when it is about buying things – I have all the things I really need to enjoy my life <i>Possessions as defining happiness</i> – My life would be better if I owned things that I don’t have – I would be more happy if I could buy more things – Sometimes, it bothers me when I can’t afford to buy things that I like – I feel very happy when I buy things – I like to have a luxurious life <i>Possessions as defining success</i> – Some of the most important achievements in life include acquiring material possessions – I like to own things that impress people – I don’t place much emphasis on the amount of material objects people own as a sign of success – I don’t pay much attention to the material objects other people own | Richins and Dawson (1992) |

Table A1.
Measurement items