Interrelationships among Facets of Self, Motivation, and Conspicuous and Sustainable Consumption Behaviour

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Abstract

The current study focuses on a process the current researchers label intra-negotiation—which deals with resolution of an individual's potential conflict across facets of oneself—and its influence on two distinctly different kinds of consumption (one favouring consumption, the other reducing the import of it). Specifically, we explore the discrepancy between actual-, ideal-, and ought-self and investigate the effect of these gaps on consumption behaviour. Moreover, attention is given to the association between three dominant human motives and consumption behaviour. The findings reveal that (1) ideal-actual self-discrepancy is inversely associated with achievement motivation, and (2) affiliation motivation is negatively related to conspicuous consumption. Affiliation motivation is ascertained to be positively related to sustainable consumption, whereas power motivation is discerned to be positively associated with conspicuous consumption. Neither conspicuous nor sustainable consumption is associated with the ideal-actual self or ought-actual self discrepancy. Possible rationales for the findings of the study, as well as study implications, are proffered.

Keywords: facets of self, self discrepancy, intra-negotiation of self discrepancy, consumption behaviour, human motives

1 INTRODUCTION

Consumer culture theory has observed a relationship between the self and consumption behaviour (Belk, 1988; Sirgy, 1982). In fact, regardless of one's ethnicities, culture, principles, self-views, or income, people are motivated to express their "self" through their consumption. Although researchers have viewed the "self" from various facets, (Ahuvia, 2005; Belk, 1988; Damasio, 2003; Fournier, 1998; Gallagher, 2000; James, 1890; Lambie & Marcel, 2002; Legrand & Ruby, 2009), in the extended view of the self, individuals' *possessions* are contributors to and reflections of their identities (Belk, 1988; James, 1890).

Self-discrepancy theory posits that there are *three domains* of the self: ideal, ought, and actual (Higgins, 1987). A dominant view of the self is the inevitable *discrepancy* across those three *alternative* selves (Higgins, 1987). Ideally, individuals likely prefer psychologically integration of the self—in other words, consistency across the self's three facets (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). If not integrated, self-discrepancy can engender discomfort in individuals, which might motivate them to undertake efforts (e.g., make purchases) to expurgate the inimical feelings (Higgins, 1987, 1989). Indeed, through consumption of possessions one strives to confirm, complete, verify, enhance, and attain his/her actual, ideal, and ought self—thus fostering integration across the three (Belk, 1984; Brown, Collins, & Schmidt, 1988; Swann Jr, Stein-Seroussi, & Giesler, 1992).

This investigation examines one other psychological state—motivation. Achievement, affiliation, and power are key learned psychological motives (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Murray, 1938) that can influence an individual's behaviour (e.g., consumption demeanour). In the Murray (1938) tradition, the study of motivation seeks to explain, understand, and predict the reasons people engage or discontinue any set of behaviours to satisfy the foregoing three needs. When not satisfied, people search for other forms of compensation, such as wealth and possessions. Whether motivated by hedonic, utilitarian, experiential, or functional reasons, consumers engage in various consumption behaviours. Some make consumption decisions to identify with selected groups (e.g., affiliation) (Mead, Baumeister, Stillman, Rawn, & Vohs, 2011); others make purchases to display status and prestige (e.g., achievement and power) (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004; Rucker & Galinsky, 2009).

Despite the importance of and inherent self-discrepancy in each person, the issue has received minimal empirical attention in marketing. Extant work has been in the context of cosmetic surgery (Pentina, Taylor, & Voelker, 2009) and compulsive buying (Dittmar, 2005)—both in situations reflective of a culture of consumption. Indeed, research focusing on the self in marketing essentially has examined issues related to self-congruity (Sirgy, Lee, Johar, & Tidwell, 2008), self-regulation (Chan & Wan, 2012), and self-concept (Sirgy, 1982). The current study introduces a process the current researchers label *intra-negotiation* (which deals with *resolution* of an individual's potential conflicts across three facets of oneself) and its impact on consumption behaviour. In addition, the big three motives have been found to be the influencer behind one's language usage (Pennebaker, Mehl & Niederhoffer, 2003) to subjective well-being (Kehr, 2004). Yet, research exploring the relationship between consumption behaviours and the big three motives has been sparse.

We propose that intra-negotiation is employed to resolve conflicts between the foregoing three perceptions of the self—(1) actual- and ideal-self and (2) actual- and ought-self. The *intra-negotiation* process is contextually dependent, internally focused, conscious or automatic, and effortless or purposeful (Swann, 2005; Swann, 1987). During intra-negotiation, individuals use various strategies to reconcile conflicts between the actual- and ideal- or the actual- and ought-self. Specifically, the actual-self *negotiates* with the ideal- or ought-self to derive a coherent self, or the ideal- or ought-self negotiates with the actual-self.

The current investigation seeks to advance the literature on the relationship between the self and consumption by identifying the underlying negotiation process of the self that promotes consumers' behaviours. The purpose of the study was to investigate the role of individuals' self-discrepancies on two antipodal kinds of consumption—conspicuous versus sustainable consumption (Horney, 1964; Munson, 1973). Conspicuous consumption could be regarded as profligate, social status buying; sustainable consumption, buying that is salutary for overall society and oneself. Given that the *ideal-self* embodies *extrinsic* values and the *ought-self intrinsic* values (Higgins, 1987) and the nature of the preceding three motives, these two kinds of buyer behaviour seemed especially germane for the present study.

The main contributions of this study are to (1) introduce the intra-negotiation process of self-discrepancy, (2) explain how the role of self-discrepancy can conduce to two alternative consumption behaviours, and (3) expatiate on the underlying role of human motives on consumers' behaviour.

2 BACKGROUND LITERATURE

As noted earlier, there are *three domains* of the self: ideal, ought, and actual (Higgins, 1987). The *ideal-self* is the representation of wishes, hopes, and aspirations that an individual and/or significant others *would like* him/her to achieve or realize (e.g., be a movie star, high-paid executive, beauty pageant contestant). Essentially, it represents a desired self. The *ought-self* is the representation of duties, responsibilities, and obligations that an individual and/or significant others feel he/she *should* embrace (e.g., caring friend, student, loving child). In a sense, it is redolent of a normative self. The *actual-self* is the representation of one's *current state* (as perceived

by the individual and/or others). Thus, it is suggestive of a descriptive (i.e., extant) self. The *ideal-self* embodies *extrinsic* values; the *ought-self*, *intrinsic* values (Higgins, 1987).

The concept of the self is bounded by contextual influences. One can exert simultaneously or discretely actual self-image and actual social self-image and ideal self-image and ideal social self-image (Sirgy, 1982). These self-images can be congruent or contradict each other; if contradictory, a self-discrepancy arises. As Higgins (1989, p. 97) avers: "[A] self-discrepancy is a cognitive structure interrelating distinct self-beliefs." In addition to the three types of self domains (actual, ought, ideal), the self also adopts two standpoints or perspectives (Higgins, 1989, p. 321): "[one's] own personal standpoint and the standpoint of some significant other" (someone important to the individual). Self-discrepancy arises when the two stances (i.e., actual- versus ideal-self or actual- versus ought-self) are discordant, regardless of the standpoints (Higgins, 1989). Such contrariety necessitates resolution of it to foster one's well-being.

2.1 Strategies of the Self

In self-awareness theory, Duval and Wicklund (1972) posit that, when attention is directed toward the self, an evaluation of the actual-self is compared with the ideal- or ought-self. Values and interests of the three selves sometimes are in harmony and interdependent; at other times, contradicting and independent of each other. The resulting valences of the evaluations can be either positive or negative (Higgins, 2000; Higgins, Roney, Crowe, & Hymes, 1994). However, the comparison typically yields affect that *favours* the *ideal* or *ought* self. The *greater the difference* between the actual- and ideal- or actual- and ought-self, the *larger* the *discrepancy* between the two facets and increased possibility of self conflicts and feelings of discomfort (Higgins, 1987). A negative affect favouring the ideal- or ought-self (over the actual-self) motivates behaviours to *narrow* the *discrepancy*, either through changing perceptions of the actual-self to closely match the perceptions of the ideal- or ought-self or turning away from attention to the self (Hoyle, 2006).

Germane literature infers that individuals use several strategies to manage the self to maintain a predictive and controllable self: bringing other people to view one's un/desired self, or being relatively more internal focused, deliberate, intentional, and intra-psychic (Higgins et al., 1994; Swann, 2005; Swann, 1987). In a *self-verification* strategy, individuals choose to be with objects (e.g., possessions, dinner at a haute cuisine restaurant) and people who support their self-concept no matter how harsh their revealed self-concepts might be for them (Gómez, Seyle, Huici, & Swann, 2009). In a *self-enhancement* strategy individuals choose to associate with positive identities and outcomes (Brown et al., 1988).

In a *self-completion* strategy, people acquire and display *material possessions* to *compensate* for certain inadequacies of their self (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1982). As such, individuals rely on consumption and possessions to *reconstruct* their self-identity and social identity (Kleine Iii & Kleine, 2000). Consumption (or possibly even non-consumption), then, is used to narrow the gap between the ideal- or ought-self and actual-self (Dittmar, Beattie, & Friese, 1996; Eisend & Möller, 2007). The magnitude of self-discrepancy affects symbolic, functional, and emotional values of products and impulse buying frequency (Dittmar et al., 1996). In addition, discrepancy between the actual- and ought-self motivates consumers to rely on meanings inherent in products to construct their social roles, especially novel ones (Solomon, 1983). Consumption (or possibly even non-consumption) can be used to create, preserve, and cultivate a stable and harmonious self-concept (Karanika & Hogg, 2010; Schouten, 1991).

2.2 Intra-Negotiation of Self-Discrepancy

The discrepancy between the actual- *and* ideal- or actual- *and* ought-self arises owing to individuals' continuously *comparing* themselves with others so as to judge how well they are doing (Festinger, 1954). In this process, well-being, values, and interests of *others* are reflected in their ideal- or ought-self. In other words, from a *consumption* perspective, self-perception of the ideal- or ought-self is anchored in what *others* possess (Kleine Iii & Kleine, 2000).

Once the foregoing self-evaluation process has occurred (Collins, 1996), individuals engage in various methods—such as self-verification, self-enhancement, self-completion, identity negotiations, consumption, and use of possessions—to reconcile the discrepancy (Brown, 1986; Swann, 1987; Swann & Read, 1981). Of these, *identity negotiation* is utilized to resolve conflicts between *others' perceptions of an individual and that person's* self-view (Swann, 1987).

Regardless of the view of the self, contemporary consumers possess fragmented and multiple senses of self (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995). In these fragmented and multiple senses, Ahuvia (2005, p. 181) argues that not many consumers abandon their *desired* self for a coherent identity. Rather, "throughout their lives, people strive to resolve identity conflicts, although the on-going nature of life renders *each resolution inherently tentative and imperfect*" (italics added). In other words, self-discrepancy, identity conflict, and identity negotiation are omnipresent (Ahuvia, 2005; Duval & Wicklund, 1972).

Building on identity negotiation theory, we propose that *intra-negotiation* is employed to resolve conflicts between multiple perceptions of the self—(1) actual- and ideal-self and (2) actual- and ought-self. During intra-

negotiation, individuals essay to reconcile conflicts between the actual- *and* ideal- or the actual- *and* ought-self. Specifically, the actual-self *negotiates* with the ideal- or ought-self to derive a coherent self, *or* the ideal- or ought-self negotiates with the actual-self.

Ahuvia (2005) proposes three distinct strategies for creating a coherent self-narrative: demarcating, compromising, and synthesizing. *Demarcating* strategy strongly endorses the ideal- or ought-self and rejects the actual-self. The outcome of this negotiation yields in favour of the ideal- or ought-self. As a result, individuals behave in such a way that solidifies and enhances the ideal- or ought-self. C*ompromising* strategy attempts to resolve conflicts by being in between these two identities. The outcome of this negotiation yields behaviours that satisfy both actual-self and ideal- or ought-self. A *synthesizing* strategy combines the favourable elements of both identities and establishes a new self that satisfies both identities (Ahuvia, 2005). A review of the literature suggests that individuals use three strategies to resolve conflicts between the self. Similarly, we propose that individuals specifically negotiate between the actual-, ideal-, and ought-selves using demarcating, compromising, and synthesizing strategies.

Karanika and Hogg (2010) find that *consumption* assumes a mediating role in the identity conflict resolution process. Interestingly, they discern that individuals' consumption strategies are mostly consistent with identity negotiation strategies proposed by Ahuvia (2005). So, as individuals encounter identity conflict, they use intra-negotiation to derive a coherent self. The overarching theme of the foregoing strategies is the selection of a *dominant* identity versus the other two facets of the self, or the compromising or rejection of both identities. The outcomes of intra-negotiation are manifested in the types of consumption thereafter. Taken together, depending on the strategies used and the resulting outcomes during the intra-negotiation process, individuals are motivated to consume products that are *consistent* with the values and interests of the *resulting* self (and thus attenuating the self conflicts).

2.3 Conspicuous versus Sustainable Consumption vis-à-vis the Self

The purpose of marketing traditionally has focused on satisfying consumer needs; after all, economic growth builds on unsatisfied needs (Hamilton, 2004). In a culture of consumption—"I shop, therefore I am" (Holbrook, 2001)—inherent and inevitable *self-discrepancy* motivates individuals to shop in order to "extend" the self (Belk, 1988). Marketing scholars, however, have issued a call for a transformation of marketing thought and practice that will contribute to the commonweal (Brown et al., 2005; Mick, 2007; Varey, 2010; Wilkie & Moore, 2006). These advocates admonish marketers for the tendency to neglect moral responsibility by encouraging consumers to "spend, spend, spend." The foregoing disquisition infers that marketers proverbially have induced consumers to buy irrespective of whether the nature of the purchase is salutary for the consumer and society at large. As such, this is redolent of conspicuous consumption. Alternatively, some marketing scholars embrace the idea that marketers should provide offerings that are salubrious for both the consumer and society. Purchasing such products is reflective of sustainable consumption.

As noted earlier, when individuals embark on a demarcating strategy, the outcome of the intra-negotiation process favours the ideal- or ought-self and totally rejects the actual-self (Ahuvia, 2005). We postulate that individuals using a demarcating strategy engage in two kinds of antipodal consumption. More specifically, Munson (1973) and Horney (1964) promulgate that the self has an impact on whether the individual engages in two kinds of antipodal consumption—"conspicuous" versus "sustainable"—which embody a *consumption spectrum*. Conspicuous consumption differs from sustainable consumption in terms of *using* scarce resources versus minimal resources.

2.4 Conspicuous Consumption.

Conspicuous consumption is "the purchase of goods or services for the specific purpose of displaying one's wealth" (Investopia, 2015). Conspicuous, extravagant, or status consumption refers to the same phenomenon. Many scholars have explored this behaviour, starting with Veblen's (1925) conception of the urban nouveau riche to the newly-entitled "me" generation (Twenge, 2006). Such individuals exercise "a deliberate engagement in symbolic and visible purchase, possession, and usage of products and services imbued with scarce economic and cultural capital with the motivation to communicate a distinctive self-image to others" (Roy Chaudhuri, Mazumdar, & Ghoshal, 2011).

Conspicuous consumption encompasses two dimensions: social visibility and uniqueness of products, services, and experiences (Roy Chaudhuri et al. 2011). *Social visibility* refers to a person's proclivity to be conspicuous (observable) to others in ways that might enhance his/her status through possessions. *Uniqueness* pertains to being distinct from others by purchasing items that few people own. Conspicuous consumption consumers are willing to pay a premium price for an equivalently functional product or service in order to achieve perceived status and prestige (Bagwell & Bernheim, 1996). They use visible status symbols to categorize themselves in society and to facilitate the self's achieving self-congruency (Belk, 1988; Chaudhuri & Majumdar, 2010).

As individuals compare themselves with others, the upward/unfavourable comparisons (i.e., comparing oneself with someone he/she perceives as truly superior to the individual, thus leading to an unfavourable perception of oneself vis-à-vis the referent other) occur faster than the downward/favourable comparisons (comparing oneself with someone he/she perceives as truly inferior to the individual, thus leading to a favourable perception of oneself vis-à-vis the referent other) (Wood, 1989). Feelings of inadequacy and inferiority motivate individuals to increase their consumption (Christen & Morgan, 2005; Drèze & Nunes, 2009). Specifically, relative to high income persons, low-income individuals spend more on conspicuous consumption in order to "keep up with the Joneses" (Christen & Morgan, 2005; Drèze & Nunes, 2009).

Interestingly, individuals with higher self-discrepancy are found to have a stronger need for products that will make them feel worse about themselves (Daza, 2011). (Essentially, these persons make purchases to close the ideal-actual discrepancy, but doing so does not make them happy.) This need is especially prevalent among individuals whose ideals are anchored in *extrinsic* (e.g., money, wealth, beauty), rather than in *intrinsic* (e.g., personal growth, inner freedom, self-actualization), values (Daza, 2011). Indeed, a relatively recent study found that people who care about social position and status are motivated to spend more on conspicuous consumption when their material possession comparisons with others do not yield unfavourable impressions (Ordabayeva & Chandon, 2011). Those authors also ascertained that material possession equality motivates individuals with extrinsic values—such as social position and status—to increase their conspicuous consumption, thus enhancing a perception that one is favourably different from the referent other.

Munson (1973) and Horney (1964) declaim that conspicuous consumption products are preferred by the ideal-self. Conceivably, conspicuous consumption is the manifestation of the ideal-self, resulting from the intra-negotiation process between the actual- and the ideal-self. A preference for conspicuous consumption results in the ideal-self overcoming the actual-self.

Alternatively, Ordabayeva and Chandon (2011) find that material possession equality reduces conspicuous consumption for people who do not care about their social position. Indeed, a predilection for sustainable consumption may well lead to the ought-self supplanting the actual-self with the denouement being an aversion to conspicuous consumption kinds of products. After all, the ought-self embodies normative beliefs and intrinsic (i.e., non-material) values, thus seemingly conducing to a consumer's decreased attention or interest in status-oriented items.

The foregoing implies that the ideal-self will be favourably disposed toward conspicuous consumption. In contrast, though, the ought-self contains some sense of intrinsic values; thus, it is likely to have the opposite impact on conspicuous consumption from the ideal-self. Based on the preceding dialectic, then, the following hypotheses are offered:

H_{1a}: Ideal-actual self-discrepancy is positively related to conspicuous consumption.
H_{1b}: Ought-actual self-discrepancy is negatively related to conspicuous consumption.

2.5 Sustainable Consumption.

Sustainable consumption has been defined as "the use of goods and services that respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life, while minimizing the use of natural resources, toxic materials and emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle, so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations" (Oslo Roundtable on Sustainable Production and Consumption, 1994). A desire for a simple lifestyle or concern for societal welfare is a touchstone of sustainable consumption, which is in sharp contrast to a desire for social visibility and uniqueness (conspicuous consumption). Individuals opting for sustainable consumption, to some extent, may exhibit anti-consumption behaviours through focusing on sustainable living (Iyer & Muncy, 2009; Lee, Roux, Cherrier, & Cova, 2011).

Originally mentioned as responsible living (Fisk, 1973), sustainable living transcends anti-consumption. Specific behaviours include rejection of or reduction in consumption, as well as reusing and recycling products. Sustainable consumption closely relates to thriftiness, frugality, and environmental consciousness (Black & Cherrier, 2010; Fisk, 1973). Sustainable consumers attempt to live a so called "sustainable" life by not purchasing conspicuous products, in general (Black & Cherrier, 2010; Iyer & Muncy, 2009).

Scholars have identified two types of sustainable consumers: simplifiers and global impact consumers. *Simplifiers* eschew a culture of consumption and do not derive happiness through ownership of possessions (Cherrier, 2009). They believe in sustainable, simplified, and reduced consumption-based lifestyles (e.g., green living) but are not "frugal materialists" who reduce consumption in one area to increase consumption in another (Lastovicka, Bettencourt, Shaw Hughner, & Kuntze, 1999). They possess negative attitudes toward hyper-consumption and eschew hyper-consumption as a means for enhancing personal well-being.

Global impact consumers focus on benefiting humanity at large. They are concerned about environmental waste, material inequality across nations, and societal issues (Iyer & Muncy, 2009). Global impact consumers oppose a hyper-consumption culture (Albinsson, Wolf, & Kopf, 2010). They also reject conspicuous products as a means of achieving personal fulfilment and the desired self (Cherrier, 2009; Cherrier, Black, & Lee, 2011; Iyer

& Muncy, 2009). Moreover, they are resistant toward a culture of consumption and project consumer-resistant identities (Cherrier, 2009; Cherrier et al., 2011).

Conceivably, sustainable consumption lifestyles are a contradistinction to conspicuous consumption lifestyles. Individuals attempt to derive a desired-self through means of a consumption spectrum, with the endpoints referring to sustainable versus conspicuous behaviours (Horney, 1964; Munson, 1973). Empirical research relating to sustainable consumption is sparse. Inferring from the preceding discussion related to conspicuous consumption, though, discrepancies between the ideal-actual self and ought-actual self conceivably have contrasting relationships with sustainable consumption. With the putative negative effects of a consumption culture and a materialistic society anchored in extrinsic values of the ideal-self, sustainable consumption is likely to appeal to the ought-self. Thus, the following hypotheses are proffered:

H_{2a}: Ideal-actual self-discrepancy is negatively related to sustainable consumption.
H_{2b}: Ought-actual self-discrepancy is positively related to sustainable consumption.

2.6 Consumption and Motivation

The *achievement motive* is one's desire to excel and outperform established sets of standards relative to oneself or others (McClelland 1985). Those possessing this motive have a motive and desire to excel. The motivation centres on competence and functions as directive influences on affect, cognition, and behaviour (Elliot, 1999). The *affiliation motive* refers to one's desire to form friendships and associations with others (Murray, 1938). Its focal point is on establishing a sense of belonging. Per Maslow's (1954) need hierarchy, it pertains to a desire to achieve "belongingness and love." The *power motive* entails yearning to affect, control, and influence other people (Winter, 1973). Power-driven individuals prefer to be visible, influential, and dominant in either personal or professional positions. These individuals tend to draw attention to themselves and impress others by displaying prominent status (Ng, Winter, & Cardona, 2011) and by consuming ostentatious products (Winter, 1973).

2.7 Achievement Motivation and Consumption.

Owning products with specific brand names can be redolent of a sense of achievement for many consumers (O'cass & Frost, 2002; O'Cass & McEwen, 2004). The empirical relationship between achievement motivation and consumption has rarely been reconnoitred. However, extant studies have attempted to connect the need to achieve with conspicuous consumption. In a study of willingness to pay premium prices, consumers were observed to be more inclined to pay higher prices when experiencing feelings of envy. Van de Ven et al. (2011) reason that envy is the engine of consumers' achievement motivation—according to Corneo and Jeanne's (1997, 2001a, 2001b) studies. In addition, materialistic individuals tend to have achievement goals (Ku 2004). From this perspective, the putative association between the achievement motive and conspicuous consumption can be proffered:

H_3: The achievement motive is positively related to conspicuous consumption.

2.8 Affiliation Motivation and Consumption.

Possibly a high need for social affiliation heightens one's focus on monitoring social inclusion. Research has found that social exclusions increase affiliation needs (Mead et al., 2011), augment conformance to group norms (Williams, Cheung, & Choi, 2000), and raise the focus toward impression management (Lakin, Chartrand, & Arkin, 2008). Recent work on social exclusion ascertains that individuals are motivated to spend and consume in order to gain affiliation (Mead et al., 2011). This implies that the nature of the group (i.e., its raison d'être or focus) toward which the individual aspires—à la conspicuous or sustainable products in this study—is likely to affect the person's consumption behaviour. In fact, extant work indicates that motivation to conform to outside influence (e.g., "significant others") affects consumers' purchase behaviours (e.g., Tran et al., 2014). Thus, a need to join and associate with a group encourages individuals to interact with the group and conceivably engage in (conform to) consumption behaviour that is consistent with the members of the particular group. As such, the following hypotheses are offered:

H_4: Affiliation motive is positively related to conspicuous consumption.
H_5: Affiliation motive is positively related to sustainable consumption.

2.9 Power Motivation and Consumption.

Power-motivated persons might have the desire to focus on their state of power and thus be motivated to acquire more power. In addition, people generally prefer to have more power than less (Handgraaf, Van Dijk, Vermunt, Wilke, & De Dreu, 2008). The foregoing thus suggests that high power-motivated individuals seek to increase power (Ronay & von Hippel, 2010). Findings from germane work indicate that powerless individuals

are motivated to consume luxurious and status goods to restore power (Rucker & Galinsky, 2008). The logic is that status is a form of power (Chaudhuri & Majumdar, 2006; O'Cass & McEwen, 2004). Conceivably, power-motivated individuals are inclined to purchase conspicuous products to manifest such power. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_6: Power motivation is positively related to conspicuous consumption.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sample and Procedure

The survey was administered online to college students for a duration of 20 minutes. Respondents were informed that their participation or lack thereof would not affect their class standing. Extra class credit was given for completing the survey, but there was no penalty for not completing it. Responses remained completely anonymous. A total of 538 surveys were returned. Thirteen surveys were deleted, due to abundant missing data, thus yielding the final data set of 525 respondents. Respondent demographics were as follows: average age, 22.73 years; gender, 46.7% male; ethnicity, 56.8% Caucasian; parents' income, 31.2% beyond $100,000; respondents' income, 41.2% under $9,999; and marital status, 92.3% single or never married. Nonresponse bias was assessed by splitting the sample into early and late respondents and measuring differences between those two groups vis-à-vis the demographics data (Armstrong & Overton, 1977). Results yielded no statistically significant (p > .05) differences.

3.2 Measurement Validation

All measures were adapted from extant scales. *Conspicuous* (Roy Chaudhuri et al., 2011) and *sustainable* (Iyer & Muncy, 2009) *consumption* constructs were anchored on a 7-point Likert scale, from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. As noted earlier, conspicuous consumption consists of two components, social visibility and uniqueness. To be compatible with extant work, both components were assessed. Also, as mentioned previously, there are two kinds of sustainable consumers, simplifiers and global impact. Again, to be consistent with prior work, both consumer types were assessed. Accordingly, when testing hypotheses pertaining to either kind of consumption, tests were conducted on the germane two underlying constituents. Also, *achievement, affiliation*, and *power motivation* were adapted from the work of Jackson (1984); the aforementioned Likert scale was utilized for these items as well.

The conventional scale measuring *self-discrepancy* provides a 28-item adjective checklist (Gough and Heilbrun, 1983); an alternative is a user-generated technique, which was employed in this study. The latter approach has been shown to be consistent with theory, be less demanding for respondents, and have fewer measurement errors (Francis, Boldero, & Sambell, 2006). Because the self-discrepancy concept is the perception of the differences between the actual and desired state, individuals' ought- and ideal- self-discrepancy not only differ in the current and future states, but the dimensions also vary. Traits, behaviours, attitudes, feelings, and states of beings are all valid dimensions of self-concept. Thus, a nonidiographic self-concept measure is insufficient to capture individuals' self-discrepancy. Moretti and Higgins (1990) emphasize the import of measuring self-discrepancy using idiographic self-nominated attributes as opposed to standard self-ratings (per the checklist of Gough and Heilbrun [1983]).

To assess self-discrepancy, a measure was partially adapted from Francis et al. (2006). (Because the measure was adapted, it was not pre-tested.) First, participants were asked to generate four ideal- and ought-self attributes. Second, they were asked to list four corresponding antonyms of the attributes that they had generated, and then place them at the opposite end of a 7-point Likert scale. Third, they were asked to select where they saw themselves currently in relation to these attributes. The 7-point Likert scale was anchored from 1 = ideal- and ought-self to 7 = antonym of ideal- and ought-self. Examples of the attributes/antonyms used included healthy/unhealthy, hardworking/lazy, successful/unsuccessful, happy/depressed, and provider/taker, among others.

Items were first examined using principal components analysis and Varimax rotation to identify and remove substantive cross-loading items. Second, measurement validities were assessed by calculating Cronbach alphas for each construct. All alphas were at acceptable levels (α > .7) (Nunnally, 1978). Third, the resulting sets of items were analyzed via confirmatory factor analysis using LISREL 8.8 to verify unidimensionality. The goodness of fit indices indicated good fit: Chisquare = 1138.38 df = 524; IFI = 0.96, NFI = 0.93, AGFI = 0.87, CFI = 0.96, SRMR = 0.052, RMSEA = 0.047 (Hu and Bentler 1999). The chi-square statistic was significant (p<.05). However, the chi square statistic often rejects valid models in research with large samples (n = 525 in this study) (Bagozzi and Yi 1988). Study measurement items–and concomitant statistics—are shown in Tables 1, 2, 3,4, and 5.

Table 1: Factor structure of achievement, affiliation, and power motives

	Achievement	Power	Affiliation
I am attracted by tasks, in which I can test my abilities.	.887		
I am interested in situations allowing me to test my abilities.	.849		
I enjoy working on difficult tasks.	.778		
I like situations in which I can find out how capable I am.	.728		.453
I think I would enjoy having authority over other people.		.888	
I find satisfaction in having influence over others.		.809	
I strive to gain control over the events around me at school or work.		.778	
If given the chance, I would make a good leader of people.		.652	
There are some people that I feel very close to.			.800
Having closed personal relationship is very important to me.			.731
Whenever I believe that I have hurt someone's feelings, I feel guilty.			.722
Percentage of variance	26.95	24.50	19.38

Table 2: Factor structure of conspicuous consumption: uniqueness and social visibility

	Uniqueness	Social visibility
By choosing a product having an exotic look and design, I show my friends that I am different.	.863	
I choose products or brands to create my own style that everybody admires.	.844	
Others wish they could match my eyes for beauty and taste.	.783	
I would buy an interesting and uncommon version of a product otherwise available with a plain design, to show others that I have an original taste.	.753	
I buy some products because I want to show others that I am wealthy.		.825
It says something to people around me when I buy a high priced brand.		.805
I would be a member in a businessmen's posh club.		.802
Given a chance, I would hang a Hussain painting in drawing my room.		.639
Percentage of variance	36.73	34.24

Table 3: Factor structure of sustainable consumption: global impact consumers and simplifiers

	Global impact consumers	Simplifiers
We must do our part to conserve world's resources.	.850	
If the world continues to use up its resources, it will not survive.	.784	
If we all consume less, the world would be a better place.	.782	
Most people buy way too many things that they really don't need.	.690	
Brand name is not important to me.		.770
"Waste no, want not" is a philosophy I follow.		.739
Given a choice, I would like to buy 'do-it-yourself' products.		.720
Living a simple life makes me happier.		.563
Percentage of variance	32.46	26.12

Table 4: Structural Equation Model Results

Construct and Scale Items	Std. est.	t-stats	CR	AVE
Achievement Motivation				
I am attracted by tasks, in which I can test my abilities.	.88	27.33	.904	.707
I am appealed by situations allowing me to test my abilities.	1.0	28.49		
I enjoy working on difficult tasks.	1.0	na		
I like situations in which I can find out how capable I am.	.90	20.32		
Affiliation Motivation				
There are some people that I feel very close to.	.77	10.59	.734	.485
Having closed personal relationship is very important to me.	1.0	na		
Whenever I believe that I have hurt someone's feelings, I feel guilty.	.99	15.34		
Power Motivation				
I think I would enjoy having authority over other people.	.73	15.34	.839	.568
I find satisfaction in having influence over others.	.93	19.13		
I strive to gain control over the events around me at school or work.	1.0	na		
If given the chance, I would make a good leader of people.	.90	16.48		
Ideal vs. Actual Self				
Please indicate where you see yourself actually are in relation to your ideal 1	1.0	na	.758	.441
Please indicate where you see yourself actually are in relation to your ideal 2	.98	12.65		
Please indicate where you see yourself actually are in relation to your ideal 3	.99	12.71		
Please indicate where you see yourself actually are in relation to your ideal 4	.92	12.09		
Ought vs. Actual Self				
Please indicate where you see yourself actually are in relation to your ought 1	.90	14.13	.807	.512
Please indicate where you see yourself actually are in relation to your ought 2	1.0	na		
Please indicate where you see yourself actually are in relation to your ought 3	.98	14.78		
Please indicate where you see yourself actually are in relation to your ought 4	.95	14.25		
Conspicuous Consumption: Social Visibility				
I buy some products because I want to show others that I am wealthy.	1.0	na	.837	.566
It says something to people around me when I buy a high priced brand.	.96	20.19		
I would be a member in a businessmen's posh club.	.94	19.52		
Given a chance, I would hang a Hussain painting in drawing my room.	.68	13.47		
Conspicuous Consumption: Uniqueness				
By choosing a product having an exotic look and design, I show my friends that I am different.	.88 / .90	21.34 / 21.33	.888	.666
I choose products or brands to create my own style that everybody admires.	1.0	na		
Others wish they could match my eyes for beauty and taste.	.95	23.42		
I would buy an interesting and uncommon version of a product otherwise available with a plain design, to show others that I have an original taste.				
Sustainable Consumption: Global Impact Consumers				
We must do our part to conserve world's resources.	.94	14.72	.808	.519
If the world continues to use up its resources, it will not survive.	1.0	na		
If we all consume less, the world would be a better place.	.93	15.62		
Most people buy way too many things that they really don't need.	.84	14.95		
Sustainable Consumption: Simplifiers				
Brand name is not important to me.	.85	9.69	.694	.363
"Waste no, want not" is a philosophy I follow.	1.0	na		
Given a choice, I would like to buy "do-it-yourself" products.	.85	9.67		
Living a simple life makes me happier.	.92	9.72		

Note. "na" = "not applicable."

Table 5: Means, Standard Deviations, Alphas, Correlations, and Shared Variances

	Means	s.d.	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Achievement Motivation	5.55	1.09	.89	1	.30	.22	.01	.00	.00	.02	.09	.05
Affiliation Motivation	5.79	1.01	.70	.55	1	.11	.00	.00	.01	.01	.13	.01
Power Motivation	5.09	1.13	.83	.46	.34	1	.00	.00	.03	.10	.03	.00
Ideal-Actual Discrepancy	3.40	1.16	.76	-.13	-.03	-.09	1	.29	.00	.00	.00	.00
Ought-Actual Discrepancy	3.53	1.46	.81	.00	.05	-.04	.54	1	.00	.00	.00	.00
Social Visibility	3.22	1.51	.83	-.07	-.11	.19	-.02	-.04	1	.40	.01	.02
Uniqueness	3.86	1.51	.88	.14	.11	.32	-.03	-.04	.64	1	.00	.00
Global Impact	5.37	1.08	.80	.30	.36	.18	-.04	.03	-.14	.06	1	.15
Simplifiers	4.46	1.15	.69	.22	.12	.09	.00	.02	-.15	.04	.4	1

Note. Correlations are reported in the lower half of the matrix.
Note. Shared variances are reported in the upper half of the matrix.

Fourth, convergent validity was assessed by examining the completely standardized factor loadings. All loadings were statistically significant (t-values ranged from 9.67 to 28.49) and exceeded the recommended .50 level (Hair et al. 2006). Convergent validity was also assessed by calculating composite reliabilities, as recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981). All constructs, ranging from .75 to .90, exceeded the recommended level (>.7). Another assessment of convergent validity was examined using the average variance extracted (AVE). With the exceptions of ideal-actual, affiliation, and sustainability consumption, all AVEs exceeded the recommended level (>.5). However, the Cronbach's alphas of ideal-actual, affiliation, and sustainability consumption were at acceptable levels for exploratory research. Fifth, discriminant validities were assessed by comparing the square of the correlation between each construct with the corresponding average variance extracted. In each case, the square of the correlation between each pair of constructs was significantly - lower than the AVEs. These results demonstrated good discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

3.3 Hypothesized Structural Model Results

The structural model also provided good fit to the study: The goodness of fit indices indicated good fit: Chisquare = 1433.07 df = 538; IFI = 0.96, NFI = 0.92, AGFI = 0.86, CFI = 0.96, SRMR= 0.061, RMSEA= 0.056 (Hu and Bentler 1999). Again, the chi-square statistic was significant ($p<.05$) due to large samples research (Bagozzi and Yi 1988). Shown in Table 6 are the standardized path coefficients and associated significant levels of the proposed relationships.

3.4 Results of Hypothesis Tests.

$H_{1a,b}$ predicted that the ideal-actual (ought-actual) discrepancy is positively (negatively) related to conspicuous consumption. $H_{2a,b}$ posited that the ideal-actual (ought-actual) discrepancy is negatively (positively) related to sustainable consumption. Owing to insignificant results ($p > .05$—Table 6), however, none of these hypotheses receives empirical support.

H_3 predicted that achievement motivation would be positively associated with conspicuous consumption. Such motivation, however, evinces no significant relationship ($p > .05$) with either of the two components of conspicuous consumption—social visibility and uniqueness; so, the hypothesis is rejected. H_4 proposed that affiliation motivation would be positively related to conspicuous consumption. Results are significant for social visibility (-.46, t = 3.4, p < .05)—but in the obverse direction—yet not for uniqueness (-.02, t = .19, p < .05). Thus, H_4 is not supported. H_5 posited that affiliation motivation would be positively related to sustainable consumption. Results are significant for one of the two types of sustainable customers: global impact consumers (.58, t = 6.01, p < .05); simplifiers (.15, t = 1.38, p > .05). Thus, H_5 is partially supported. H_6 promulgated that power motivation would be positively associated with conspicuous consumption. Results are significant for both social visibility and uniqueness (.54, t = 6.85, p < .05; .47, t = 6.14, p < .05); thus, H_6 is supported.

Table 6: Hypothesized Model Structural Coefficients

Path	Standard coefficients (t-values)
$H_{1a:}$ Ideal-Actual (+) → conspicuous consumption[a]	-.02 (.26) & .04 (.54)
$H_{1b:}$ Ought-Actual (-) → conspicuous consumption[a]	-.02 (.39) & -.06 (1.04)
$H_{2a:}$ Ideal-Actual (-) → sustainable consumption[b]	-.04 (.67) & .06 (.97)
$H_{2b:}$ Ought-Actual (+) → sustainable consumption[b]	.0 (.1) & -.01 (.22)
$H_{3:}$ Achievement (+) → social visibility	-.15 (1.37)
H_3 : Achievement (+) → uniqueness	-.01 (.08)
$H_{4:}$ Affiliation (+) → social visibility	-.46[c] (3.40)
$H_{4:}$ Affiliation (+) → uniqueness	-.02 (.19)
$H_{5:}$ Affiliation (+) → global impact	.59[c] (6.01)
$H_{5:}$ Affiliation (+) → simplifying	.15 (1.38)
$H_{6:}$ Power (+) → social visibility	.54[c] (6.85)
$H_{6:}$ Power (+) → uniqueness	.47[c] (6.14)

[a]*The coefficient and t-value on the left denotes the results for "social visibility"; on the right, for "uniqueness."*
[b]*The coefficient and t-value on the left denote the results for "global impact customers"; on the right, for "simplifiers."*
[c]*p < .05*

4 DISCUSSION

A study was conducted chiefly to examine how consumption behaviour is influenced through self-discrepancies and motivation of individuals. In doing so, the concept of the intra-negotiation process was introduced. Intra-negotiation is a concerted endeavour on the part of an individual to undertake efforts to reconcile discrepancies between his/her ideal- and ought-self vis-à-vis the actual-self. This is the inaugural investigation in the marketing discipline to reconnoiter the influence of self-discrepancies on *both* conspicuous and sustainable consumption. Previous empiricism has minimally investigated the former, and no extant published work was found that examined the latter. Findings were not supportive of most hypotheses, yet analyses did proffer some expected and unexpected, but intriguing, outcomes.

4.1 Interpretation of the Findings.

Surprisingly, neither conspicuous nor sustainable consumption was associated with the ideal-actual self or ought-actual self discrepancy. The ideal-actual self discrepancy was proposed to be positively related to conspicuous consumption and negatively related to sustainable consumption. The ought-actual self discrepancy was presupposed to be negative associated with conspicuous consumption and positively associated with sustainable consumption. The foregoing results imply that the extent of difference between the actual and the other two facets of self seemingly does not affect whether consumers opt for either kind of consumption behaviour. Perhaps the "genre" of consumption (conspicuous or sustainable in this case) is impervious to issues of self-discrepancy. Alternatively, peradventure the discrepancy in the selves will not induce consumers to pursue either kind of consumption behaviour in efforts to reduce the discordancy among facets of the self.

All three kinds of motivation were hypothesized to be positively related to conspicuous consumption. The supposition was that purchasing products can be reflective of one's achievement, desire for inclusion in a group, and expression of increased power. Achievement motivation, however, was *unrelated* to conspicuous consumption. As noted earlier, the achievement motivation/conspicuous consumption association has yet to be explored. Nonetheless, empirical work has found a *tangential* relationship between the two constructs (Corneo and Jeanne 1997, 2001a, 2001b; Ku 2004; Van de Ven et al. 2011). Thus, the finding in this study is not compatible with those obtained in the foregoing investigations. Conceivably, consumers might not regard observable, status-oriented products as signs of achievement or accomplishment. Given the perceived "commoditization" of many products today, consumers may consider many erstwhile high status offerings to be mainstream—thus not conferring special cachet on them vis-à-vis referent others.

Interestingly, affiliation motivation was discerned to be *negatively* related to conspicuous consumption. Based on prior research (e.g., Mead et al., 2011), a positive association was expected. Evidently, having an acute aspiration to "belong" does not lead an individual to purchase status-oriented items; indeed, it pushes them not to buy such offerings. Again, just as with achievement motivation, maybe the commoditization of products has led consumers to perceive that having observable, high cachet-laden products will not afford them enter into a particular group. Accordingly, this finding begs the question whether individuals truly are motivated to spend and consume in order to gain affiliation, as Mead et al. (2011) found.

Power motivation was ascertained to be positively related to conspicuous consumption. This result is consistent with germane work in the area (Chaudhuri & Majumdar, 2006; O'Cass & McEwen, 2004; Rucker & Galinsky, 2008). Ostensibly, consumers feel that possessing the "right" products will enhance their feelings of control and influence over others. This suggests that consumers who aspire to power will undertake efforts to augment their power via visible, status-oriented offerings.

Affiliation motivation was promulgated as being positively associated with sustainable consumption. Findings supported this supposition, thus comporting with tangentially-related prior research (e.g., Lakin, Chartrand, & Arkin, 2008; Williams, Cheung, & Choi, 2000). The result infers that by being desirous of having a sense of belongingness, purchasing items that are good for society in the long run and that are not redolent of excessive consumption will be salutary for such individuals. In fact, this speculation is further supported with the inverse association observed between the affiliation motive and conspicuous consumption.

4.2 Contributions to Theory

Three major contributions flow from the current investigation. First, the concept of intra-negotiation was introduced. It was presented as an alternative approach individuals use in resolving their self-discrepancies and thus reflects a new, alternative strategy for reconciling differences across the self. We thus advance the literature on the relationship between the self and consumption by identifying the underlying negotiation process of the self that promotes consumers' behaviours. With its introduction, intra-negotiation may well help enhance understanding of how or why consumers utilize consumption in their efforts to resolve people's discordant views of the self.

Second, this is only the third investigation to explore self-discrepancy in a marketing context. Owing to the dramatic influence self-discrepancy can have on individuals' behaviour, exploring the concept in a consumption setting seemed warranted. As such, it adds to the paucity of knowledge regarding the impact of

self-discrepancy on consumer behaviour. Indeed, extant work pertaining to the self in marketing essentially has primarily examined issues related to self-congruity, self-regulation, and self-concept, not self-discrepancy.

Third, this work included two distinctly different kinds of consumption, conspicuous and sustainable. Rarely, though, has an investigation examined these contrasting kinds of consumption conterminously. The study thus adds to knowledge regarding potential influencers of these two antipodal kinds of consumption. In particular, the current research has advanced extant knowledge by exploring conspicuous and sustainable consumption vis-à-vis both self-discrepancy and human motives.

4.3 Contributions to Practice

Study findings offer prospective directions for marketers. The findings that the (1) ideal-actual self-discrepancy is *inversely* associated with achievement motivation and (2) affiliation motive is *negatively* related to conspicuous consumption, while unexpected, can plausibly be explained. One would expect that conspicuous products and services are manifestations of a person's achievement and desire to conform to group "norms" of consumption. Perhaps, however, the "American dream" puts pressure on achievement- and affiliation-oriented individuals, thus widening their ideal-actual-self gaps. Unable to manage such social pressures effectively, they conceivably become cynical, thus resisting consumption of socially visible offerings. This explanation is supported by the recent work of Mikkonen et al. (2011). Foucault (1983) describes individuals who are against social order of contemporary and normalized subjectivity. Such persons refuse to be what they are and attempt to create a new identity via iconoclastic efforts. The implication seemingly, then, is that upscale and luxury goods marketers may not wish to be perfervid in closely tying their products to a consumer's sense of achievement.

Also, affiliation motivation was ascertained to be *positively* related to sustainable consumption. Marketers selling products that are ecologically friendly may wish to promote their wares as being especially apposite for individuals who are in the vanguard of those having a concern about the environment and long-term impact on society. Using spokespersons from such entities as nongovernment organizations (e.g., World Nature Organization, Green Peace) and volunteer organizations (e.g., Humane Society) in promotion vehicles could demonstrate that the sustainable shopper has a large following (à la a group).

The positive association between power motivation and conspicuous consumption also is redolent of what upscale and luxury marketers might pursue. Showing well-known, successful personalities who tend to be influencers using their products could lead power-motivated consumers to purchase such items. Also, presenting vignettes of mainstream individuals consuming such products and the seeming salutary impact doing so has on the protagonists' sense of power could be employed.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The present investigation possesses certain key limitations. Some might argue that explicit goals are manifestations of implicit motives (Murray 1938). Others, however, believe that the two systems are unrelated (McClelland 1989; Michalak et al. 2006). The relationship between implicit and explicit goals and motives poses a limitation for this study, as only explicit motives were explored. Therefore, future work should examine the impact of both explicit and implicit motives, as well as congruency between the two motives, on consumer behaviours.

Also, in focusing on cognitive and conative variables—self-discrepancy and motivation, respectively—a limited model was proposed and tested. Consequently, other variables that could affect conspicuous and sustainable consumption were omitted. Therefore, subsequent empiricism might explore the concatenation of variables in this study while incorporating additional variables, such as involvement, importance of the purchase, kind of product or service, and price. Moreover, the sample was comprised chiefly of younger-aged individuals (mean = 22 years). Self-discrepancies and their significance may well vary across age and should be reconnoitered in future work.

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