

## **An Exploratory Study of the Relationships between Advertising Appeals, Spending Tendency, Perceived Social Status and Materialism on Perfume Purchasing Behavior**

**Benjamin Chan Yin Fah**

**Yeoh Sok Foon**

Centre of Excellent for Sustainable Consumption Studies  
Faculty of Human Ecology, Universiti Putra Malaysia  
43400 Serdang Selangor, Malaysia

**Syuhaily Osman**

Faculty of Management & Information Technology  
UCSI University, No. 1, Jalan Menara Gading  
UCSI Heights 56000 Cheras, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Email: yeohsf@ucsi.edu.my, Phone: 016-2556802

### **Abstract**

*The purpose of the study was to investigate the purchasing behavior of Malaysians and its association with advertising appeals, tendency to spend, perceived social status and materialism. Data for this study was obtained through self-administered using convenience sampling. A total of 120 respondents were collected in Berjaya Megamall Kuantan, Pahang, Malaysia. The findings of the study revealed that those respondents who willing to spend money on perfume product had high level of advertising appeals, perceive social status, materialism and moderate level of tendency to spend. This study is important to the marketers to understand the consumer's purchasing behavior on perfume. The marketer also could understand the market segmentation than make them to be more competitive and utilize target market wisely.*

**Keywords:** Advertising appeals, tendency to spend, social status, materialism, purchasing behavior

### **1. Introduction**

According to Nielsen (2007), nowadays consumers strived to have good looks and willing to invest for that. Perfume is one of the cosmetic products, besides it also includes skin care and make up products. In year 2002 to 2007, Malaysia experiencing an annual growing rate of 3.8% for perfume market (Fragrances in Malaysia 2012, 2010). To date, there is no study on consumer purchasing behavior towards perfume in Malaysia has been conducted. Consumers are plays important role in market and have unique characteristics that response differently to every product. Schiffman & Kanuk (2007) defined that decision of an individual or family to be committed to a particular lifestyle (e.g., devoted followers of a particular religion) impacts on a wide range of consumer behavior. Therefore, consumer decision making either buy or not to buy a product is very unique and eventually influence the market. If the consumers are willing to trade their time and income to buy goods or services would leads to positive effect for the market. There are many external and internal factors that influence the consumer's purchasing behavior. In launching new consumer products, marketers typically rely on conventional promotion method that is advertising. In this study, the external factor would be the advertisement appeals. Verma (2009) stated that advertising is a tool for marketing the goods and services to consumers.

On the other hand, the internal factors refer to the tendency to spend, perceived social status, and materialism of the consumers. Previous study found that possessions are important and consumers had different desire to consume products or services (Belk, 1988 as cited in Fitzmaurice, 2008). The difference between involvement and information processing among consumer was significantly influence the attitude towards the consumer product (Haugtvedt et al., 1992). Specifically, advertising appeals are important message that will affect the consumer's purchasing behavior (Verma, 2009). The advertisement through the mass media, such as television, internet, and radio were among the fastest way for a marketer to introduce the product to a wide range of consumers. Consumers in market come from different personal background. Therefore, they had different perception and needs towards product. According to Cobb and Hoyer (1986) as cited in Shoham and Brencic (2003), female consumers were more likely to plan before they purchase good than male consumer. A study found that, there was a significant relationship between perceived social status and materialism with the purchasing behavior among the consumers (Jalees, 2007). Fitzmaurice (2008) stated that high materialism consumers viewed possessions is the way to achieve their happiness and well-being. The accumulated goods are important to their lives and they judge their success through the ownership and quality of good possession.

This group of consumer buys things and use money to satisfy their survival needs and to establish their social significance (Fugua, 1990 as cited in Watson, 2003). Compulsive consumers perceived that social status and materialism are internal factors could affect their purchasing behavior and repurchase intention. However, the relationship between materialism consumers and perfume purchasing were not discussed. Every individual have different spending behavior, some consumers tend to spend rather than save on certain product. Hence, tendency to spend would influence one's purchasing decision. This study aimed to examine the advertising appeal, tendency to spend, perceived social status, materialism and purchasing behavior on perfume among the consumer. This study also investigated the difference and correlation between the selected variables with demographic background and perfume purchasing behavior.

## 2. Literature Review

Numerous of previous studies have been focused on consumer demographics and purchasing behavior. According to Wilkie (1995) as cited in Markham and Cangelosi (1999), female teenagers were interested in competing with new body odors. Youth consumers were fell in categories of impulsive (Ketzenberger & Forrest, 2000) and compulsive buying behaviors (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989 as cited in Sneath, Lacey & Hensel, 2008). On the other hand, consumer decision making commonly influenced by price, quality and advertisement (Das, Mohanty & Shil, 2008). Advertisers are experts in getting people interested in what they said and make the messages memorable (Verma, 2009). Recognizing, emotional and rational appeals are the most important elements in advertising appeals. A study conducted by Verma (2009) to study the influence of both emotional and rational appeals on consumer purchasing decision. He adapted five types of emotional appeals (thrill, affection, pride, fear and humor) from Moriarty (1991) and Hoyer and MacInnis (1997) and four types of rational appeals (product attributes, refreshment, logics and educative information) from Rossiter and Donovan (1991) using five-point ordinal scale.

The study found that all of the selected appeals had different influence on consumer at stage of attention, purchase and re-purchase decision. Refreshment, product attributes and educative information under rational appeals influences all the three stages among consumers. While, thrill and pride under emotional appeals only influence consumer at stage of purchase decision. On the other hand, Ruiz and Silicia (2004) explained that advertising appeals can be divided by cognitive and/or affective processing styles among consumers. They found that informational and informational-emotional advertising appeals could lead consumer to have positive attitude towards brand, higher purchase intention and brand choice. However, limited study has been conducted to explore how the advertising appeals influence perfume purchasing behavior. A study conducted by Watson (2003) found that high level of materialism was associated with high level of spending tendency.

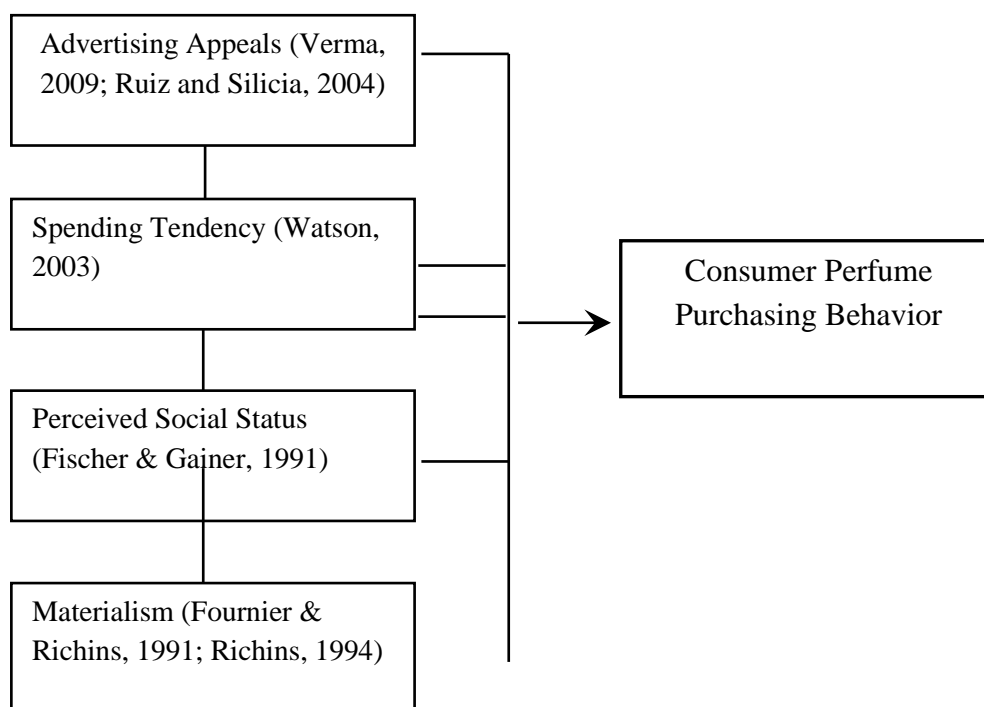


Figure 1: Research Framework of The influence of Advertising Appeal, Spending Tendency, Perceived Social Status and Materialism on Consumer Perfume Purchasing Behavior

Fournier and Richins (1991) as cited in Fitzmaurice (2008) suggested that high materialistic consumers were more likely to buy something that is readily visible to other to signal and affirm their own high status and success than low materialism consumers. Richins (1994) as cited in Fitzmaurice (2008) stated that high materialistic consumers perceived higher value in purchasing and viewed product as their ability to communicate with others successfully. Perceived social status is subjective and different among individuals. Since social status is important after consumers achieved basics needs, consumers also try to search for products that could contribute for higher social status. Fischer & Gainer (1991) as cited in Coombs (2004) found that purchasing goods more representing social identify to female consumers. Further, purchasing goods brought stronger emotional, psychological and symbolic role for female consumers compared to male consumers. However, the literature showed few studies on evaluating the different impact of materialism, advertising appeals and perceived social status on perfume purchasing behavior.

### 3. Objectives of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the consumers perfume purchasing behavior and its association with advertisement appeals, tendency to spend, perceived social status and materialism.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Sampling and Location

A multistage sampling was employed to recruit respondents. The function of case selection in Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used. At first stage, one state was randomly selected from the poll list of 14 states that is Pahang state. Secondly for the location of this study, this study aimed to interview respondent in shopping mall. *Berjaya Megamall Kuantan* was chosen randomly out of the list of shopping mall in Pahang state. Later, quota sampling was used for sample selection. A total of 20 female respondents and 20 male respondents from each age group of 21 to 25, 26 to 30 and 31 to 35 were chosen accordingly. The inclusion criterion in respondent selection is the individual who are currently using perfume.

### 4.2 Measurement of Variables

Perfume purchasing behavior was measured by stating the spending amount in a year for the perfume product. Each item has five response categories, ranging from 1 = "Does not apply" to 5 = "Very important". Advertising appeals was measured with a list of eight items of advertising appeals adopt from Verma (2009) by each scale item has five response categories, ranging from 1 = "Does not apply" to 5 = "Very important". The minimum total score was eight and maximum total score was 40. Advertising appeals were categorized as low (8 to 18 points), moderate (19 to 29 points) and high (30 to 40 points) using equal range. There are six items to measure tendency to spend instrument was adopted from Jalees (2007). The responses vary from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree". The total minimum score was six and total maximum score was 30. Further, tendency to spend were categorized as low (6 to 13 points), moderate (14 to 21 points) and high (22 to 30 points) using equal range. Three items of perceived social status instrument and three items of materialism instrument also adopted from Jalees (2007). The responses for both instruments are vary from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree". The total minimum score was three and total maximum score was 15. Further, perceived social status and materialism were categorized as low (3 to 6 points), moderate (7 to 10 points) and high (11 to 15 points) using equal range.

## 5. Research and Findings

### 5.1 Profile of the Respondents

A total of 60 males and 60 females were equally distributed. The respondents were formed by three age group start from 21 to 25, 26 to 30 and 31 to 35. The result showed that majority of the respondents were Chinese (59.2%) followed by Malay (28.3%) and minority of them were Indian (11.7%). Looking at the monthly income, 48.3% of the respondents obtained RM 2000 or below and 30.0% of them obtained RM2000 to RM3000. About 22.0% of the respondents obtained RM3001 and above per month. Further, the study found that there is a significant relation between monthly income and gender [Pearson  $\chi^2(2, N = 120) = 8.65, p \leq 0.05$ ]. However, there is no significant relationship between monthly income and ethnicity was found to be not correlated or not related [Pearson  $\chi^2(6, N = 120) = 3.36, p \geq 0.05$ ].

### 5.2 Advertising Appeal

Table 1 shows the eight items of advertising appeals. Generally, the respondents perceived important for all the items. Among the advertising appeal, great taste (60%), refreshment (34.2%) and romantic (30.8%) were the of importance advertising appeal perceived by the respondents. The majority of the respondents (55.8%) had high level of advertising appeal, 41.7% of the respondents had moderate level of advertising appeal and only 2.5% had low level of advertising appeal. The study found that there was a significant relationship between level of advertising appeals and age group [Pearson  $\chi^2(4, N = 120) = 9.970, p \leq 0.05$ ].

However, there was no significant relationship between level of advertising appeals with gender, ethnicity and monthly income category.

### 5.3 Tendency to Spend

Table 2 shows the item results of tendency to spend. In terms of item analysis, most of the respondents agree that they were impulsive buyer (48.3%), would spend part or whole of their saving for shopping (50.8%) and have an irresistible urge to go into a shop and buy something (41.7%). However, most of the respondents did not agree item 4 (65.8%), 5 (58.3%) and 6 (38.5%). Majority of the respondents (60.8%) had moderate level of tendency to spend followed by 20.8% had low level of level of tendency to spend and only 18.3% of them had high level of tendency to spend.

### 5.4 Perceived Social Status

Table 3 shows the three items of perceived social status. In general, the respondents agree towards purchasing influence their perceived social status. The results showed that 47.5%, 64.1% and 50.0% of the respondents agree for item one to three respectively. The study found that majority of respondents (55.0%) had high level of perceived social status and 37.5% respondents had moderate level of perceived social status. Only minority of respondents (7.5%) considered as low level of perceived social status. There was a significant relationship between level of perceived social status and monthly income category [Pearson  $\chi^2(4, N = 120) = 12.12, p \leq 0.05$ ]. This indicated that the respondents' monthly income was influencing their perceived social status.

### 5.5 Materialism

Table 4 shows the three items of materialism. Generally, majority of the respondents agree that it is important to have nice things, rich enough to buy anything and feel happier if they could afford to buy more things. About 84.2% of the respondents had high level of materialism, followed by 15.0% of them had moderate level of materialism and only one respondent (0.8%) had low level of materialism. There was a significant relationship between level of materialism and ethnicity [Pearson  $\chi^2(6, N = 120) = 13.80, p \leq 0.05$ ]. This means that the level of materialism influenced by their ethnicity. Further, the result showed that Chinese respondents were more materialistic than Malay, Indian and other race.

### 5.6 Purchasing Behavior

Majority of the respondents (93.3%) had low level of purchasing behavior. They spent less than RM3, 000 on perfume product per year. Only, 5.0% of the respondents had moderate level that the respondents spent RM3, 001 to RM 6,000 and only 1.7% of the respondents in high level of purchasing behavior spent RM6,001 to RM10,000 on perfume product per year. The minimum spent was RM30 and the maximum spent was RM10000. There was a significant relationship between purchasing behavior and gender [Pearson  $\chi^2(2, N = 120) = 8.57, p \leq 0.05$ ]. The result showed that female respondents were more spend their money for the perfume product than male. Besides, Drury (2000) found female respondents believed that complete realization of their improved self image was just purchase.

### 5.7 Correlation of Purchasing Behavior with Selected Variables

Pearson Moment Correlation was used to test whether the relationship between advertising appeals, tendency to spend, perceived social status and materialism with purchasing behavior on perfume. Table 5 shows that there was significant relationship between the advertising appeals ( $r = 0.257, p \leq 0.05$ ), tendency to spend ( $r = 0.360, p \leq 0.05$ ), perceived social status ( $r = 0.296, p \leq 0.05$ ) and materialism ( $r = 0.200, p \leq 0.05$ ) with purchasing behavior on perfume. From this study, advertising appeals have influenced respondents in Kuantan in spending for purchase perfume product. This means that the higher the level of advertising appeals, the higher the purchasing behavior of respondents. The findings of the study is supported by previous study, consumers with high involvement in purchase evaluate advertising information significantly influence the attitude towards the consumer product (Haugtvedt et al., 1992). This results was consistent with Verma (2009), advertising appeals are important message that affects the consumers purchasing behavior.

Besides, tendency to spend have influence toward respondents in Kuantan to spend for the perfume product. This means that the lower the level of tendency to spend, the lower the purchasing behavior of respondents, and vice versa. Duesenberry (1949) as cited in Watson (2003) proposed a theory of consumption which suggested that people consumed goods according to their perceptions of what was normal for their reference group and also included social comparison as a central process in consumption decisions. Perceived social status influenced consumers in Kuantan to spend for the perfume product. This means that the lower the level of perceived social status, the lower the purchasing behavior of respondents, and vice versa. Shopping is changing its nature and focus shifting from the purchase to satisfy the physical needs of oneself towards the use of consumer goods to gaining social status (McCracken, 1990 as cited in Neuner, Raab & Reisch, 2004). Lastly, materialism have influenced toward respondents in Kuantan to spend for the perfume product.

This means that the lower the level of materialism, the lower the purchasing behavior of respondents, and vice versa. With a primary dimension of Richins and Dawson's (1992) definition of materialism is possession-defined success. Thus, this study supported by previous study that consumer with high levels of materialism are more prone to be spenders than savers (Watson, 2003).

### **6. Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations**

The study found that advertising appeals, tendency to spend, perceived social status and materialism influence respondent's purchasing behavior in Kuantan to spend for the perfume product. Understanding the factors that influenced consumer's purchasing behavior was an opportunity for marketer to understand the market segments. With the market segmentation, marketer can identify the groups of perfume's customer and their behavior. Besides, marketer can improved the market position to meet target market. Understand the market segments also can make marketer more competitive and utilize target market. The study also found that advertising appeals was important to influence consumer's purchasing behavior, thus marketer should focus on advertisement to promote their perfume products. The study found that purchasing behavior is influenced by gender, females spent more of their money on perfume products than males. So marketer can target more on the female market. Peoples who perceived high social status will spend more money to buy perfume, so marketer can focus their market on high class society.

Advertising appeals, tendency to spend, perceived social status and materialism have significant relationship with the purchasing behavior. However, this study performed only in the Malaysia context and without direct cross-cultural comparisons, it is difficult to determine the differential factors that may affect the quality of purchasing behavior on perfume across cultures. Besides, the data in this study were gathered from one just Kuantan District in Pahang state. So, the future research needs to conduct in different state to know more on consumer profile. In future, Lastly, similar study should increase the sample size to wider population because 120 respondents is not sufficient to generalize reliable results and fails to generalize the whole purchasing behavior on perfume among consumers.

### **Acknowledgement**

I want to express my appreciation to Ms Hang Xiu Wen and Wong Chee Yien in converting part of the term paper into this paper. Knowing that there are rooms of improvement in this paper but their first attempt in publication should be given supports and encourages.

### **References**

- Beatty, S. E., & Ferrell, M. E. (1998). Impulse Buying: Modeling its precursors. *Journal of Retailing*, 74 (2), 161-167.
- Coombs, R. H. (Ed.). (2004). *Handbook of addictive disorders: A practical guide to diagnosis and treatment*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Das, B., Mohanty, S., & Shil, N. C. (2008). Categorizing consumers' buying behavior: A factor analysis in consumer durable market. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 3 (9), 147-156.
- Fitzmaurice, J. (2008). Splurge purchases and materialism. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 25 (6), 332-338.
- Fragrances in Malaysia to 2012 (2010). Retrieved on Jun, 1, 2010 from <http://www.reportlinker.com/p098527/Fragrances-in-Malaysia-to.html>.
- Haugtvedt C.P., R.E. Petty & J.T. Cacioppo. (1992). 'Need for Cognition and Advertising: Understanding the Role of Personality Variables in Consumer Behavior', *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 1(3), 239-60.
- Jalees, T. (2007). Identifying determinants of compulsive buying behavior. *Market Forces*, 3(2), 30-51.
- Markham, S., & Cangelosi, J. (1999). An international study of unisex and same name fragrance brands. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 8(5), 387-401
- Nairn, A., & Berthon, P. (2003). Creating the customer: The influence of advertising on consumer market segments – Evidence and ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 42, 83-99.
- Neuner, M., Raab, G., & Reisch, L. A. (2005). Compulsive buying in maturing consumer societies: An empirical re-inquiry. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 26, 509-522.
- Nielsen, A. C. (2007). *Health, beauty & personal grooming: a global Nielsen consumer report*. Report: March 2007.
- Schiffman, L. G., & Kanuk, L. L. (Eds.). (2007). *Consumer behavior*. United States: Prentice-Hall International.
- Seitz, V. A., & Johar, J. S. (1993). Advertising practices for self-image projective products in the new Europe. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 10 (4), 15-26.

- Shoham, A., & Brencic, M. M. (2003). Compulsive buying behavior. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 20 (2), 127-138.
- Sneath, J. Z., Lacey, P. A., & Hensel, K. (2008). Coping with a natural disaster: Losses, emotions, and impulsive and compulsive buying. *Market Lett*, 20, 45-60.
- Verma, S. (2009). Do all advertising appeals influence consumer purchase decision: An exploratory study. *Global Business Review*, 10 (1), 33-43.
- Watson, A., Viney, H., & Schomaker, P. (2002). Consumer attitudes utility products: A consumer behavior perspective. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 20 (7). 394-404.
- Watson, J. J. (2003). The relationship of materialism to spending tendencies, saving and debt. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 24, 723-739.

**Table 1: Advertising Appeal**

No	Items	%					Total
		1	2	3	4	5	
1.	Humor	6.7	15.0	23.3	40.0	15.0	100.0
2.	Romantics	4.2	5.8	20.0	39.2	30.8	100.0
3.	Informative	5.8	5.0	16.7	54.2	18.3	100.0
4.	Refreshment	3.3	3.3	18.3	40.8	34.2	100.0
5.	Logics	13.3	22.5	16.7	33.3	14.2	100.0
6.	Enjoyable	9.2	17.5	19.2	40.0	14.2	100.0
7.	Pride	1.7	10.8	25.8	37.5	24.2	100.0
8.	Great Taste	0.8	0.0	7.5	31.7	60.0	100.0

Cronbach's alpha = 0.682, Var = 0.117, SD= 0.342

Scale: 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly agree

**Table 2: Tendency to Spend**

No	Items	%					Total
		1	2	3	4	5	
1.	When I have money, I cannot help but spend part or the whole of it	4.2	22.5	22.5	38.3	12.5	100.0
2.	I am often impulsive in my behavior	4.2	15.8	31.7	35.0	13.3	100.0
3.	As soon as I enter the shopping centre, I have an irresistible urge to go into a shop and buy something	7.5	29.2	21.7	29.2	12.5	100.0
4.	I am one of those people who often respond to direct mail offers	33.3	32.5	13.3	15.0	5.8	100.0
5.	I have often bought a product that I did not need, even though I have very little money to left	20.0	38.3	18.3	14.2	9.2	100.0
6.	I am spendthrift	9.2	28.3	28.3	20.0	14.2	100.0

Cronbach's alpha = 0.795, Var = 0.033, SD= 0.182

Scale: 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly agree

**Table 3: Perceived Social Status**

No	Items	%					Total
		1	2	3	4	5	
1.	I feel that to be part of high class society, excessive buying is important	5.0	23.3	24.2	33.3	14.2	100.0
2.	Buying expensive and apparel things is symbolic of higher living standard	4.2	11.7	20.0	48.3	15.8	100.0
3.	I find myself holding a special place in the social gathering as I possess unique and expensive things and accessories	2.5	15.0	32.5	29.2	20.8	100.0

Cronbach’s alpha = 0.773, Var = 0.012, SD= 0.110

Scale: 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly agree

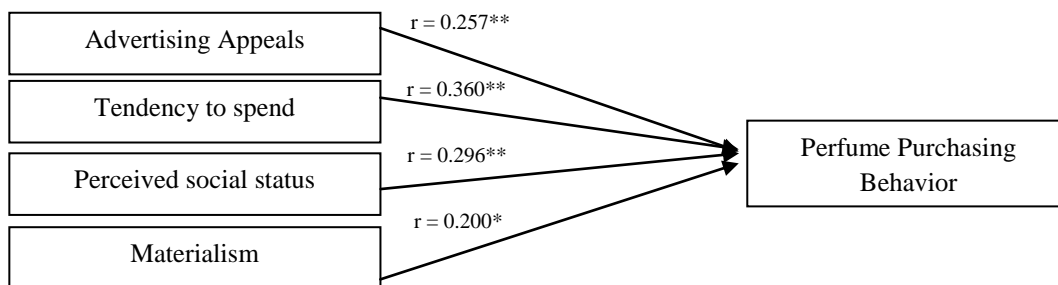
**Table 4: Materialism**

No	Items	%					Total
		1	2	3	4	5	
1.	It is important to me to have nice things	2.5	5.8	18.3	40.0	33.3	100.0
2.	I would like to be rich enough to buy anything I want	0.8	3.3	15.8	35.0	45.0	100.0
3.	I’d happier if I could afford to but more things	0.0	3.3	15.8	35.0	45.8	100.0

Cronbach’s alpha = 0.658, Var = 0.021, SD= 0.145

Scale: 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly agree

**Table 5: The relationship between the advertising appeals, tendency to spend, perceived social status and materialism on perfume purchasing behavior**



Note: \*  $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .01$