

St. Petersburg State University  
Graduate School of Management

MASTER THESIS:

**Prerequisites for symbolic consumption in the Russian apparel market**

Done by

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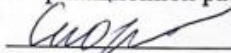
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**ЗАЯВЛЕНИЕ О САМОСТОЯТЕЛЬНОМ ХАРАКТЕРЕ ВЫПОЛНЕНИЯ  
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June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 (Date)

**ABSTRACT**

Master Student's Name	Maria Skorodumova
Academic Advisor's Name	Olga N. Alkanova
Master Thesis Title	Prerequisites for Symbolic Consumption in the Russian Apparel Market
Description of the goal, tasks and main results the research	<p>The purpose of this research is to identify and study the factors influencing the propensity to symbolic consumption of apparel in the Russian market.</p> <p>Analysis of theoretical literature and research on the topic of symbolic consumption has been held, and analysis of symbolic brands and behavioral patterns have been developed. The conceptual model was developed on the basis of studied concepts, and factors of the model constructs have been proposed and explained. The data was collected in the form of online survey, after which the conceptual model was tested with the use of regression analysis.</p> <p>The study discovered the external, individual, and demographic factors which influence individual's propensity to symbolic consumption in the cases of 4 symbolic functions of apparel: status and wealth demonstration, group-belonging indication, demonstration of personal interests and values, and expression of personal sense of style and trendiness. While media impact and gender proved to be significant factors in all the studied cases, the other factors' influence varied dependently on the considered symbolic function.</p> <p>The current research helped to systemize the concept of the symbolic consumption, studied this concept in regards to the Russian market, as well as identified the field for further research and provided the managerial implications which can be used by the marketing specialists working in the fashion field.</p>
Keywords	Symbolic consumption, conspicuous consumption, consumer behavior, fashion consumption, regression modeling

## АННОТАЦИЯ

Автор	Скородумова Мария
Научный руководитель	Алканова Ольга Николаевна
Название ВКР	Предпосылки символического поведения на российском рынке одежды
Описание цели, задач и основных результатов исследования	<p>Целью данного исследования является выявление и изучение факторов, влияющих на склонность к символическому потреблению одежды на российском рынке.</p> <p>Проведен анализ теоретической литературы и исследований по теме символического потребления, разработан анализ символических брендов и моделей поведения потребителей на рынке одежды. На основе изученных концепций разработана концептуальная модель, предложены и объяснены факторы конструкторской модели. Данные были собраны в виде онлайн-опроса, после чего концептуальная модель была протестирована с применением регрессионного анализа.</p> <p>В ходе исследования выявлены внешние, индивидуальные и демографические факторы, влияющие на склонность покупателя к символическому потреблению в случаях четырех символических функций одежды: демонстрация статуса и богатства, указание на групповую принадлежность, демонстрация личных интересов и ценностей, выражение личного чувства стиля и следования модным трендам. В то время как воздействие СМИ и гендер оказались значимыми факторами во всех исследованных случаях, влияние других факторов варьировало в зависимости от рассматриваемой символической функции.</p> <p>Настоящее исследование помогло систематизировать концепцию символического потребления, изучить данное понятие применительно к российскому рынку, а также обозначить поле для дальнейших исследований и дать управленческие рекомендации, которые могут быть использованы маркетологами, работающими в сфере моды.</p>
Ключевые слова	Символическое потребление, статусное потребление, поведение потребителей, потребление моды, регрессионное моделирование

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## INTRODUCTION

### *Relevance of the study*

During the past years more and more fashion brands have been switching their focus from highlighting the functional and qualitative features of their products to the symbolic ones, creating a certain brand story, and promoting their clothes through the lifestyle, social status, and values they consider their consumers desire to be associated with. This gave ground to studying the concept of symbolic consumption, defined as the tendency of consumers to rely and focus on the meanings attached to goods, beyond their physical properties, and provide an important means by which consumers define themselves. As for now, the majority of brands study their target buyers behavior, analyze how they want to be perceived by society: if they are prone to make any statement about themselves by putting clothes on every day, if they want to highlight their belonging to a certain group by shopping where this group usually shops, or if they want to stand out of the crowd by choosing brands which promote uniqueness and free spirit. Many more aspects of symbolic consumption are constantly being researched in the clothing industry worldwide, providing brands with more effective positioning and promotion companies.

As for Russian market, during the recent years it has been facing turbulent changes: at first, stores were temporary closed due to COVID-19 in 2020, then in 2022 top international players like Inditex Group, Hennes & Mauritz Group, Mango etc. left the market, and online stores like ASOS and Farfetch stopped delivering to Russian customers. Those large companies had made a huge market share which now is supposed be filled with existing and newly developing local Russian brands that have less knowledge about the market, consumer behavior, and symbolic consumption patterns in particular.

### *Research gap*

Existing research on the topic considers symbolic consumption in general, without concentrating on apparel market (some papers consider symbolism in clothing, but even they still apply limitations which are not relevant to current research's market, and do not provide statistically proven conclusions). Moreover, there is no research that would be targeted at the Russian market, while we may assume that it differs from other ones in terms of consumer behavior due to unique

historical, information and financial context. Finally, during the literature analysis there was no study identified that would try to provide the systematical model of the prerequisites and factors which would motivate customers to symbolic consumption.

*Aim & objectives of the study*

This study aims to examine the factors predetermining symbolic consumption tendencies among consumers in Russia based on their behavioral characteristics and provide the insights on how fashion brands should promote their clothes to their target audience depending on the research findings.

In order to achieve the set goal, the following aims have been set:

1. To research the concept of symbolic consumption and study consumer behavior in the fashion market;
2. To determine the factors which could predict consumer's propensity to symbolic consumption;
3. To develop a model of defined factors' influence on propensity to symbolic consumption through the functions consumers expect their clothes to perform;
4. To validate the model on the basis of empirical research and provide theoretical and practical conclusions.



## CHAPTER 1. SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION IN THE APPAREL MARKET

### 1.1. The concept of symbolic consumption

Symbolic consumption refers to the act of consuming products or services primarily for their symbolic meanings, rather than their functional or material qualities. This type of consumption is driven by the desire to enhance one's *identity, social status, or self-expression* using products and services that convey specific symbolic meanings [Pronay & Hetesi, 2016]. Products and services may be seen as status symbols, cultural markers, or expressions of personal style, and are often associated with certain social groups or cultural values.

Symbolic consumption may be influenced by various factors, including cultural norms, personal values, social identity, and marketing messages. For example, luxury goods such as designer clothing or high-end cars are often seen as symbols of wealth and status, while alternative fashion or music may be used to express countercultural values or individuality [Vasic-Nikcevic, 2019]. Similarly, consumption of any other product or service may become associated with a particular lifestyle or social identity.

The concept of symbolic consumption has become increasingly important in contemporary societies, where consumption is often seen as a means of self-expression and social participation [Saenger et al, 2013]. At the same time, when we talk about status consumption as a form of symbolic consumption, it is worth to notice it has been criticized for contributing to materialism, and for reinforcing social inequalities by creating exclusive symbolic meanings associated with certain products and services [Velandia-Morales et al, 2022].

The conceptual framework for studying symbolic consumption was proposed by *Elizabeth C. Hirschman (1981)*. The author suggested to consider three central issues while comprehending the subject of symbolic consumption: systemic level, integral processes, and source of control.

- **Systemic level**: this issue considers symbolic consumption as a subject for discussion not only from a psychological posture, which observes the individual perspective, but also from a sociological posture, studying the group as a primary unit of analysis. This proposition is justified by the fact that for any symbol to obtain and translate the certain meaning, there must be a symbolic possessor and a symbolic observer, creating interpersonal communication. Thus, symbolic consumption phenomenon is recommended to be studied as a *complex of individual and sociological (dyadic or collective) perspectives*.

- Integral processes: this issue concerns the integral processes underlying symbolic consumption, which are divided by the author into two groups: *production* of symbols and *consumption* of symbols. Production processes should not be considered as processes responsible for physical creation of symbols only – they also provide the products with socially symbolic meanings to translate to the customers in the future. Therefore, before trying to comprehend why and how people consume symbols, it is necessary to firstly understand the process of ascribing those meanings to the products. Regarding the consumption of symbols, this process should be studied referring to consumers' perception prior to purchase, during the purchase, and after the purchase. The last stage, though being often left aside, is also important for understanding the real reasons underlying symbolic consumption.
- Source of control: despite that it is meant for producers to inscribe the symbolic meanings to their product, it often happens that with time consumers become the main influencers on the symbolic meaning eventually translated to the society – they may redefine the initial message set by the brand, or even radically change its social meaning. Therefore, definition of who are the actual controllers of the symbols is important issue to consider in the symbolic consumption research.

The current research will mostly concentrate on systematic level of the framework, analyzing the *individual and social perspectives* on consumers' motivation behind consumption of symbols. In the case of integral processes level, it is relevant for current research to focus on the *consumption of symbols* part, though the symbols production process will also be covered for providing managerial implications of the study. Source of control level will also be considered with the same aim, indicating the possible paths for managing the symbolic meanings translation.

### **Symbolic vs functional consumption**

Many authors connect the symbolic consumption concept development with the postmodern society patterns - if earlier the consumption patterns were formed by society, nowadays the consumption itself has become a society-forming force, as it strengthens the social status and constructs consumer's social identity [Pronay & Hetesi, 2016]. Therefore, consumers more often

focus on buying image but not a good itself, by that giving their lives a meaning through consumption [Elliott, 1999].

Given that, goods have become both economic and symbolic objects, and that is why they are not used completely for their functional purposes [Ligas & Cotte, 1999]. The former social theory presumes that conduct is oriented to the utility of goods, while postmodernists assume that it is oriented to their symbolic meanings [Campbell, 1996]. Thus, consumption may have two dimensions: *functional (or utilitarian) and symbolic*. In the case of functional consumption, the consumer decision-making process is based on rational reasoning and the functional usefulness of the product, relating choice to 'utility' and 'satisfaction', while symbolic consumption is characterized by the questionable objective usefulness of the purchase and is more based on whether the consumer desires to be identified with certain messages, values, and images [Pronay & Hetesi, 2016], by that using such symbolic properties as 'identity', 'image' or 'life-style'. The reasons that underlie an individual consumer's decision to select, purchase and wear (in a case of apparel) one item rather than another may relate to either its functional or symbolic features, or more likely, to the *combination of the two*.

### **Symbolic meaning of items and consumer's actions**

Consumers usually appear to approach products with the intention of finding confirmation of an existing self-image. It is important that symbolic meanings that may seem to be attached to the products, are not necessarily the real symbols which motivated the consumer to make a purchase [Campbell, 1996]. For example, if a person buys and wears a T-Shirt with a rock band's name on it, it does not strictly apply that they want to translate to society that they are a big fan of their music. He or she may not even know what this band is, but T-Shirt design suited their self-perception of a rebellious person, and this was the message customer wanted to translate. Therefore, it is dangerous, while analyzing consumer's behavior, to straightforwardly assume that the meaning of an item can be easily extrapolated to understand the meaning of an individual's action in selecting and displaying it. Both the meaning of objects and the meaning of customer's actions should be analyzed while studying symbolic consumption, in order to define the real reasons underling consumer behavior.

- *Meaning of items* is the more obvious part of symbolic consumption which concerns the question of unity and the parameters of the meaning.
- *Meaning of actions* may be expressed in a consumption process as well as in the usage process. Determining 'the meaning' of an action is a far more complex process than

identifying 'the meaning' of a product. The main types of action in symbolic consumption are the choice and the after-purchase decision to use an item – frequency, on which occasions, in which combinations etc. These are described as 'actions' since they reflect conscious choices by motivated consumers who see them as tools to achieve desired goals. The same approach to studying symbolic consumption process has been proposed by *Elizabeth C. Hirschman (1981)* in the conceptual framework discussed earlier.

For the current research goal, it is crucial to distinguish the meaning of fashion items and the meaning for individual's actions while buying and wearing clothes, since in frequent cases the *actions* analysis will lead to the genuine symbolic consumption prerequisites definition. Furthermore, since this research focuses on the selection and purchase of the clothes, the meaning of such consumer's action as a usage process will not be thoroughly considered and will not be included in the definition of 'symbolic consumption'.

### **Individualistic and in-group dimension of symbolic consumption**

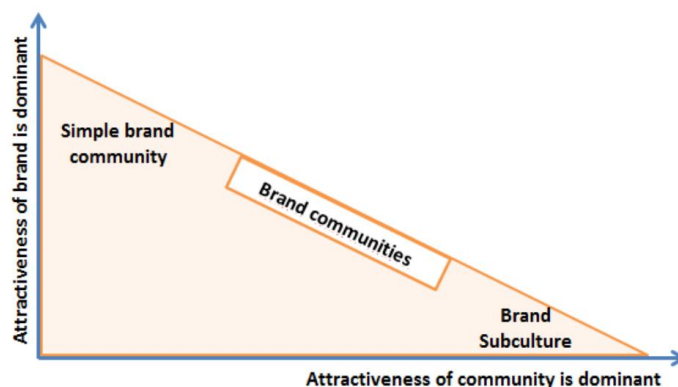
The concept of symbolic consumption has been also studied from the individualistic and in-group perspective – authors tried to examine whether customers consume symbolically in order to highlight their personal identity or social identity (when individuals define themselves as member of a group more than separate person) [Hokkanen, 2014]. Social identity can be formed by a number of social groups a person belongs to, as well as by brands who may impose the certain vision and lifestyle to the customer, and 'meaningfulness' of actions, which, as it was mentioned previously, is not always originally personal and sentimental – it often relates to a socially shared system of meanings [Campbell, 1996]. There is a theory that people use consumption as a tool of sending messages to others, as well as decoding messages from others' consumption practices, and those messages will be successfully communicated only if the symbolism in them is socially recognized [Vasic-Nikcevic, 2019]. It is important for some consumers to plan and predict how other members of their social group might interpret the meanings of certain items and brands, so that they can use the symbolic content of chosen consumption objects to reflect their affiliation or connection to a chosen social group.

In this case, it is important for the further research to manage to consider *both the personal reasons* underlying the choice individuals make, and the *ones imposed or anticipated by the social*

**group** they belong to or desire to belong to. For example, one could say that they buy eco-friendly clothes from sustainable brands as they associate themselves with the brand’s declared sustainable vision and want to support the conscious lifestyle, while the real underlying reason is that they want to indicate themselves a part of a social group where following conscious lifestyle is expected from everyone. In fact, this example has been proven to be relevant in one of the researches on the factors predetermining conscious consumption, which indicated that symbolic consumption is one of the strongest drivers of sustainable fashion purchases [Apaolaza et al., 2022]. Consequently, the purchase of green clothing was more strongly associated with the benefits of a prosocial image than with the genuine consumers’ concern about the environmental problems.

Additionally, frequently the symbolic consumption behavior may be stimulated at the moment when the *consumer transits from one social role to another* - ambiguity and uncertainty about their new role leads to the reliance on the symbolic properties of goods to assist them in performing the desired role [Vasic-Nikcevic, 2019].

The in-group dimension of symbolic consumption also may be considered from another point of view – not as a consequence or indicator of consumer’s happened transition to another social role/group, but as an opportunity to enter a community already created and promoted symbolically by the brand. In research conducted by Pronay & Hetesi (2016) authors distinguish brand communities on the basis of the main cohesive force driving consumers to purchase their products or services. Thus, the developed model (*Figure 1*) suggests that when the brand attractiveness is dominant, the simple brand community is created, and people are prone to consume the brand because of the brand itself, while in the case when attractiveness of community is dominant, brand subculture is emerged, where consumers are more interested in interacting with each other than with the brand.



**Figure 1** Brand communities’ model [Pronay&Hetsi, 2016]

While the debate on which community type is more efficient in the long-term perspective is still open, this model anyway should be considered in the current research with an aim of identifying

reasoning behind consumers' propensity to symbolic consumption – they may either desire to demonstrate their belonging to the group they transferred to, or to enter the new subculture created by the certain brand followers. In any way the *transition to the new social group* is an aspect which has once again been considered in the research work devoted to the symbolic consumption, which implies necessity to analyze it in the current research as a factor which may influence the symbolic consumption of apparel.

### **Channels for symbols translation**

For the understanding of consumers' perception of symbolic meanings translated by the producers, it is relevant to investigate the symbols translation channels used by the brands:

- Social media

In order to get more up-to-date approach to symbolic consumption, it is necessary to study this concept in the terms of technologies development and social media aspect in particular. Existing study on this topic [Luna-Cortés, 2017] examines how the symbolic consumption factors define customer's activity in social networks and their activity online, but not vice versa. This allows us to assume that since the statistical connection between those factors have been proven, it might be reasonable to study as well the social network perception as a determining factor for the symbolic consumption behavior. For instance, another study [Sulhaini & Sulaimiah, 2022] mentions that interactions on social media enable consumers to influence one another, thus to create the meaning of brands' symbolic values. Therefore, the symbolic values are co-produced by individual consumers and their online social groups, while the symbols promoted by brands would be meaningless without consumers' social interactions. However, these insights were not supported by quantitative evidence, and authors themselves mention that there is a research gap on how exactly social media involvement is connected to consumer orientation towards gaining certain symbolic value. However, the set assumptions strongly correlate with the brand communities' theory [Pronay & Hetesi, 2016] described in the previous paragraph.

These findings give a reason to examine the influence of social media on symbolic consumption. Whether a person is led by personal believes, or by values of a group they associate themselves with, social media is a strong tool that may even form those values and believes and determine or impose the behavior they want to get from the customers by setting the right brand image.

- Influence marketing

Influence marketing, while sometimes being a form of social media marketing described above, is a common channel for translating symbolic meanings, since the influencers themselves attract their followers with their lifestyle, social image, vision etc. This channel is widely used by symbolic brands, since the influencers are mostly have already established their direction in content creation and values/style translation and gathered an audience who follows them exactly for that direction and shows a high loyalty and trust level.

- Video advertising

According to Biteable research<sup>1</sup>, 60% of companies create promotional videos since they believe them to be effective. It is explained by the fact that video gives brands an opportunity to tell a story, educate people on desired topic in an engaging way, and establish brand awareness<sup>2</sup>, which is crucial in a case of promotion of symbols. When the brand's goal is to translate its vision, lifestyle it supports, and establish an emotional connection with a viewer, video marketing is the one of the most often ways used to do so.

As it may be seen, brands may influence customers' perception of the symbolic meanings using various channels, all representing different forms of media. Nevertheless, the extend to which each channel is effective, presumably depends on the consumer's media susceptibility level, which should also be considered in the current research and in the managerial implications part.

## **1.2. Specifics of consumer behavior in the fashion market**

This paragraph aims to examine the consumer behavior trends typical for the fashion market, with a goal to determine which aspects could be implied to the case of symbolic consumption of apparel.

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<sup>1</sup> Biteable, 2023. Video marketing statistics: The state of video marketing in 2021. [Online] Available at: <https://biteable.com/blog/video-marketing-statistics/> [Accessed 03 March 2023]

<sup>2</sup> SendPulse, 2023. Video Advertising. [Online] Available at: <https://sendpulse.com/support/glossary/video-advertising> [Accessed 03 March 2023].

## **Symbolic functions of apparel**

The analysis of the literature studying symbolic consumption in the case of fashion market has led current research to the determination of the symbolic functions customers expect their new clothing to perform. The symbols attached to their items by the brands are eventually used by consumers to translate different messages to the different message recipients, and this study focuses on the symbolic consumption prerequisites in general instead of focusing on each symbol separately. Therefore, for the future research it is reasonable to investigate not the symbols themselves, but the symbolic functions of apparel predetermining the symbolic consumption of clothing.

### *Group-belonging indication*

Clothes are a socially consumed product category, with social norms frequently affecting individual behavior. They often *act as indicators that wearer is similar to other people* who wear the same brands/designs/etc. As research proved, people tend to link clothing symbols with personalities and interests of others and rely on their conclusions while establishing further relationships [Vasic-Nikcevic, 2019]. Interestingly, while clothing often performs a function of indication of belonging to a certain reference group, it can at the same time be used by consumers as a tool for displaying their uniqueness and dissimilarity with members of other huge social groups they do not belong to [Ilin, 2003]. The extreme form of such behavior may be illustrated by the existence of different subcultures with a very unique style which is considered deviant and irrelevant to wear outside of such groups in other social circumstances. At this point, people demonstrate their unwillingness to obey social norms and accept socially imposed symbols, which eventually also may be defined as a form of symbolic consumption.

It may be concluded that individuals may consume clothes with a goal to indicate their belonging to the social group – they evaluate other group members and from their side try to dress accordingly to the established norms. Moreover, by doing so they also send a message to others, observing non-group members, about their group belonging. Consequently, the indication of the group-belonging may be considered as one of the *symbolic functions* consumers expect clothing to perform in the cases of symbolic consumption.



### *Conspicuous consumption of fashion*

One of the most discussed forms of symbolic consumption in the apparel market is conspicuous consumption. The demonstrativeness of fashion is its inherent quality – a fashion object is acquired for display, demonstration to others. Though, the scale of the demonstration can be different: it ranges from the demonstration of fashionable behavior through media to being shown in a narrow circle of friends and relatives [Ilin, 2003]. The conspicuousness theory is mostly associated with the consumption of luxury, when the high price is often a consequence of a brand prestige and wealth and status symbols associated with an item, rather than its functional qualities.

Although in some research conspicuous consumption is used as a synonym for the current paper's definition of symbolic consumption, the further research will refer to the term defined by Veblen (1899) as 'the act of displaying ostentatious wealth to gain status and reputation in society'.

### **Analysis of symbolic brands from the apparel market**

Since consumption, as it was mentioned earlier, may be either functional or symbolic (or sometimes both), the clothing brands may also aim to translate either functional or symbolic meanings to their consumers, depending on which strategy seems to be the most efficient and satisfy brand's goals. In order to elaborate on how functional and symbolic brands are distinguished in the current research, some well-known brands have been chosen, and their translated meanings were estimated by the author. It is worth to mention that though many fashion brands are presented exclusively in marketplaces like Lamoda, Wildberries, Ozon, Yandex Market etc., the study of symbolic consumption of apparel in the marketplaces will not be executed in the current research. It is justified by the fact that symbols are initially translated to the customers by the brands themselves through other channels such as social media, internet advertising etc., and if we consider the brands that are presented exclusively in the market places, we may assume they try to promote functional features or quickly adopt to quick-fashion trends without attempting to build an emotional and symbolic connection with the customer.

Moreover, symbolic functions estimation was included into the symbolic brands analysis, which is done with an aim to benefit current research in identifying the symbolic functions of apparel

not considered in the existing literature on the topic. The analysis is presented in the Table 1, where the marked brands are those that are no longer presented in the Russian market:

*Table 1 Examples of symbolic and functional fashion brands*

	<b>Brand name</b>	<b>Market segment</b>	<b>Translated meanings</b>	<b>Symbolic purposes</b>
<b>Symbolic brands</b>	Louis Vuitton*	Luxury	Heritage, quality, and exclusivity, wealth	To demonstrate wealth and social status
	Gucci*	Luxury	Creativity, power, individualism, wealth	To demonstrate creativity, wealth
	Levi's*	Diffusion & Premium	Heritage, rugged individualism, authenticity, fast fashion rejection	To demonstrate personal values and sense of style
	Tommy Hilfiger*	Diffusion & Premium	American heritage, classic and preppy style, premium lifestyle	To demonstrate personal values and taste in fashion, social status
	Massimo Dutti*	Diffusion & Premium/ Mass market	Old money style, exclusivity, simplicity, elegance	To demonstrate wealth, sense of style
	Zara*	Mass market	Simplicity, elegance, sophistication, rapid trends adoption	To demonstrate sense of style and trendiness
	Lichi	Mass market	Elegant approach to fast-fashion, European style	Demonstrate trendiness and good taste
	Befree	Mass market	Young fashion for any age, freedom, and creativeness	Express personal freedom and trendiness
<b>Functional brands</b>	Columbia	Mass market	Quality, functionality, good price	-
	Gloria Jeans	Mass market	Good quality for low price	-
	O'stin	Mass market	Large assortment, good quality, low price	-

Bases on the conducted brand analysis, the conspicuous function of apparel purchase in cases of symbolic brands has been proven to exist in the market.

Moreover, in frequent cases trendiness and sense of style demonstration has proven to be the important clothing function individuals seek while choosing and purchasing apparel. Although it may be assumed that sometimes the desire to look trendy is concerned with the group-belonging function

of clothing which was indicated in the previous paragraph, there is not enough evidence to suggest that reason is exclusive. Thus, such symbolic function of apparel as demonstration of personal trendiness and sense of style may be also considered in the further research.

Another example of symbolic consumption observed during the apparel market analysis is the purchase of official merch or any item of any brand which illustrates the name or image of the music band/TV show/etc. individual likes. Such consumption is motivated not by the functional meanings of the item, but by the symbolic ones since it straightforwardly reflects the individual's interests.

## **Conclusion**

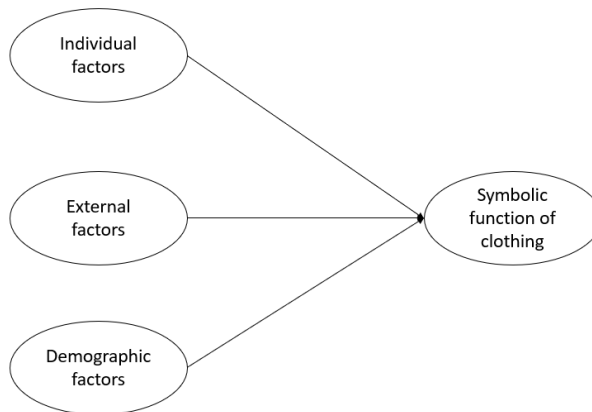
The symbolic consumption concept in general has been studied in this chapter, followed by the existing literature and market analysis of the symbolic consumption in case of apparel market. The aim of this chapter was to reveal the research gap regarding the studied topic, and to determine the direction for the further conceptual model development.

The first paragraph of the literature review was devoted to the study of symbolic consumption phenomena, which later defined the conceptual direction for the study:

- Symbolic consumption and functional consumption concepts have been examined, for the clearer understanding of the symbolic consumption definition in the scope of the study: “act of consuming products or services primarily for their symbolic meanings, rather than their functional or material qualities”.
- The meanings of items and meanings of consumers' actions have been discussed, resulting in defining that for the current paper it is relevant to consider the pre-purchase intentions of the symbolic consumption, leaving the after-purchase behavior of the consumer as a limitation.
- The individualistic and in-group dimensions of symbolic consumption have been considered, which indicated that symbolic consumption may be caused either by individual factors, or by social ones, and it is important to distinguish these two dimensions in the process of further research.
- The channels used by brands to translate their meanings to the consumers have been analyzed, which highlighted the importance of the media impact at defining consumers' intention to symbolic consumption.

The second paragraph was devoted to the investigation of the symbolic consumption trends typical to the apparel market. Firstly, literature review was conducted, which resulted in the definition of the symbolic functions consumers expect clothing to perform while making purchasing decisions. Then, examples of symbolic and functional brands were analyzed with definition of the meanings they translate to the consumers, and symbolic functions they perform.

The analysis conducted in the first chapter has led to the development of the conceptual model of the further research (*Figure 2*):



**Figure 2** *Conceptual model of the research [developed by the author]*

Analysis of brands, that refer to symbolic and functional meanings in their positioning, along with the study of general symbolic consumption patterns and in fashion market in particular, has resulted with the definition of the functions consumers expect their clothing to perform in the cases of symbolic consumption:

- *Status demonstration,*
- *Demonstration of the belonging to the group,*
- *Demonstration of personal sense of style and trendiness,*
- *Demonstration of personal interests.*

These functions will be studied in the further research as dependent variables in determination of propensity to symbolic consumption, and each function should be considered separately in the research in order to get more detailed and accurate understanding of which prerequisites could predict each type of symbolic consumption.

## CHAPTER 2. RESEARCH MODEL DEVELOPMENT

Based on the set research goals and conducted literature review, following research questions were justified to answer with current research:

1. What types of symbolic functions does clothing perform to consumers?
2. Which consumer's individual characteristics may influence their propensity to symbolic consumption?
3. Which external factors may influence consumer's propensity to symbolic consumption?

With an aim to answer these questions, the initial conceptual model was put forward based on the literature review and market analysis. This model is aimed at considering the extent to which consumer is prone to symbolic consumption because of various personal, external, and demographic factors influencing the function this consumer expects the clothes to perform, which will be further provided and explained. The symbolic functions the current research proposes to consider as the different types of symbolic consumption of apparel are the following:

1. *Status and wealth demonstration (conspicuous consumption)*

Certain types of clothing, such as luxury designer brands, are often associated with wealth and affluence. Wearing these brands can serve as a way to demonstrate one's status and financial standing.

2. *Indication of a belonging to the social group*

Clothing can also be used to signal membership in a particular social group. For example, members of a sports team may wear team jerseys to show their allegiance, while workers of the certain job field may wear the clothes of the style relevant to this field in order to identify themselves with the colleagues.

3. *Expression of personal sense of style and trendiness*

Clothing can be a way to express one's personal sense of style and stay up-to-date with the latest fashion trends. This can involve wearing unique and trendy clothing items, or putting together outfits that reflect one's individual tastes and preferences.

4. *Demonstration of personal interests and values*

Finally, clothing can be a means of demonstrating one's personal interests and hobbies. For example, someone who loves a certain sport may wear clothing with related logos or designs, while a

fan of a particular musical artist may wear their concert merchandise. This can act as a social signal to others who share similar interests.

## **2.1. Individual characteristics**

Although symbolic consumption is a more socially-oriented concept, it is required to study from individualistic perspective – the individual perception of social norms, codes and messages influences to what extent consumer is prone to symbolic consumption. The further research is going to consider the following individual characteristics:

### *1. Knowledge of clothing codes*

The knowledge of clothing codes refers to the understanding of the appropriate attire for different occasions, settings, and cultures. It encompasses an understanding of dress codes, formal and informal clothing norms, and cultural traditions related to clothing. This knowledge is important for presenting oneself appropriately in different contexts since clothing as a means of communication relies on a ‘code’ [McCracken & Roth, 1989]. Understanding the codes associated with those contexts may initiate consumers’ tendency to choose clothing intentionally, depending on an image they want to send to others, which makes the functional qualities of apparel less significant for them.

While the clothing codes are imposed and controlled by society, the effect of this factor is presumably the most intense in the cases of consumers’ desire to indicate their belonging to the social group (individuals track the codes relevant for their target groups and dress accordingly), and to express their personal sense of style and trendiness (the characteristics which are also set and controlled by society).

In the case of conspicuous consumption, the influence of knowledge of clothing codes factor is more ambiguous since such behavior is often associated with avoidance of uncertainty caused by low awareness about social group individual belongs to [Eastman et al, 2018], therefore, by low awareness of the codes and norms relevant to it. Thus, the negative influence of the knowledge of clothing codes may be assumed in the case of conspicuous consumption.

### *H1. Individual’s **knowledge of clothing codes**:*

- (a) negatively influences their propensity to consume clothing with an aim to demonstrate their status and wealth.*
- (b) positively influences their propensity to consume clothing with an aim of group-belonging indication.*

- (c) *positively influences their propensity to consume clothing with an aim of expressing their sense of style and trendiness.*
- (d) *affects their propensity to consume clothing with an aim to demonstrate their personal interests.*

## 2. Level of self-monitoring

The definition of self-monitoring level is the individual's ability to monitor social behaviors and adopt their self-presentation, emotions expression and behavior accordingly<sup>3</sup>. People having low levels of self-monitoring, reflect their own attitudes, feelings, thoughts, and judgments. These individuals talk quite openly compared to those with high levels of self-monitoring [Premeaux & Bedeian, 2003] and tend to express themselves without dependence on the social situation. People having high levels of self-monitoring can respond easily to the signs of other people and therefore they have a remarkable ability to adapt to other people's expectations [Taştan et al., 2014].

There is a basis to assume that symbolic consumption is generally more common for consumers with high level of self-monitoring – one of the studies has shown significant difference in attitude towards unbranded clothing by two groups [Auty & Elliot, 1998]: respondents with high self-monitoring level perceived it as unacceptable, while those with low level of this factor perceived it as more individualistic and more favorable. Nevertheless, in the current study, the dimension of self-monitoring impact may vary from negative to positive accordingly to the symbolic function individual desires their clothing to perform. Such symbolic functions of clothing as indication of the belonging to the social group, status consumption and expression of personal sense of style and trendiness may be associated with individual's high level of self-monitoring, while the personal interests' demonstration does not imply the adaptation to the social norms and trends, thus, may be investigated as a function predicted by low level of self-monitoring.

### ***H2. Individual's level of self-monitoring:***

- (a) *positively influences their propensity to consume clothing with an aim of group-belonging indication.*
- (b) *positively influences their propensity to consume clothing with an aim of expressing their sense of style and trendiness.*

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-self-monitoring-5179838>

(c) *negatively influences their propensity to consume clothing with an aim to demonstrate their status and wealth.*

(d) *negatively influences their propensity to consume clothing with an aim to demonstrate their personal interests.*

### 3. Level of materialism

Those consumers who hold high levels of materialism are prone to value material possessions over other values, and tend to use clothing to symbolize social status, prestige, and success [Browne & Kaldenberg, 1997]. Individuals who believe that acquiring possessions leads to happiness, perceive clothing as a tool to project their desired image to others [Belk, 1998], and become motivated to acquire goods to signal both themselves and surrounding others the attainment of status in society and social consumption [Fitzmaurice & Comegys, 2006]. Such behavior implies the symbolic communication and drives the materialists' tendency to valuing symbolic meanings of apparel over the functional features.

Presumably, the tendency to materialism may be a driver for all of the symbolic functions investigated in this study, because this factor is expressed in individual's tendency to overestimate the value of the objects, endowing them with non-functional qualities that carry the goal of broadcasting certain messages to others.

*H3. Individual's level of materialism positively influences their propensity to consume clothing with an aim of:*

(a) *status and wealth demonstration.*

(b) *group-belonging indication.*

(c) *expressing their sense of style and trendiness.*

(d) *demonstrate their personal interests.*

### 4. Self-esteem level

Individual's confidence and self-esteem level has been considered in different studies that may relate to symbolic consumption, though while some research revealed its positive influence on consumer's tendency to consume symbols, others indicated the negative relations. For example, Wicklund and Gollwitzer (1982) proposed the symbolic self-completion theory indicating that individuals who have low self-esteem may perceive the acquisition of symbolic objects as a way to



compensate for their perceived incompleteness and build a more dignified sense of self. Meanwhile, Truong & McColl (2011) revealed in their research that the high level of self-esteem positively predicts propensity to conspicuous consumption of fashion, which may be explained by the freedom of expression self-confident individuals have.

These findings create a research gap regarding self-esteem level influence on symbolic consumption, which makes it reasonable to consider this factor in the current research and try to investigate whether that difference may be occur in the cases of different symbolic functions of apparel.

*H4. Individual's self-esteem level:*

- (a) positively influences their propensity to consume apparel with an aim of status and wealth demonstration.*
- (b) negatively influences their propensity to consume clothing with an aim of group-belonging indication.*
- (c) negatively influences their propensity to consume clothing with an aim of expressing their sense of style and trendiness.*
- (d) negatively influences their propensity to consume clothing with an aim to demonstrate their personal interests.*

**2.2. External factors**

The symbolic consumption implies giving the symbolic meanings to the items, which further are meant to be translated to the society. The external environment may impact the extent to which consumer is prone to symbolic consumption, and different external factors may be considered in the research model.

*1. New social group*

The literature review analysis in the previous chapter has proved the necessity to consider the transition to the new social group as the predictor of consumer's propensity to symbolic consumption. The transition to a new social group can predict consumers' tendency towards symbolic consumption because it can change their social identity. Social identity theory addresses the ways that individuals' self-concepts are based on their memberships in the social groups and the ways their attitudes and behaviors are influenced regarding their group-belongings [Leaper, 2011]. Individual's judgement about themselves becomes a consequence of their comparisons with other group members, and the

relevant out-groups, which drives the social competition and desire to make the in-group distinctive and superior to others [Abrams, 2001]. Presumably, the transition to the new social group may stimulate such behavior extensively – the consumer may adopt the values, beliefs, and behaviors of that group, and their new social identity has to be communicated to others, which also may be reflected in purchasing clothing possessing symbolic meanings.

*H5: Individual's **transition to the new social group** positively influences their propensity to consume apparel with an aim of:*

- (a) status and wealth demonstration.*
- (b) group-belonging indication.*
- (c) expressing their sense of style and trendiness.*
- (d) demonstrate their personal interests.*

## 2. *New social status*

Although this factor may be considered similar to the previous one, there may occur cases when the new social status may be obtained by the individual while staying in the existent social groups. The examples of transition to the new social status may be the promotion at work, income increase which leads to new position in the society, marriage, etc. While they do not imply the change of the social group, they generally require the new behavioral patterns expected by the society, which presumably leads to the propensity to symbolic consumption.

Assumingly, the higher social status drives symbolic consumption, since the individuals representing higher social classes tend to perceive the products more as symbols and indicators of a persons' identity, while lower social classes perceive them more as social facilitators, and do not aspire to become the possessors of such items [Belk et al, 1982].

*H6: Individual's **transition to the higher social status** positively influences their propensity to symbolic consumption of apparel with an aim of:*

- (a) status and wealth demonstration.*
- (b) group-belonging indication.*
- (c) expressing their sense of style and trendiness.*
- (d) demonstrate their personal interests.*

### 3. Media content

Products are given symbolic meanings by the media, and people are influenced by such meanings in their consumption of products [Baudrillard, 1998]. Media endows clothing items with additional associations which form a certain image of the brand in the individual's mind and drives them to consume the image but not the functional qualities of the items themselves. Depending on the brand's positioning, it can translate either the sense of belonging, or the sense of exclusivity, which eventually may lead to the case of any symbolic function of apparel considered earlier.

*H7: **Media content and advertising** positively influence individual's propensity to symbolic consumption of apparel with an aim of:*

- (a) status and wealth demonstration.*
- (b) group-belonging indication.*
- (c) expressing their sense of style and trendiness.*
- (d) demonstrate their personal interests.*

### 4. Special occasions

The case of special occasions may influence consumer's propensity to symbolic consumption due to two reasons:

- Frequently special occasions (be that formal or informal) require following the certain dress code, which arises the probability of consumers preference of symbolic features of clothing over functional ones.
- Special occasions imply intense communication with other people, as well as making new acquaintances, which provides a perfect social situation for demonstration of oneself.

*H8: **The upcoming special occasion** positively influences individual's propensity to symbolic consumption of apparel with an aim of:*

- (a) status and wealth demonstration.*
- (b) group-belonging indication.*
- (c) expressing their sense of style and trendiness.*
- (d) demonstrate their personal interests.*

### **2.3. Demographic factors**

#### *1. Age*

The majority of the consumers' studies on symbolic consumption have considered younger generations in their research, explaining that by the fact that they are more focused on establishing social connections, defining themselves through active communication, and are more prone to expressing themselves through the external attributes. Since current research focuses on clothing as a tool to communicate certain messages to others, it may be assumed that the younger consumers are more prone to symbolic consumption of apparel, than the elder ones. This also may be explained by the fact that clothing is one of the most affordable sign translators, and since younger age implies lower income, it is easier for youngsters to express themselves through their clothing choices.

*H9: The individual's **age** negatively influences their propensity to symbolic consumption of apparel with an aim of:*

- (a) status and wealth demonstration.*
- (b) group-belonging indication.*
- (c) expressing their sense of style and trendiness.*
- (d) demonstrate their personal interests.*

#### *2. Income*

In the case of conspicuous consumption, the income level may be considered as one of the main predictors, since luxury goods' prices tend to be much higher than mass products, which highlights their exclusivity and translates the symbols related to the high social status. Nevertheless, some discussion has been held regarding low income being the factor positively influencing conspicuous consumption - Yang in his research (2012) suggested that consumers strive to differentiate themselves from those occupying a lower socioeconomic status, while imitating the patterns of behavior demonstrated by those in a higher class. This may lead to the assumption that in some cases low income may be a driver for symbolic consumption.

These findings may indicate that it is relevant for the current research to consider income level as a potential predictor of propensity to symbolic consumption – the other cultural and economic

circumstances, along with the distinguishing the symbolic consumption into different symbolic functions, may lead to the clarification of this factor's impact.

*H10: Individual's **income level** positively influences their propensity to symbolic consumption of apparel with an aim of:*

- (a) status and wealth demonstration.*
- (b) group-belonging indication.*
- (c) expressing their sense of style and trendiness.*
- (d) demonstrate their personal interests.*

### 3. Gender

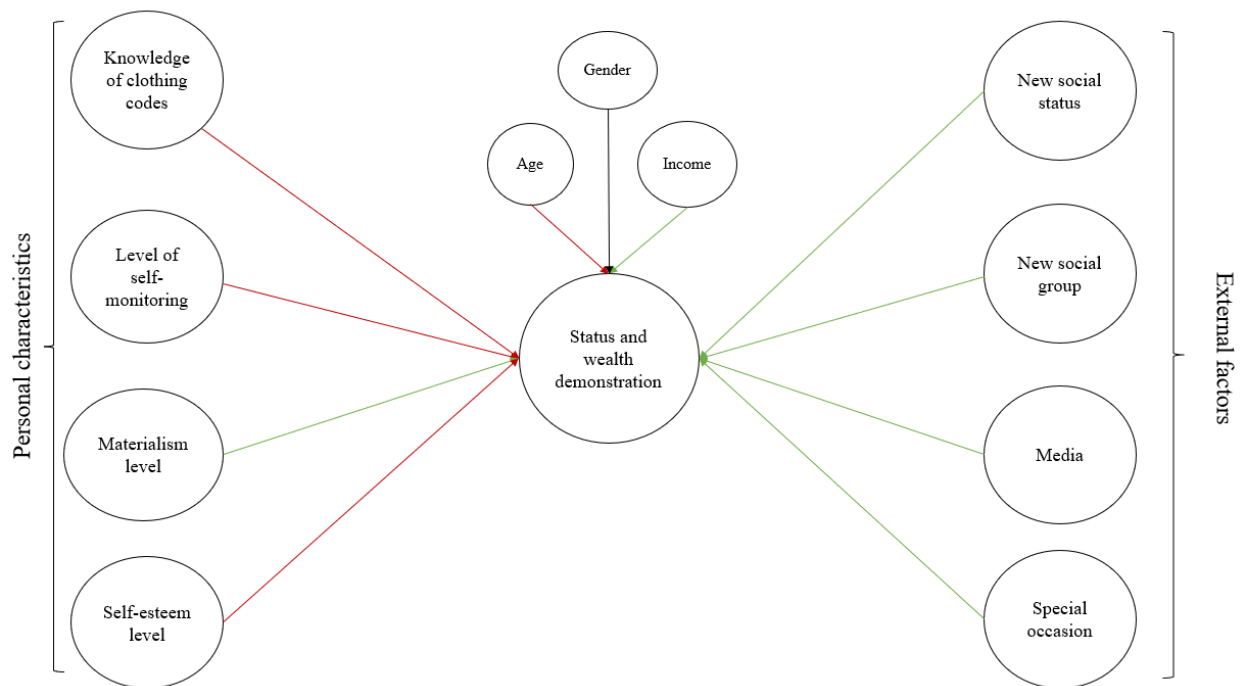
There is some evidence to assume that gender may define consumer's propensity to symbolic consumption – in some research papers it has been proved that females show stronger preference for symbolic meanings of clothing, in cases of both novelty and uniqueness symbols and status indicators [Millan & Wright, 2018]. Moreover, women have been proved to be more involved in the conspicuous consumption and use apparel as a tool to communicate to others their status and identity [O'Cass, 2001]. Alternatively, the same research suggested that males tend to put more materialistic values into possessions that females, which also may drive their propensity to symbolic consumption, while the other study indicated the higher level of involvement in fashion clothing withing women, which proved to be a consequence of the higher materialism level [Handa & Khare, 2013]. Such discrepancies within the scope of one research give a reason for including the gender factor into the research model of this paper and study the gender effect in the differences in other prerequisites defining the consumer's propensity to symbolic consumption.

*H11: The individual's **gender** influences their propensity to symbolic consumption of apparel with an aim of:*

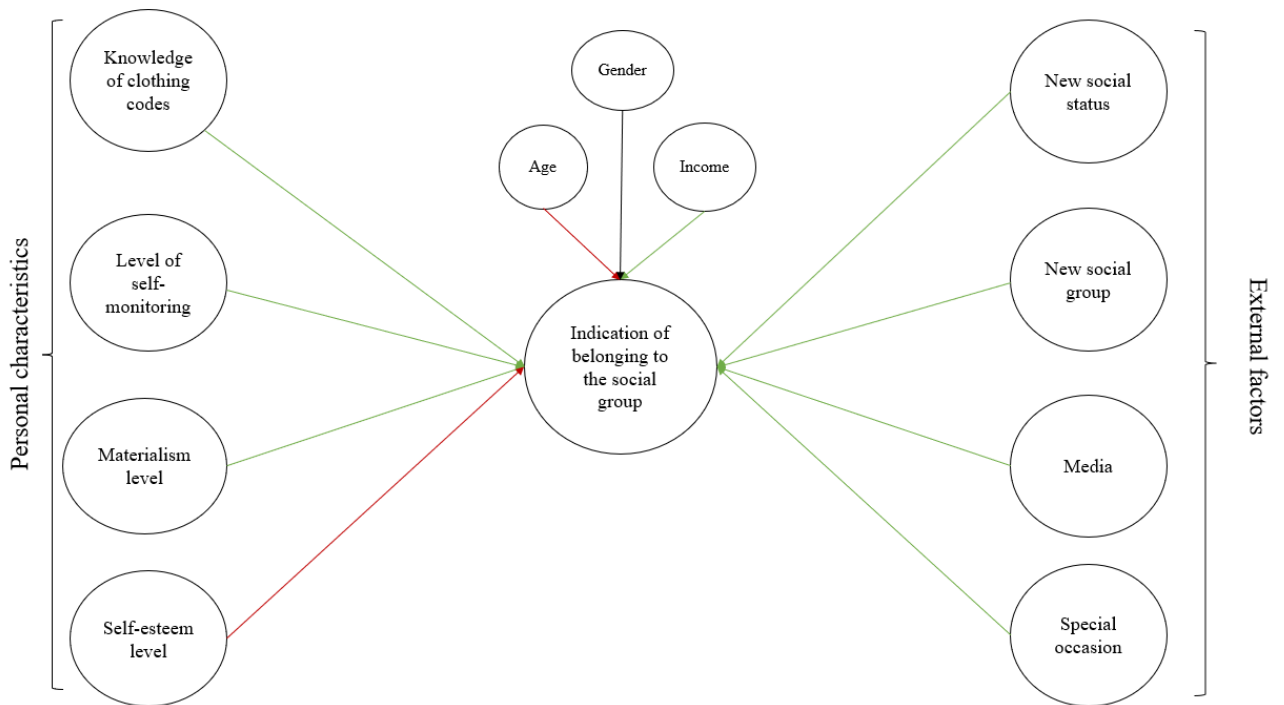
- (a) status and wealth demonstration.*
- (b) group-belonging indication.*
- (c) expressing their sense of style and trendiness.*
- (d) demonstrate their personal interests.*

## 2.4. Research model

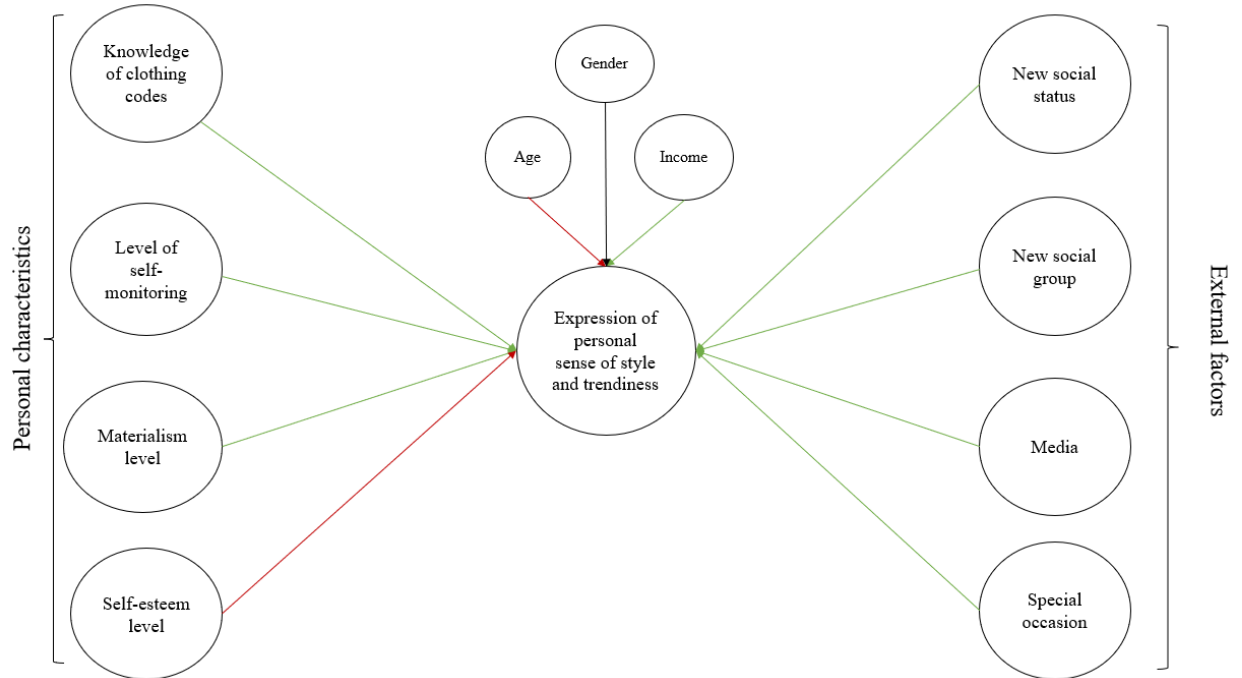
All the proposed hypotheses regarding outlined factors' influence on individual's propensity to symbolic consumption may be visualized in a form of the following 4 research models, each indicating the factors' influence in cases of each symbolic function of apparel: status and wealth demonstration (Figure 3), indication of belonging to the social group (Figure 4), expression of personal sense of style and trendiness (Figure 5), and demonstration of personal interests (Figure 6). The lines' colors reflect the direction of the factor's influence proposed in the hypotheses earlier: green lines reflect the positive influence of independent factors on the dependent one, while the red lines reflect the negative influence.



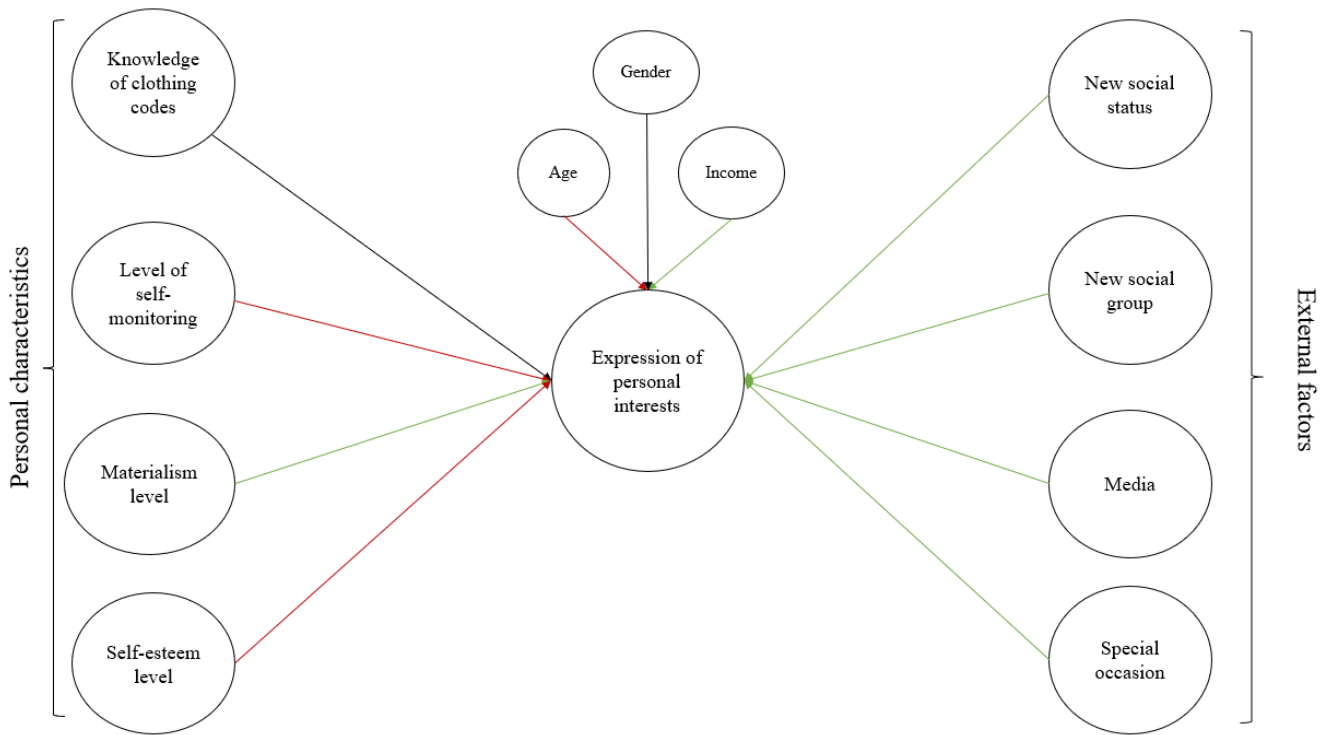
**Figure 3** Research model for the symbolic function of status and wealth demonstration



**Figure 4** Research model for the symbolic function of group-belonging indication



**Figure 5** Research model for the symbolic function of expression of personal sense of style and trendiness



**Figure 6** Research model for the symbolic function of expression of personal interests

The proposed conceptual model considers symbolic consumption as a continuous process of individual and external prerequisites' influence on the symbolic aims that consumers set while choosing and purchasing clothing items. It is assumed that certain individual, external and demographic factors might predict which symbolic function clothes need to perform to the consumer, thus determining their tendency to symbolic consumption. The model has a potential to allow brands to predict the symbolic consumption tendencies among their customers, or to initiate the practices driving such behavior.



## CHAPTER 3. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

### 3.1. Research design

#### *Research methodology*

To gain this paper's goals and to answer the research questions it was decided to use a quantitative method approach, which implies developing a questionnaire, operationalizing abstract concept into measurable variables, and conducting regression analysis. Since some of the factors of the model are complex and include several meanings, they have been measured using several survey questions and later have been used in the factor analysis with an aim of reducing the number of the variables used in the further regression analysis as independent factors.

In total, four regression models have been developed, each identifying the factors significantly influencing one of the four symbolic functions of clothing indicated in the previous chapters. The regression method is needed in this research as it provides the cause and effect overview of the whole framework, indicating which factors significantly predict purposes consumers expect their clothing to fulfill, and thus their propensity to symbolic consumption.

#### *Data collection*

The questionnaire was spread through the service "Yandex.Toloka" in order to get the most relevant and equally distributed data sample. This service allows researchers to collect data for their studies, setting up the target audience and the desired quality of the responses (quality is the rating of the respondent based on their user experience with the service, timing of survey completion, and logic level of the answers). For the current research the following settings have been used:

- Target sample had to equal 400 respondents or more – this number of observations was needed to make the future analysis reliable and representable.
- Quality of respondents had to be higher than 80% – this setting decreased the chance to get random and irrelevant answers, as well as decreased the number of outliers.
- Geography of the research had to include the whole Russian territory – such approach allowed the research to consider the observations in various regions and reflect the results which are relevant to all the country and not just to distinct territories.
- The research had to collect the equal or close to equal numbers of answers from both males and females. This was motivated by the proposed hypotheses regarding gender influence on propensity to symbolic consumption – in order to get the most relevant results it was reasonable to target the equal samples of men and women.

- There were no limitations regarding the age of the respondents – since one of the hypotheses of the study referred to the age’s influence on propensity to symbolic consumption, all the age categories had to be included into the research. The service does not provide the opportunity to adjust the settings so that different age categories are presented equally, therefore, no limitations have been set.

### **3.2. Questionnaire development and variables operationalization**

Firstly, the online questionnaire was developed for the purpose of testing the hypotheses of the developed research model. The questionnaire was divided into 5 blocks (the full list of the questions along with the names of the variables extracted from the answers may be found in the Appendix 1):

#### *1. Block 1: Consumption patterns in the apparel market*

This block of 5 questions is aimed at identifying the consumption behavior patterns regarding apparel market. The questions include the information about preferred shopping format (offline brand shops/shopping malls/online marketplaces/online brand websites), shopping frequency, attitude towards shopping, and preferred brands. Moreover, the respondents had to indicate on a Likert scale, to which extent certain factors are important to them while choosing the clothes (such as quality, trendiness, uniqueness, brand prestige and recognition, and affordable price). The respondents’ answers to the questions of this block may benefit the research in identifying additional behavioral patterns which may be important while studying symbolic consumption of apparel.

#### *2. Block 2: Propensity to consumption of symbolic functions of clothing*

The second block consists of 8 questions and aims to reveal respondents’ propensity to consume clothing in case of each symbolic function proposed in the research model. For each of the 4 symbolic function there are 2-3 questions asking the respondents to indicate on a Likert scale from 1 to 7, how well the statements about their shopping behavior characterize them. Thus, statements like “I buy expensive clothes because it helps me to highlight my income level” and “I buy expensive clothes because it helps me to highlight my social status” characterize respondent’s propensity to consume clothing with an aim of *status and wealth demonstration*. The statements identifying the propensity to consume clothing with an aim of *group-belonging indication* refer to respondent’s tendency to buy clothes which reflects their activity areas style and their friends group style. The scales indicating propensity to the *interests’ demonstration* refer to respondent’s tendency to buy clothes which reflects their interests in music/cinematography/etc. and their personal values (for example, when brand is sustainable or performs charity activities). Finally, the individual’s propensity

to express their sense of style and trendiness through clothing consumption were analyzed as their tendency to buy clothing which reflects their vision of the style (elegant/sporty/relaxed etc.) and clothing which follows the current fashion trends. Thus, each symbolic function of clothing is characterized with 2 distinguish statements which help to characterize respondents' propensity to symbolic consumption of clothing. The corresponding variables are later to be joined correspondingly after the factor analysis, and to be analyzed as dependent variables in the regression analysis.

### 3. Block 3: External factors' influence on decision to buy new clothes

This block consists of 11 questions which aim to identify the cases motivating consumers to buy new clothes. All the scales were developed by the author of this thesis on the basis of the analyzed literature. Again, the Likert scale questions were included, asking respondents to indicate how well the statements about the wardrobe update situations characterize them. The transition to the *new social group* factor is analyzed via 3 statements indicating consumer's tendency to update their wardrobe in a case of new working place, new study place, and new social circle. The *new social status* factor refers to the significant income growth, job promotion, and change of family status. The *media influence* is assessed through consumers' propensity to buy new clothing item after seeing the recommendation of the influencer they trust, after seeing the recommendation in the social media of an individual they are interested in, and after seeing the advertisement of the brand itself in the social media or at any website. The *special occasion* influence scales included the probability that the consumer would buy new clothes before the upcoming business event like business meeting/conference/interview, and upcoming informal event like celebration/wedding/birthday etc. The cases proposed in the current blocks as a situations of clothing consumption are based on the literature review and in the future may be considered as research limitations, since it may be assumed that not all the examples for each symbolic function were provided. The variables derived from this block's questions are going to be joined after the factor analysis and used in the further regression analysis as independent variables of the 'external factors' block of the research model.

### 4. Block 4: Individual factors' investigation

The following block is focused on identifying individual behavioral characteristics which were analyzed in the previous chapter and are expected to influence on propensity to consume clothing in the case of each symbolic function. The block consists of 10 questions, each in a form of a statement, level of agreement with which need to be assessed by respondents on a Likert scale from 1 to 7. In the cases of 3 factors developed in the previous chapter, the existent behavioral scales were adopted to the current research goals. Thus, *level of self-monitoring* assessment included 3 statements adopted

from the Self-monitoring scale developed by Mark Snyder (1974). Although the original scale has implied 'True'/'False' answers, for the current research methodology it was relevant to use the Likert scale, since further the variables derived from the answers were included in the regression analysis. The 3 questions indicating *materialism level* were borrowed from the research [Ponchio & Aranha, 2008] which adopted the Materialism scale developed by Belk in 1984 and the Material Values scale developed by Richins (1994). The 2 statements identifying respondent's *self-esteem level* were adopted from Rosenberg's self-esteem scale (1965).

Finally, since there is no scale developed which would analyze individual's knowledge of clothing codes, the 2 statements were developed by the author of the research based on the definition of the factor stated in the previous chapter and literature analysis. The variables derived from the respondents' answers were further logically joined after the factor analysis and were used in the regression analysis as independent variables representing the 'Individual characteristics' factors of the research model.

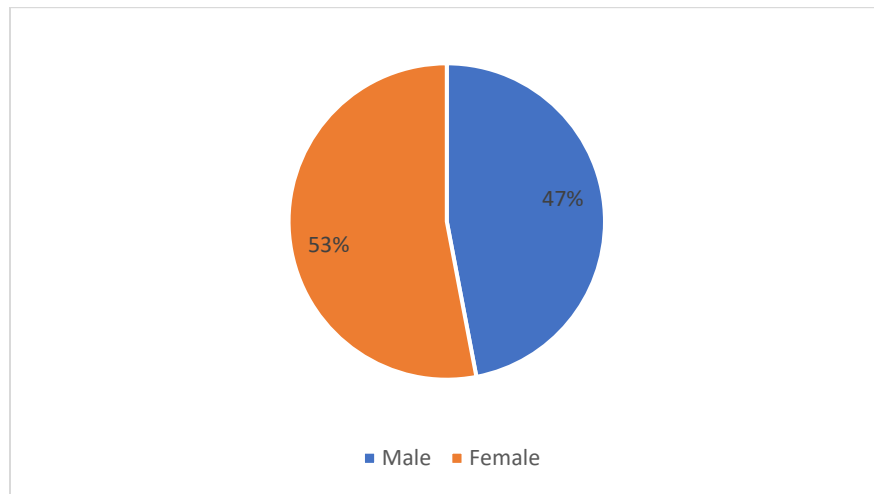
#### 5. *Block 5: Demographic data*

The final block consists of 5 questions and requires the respondents to share some demographic data. The question which asked respondents to indicate their age was an open question, while other 4 questions, including indication of the gender, location, source and the level of income, were in a form of a multiple choice.

### **3.3. Sampling profile**

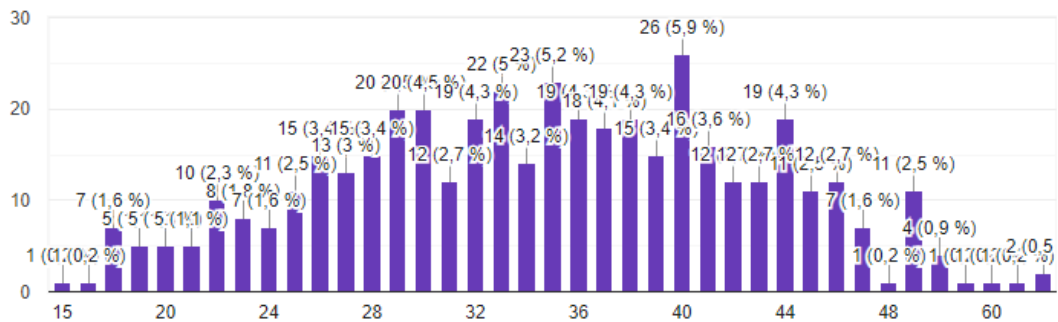
#### *Demography*

In total, 440 respondents participated in the survey. The sample consists of 208 males and 232 females, presenting 47% and 53% of the sample respectively (Figure 7). This gives an opportunity for the survey to study the gender factor influence using a sufficient number of respondents representing each gender.



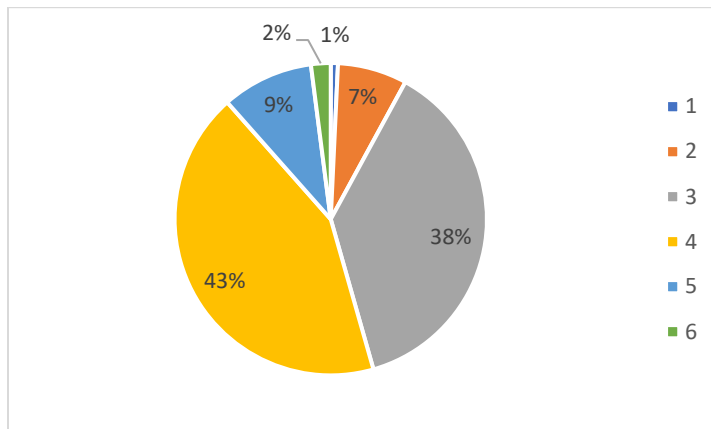
**Figure 7** Gender distribution

Regarding the age distribution, it may be observed in the Figure 8 that all age categories are presented in the sample, allowing the study to examine the age factor influence on consumers' propensity to symbolic consumption.



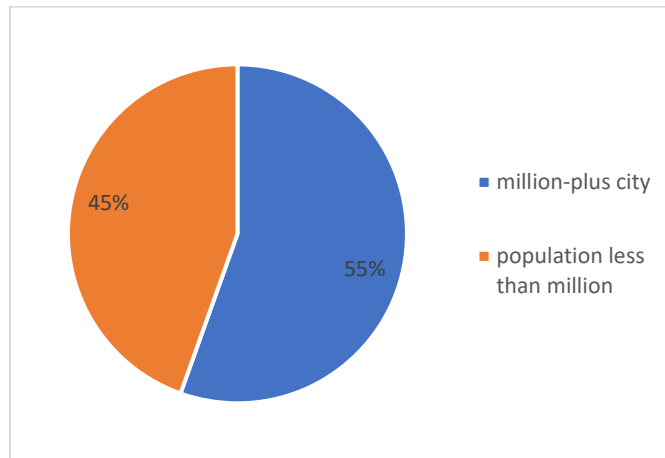
**Figure 8** Age distribution

Considering the sample's income level distribution (Figure 12), the majority of respondents (81%) represent 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> income levels – 38% have enough money for buying food and clothes, but experience difficulty with buying home appliances, while 43% can afford the latter though do not have enough money to buy a new car. It may be concluded that current survey's sample mostly represents the middle class, though also it includes the groups of respondents with both lower and higher income, which is beneficial for the further research.



**Figure 9** Income level distribution

The sample represents close to equal number of citizens of million-plus Russian cities and smaller ones (Figure 10), which makes the data analysis results relevant to the whole Russian market independently on the consumer's location.



**Figure 10** Geographical distribution

Finally, the means of the scales indicating respondents' attitudes towards shopping (Table 2) indicate that in general sample more enjoys the shopping experience than dislikes it:

**Table 2** Means of attitudes towards shopping

<b>Dislike shopping</b>	<b>Indifferent to shopping</b>	<b>Like shopping</b>
2,620454545	3,045454545	3,440909091

### 3.4. Data analysis results

#### 3.4.1. Factor analysis

The values of some factors of the model were identified using several questions in the questionnaire. Therefore, for convenience of the further analysis the results of such indicators were initially grouped into new variables with a preliminary factor analysis. It included the analysis of the variables reflecting the symbolic functions of apparel, as well as the individual characteristics and external factors influencing individual's propensity to symbolic consumption. Thus, 3 factor analyses have been proceeded with preliminary validation and reliability tests – all the outputs with the analytical comments can be found in the Appendix 2, 3 and 4.

- *Individual characteristics*

9 variables reflecting 4 factors from the model have been analyzed, leading to the elimination of the 'knowledge of clothing codes' factor, which did not pass the validity and reliability test – the factor loading was lower than 0,5, and Cronbach's Alpha was lower than 6. Other variables have passed the preliminary tests and been grouped for the further use in the regression analysis as independent variables. The results of the analysis and the names of the new variables are presented in the Table 3:

**Table 3** Factor analysis results: individual characteristics [Source: analysis in SPSS]

Statement from the questionnaire	Factor loadings from Rotated matrix output			Cronbach's Alpha	Resulting variable
	1	2	3		
I behave differently in different social situations and groups			0,824	0,732	Self-monitoring level
When I'm not sure how to behave in a social situation, I often adjust to the behavior of others			0,866		
I enjoy spending money on different things	0,666			0,762	Materialism
It frustrates me that I can't always buy what I want	0,8				
I believe that my life would be better if I had a lot of things that I don't have at the moment	0,862				
I am confident in my beliefs and do not hesitate to share them with others		0,883		0,786	Self-esteem level

I consider myself a worthy person, at least on an equal level with others		0,86		
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Thus, three individual factors have been used in the further regression analysis: self-monitoring level, materialism level, and self-esteem level.

- *External factors*

Initially 10 variables have been analyzed for reliability, which led to elimination of 2 variables from the further analysis: the formation of the new social circle and change of the family status. The analysis indicated that without these variables the Cronbach's Alpha would have significantly increased, meaning that these variables were not consistent with other ones. After the elimination, the factor analysis has been conducted, leading to the following results presented in the Table 4:

**Table 4** Factor analysis results: external factors [Source: analysis in SPSS]

Statement from the questionnaire	Factor loadings from Rotated matrix output				Cronbach's Alpha	Resulting variable
	1	2	3	4		
Moving to a new job is a situation where I (would) review my wardrobe			0,848		0,87	<b>Transition to the new social group</b>
Moving to a new place of study is a situation where I (would) review my wardrobe			0,862			
With a significant increase in income, I will most likely update my wardrobe		0,921			0,856	<b>Status increase</b>
When my social status changes with a promotion at work, I'm more likely to update my wardrobe		0,825				
If I see a clothing recommendation from a blogger I follow, I'm more likely to buy it	0,892				0,882	<b>Media impact</b>
I can buy new clothes after seeing the recommendation of a person I'm interested in on social networks	0,927					
I can buy new clothes after seeing a brand's ad on social media or on a website	0,789					



Before an upcoming business meeting/conference/job interview, I will most likely purchase a new piece of clothing				0,786	0,743	<b>upcoming_event</b>
Before an upcoming holiday/friends wedding/birthday and other non-business events, I will most likely purchase a new piece of clothing				0,816		

Therefore, four external factors have been used in the regression analysis as independent variables: transition to the new social group, transition to the new social status, media and upcoming event.

- *Symbolic functions of apparel*

In this block all the variables have passed validity and reliability tests, which led to the following results of the factor analysis (Table 5):

**Table 5** Factor analysis results: symbolic functions of apparel [Source: analysis in SPSS]

Statement from the questionnaire	Factor loadings from Rotated matrix output				Cronbach's Alpha	Resulting variable
	1	2	3	4		
I buy expensive clothes because it helps to highlight my income level.	0,874				0,937	<b>Propensity to consume clothing with an aim of status and wealth demonstration.</b>
I buy expensive clothes because it helps to emphasize my social status.	0,875					
I buy clothes that reflect the style of the field of work I belong to				0,644	0,601	<b>Propensity to consume clothing with an aim of group-belonging indication</b>
I buy clothes that are similar in style to my friends.				0,78		
I buy clothes that highlight my interests (e.g. in music/movies/sports etc.)		0,898			0,781	<b>Propensity to consume clothing with an aim of expression of personal style and trendiness</b>
I buy clothes that emphasize my values (for example, clothes made from recycled materials or clothes from a charity brand)		0,782				
I buy clothes that emphasize my style vision (elegant/relaxed/sporty, etc.)			0,941		0,647	<b>Propensity to consume clothing with an aim of expression of personal interests and values</b>
I buy clothes that are in line with current fashion trends.			0,713			

Thus, four factors have been used in the further regression analysis as dependent variables: propensity to consume clothing with an aim of status and wealth demonstration; propensity to consume clothing with an aim of group-belonging indication; propensity to consume clothing with an aim of interests and values expression; and propensity to consume clothing with an aim of trendiness demonstration.

### **3.4.2. Regression analysis**

To test the developed research models, in total four regression analyzes were carried out, showing the influence of individual characteristics, external factors, and demographic factors on respondents' propensity to consume clothing in order to realize the four previously indicated symbolic functions of apparel. Each of the tested models is analyzed and further described separately from the others.

All the models have been checked for compliance with the conditions necessary for the regression analysis (multicollinearity absence, homoscedasticity, and absence of autocorrelation of residuals). All the output, including both regression analyses and regression assumptions, are accessible in the Appendixes to each regression analysis (Appendix 5, 6, 7 and 8).

It is worth to mention before the analysis results presentation, that for the convenience of the further analysis the 'gender' binary variable has been recoded, with "0" presenting the "Male" answers and "1" – "Female". Since the 'income level' variable is presented as an ordinal scale that does not have the objectively measured intervals between the meanings, it is not reliable to use it as a factor in regression analysis. Therefore, it was decided to use the dispersion analysis separately for this variable in order to tests the proposed hypotheses – the analysis results are presented in the next paragraph.

#### *1. Propensity to consume clothing with an aim of status and wealth demonstration.*

Independent variables: gender ('*gender*'), media impact ('*media*'), self-esteem level ('*self\_esteem*'), age ('*age*'), level of self-monitoring ('*self\_monitoring*'), transition to the new social status ('*status\_increase*'), transition to the new social group ('*group\_transition*'), upcoming special occasion ('*upcoming\_event*'), materialism level ('*materialism*').

Dependent variable: Propensity to consume clothing with an aim of status and wealth demonstration ('*propensity\_status\_wealth*').

The following analysis tests the hypotheses H2a, H3a, H4a, H5a, H6a, H7a, H8a, H9a, H11a.

The 1<sup>st</sup> hypothesis is not going to be tested, since the ‘knowledge of clothing codes’ factor earlier proved to be irrelevant for the further analysis.

The data obtained from the analysis of the influence of various factors on the propensity to consume clothing with an aim of status and wealth demonstration can be summarized in a single table (Table 6). It presents significance coefficients that reflect the presence of the influence of variables on propensity, as well as standardized B-coefficients that describe the strength of the identified relationship (significant indicators are highlighted in gray). Also, the bottom rows of the table contain information about the significance of the regression model (ANOVA) and the percentage of the model explained by independent factors (R-square indicator).

**Table 6** Results of regression analysis of propensity to consume clothing with an aim of status and wealth demonstration [Source: analysis in SPSS]

	Propensity to consume clothing with an aim of status and wealth demonstration	
	beta	significance
External factors		
Transition to the new social group	0,073	0,127
Transition to the new social status	-0,045	0,396
Media	0,427	0,000
Upcoming special occasion	0,108	0,042
Individual characteristics		
Level of self-monitoring	0,006	0,892
Level of materialism	0,171	0,001
Self-esteem level	-0,016	0,732
Demographic factors		
Age	0,019	0,015
Gender	-0,625	0,000
Model Significance Indicators		
ANOVA significance	< 0,001	
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	36,2%	

It may be observed from the results, that factors which significantly influence respondents’ propensity to consume clothing with an aim of wealth and status demonstration are *media impact*, *upcoming special occasions*, *consumer’s level of materialism*, *age*, and *gender*. Notably, Beta-coefficient of the gender factor is negative. Since earlier the variable observations were recoded so that ‘0’ reflects ‘male’ and ‘1’ reflects ‘female’ answers, it may be concluded that male gender

positively influences the propensity to symbolic consumption in the case of status and wealth demonstration. Moreover, it is worth to note that the age factor's Beta coefficient is positive, meaning that the hypothesis regarding age's negative influence on the dependent variable was partially wrong, but still can be confirmed since the analysis indicated the significance of the factor.

Therefore, 5 out of 9 hypotheses have been confirmed with the regression analysis: H3a, H7a, H8a H9a and H11a.

## 2. *Propensity to consume clothing with an aim of group-belonging indication*

Independent variables: the same as in regression analysis 1.

Dependent variable: Propensity to consume clothing with an aim of group-belonging indication (*'propensity\_group'*).

The following analysis tests the hypotheses H2b, H3b, H4b, H5b, H6b, H7b, H8b, H9b, H11b.

The results of the study of factors influencing the propensity to consume clothing with an aim of group-belonging indication can be presented in the following table (Table 7):

**Table 7** Results of regression analysis of propensity to consume clothing with an aim of group-belonging indication [Source: analysis in SPSS]

	Propensity to consume clothing with an aim of group-belonging indication	
	beta	significance
External factors		
Transition to the new social group	0,153	0,001
Transition to the new social status	-0,012	0,811
Media	0,440	0,000
Upcoming special occasion	0,069	0,154
Individual characteristics		
Level of self-monitoring	0,068	0,112
Level of materialism	0,029	0,554
Self-esteem level	0,027	0,538
Demographic factors		
Age	0,014	0,063
Gender	-0,433	0,001
Model Significance Indicators		
ANOVA significance	< 0,001	
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	39,0%	

The results indicate that such external factors as *transition to the new social group* and *media impact* significantly influence respondent's propensity to consume clothing with an aim of group-belonging indication. Moreover, as well as in the previous analysis, *age* and *gender* proved to be significant factors, with age providing positive influence, and gender – negative.

Therefore, 4 out of 9 hypotheses have been confirmed: H5b, H7b, H9b and H11b.

### 3. Propensity to consume clothing with an aim of expression of personal style and trendiness

Independent variables: the same as in regression analyses 1-2.

Dependent variable: propensity to consume clothing with an aim of expression of personal style and trendiness (*'propensity\_trendiness'*)

The following analysis tests the hypotheses H2c, H3c, H4c, H5c, H6c, H7c, H8c, H9c, H11c.

The general results of the study of factors influencing the propensity to consume clothing with an aim of expression of personal style and trendiness can be presented in the following table (Table 8):

**Table 8** Results of regression analysis of propensity to consume clothing with an aim of expression of personal style and trendiness [Source: analysis in SPSS]

	Propensity to consume clothing with an aim of expression of personal style and trendiness	
	beta	significance
External factors		
Transition to the new social group	0,018	0,665
Transition to the new social status	0,172	0,000
Media	0,203	0,000
Upcoming special occasion	0,262	0,000
Individual characteristics		
Level of self-monitoring	0,054	0,172
Level of materialism	0,037	0,418
Self-esteem level	0,095	0,020
Demographic factors		
Age	-0,007	0,304
Gender	-0,139	0,248
Model Significance Indicators		
ANOVA significance	< 0,001	
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	43,0%	

This analysis indicates that no demographic factors influence the dependent variable, while 3 out of 4 external factors have a significant positive influence: *transition to the new social status*, *media impact*, and *upcoming special occasion*. Moreover, such individual characteristic as the *self-esteem level* also positively influences consumer's propensity to buy clothes with an aim of interests and values demonstration, though the hypothesis assumed the effect of the factor to be negative.

In total, 4 out of 9 hypotheses have been confirmed: H4c, H6c, H7c, and H8c.

4. *Propensity to consume clothing with an aim of expression of personal interests and values*

Independent variables: the same as in regression analyses 1-3.

Dependent variable: Propensity to consume clothing with an aim of expression of personal interests and values (*'propensity\_interests\_values'*)

The following analysis tests the hypotheses H2d, H3d, H4d, H5d, H6d, H7d, H8d, H9d, H11d.

The data obtained during the analysis can be summarized in a following table (Table 9):

**Table 9** Results of regression analysis of propensity to consume clothing with an aim of expression of personal interests and values [Source: analysis in SPSS]

	Propensity to consume clothing with an aim of expression of personal interests and values	
	beta	significance
External factors		
Transition to the new social group	0,125	0,012
Transition to the new social status	-0,118	0,030
Media	0,516	0,000
Upcoming special occasion	0,030	0,586
Individual characteristics		
Level of self-monitoring	0,043	0,366
Level of materialism	0,078	0,161
Self-esteem level	0,014	0,783
Demographic factors		
Age	-0,012	0,304
Gender	-0,417	0,004
Model Significance Indicators		
ANOVA significance	< 0,001	
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	34,3%	

The analysis results show that such significant external factors as transition to the new social group and media impact positively influence propensity to consume clothing with an aim to express personal interests and values. Another significant external factor, transition to the new social status, provides a negative influence, although initially the impact was assumed to be positive. Moreover, the gender factor proved to be significant – the negative Beta-coefficient indicates that male respondents showed the higher propensity to symbolic consumption with an aim to demonstrate interests and values.

In total, 4 out of 9 hypotheses have been confirmed: H5d, H6d, H7d, and H11d.

### 3.4.3. Dispersion analysis

As it was mentioned in the previous paragraph, due to the type of the variable ‘income\_level’ which is presented as an ordinary scale, it is more reliable to conduct a dispersion ANOVA analysis than a regression analysis in order to test the proposed hypotheses and estimate the factor’s influence on the dependent variables. Therefore, the dispersion analysis was conducted in SPSS, which results are summarized in the table below (Table 10). The analysis output may be found in the Appendix 9.

*Table 10 Results of dispersion analysis*

Dependent variable	Significance level
Propensity to consume clothing with an aim of status and wealth demonstration	0,556
Propensity to consume clothing with an aim of group-belonging indication	0,356
Propensity to consume clothing with an aim of expression of personal style and trendiness	0,009
Propensity to consume clothing with an aim to express interests and values	0,257

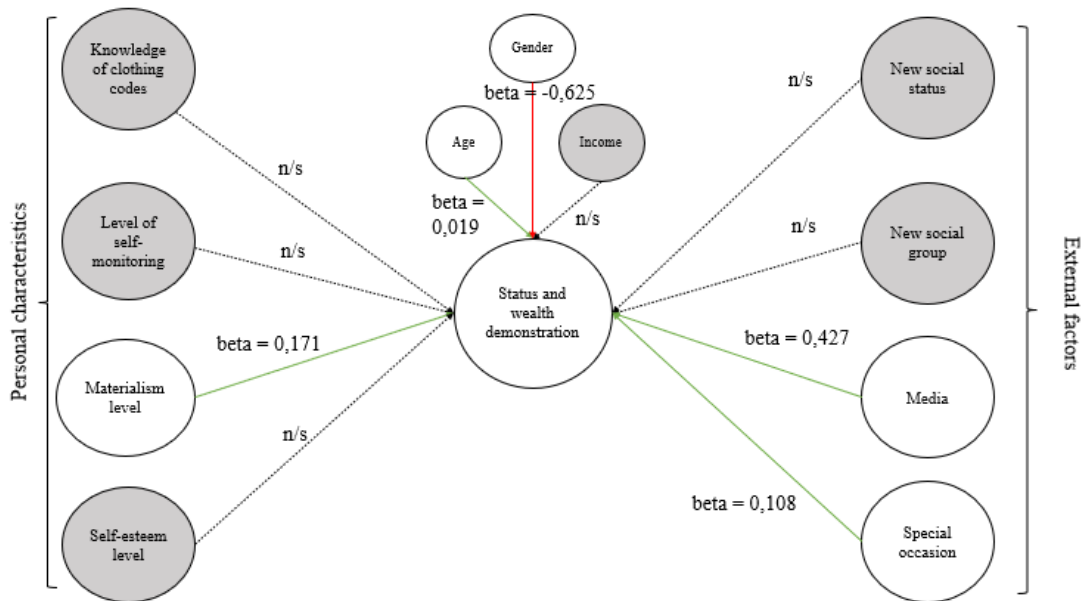
It may be observed that significance level is lower than 0,05 only when the dependent variable is propensity to consume apparel with an aim to express personal style and trendiness, which means that income level influences on propensity to symbolic consumption only in the case of this symbolic function. The means’ comparison (Appendix 9) showed that the mean of the propensity in the case of this symbolic function increases accordingly with the growth of the income level, consequently, it may be concluded that the factor’s influence is significant and positive. Thus, the analysis has confirmed the hypothesis H10c and rejected the other ones.

### 3.5. Discussion

The developed research model, which examines the internal, external and demographic factors' influence on individual's propensity to symbolic consumption, was applied to the four symbolic functions of apparel identified during literature review and market exploration: status and wealth demonstration, group-belonging indication, expression of personal sense of style and trendiness, and expression of personal interests and values. The variables indicating propensity to consume clothing which performs these functions have been analyzed separately as dependent variables in the regression analysis. This paragraph presents the results' interpretation and discussion.

#### 1. Propensity to consume clothing with an aim of status and wealth demonstration.

The summarized results of this symbolic function may be presented in the Figure 11, where grey lines reflect non-significance of the factor, while red and green lines reflect significant factors with negative and positive, relatively, influence on the dependent variable. 'N/s' reflect not significant connection between the factors, and those which are significant, are signed with the beta coefficients:



**Figure 11** Resulting model of factors influencing propensity to consume clothing with an aim of status and wealth demonstration

The results of the analysis showed that consumers with high materialism level are more prone to status and wealth demonstration through their clothing choices, while the strongest external influence comes from media messages sent by the influencers and clothing brands themselves. The propensity to such type of consumption is also predicted by the upcoming special occasion, be that business or leisure event. The analysis also identified that the higher is the consumer's age, more

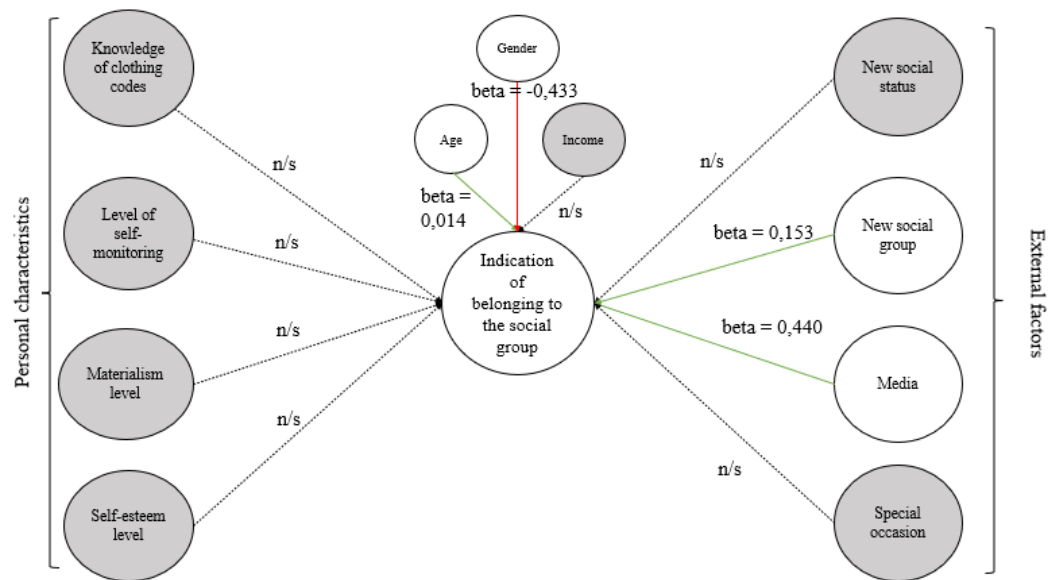


prone they are to express their wealth and social status using their clothes, and moreover, such behavior is more typical for the male consumers.

The identified influences in cases of media impact and materialism level have confirmed the assumptions based on the existing literature and prove that such behaviors are also applicable to the Russian market. Hypothesis regarding age influence, however, identified that the elder individuals are more prone to status consumption in the terms of Russian market, despite that assumption was that the younger consumers should have showed higher propensity to symbolic consumption in this case. The study has also added certainty to the gender influence, which was hard to predict since different research papers identified different connections between gender and symbolic consumption behavior. It may be concluded, that in terms of the Russian market, clothing choices which are made with an aim to demonstrate status and wealth, are more common for men than women.

## 2. Propensity to consume clothing with an aim of group-belonging indication.

The summarized results of the analysis of this research model may be presented in the Figure 12:



**Figure 12** Resulting model of factors influencing propensity to consume clothing with an aim of group-belonging indication

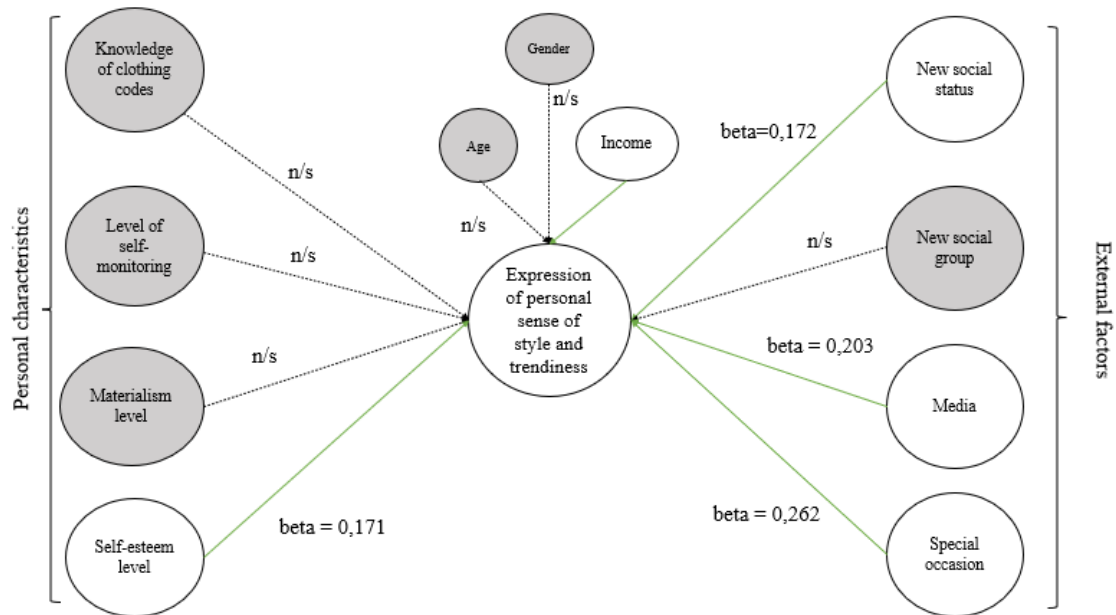
The analysis identified that no individual characteristics proposed by the research model influence customers' propensity to buy clothes that would indicate their belonging to the social groups they want to identify with. Nevertheless, such external factors like the media impact and transition to the new social group proved to be influencing such behavior. The first factor significance implies that

influencers, persons of interests, and clothing brands may stimulate such type of symbolic consumption, which was identified in the survey by estimation of respondents' propensity to buy clothes reflecting the style of their activity field and the style of their friends' group. The transition to the new social group factor, while being the most anticipated one to influence the dependent variable in this model, confirmed that such situations in consumer's life like new job or new place of study can predict their propensity to buy new clothes which would associate them with their new position.

Like in the first model, age and gender are factors that may predict symbolic consumption with an aim of group-belonging indication. Again, the higher is the consumer's age, the higher is their propensity to such symbolic function of apparel, while males show higher tendency to the studied behavior.

### 3. Propensity to consume clothing with an aim of expression of personal sense of style and trendiness.

The summary of the regression analysis for this model is reflected in the Figure 13:



**Figure 13** Resulting model of factors influencing propensity to consume clothing with an aim of expression of personal sense of style and trendiness

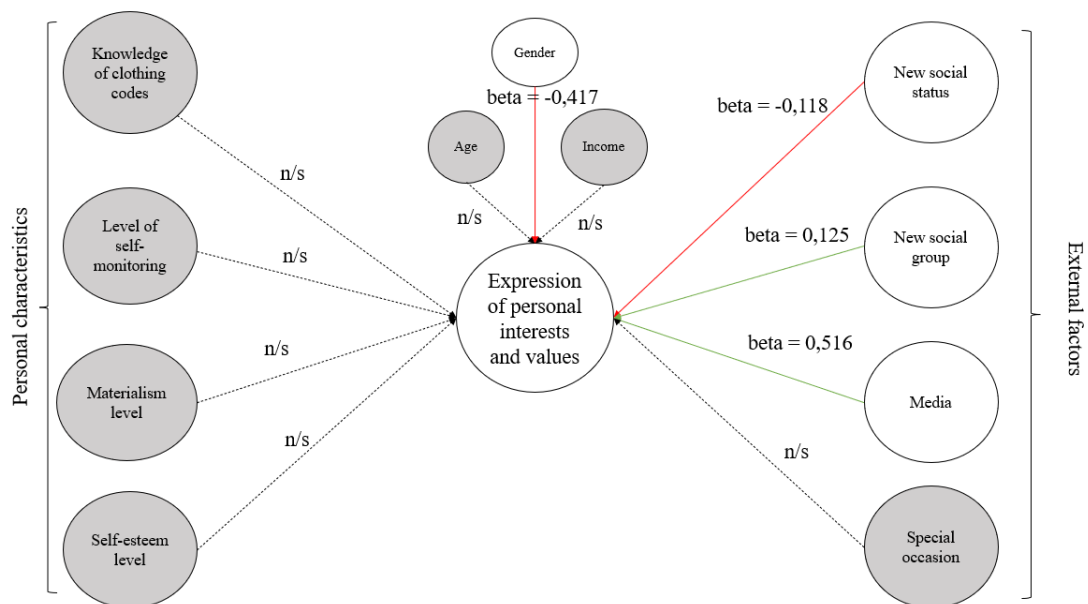
The study of the propensity to express personal style and trendiness through clothes showed that almost all of the considered external factors influence such behavioral pattern. The strongest influence is performed by the upcoming special occasion, then goes the media impact and the transition to the new social status.

The only individual characteristic which proved to be influential in this model is the self-esteem level. Notably, the initially proposed influence was negative, while the current research proved it to be positive. It means that for the studied sample the more consumer is confident and the higher is their self-appraisal, the more prone they are to buy clothes which defines their personal style, and which follows the current fashion trends. Considering the identified significant external factors, it may be assumed such behavior is most strongly expressed when being exposed to the new social layer in the situation of a social event, while the orienteers for the style choices coming from the relevant media channels.

Despite that no of the demographic factors discussed in the previous models influence the propensity to buy clothes so that it reflects the trendiness of the consumer, this is the only symbolic function which is positively predicted by the individual's income level. This means that such consumer behavior is more typical for those who earn more, and considering that majority of the respondents make money of their own, this study shows that Yang's (2012) proposition regarding low income's positive influence on propensity to status consumption, does not work in the case of another symbolic function of apparel.

#### 4. Propensity to consume clothing with an aim to express personal interests and values.

The summary of the regression analysis for this model is reflected in the Figure 14:



**Figure 14** Resulting model of factors influencing propensity to consume clothing with an aim to express personal interests and values

The final model's results indicated that no of the considered individual characteristics play role defining the propensity to symbolic consumption of clothes which reflects one's interests and values. Nevertheless, 3 out of 4 external factors proved to be influential: transition to the new social group, transition to the new social status, and media impact. While the transition to the new social group factor's significance may be explained by the individual's necessity to define themselves while meeting new people, the transition to the new social status, on the contrary with results of the previous analysis, proved to negatively influence such behavior, which needs to be studied more thoroughly. Probably, such finding demonstrates that the higher is the person's status, the less expected they are to translate their inner personality to the others: while trendiness and sense of style considered in the previous model are more superficial characteristics, the individual's interests and values are more private.

As in the first two models, the gender factor had the same impact on the dependent variable. Consequently, it may be concluded that the males in total are more prone to symbolic consumption of apparel in the Russian market than women. Also, the general conclusion can be drawn about the media influence – all of the models have proved this factor to impact the symbolic consumption, no matter what symbolic function consumer expects their clothing to perform.

### **3.6. Managerial implications**

The results of the study may be used in practice by the marketing specialists in two ways:

- 1) Choice of the effective positioning and promotion strategies accordingly with the current audience of the brand.*

The research results have indicated the external factors which proved to be stimulating the symbolic consumption in the cases of different symbolic functions of apparel. These functions, even while the clothing item may be the same, translate different meanings to various consumers. By studying its current audience demography and individual behavioral trends, brands may predict, which symbolic function their consumers expect their clothing to perform, and which stimuli may increase their desire to obtain new clothes. This analysis, along with the use of the research results, will help the marketing specialists to develop the most efficient promotional strategies and messages in the case of each target group.

For instance, the demographic factors can be easily identified using loyalty programs' data or the digital data of the customers accessible via personal accounts in the brands' websites, marketplaces

etc. With the use of analytics provided by the target and context advertisement tools, the signs indicating the individual characteristics proposed in the model may be analyzed, as well as the shopping patterns reflecting the external stimuli to consume clothing in general. Based on this data, brands may identify, which symbolic function their customers expect their clothing to perform and are the most prone to, and adopt the marketing messages accordingly, so that they highlight the benefits of the clothing which reflect that their product is going to satisfy the consumers' needs.

2) *Choice of the target audience which is the most affected by the promotion strategy and positioning brand currently uses.*

The opposite perspective on the practical implementation of the research is that the brands that have already established their positioning and the symbolic purpose their clothes is supposed to fulfill, may use the results to target the audience which is the most sensitive to the translated marketing messages, and adopt their promotional tools accordingly.

The research results allow the companies not to exclusively focus on only one way to imply the findings, but also to combine the marketing tactics and access different target groups with different messages, by that reaching the higher efficiency without changing the items themselves. It is important that independently on the company's goal and symbolic function they want their clothes to perform, much attention should be given to developing the media strategy, since the media impact was the only factor which is significant in all of the symbolic functions models.

### **3.7. Limitations and further research**

While the study has revealed significant external factors influencing consumers' propensity to symbolic consumption in the case of each symbolic function, only two individual characteristics in total had such impact: materialism level in case of status and wealth consumption, and self-esteem level in case of expression of personal style and trendiness. Such result indicates that individual characteristics considered in the foreign literature for some reason are not influential in the conditions of the Russian market, and further research could be done on identifying personal behavioral trends which could predict symbolic consumption of apparel. Moreover, the knowledge of clothing codes factor, which was proposed after the literature review, did not pass the validity test during the factor analysis. Considering that this was the only individual factor which was assessed in the survey without the adoption of the earlier developed scale to measure it, it may be assumed that another research

could be conducted with the use of different formulation of the statements indicating knowledge of clothing codes variable.

The other aspect that needs further study is the media impact which proved to be significant in the cases of all the symbolic functions. The current study focuses on studying the influence marketing and brands' online advertising influence as a group factor, while there may be differences in consumers' perceptions of these methods in the scope of each symbolic function distinctly. Moreover, more media channels could be studied in the future with an aim to get a better understanding of the tools fashion marketers could use to promote their brands.

Finally, it is worth noting that such external factor as transition to the new social group after the factor analysis has eventually considered only two situations studied in the survey: new workplace and new place of study, thus, the research results and managerial implications are applicable only to these cases.

## CONCLUSION

The goal of study was to reveal the factors predetermining symbolic consumption of apparel in the Russian market. To achieve this goal, a set of tasks has been set, completion of which let the research to determine which factors consumers who are prone to symbolic consumption are influenced the most.

The first stage of the research, presented in the first chapter of this paper, on the basis of literature review and market research, the definition of the symbolic consumption has been derived, as well as the classification of symbolic functions of apparel which depends on the symbolic aim consumer desires their clothes to perform while making a purchasing choice: wealth and status demonstration, group-belonging indication, indication of personal sense of style and trendiness, and expression of personal interests and values. Further, the conceptual model has been developed, which focuses on the definition of the consumer's propensity to each of the symbolic functions as a consequence of individual characteristics consumer possesses, external factors, and demographic factors.

At the second research stage, conducted in the Chapter 2, the factors characterizing each conceptual model construct have been identified based on the literature analysis. Thus, 4 research models have been developed, each for the one of the defined symbolic functions of apparel. The dependent variables were studied as individual's propensity to symbolic consumption with an aim of realization of the certain symbolic function of apparel. For the confirmation of the developed model, the set of 11 hypotheses has been proposed: 4 reflecting the individual characteristics' influence on the dependent variables, other 4 – external factors' influence, and final 3 – the demographic factors' influence.

As a part of the third stage of this work, the empirical study has been conducted in the Chapter 3. To test the set model the online survey has been conducted, and the data later has been analyzed with the use of factor analysis and regression analysis. The research identified the factors significantly influencing propensity to symbolic consumption of apparel in the case of each symbolic function. While some factors showed stable significance in all of the regression models, some of them were significant only in the cases of certain symbolic functions, which proved the importance to distinguish different types of symbolic consumption while studying this concept in the scope of the apparel market.

The hypotheses considering the external and demographic factors' influence showed more support than the individual characteristics' impact, which lead to the definition of the opportunities of the further research.

Finally, the managerial implications of the study have been developed for the brands and companies using or planning to use the symbolic meanings' translation in heir positioning and promotion. The research helps to identify the best target sample for the already executed positioning strategy, as well as to adopt the marketing strategy to the already existent client base by studying their shopping behavior and demography.

Thus, the set goal and tasks of the research have been completed, as well as the research questions have been answered: the study identified the types of symbolic functions clothing performs to consumers, and defined which external factors and consumer's individual characteristics may influence their propensity to symbolic consumption of apparel in the Russian market.



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## APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

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### Section 1. Introduction

Good afternoon!

My name is Maria, and I am conducting a study of consumer behavior in the Russian clothing market. In my work, I want to understand how and why Russian consumers choose clothes in different situations, as well as what clothes mean to us in everyday life. The collected data will be used only in summary form and for the purposes of this study.

Thank you for taking the time to fill out the survey. The survey will take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

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**Section 2.** First, let's talk about your main shopping habits when shopping for clothes.

1. Where do you buy clothes most often? (variable '*place\_shopping*')
  - In brands' offline stores
  - In brands' online stores
  - On marketplaces (e.g. Lamoda, Wildberries etc.)
  - In shopping malls
  - Other
2. How often do you buy new clothes? (variable '*frequency\_shopping*')
  - Once a week and more often
  - Approximately once a month
  - Approximately once three months
  - Approximately once a half a year
  - Approximately once a year
3. What clothing brands do you buy the most often? Mention up to 5 brands. (variable '*brands*')
4. Estimate how important are following factors to you while shopping for clothes on a scale from 1 (the factor is not important at all) to 5 (the factor is extremely important):
  - Affordable price (variable '*affordable\_price*')
  - High quality (variable '*high\_quality*')
  - Brand recognition (variable '*brand\_recognition*')
  - Brand prestige (variable '*brand\_prestige*')
  - Item's uniqueness (variable '*item\_uniqueness*')

- Item's trendiness (variable '*trendiness*')
5. Estimate to what extent you agree with the following statements on a scale from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (absolutely agree):
- I don't like shopping - when I need to buy some clothes, I try to get it over with quickly. (variable '*dislike\_shopping*')
  - I am indifferent to shopping and usually buy only what I plan initially. (variable '*indifference\_shopping*')
  - For me, shopping is a pleasant way to spend time, I enjoy finding and buying clothes. (variable '*like\_shopping*')

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**Section 3.** In this section, you will have to evaluate on a scale from 1 to 7 how well the following statements characterize you (1 - This is not about me at all, 7 - This is totally about me)

- 6. I buy expensive clothes because it helps to highlight my income level. (variable '*propensity\_wealth*')
- 7. I buy expensive clothes because it helps to emphasize my social status. (variable '*propensity\_status*')
- 8. I buy clothes that reflect the style of the field of work I belong to. (variable '*propensity\_group\_sphere*')
- 9. I buy clothes that are similar in style to my friends. (variable '*propensity\_group\_friends*')
- 10. I buy clothes that highlight my interests (e.g. in music/movies/sports etc.) (variable '*propensity\_interests*')
- 11. I buy clothes that emphasize my values (for example, clothes made from recycled materials or clothes from a charity brand). (variable '*propensity\_values*')
- 12. I buy clothes that emphasize my style vision (elegant/relaxed/sporty, etc.) (variable '*propensity\_style*')
- 13. I buy clothes that are in line with current fashion trends. (variable '*propensity\_trendiness*')

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**Section 4.** In this section, you will have to evaluate on a scale from 1 to 7 how well the following statements characterize you in a situation of wardrobe update (1 - This is not about me at all, 7 - This is totally about me)

- 14. Moving to a new job is a situation where I (would) review my wardrobe. (variable '*transition\_job*')

15. Moving to a new place of study is a situation where I (would) review my wardrobe. (variable '*transition\_study*')
  16. If I have a new social circle, I tend to revise my wardrobe. (variable '*transition\_social\_circle*')
  17. With a significant increase in income, I will most likely update my wardrobe. (variable '*change\_income*')
  18. When my social status changes with a promotion at work, I'm more likely to update my wardrobe. (variable '*change\_job\_promotion*')
  19. If my marital status changes, I will most likely update my wardrobe. (variable '*change\_family\_status*')
  20. If I see a clothing recommendation from a blogger I follow, I'm more likely to buy it. (variable '*media\_influencer*')
  21. I can buy new clothes after seeing the recommendation of a person I'm interested in on social networks. (variable '*media\_person\_of\_interest*')
  22. I can buy new clothes after seeing a brand's ad on social media or on a website. (variable '*media\_brand\_advertising*')
  23. Before an upcoming business meeting/conference/job interview, I will most likely purchase a new piece of clothing. (variable '*upcoming\_business\_event*')
  24. Before an upcoming holiday/friend's wedding/birthday and other non-business events, I will most likely purchase a new piece of clothing. (variable '*upcoming\_informal\_event*')
- 

**Section 5.** In this section, you will have to answer questions about what and how influences your choice as a buyer. On a scale of 1 to 7, evaluate how much you agree with the following statements (1 - strongly disagree, 7 - strongly agree).

*Self-monitoring level (adopted from the Self-monitoring scale developed by Mark Snyder)*

25. My behavior always expresses my true feelings, emotions, and beliefs. (variable '*self\_monitoring\_1*')
26. I behave differently in different social situations and groups. (variable '*self\_monitoring\_2*')
27. When I'm not sure how to behave in a social situation, I often adjust to the behavior of others. (variable '*self\_monitoring\_3*')

*Knowledge of clothing codes*

28. I always dress appropriately for the place and situation. (variable 'knowledge\_clothing\_codes\_1')

29. I draw conclusions about the character / social status / potential place of work of people when I see their clothes. (variable 'knowledge\_clothing\_codes\_2')

*Materialism level (adopted from the Materialism scale developed by Mateus Canniatti Ponchio and Francisco José Espósito Aranha Filho)*

30. I enjoy spending money on different things. (variable 'materialism\_1')

31. It frustrates me that I can't always buy what I want. (variable 'materialism\_2')

32. I believe that my life would be better if I had a lot of things that I don't have at the moment. (variable 'materialism\_3')

*Self-esteem level (adopted from Rosenberg's self-esteem scale (1965))*

33. I am confident in my beliefs and do not hesitate to share them with others. (variable 'self\_esteem\_1')

34. I consider myself a worthy person, at least on an equal level with others. (variable 'self\_esteem\_2')

---

**Section 6.** This is the final section in which I will ask you to answer a few short questions about yourself. The data is strictly confidential and is used exclusively for research purposes.

35. Please enter your gender. (variable 'gender')

- Female
- Male

36. Please enter your age. (variable 'age')

37. Please select your city of residence. (variable 'location')

38. Do you live off your own source of income or on your family's income? (variable 'income\_source')

- I live using my own income.
- I live off my family.
- I live off both of these sources of income.

39. Please indicate which of the following statements best describes your (or your family's) financial situation. (variable 'income\_level')

- Not even enough money for food.



- Enough money for food, but buying clothes is difficult.
- There is enough money for food and clothes, but buying large household appliances is difficult.
- There is enough money for household appliances, but buying a new car would be difficult.
- Enough income for a new car but buying an apartment or house (other real estate) is difficult.
- I can afford everything.

## APPENDIX 2: FACTOR ANALYSIS OF INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

### 1. 'Self-monitoring' reliability test

Cronbach's Alpha is higher than 0,6, meaning that characteristics are internally consistent.

*Table 11 Reliability statistics for self-monitoring factor*

Reliability statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Standartized Cronbach's Alpha	N elements
0,702	0,7	3

However, further analysis showed that Alpha Cronbach's would have been higher if the first variable was excluded:

*Table 12 Reliability statistics of variables characterizing self-monitoring level*

Statistics of points in relation to the total score					
	Scale mean when item is excluded	Scale variance when item is excluded	Corrected correlation between item and total	The square of the multiple correlation coefficient	Cronbach's alpha at item exclusion
My behavior always expresses my true feelings, emotions and beliefs.	8,31	10,515	0,416	0,185	0,732
I behave differently in different social situations and groups	8,27	8,352	0,615	0,396	0,481
When I'm not sure how to behave in a social situation, I often adjust to the behavior of others.	8,79	9,391	0,534	0,34	0,591

After doing so, the reliability test indicated better results, with Cronbach's Alpha equaling 0,732:

*Table 13 Reliability statistics of self-monitoring factor after the variable elimination*

<b>Reliability statistics</b>		
Cronbach's Alpha	Standartized Cronbach's Alpha	N elements
0,732	0,732	2

Therefore, only variables 'self\_monitoring\_2' and 'self\_monitoring\_3' were further used in the factor analysis.

### **2. 'Knowledge of clothing codes' reliability test**

Reliability test indicated the low value of Cronbach's Alpha – it should be at least equal 0,6 in order to be reliable. Since the statements that have been used in the questionnaire to describe the level of knowledge of clothing codes are not relevant for current study if they are used separately, it was decided to exclude this factor from the further analysis.

*Table 14 Reliability statistics for knowledge of clothing codes factor*

<b>Reliability statistics</b>		
Cronbach's Alpha	Standartized Cronbach's Alpha	N elements
0,428	0,428	2

### **3. 'Materialism' reliability test**

Cronbach's Alpha value is higher than 0,6, meaning that reliability test is passed.

*Table 15 Reliability statistics for materialism factor*

<b>Reliability statistics</b>		
Cronbach's Alpha	Standartized Cronbach's Alpha	N elements
0,762	0,762	3

Moreover, the further analysis showed that Cronbach's Alpha could not become higher if one of the variables was excluded.

**Table 16** Reliability statistics of variables characterizing materialism level

<b>Statistics of points in relation to the total score</b>					
	Scale mean when item is excluded	Scale variance when item is excluded	Corrected correlation between item and total	The square of the multiple correlation coefficient	Cronbach's alpha at item exclusion
I enjoy spending money on different things	8,04	13,128	,529	,283	,749
It frustrates me that I can't always buy what I want	7,55	11,419	,611	,393	,661
I believe that my life would be better if I had a lot of things that I don't have at the moment	8,37	11,645	,643	,422	,623

Therefore, all 3 variables were used in the further factor analysis.

#### **4. 'Self-esteem' reliability test**

Cronbach's Alpha value is higher than 0,6, meaning that reliability test is passed and variables may be used in the factor analysis.

**Table 17** Reliability statistics for self-esteem factor

<b>Reliability statistics</b>		
Cronbach's Alpha	Standartized Cronbach's Alpha	N elements
0,786	0,786	2

#### **5. Factor analysis**

The KMO measure which is higher than 0,6, and significance level which is lower than 0,05 confirm the required correlation level between the variables.

**Table 18** KMO measure for individual characteristics

<b>KMO and Bartlett's test</b>		
A measure of the adequacy of the Kaiser-Meier-Olkin (KMO) sample.		0,749
Bartlett's sphericity criterion	Approximate chi-square	1047,08
	ст.св.	21
	Significance	<,001

Together, 3 extracted factors explain 76% of the dispersion, which is higher than required minimum value of 50,1%:

**Table 19** Explained cumulative variance of individual characteristics factors

Компонент	<b>Объясненная совокупная дисперсия</b>								
	Начальные собственные значения			Извлечение суммы квадратов нагрузок			Ротация суммы квадратов нагрузок		
	Всего	% дисперсии	Суммарный %	Всего	% дисперсии	Суммарный %	Всего	% дисперсии	Суммарный %
1	3,305	47,209	47,209	3,305	47,209	47,209	2,009	28,706	28,706
2	1,121	16,015	63,224	1,121	16,015	63,224	1,735	24,790	53,497
3	,895	12,788	76,012	,895	12,788	76,012	1,576	22,515	76,012
4	,562	8,030	84,042						
5	,456	6,510	90,552						
6	,384	5,482	96,034						
7	,278	3,966	100,000						

Метод выделения факторов: метод главных компонент.

When analyzing the rotated matrix of components, it can be seen that all factors have factor loadings higher than the required value of 0.6.

**Table 20** Rotated component matrix of variables describing individual characteristics

<b>Rotated Component Matrix</b>			
	Component		
	1	2	3
I behave differently in different social situations and groups			0,824
When I'm not sure how to behave in a social situation, I often adjust to the behavior of others			0,866
I enjoy spending money on different things	0,67		

It frustrates me that I can't always buy what I want	0,8		
I believe that my life would be better if I had a lot of things that I don't have at the moment	0,86		
I am confident in my beliefs and do not hesitate to share them with others		0,88	
I consider myself a worthy person, at least on an equal level with others		0,86	
Factor selection method: principal component method.			
Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization.			
a. The rotation converged in 5 iterations.			

Therefore, 3 variables were formed for the further analysis:

- Self-monitoring level ( $\text{self\_monitoring} = (\text{self\_monitoring\_2} + \text{self\_monitoring\_3})/2$ )
- Materialism level ( $\text{materialism} = (\text{materialism\_1} + \text{materialism\_2} + \text{materialism\_3})/3$ )
- Self-esteem level ( $\text{self\_esteem} = (\text{self\_esteem\_1} + \text{self\_esteem})/2$ )

### APPENDIX 3: FACTOR ANALYSIS OF EXTERNAL FACTORS

#### 1. 'Transition to the new social group' reliability test

Variables: 'transition\_job', 'transition\_study', 'transition\_social\_circle'.

Cronbach's Alpha is higher than 0,6, meaning that characteristics are internally consistent and reliability test is passed:

*Table 21 Reliability statistics for transition to the new social group factor*

Reliability statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Standartized Cronbach's Alpha	N elements
0,846	0,855	3

However, further analysis showed that it would be relevant to exclude variable 'transition\_social\_circle' in order to increase general Cronbach's Alpha to 0,870. Therefore, this variable was not used in the factor analysis.

*Table 22 Reliability statistics of variables characterizing transition to the new social group factor*

Statistics of points in relation to the total score					
	Scale mean when item is excluded	Scale variance when item is excluded	Corrected correlation between item and total	The square of the multiple correlation coefficient	Cronbach's alpha at item exclusion
Moving to a new job is a situation where I (would) review my wardrobe	6,40	11,580	,738	,603	,761
Moving to a new place of study is a situation where I (would) review my wardrobe	6,78	10,754	,788	,646	,710
If I have a new social circle, I tend to revise my wardrobe	7,36	12,936	,620	,393	,870

## 2. 'Transition to the new social status' reliability test

Variables: 'change\_income', 'change\_job\_promotion', 'change\_family\_status'.

Cronbach's Alpha is higher than 0,6, meaning that characteristics are internally consistent and reliability test is passed:

*Table 23 Reliability statistics for social status transition factor*

Reliability statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Standartized Cronbach's Alpha	N elements
0,808	0,810	3

However, further analysis showed that it would be relevant to exclude variable 'change\_family\_status' in order to significantly increase general Cronbach's Alpha to 0,856. Therefore, this variable was not used in the factor analysis.

*Table 24 Reliability statistics of variables characterizing transition to the new social status*

Statistics of points in relation to the total score					
	Scale mean when item is excluded	Scale variance when item is excluded	Corrected correlation between item and total	The square of the multiple correlation coefficient	Cronbach's alpha at item exclusion
With a significant increase in income, I will most likely update my wardrobe	8,43	10,925	,677	,565	,720
When my social status changes with a promotion at work, I'm more likely to update my wardrobe	8,71	9,381	,766	,628	,617
If my marital status changes, I will most likely update my wardrobe	9,72	11,074	,543	,318	,856

## 3. 'Media impact' reliability test

Variables: 'media\_influencer', 'media\_person\_of\_interest', 'media\_brand\_advertising'.



Cronbach's Alpha is higher than 0,6, meaning that characteristics are internally consistent and reliability test is passed:

*Table 25 Reliability statistics for media impact factor*

Reliability statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Standartized Cronbach's Alpha	N elements
0,882	0,883	3

Moreover, the further analysis showed that Cronbach's Alpha could not become higher if one of the variables was excluded. Therefore, all 3 variables were used in the further factor analysis.

*Table 26 Reliability statistics of variables characterizing media impact*

Statistics of points in relation to the total score					
	Scale mean when item is excluded	Scale variance when item is excluded	Corrected correlation between item and total	The square of the multiple correlation coefficient	Cronbach's alpha at item exclusion
If I see a clothing recommendation from a blogger I follow, I'm more likely to buy it	5,92	11,734	,787	,695	,821
I can buy new clothes after seeing the recommendation of a person I'm interested in on social networks	5,68	10,627	,847	,746	,763
I can buy new clothes after seeing a brand's ad on social media or on a website	5,39	11,969	,687	,489	,808

#### 4. 'Upcoming event' reliability test

Variables: 'upcoming\_business\_event', 'upcoming\_informal\_event'

Cronbach's Alpha is higher than 0,6, meaning that characteristics are internally consistent and reliability test is passed:

**Table 27** Reliability statistics for upcoming event factor

Reliability statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Standartized Cronbach's Alpha	N elements
0,743	0,744	2

## 5. Factor analysis

The KMO measure which is higher than 0,6, and significance level which is lower than 0,05 confirm the required correlation level between the variables.

**Table 28** KMO measure for external factors

KMO and Bartlett's test		
A measure of the adequacy of the Kaiser-Meier-Olkin (KMO) sample.		0,807
Bartlett's sphericity criterion	Approximate chi-square	2342,503
	CT.CB.	36
	Significance	,000

When analyzing the rotated matrix of components, it can be seen that all factors have factor loadings higher than the required value of 0.6:

**Table 29** Rotated component matrix of variables describing external factors

	Rotated Component Matrix			
	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Moving to a new job is a situation where I (would) review my wardrobe			0,85	
Moving to a new place of study is a situation where I (would) review my wardrobe			0,86	
With a significant increase in income, I will most likely update my wardrobe		0,92		
When my social status changes with a promotion at work, I'm more likely to update my wardrobe		0,83		

If I see a clothing recommendation from a blogger I follow, I'm more likely to buy it	0,89			
I can buy new clothes after seeing the recommendation of a person I'm interested in on social networks	0,93			
I can buy new clothes after seeing a brand's ad on social media or on a website	0,79			
Before an upcoming business meeting/conference/job interview, I will most likely purchase a new piece of clothing				0,79
Before an upcoming holiday/friends wedding/birthday and other non-business events, I will most likely purchase a new piece of clothing				0,82
Factor selection method: principal component method.				
Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization.				
a. The rotation converged in 5 iterations.				

Therefore, 4 variables were formed for the further analysis as independent variables:

- New social group ( $group\_transition = (transition\_job + transition\_study)/2$ )
- New social status ( $status\_increase = (change\_income + change\_job\_promotion)/2$ )
- Media impact ( $media = (media\_influencer + media\_person\_of\_interest + media\_brand\_advertising)/3$ )
- Upcoming special occasion ( $upcoming\_event = (upcoming\_business\_event + upcoming\_informal\_event)/2$ )

## APPENDIX 4: FACTOR ANALYSIS OF SYMBOLIC FUNCTIONS

### 1. 'Wealth and status demonstration' reliability test

Variables: 'propensity\_wealth', 'propensity\_status'

Cronbach's Alpha is higher than 0,6, meaning that characteristics are internally consistent and reliability test is passed:

*Table 30 Reliability statistics for propensity to wealth and status demonstration factor*

Reliability statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Standartized Cronbach's Alpha	N elements
0,937	0,937	2

### 2. 'Indication of group belonging' reliability test

Variables: 'propensity\_group\_sphere', 'propensity\_group\_friends'

Cronbach's Alpha is higher than 0,6, meaning that characteristics are internally consistent and reliability test is passed:

*Table 31 Reliability statistics for propensity to indication of group-belonging factor*

Reliability statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Standartized Cronbach's Alpha	N elements
0,601	0,604	2

### 3. 'Expression of interests and values' reliability test

Variables: 'propensity\_interests', 'propensity\_values'

Cronbach's Alpha is higher than 0,6, meaning that characteristics are internally consistent and reliability test is passed:

*Table 32 Reliability statistics for propensity to expression of interests and values factor*

Reliability statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Standartized Cronbach's Alpha	N elements
0,781	0,782	2

#### 4. 'Demonstration of trendiness' reliability test

Variables: 'propensity\_interests', 'propensity\_values'

Cronbach's Alpha is higher than 0,6, meaning that characteristics are internally consistent and reliability test is passed:

*Table 33 Reliability statistics for propensity to demonstrate personal style and trendiness factor*

Reliability statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Standartized Cronbach's Alpha	N elements
0,647	0,648	2

#### 5. Factor analysis

The KMO measure which is higher than 0,6, and significance level which is lower than 0,05 confirm the required correlation level between the variables.

*Table 34 KMO measure for factors characterizing symbolic functions of apparel*

KMO and Bartlett's test		
A measure of the adequacy of the Kaiser-Meier-Olkin (KMO) sample.		0,813
Bartlett's sphericity criterion	Approximate chi-square	2342,503
	ct.cb.	36
	Significance	,000

Together, 3 extracted factors explain 82,5 % of the dispersion, which is higher than required minimum value of 50,1%:

**Table 35** Explained cumulative variance of symbolic functions of apparel

Объясненная совокупная дисперсия									
Компонент	Начальные собственные значения			Извлечение суммы квадратов нагрузок			Ротация суммы квадратов нагрузок		
	Всего	% дисперсии	Суммарный %	Всего	% дисперсии	Суммарный %	Всего	% дисперсии	Суммарный %
1	4,054	50,670	50,670	4,054	50,670	50,670	2,246	28,080	28,080
2	1,061	13,268	63,938	1,061	13,268	63,938	1,721	21,516	49,596
3	,871	10,884	74,822	,871	10,884	74,822	1,392	17,398	66,994
4	,615	7,687	82,509	,615	7,687	82,509	1,241	15,515	82,509
5	,523	6,536	89,045						
6	,427	5,335	94,380						
7	,336	4,194	98,574						
8	,114	1,426	100,000						

Метод выделения факторов: метод главных компонент.

When analyzing the rotated matrix of components, it can be seen that all factors have factor loadings higher than the required value of 0.6:

**Table 36** Rotated component matrix of variables describing propensity to symbolic functions of apparel

Rotated Component Matrix				
	Component			
	1	2	3	4
I buy expensive clothes because it helps to highlight my income level.	0,874			
I buy expensive clothes because it helps to emphasize my social status.	0,875			
I buy clothes that reflect the style of the field of work I belong to				0,644
I buy clothes that are similar in style to my friends.				0,78
I buy clothes that highlight my interests (e.g. in music/movies/sports etc.)		0,898		
I buy clothes that emphasize my values (for example, clothes made from recycled materials or clothes from a charity brand)		0,782		
I buy clothes that emphasize my style vision (elegant/relaxed/sporty, etc.)			0,941	
I buy clothes that are in line with current fashion trends.			0,713	
Factor selection method: principal component method.				
Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization.				
a. The rotation converged in 5 iterations.				

Therefore, 4 variables were formed for the further analysis as dependent variables:

- Propensity to symbolic consumption of apparel with an aim of status and wealth demonstration ( $\text{propensity\_status\_wealth} = (\text{propensity\_wealth} + \text{propensity\_status})/2$ )
- Propensity to symbolic consumption of apparel with an aim of group-belonging indication ( $\text{propensity\_group\_belonging} = (\text{propensity\_group\_sphere} + \text{propensity\_group\_friends})/2$ )
- Propensity to symbolic consumption of apparel with an aim of personal interests and values demonstration ( $\text{propensity\_interests\_values} = (\text{propensity\_interests} + \text{propensity\_values})/2$ )
- Propensity to symbolic consumption of apparel with an aim of expression of personal sense of style and trendiness ( $\text{propensity\_style\_trendiness} = (\text{propensity\_style} + \text{propensity\_trendiness})/2$ )

## APPENDIX 5: REGRESSION ANALYSIS: STATUS AND WEALTH DEMONSTRATION

Firstly, multiple regression assumptions have been checked:

- *Multicollinearity absence*  
All tolerance figures are higher than 0,2, while VIF figures are lower than 10, which proves there is no multicollinearity.
- *Homoscedasticity*  
The scatterplot shows there is no pattern reflecting no-linearity of the data.
- *Absence of residuals' autocorrelation*  
Durbin Watson coefficient is close to the meaning of 2, indicating there is no autocorrelation.

**Table 37** Summary of the regression model with propensity to consume clothing with an aim of status and wealth demonstration as dependent variable

<b>Model summary<sup>b</sup></b>										
Model	R	R-square	Adjusted R-square	Standard error of estimation	Статистика изменений					Durbin Watson
					Change R squared	Change F	ст.св.1	ст.св.2	Sig.Change F	
1	,602 <sup>a</sup>	0,362	0,348	1,29804	0,362	26,164	9	415	0,000	2,021
a. Predictors: (constant), gender, media, self_esteem, age, self_monitoring, status_increase, group_transition, upcoming_event, materialism										
b. Dependent variable: propensity_status_wealth										

**Table 38** ANOVA analysis of the regression model with propensity to consume clothing with an aim of status and wealth demonstration as dependent variable

<b>ANOVA<sup>a</sup></b>						
Model		Sum of squares	ст.св.	Mean Square	F	Significance
1	Regression	396,759	9	44,084	26,164	<,001 <sup>b</sup>
	Remainder	699,241	415	1,685		
	Total	1096,000	424			
a. Dependent variable: propensity_status_wealth						
b. Predictors: (constant), gender, media, self_esteem, age, self_monitoring, status_increase, group_transition, upcoming_event, materialism						



**Table 39** Coefficients of the regression model with propensity to consume clothing with an aim of status and wealth demonstration as dependent variable

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>											
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity statistics	
		B	St. error	Beta			Zero order	Partly	Component	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-0,207	0,402		-0,515	0,607					
	group_transition	0,073	0,048	0,081	1,529	0,127	0,331	0,075	0,060	0,551	1,814
	status_increase	-0,045	0,053	-0,046	-0,850	0,396	0,197	-0,042	-0,033	0,528	1,894
	media	0,427	0,047	0,440	9,153	0,000	0,539	0,410	0,359	0,666	1,501
	upcoming_event	0,108	0,053	0,110	2,040	0,042	0,332	0,100	0,080	0,525	1,903
	self_monitoring	0,006	0,046	0,006	0,136	0,892	0,127	0,007	0,005	0,737	1,357
	materialism	0,171	0,054	0,174	3,201	0,001	0,237	0,155	0,126	0,521	1,921
	self_esteem	-0,016	0,048	-0,016	-0,343	0,732	0,007	-0,017	-0,013	0,730	1,369
	age	0,019	0,008	0,097	2,433	0,015	0,069	0,119	0,095	0,965	1,036
	gender	-0,625	0,141	-0,194	-4,436	0,000	-0,113	-0,213	-0,174	0,802	1,247

a. Dependent variable: propensity\_status\_wealth



**Figure 15** Scatterplot of the regression model with propensity to consume clothing with an aim of status and wealth demonstration as dependent variable

## APPENDIX 6: REGRESSION ANALYSIS: GROUP-BELONGING INDICATION

Firstly, multiple regression assumptions have been checked:

- *Multicollinearity absence*  
All tolerance figures are higher than 0,2, while VIF figures are lower than 10, which proves there is no multicollinearity.
- *Homoscedasticity*  
The scatterplot shows there is no pattern reflecting no-linearity of the data.
- *Absence of residuals' autocorrelation*  
Durbin Watson coefficient is close to the meaning of 2, indicating there is no autocorrelation.

*Table 40 Summary of the regression model with propensity to consume clothing with an aim of group-belonging indication as dependent variable*

Model summary <sup>b</sup>										
Model	R	R-square	Adjusted R-square	Standard error of estimation	Статистика изменений					Durbin Watson
					Change R squared	Change F	ст.св.1	ст.св.2	Sig.Change F	
1	,635 <sup>a</sup>	0,403	0,390	1,20177	0,403	31,372	9	418	0,000	1,921
a. Predictors: (constant), gender, media, self_esteem, age, self_monitoring, status_increase, group_transition, upcoming_event, materialism										
b. Dependent variable: propensity_group_belonging										

*Table 41 ANOVA analysis of the regression model with propensity to consume clothing with an aim of group-belonging indication as dependent variable*

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model	Sum of squares	ст.св.	Mean Square	F	Significance	
1	Regression	407,778	9	45,309	30,957	<,001
	Remainder	603,701	415	1,444		
	Total	1011,479	424			
a. Dependent variable: propensity_group_belonging						
b. Predictors: (constant), gender, media, self_esteem, age, self_monitoring, status_increase, group_transition, upcoming_event, materialism						

Table 42 Coefficients of the regression model with propensity to consume clothing with an aim of group-belonging indication as dependent variable

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>											
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity statistics	
		B	St. error	Beta			Zero order	Partly	Component	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	0,161	0,372		0,434	0,665	-0,569	0,891			
	group_transition	0,153	0,044	0,177	3,473	0,001	0,066	0,240	0,419	0,167	0,131
	status_increase	-0,012	0,049	-0,012	-0,239	0,811	-0,107	0,084	0,239	-0,012	-0,009
	media	0,440	0,043	0,472	10,230	0,000	0,355	0,524	0,583	0,447	0,387
	upcoming_event	0,069	0,048	0,074	1,428	0,154	-0,026	0,164	0,364	0,070	0,054
	self_monitoring	0,068	0,043	0,070	1,593	0,112	-0,016	0,152	0,167	0,078	0,060
	materialism	0,029	0,049	0,031	0,592	0,554	-0,068	0,126	0,204	0,029	0,022
	self_esteem	0,027	0,044	0,027	0,616	0,538	-0,059	0,114	0,023	0,030	0,023
	age	0,014	0,007	0,072	1,865	0,063	-0,001	0,028	0,034	0,091	0,070
	gender	-0,433	0,130	-0,141	-3,320	0,001	-0,689	-0,177	-0,062	-0,160	-0,125

a. Dependent variable: propensity\_group\_belonging

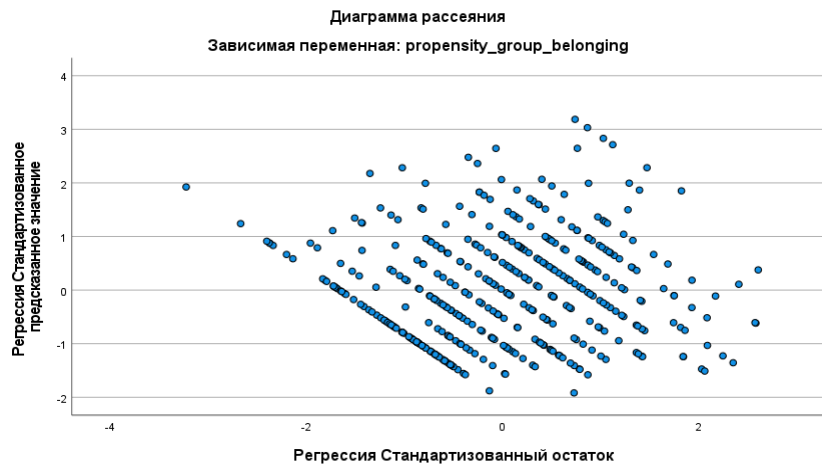


Figure 16 Scatterplot of the regression model with propensity to consume clothing with an aim of group-belonging indication as dependent variable

## APPENDIX 7: REGRESSION ANALYSIS: EXPRESSION OF SENSE OF STYLE AND TRENDINESS

Firstly, multiple regression assumptions have been checked:

- *Multicollinearity absence*  
All tolerance figures are higher than 0,2, while VIF figures are lower than 10, which proves there is no multicollinearity.
- *Homoscedasticity*  
The scatterplot shows there is no pattern reflecting no-linearity of the data.
- *Absence of residuals' autocorrelation*  
Durbin Watson coefficient is close to the meaning of 2, indicating there is no autocorrelation.

**Table 43** Summary of the regression model with propensity to consume clothing with an aim of expression of personal sense of style and trendiness as dependent variable

<b>Model summary<sup>b</sup></b>										
Model	R	R-square	Adjusted R-square	Standard error of estimation	Статистика изменений					Durbin Watson
					Change R squared	Change F	ст.св. 1	ст.св.2	Sig.Change F	
1	,665 <sup>a</sup>	0,442	0,430	1,10197	0,442	36,520	9	415	0,000	2,013
a. Predictors: (constant), gender, media, self_esteem, age, self_monitoring, status_increase, group_transition, upcoming_event, materialism										
b. Dependent variable: propensity_style_trendiness										

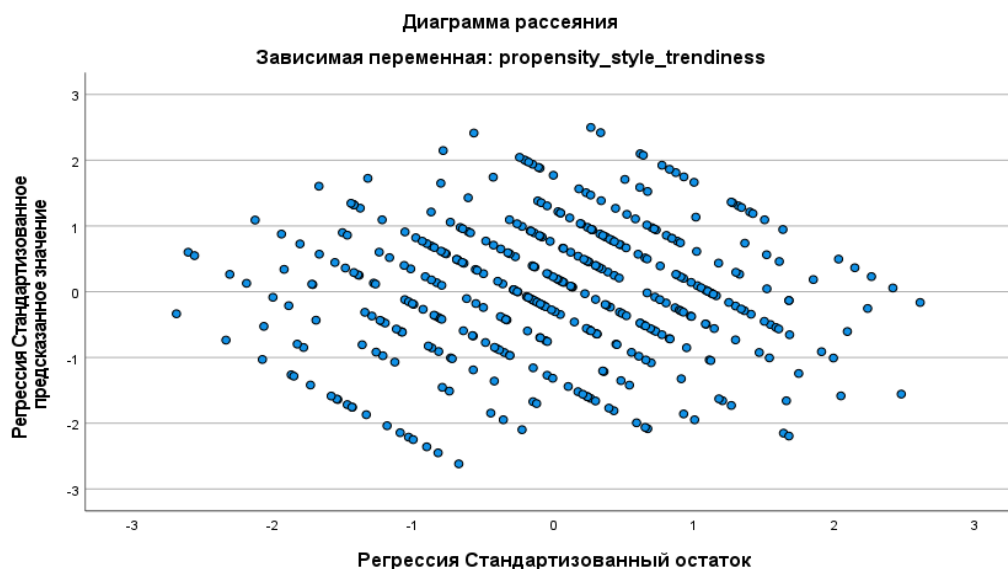
**Table 44** ANOVA analysis of the regression model with propensity to consume clothing with an aim of expression of personal sense of style and trendiness as dependent variable

<b>ANOVA<sup>a</sup></b>						
Model		Sum of squares	ст.св.	Mean Square	F	Significance
1	Regression	399,132	9	44,348	36,520	<,001b
	Remainder	503,953	415	1,214		
	Total	903,085	424			
a. Dependent variable: propensity_style_trendiness						
b. Predictors: (constant), gender, media, self_esteem, age, self_monitoring, status_increase, group_transition, pcoming_event, materialism						

**Table 45** Coefficients of the regression model with propensity to consume clothing with an aim of expression of personal sense of style and trendiness as dependent variable

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>											
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity statistics	
		B	St. error	Beta			Zero order	Partly	Component	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1,017	0,341		2,983	0,003					
	group_transition	0,018	0,041	0,021	0,434	0,665	0,451	0,021	0,016	0,551	1,814
	status_increase	0,172	0,045	0,195	3,856	0,000	0,502	0,186	0,141	0,528	1,894
	media	0,203	0,040	0,230	5,127	0,000	0,439	0,244	0,188	0,666	1,501
	upcoming_event	0,262	0,045	0,295	5,834	0,000	0,570	0,275	0,214	0,525	1,903
	self_monitoring	0,054	0,039	0,058	1,367	0,172	0,252	0,067	0,050	0,737	1,357
	materialism	0,037	0,045	0,041	0,810	0,418	0,382	0,040	0,030	0,521	1,921
	self_esteem	0,095	0,041	0,100	2,341	0,020	0,197	0,114	0,086	0,730	1,369
	age	-0,007	0,007	-0,038	-1,028	0,304	-0,083	-0,050	-0,038	0,965	1,036
	gender	0,139	0,120	0,047	1,158	0,248	0,250	0,057	0,042	0,802	1,247

a. Dependent variable: propensity\_style\_trendiness



**Figure 17** Scatterplot of the regression model with propensity to consume clothing with an aim of expression of personal sense of style and trendiness as dependent variable

## APPENDIX 8: REGRESSION ANALYSIS: DEMONSTRATION OF INTERESTS AND VALUES

Firstly, multiple regression assumptions have been checked:

- *Multicollinearity absence*  
All tolerance figures are higher than 0,2, while VIF figures are lower than 10, which proves there is no multicollinearity.
- *Homoscedasticity*  
The scatterplot shows there is no pattern reflecting no-linearity of the data.
- *Absence of residuals' autocorrelation*  
Durbin Watson coefficient is close to the meaning of 2, indicating there is no autocorrelation.

**Table 46** Summary of the regression model with propensity to consume clothing with an aim of demonstration of interests and values as dependent variable

<b>Model summary<sup>b</sup></b>										
Model	R	R-square	Adjusted R-square	Standard error of estimation	Статистика изменений					Durbin Watson
					Change R squared	Change F	ст.св.1	ст.св.2	Sig.Change F	
1	,598 <sup>a</sup>	0,357	0,343	1,34739	0,357	25,853	9	419	0,000	1,830
a. Predictors: (constant), gender, media, self_esteem, age, self_monitoring, status_increase, group_transition, upcoming_event, materialism										
b. Dependent variable: propensity_interests_values										

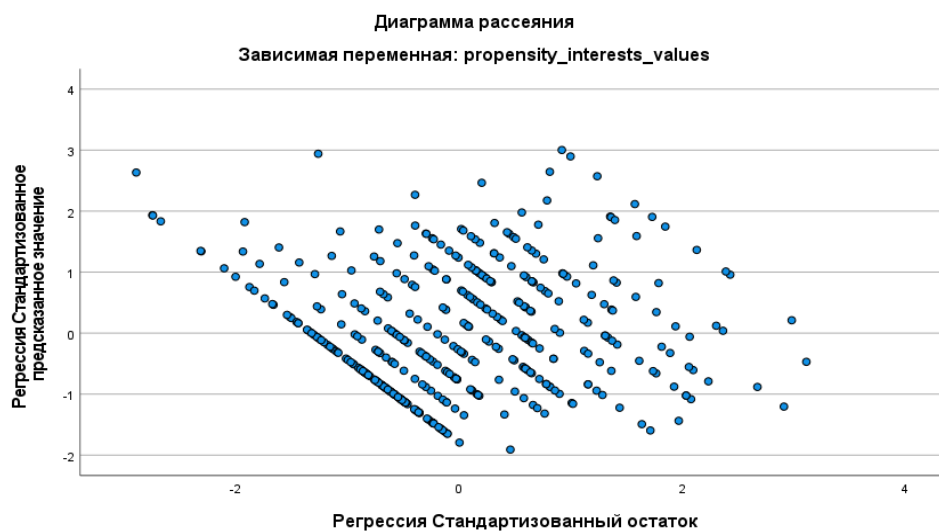
**Table 47** ANOVA analysis of the regression model with propensity to consume clothing with an aim of demonstration of interests and values as dependent variable

<b>ANOVA<sup>a</sup></b>						
Model		Sum of squares	ст.св.	Mean Square	F	Significance
1	Regression	427,903	9	47,545	26,513	<,001b
	Remainder	744,214	415	1,793		
	Total	1172,118	424			
a. Dependent variable: propensity_interests_values						
b. Predictors: (constant), gender, media, self_esteem, age, self_monitoring, status_increase, group_transition, pcoming_event, materialism						

**Table 48** Coefficients of the regression model with propensity to consume clothing with an aim of demonstration of interests and values as dependent variable

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>											
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity statistics	
		B	St. error	Beta			Zero order	Partly	Component	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1,369	0,414		3,305	0,001					
	group_transition	0,125	0,049	0,133	2,533	0,012	0,334	0,123	0,099	0,551	1,814
	status_increase	-0,118	0,054	-0,117	-2,174	0,030	0,126	-0,106	-0,085	0,528	1,894
	media	0,516	0,048	0,513	10,702	0,000	0,574	0,465	0,419	0,666	1,501
	upcoming_event	0,030	0,055	0,029	0,546	0,586	0,280	0,027	0,021	0,525	1,903
	self_monitoring	0,043	0,048	0,041	0,906	0,366	0,124	0,044	0,035	0,737	1,357
	materialism	0,078	0,055	0,076	1,404	0,161	0,170	0,069	0,055	0,521	1,921
	self_esteem	0,014	0,049	0,013	0,276	0,783	-0,018	0,014	0,011	0,730	1,369
	age	-0,012	0,008	-0,057	-1,430	0,153	-0,093	-0,070	-0,056	0,965	1,036
	gender	-0,417	0,145	-0,125	-2,872	0,004	-0,078	-0,140	-0,112	0,802	1,247

a. Dependent variable: propensity\_interests\_values



**Figure 18** Scatterplot of the regression model with propensity to consume clothing with an aim of demonstration of interests and values as dependent variable

## APPENDIX 9: DISPERSION ANALYSIS

Table 49 Dispersion analysis with income level as an independent variable

ANOVA						
		Square sum	ct.cb.	Mean square	F	sig.
propensity_status_wealth	Between groups	10,216	5	2,043	0,792	0,556
	Within groups	1088,529	422	2,579		
	Total	1098,745	427			
propensity_interests_values	Between groups	15,324	5	3,065	1,108	0,356
	Within groups	1167,710	422	2,767		
	Total	1183,034	427			
propensity_style_trendiness	Between groups	32,426	5	6,485	3,139	0,009
	Within groups	871,866	422	2,066		
	Total	904,292	427			
propensity_group_belonging	Between groups	15,431	5	3,086	1,313	0,257
	Within groups	991,532	422	2,350		
	Total	1006,963	427			

Table 50 Means comparison

Report			
propensity_style_trendiness			
income_level	Mean	N	Standart deviation
1	3,0556	9	1,15770
2	3,7596	52	1,34853
3	4,4258	182	1,41079
4	4,3497	153	1,46459
5	4,3214	28	1,63986
6	4,5000	4	1,77951
Bcero	4,2827	428	1,45526