

# The Transwomen's Shopping Behaviour of Fashion Brand in THAILAND; Self-Esteem, Body-Image

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## Abstract

The study aims to investigate the consumer behaviour of “The ‘Pink Pound’ or the ‘Pink Money’”. These are the marketing term used to define the huge amount of money spent by gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgenders (LGBT). LGBT consumers have higher incomes than other consumers. Moreover, they are generally well educated and favour high-quality products and have a hedonistic lifestyle. In other words, they socialise more often than straight men and women. This might be because they tend to live in urban areas, have high disposable income and have no children. Furthermore, they are more brand loyalty, especially for the business that targets and support their communities. Also, they are more keen to network than counterparts. There were 80% of gay men, and 76% of lesbians are internet-user compared with 70% of straight men and 69% of women. Moreover, they spend 35% more on online shopping than non-LGBT. LGBT consumers are an early adopter and trendsetter; they pick up on the international trend quickly. Thus, they are considered as a useful indicator of market trend. Perhaps, their lifestyle influences the men's fashion and grooming market; for example, nowadays, men tend to do ear piercing and spend more time and money on their appearance and lifestyle. The research points out that 48% of LGBT consumers like to keep up the latest style and trends compared to only 38% of heterosexual. All of the information can emphasize a potential of this dream market, which seems to be not interested widely as much as it should be.

**Keywords:** consumer behaviour, transwomen, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgenders

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## Introduction

### Background

The 'Pink Pound' or the 'Pink Money' are the marketing term used to define the huge amount of money spent by gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgenders (LGBT). Since the acceptance of homosexual has been increasing globally, more people identify themselves publicly as being part of this classification (BBC News, 2016). Thus, we often see LGBT people in our society (e.g. as a professional), including media such as in sitcoms, dramas, and several talk shows that hosted by openly homosexual celebrities (Euromonitor, 2010). For example, a celebrity, Sam Smith was the first openly gay artist who acquire the GRAMMY's Award in 2015. Although LGBT people still have to face through stigmatisation and discrimination as a significant amount of homophobia that is still run deep in societies, market researchers were interested in 'Pink Pound' and how they spend their money. Many multinational companies are kept an eye on this niche market (Euromonitor, 2016). It is believed that this market is valuable and able to produce lots of income to their company

The size of LGBT market is attractive. Therefore, a large amount of market effort is undertaken to seize the opportunity by tapping into this dream market like well-known companies such as IKEA, Levi's and Absolut Vodka. However, the accurate figure of LGBT is difficult to indicate. Many academics and marketing experts estimate approximately from 4% to 10% of any given population (Rudd, 1996; Solomon, 2014). According to the Barratt (2015), global LGBT market is worth more than a trillion dollars; besides, they earn 23% above the national average and spend around 30% of their income on lifestyle products and entertainments (Callander, 2011). In line with the study of Solomon (2014) which reveal that gays are twelve times more likely to have a professional job, eight times more likely to own a laptop and twice times to own a holiday home than heterosexual. The researches by Euromonitor (2010) and Nielsen (2015) also highlight the attractive of the dream market. They revealed that homosexual consumers are more affluent than heterosexual counterparts due to the fact that they are less likely to have dependents, and there is a predominance of DINK (Double Income No Kids) family in the gay community.

According to Euromonitor (2010) and Nielsen (2015) report that the average wage of a gay consumer is £38,000, compared with the UK average of £26,000.

### Approach to the Research

The secondary research will be conducted through academic journals, newspaper and market reports from the library and online databases in order to develop the understanding of the homosexual's consumer behaviour and to identify the theory to explain such behaviour. By doing so, it can help to improve the quality of the primary research. Additional, due to the research about shopping behaviour of the transwomen is rarely conducted, the primary research is necessary.

The quantitative research will be strived through the online survey from a variety group of women and transwomen in Thailand, in order to engender the new knowledge and to understand more about transwomen. This study also fulfils the gap as no research has explored in this topic before.

The explanatory method will be undertaken to explain the result from the quantitative aspect by applying the relevant theory of the prior research. Finally, the IBM SPSS will be used to analyse the data which collect through the quantitative method.

### Research Objectives

1. To develop an understanding of the shopping behaviour of transwomen in the fashion sector such as price consciousness, quality consciousness, shopping enjoyment, brand loyalty.
2. To compare the difference shopping behaviour between women and transwomen
3. To explore whether the transwoman sees themselves distinct or similar to other transwomen.
4. To explore the factors that influence the shopping behaviour of transwomen in the fashion sector such as body-image and self-esteem.
5. How fashion brand can approach this market by understanding the outcome.

### Literature Review

#### Homosexual and Fashion

Gay men have come to light as a profitable niche for mainstream marketers (Kates, 2000), especially for fashion merchandising. As Braun et al. (2020) reveal that fashion plays an important role in the homosexual life. The one reason is that the physical attractiveness plays a major role in partner selection for homosexual (Braun & Walter, 2014). Besides, Sha et al. (2007) also point out that due to a homosexual character is socially constructed through appearance, homosexual consumers appearance and self-presentation can be very crucial and transmitted through clothing (Braun & Walter, 2014). Clothing is a product that generates self-image. It is not only key element in influencing people's impression, but also could be a communicator to transfer information between wearer and viewer (Holman, 1980). For example, if individuals who always dress in a formal way, he/she might be assumed that having neat character. Many researchers have indicated that gay men are more fashion conscious, fashion interest and fashion awareness (Braun & Walter, 2014; Reilly & Rudder, 2007) and sometime their style even guide the fashion trend in the male heterosexual communities (Sha et al., 2007). They also spend more time and money on clothes than heterosexual (Kates, 2002), especially for premium product (Braun et al., 2015). This might because the homosexual society particularly gay men have higher appearance expectation among others (Rudd, 1996, Stabiner, 1982). Moreover, this dream market seems to have more brand loyal than average consumers (Reilly & Rudder, 2007; Reilly et al., 2008). Additionally, gay men are willing to spend more to support gay society (Reilly & Rudder, 2007; Braun et al., 2015) and likely to shop from the gay-friendly brand such as companies which support homosexual employee or 5 target gay customers (Kates, 2000). On the other hand, they tend to avoid to purchase anythings from businesses that they perceived as homophobic. Kates (2000) explains that they use money as a weapon to show their market power against those companies they perceived as an opponent and support the gayfriendly company with brand loyalty. However, normally, when researchers mentioned about homosexual, they usually

refer to gay and lesbian. Therefore, it is possible that MTF behaviour might be different from other homosexuals. This research aims to find out the MTF shopping behaviour in the fashion sector.

### **Normative Expectation**

The explanation why LGBT customer tends to be more fashion forward could be explained by the theory of “normative expectation” originated by Goffman (1963). As a result of struggling for acceptance and equal treatment within society (Braun et al., 2015), these people tend to have low self-esteem. Therefore, they use clothing consumption behaviour as a tool to achieve visibility and recognition (Kates & Belk, 2001), to improve other negative aspects of their life and to escalate their self-esteem (Reilly et al., 2008; Reilly & Rudder, 2007)

### **The Social Comparison Theory**

The social comparison theory by Festinger (1954) can also be implemented to clarify why homosexual people are more fashion conscious. According to Lennon et al. (1999), the outcome of the comparisons affect feelings, perceptions of self-attractiveness, and body image; The study of Aspinwall and Taylor (1993) found that individuals with high self-esteem tend to make the upward comparison as it can contribute motivation and inspiration while individuals with low self-esteem prone to favour downward comparison as it can enhance their emotion. As Veblen (2007) state that the lower class purchase luxury product to associate themselves with or be perceived as a member of the higher class while higher class spend on a luxury product to dissociate themselves from the lower class. The work of Han et al. (2010) explain more about this by separating consumer into four groups: Patrician, Parvenu, Proletarian, Poseur.

Next, the Poseneur is a group that want to be what he or she not. They try to associate themselves with other haves. However, as they cannot afford the authentic product, they use the mimic goods instead. Finally, the Proletarian is less affluent consumers and less status conscious. On this basis, it could be inferred that homosexual might consumes conspicuous goods to signal status and improve their body-image leading to higher self-esteem (Nwankwo et al., 2014; Wang & Griskevicius, 2014), which were diluted by the society norms. Also, use the brand as a symbol to show status and distinct themselves from the other people, and the lower-class society while try to reach the ideal which they see as a higher-class society (Reilly et al., 2008). However, it is obscure which group they try to distinct. Do they try to separate themselves from their group or other heterosexuals? Moreover, do they perceive others homosexual as equality?

### **Body Image — Self-Esteem — Shopping Behaviour**

Many pieces of research point out the connection between body images, selfesteem and shopping behaviours (Gatti et al., 2014; Reilly & Rudd, 2007; Williams & Currie, 2000). Body image is not only the way one feels and acts on themselves, but also the way person perceive about their body (Rabito & Rodriguez, 2015), thus body image is one of the significant components to develop the individual’s self-esteem (Gatti et al., 2014).

The perception and feeling of our body and appearance can greatly influence the self-esteem (Szabó, 2015). The work of Gatti et al. (2014) and Williams and Currie (2000) reveal that the person who dissatisfies with their body and appearance has low self-esteem and vice versa. This is another explanation why homosexual tend to be fashion forward and spend more time and money for shopping. As they have low self-esteem from the discrimination and stigmatisation for not harmonising with the social norms; they use clothing, especially luxury brand to show that they are living well and better than other heterosexuals or even other homosexuals. Besides, consuming luxury goods can increase their body image leading to escalating the self-esteem. Self-esteem also links with shopping behaviour. Consumers with low self-esteem resort to compulsive buying as a mean to feel better about themselves (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989), to reduce their stress and tension and to raise the self-esteem (Hirschman, 1992). They tend to shop less frequently, spend less time shopping, and less enjoy than other homosexuals with high self-esteem; besides, they tend to shopping online or through the catalogue to avoid being seen and evaluated in brick and mortar store (Reilly & Rudd, 2007). On the other hand, homosexual with high self-esteem might want to express their strength through certain consumption behaviour of apparel (Reilly & Rudd, 2007). This is obviously seen in our daily life that they tend to dress more creative, more fashionable, and they do not hesitate to express that they are homosexual. The study of the Reilly and Rudd (2007) reveals that gay men tend to purchase the unaffordable goods by using a credit card. The reason might because they purchase expensive, designer-level clothing to compensate the body that not match with the expected standard of the social norm (Kates, 2000) or to demonstrate to society that despite the discrimination and stigma, they are well-being. Also, they feel they are expected to dress in a fashion-forward manner so they have to purchase the unique and latest clothing styles from speciality brand which is more expensive. Besides, they might choose to support gay-friendly business and happy to pay a premium for the goods as they think support such a business is worth the additional cost. By understanding this behaviour, marketers can derive ways to serve this potentially lucrative market segment,

### What is Ka-thoey?

Transgender can be categorised as people who desire to change their sexes from male to so-called female transwomen — MTF, or female to male so-called transmen — FTM (Benjamin, 1966) and crave to be a member of opposite sex (Schilt, 2006). In Thailand, those MTFs are named exclusively as 'lady-boys', 'ka-thoey' or 'phuying-praphet-song'. In fact, the word 'ka-thoey' can be a threatening term for MTF. They usually prefer to be called 'a second type of woman' or 'phuying-praphet-song' as they want to be accepted as a female (Ten, 1999).

The life of a person who born as a man but has a feminine mind is not a bed of roses. They have had a feeling of anxiety for being different from other people of the same sex, since childhood. They prefer activities of the other sex and start to wear clothes of the opposite sex from an early age, not for enjoyment but as an expression of the feeling of belonging to the other sex which is not theirs (Rabito & Rodriguez, 2015). Even though there is a wide acceptance and social integration of MTF in Asian, particularly Thailand (Euromonitor, 2010). For example, they are participating in some certain professional careers such as film star, chef, designer

(Ten, 1999). They still have to face the significant dilemma not only internally as their identity crisis between their mind and body (Shilling, 2008), but also externally like discrimination, stigma, verbal & physical abuse and prejudice. Therefore, MTFs have to face with difficulty in their life than other homosexuals as their appearance and body are not fit with their mind and not be accepted by social norm. Head (2008) report that it is unusual to see transgender work as headmaster and other professional jobs, but it is usual to find them work in bars, clubs and other night time economy careers. This job recruitment issue is only an example that highlight the prejudice and discrimination issue among MTF which undermines their self-esteem. Consequently, they might purchase cloth and luxury goods as a tool to increase their self-esteem as many researchers point out that the homosexual tend to consume expensive designer clothing to compensate for a body that does not meet the ideal (Kates, 2000), purchase luxury brand to compensation for bodily flaws (Kates, 2002), use clothing shopping to improve 10 other negative aspects of their life and to boost their self-esteem (Reilly et al., 2008; Reilly & Rudder, 2007).

As, Thailand has a large number of MTF which higher than the West countries (Winter, 2006) and this market seem to be neglected from the marketer; it is interesting to investigate in this area. Particularly, in this competitive era, every organisation seeks for the new opportunity to make more profit. Perhaps, the outcome of the research can shed the light on the new potential market which is overlooked by multinational companies and provide the new opportunity and knowledge to tap into this dream market. The proposed of this research is focused on the shopping behaviour of MTF in Thailand which has never been investigated before. In addition, the theory of normative expectation, social comparison, body-image and self-esteem will be used in this research to scrutinise whether these concepts can be applied in Thai society or not.

## Research Methodology

### Primary Research

The primary research for this project is necessary because the secondary data about the MTF is very limited especially about the shopping behaviour. Therefore, the quantitative analysis is needed to address all the research objective. While, the secondary data which already discuss in Chapter 1 will explain the findings and result which come from the primary research.

#### Sampling

The target population for the questionnaire is women and MTFs in Thailand. After providing informed consent, participants completed an online questionnaire designed through SurveyMonkey software. The snowball sampling technic will be use which can approach large target participants faster and easier. 250 participants (men = 7.60%, women = 47.60% and MTFs = 44.80%) ranging age from 19 to 50 (M = 27, SD = 4.982) and income ranging from lower than 15,000 to more than 45,000 baht (M = 15,001 - 30,000 baht, SD = .959) data were collected. The 74 data were collected from Facebook, 162 data were collected from personal contact and snowball technique and 14 data were collected from direct mail. 19 participants who are men were

excluded as there is not a target group in this research. Then 15 incomplete questionnaires were removed. Therefore, 216 participants (women = 50.46%, MTFs = 49.54%) remained in the study.

#### Materials and procedure

The questionnaire begins with the general information part which includes sex (Male, Female and Transwomen), age (open-end) and income (from 1 = lower than 15,000 to 4 = more than 45,001) Next, the shopping behaviour questionnaire part, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) and body dissatisfaction subscale were employed in this study (see the questionnaire, English version in Appendix A)

The 10 shopping behaviour questions with Likert 5-point scales (from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) were used to measure the participants' shopping behaviour such as time pressure (specific shopping trip), innovativeness (product purchase), shopping enjoyment, quality consciousness, price consciousness, brand consciousness and brand loyalty (e.g. It is important to me to buy highquality products, I usually purchase brand name products, I usually purchase items for sale only, I tend to be a fashion leader rather than a fashion follower). All the questions were guided by the work of Bruner et al. (2005). By using these studies as guidance, it provides comprehensive marketing scales and greater reliability of the questionnaire

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) is the most the widely use to measure participants' self-esteem (Gray-Little et al., 1997). This scale was used to measure MTF's self-esteem in this research. The RSE consists of 10 items, such as I take a positive attitude toward myself, on the whole, I am satisfied with myself and I feel that I have a number of good qualities, which use to measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self (Rosenberg, 1965) Additionally, this multiple-item scales were rated on Likert 4-point scales from strongly agree to strongly disagree (value = 0 - 4; Mean = 21.75, S.D. = 3.67). The reason to use multiple-item scales is to ensure content validity for multifaceted constructs (Robins et al., 2001). The reliabilities for the RSE ranging is between .72 and .88 (Gray-Little et al., 1997). The scale ranges from 0 - 30. Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem. Scores between 15 and 25 are within normal range; scores below 15 suggest low self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965).

Finally, body dissatisfaction subscale is one of 11 sub-scales which are in Eating Disorders Inventory-2 (EDI-2). This scale is a good indicator to value body dissatisfaction (Rabito & Rodríguez, 2015). This scale was used to 15 measure MTF's body-image in this research. From previous research, the reliabilities for the EDI-2 ranging is between .90 and .93 (Jennings et al., 2006). A score lower than 11 indicates that a person has a body dissatisfaction (e.g. I think that my stomach is too big, I think that my thighs are too large, I feel satisfied with the shape of my body). This multiple-item scales use Likert 5-point scales to measure the participants' body-image (0 = Strongly Disagree, 1 = Disagree, 2 = Undecided, 3 = Agree, 4 Strongly Agree; Mean = 14.89, S.D. = 5.16)

#### Validity & Reliability

All the questions were used by other researchers which can ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. However, due to the participants are Thai, the scholar will translate the question into the local language. Moreover, to avoid translation issue, the Thai questions are the one which is already translated and

used by other researchers (Jennings et al., 2006; Ross et al., 2006). Moreover, the pretesting will be carried out among 15 volunteer respondents to discover the faults before proceeding the survey

## Result & Discussion

In this section will look into the result of the survey and as there is no research about MTF's shopping behaviour before, the primary research will address all the research objective. Firstly, the general information about the income will be compared between female and MTF. Then, the result of the social comparison theory among MTF society will be provided. Next, the t-test was run to find out the difference in shopping behaviours between female and MTF will be discussed. Follow by, the correlation between self-esteem, body-image, shopping behaviour will be explored. Finally, the regression was used to predict which factor between self-esteem and body-image is a better prediction of shopping behaviour.

MTFs are more affluent

The percentage respondents' income between female and MTF. The data indicates that MTFs have higher average income than female. This might because they are less likely to have dependents and there is a predominance of DINK (Double Income No Kids) family in MTF community. This result is in line with many pieces of research (Barratt, 2015; Euromonitor, 2010; Nielson, 2015; Solomon, 2014) which reveal that homosexuals are more affluent than heterosexual. Besides, as the scholar has an opportunity to conduct an informal interview with some of the MTF respondents, the another reason that they have to generate higher income, because they have higher expense than women. Since, they are not women and their body is also not even though how similar they are, they have to beautify themselves to be accepted as a female. Moreover, due Percentage of respondents Income per month (baht) Female (N = 119) MTF (N = 112) lower than 15,000 15 16 15,001 - 30,000 63 48 30,001 - 45,000 14 18 more than 45,000 17 25 Total 100 100 17 to there is no definitely way to define membership to one sex or another, a human body is an indicator and people will treat MTF as a woman if they perceive them corresponding to a female even their identities are different (Rabito et al., 2015). Therefore, they will make all efforts to ensure that their bodies suit their identities. For example, rhinoplasty, breast surgery, plastic surgery also cosmetic and garments, etc. One of the respondent use the phase "to be a MTF is expensive" to explain their life.

MTFs are equality.

A majority of MTF respondents agree that they are equity and not compare themselves with others. This indicates that they see other MTF equality. This might because MTFs are already different and they are minority group so they have to be united. Therefore, they might use garment and brand to fulfil and enjoy themselves also improve their self-image instead of use it as a tool to distinct from others. This outcome is inconsistency with the work of Han et al. (2010) and Veblen (2007) which state that individuals use the luxury product as a symbol to show their status, to associate or to distinct themselves with others.



### Female & MTF Shopping Behaviour

An independent-samples t-test was run to determine if there are any difference in shopping behaviour between female and MTF. Only four from ten variables which consist of time pressure, fashion forward, innovativeness (product purchase) and brand consciousness are statistically significant. While quality consciousness (the intention on buying high quality products rather than compromising on quality to get a lower price), price consciousness (the degree to which a respondent focuses on sales and trying to get the best price), shopping enjoyment (the indication that shopping is something respondents like to do) and brand loyalty (the tendency to buy the same brand within a specified product category rather than seek variation) are no difference between both groups

First, MTFs have limited amount of time to use during a particular shopping episode, a statistically significant difference,  $M = -.296$ , 95% CL  $[-.586, -.005]$ ,  $t(211) = -2.004$ ,  $p = .046$ . Next, MTF ( $M = 3.30$ ,  $SD = .886$ ) are more fashion forward than female ( $M = 2.93$ ,  $SD = .914$ ) when shopping garment product, a statistically significant difference,  $M = -.367$ , 95% CL  $[-.610, -.124]$ ,  $t(211) = -2.978$ ,  $p = .003$ . Then, MTF ( $M = 3.67$ ,  $SD = .859$ ) are more innovative than women ( $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = .940$ ) when shopping garment product, a statistically significant difference,  $M = -.268$ , 95% CL  $[-.511, -.025]$ ,  $t(211) = -2.171$ ,  $p = .031$ . Likewise, MTF ( $M = 2.60$ ,  $SD = .891$ ) have more brand consciousness than female ( $M = 2.35$ ,  $SD = 1.002$ ) while choosing the garment product, a statistically significant difference,  $M = -.258$ , 95% CL  $[-.514, -.002]$ ,  $t(211) = -1.986$ ,  $p = .048$ . The result indicates that MTFs have more time pressure when shopping. It might because most MTF earn more, they have to spend most of the time on their work; therefore, they might have time limited when shopping. Some of the respondents told the scholar that they have to work 7 days a week. This result disclaims the work of Kates (2002) which point out that homosexual spend more time than heterosexual. Also, there is no statistically significant difference between both groups on brand loyalty. This outcome disclaims the work of Reilly and Rudder (2007) and Reilly et al. (2008) which claim that LGBT has more brand loyalty than average consumers.

However, when comparing fashion forward and innovativeness between both genders, MTFs have the higher score on both points. This mean that as MTFs tend to be fashion leader than a fashion follower, they might have to engage more in exploratory behaviours, particularly when it comes to trying out new and different products to be fashionable all the time. This outcome is consistent with others research. Homosexuals are more fashion forward as they have higher appearance expectation among others. Besides, the MTF might have low selfesteem as their mind and body are not harmonising with the norms (Goffman, 1963), they use clothing as a tool to achieve visibility and recognition and to improve other negative aspects of their life and to escalate their self-esteem (Braun & Walter, 2014; Kates & Belk, 2001; Reilly & Rudder, 2007; Rudd, 1996; Sha et al., 2007; Stainer, 1982). Also, using the pressure garments to hide their masculinity and try to pass off as people of the opposite sex in public (Rabito & Rodríguez, 2015). Finally, the result indicates that MTFs have more brand consciousness than female. This mean MTFs have more desire to buy brand-name products preferring nationally known brands rather than private distributor brands or generic brand. Therefore, the brand is important to MTF than female. This might because they use the brand as a tool to show that despite the

discrimination, they are living well and better than other heterosexual or purchase expensive, designer-level clothing to compensate the body that does not match with the social norm (Kates, 2000).

#### MTF — Self-Esteem, Body-Image, Shopping Behaviour and Social Comparison Theory

The Pearson's product-moment correlation was run to assess the relationship between body image and shopping behaviour, self-esteem and body-image, also between self-esteem, shopping behaviour and social comparison in MTF (see also Table 4). The result shows that there was a moderate negative correlation between self-esteem and body-image,  $r(87) = -.345$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $0.001 < sig$ .

This indicates that MTFs have high self-esteem, even though they have body dissatisfaction. The result opposes the work of Gatti et al. (2014) and Williams and Currie (2000) which point out that the person who dissatisfies with their body and appearance will have low self-esteem and vice versa. The explanation for the inconsistency result is might because when MTFs have high self-esteem, they might have high self-confidence; therefore, they might look through their body image. As a result, even though their body does not suit with the ideal, they still have high self-esteem

Next, there was no correlation between body-image and shopping behaviour but there was a moderate positive correlation between self-esteem and shopping enjoyment,  $r(87) = .232$ ,  $p < .031$ ,  $0.031 < sig$ .

This indicates that the more self-esteem MTFs have, the more enjoyment when they are shopping. The result in line with the work of Reilly and Rudd (2007) which reveal that individuals with low self-esteem enjoy less when they are shopping and prone to shopping online or through a catalogue to avoid being seen and evaluated in brick-and-mortar store and vice versa.

Next, there was also a moderate positive correlation between self-esteem and innovativeness (product purchase),  $r(87) = .249$ ,  $p < .020$ ,  $0.020 < sig$ .

This indicates that the more self-esteem MTFs have, the more innovativeness when they purchase garments. This might because MTF with high self-esteem want to express their strength via certain consumption behaviour of apparel as obviously seen them dress more creative and fashionable (Reilly & Rudd, 2007). Besides, they might feel that they are expected to dress in a fashion-forward manner so they have to wear the unique and latest clothing styles (Kates, 2000). This also in line with the research by Euromonitor (2010) and Nielsen (2015) which reveal that LGBT consumers are more early adopter and trend setter also like to keep up the latest style of the trend.

However, there was not any correlation between self-esteem and comparison with others ( $M = 2.57$ ,  $SD = 1.074$ ). This indicates that there is no correlation between self-esteem and social comparison theory which is inconsistency with the work of Aspinwall and Taylor (1993). They point out the relation between self-esteem and social comparison that individuals with high self-esteem tend to make the upward comparison to motivate and improve themselves and vice versa or make a two way comparison to distinct themselves from the lower society and to associate with higher one. Part of MTFs might compare themselves whether the evaluation is positive or negative to know their position relative to some standard, to feel better about themselves or to improve their self-image. However, this activity is not related with self-esteem.

**Table 1** Correlation

Variables	Self-Esteem	Sig(2-tails)
Body-Image	-.345**	0.001
Shopping Enjoyment	.232*	0.031
Innovativeness (Product Purchase)	.249*	0.020
Comparison with others	-.086	??

\*\* = significant 0.01, \* = significant 0.05

Self-esteem/Body-image is a better prediction for shopping behaviour?

**Table 2** Regression

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	27.734	3.241		8.557	0.000
	Self-Esteem	.178	.118	.173	1.512	.134
	Body-Image	.071	.085	.096	.838	.404

Dependent Variable: Shopping Behaviour

a. Dependent Variable:

Shopping Behaviour Multiple regression analysis was calculated (by Enter Method) to predict shopping behaviour based on their self-esteem and body-image. A significant regression equation was found. Participants' predicted shopping behaviour is equal to 27.734 + .178 (self-esteem) + .071. Participants' predicted shopping behaviour is equal to 27.734 + .178 (self-esteem) + .071 (body-image). Participant's shopping behaviour increased .178 point for each point of self-esteem while participant's shopping behaviour increased only .071 for each point of body-image. This indicates that self-esteem is a better predictor of shopping behaviour than body-image. However, both self-esteem and body-image were no significant predictors of shopping behaviour

Body-Image mediates Shopping Behaviour?

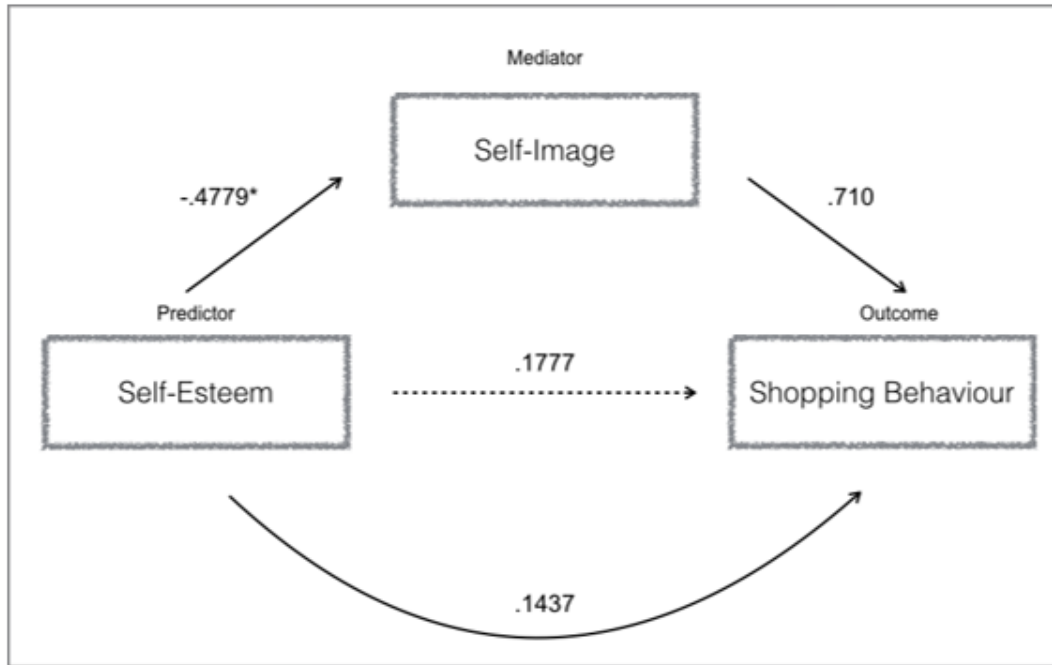


Figure 1 The body-image as a mediator of shopping behaviour

The Figure1 shows that regression analysis was used to investigate the hypothesis that body-image mediates shopping behaviour. Results indicated that self-esteem was a significant predictor of body image,  $b = -.48$ ,  $SE = .14$ ,  $p = .009$ . However, body-image was not a significant predictor of shopping behaviour,  $b = -.004$ ,  $SE = .019$ , ns. These results support the not mediational hypothesis. SE was no longer a significant predictor of shopping behaviour after controlling for the mediator, attributional positivity,  $b = .024$ ,  $SE = .026$ , ns, consistent with full mediation. Approximately 1.4% of the variance in SB was accounted for by the predictors ( $R^2 = .014$ ). The indirect effect was tested using a bootstrap estimation approach with 5,000 samples. These results indicated the indirect coefficient was significant,  $b = .002$ ,  $SE = .01$ , 95% CL =  $-.0169, .0236$ . Self-esteem was associated with approximately .002 points higher self-esteem scores as mediated by body-image. Nevertheless, the mediation is not successful, ( $F(2,85) = .596$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

Conclusion of the Section

In this study, the results reveal many interesting points. First, when comparing the data between MTF and female it shows that MTFs are more affluent, more time pressure, more fashion forward, more innovativeness and more brand consciousness. Next, it shows that self-esteem and body image have negative correlation which is inconsistency with other research. Also, find out that there is positive correlation between self-esteem, shopping enjoyment and innovativeness. While, there is no correlation with self-esteem and social comparison which again, is inconsistency with other research. Further, the result states that self-esteem is a

better predictor of shopping behaviour than body-image. Finally, the regression analysis reveals that body-image is not mediate between self-esteem and shopping behaviour.

## Conclusion

The research discovered many interesting results on MTF's shopping behaviour. It reveals that MTF is more time pressure, more fashion forward, more innovative and more brand conscious; also, more affluent than female. The resulting highlight the new opportunity for the fashion brand as MTF do not only have more purchasing power, but also the early adopter to the trend, which means they have to purchase new garments all the time to be in trend, and more desire to buy brand-name products. However, due to MTFs are more time pressure, the marketer has to provide convenience shopping channel which can save their time (such as online shopping, delivery, etc.). However, the outcome of this project is inconsistency with other research about social comparison theory. It shows that MTFs are likely to see other both female and MTF as equality. This indicates that MTFs are grouping together. The marketer can apply this behaviour to the marketing plan. For example, as MTFs are united, using opinion leader marketing might be one of the best ways to approach this market

Moreover, the research indicates that the self-esteem of MTF is a major factor which influencing shopping behaviour than body-image. There is a negative relation between self-esteem and body image. While, there is a positive relation between self-esteem, shopping enjoyment and innovativeness. This shows that marketers should emphasise on MTF's self-esteem rather than how they look. Because as long as they have high self-esteem, they are still an early adopter to the trend and will enjoy shopping even though their body-image seems unsatisfied. Besides, the result is inconsistency with other research about the relation between self-esteem and social comparison (both upward and downward). To conclude, because MTFs are different, they should be treated with an appropriate marketing strategy. As the research is entirely new in this field, there are many gaps in fulfilling. Many questions still need an answer; for example, are they willing to spend more than counterpart? Are they shopping more frequently? Are they keen to purchase from the brand supporting their communities? Are there any further factors that impact MTF shopping behaviour?

Moreover, from an informal interview scholar find out an interesting information. In MTF society, they separate themselves into 3 steps. First, 'tud' refers to the young generation of MTF who still dress like a boy but act as a counterpart (they willing to be as a counterpart, but as they still in high school, they have to obey the rule). Next, 'ka-thoey' refers to MTF who already dress like a female but not having a transsexual operation. Finally, 'phuying-praphet-song' refers to MTF who already have the transsexual operation, this is the full transformation of MTF. Therefore, they might have different shopping behaviour in each stage of their life which still need to be investigated

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