Socioeconomic-status and Physical Attractiveness of Customers in LuxuryRetailEncounters: Moderating Role of Customers Age

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Abstract
This paper examines the impact of activation of socioeconomic status and physical attractiveness on the interpersonal orientation, service quality and preferential treatment of a salesperson in the context of luxury fashion retailing stores of Pakistan. This research also investigates the moderation effect of age on these relationships. Quantitative research based on 251 Pakistani customers from three major cities of Pakistan were employed. Study have utilized process macro techniques for moderation analysis using SPSS. The results indicate that regardless of age difference, customers think that they are being judged by salesperson based on their status and physical attractiveness. This research also highlights the service quality provide by salesperson that changes on their perceived image of customers. This research adds valuable contributions by identifying how customer age can affect the stereotyping of salespersons in retail settings.

Keywords: *service quality, preferential treatment, socioeconomic-status, luxury fashion retailing.*

1.   Introduction

Retail is consistently an important sector for revenue generation. Now a days retail sector is redefining the consumer purchase involvement by improving seller and buyer relationship and thus contributing towards economic growth (Manikyam, 2014). In recent fast-paced market development, retailers are not only looking for profits maximization but also identifying customers' preferences and choices which could improve shopping experience from satisfactory to delightful (Gillani, 2012).

In retail settings customers directly or indirectly interact with salespeople through different media channels (Avi & Kumar, 2019). Salespersons often perceived customers by their intuitive and deliberativejudgments and make a prospecting model in their minds to know how to engage them in certain purchase conduct (Verbeke & Bagozzi, 2002). This judgment based on Based on this physiologicalsegmentation they designed a superficial criterion, which in turn changes interpersonal orientation, and creates the difference in service quality and preferential treatment to a customer(Cervellon, Poujol & Tanner, 2019). Researchers often associate this attribute to stereotyping, in which people assign certain

characteristics to a specific group of people and based on that judgment perceive their buying behavior(Cowart & Brady, 2014). It is "widely shared assumptions about a certain type of people"(Babin, Boles & Darden, 1995). These assumptions can often take in certain human characteristics (González*et al.,* 2017b). It includes age, gender, education, social class ethnicity which serves as the cognitive economizer (Lee & Pausé, 2016). Extent research on stereotypingdiscovered customer judgment criteria based on physical attractiveness or socioeconomic status (Babin *et al.*, 1995). Likewise, some other studies have also discovered the positive relationship among preferential treatment and service quality in terms of stereotyping based on demographics age, gender, income, etc.(Li, Xie, Gao & Guan, 2019). Similarly, research is evident on physical attractiveness stereotyping, interpersonal orientation(Elmer & Houran, 2020; Li, Xie, *et al*., 2019; Rodgers, Campagna, & Attawala, 2019), service quality(Dossinger, Wanberg Choi, & Leslie, 2019; Li, Zhang & Laroche, 2019; Wu, So, Xiong & King, 2019) and preferential treatment(Cervellon *et al.*, 2019; Dossinger *et al*., 2019).

Most of the research is conducted generally in Western and European contexts, and variables such as socioeconomic status and physical attractiveness stereotype with the salesperson's orientation, service quality and preferential treatment given by salesperson were identified(Cervellon *et al*., 2019). Existing research emphasizing the importance of salesperson stereotyping and consumer buying behavior (Cervellon *et al.*, 2019). Role of salesman stereotyping in the retail setting is often limited (Abubakar, Anasori, & Lasisi, 2019). Most of these studies are western and lack attention towards as to how salesperson create an image of customers, perceive their certain qualities and then either make a successful or un-successful sale(Cervellon*et al*., 2019). Available literature on customer stereotyping reveals that the research on this area in Pakistan is almost non-existent.

Accordingly, our study will provide valuable contributions in literature by discussing the role of shopper economic and physical status and its impact on salesperson interpersonal orientation, overall service quality and preferential treatment within Pakistani retail settings. This study aims to develop findings that would be helpful for retailers and marketers to understand shoppers and sales people's perceived relationship which later help to increase the effectiveness of these interactions.

2. Theoretical framework

We adopted three elements from (Cervellon *et al*., 2019) in the definition of serotyping. This research uses Interpersonal Orientation Theory(Humphreys & Williams, 1996) to study the effect of triggering a socioeconomic status- wealth, and physical attractiveness stereotype on the delivery of services of a luxury fashion retailing salesperson. According to the Humphreys and Williams (1996), Interpersonal Orientation Theory lies within the theme of contemporary marketing, in which customer's orientation is not only towards what buyers receive i.e. product attributes, but also on how buyers and sellers interact i.e. interpersonal attributes. This theory also recognizes the greater role played by a salesperson in creating overall customer satisfaction(Humphreys & Williams, 1996).

2.1 The Effects of Socioeconomic Status and Physical Attractiveness of Shopper on Salesperson's Interpersonal Orientation

Interpersonal orientation generally refers to "individual differences in preference for social interaction. The influence of IO, however, likely depends on the nature of person liking and disliking within the interpersonal context". In retail, service domain of marketing, establish that interpersonal relationship among buyer and seller set foundations forfitting behaviors(Thibaut, 2017). Interpersonal attributes are found to be a substantial factor in the satisfaction of customers, which they have a specific effect on salesperson's skill to optimize that value and satisfaction for customers(Jones, Busch, & Dacin, 2003). Researchers have

emphasized the significance of interpersonal skills on the performance of sales (Alge*et al.,* 2002; Basir, Ahmad, & Philip, 2010). Like interpersonal orientation, the salesperson is expected to understand the needs of customers in order to deliver effective sales services and then modify their approach as interaction increases (Agnihotri, Vieira, Senra, & Gabler, 2016). "Interpersonal components play a significant role in determining the observable variability in interpersonal attraction at zero acquaintance"(Back, Schmukle, & Egloff, 2011). Cervellon *et al*. (2019) found that interpersonal orientation can affect service quality. The soft quality and individualization of attention towards a customer can both solve the problem of customers and can lead to useful service. The research quotes the categorization of events that can build up the perception of the customer in the salesperson's mind.

The stereotypes that originate from classism are usually the beliefs that are assigned to the individuals depending upon their socioeconomic status (Fiske, 2000). Classism is based on stereotypes, predisposition, and discernment which relies on the socioeconomic status of a person. The culture of the economic system is important on both local and interpersonal level. If the culture based on materialistic objects or the education system or the basis of visible status then the classicism behavior demonstrates in an accordance with the value system of that individual (Aosved& Long, 2006).Nelissen and Meijers (2011) in their research showed that a person who shows luxury labels is considered wealthier thus is given special treatment from people.

> *H_{1a}: The socioeconomic status of a luxury shopper will affect salesperson's interpersonal orientation*

> *H_{2a}: The physical attractiveness of a luxury shopper will affect salesperson's interpersonal orientation*

2.2 The Effects of Socioeconomic Status and Physical Attractivenessof Shopper on Salesperson's Service Quality

Perceived service quality is defined as consumer's judgment, impression about collective superiority(Cronin Jr & Taylor, 1992). The basis started from the gap model for service quality which suggested that the gap between actual and expected performance derives the perceived service quality. Grönroos (1984) divided service into two categories, technical (actual product received by the customer) and functional category (the process through which customer gets the final delivery) of services. Brady and Cronin (2001) suggested that the service quality depends upon three aspects which include interpersonal quality, outcome quality and environmental quality, which now can be easily seen in the SERVQUAL scale as these dimensions are well postulated as the descriptors of overarching dimensions.

Service excellence has long been taken as customer satisfaction, but this study has been neglected in terms of the luxury store retailing. These days' luxury retailers are trying to differentiate themselves and reinventing in terms of the communication among salespeople and customer on the point of sales. To maintain a specific image of the brand and store only a structured service approach can be used (Ehbauer&Gresel, 2013).

As per Atsmon, Dixit, and Wu (2011) a McKinsey review states that the luxury market is not providing exceptional services in stores as every two out of three customers are facing the indifference behavior of salespeople. As the standards for the customers and luxury stores are raising the expenses for hiring training and maintaining a luxury view of the store are also increasing.

Mussweiler and Bodenhausen (2002) discussed physical attractiveness as the mark for judgment and evaluation and humans as individuals have it in their nature to compare themselves with whom they live with, it could be colleagues, friends or the people during service encounters. The selective accessibility process model (SAPM) also clarifies that humans unconsciously compare objects from targets to evaluate and generate conclusions

(Mussweiler, 2003). In the services sector this social comparison can also occur in which when customers dealt with physically attractive staff, they generate a simple comparison with them based on physical appearance, and according to the author when two physically attractive people encounter each other, they can communicate in a better way.

This process can be reversed as the customer not always check the similarity index but can also check the dissimilarity index which can then make customers think that salespersons are far apart from them in social distance judging them only on basis of their physical appearance, which can then make customer reluctant to share information and emotions with a salesperson which can lead towards an unsuccessful sale(Mussweiler, 2003).

Li, Zhang, *et al*. (2019) investigated both the impact of the physical attractiveness of salesperson on customers and the impact of customer's physical attractiveness on the salesperson. The physically attractive person can make interaction easier which creates a path for interpersonal interaction and makes the person more persuasive(Ahearne, Gruen, & Jarvis, 1999).Langlois *et al*. (2000) in his research on infants proved that it is an evolutionary development in human beings that they like beautiful things. Not only in psychology or the subjects of sociology this research has weightage in marketing as well as marketer use attractiveness standards to create patronage and purchase intentions(Li, Zhang, *et al*., 2019).

The salesperson develops an impression of the customer on the first encounter, which can alter during the interaction with the customer. The first impression can alter the way of initial interaction among buyers and sellers (Bergeron, Fallu, & Roy, 2008). Mistaken categorization by salesperson sometimes resulted in poor service (Ainscough & Motley, 2000; Bone, Christensen, & Williams, 2014; Cervellon *et al*., 2019). It can be assumed that

H_{1b}: The socioeconomic status of a luxury shopper will affect the salesperson's service quality.

H_{2b}: The physical attractiveness of a luxury shopper will affect the salesperson's service quality.

2.3 The Effects of Socioeconomic Status and Physical Attractivenessof Shopper on Salesperson's Preferential Treatment

Preferential treatment recognizes as the added services given to selective customers based on elevated status or due to some other factors perceived by the salesperson (Lacey, Suh, & Morgan, 2007; Yagil & Medler, 2019). In the services industry, customers with higher status often receive preferential treatment and with the higher status, they often enjoy additional services given by salesperson andits tangible counterparts(Dreze & Nunes, 2008; Eggert, Steinhoff, & Garnefeld, 2015; Lacey *et al*., 2007; Pez, Butori, & de Kerviler, 2015).

Indeed, stereotypingincludes factors such as status(Cervellon & Coudriet, 2013), age(Wilson *et al*., 2017), gender(González *et al*., 2017a), obesity(Lee & Pausé, 2016), race(Brewster, Lynn, & Cocroft, 2014), and sexual orientation(Andersen, Moberg, Bengtsson, & Garmy, 2017; Yagil & Medler, 2019)and thus result in preferential treatment.

BliegeBird *et al*. (2005) conversed criteria for consumer singling theory (CST): it should be visible enough to be understood, that signal must be an un-observable yet desired quality such as high wealth, blessed gene and health and foremost this signal should be able to gain some sort of benefit in the end. Sales staff tend to create an impression of a customer by just looking at the attire, watch and wallet. This impression leads salesperson towards giving customers different attention, which then leads towards the difference in service quality(Johnson, Schofield, & Yurchisin, 2002). Previous researches indicate that males are more conscious about wearing luxury items while they purchase from luxury stores to create a status signal(Nelissen & Meijers, 2011). Indeed research showed that non-verbal cues passed by customers, like emotional expressivity and domination can also help in building a positive

image in front of the salesperson (DePaulo, 1992). All these cues can alter the behavior of a salesperson once the customer enters in-store, thus the study proposed:

> ***H₁c***: *The socioeconomic status of a luxury shopper will affect the preferential treatment given by the salesperson.*

> ***H₂c***: *The physical attractiveness of a luxury shopper will affect the preferential treatment given by the salesperson.*

2.4 ModeratingRole of Age of Customers

Salesmen stereotyping has a subnational effect on the purchasing conduct of luxury customers. Furthermore, the association between salesperson stereotyping and luxury customers buying behavior has long been discussed. It also includes some other factors such as the effects of race, gender, and manner of dress on retail service (Ainscough & Motley, 2000).Age is a key factor that can affect interest, tastes, ability and preferences (Quester *et al*., 2007).

Ageism as "institutionalized and individual prejudice against the elderly, stereotyping, myth-making, distaste, and/or avoidance"(Butler, 1978). Ageism is also sought in similar to the other status and physical status stereotypes in terms of looking down at the different people in a society. Age stereotype general refers to the general beliefs regarding older and younger age(Levy, 2009). In any situation, there are two types of age stereotypes, either implicit or explicit(Hess, *et al*., 2003).

Ganesan-Lim, Russell-Bennett, and Dagger (2008) mentioned the concern for the difference of service quality for a different segment of the population because each segment has a different value characteristic. Scholars describe that every segment is considered important (Ganesan *et al*., 2008).

Regarding this research, it is proposed that in the luxury fashion retailing store, the age of the customer might interact with the socioeconomic status, which creates an impact on the overall interpersonal orientation of the customer. For this following hypothesis is proposed:

> ***H₃ₐ₋c***:A*ge* moderates the relationship between s*ocioeconomic status and salesperson's interpersonal orientation, service quality, and preferential treatment.*

The social expectations related to beauty standards are relatively high, people with physical attractiveness are preferred in the services industry. Previous literature shows how researchers have worked on "beauty is good" stereotypes which makes a belief that people with physical attractiveness are more susceptible to obtaining social advantages(Hall, Ahearne, & Sujan, 2015; Shahzad& Khattak, 2015). There are more than thousands of studies that support the concept of beauty is a good stereotype and it remained a controversial topic of research(Langlois *et al*., 2000).

About this research, it is proposed that in the luxury fashion retailing store, the age of the customer might interact with physical attractiveness, which creates an impact on the overall interpersonal orientation of the customer.

For this following hypothesis is proposed:

> ***H₄ₐ₋c***:   A*ge* moderates the relationship between *physical attractiveness and salesperson's interpersonal orientation, service quality, and preferential treatment.*

2.5 Theoretical Framework

Consequently, Figure 1 provides a Theoretical model of the variables and relationships under study. The proposed theory indicates customer interpersonal orientations, servicequality andpreferential treatment as the dependent variable and socio-economic status and physical attractiveness as the independent variable. Moreover, age is proposed as a moderating force in the relationship between all predictors and criterion variables.
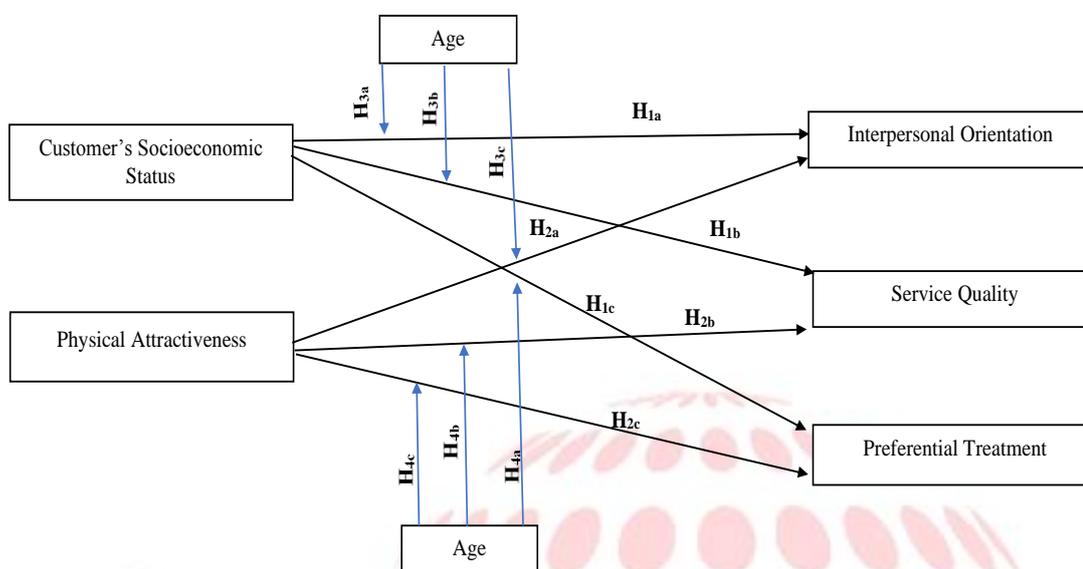
Figure 1 Research Model

3. Method

This study utilizes a quantitative approach to determine how salesperson perceived criteria i.e. status and physical attractiveness about the shopper and its effect on overall interpersonal orientation, service quality and preferential treatment. The target population of this study is luxury fashion retailing brands, customers.

3.1 Sample

This study utilized a non-probability convenience sampling technique. "Non-probability sampling is a sampling procedure that will not bid a basis for any opinion of probability that elements in the universe will have a chance to be included in the study sample"(IllkerEtikan&Bala, 2017).Convenience sampling is "Non-probability or non-random sampling where members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate are included for the study"(Dörnyei, 2007; Ilker, Musa, &Alkassim, 2016). It is also referred to as "The researching subjects of the population that are easily accessible to the researcher"(Ilker*et al*., 2016; Given, 2008).

Three major cities were selected from Pakistan. The data is collected from the major outlets of top luxury fashion retailing brands which are mainly located in the famous malls of three cities, Dolmen Mall Clifton, Dolmen Mall Hyderi from Karachi (140 questionnaires were distributed), Mall of Lahore, Emporium Mall from Lahore (120 questionnaires distributed) and Centaurus Mall and Giga Mall Islamabad (110 questionnaires distributed). Luxury shopping retailing stores were selected based on the reappearance of name on several lists of top 20 luxury fashion retailing stores of Pakistan. It mainly includes Sana Safinaz, Bonanza Satrangi, Alkaram Textiles, Sapphire, Nishat Linen, GulAhmed, AsimJofa.The data about the luxury fashion retailing stores were collected from different sources including a review from "Pakistan Economist" and "Global Village Space". The sample size was calculated using GPower 3.1 software from the target population started in October 2019 till December 2019. A total of 370 questionnaires were distributed and 369 filled questionnaires

were collected. (Nayak & Hazra, 2011). GPower is a tool to calculate power analysis for different tests and it can also be used to calculate effect sizes to be displayed graphically (Faul*et al.,* 2009; Faul *et al.,* 2007). GPower 3.1 software is used to calculate the sample size of 251 for study.
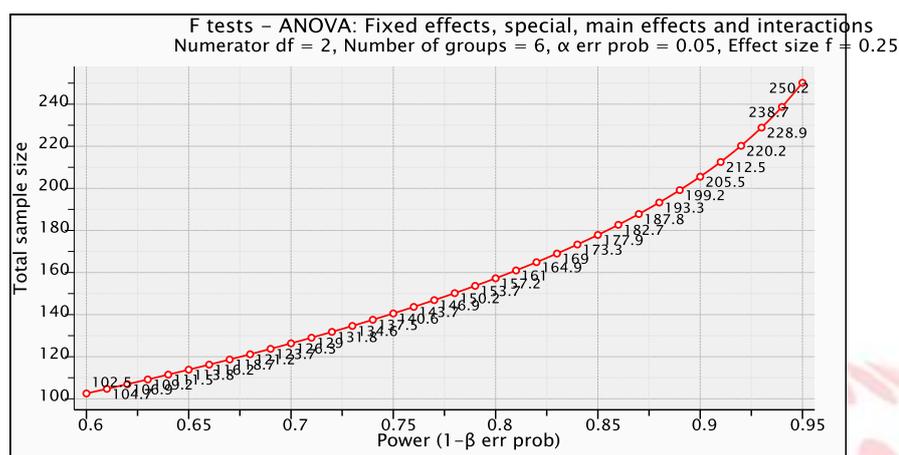

Figure 2 Sample Size from GPower

3.2 Instrument and Data Collection

Data of this study was collected through a structured and personally administered questionnaire(M. F. Shahzad, Bilal, Xiao, & Yousaf, 2019). Customers were intercepted in shopping malls i.e. in luxury fashion brand retailing stores and questionnaire was administered to those who extend their willingness to participate in the survey. The questionnaire consists of two sections. Section one specifies demographic details such as age, gender, education, income, and occupation. In the next section, respondents rate the agreement and disagreement with salesperson stereotyping behavior in retail settings. Scales were adopted from extant literature to ensure the content validity of scales.

The next section consists of seven points Likert scale whereby 1 (not likely at all) to 7 (extremely likely)(Shahzad, Tian, & Xiao, 2019). To assess the interpersonal orientation a five-item scale fromHumphreys and Williams (1996)was used to determine, salesperson time to respond, willingness to satisfy customers, creativity in meeting clients' identify their underlying needs and ability to do the job right at the first time(Cervellon *et al*., 2019).

Next, a six items scale was used to understand service quality on a SERVQUAL survey, including an interpersonal orientation dimension(Cervellon *et al*., 2019). The service quality scale items were picked from the SEQUAL of stores employee(Baker, Grewal, & Parasuraman, 1994). The subsequent section of the questionnaire consists of a four-item scale measuring the preferential treatment's given by service providers(Patterson & Smith, 2003).

The following section incorporates a three items scale measuring the socioeconomic status of consumers. The scale was originally developed by Kuppuswamy's SES (Saleem, 2003). This scale's formula is kept the same but the level of income and correspondence with status changes every year, thus the latest principle for the year 2019 is chosen, to gather the

possible best results. The last section of the questionnaire assessing the physical attractiveness of consumers on three items scale adopted from (Argo & Main, 2008).

3.3 Sample Details

The results in table-I representing,thegender distribution of respondents who were participated in the current survey, of 360 respondents 220 (61.1 %) were male and 140 (38.9%) were female. Frequency distribution of the sample in terms of age, education, income level,and occupation are shown in table-I.

Table I: Demographic Characteristics

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
GENDER		
Male	220	61.1
Female	140	38.9
AGE		
18-22	42	11.7
23-27	195	54.2
28-32	60	16.7
33-37	30	8.3
38-42	24	6.7
43-47	5	1.4
48-52	4	1.1
EDUCATION		
Illiterate	11	3.1
Primary School	5	1.4
High School	2	0.6
Intermediate/Diploma	37	10.3
Graduate	305	84.7
INCOME		
Greater than Rs.78,063	151	41.9
Rs.39,033–Rs.78,062	10	36.1
Rs.29,200 – Rs.39,032	45	12.5
Rs.19,516– Rs.29,199	18	5
Rs.11,708– Rs.19,515	16	4.4
OCCUPTION		
Legislators Senior Officials & Managers	3	0.8
Professionals	28	7.8
Skilled Workers and Shop & Market Sales Workers	222	61.7
Skilled Agricultural &	3	0.8

Fishery Workers		
Craft & Related Trade Workers	44	12.2
Plant & Machine Operators and Assemblers	2	0.6
Elementary Occupation	34	9.4
Unemployed	24	6.7
CITY		
Islamabad	110	30.5
Lahore	120	33.3
Karachi	130	36.2

Sample size: 360 respondents, RS. Pakistani Rupee (Currency)

4. Results

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 25th edition was used. For descriptive statistics arithmetic mean, standard deviation and frequency distribution indices were used (Bradley, 2007). Moreover, Univariate Linear Regression techniques were then used to test the effect of predictors on criterion variables. For reliability purposes, Cronbach's α reliability tests were considered. Results have shown the following values, interpersonal orientation α value is 0.779, service quality 0.799, preferential treatment 0.768 and physical attractiveness 0.850indicating an appropriate inter-item consistencyamong all variables (Bagozzi, Yi, & Phillips, 1991). In table II constructs correlations fulfilling the required reliability and validity criteria. Hence, constructs and model items are adequate to test the structural model and developed propositions.

Table II: Correlation Results

Factor	1	2	3	4	5
Socioeconomic status	1				
Physical Attractiveness	.310**	1			
Interpersonal Orientation	.475**	239**	1		
Service Quality	.414**	251**	.412**	1	
Preferential Treatment	.339**	.374**	.578**	. 257**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

3.4 Hypothesis Testing

To test the said relationship t-value was consider and according to Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black (1998) t-value should be greater than 1.96.

Results disclose a positive, significant link between socioeconomic status and interpersonal orientation (β= 0.543, t = 3.686, p < 0.001), there is positive link was found between physical attractiveness and interpersonal orientation (β= 0.391, t = 2.584, p < 0.001). Similarly, socioeconomic status revealed a positive relationship on service quality (β = 0.369, t = 4.911, p < 0.001), and positive relationship between physical attractiveness on service quality (β = 0.251, t = 5.721, p < 0.001) thereby supporting H1a, H1b, H2a and

H2b. Lastly, socioeconomic found a significant positive effect on preferential treatment (β = 0.140, t = 4.718, p < 0.001), whereas study has also found a positive effect of physical attractiveness on preferential treatment (β = 0.175, t = 3.396, p < 0.001), thereforeaccepting H3a and H3b. The results are presented in table III.

Table III: Regression Estimates

PATH			
From	**To**	**Hypotheses**	**Standardized Estimate (CR)**
Socioeconomic Status	Interpersonal Orientation	H_{1a}	0.543(3.686)
Physical Attractiveness	Interpersonal Orientation	H_{1b}	0.391(2.584)
Socioeconomic Status	Service Quality	H_{2a}	0.369(4.911)
Physical Attractiveness	Service Quality	H_{2b}	0.251(5.721)
Socioeconomic Status	Preferential Treatment	H_{3a}	0.140(4.718)
Physical Attractiveness	Preferential Treatment	H_{3b}	0.175(3.396)

CR = 1.96 (α = 0.05 level)

3.4 Testing Moderation

To check the moderation-interaction effect of age with the independent variable and dependent variables PROCESS version 3.4 by Andrew F. Hayes was used. Results showed in table IVthat there is a significant interaction effect (p=.0001) of status and age with interpersonal orientation and inferred to accept H3a. The tests were run for service quality (p=.0082) and preferential treatment (p=.0258) which also have significant interaction effect with socioeconomic status and age, thus rejects the H3b and H3c.

Further results showed that there is a significant interaction effect (p=.0000) of physical attractiveness and age with interpersonal orientation and inferred to accept H4a. The same tests were run for service quality (p=.0394) which is significant and preferential treatment (p=.0010) which has also significant interaction effect with physical attractiveness and age, thus accepts the H4b and H4c. The graphical figures for moderation are attached in Appendix A.

Table IVModeration Estimates

Variable		R^2	Beta	t-value	p-value
Interpersonal Orientation	**Socioeconomic status*Age**	0.246	0.628	7.5128	0.0001
	Physical Attractiveness*Age	0.690	0.149	8.0748	0.000
Service Quality	**Socioeconomic status*Age**	0.667	0313	7.8775	0.0082
	Physical Attractiveness*Age	0.872	0.666	2.0681	0.0394
Preferential Treatment	**Socioeconomic status*Age**	0.141	0.209	4.5422	0.0258

Physical Attractiveness*Age	0.417	0.173	3.93381	0.0010

Interaction effect on Salesperson's Interpersonal Orientation, Service Quality, and Preferential Treatment

5. Discussion

This research concludes that the fashion retailing sector of Pakistan is an emerging sector that showed lots of potential during the past few years, and the client base for luxury fashion retailing brands is increasing with time. The concept of brands is relatively new to the commonality, but customers have adopted the situation and they are now leaned towards shopping from brands. As the awareness level, the increasing customer is getting to know about the sales quality and the treatment to be expected from brands. The expectation from normal brands for services is quite high, so the services from luxury fashion brands are expected to be higher than the normal treatment and services that are usually provided on local stores level.

The study highlights the point that rather than training and scrutinizing the salesperson of luxury stores, the customers are more and more aware of the situation and they still feel stereotyped during their visits to such stores. The relationship of socioeconomic status and physical attractiveness with interpersonal orientation, service quality, and preferential treatment is significant and positive which indicates customer's positive perception indicators held by the salesperson. Furthermore, the interaction effect of age upon the socioeconomic status and physical attractiveness with interpersonal orientation, service quality, and preferential treatment was found positive.

In Pakistan, regardless of relatively less awareness on brands and service quality standards, customers expect a higher level of service quality from salespeople especially when they visit luxury fashion retail stores. Regardless of the fact, stereotyping may breed undesirable feelings in the mind of the customer when they realize this fact which later can affect their bonding. Effective salesperson person training can lead to the situation.

Cervellon *et al*. (2019)also indicated that stimulation of stereotypes of customers changes the thinking and perception of a salesperson to treat them or provide them quality services. The findings reveal that the interaction between salesperson and customers in the first few minutes of encounter can result in the type of services and interpersonal orientation with preferential treatment provide by the salesperson. Our study is also in line withCrosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990) who stated that the opportunity to make a sale successful can be missed by underestimating the status of a customer and the chance of sales can be improved by overestimating it.

This study also indicates that the salespersons are more attentive towards the one who gives prompt signals of status and are more physically attractive then receive better services quality and preferential treatment. These observations are in line with (Paulins, 2005) , Nelissen and Meijers (2011) who found that the customer's dress style and physical attractiveness impact the behavior of service quality and preferential treatment. This study inferred that trend of agreement with the increase in status and physical attractiveness signals increases the interpersonal orientation, service quality and preferential treatment by the salesperson.

This study offers several theoretical as well as managerial implications. As suggested by Cervellon *et al*. (2019) that status biases are not the result of any training of the organization they are only brought up with the activation of the perceived status stereotype. A salesperson organizes that without knowing that he/she would be judging a customer based on status or their physical attractiveness. According to Andrzejewski and Mooney (2016) the salesperson

with higher possibilities of stereotyping faces cognitive dissonance when they are asked to behave opposite of their behaviors which may result in undesired service quality.

The successful business trains its employees to avoid the "Rolex effect", in which salesperson judges the customers based on the acquisition and appearance and. There should be specific pieces of training programs for the salesperson's self-awareness and stereotyping avoidance. The luxury retailing sector is expected to provide extraordinary customer services where the frontline salesperson is the one who plays a key role in turning a prospect into a loyal customer. Salesperson training programs can increase the effectiveness of salesperson imaginary interaction with customers.

6. Implications, limitations and Future Direction

Important implication of the study could be of hiring staff who is naturally lack biased characteristics. Many foreign brands train their employees to avoid the "Rolex effect", in which salesperson judges the customers on basis of the acquisition and appearance and then act accordingly. There should be specific trainings for the salespersons to form self-awareness, to know about what they are biased about and then avoid stereotyping.This research exhibits certain limitations, as it takes into only luxury fashion retailing industry, and can be tested in different retailing contexts using both quantitative-qualitative methods.Other demographics variables could provide interesting insights into the future. The study used a convenience sampling method which often limits the generalizability of the study, another type of sampling technique will provide thought-provoking findings.

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Appendix A
Figure A-1 Impact of Socioeconomic status on Interpersonal orientation under the influence of Age
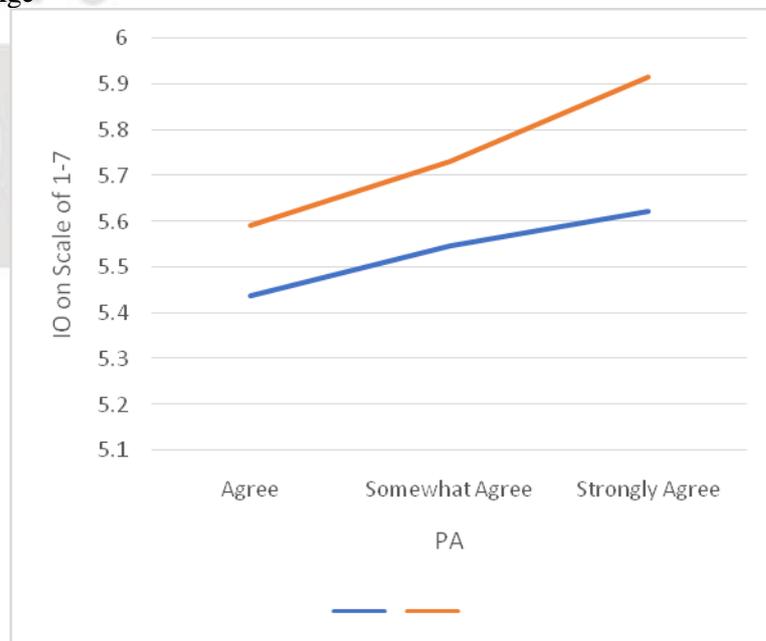

Figure A-2 Impact of Socioeconomic Status on Service Quality under the influence of Age

Figure A-3 Impact of Socioeconomic Status on Preferential Treatment under the influence of Age

Figure A-4 Impact of Physical Attractiveness on Interpersonal Orientation under the influence of Age

Figure A-5 Impact of Physical Attractiveness on Service Quality under the influence of Age

Figure A-6 Impact of Physical Attractiveness on Preferential Treatment under the influence of Age