

Psychological traits and purchase intention in Lebanese aesthetic clinics: The mediating role of brand attitude

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Abstract: This paper investigates how value consciousness, susceptibility to normative influence, and consumer need for uniqueness shape purchase intention in Lebanese aesthetic clinics, and whether brand attitude mediates these relationships. A structured questionnaire was administered to 350 current or potential users of aesthetic clinic services in Lebanon. Data were analyzed using SPSS 27 and AMOS 27 through reliability and validity tests, correlation analysis, structural equation modelling, and bootstrapped mediation analysis. Value consciousness, normative influence susceptibility, and consumer need for uniqueness positively influenced both brand attitude and purchase intention. Brand attitude also has a strong positive impact on purchase intention and partially mediates the relationships between the three psychological traits and purchase intention. The findings indicate that both functional and symbolic assessments influence clinic choice in the Lebanese context, where economic strain, social signaling, and identity expression occur concomitantly. Aesthetic clinics should strengthen value-based positioning, use socially credible communication, and offer differentiated brand experiences that appeal to value-seeking, socially influenced, and uniqueness driven consumers.

Keywords: Brand attitude, Consumer need for uniqueness, Lebanon, aesthetic clinics, Purchase intention, Susceptibility to normative influence, Value consciousness.

1. Introduction

The decisions made by consumers to consume appearance-related services are not based solely on the quality or cost of services. Self-image, perceived value, social approval, and meanings attached to the clinic brand influence purchase intention in aesthetic clinics [1-3]. Earlier studies in consumer behavior show that behavioral intention is often formed through utilitarian assessment and symbolic interpretation, especially in services related to identity, viewability, and lifestyle expression [3-5].

The case of Lebanon offers a very pertinent backdrop to this question. The long-term economic instability in the country has increased the sensitivity of consumers to value, and the demands in the sphere of beauty, wellness, and appearance services remain integrated into daily social and cultural existence. Within this context, consumers might be interested in aesthetic services that are affordable and trustworthy, as well as socially acceptable and able to convey individuality. The industry thus integrates both functional and symbolic motives in a manner that renders it particularly practical to examine the psychological forces of clinic choice [6-10].

Although there is increased attention to the psychological factors of consumption, few studies have been conducted on value consciousness, vulnerability to normative influence, consumer need for distinctiveness, attitude towards the brand, and purchase intention in a single cohesive structure within the context of Lebanese aesthetic clinics. Research on these variables has tended to be conducted separately or has only considered stable, developed markets, not crisis-affected service settings. This results in inadequate insights into the roles of economic pressure, social identity, and self-expressive motives in forming purchase intentions in emerging markets [6, 7, 9, 11, 12].

This paper relies on the Theory of Attitudes, Reference Group Theory, Social Identity Theory, and Uniqueness Theory to describe how individuals form intentions to consume aesthetic services [1, 2, 11, 13]. Collectively, these views imply that consumers develop purchase intentions based not only on rational evaluation of value but also on social comparison, perceived approval, and the urge to preserve a unique self-concept [2, 6, 11, 13]. It is on this ground that the proposed model will be explored to determine whether value consciousness, normative influence susceptibility, and the consumer's need to be unique have a direct and indirect effect on purchase intention, mediated by brand attitude [4, 5].

Based on this, the proposed study aims to describe how psychological characteristics influence the intention to utilize Lebanese aesthetic clinics and to clarify the mediating role of brand attitude in the relationship. The study seeks to contribute to both theory and managerial understanding of how clinic brands can better respond to value-seeking, socially influenced, and uniqueness-driven consumers by addressing an under-explored service context in the Arab region.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Study Design and Participants

This study utilized a quantitative, deductive, and positivist research design to test the correlations among psychological traits, brand attitude, and purchase intention in Lebanese aesthetic clinics. The target population included Lebanese residents aged 18 years or older who were familiar with or had experience of aesthetic clinic services. A structured questionnaire with 350 respondents was used to collect data. The sampling mode employed was non-probability and respondent-based, deemed suitable for accessing consumers familiar with the study context.

2.2. Survey Instrument and Measures

Data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire that contained closed-ended questions. The tool was divided into two sections: the demographic profile and scales that included multi-item measures of value consciousness, normative influence susceptibility, consumer need to be unique, brand attitude, and purchase intention. All construction items were based on those in the literature and were evaluated on a five-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree [5, 6, 8-10, 13]. Appendix A contains the complete survey instrument.

2.3. Measurement of Constructs

Value consciousness items measured the degree to which respondents rated the service worth in comparison to price and utility [6, 10]. Susceptibility to normative influence measured how well others influenced the views, expectations, and buying behaviors of respondents [2, 5]. The consumer requirement of distinctiveness gauged the aspiration to manifest individuality via a unique selection of services [13]. Brand attitude was the general rating of aesthetic services and perceived social and experiential importance [8, 9]. Purchase intention quantified the readiness of respondents to purchase, repurchase, and recommend aesthetic services in the future [14, 15].

2.4. Data Analysis

Data was analyzed with SPSS 27 and AMOS 27. The analysis included descriptive statistics of the demographic profile, reliability and validity testing of the measurement model, Pearson correlation analysis, structural equation modeling, and mediation analysis. Measurement quality was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted, while path coefficients and significance levels evaluated the hypothesized construct relationships.

2.5. Ethical Considerations

Participation in the survey was voluntary, and responses were treated confidentially and analyzed in aggregate form solely for academic research purposes.

Table 1.
Sample profile of respondents (N = 350).

Variable	Category	n (%)
Gender	Male	184 (52.6)
Gender	Female	166 (47.4)
Age	18-23 years	33 (9.4)
Age	24-33 years	95 (27.1)
Age	34-43 years	111 (31.7)
Age	44-53 years	83 (23.7)
Age	54-63 years	28 (8.0)
Employment status	Full-time employment	216 (61.7)
Employment status	Part-time employment	49 (14.0)
Employment status	Self-employed	85 (24.3)
Education level	Bachelor's degree or above	350 (100.0)

3. Results

3.1. Respondent Profile

The respondent profile depicts a balanced sample in terms of gender and concentration on the economically active adults' segments, particularly respondents aged 34-53 years. Most respondents indicated full-time work and middle-income statuses, suggesting that the sample is representative of consumers likely to make discretionary service decisions while still considering value aspects.

3.2. Reliability and Validity of the Measurement Model

The measurement model yielded satisfactory reliability. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.783 for value consciousness, 0.865 for normative influence susceptibility, 0.756 for consumer need uniqueness, 0.817 for brand attitude, and 0.788 for purchase intention. Convergent validity and internal consistency of the constructs were also supported by composite reliability and average variance extracted values that met acceptable thresholds.

3.3. Correlation Analysis

Bivariate analysis revealed positive relationships between all core constructs. Value consciousness, normative influence susceptibility, consumer need for uniqueness, and brand attitude were all positively related to purchase intention, indicating stronger consumer intention to buy as value orientation, social responsiveness, uniqueness seeking, and more favorable brand evaluation increase.

3.4. Structural Model Testing

The results of structural equation modeling show that all three psychological traits have a positive effect on brand attitude. Brand attitude was positively affected by value consciousness; normative influence was more positively affected; and consumer need for uniqueness produced a significant positive effect. In turn, brand attitude had a significant positive influence on purchase intention. The direct relationships between value consciousness, normative influence susceptibility, and consumer need for uniqueness to purchase intention were also positive and statistically significant.

3.5. Mediation Analysis

The mediation analysis establishes the explanatory nature of brand attitude. The direct effect on purchase intention via brand attitude was significant for value consciousness, normative influence susceptibility, and consumer need for uniqueness, showing partial mediation. These results indicate that psychological characteristics affect purchase intention both directly and indirectly by contributing to a more positive attitude toward aesthetic service brands.

Table 2.

Reliability and validity summary.

Construct	Cronbach alpha	CR	AVE
Value consciousness	0.783	0.921	0.501
Susceptibility to normative influence	0.865	0.723	0.581
Consumer need for uniqueness	0.756	0.932	0.533
Brand attitude	0.817	0.938	0.521
Purchase intention	0.788	0.910	0.503

Table 3.

Structural model and mediation results.

Path	Beta	p-value	Finding
VC -> BA	0.142	0.018	Positive; supported
SNI -> BA	0.319	0.004	Positive; supported
CNFU -> BA	0.286	0.014	Positive; supported
BA -> PI	0.747	0.012	Positive; supported
VC -> PI	0.237	0.001	Positive; supported
SNI -> PI	0.195	0.009	Positive; supported
CNFU -> PI	0.221	0.006	Positive; supported
VC -> BA -> PI	0.106	0.015	Partial mediation
SNI -> BA -> PI	0.238	0.011	Partial mediation
CNFU -> BA -> PI	0.214	0.013	Partial mediation

4. Discussion

4.1. Value Consciousness and Purchase Intention

Value consciousness is especially significant in Lebanon's crisis-impacted economy. These findings imply that low prices are not a sufficient stimulus to motivate consumers planning to utilize aesthetic services; instead, they are motivated by the perceived balance between financial sacrifice and anticipated service utility. This aligns with studies revealing that value-conscious consumers need assurance that the rewards of a purchase are worth the money [6, 10]. In aesthetic clinics, clear pricing, clarity of outcome, and credibility of services are key in enhancing purchase intention.

4.2. Susceptibility to Normative Influence

Susceptibility to normative influence is also a significant predictor of susceptibility. Apparel markets and consumers of appearance products are frequently subjected to peer judgment, social approval, and symbolic consumption pressures, which influence brand evaluations and behavioral intentions [2, 5]. Social approval can positively affect confidence in choosing aesthetic services in the Lebanese context, where interpersonal visibility and reference-group power can be high. Trust-building mechanisms, including testimonials, reputation cues, and referral-based communication, can thus assist clinics.

4.3. Consumer Need for Uniqueness

Consumer need for uniqueness also demonstrates a positive impact on brand attitude and purchase intention. This shows that not all consumers consume aesthetic services to meet beauty expectations but because it is a way to be unique and affirm a unique self-identity [13]. The outcome confirms the uniqueness theory, demonstrating that differentiated service positioning and individual treatment experiences can positively impact consumer evaluation and brand selection of aesthetic clinic brands.

4.4. The Mediating Role of Brand Attitude

In sum, the empirical data demonstrate that brand attitude is a key process connecting psychological characteristics to purchase intention. Positive brand appraisals help to convert value perceptions, social cues, and identity-related motives into greater willingness to buy, rebuy, and recommend services [1, 8, 9]. This observation supports the role of brand-building in clinic-based

aesthetic markets where consumers tend to make judgments in the face of uncertainty and make use of cognitive and emotional judgments of the service provider.

5. Conclusions

This paper shows that value-seeking, social influence, and self-expressive motives jointly affect purchase intention in Lebanese aesthetic clinics. Value-oriented consumers, those responding to societal pressure, or desiring to be unique, tend to have more positive attitudes toward clinical brands and consequently, a higher willingness to buy.

The key finding of the study is the mediating role of brand attitude. The attitude toward the brand does not substitute the direct impact of psychological characteristics; it transforms a portion of the impact into purchase intention. This observation implies that branding should be considered a behavioral tool rather than a communication resource in aesthetic clinics in Lebanon.

This work contributes both theoretical and managerial insights. It applies attitude-based, social influence, and uniqueness frameworks to a little-explored Arab service setting. Managing-wise, it suggests clinics should integrate value-based signaling, visible social legitimacy, and personalized or differentiated positioning to reinforce intentions among target segments.

There are also limitations to the study. It is based on cross-sectional, self-reported data, is not probability-sampled, and is contextually restricted to Lebanon. Future studies might employ longitudinal designs, larger geographic samples, more mediators, and qualitative methods to enhance knowledge about how brand attitude is established and how it influences real purchase behavior in the long run.

Abbreviations:

VC = value consciousness; SNI = susceptibility to normative influence; CNFU = consumer need for uniqueness; BA = brand attitude; PI = purchase intention; SEM = structural equation modeling.

Transparency:

The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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Appendix A. Survey Instrument

Response format for Sections B-F: respondents selected one option on a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree).

A. Demographic Profile

Variable	Response options
Gender	Male; Female
Age	18 less than 24 years old; 24 less than 34 years old; 34 less than 44 years old; 44 less than 54 years old; 54 less than 64 years old
Employment Status	Full-time employment; Part-time employment; Self-Employed
Monthly Income	USD 150 to less than USD300; USD 300 to less than USD500; USD 500 to less than USD1000; USD 1000 to USD2000; above USD2000
Education Level	Bachelor's degree; Master's degree; Doctorate / PhD degree
Marital Status	Single; Married; Divorced; Other

B. Value Consciousness

Item	Statement
1	I am very concerned about low prices, but I am equally concerned about overall service utility.
2	I always try to maximize the utility I get for the money I spend when purchasing a service.
3	When I get a service, I like to be sure that I am getting my money's worth.
4	I carefully evaluate the value and benefits of products or services before making a purchase decision.
5	Considering the worth and importance of what I buy is essential to me when making purchasing choices.

C. Susceptibility to Normative Influence

Item	Statement
1	When buying an aesthetic service, I generally get a service that I think others will approve of.
2	If I want to be like someone, I often try to buy the same services that they experience.
3	I often identify with other people by purchasing the same services they purchase.
4	The opinions and recommendations of others strongly influence my purchase decisions.
5	I often feel pressure to conform to societal norms and trends when deciding what to buy.

D. Need for Uniqueness

Item	Statement
1	When a service I experience becomes popular among the general population, I begin to use it less.
2	I often try to avoid services that I know are bought by the general population.
3	Services do not seem to hold much value for me when they are purchased regularly by everyone.
4	Being different and standing out from the crowd is important to me when it comes to my purchases.
5	I actively seek out unique and unconventional products that reflect my individuality and personal style.

E. Brand Attitude

Item	Statement
1	I like to purchase services.
2	I think that services help to show the user's social status.
3	I consider myself knowledgeable on aesthetic services.
4	I enjoy learning about aesthetic services.
5	I can recognize almost all aesthetic services.

F. Purchase Intention

Item	Statement
1	I am considering purchasing a service at a higher price.
2	The price of this service is affordable compared to other services in the market.
3	I have a strong intention to make future purchases from this brand or store.
4	I am likely to recommend this service to others and consider repurchasing it in the future.
5	When I come across appealing products or services, I feel motivated to make a purchase and try them out for myself.