

# Aspirations, Materialism and Repurchase Intentions of Luxury Alcohol Brands in South Africa

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**Abstract** – In emerging markets, where a substantial number of individuals live below the poverty datum line, status consumption and the desire to purchase luxury products has been increasing. This paper will examine the inter-relationships between intrinsic aspirations, extrinsic aspirations, materialism and repurchase intentions of luxury alcohol brands in South Africa. The study followed a quantitative research design and data was collected from 222 participants in South Africa. Data analysis involved structural equation modelling (SEM) performed through AMOS 27 software. The findings of the study showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between extrinsic aspirations and materialism. On the other hand, it was noted that the relationship between materialism and repurchase intentions of luxury alcohol brands was not statistically significant. Similarly, it was noted that the relationship between intrinsic aspirations and materialism was not statistically significant. This study contributes to the understanding of status consumption and shows that extrinsic aspirations have an impact on materialism. Furthermore, marketers and practitioners in emerging markets can draw from the findings of study and note that materialism displayed by consumers does not directly influence the repurchase behaviour of luxury goods.

**Keywords** – Intrinsic Aspirations, Extrinsic Aspiration, Materialism, Repurchase Intentions, Luxury

## 1 Introduction

Luxury is a subjective norm that varies across individuals, cultures and economic classes. Within the academic sphere there is no singular definition, as the material aspects of a good alone does not explain what luxury entails. Rather, the concept of luxury depends on what the good is, as well as both the social and individual context in which it is purchased and consumed (Berthon et al., 2009). Luxury is thus not limited to one type or industry of goods, but forms a segment of each respective good or service market. On the other hand, in a developing country such as South Africa, the luxury market amounts to US\$ 783.8 million and the market is expected to annually grow by 1.77% in the period 2023 - 2028 (Statista, 2023). The reasons, why

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consumers in South Africa purchase certain categories of brands, particularly luxury brands, has not received adequate scholarly attention. Traditional research (Veblen, 1994) has argued that the conspicuous consumption of luxury goods is a means to show economic power and class. In this regard, limited scholarly knowledge exists that can be used by marketers and practitioners in developing countries, such as South Africa, to understand status consumption. Thus, the paper examines the interrelationships between intrinsic aspirations, extrinsic aspirations, materialism and repurchase intentions of luxury alcoholic beverages in the South African market.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Consumer Aspirations

Consumer behaviour has been shown to be influenced by the consumer's aspirations (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 1999; Kopetz et al., 2012). The specific mechanics of which type of goal drives a specific behaviour can, and does, vary. Troung (2010) found that luxury consumption could be driven by either aspects of extrinsic aspirations or those of intrinsic aspirations. Intrinsic aspirations refer to the internal motivations that lead a consumer to purchase, in this context, luxury goods. This internally-oriented notion of consumption includes aspects such as self-fulfilment goals, self-directed pleasure and the desire for quality (Tsai, 2005). In respect of quality, it is posited that luxury brands in their essence denote that they are of high quality. The meaning a brand communicates to consumers depends on, in part, the perceived quality of the goods, which luxury brands posit as superior through their pricing level (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). This is important, as Silverstein and Fiske (2003) imply that consumers trade up into luxury goods due to perceived higher levels of quality.

Further to how intrinsic aspirations influence buying behaviour, Wong and Ahuvia (1998) theorise that products have three types of value. Instrumental value is the basic function the product was meant to fulfil. Symbolic value is what that product says about the brand or purchaser. Lastly, hedonic value is an indulgence of the internal self (Wong & Ahuvia, 1998). Intrinsic aspirations to purchase luxury goods would rely on the hedonic value that the purchase would represent to the consumer, namely that the pleasure of buying luxury alcohol brands is for the personal self and encompasses personal emotional benefits to the consumer. As articulated by Hope, Koestner, Holding and Harvey (2016) extrinsic aspirations are do not satisfy basic psychological needs and instead rely on external approval. Extrinsic aspirations are often linked to conspicuous consumption, which, as defined in Veblen's (1994) treatise, is the consumption of goods and services above what is necessary for human sustenance. The use of luxury goods thus falls under this definition. Veblen surmised that people buy luxury products to signal their wealth and class (1994). While initially considered a way for a social class to distinguish itself away from the need to engage in labour for sustenance, over time the understanding of conspicuous consumption has moved from analysis of those

engaged in symbolic economic activity – the leisure class (Veblen, 1994) – to a modern consumer society where those involved in practical economic activities show off their new-found wealth (Podoshen & Andrzejewski, 2012).

The externalisation of luxury further serves to create class distinction for the consumer or, alternatively, for a consumer to emulate an aspirational reference group (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). This creates other-referenced reasons to purchase luxury brands and their possession may indicate that the consumer is symbolically a member of a particular group (Vigneron and Johnson, 1999). Additionally, Jain et al. (2015) identify four factors that are extrinsic motivators – status value, conspicuous value, susceptibility to normative influence and uniqueness value. These four elements are suggested to have a positive influence on how a consumer thinks their social group will react to their behaviour. Extrinsic aspirations are, therefore, used to control impression management (Tsai, 2005).

## 2.2 Materialism

Drawing from the conceptualisation of Richins and Dawson (1992), this paper examines materialism as a value rather than as a personality trait (Podoshen & Andrzejewski 2012). Thus, as defined by Kasser (2016), materialism “comprises a set of values and goals focused on wealth, possessions, image, and status” (p. 489). Regarding purchase behaviour, it has been argued that the materialistic consumer defines their success and happiness through their possessions (Richins & Dawson, 1992). With happiness being derived partly from the possessions one has, Watson (2003) concludes that materialists spend more and purchase more than non-materialists. Brown et al. (2016) echo this notion in their study looking at how consumers with a high materialistic outlook spend their everyday money. They found that people high in materialism spent more money than those low in materialism (Brown et al., 2016). With materialism seen as a value, importance is placed on ownership, and one’s purchasing behaviour is used as a standard to evaluate one’s life.

The second consideration regarding materialism is status, which is only relevant in relation to others’ social standing. For the materialistic person, possessions, through their ability to create a perception of status level, provide value (Watson, 2003). This value is separate to satisfaction that may be gotten from utilising the good. In this regard, the reference group would be seen as a point through which a consumer would define their level of spending. Bearden and Etzel (1982) defined reference groups as those groups which have a significant influence over an individual’s behaviour. The type of influence, identified in their seminal paper on reference groups by Park and Lessig (1977), can be informational (adding credibility to purchasing decision); utilitarian (reflecting a need for conformity) or value expressive, which relates to how the purchase would reinforce the consumer’s self-concept.

## 2.3 Repurchase Intention

Repurchase intention refers to the decision to engage in a repetitious buying of a good or service in the future. It’s important to understand the potential

of a repeat purchase (Peyrot & Van Doren, 1994) for a good as this helps brands develop relationships with their consumers and can ensure the longevity of a brand. As a construct, repurchase intention has been examined by various scholars in differing contexts. Mittal and Kamakura (2001) presented a conceptual model linking repurchase intention to satisfaction. In more recent times, Liao, Lin, Luo and Chea (2017) studied the relationship between repurchase intention and satisfaction in an online setting. In terms of consumer behaviour studies, repurchase intention allows one to look at both a consumer's expectation and probability of their behaviour as well as their intention (Chan et al., 2015). These dual dimensions mean that looking at this construct allows for better prediction of consumers' future behaviour. As most consumer purchases are repeat purchases, it is important to understand why consumers choose to buy a brand again and how to drive further retention.

## 2.4 Hypothesis Formulation

There has been some precedent in the study of the proposed constructs. Shao et al. (2019) looked at the direct relationship of intrinsic and extrinsic values on repurchase intention. They argue that luxury good consumption is a form of goal pursuit for consumers that is individualistic. Their research showed that both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated consumers purchased luxury brands; however, their incidence of purchase was moderated by need for uniqueness. There is also conceptual support linking materialism to the type of aspirations that one possesses (Roberts & Pirog, 2004). In their study, Roberts and Pirog (2004) similarly found that there was a link between personal goals and materialism as a value. The current study brings together the aspiration constructs, materialism and repurchase intention into a singular model.

According to Roberts and Pirog (2004), in providing a summation of research by Richins and Dawson (1992), materialism is negatively correlated to intrinsic goals. This is because the nature of materialism may be in opposition to the benefits sought by intrinsically motivated consumers. Although there is a segment of luxury brand consumers who place worth on the hedonic value (Wong & Ahuvia, 1998) of spending their hard-earned money on themselves (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003), this could be more associated with a less visible mode of conspicuous consumption. Truong and McColl (2011) however, put the idea forward that consumers with intrinsic aspirations do not purchase products for materialistic reasons but rather for self-directed pleasure. Leading from this discussion, the following hypothesis is thus proposed:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a negative relationship between intrinsic aspirations and materialism.

The relationship between extrinsic goals and materialism has also been examined in literature. Through the extent that a consumer centralises extrinsic aspirations, materialism can be deduced (Kasser, 2016). Otero-Lopez and Villardefrancos (2015) found that financial success, image and popularity, which are aspects of extrinsic aspirations, can be closely linked to materialism. Further, research by Truong (2010) found that extrinsic aspirations can be strongly linked to conspicuous consumption which is another aspect of materialism. It is thus hypothesised that:

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H<sub>2</sub>: There is a positive relationship between extrinsic aspirations and materialism.

Few studies have been done showing a link between materialism and general consumer purchasing behaviour. It has been stated by Kasser (2016), that those who prioritise materialism are less prudent in spending their money. Otero-Lopez and Villardefrancos (2015) studied life aspirations in relation to compulsive buying and concluded that individuals with a high extrinsic motivation also showed high compulsive buying propensity. Chan et al. (2015) found that materialism had an indirect influence on repurchase intention. This influence came through the relationship of materialism to status consumption. In a study on the repurchase intentions of luxury goods by Thai consumers, Zhang and Chaipoopirutana (2016), looking at materialism as an element of personal value perceptions, found that there was a strong relationship between materialism and repurchase intention. Based on these previous studies the research hypothesises that:

H<sub>3</sub>: There is a positive relationship between materialism and repurchase intention.

### 3 Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design and Procedure

The study employed a quantitative cross-sectional approach. Data was collected via a self-administered online questionnaire developed on Qualtrics and administered via online social network platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. The target population for the study consisted of adults above the legal South African drinking age, which is eighteen years of age. With a target sample of  $n \geq 200$ , a sample of 222 participants was drawn from the population using non-probability convenience sampling. The questionnaire had three parts. Part one included screening questions and general questions on the consumer's alcohol consumption and alcohol purchasing behaviour. Part two was made up of questions adapted from various scales set to measure the constructs of the study. Part three consisted of demographic questions. Each of the constructs examined had pre-established scales that had been tested for validity and reliability in previous studies. The items measuring both intrinsic aspirations and extrinsic aspirations were adapted from Kasser and Ryan's (1993) Aspiration Index. For materialism, Richins and Dawson (1992) developed the material values scale (MVS). For this study the shorter nine-point version of the MVS as validated by Richins (2004) and Lipovčan et al. (2015) was used. The decision to use the shorter version was based on the intention to retain participants' concentration for the entire survey. Lastly, the Repurchase Intentions scale used by Sun (2015), who adapted it from Li et al. (2013), was utilised for the present study. To analyse data SPSS 27 was used to perform descriptive statistics and reliability tests. Furthermore, AMOS 27 was used to perform structural equation modelling which involved a two-step procedure, namely confirmatory factor analysis followed by hypothesis testing of the proposed relationships depicted in the conceptual model.

## 4 Results

A total of 250 questionnaires were collected, with 222 deemed suitable and complete. 87.2% of respondents reported that they were citizens or residents of South Africa. As seen in Table 1, 56.3% of respondents were female and 42.3% identified as male. The majority of respondents (50%) were Black/Africa, 2.3% were Asian/Indian, 19.8% were Coloured, 24.8% were White and 1.8% indicated other. The majority of the respondents (47.7%) were less than 30 years, 40.1% of the respondents were between 30 years and 40 years, lastly more than 12.2% were more than 40 years.

**Table 1:** Respondent Demographics

Variable	Response Category	Size	Percentage of Respondents
Gender	Male	94	42.3
	Female	125	56.3
	Prefer not to answer	3	1.4
Population Group	Asian/Indian	5	2.3
	Black/Africa	111	50.0
	Coloured	44	19.8
	White	55	24.8
	Other	4	1.8
	Prefer not to answer	3	1.4
Age	Less than 30 years	106	47.7
	Less than 40 years	89	40.1
	More than 40 years	27	12.2

### 4.1 Validity and reliability

Construct validity was ascertained through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and it can be noted in Table 2 that the threshold of the model fit indices were met.

**Table 2:** Model fit indices results

Model Fit Criteria	( $\chi^2/DF$ )	GFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	RFI	NFI	RMSE

<b>Recommended Threshold</b>	<3	>0.8	>0.8	>0.8	>0.8	>0.8	>0.8	<0.08
<b>Indicator Value</b>	1.915	0.896	0.938	0.921	0.937	0.848	0.878	0.064

It can be noted from Table 3, that the reliability of the scale was above the required threshold of 0.7. In terms of AVE, it can be noted the AVE for Intrinsic Aspirations and Repurchase Intentions were above the cut-off point of 0.5 (Zikmund et al., 2010). However, the AVE of Extrinsic Aspirations and Materialism were slightly below the cut-off point. Nonetheless, a Cronbach Alpha above 0.7 implies convergent validity (Nunnally, 1978) and all the factor loadings of these constructs were above 0.5.

**Table 3:** Reliability and Validity

Column 1	Cronbach's Alpha	Overall Cronbach's Alpha	AVE
Extrinsic Aspirations	0.746	0.797	0.441
Intrinsic Aspirations	0.756		0.542
Materialism	0.830		0.496
Repurchase Intentions	0.885		0.566

#### 4.2 Path modelling and hypothesis testing

Table 4 shows the results of the proposed hypothesis in the study. It can be noted that only one proposed hypothesis (H2) was supported and significant. The other two hypothesis (H1 and H3) were not supported and were not significant.

**Table 4:** Hypothesis results

Proposed Hypothesis Relationship	Hypothesis	P-value	Outcome
Intrinsic Aspirations > Materialism	H1	0.145	Not supported and not significant
Extrinsic Aspirations > Materialism	H2	0.004	Supported and significant
Materialism > Repurchase Intentions	H3	0.133	Not supported and not significant

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## 5 Discussion

The object of this study was to examine the relationship between aspirations (intrinsic and extrinsic), materialism and repurchase intentions of luxury alcohol brands in the South African context. Previous research in developed countries established that there was a relationship between intrinsic aspiration, extrinsic aspiration, materialism and repurchase intentions (Kasser, 2016; Truong, 2010). However, the interrelationships of these constructs with materialism had not been fully explored. The findings of the study indicated there was a statistically significant positive relationship between extrinsic aspirations and materialism. This finding is in line with findings from other studies (Kasser, 2016; Otero-Lopez & Villardefrancos, 2015; Truong, 2010). On the other hand, in the study it was noted that the relationship between intrinsic aspirations and materialism was not statistically significant. This finding is in line with findings from other studies (Roberts & Pirog, 2004; Richins and Dawson, 1992; Truong & McColl, 2011). Hence, it can be inferred that high intrinsic aspirations do not have a positive impact on materialism. Thus, intrinsic consumers do not have high levels of materialism. Whereas, extrinsic consumers have high levels of materialism. Furthermore, in the study it was found that there is no statistically significant positive relationship between materialism and repurchase intentions of luxury alcohol brands. This finding is not in line with the assertions by Pandalaere (2011) who purports that materialism has a positive impact on the purchase of luxury goods.

## 6 Conclusion

The findings in the study suggest that for South African consumers who are materialistic, the repurchase and consumption of luxury alcohol brands does not necessarily fulfil their materialistic desires. Hence managers of businesses that sell luxury alcoholic beverages in South Africa need to be mindful that the repurchase intentions of luxury alcoholic beverages is not directly related to the level of materialism of consumers. In this vein managers of businesses that sell luxury alcohol brands might need to consider possible mediating variables such as satisfaction, that might positively mediate the relationship between materialism and repurchase intentions of luxury alcohol brands. Satisfaction may be attributed to the actual taste of the luxury alcohol brand or appraisal from peers.

Furthermore, in order to encourage the repurchase of luxury brands, managers might use promotional methods that seek to overtly encourage extrinsic consumers to be loyal to luxury alcohol brands and thereby repurchase these brands. It can be noted that other possible demographic variables might result in the repurchase intentions of luxury alcoholic beverages, such as the income levels and age of consumers.



## 7 Limitations and Future Research

The following limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings of this research. Firstly, the cross-sectional nature of the study design means that the consumer behaviour reported in this study was not analysed over time. Second, the convenience sampling used in the study is another limitation of the study. Future research can investigate possible mediating and moderating variables in the interrelationship between extrinsic aspiration, intrinsic aspirations, materialism and repurchase intentions.

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