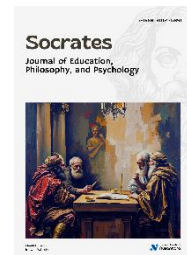




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The Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Self-Identity in Early Adulthood with the Bandwagon Effect in the Use of Luxury Fashion

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Abstract: This study aimed to determine the relationship between self-esteem and self-identity in early adulthood within the context of the bandwagon effect in the use of luxury fashion. The phenomenon of luxury fashion consumption among early adults has increased alongside the influence of social media, social trends, and the need for social recognition. This research employed a quantitative approach with a correlational method. The participants consisted of 120 early adults in Bekasi City who actively use social media and wear luxury fashion products, selected through purposive sampling. The research instruments used were the Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (EIPQ) to measure self-identity and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) to measure self-esteem. Data analysis was conducted using Kendall's Tau B correlation analysis because the data were not normally distributed. The results showed a significant positive relationship between self-esteem and self-identity, with a correlation coefficient value $\tau_b = 0,692$ and a significance value of $p < 0.001$. This indicates that higher self-esteem is associated with higher self-identity. Conversely, lower self-esteem tends to be related to a less stable self-identity and greater susceptibility to social trends in the use of luxury fashion.

Keyword: Self-Esteem, Self-Identity, Early Adulthood, Bandwagon Effect, Luxury Fashion

INTRODUCTION

In the early stages, individuals are in the process of searching for identity and building self-esteem, so external symbols such as luxury brands are often used to create self-image and social status (Xi et al., 2022). Luxury fashion refers to a category of fashion products perceived as having aesthetic value, high quality, exclusivity, and a symbol of social status in the eyes of consumers. Products in this category are typically characterized by premium prices, high artistry, and a strong and prestigious brand image, thus fulfilling not only functional needs but also symbolic and emotional needs of consumers. Fashion consumption is often influenced by symbolic dimensions such as uniqueness, as well as social associations that can reflect the identity and status of the wearer. This luxury value is also associated with perceptions of quality, rarity, and a different experience compared to mass fashion products, making luxury fashion a representation of a lifestyle that goes beyond basic needs and is more about personal expression and individual social achievement (Qadri et al., 2025). The development of social media and

consumer culture has driven the increasing use of luxury fashion among young adults. Luxury fashion products are no longer viewed solely as a necessity for appearance, but also as symbols of social status, self-image, and a means of gaining recognition from the social environment. This phenomenon is increasingly evident among the younger generation who actively use social media, where individuals tend to compare themselves to others through digital content that showcases luxurious and exclusive lifestyles. This condition gives rise to a tendency towards the bandwagon effect, which is the behavior of following trends or decisions made by many people in order to be accepted within a social group (Djuna & Fadillah, 2022). In the context of luxury fashion, this behavior can be seen in the urge to use non-branded items due to functional needs, but rather due to the desire to gain social validation and enhance self-image.

During early adulthood, individuals are in a stage of psychological development characterized by the process of searching for self-identity and forming a more stable self-concept. According to Marcia, self-identity develops through processes of exploration and commitment toward values, roles, and life goals considered suitable for oneself. However, in today's digital era, the process of identity formation is influenced not only by personal experiences, but also by social pressure, popular culture, and standards that develop through social media. Individuals who have not yet developed a strong self-identity tend to be more easily influenced by social trends, including the use of *luxury fashion* as a symbol of social acceptance and self-representation.

In addition to self-identity, self-esteem is also an important factor in understanding symbolic consumption behavior during early adulthood. Self-esteem refers to an individual's evaluation of their own worth and value (Rosenberg, 1965). Individuals with low self-esteem tend to seek external recognition to increase their self-confidence. One common form of compensation is the use of branded goods or *luxury fashion* as a means of building a self-image perceived as more valuable in the eyes of society. In contrast, individuals with high self-esteem tend to have better self-acceptance and are less likely to depend on external symbols to determine their self-worth.

The increasing phenomenon of *luxury fashion* use among early adults is important to examine because it is closely related to individuals' psychological development. When self-identity is built based on social validation and external symbols, individuals are at risk of developing less stable identities and becoming more easily influenced by changing social trends. Therefore, this study aims to determine the relationship between self-esteem and self-identity among early adults in the context of the *bandwagon effect* in the use of *luxury fashion*. This study is expected to contribute to the development of developmental psychology and social psychology studies, particularly regarding self-identity formation among young people in the era of digital consumer culture.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational method aimed at examining the relationship between self-esteem and self-identity among early adults in the context of the *bandwagon effect* in the use of *luxury fashion*. The research subjects consisted of 120 participants. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling based on specific criteria in accordance with the research objectives. The research instruments consisted of a self-identity scale and a self-esteem scale. The self-identity variable was measured using the Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (EIPQ) based on Marcia's theory, while the self-esteem variable was measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) based on Rosenberg's theory.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate a significant positive relationship between self-esteem and self-identity in early adulthood in the context of the bandwagon effect on luxury fashion use. Based on the results of the hypothesis test using Kendall's Tau B correlation, a correlation coefficient value of 0.692 was obtained with a significance value of $p < 0.001$.

Table 1. Correlation Test

Variable		Pride	Personal identity
Pride	Pearson's r	-	
	p-value	-	
	Kendall's Tau B	-	
	p-value	-	
Personal identity	Pearson's r	0.942***	-
	p-value	<.001	-
	Kendall's Tau B	0.692***	-
	p-value	<.001	-

This indicates a significant relationship between self-esteem and self-identity. A positive correlation coefficient indicates a unidirectional relationship between the two variables. These results indicate that the higher an individual's self-esteem, the stronger their self-identity. Conversely, individuals with low self-esteem tend to have less stable self-identities and are more easily influenced by social trends in luxury fashion. These findings demonstrate that self-esteem plays a crucial role in the process of identity formation in early adulthood, particularly amidst the rise of consumer culture and the influence of social media. Individuals with high self-esteem generally accept themselves, feel capable, and are less likely to rely on the approval of others. This condition makes individuals more confident in their values, goals, and life choices, allowing for a more mature exploration and commitment to identity formation.

These research findings also align with the concept of the bandwagon effect. This phenomenon describes the tendency of individuals to follow choices or behaviors that are currently being practiced by many others in order to gain social acceptance and a sense of belonging. Early adults with high self-esteem are less likely to be influenced by social pressure to follow luxury fashion trends simply for recognition. They are generally able to distinguish between personal needs and the desire for validation from their environment, so their decision to use luxury products is based more on self-worth than simply following trends. This finding aligns with research by Razmus & Laguna (2024), which states that individuals with high self-esteem tend to be more consistent in their lifestyle choices and consumption styles, while individuals with low self-esteem are more easily influenced by external recognition.

Based on the data categorization results, the majority of respondents had a high level of self-identity and self-esteem. This indicates that most respondents had a positive self-evaluation and a fairly good sense of self-understanding. Nevertheless, the use of luxury fashion remains a part of the respondents' lifestyle as a form of self-expression and social adjustment. The use of luxury goods in early adulthood is not always interpreted as purely consumerist behavior, but also as a social symbol related to self-image, group acceptance, and identity representation in social environments and digital media.

This research finding aligns with Rosenberg's theory, which states that individuals with high self-esteem tend to have better self-acceptance, feel valuable, and are less dependent on external validation. Individuals with high self-esteem are generally better able to build a stable self-identity because their decisions and life choices are based on personal values, not solely on social pressure. In the context of luxury fashion use, individuals with high self-esteem tend to use fashion products as a form of personal preference or self-expression, rather than as a primary means of gaining social recognition.

Conversely, individuals with low self-esteem are more susceptible to identity confusion and dependence on social judgment. This condition makes it easier for individuals to follow popular trends to feel accepted and perceived as equal within a particular social group. This phenomenon demonstrates the bandwagon effect, where consumption behavior is influenced by the urge to conform to the majority or social environment. When using luxury fashion, individuals often purchase branded goods not based on functional needs, but rather to boost self-confidence and build a more positive social image. This is supported by research by Goor et al. (2020), which explains that luxury consumption can lead to feelings of inauthenticity when

individuals use these products to meet social expectations. Furthermore, research by Opiri (2021) also found that self-esteem influences individuals' attitudes toward luxury fashion, especially among younger generations who actively use social media.

Social media also strengthens the relationship between self-esteem and identity in early adulthood. Exposure to content about luxury lifestyles, the use of branded goods, and ideal appearance standards makes it easier for individuals to engage in social comparison. When individuals feel inadequate compared to others, using luxury fashion can be a compensatory strategy to increase their sense of worth and gain social validation. In such circumstances, self-identity becomes more dependent on external symbols and environmental recognition than on an authentic sense of self. If this persists, it can lead to a more fragile self-identity that is susceptible to change following evolving social trends.

This research shows that self-esteem is an important psychological factor in identity formation in young adulthood. Individuals with high self-esteem tend to have a clearer, more stable identity, and are less susceptible to social pressures and consumer culture. Conversely, individuals with low self-esteem are more susceptible to using external symbols such as luxury fashion as a tool to build their self-image and gain social acceptance. Therefore, it is crucial for young adults to develop self-acceptance and a healthy self-concept so that the identity formation process does not rely solely on social validation and emerging trends in their environment.

This research implies that developing healthy self-esteem in young adulthood is crucial so that individuals can build a more stable identity and are less dependent on social validation or trends on social media. Furthermore, the results of this study can be used by the fields of developmental psychology and education to help young people understand the importance of self-acceptance and authentic identity formation in a digital consumer culture.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between self-esteem and self-identity in early adulthood in the context of the bandwagon effect on luxury fashion use. The higher an individual's self-esteem, the stronger and more stable their identity. Conversely, individuals with low self-esteem tend to be more easily influenced by social pressures and trends in using luxury fashion as a means of gaining social recognition and building self-image. These findings indicate that self-esteem plays a crucial role in the process of identity formation in early adulthood, especially amidst the development of social media and an increasingly strong consumer culture.

This study also shows that the use of luxury fashion in early adulthood is not only related to the need for appearance, but also related to the psychological need to be accepted, appreciated, and recognized by the social environment. Therefore, developing healthy self-esteem is important so that individuals are able to build a more authentic, stable self-identity that is not easily dependent on external validation or developing social trends.

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