

## **BODY IMAGE IN SOCIAL IDENTITY PROJECTION AMONG FEMALE SRI LANKAN MIGRANTS IN THE UK**

**U.N.A. Rajapakshe<sup>1,\*</sup> and N.H.K. Cooray<sup>2</sup>**

*<sup>1,2</sup>University of Strathclyde, School of Education, 16, Richmond Street, Glasgow, G1 1XQ, United Kingdom*

\*Corresponding author (email: [udumullage.rajapakshe.2022@uni.strath.ac.uk](mailto:udumullage.rajapakshe.2022@uni.strath.ac.uk))

### **INTRODUCTION**

This concept paper delves into the intricate realm of consumer identity, exploring how an individual's affiliations and group memberships shape their self-concept. These social categories, spanning gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and employment, profoundly influence one's consumer identity (Forehand et al., 2021). Understanding this dynamic is essential, as it uncovers an individual's role in society, their beliefs, values, behaviours, and intricate social relationships, all while being subject to the interplay of psychological processes and societal constraints (Weinberger & Crockett, 2018).

Furthermore, this paper delves into the multifaceted world of migrant populations, emphasizing the significance of comprehending the nuanced concept of consumer identity within this context (Leurs et al., 2013). Migrants, who embark on journeys for various reasons, often bear diverse consumer identities influenced by their unique backgrounds, experiences, and motivations (Rosa-Salas & Sobande, 2022). This exploration also sheds light on the complexities of identity presentation, especially in the digital age, where social media plays a pivotal role in projecting one's multifaceted identity, particularly among migrant females.

Within the intricate web of human identity, consumer identity is a significant facet, deeply moulded by an individual's group memberships and affiliations (Forehand et al., 2021). These encompass a rich tapestry of dimensions, including gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and employment (Ger, 2018). Together, these factors profoundly influence and shape one's consumer identity. Understanding consumer identity is paramount, for it unveils one's role within society, beliefs, values, behaviours, and the complex network of social relationships one weaves (Leurs et al., 2013). However, this understanding is far from isolated, as it is subject to the intricate interplay of both psychological processes and societal constraints.

In the experience of intersectionality in the social identity of migrants, their identity expressions become different and crucial to understand. Migrants' social identities are complex and multidimensional, influenced by characteristics such as nationality, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, and socioeconomic status (Leurs et al., 2013). It's crucial to highlight that migrant social identities are far from homogeneous and can vary substantially among people and groups. Therefore, it becomes vital to recognize the importance of an additional theoretical lens to uncover how social media serves as a platform for presenting intersectional identities among migrant females.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This concept paper is guided by the interplay of consumer identity and intersectionality, particularly among migrant populations. It emphasizes that these identities are not monolithic; they are multifaceted and moulded by various social categories, experiences, and motivations. Thus, the review was based on the Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) and Consumer Identity

are two dynamic fields of study that have garnered significant attention in the realm of consumer behaviour and marketing. CCT is a multidisciplinary approach focused on examining how culture and consumption practices are interconnected (Arnould, 2006). It delves into the cultural meanings and influences that drive consumer behaviour and the creation of marketplace meanings (Arnould & Thompson, 2007).

*Consumer Identity:* The paper delves into the complex world of consumer identity, exploring how an individual's affiliations and group memberships significantly shape their self-concept (Coskuner-Balli, 2013). It uncovers the role of societal categories and how they influence one's beliefs, values, behaviours, and relationships. The impact of psychological processes and societal constraints is also underlined (Hungara & Nobre, 2021). Consumer Identity, on the other hand, is a concept that revolves around an individual's self-concept, largely influenced by their group memberships and affiliations (Arnould, 2006). These social categories encompass aspects such as gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and employment, all of which significantly shape one's consumer identity. Understanding consumer identity is central to comprehending one's role in society, beliefs, values, behaviours, and social relationships, all of which are subject to both psychological processes and societal constraints (Forehand et al., 2021).

*Migrant Identities:* Migrant identities form a dynamic and multifaceted realm of study, revealing the intricate web of human experiences (Leurs et al., 2013). Migrants are a diverse and heterogeneous group with unique backgrounds, experiences, and motivations that drive their journeys. This diversity extends to their social identities, which encompass an array of dimensions, including nationality, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, and socioeconomic status. These factors interweave, shaping how migrants perceive and project their identities in their native contexts and in the societies, they migrate to (Üstüner & Holt, 2007).

The heart of this concept paper lies in the recognition that migrant identities are multifaceted and intersectional. Within this framework, there is a dual representation of identity: one anchored in their native ethnocultural context and another arising from their roles as migrants in new lands (Arnould & Thompson, 2007). This multifaceted identity extends beyond the traditional categories, forging a unique path for each individual and group (Leurs et al., 2013). This representation of intersectional identity is a critical contribution to the existing body of knowledge. It acknowledges the importance of understanding how migrants articulate and represent their identities in various forms (Kizgin et al., 2020). The complexities of migration experiences, encompassing both the native context and the adopted cultural environment, call for an exploration of how migrants navigate these intricacies, both individually and collectively (Leurs et al., 2013).

This concept paper not only highlights the significance of representing migrant intersectional identities but also underscores the existence of a notable theoretical gap (Arnould & Thompson, 2007). While there is a growing body of research on migration and identity, there remains a dearth of comprehensive understanding regarding how migrants represent their multifaceted identities.

The existing literature primarily focuses on specific aspects of migration, identity, or acculturation. It often overlooks the nuanced ways in which migrants negotiate and express their intersectional identities (Leurs et al., 2013). This paper aims to address this gap by emphasizing the need for in-depth research that uncovers the diverse and evolving forms through which migrants articulate their identities (Kizgin et al., 2020).

*Intersectionality and social media:* The paper explores how intersectionality, particularly among migrant females, shapes their identity expressions (Kizgin et al., 2020). It recognizes

the role of social media in providing a platform for these expressions, where multifaceted identities are projected and understood. Particularly, it became important in the setting of migrants as using social media as the platform for present their intersectional identities.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This concept paper illuminates the intricate web of consumer identity and intersectionality, especially within the context of migrant populations. It underscores the need to acknowledge the diversity of consumer identities and the dynamic nature of these identities, further complicated by migration. The paper also recognizes the digital age's role in identity presentation, particularly through social media, and its importance in understanding intersectional identities among migrant females. Ultimately, this paper provides a theoretical framework for future research exploring the complex relationships between consumer identity, intersectionality, and migration in a rapidly changing world. Thus, in the process of understating the how this intersectional identity of the migrant females was being presented in the social media it was proposed to employs digital methods and netnography as the most suitable approach to investigate social media's role in understanding consumer identity, especially among migrants. Social media platforms offer individuals, particularly those with intersectional social identities, a platform to express themselves in both their native and adopted communities. This choice is based on existing research that highlights social media's role in representing intersectionality.

**Keywords:** Body image, consumer identity, social media

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