

Consumption Resources and Self-Creation Process: A Key Resource and Multi-Component Resource Perspective

ทรัพยากรเพื่อการบริโภคและกระบวนการสร้างตัวตน: มุมมองจากทรัพยากรหลักและหลายองค์ประกอบ

Dr. Kritsadarat Wattanasuwan

Associate Professor

Marketing Department

Thammasat Business School, Thammasat University

ดร. กฤษฏารัตน์ วัฒนสุวรรณ

รองศาสตราจารย์ ภาควิชาการตลาด

คณะพาณิชยศาสตร์และการบัญชี มหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์

E-mail: kritsadarat@tbs.tu.ac.th

วันที่ได้รับต้นฉบับบทความ : 27 กุมภาพันธ์ 2565

วันที่แก้ไขปรับปรุงบทความ : 9 เมษายน 2565

วันที่ตอบรับตีพิมพ์บทความ : 30 เมษายน 2565

Dr. Pattana Boonchoo

Assistant Professor

Marketing Department

Thammasat Business School, Thammasat University

ดร. พัฒน์ธนะ บุญชู

ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ ภาควิชาการตลาด

คณะพาณิชยศาสตร์และการบัญชี มหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์

E-mail: Pattana@tbs.tu.ac.th

Dr. Aurathai Lertwannawit

Associate Professor

Marketing Department

Thammasat Business School, Thammasat University

ดร. อรทัย เลิศวรรณวิทย์

รองศาสตราจารย์ ภาควิชาการตลาด

คณะพาณิชยศาสตร์และการบัญชี มหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์

E-mail: Aurathai@tbs.tu.ac.th ; Ph : 062-642-4565

Abstract

This research's objective was to analyze and synthesize all data in terms of key resource and multiple-component resource theories to propose a conceptual model to substantiate the relations among consumer experiences, symbolic consumption, and self-expression. The first proposition posits that consumer experiences, both lived and mediated, have an impact on the appropriation of symbolic consumption, which will lead to confirming the form of self- and/or social symbolism. Following with the second proposition posits that symbolic consumption affects consumers' self-expression. This research concludes by discussing theoretical and managerial contributions to consumers' perceptions. The model can be a theoretical framework for future empirical studies. Moreover, it can be used for consumers' perception prediction in terms of consumer experiences, symbolic consumption, self-expression, lived and mediated experiences, and the form of self- and/or social symbolism. In addition, those factors mentioned will be used for quantitative analysis to prove the model in the future.

Keywords: lived experience, mediated experience, self-expression, key resource and multiple-component resource theory, symbolic consumption

บทคัดย่อ

บทความวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อนำเสนอการวิเคราะห์และสังเคราะห์ข้อมูลโดยใช้ทฤษฎีทรัพยากรหลักและองค์ประกอบที่เกี่ยวข้อง สู่การพัฒนาเป็นแบบจำลองที่อธิบายถึงความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างประสบการณ์ของผู้บริโภค การบริโภคเชิงสัญลักษณ์ และการแสดงความเป็นตัวตน โดยประพจน์แรกเป็นการอธิบายความสัมพันธ์ของประสบการณ์ของผู้บริโภคที่เกิดจากประสบการณ์ชีวิตและประสบการณ์ผ่านสื่อที่ส่งผลกระทบต่อการจัดสรรประโยชน์จากบริโภคเชิงสัญลักษณ์ที่อยู่ในรูปแบบของสัญลักษณ์ของตนเองและทางสังคม และประพจน์ที่สองเป็นการนำเสนอความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างการบริโภคเชิงสัญลักษณ์ที่ส่งผลต่อการแสดงความเป็นตัวตนของผู้บริโภค บทความวิจัยนี้สรุปด้วยการอภิปรายนัยยะของงานวิจัยทั้งทางด้านทฤษฎีและการนำไปใช้ในเชิงความคิดเห็นของผู้บริโภค โดยแบบจำลองนี้สามารถใช้เป็นกรอบทฤษฎีเพื่อใช้ในการวิจัยเชิงประจักษ์ในอนาคต รวมถึงสามารถใช้เป็นแนวทางการพยากรณ์ความคิดเห็นของผู้บริโภค ในประเด็นของ ประสบการณ์ของผู้บริโภค การบริโภคเชิงสัญลักษณ์ การแสดงความเป็นตัวตน ประสบการณ์ชีวิตและประสบการณ์ผ่านสื่อ การจัดสรรประโยชน์จากบริโภคเชิงสัญลักษณ์ และรูปแบบของสัญลักษณ์ของตนเองและทางสังคม ทั้งนี้องค์ประกอบทั้งหมดจะนำไปสู่การวิเคราะห์ในเชิงปริมาณ เพื่อค้นหาคำตอบในรูปแบบของการทดสอบแบบจำลองในอนาคต

คำสำคัญ: ประสบการณ์ชีวิต ประสบการณ์ผ่านสื่อ การแสดงความเป็นตัวตน ทฤษฎีทรัพยากรหลักและหลายองค์ประกอบ การบริโภคเชิงสัญลักษณ์

Introduction

Consumers buy and use products and services to gain value from their purchases. The values derived from products and services affect four consumer needs: functional, emotional, life-changing, and social impact (Almquist, Senior & Bloch, 2016). Consumers usually weigh the values of their purchases against the prices they pay. Nonetheless, it is difficult to know the actual value of their consumption because some of the key elements of value are psychologically related and difficult to evaluate. One of the key values that consumers typically obtain is how they acquire their identity through consumption. Consumers are increasingly benefiting from symbolically extending themselves through their consumption.

Consumers are exposed to a plethora of symbolic resources for constructing and re-creating their identities. These symbolic resources are typically classified as lived or mediated (Thompson, 1990, 1995). Consumers move through time and space in their daily lives, capturing both lived and mediated experiences and incorporating them into a constantly evolving life project (Thompson, 1995). The distinctions between these two kinds of experiences are becoming increasingly blurred and indistinguishable. We must consider the interplay of both experiences in our daily lives to understand how symbolic resources are appropriated and incorporated into the self-creation project.

The emergence of new technologies enhances consumers' capability in the self-creation process (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022; Takahashi, 2010). Datareportal (2022) reports on the total numbers of social media users and consumptions, i.e. in 2022, there are 4.62 billion social media users, which account for 58.4% of the total population. In addition, there are 424 million new users among the total social media users worldwide. These numbers illustrate the incremental blurs in the line of living and experiencing arena. The social media connection extends the living and experience landscape for self-creation, both consumption and visualization. In addition, the metaverse becomes the choice for a new generation in spending their lives, and it has been forecasted to be incremental growth of consumption. Many fashion brands enter to Metaverse landscape to be part of the self-creation process of consumers such as Adidas, Burberry, Balenciaga, and more. Consequently, understanding consumer experiences in living experience and mediated experience via the various platforms enables marketing scholars to comprehend customers' consumption resources and self-creation process, enhancing marketers' capability to design experiences for consumers' journey.

Research Objective

The study of consumers' need to express themselves has grown significantly over the last decade, partly due to the increased use of many social media platforms (Bailey, Matz, Youyou & Iyengar, 2020; Orehek & Human, 2017). Thus, in this research, we examine the connections between symbolic consumption and self-expression. More specifically, we investigate the relation between consumer experience and symbolic consumption and the impact of symbolic consumption on consumer self-expression. In doing so, we attempt to apply resource theories to the study of consumer behavior, which has received scarce attention in the literature to date (Dorsch, Törnblom & Kazemi, 2017). Here, we treat consumer experiences as key resources that consumers can use to create symbolic consumption. The streams of psychological resource theories will help us better understand the current consumer view and provide a new perspective beyond the traditional neoclassical economic perspective that has not delved much into the psychological attributes of consumers.

Research Methodology

To develop the conceptual model, we use the document analysis technique as a research tool (Altheide & Schneider, 2013). The main sources of the documents are academic journals. The model is developed by using the deductive approach. The central focus is on key resource and multi-component resource theories, which we use as the foundation of proposition development. The searched keywords are lived experience, mediated experience, symbolic consumption, and self-expression.

Outline of Paper

This paper is structured as follows. First, several key streams of the relevant literature are presented in the next section, including a discussion of key resource and multi-component resource theories, symbolic resources, appropriation of consumption symbolism, and self-expression. The following section then covers the line of reasoning that leads to the postulation of the proposed relations and the discussion on future research directions. In the final section, the study's main ideas are summarized, and its key theoretical and managerial implications are presented.

Literature Review

Key Resource and Multi-Component Resource Theories

Resources are assets that are valuable to consumers and serve as means to achieve desired outcomes (Hobfoll, 2002). In this paper, we adopt a key resource perspective on consumption. The perspective is based on the key resource and multi-component resource theories (Dorsch et al., 2017). This stream of theories seeks to comprehend how consumers manage their available resources to meet their needs. Consumers' management of their resources to reduce tension and achieve physical and emotional well-being in a changing environment lies at the heart of the key resource theories (Dorsch et al., 2017; Nain, 2021).

Our study goes beyond the resource exchange theory, which is especially relevant in business-to-business context. While the resource exchange theory focuses on exchanging similar resources and the mechanisms governing the exchange transactions (Brinberg & Wood, 1983), the key resource and multi-component resource theories adopted in this study are based on consumer psychology. The focus is mainly on the motivational theories seeking to explain how people reduce their consumption dissatisfaction and improve their well-being (Dorsch et al., 2017).

Instead of viewing resources solely through the lens of neoclassical economics, we adopt a social psychology perspective and focus on consumers' psychological and personal resources (Törnblom & Kazemi, 2014). Consumption resources include both economic and non-economic (social) resources, both tangible and intangible. In general, all consumption choices can be viewed as symbolic resources for the self; in other words, all products carry symbolic meanings that people can use to create and articulate who they are and to position themselves in the cultural world (Csikszentmihalyi & Halton, 1981; Douglas & Isherwood, 1980; McCracken, 1990). Consumers use both lived and mediated experiences as psychological resources for symbolic consumption and well-being.

Lived Experience and Mediated Experience as Symbolic Resources

In this study, consumer experience gained through various forms of learning is regarded as a resource for consumers to appropriate consumption symbolism. The two broad categories of consumer experiences are lived experience and mediated experience.

Lived Experience. Lived experience comprises hands-on activities and vis-à-vis encounters in people's everyday lives (Rickman, 1979). People acquire lived experience in their daily lives' immediate and practical contexts; they hardly question or hold any explicit act of reflection on it (Thompson, 1995). People are unavoidably engrossed in lived experience. Nonetheless, they may have the ability to influence it through their immediate actions or interactions with others in that lived moment. Undoubtedly, lived experience becomes a relevant symbolic resource that individuals primarily incorporate into their self-project (Thompson, 1995).

Essentially, everyday lived experience is the domain where people engage in "symbolic creativity" to ensure human existence's daily production and reproduction (Willis, 1990). Lived experience is not only a symbolic resource, but it is also a means of maintaining individuals' self-narrative. To make sense of themselves, people constantly acquire, interpret, exchange, negotiate, and reproduce vast symbolic resources from and through a variety of social interactions and consumption activities as they travel through time and space in their daily lives (Ekström & Brembeck, 2020). In general, people learn from their lived experiences throughout their lives. As children, they learn from their parents, schools, and interactions with other people through verbal and nonverbal communication and even by using branded products (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998; Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014).

Indeed, socialization within the family is the most powerful primary symbolic resource (Furnham & Stacey, 1991; Giddens, Duneier, Appelbaum & Carr, 2020). While some persons may respect their parents' experience and wisdom and adopt the latter's views without question, many people, especially during adolescence when they keenly explore possibilities (Willis, 1990), may strive to establish their autonomy through reinterpreting and renegotiating meanings with their parents (Noller & Callan, 2015).

Besides family interactions, another powerful lived experience involves interactions with significant others outside the home, particularly in school. People simultaneously acquire enormous symbolic resources from the "hidden curriculum"—social interactions with teachers and friends (Giddens et al., 2020). Interactions with friends potentially present people with competing meanings, mainly when such interactions increasingly occur outside school (e.g., shopping centers, cinemas, amusement parks, or nightclubs). Socializing with friends is undoubtedly a vital source of symbolic meanings that individuals incorporate to a great extent into their self-project and potentially remains an essential symbolic resource throughout their lives (Giddens et al., 2020). More importantly, friendship is usually a conscious decision. People select friends with whom they want to relate and share identities; thus, the symbolic resources available in friendship are presumably desirable. Furnham (1989) observes that even for young children, interactions with friends provide valuable resources that adults cannot offer.

In terms of communications in people's daily lives, they need symbolic resources to help them obtain what they want throughout their lives. Indeed, talking is fundamental to self-social identification (Davies & Harre, 1990). Along with verbal language, nonverbal aspects of communication are essential yet problematic (Argyle, 1994; Duck, 2007). Gestures, facial expressions, and eye movements send silent messages and are the principal components of social communication. Essentially, people require resources to comprehend the shared meanings of these unspoken languages.

The use of branded products is another source of lived experience. Brands are essential symbolic resources for self-creation, maintenance, and communication (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998). Nonetheless, it must be remembered that similar to other symbols, brands are constantly reinterpreted and recontextualized.

Mediated Experience. Mediated experience is the result of a culture of mass communication and people who buy and use media products (Thompson, 1995). It typically requires the ability to perceive events that differ from the practical context of people's daily lives in a particular context of time and space, as well as events that reflect everyday taken-for-granted lived experiences. Mediated experience is a recontextualized experience that does not occur in a continuous flow but rather consists of a discontinuous sequence of events with varying degrees of relevance to the self (Thompson, 1995). It typically requires the ability to perceive events that differ from the practical context of people's daily lives in a particular context of time and space, as well as events that reflect everyday taken-for-granted lived experiences.

As society is threatened on all sides by the expanding network of mediated communication, the self becomes inevitably saturated with prolific symbolic forms derived from mediated experience (Furnham & Stacey, 1991; Giddens et al., 2020; Thompson, 1995). Indeed, people live in a mediated world infused with a media culture. Advertising is widely acknowledged as one of the most powerful mediated symbolic resources for the self-creation project (Goffman, 1979; Lannon & Cooper, 1983; McCracken, 1987; Mick & Buhl, 1992; Sherry, 2012).

People sometimes associate advertising images with their self-image and evaluate those idealized images as role models and aspirations (O'Donohoe, 1994). Mediated experience through advertising provides a plethora of symbolic resources that broaden the repertoire of individuals' possible selves and enrich the pool of their capital, which they can use to negotiate and advance their self-creation project in this postmodern world.

Appropriation of Consumption Symbolism

Making sense of people's own lives in given social and cultural contexts is fundamental to their symbolic self-project. People understand themselves through their consumption experiences. Specifically, they learn about themselves through symbolisms associated with their consumption choices and activities (Douglas & Isherwood, 1980; McCracken, 1990). The process also includes symbolisms derived from both lived (e.g., brand usage) and mediated (e.g., advertising) experiences. Again, it must be remembered that consumption symbolism is not predetermined and static; instead, it is culturally constructed and in constant flux (McCracken, 1987). The self is increasingly exposed to a wide range of continuing experiences, and renewed consumption symbolism appears to emerge indefinitely.

Appropriating consumption symbolism involves a continuous interweaving of lived and mediated experiences. People acquire symbolic resources from both forms of experiences as they move through time-space paths in their daily lives, incorporating them into their ongoing self-project (Thompson, 1995). To do so, they need to develop the ability to eclectic accommodate mediated experience and interlace it with lived experience to appropriate symbolism for self-construction (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998; Thompson, 1995).

Fundamentally, the endeavour to appropriate the contextualized meanings involves complex "processes of valorization" through which people value, evaluate, and resolve the conflicts among those symbolic forms, particularly the "fields of interaction," so that certain kinds of symbolic values are ascribed to them (Thompson, 1990, pp.146-147).

To contextually appropriate meanings, people typically incorporate the rules and conventions of specific socio-historical contexts into valorization processes. People actively interpret and reinterpret countless symbolic meanings in their daily lives as they move through various social contexts, which they do inwardly as self-symbolism and outwardly as social symbolism.

People valorize and form symbolic meanings to match their life circumstances. Thompson (1995, p. 211) notes, "the ways in which individuals draw on symbolic resources to construct their sense of self will depend to some extent on the material conditions of their lives, as individuals typically adjust their expectations and evaluations to their continuously revisable assessment of what, given the circumstances of their lives, they could realistically hope to achieve." People's physical capital (i.e., bodies) and other capitals (e.g., economic, educational, or cultural) that they have established and/or accumulated throughout their life histories are undeniably primary resources that bear on the material conditions of their lives. Nonetheless, those life circumstances are not fixed but negotiable. Individuals always assess, interpret, and negotiate their self-symbolism inwardly through dialectical processes between newly acquired resources and the circumstances of their lives. Individuals do so by constantly exploring their potential selves and conversing with their internal voices.

People need to make sense of their lives in the collective world via social symbolism. For the self and others to co-arise in the world meaningfully, there must be socially shared meanings that bridge the "betweenness," that is, social symbolism. In essence, to appropriate one's sense of self is to understand where one is situated in one's social world. Collectively, social symbolism is achieved through the self-others dialectical processes. People embrace, negotiate, or co-create social representations, rules, and conventions of various symbolic forms in the course of social interactions, which they incorporate into their interpretation framework.

The more resources or capital that people employ to interpret each symbolic meaning, the more interpreting power they potentially hold. The appropriation of symbolic meanings is an ongoing process that can extend well beyond the initial context of the experience (Thompson, 1995). People inform their friends about what their parents have told them, share with their siblings what they have discussed with friends, or relay what they have seen on television to their coworkers. As a result, meanings proliferate indefinitely and sometimes incoherently, competing with one another and surviving or fading due to their power. As the sense-making process continues, self-symbolism and social symbolism become increasingly entwined—their boundaries become so blurred that it appears impossible to distinguish them.

People's appropriations of brand symbolism may be varied and may differ from what they are intended to be (Anderson & Timothy, 1988; Fiske, 2011; Livingstone, 1998; Mick & Buhl, 1992; O'Donohoe, 1994; Ritson & Elliott, 1999). Indeed, people are active interpreters of the advertising and brand meanings—they are the ultimate producers of the brands they consume (Thompson, 1995). When exposed to advertising texts, people may pay attention to certain messages only and interpret them based on their resources, such as personal perceptions, life goals, and themes, or social knowledge (Lannon & Cooper, 1983; Livingstone, 1998; Mick & Buhl, 1992). Because advertising is a form of mass communication, its meanings continue to emerge during people's social interactions with others and may eventually become socially shared meanings, that is, social symbolism (Anderson & Timothy, 1988; Ritson & Elliott, 1999; Thompson, 1995).

Self-Expression

As consumers, people tend to express themselves through their choices to paint a picture of who they are and who they want to become (Cardoso, Costa, & Novais, 2010; Ein-Gar & Johnson, 2010; Snibbe & Markus, 2005). Consumers choose products that they believe are in line with their values (Sivadas & Venkatesh, 1995). Products and services are consumed to express each individual's extended inner self to portray the picture of who a person is (Mittal, 2006). By expressing oneself, an individual can signal the values associated with the social capital and trust gained from being a member of a particular group (Welzel, 2010). Self-expression is context-specific. Consumers in some cultures may express their identities through their choices more than those in other cultures (Kim & Sherman, 2007).

Proposed Model of Symbolic Resources, Consumption Symbolism and Self-Expression

We propose the conceptual model depicted in Figure 1, based on our review of the existing literature. The model represents the relations among the three constructs of interest. People learn throughout their lives as consumers via the continuous interweaving of lived and mediated experiences to appropriate and re-appropriate meanings for their symbolic self-project. Although some literature suggests that lived experience plays a more dominant role than mediated experience in contributing symbolic meanings to everyday self-practices (e.g., Fazio & Zanna, 1978; Smith & Swinyard, 1988), we contend that this proposition fails to recognize mediated experience's inconspicuous power. Indeed, people appear to carry out, express, and exchange meaningful symbolic forms through their lived actions and interactions, but this does not imply that symbolic resources from their mediated experience play insignificant roles in creating meanings. Mediated experience can provide rich symbolic resources that people rework and recontextualize during their lived experience. According to extensive research, mediated experience from advertising performs an important function in the realm of symbolic work that young people act out in their lived social interactions (O'Donohoe, 1994; Ritson & Elliott, 1999; Willis, 1990). Mediated experience can provide powerful symbolic resources for self-projection; however, these resources must be valorized in the domain of lived experience (Thompson, 1990).

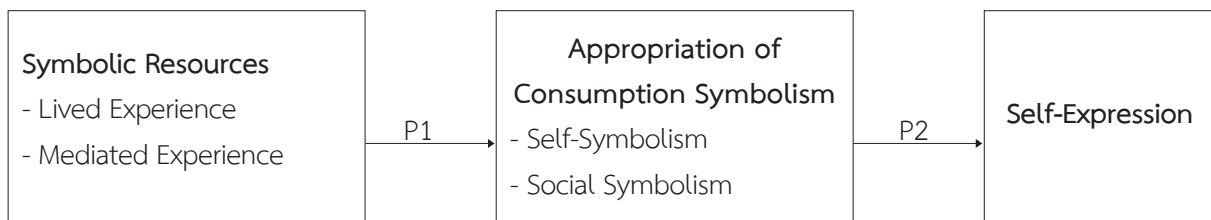


Figure 1. Proposed Model of Symbolic Resources, Consumption Symbolism and Self-Expression

As a result, everyday lived encounters in society serve as fundamental symbolic resources for each individual's social self. People have continuously acquired, interpreted, and communicated numerous symbolic forms through various social interactions, allowing them to comprehend their sense of self-awareness, social orders, and cultural values and norms, which enhance consumers' ability to meaningfully accommodate everyday activities in order to narrate their life stories and position themselves in culturally constituted worlds. (Giddens et al., 2020). Simultaneously, appropriating different symbolic resources from daily lived interactions allows people to bestow, elongate, and reproduce symbolic resources in group socialization practices (Thompson, 1990). People have gained from previous experiences (both lived and mediated) that they can use to interpret them (Thompson, 1990). Today's information technologies, such as e-mail and the Internet, increasingly mediate people's everyday social interactions. As a result, it becomes more complex as people's social networks expand beyond the spatial-temporal context of everyday lived interactions. People need to allocate even more resources or capital to deal with this growing phenomenon. Based on this line of reasoning, we present our first proposition (P1):

P1. The amount of symbolic resources via lived and mediated experiences is related to the level of appropriation of consumption symbolism.

Because the self is viewed as the result of the dependent co-emergence of the self and others, all social interactions in which the self participates in society are meaningful and central to forming its identity (Giddens et al., 2020). Presumably, individuals use these resources in various ways: to make sense of internal incoherence, to express qualities of the self, to communicate their status, to allow socialization, or even to regard them as role models (Csikszentmihalyi & Halton, 1981).

Individuals consume products and services to acquire a sense of self or establish their position in the ubiquitous world of brands through the lived consumption of a selected assortment of brands. In this way, symbolic resources from brands not only provide the self with a sense of stability but also offer comfort from uncertainty. Consumers must use consumption resources through lived and mediated experiences to develop coherent self-narratives. Brands are important symbolic resources that help people interact with one another. People talk about brands. They use the symbolic meanings of brands to present themselves. They use various brands to identify themselves in various social contexts. They even recontextualize brands in symbols that their group members can fully understand.

By opening up the self to countless mediated symbolic resources, the media culture "both enriches and accentuates the reflexive organization of the self" (Thompson, 1995, p. 212). With the intensification of such symbolic resources, people are constantly confronted with new possibilities, their worldviews are continuously changing, and their symbolic points of reference are always shifting. Consumers use mediated symbolic resources to expand their repertoire of possible selves, while facilitating their daily social interactions. Furthermore, they can use media messages to help them create symbolic representations of their narrative selves (Thompson, 1995).

Mediated experience through digital channels such as social media platforms also provides a wealth of resources for the symbolic construction of the postmodern self. Whatever resources an individual seeks to advance one's self-project, the Internet appears to have them all. More importantly, the Internet experience provides people with an unprecedented opportunity to master the art of self-presentation and self-creation (Turkle, 1996). Advertising not only contributes to the creation, modification, and transformation of cultural meanings in society (Lannon & Cooper, 1983), but it also communicates cultural meanings drawn from people's worldviews and invested in the advertised brand (McCracken, 1987). People look to advertising for symbolic resources to make sense of themselves and their social worlds. In other words, they appropriate advertising meanings by incorporating the latter into their everyday symbolic practices (Anderson & Timothy, 1988). Based on the evidence in the literature that links symbolic consumption with the self-creating process, we present our second proposition (P2):

P2. The appropriation of consumption symbolism is associated with consumers' self-expression.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future empirical studies should test the proposed relations outlined in our conceptual framework. A survey instrument could be used to collect data from consumers in various product/service contexts. The key construct measures in our proposed model could be developed or adapted from existing qualitative and quantitative studies. Measures of lived and mediated experiences could be built on the findings of studies on consumer learning and experiences, such as those reported by Lehar (2006), Novotný, Zimová, Mazouchová and Šorgo (2021), Teräs (2017), Tiidenberg et al. (2017), and Underwood (2003), to name a few. The measurement of symbolic consumption could be adapted from existing studies that have been conducted in various contexts, such as in fashion, agriculture, travel, and tourism, among others (see, e.g., Ekinci, Sirakaya-Turk & Preciado, 2013; Moinat & Müller, 2011; Tangsupwattana & Liu, 2018). The scale for measuring self-expression could be adapted from existing studies (e.g., Cardoso et al., 2010; de Vries, Peluso, Romani, Leeftang & Marcati, 2017; Marriott & Buchanan, 2014; Saenger, Thomas & Johnson, 2013).

Future research could also broaden this study's current conceptual model to include additional constructs related to self-creation. For example, the model could incorporate how consumers create and maintain their self-identity. Furthermore, future research could integrate social and cultural contexts into the model to validate their interactions in the ongoing self-project. We will also gain a better understanding of how consumers harmonize themselves due to this (Wattanasuwan, 2000).

The proposed model is based on key resource and multiple-component resource theories, focusing on identifying consumers' psychological resources to improve their well-being. Consequently, it will be interesting to examine this phenomenon from other perspectives, such as the conservation of resources theory (Halbesleben, Neveu, Paustian-Underdahl & Westman, 2014), the social resource theory (Brinberg & Wood, 1983; Törnblom & Kazemi, 2014, 2015), and the resource-based theory of the firm if the study will focus on organizational consumption (Barney, 1991; Hunt & Morgan, 1995), to name a few.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications, Discussion and Conclusion

Theoretically, our study takes a new view of symbolic consumption and the self-creation process by adopting the key resource and multiple-component resource theories to explain consumer behavior. Our study's main contribution is to regard consumer experiences as key resources that lead to symbolic consumption, whether lived or mediated. By doing so, we move away from a neoclassical economic perspective and relax the types of resources that can be included in the exchange process. Consumer experiences constitute the key input, inducing symbolic consumption, with consumers completing their self-creation process and harmonizing themselves with their social and cultural worlds through symbolic consumption.

In terms of managerial implications, understanding the relation between consumer experience as an input for the self-creation process will lead marketers to appreciate the importance of the consumers' learning process, which stems from lived and mediated experiences, as specified in our conceptual framework. As marketers, they can help improve their consumers' learning, ultimately affecting the latter's consumption choices.

We hope that our research will shed light on a new way of applying resource theories to the study of consumer behavior. Additionally, this research provides a new perspective on symbolic consumption, which has become more critical for consumers today as they are bombarded by many new social media platforms and disruptive technological developments. Understanding this interweaving of lived and mediated experiences will make it easy for consumers to symbolically consume their products and services and express themselves to the world.

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