A Study of the Effects of Self-Esteem and Religiosity on Conspicuous Consumption  
(Case Study: Students of the University of Tabriz)

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Received: 24 June 2014 Accepted: 8 April 2015

Extended Abstract
1. Introduction
Conspicuous Consumption, a kind of consumption that is mostly to satisfy social than basic economic needs, is known as an emerging social issue in contemporary sociology. Sociologically, to the conspicuous consumer, such a public display of discretionary economic power is a means either of attaining or of maintaining a given social status. Although forms of conspicuous consumption existed in the past and Veblen has spoken about it among the leisure class in Western societies, it has been only recently that the conspicuous consumption is regarded as a social problem. Nowadays, conspicuous consumption and its relevant fashionability have crossed any boundaries of class and social strata, and is a very characteristics of any society, whether developed or developing. This study has attempted to evaluate the level of conspicuous consumption among university students and investigate the effects of self-esteem, religiosity, gender, and degree levels on conspicuous consumption among students of Tabriz University.

2. Theoretical Framework
In the 19th century, the term conspicuous consumption was introduced by the economist and sociologist Thorstein Veblen (1857–1929), in the book The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study in the Evolution of Institutions (1899), to describe the behavioural characteristics of the nouveau riche (new rich) social class, Veblen labels this type of behavior conspicuous consumption. In his famous study of consumption during the Gilded Age, Veblen (1899) speculated that, for the particular individuals he studied, “Consumption is evidence of wealth, and thus becomes honorific, and ...failure to consume a mark of demerit”. People spend money on artifacts of consumption in order to give an indication of their wealth to other members of society.
Simmel (1971) maintained that women are fashion's staunchest adherents’ this is because women are historically the subordinate sex, and such as derive greater social rewards from avoiding any instance of individualization. Simmel believed that women are intellectually and emotionally more stable and faithful by nature, and that

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compensate for their internal stolidity that are drawn more strongly to vicissitudes of fashion. Women have also been deprived of development opportunities in to move towards modernity, thus they are seeking a sense of change and development of phenomena such as consumption and fashion.

Bourdieu (1984) discussed about not only conspicuous consumption but also all kind of consumption. As it is discussed above, according to him, both economic and cultural capitals reinforce the class positions. Bourdieu believes that it is an expression of class distinction, as well. In fact, people distinguish themselves from others via consumption of special goods and products.

Bocock (1993) hopes that the world's religions to overcome the consumerist lifestyle before the damage to the planet Earth gets too catastrophic.

People who have lower self-esteem than those who have higher self-esteem, are needed to be approved and admired by others & much more influenced by the pressure groups.

3. Methodology

This study, utilizing survey method, has gathered and analyzed data from 378 students of Tabriz University in the studying year 2012-13 (being around 11416 persons). Quota sampling techniques are used to derive sample from the population under study. Self-administered questionnaires are used to gather needed data. Reliability of all main three variables of the study have been higher than 0.70. SPSS and LISREL statistical packages are used to analyze data at two parts; univariate and descriptive statistics are used to describe data and sample and regression and path analysis have been employed to investigate relationships among variables.

4. Results & Discussion

Findings show that conspicuous consumption scale is low to medium among the respondents. Average conspicuous consumption among students is 25.7 (in a continuum of 10-52). Applying Pearson Correlations for bivariate analyses indicate that self-esteem, religiosity and degree level (being Msc/MA comparing to Bsc/BA) have negative and statistically significant relationships with conspicuous consumption. In comparison, conspicuous consumption was not significantly different between males and females. To investigate the relationships in detail, a Path Model has been fitted to study the structural relationships among variables of interest, and results showed that gender (being male) has positive effect on conspicuous consumption. According to the findings, self-esteem, religiosity and degree level have affected conspicuous consumption negatively and significantly. Gender (being male) has negative effects on both self-esteem, and religiosity and degree level (being Msc/MA) positively affected self-esteem.

5. Suggestions

It seems that this result, gender (being male) has positive effect on conspicuous consumption and has negative effects on self-esteem, is a new data that requires more research, so it is recommended to researchers, to conduct more research studies on this subject.

Key word: Conspicuous consumption, Self-esteem, Religiosity, Gender, Degree level.
Reference (In Persian)


**Reference (In English)**


