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Fernanda Martins Concatto

Vanity Fair:
How professional life and vanity work together

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Fernanda Martins Concatto

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Área de Concentração: Fatores Humanos no Trabalho, Planejamento Ambiental e Comportamento Humano

Orientador: Alexandre Linhares

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Abstract

Achievements is a common aspiration for individuals, organizations, and societies. Have you ever wondered why is that? Extant literature shows how narcissism impact on performance. Here, however, we examined the influence of vanity on work environment. Accordingly, we conducted 3 studies, with different approaches (survey, field, and experiment). We find a positive relationship between educational level and vanity’s sub-dimension achievement view, and also a positive relation regarding age and self-esteem, for men and women (Study 1). In addition, the data collected from workers of a high performance team, yielded that respondents with higher tenure reported higher scores on achievement sub-dimensions of vanity (Study 2). Finally, results an experiment with 95 women, highlights a peer effect regarding vanity achievement dimensions and supports the positive relationship between age and self-esteem (Study 3). These approaches to the study of vanity and professional life will nurture new empirical work, and encourage interest in exploring a broader set of vanity studies.

KEYWORDS: Vanity, Self-Esteem, Performance measures, Career success, Gender.
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Author: Fernanda Martins Concatto

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September, 2016

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1 Escola Brasileira de Administração Pública e de Empresas da Fundação Getulio Vargas (EBAPE-FGV)
2 Escola Brasileira de Administração Pública e de Empresas da Fundação Getulio Vargas (EBAPE-FGV)
1 Introduction

“Do you know why I hired you? I always hire the same girl- stylish, slender, of course, worships the magazine. But so often, they turn out to be disappointing and stupid. So you, with that impressive résumé and the big speech about your so-called work ethic- I thought you would be different. I said to myself, go ahead. Take a chance. Hire the smart, fat girl. I had hope. My God. I live on it.”

Miranda Priestly - The Devil Wears Prada (2006)

This simple example highlights how a push-pull system influences the way in which individuals view themselves and the world around them. It can be said that today it seems acceptable for job-seekers to be turned away due to lack of education, health factors, poor personal hygiene or appearance. Interviewing for a position within a company brings about a challenge that forces people to be judged against other candidates. For instance, assuming all other factors are equal such as education, work experience, speaking and writing ability a person interviewing for a position may be turned away because of physical appearance (Atiyeh, Rubeiz, & Hayek, 2008). In the example describe above, a pull-push situation is created where the interviewer is using discrete categories upon which each candidates’ qualifications are judged. Optimally, the interviewer seeks the highest qualifications in each section, whereas each interviewee strives to present their best qualifications.

Moreover, another person’s success invites comparison of the self to the more (or less) successful other, which influences perceptions. According to Social Comparison Process Theory (Festinger, 1954), people unconsciously compare themselves with others who are similar to them, motivating behaviors and decisions aligned with the context, in which ultimately favors life in society. In a developing process, people make decisions grounded in observed behaviors of role models such as celebrities, teachers, and leaders throughout their life (Kahle & Homer, 1985; Smeesters & Mandel, 2006). Thus, like decisions in daily life can be framed base on peers; co-workers, managers, leader's characteristics can influence on each other's professional practices.

Some studies on human behavior suggests that narcissism play a strong role on CEO's decision making (Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007; Zhu & Chen, 2015). This personality trait can frame CEO learning experience with previous corporate strategies, ergo biasing the information process, in a
sense that, as more narcissistic the CEO, less inclined to follow past directors' strategies (Zhu & Chen, 2015).

Research focus on narcissism have a large background. Alongside, vanity is mostly studied as a sub-dimension of narcissism, not considering that vanity can be influenced by social and economic factors, prevalent in the context (Durvasula, Lysonski, & Watson, 2001), bypassing its motivational function based on individuals external and internal sources (Workman & Lee, 2011). As consequence, little has been said about vanity role on decision making, being this discussion nearly absent on career life. In this sense, the ultimate propose of this research is bring to discussion possible consequences of vanity on professional matters.

Additionally, we propose and test connections with self-esteem. Although prior research has suggested that self-esteem is a weak predictor of human behavior and job performance (Rosenberg, Schooler, Schoenbach, & Rosenberg, 1995; Whelpley & McDaniel, 2016), it has been proved that positive feelings surrounding the self is associated to better outcomes on important tasks (Campbell & Foster, 2006). For example, there is some evidence of a positive association between self-esteem and career success (Kammrath, Ames, & Scholer, 2007) and a negative association with counterproductive work behaviors (Whelpley & McDaniel, 2016).

Under these circumstances, we conducted three studies with distinct approaches, to examine whether there is a relationship between vanity and professional life, and to investigate the psychological mechanism underlying this link. In a nutshell, survey outcome from Study 1 provided insights about vanity process, depth in the following studies, with field data (Study 2) and with experiment (Study 3). In short, the first study yielded age and educational level associated with vanity and self-esteem, suggesting also gender differences. Second study showed a positive association between tenure and vanity achievement dimensions in high performance teams, and contrast means of the collected data with those of previous research. Finally, results from Study 3 highlight the peer effect on vanity achievement dimensions, and supported the positive relationship between age and self-esteem, for women.

Consequently, we used three different set-ups to understand career context and psychological processes influenced by vanity mechanism. First, we examined self-esteem and vanity considering contextual circumstances related to professional environment (gender, educational level, and age). These attributes were calculated using regression models for each of the five dependent variables,
namely, four dimensions of vanity (Physical View, Physical Concern, Achievement View, and Achievement Concern) and self-esteem unidimensional. Besides age, in the equation we included two dummies for educational level (low and high), in which the reference category corresponded to respondents that have finished high school but did not have a bachelor degree. Further, we tested for gender differences, by adding a dummy variable in the equation (1 for women, 0 otherwise). This procedure allowed us to use Wald test to examine the effect of education and age for women and men.

In the second study, we collected data from all members of a small work team which was evaluated as high performance by the company’s annual assessment. Ergo, respondents had the same job performance outcome, which enable us to observe the variations of vanity and self-esteem across professional experience. Moreover, we compared the averages of vanity from our sample with those reported in previous literature. Finally, we drew an experiment in which provided a more elaborated investigation regarding the effects of external sources of motivation on women’s professional standards. The analysis procedure was similar to the first study, however this time we control for gender (only women) and manipulated professional achievement salience. Furthermore, the regression equation accounted for marital status factor and considered age as control variable.

In conclusion, in contrast to theoretical expectations, our results have shown a positive relation between self-esteem and age. We also have found evidences of gender difference regarding vanity scores, in which women have reported lower levels of vanity physical concern over age, while for men this latent variable is negatively associated to educational level. Our findings also suggest that achievement vanity can play an important role on organizations’ procedures and career’ experience, highlighting questions on how reliable can be companies’ performance measure over employees. Overall, this paper makes three main contributions to literature. First, it shows preliminary evidence of how career experience is related to self-esteem and vanity. Secondly, it adds to evolutionary psychology field, by exploring gender differences and marital status. Lastly, it discusses how vanity can bias job evaluation.

The remainder of the paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 presents the theoretical framework on vanity and self-esteem, discussing about professional implications. Section 3 describes the methodological procedures used for the present research. Section 4 presents all three studies, in matters of data source, statistical analysis, and results. On Section 5 is developed a discussion about the results and remarks on future agendas of research.
2 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Background

Existing research has associated narcissism with labor matters, recognizing it as a personality characteristic of someone who's self-entitled toward others, have excessively self-admiration, have high sense of superiority, likes to feel in control of situations, and to be the center of attention (Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007; Egan & McCorkindale, 2007; McCrae & Costa, 2004; Zhu & Chen, 2015). Similarly, narcissism can be understood as a personality dysfunction. According to Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders - DSM-V (American Psychiatric Association, 2014), narcissistic personality function by admiration seeking, excessive attempts to attract, excessive reference to others for self-definition, and sense of self-centered, among other resembling traits.

Notwithstanding, there are other understandings of vanity. For example, LeBel (2003) describes vanity as over-emphasizing one's positive self-perceptions and under-emphasizing one's negative self-perceptions. By this comprehension she developed a vanity scale with five dimensions: excessive physical view; overestimation of intelligence; excuses for perceived failures; overestimation of efficacy; and overestimation of skills and abilities. Other authors describe vanity as concerns about personal appearance and look fashion, an effort to make friends with social status, work attitudes aimed to achieve social importance, tendency to have parents and friends with extravagant spenders’ behaviors, and/or parents and friends with prestigious jobs (Morris, McDaniel, Worst, & Timm, 1993; Worst, Duckworth, & McDaniel, 1991). In a nutshell, vanity can be taken as a motivator, in which it has sources either external or internal to the self (Workman & Lee, 2011). Thus, it can be influenced by prevalent social and economic environment (Durvasula & Lysonski, 2010; Durvasula et al., 2001).

Similarly, external factors can raise self-esteem levels (Whelpley & McDaniel, 2016). In professional sense, Kammeyer-Mueller, Judge, and Piccolo (2008) suggested that occupational prestige and income are positively affected by individual perceptions of self-worth. Furthermore, there is evidence that high self-estimation of intelligence may boost academic performance
Moreover, the lion share of research in the organizational field has not focused on examining the mechanism between self-esteem and career success.

In line with that, performance can be understood as a sum of individual's internal and external factors, such as motivation, technical knowledge, and environment (Edmonson, 1999). Going back to the job interview example, other aspect is evidenced: the quality of a choice made by the interviewer is as important as the option of choosing a candidate by appearance or by their résumé. In other words, the overall performance generated by behaviors is as important as the behavior itself. Shedding to career context, we may conclude that the daily acts, the decision to follow or not standard procedures, can mean a fair amount of individuals to prosper (e.g.: get hired, get good grades, or be promoted) or not in a certain path.

Studies have investigated decision making relationship to well-being, optimism, self-esteem, engagement, performance, and self-efficacy (e.g.: Consiglio, Borgogni, Di Tecco, & Schaufeli, 2016; Reijseger, Schaufeli, Peeters, & Taris, 2010), and also to some issues as attention deficit, depression, and brain lesion (to a review see Branco, Cotrena, Cardoso, & Fonseca, 2014). More than that, we aim to investigate how professional performance is motivated by vanity. For this purpose, we adopt (Netemeyer, Burton, & Lichtenstein, 1995) definition of vanity.

Thus, we explore vanity as a multidimensional concept, with four dimensions: physical concern; physical view positive (and maybe inflated); achievement concern; and achievement view positive (and maybe inflated). This approach allows to access vanity through a 21 items scale, originally elaborated under the results of 5 studies with general North American population sample, such as 267 individuals of "1991 Who's Who Directory", 27 players from a football team, and 43 professional female models (Netemeyer et al., 1995). Results indicated a consistent instrument, with psychological proprieties preserve between groups, and adequate model fit. Further, a burgeoning literature regarding vanity in consumer research field started to replicate the vanity scale on different cultures, in cross cultural studies, examining if the psychometric proprieties remain similar across different countries. In sum, research which have tested the scale across different cultures, exhibited favorable results regarding its psychometric characteristics (Durvasula et al., 2001; Durvasula & Lysonski, 2008, Wang & Waller, 2006; Watchravesringkan, 2008; Workman & Lee, 2011, 2013)
2.2 Works on vanity

A few researchers have recently investigated the interactive effects of vanity and self-esteem on human behavior, specifically on matters of the luxury markets. For example, setting on traditional Chinese culture, Ye, Liu, and Shi's (2015) study found that individuals under low social status and low self-esteem are more propitious to luxury brands than the one’s with high social status, and in the opposite to individuals with high self-esteem, however, in subjects with low vanity this link is vanished. Moreover, White's (2015) explored Americans purchase of luxury goods with a framework grounded on social comparison. The results indicated that products addressing identity and achievements aspects are more likely to be consumed, insofar, the contrast with primed social comparison target had a negative impact on individuals’ self-esteem, although it had no effect on intention to buy. Specifically, they show that product evaluation is constrained by the moderation effect of vanity-concern. In sum, it seems that individuals voluntarily make judgements and evaluations by motives of vanity and self-esteem, nonetheless, it is the salient social values that underlie the role played by these dimensions in the struggle to achieve prevailing standards.

In line with that, researchers have investigated the effect of a usual practice of the clothing industry, called “vanity size”, in which garments are tagged with number sizes that are smaller than the standard. Such external source aim to trigger on people an internal motivation focus on felling thinner (Aydinoğlu & Krishna, 2012). For example, a five studies’ research with American women, have suggested that labelling clothes with bigger numbers than it usual size can increase compensatory consumption, in a behavior that targets to enhance physical appearance and self-esteem (Hoegg, Scott, Morales, & Dahl, 2014).

Moreover, Egan and McCorkindale (2007) results of a collected data from 103 women attending to a large beauty salon on US, suggested that women working in service sector spend more on cosmetics such as Botox injection, tanning products, and hair coloring, while the one’s in a professional career choose to invest on massage and utilitarian hairstyle. Furthermore, research on Pakistani scholars has investigated vanity association with utilitarian and hedonic consumption (Ahmed, Farooq, & Iqbal, 2014). Their results had shown that vanity increase compulsive shopping
and hedonic values, however, between vanity and compulsive buying there is no mediation effects of shopping values (hedonic or utilitarian).

Similarly, Grilo, Shy, and Thisse (2001) computed the market outcome over the effect of network variable on the spatial model of product differentiation. In general, vanity can mitigate price competition, leading firms to higher profits when located following Hotelling model with quadratic transportation costs without externality. However, their function equilibrium regarding number of firms and product price are associated to conformity coefficient, in a sense that, lower conformity increases firms’ competition.

Conclusively, the impact of social factors on value perception is aligned with prevailing personal motives. Thus, if aspects of vanity and self-esteem can affect the evaluation of a product, it is fair to question: could it in some extent affect performance evaluation?

2.3 Gender Differences

In regards to gender differences, interesting findings have been published. For instance, prior research has shown evidence that women are more dissatisfied with their body image (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991) and report lower levels of self-esteem than men (Zeigler-Hill & Myers, 2011). The range of the effects of such panorama on decision-making is wide and diverse. For example, for women, an excessive concern about personal physical appearance is inversely related to self-esteem and have a direct effect on attachment to goods (Avelar & Veiga, 2013). This suggests that decision making processes are respondents to the influence of such internal and external factors.

In addition, research has documented gender differences regarding vanity dimensions. For instance, Workman and Lee (2011) outcomes from a study with 284 women and 116 men, characterized by fashion followers or not, indicated that women are more willing (than men) to show professional achievement by social symbols of fashion and appearance. They also found that between fashion followers, women report higher concerns about their achievements and physical appearance, despite the fact that they seem to have a more positive view of their career success. Add to that, evidences from Pakistani University shoppers showed that achievement vanity was more prominent among teachers, whereas students depict physical vanity aspects, and also, men seems to be overall
more vain than women (Ahmed et al., 2014). On the other hand, a cross-cultural study found no gender difference in reference of Achievement Concern and Physical Concern, whereas men and women scored high levels (Durvasula & Lysonski, 2008).

Gender differences are explained by evolutionary psychology linked to adaptive problems such as mating effort, in which women are most likely to prefer mates who have the ability to invest resources, while men are more inclined to desires females with fertility signs, such as youth and physical appearance (Buss, 2007). If that is true, marriage status would have an impact on vanity levels.

3 Methodology

Standard back-translation protocols were adopted on the 21-item Consumer Vanity scale (Netemeyer et al., 1995). The questionnaire was first subjected to a preliminary English to Portuguese translation, by three researchers, native speakers from Brazil, formally attested to be fluent in English. Secondly, these three versions were judged by a bilingual PhD student, for the purpose of examining each item adequacy, and then back-translated from Portuguese to English by a native speaker from United States. Further, the original version and the back-translated one were compared by a PhD student who is a US native speakers to analyze functional, conceptual, and calibration equivalence. Finally, no major discrepancies were revealed in the translations of the Portuguese versions of the questionnaire. Next, we collected data online by Qualtrics platform. The collected data have statistically been analyzed using the software package Stata, version 14.

First Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was computed for Vanity scale. In CFA, the forecasted factor structure based on a number of observed variables is translated into the complete covariance matrix over these variables. Moreover, this matrix is adapted to the single factor model, and subsequently compared with it. The difference among the two is expressed by a number of indices, statistics indexes. An assessment of how well the predicted factor structure is corroborated by the sample data, and whether it could be generalized to the population, is often based on the values of these indices. Here we tried to access these numbers and provide quantitative support for our composition.
Table 1 - Statistics Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\chi^2$ (df)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raw comparative model</td>
<td>Four factors model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent variable-model</td>
<td>Single factor model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete model</td>
<td>Four factors model</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: CFI = comparative fit index; SRMR = square root mean residual; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation. Values in bold represent tests of the convergent and discriminant validity hypotheses. **p < .001 (two-tailed).

We analyzed whether (a) the estimated four-factor structure explained covariation among the scale items, (b) each item loaded significantly on its estimated factor, (c) if the models fitted well into known parameters and, consequently, (d) confirmed if there were convergent and discriminant validity and enough reliability on the final structure. Exemplifying, we computed the $\rho_vc(\eta)$ index, or average variance extracted (AVE), which should be greater than .50 for each of those mentioned dimensions. To affirm the distinctiveness of the four dimensions of Vanity construct, we compared the four-factor baseline measurement model with a single-factor model (Model 1), which included all indicators in just one common factor predicting the exogenous latent variable. The model comparison was based on Likelihood-ratio test using the Bayesian information criterion (BIC). In Table 1 we display sequential chi-square (and their variation), comparative fit index (CFI), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). Next, we run first- and second-order CFAs (with and without correlation between factors, respectively). Furthermore, we tested for discriminant validity by checking if AVE for each dimension was greater than the square of the correlation between it and any other dimension of the construct (first order model – Model 2). Here, the average shared squared variance should be less than the AVE. Analysis from Model 3 (second order model) is display on Table 2.
To demonstrate item loaded on its estimated factor we performed two analyses, one with items of the endogenous latent variables (four-dimensions), and other model with only one exogenous latent variable (Vanity) (models building presented on Appendix B). All items presented an adequate value (higher than .4). Additionally, the single-factor model fit the data poorly, compared with the hypothesized second order model. In a supplementary analysis we compare both models with likelihood-ratio test, and no significant improvement were provided by the single factor model (Model 1): $\Lambda_{Model1}(63) = -16475.19$, $\Lambda_{Model3}(67) = -15462.50$. By Bayesian information criterion also the first model is better, $BIC_{Model1} = 33332.70$ and $BIC_{Model3} = 31331.58$. However, the alternative first order model yielded more adequate outcomes ($\Lambda_{Model2}(69) = -15420.65$, $BIC_{Model2} = 31260.03$).

Descriptive statistics have been used to summarize the main characteristics of the sample. In general, we adopted Multilinear Regression Model as the main statistical analysis strategy. Such approach underlies three basic assumptions: 1) normality, 2) homoscedasticity, and 3) error

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>AVE</th>
<th>Cor2 (PC)</th>
<th>Cor2 (PV)</th>
<th>Cor2 (AC)</th>
<th>Cor2 (AV)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PV</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>-</td>
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<th>Model 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vanity</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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</table>

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<th>Model 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PV</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>0.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>AV</td>
<td>0.59</td>
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</table>

### Table 2 - Convergent, discriminant validities and reliability
independence. Two procedures were used to overcome these constrains. Winsor at 0.1 was used to deal with sample outliers. Moreover, all criteria variables had a specific fraction of observations modified in each tail. Add to that, it was applied bootstrap, performing 200 randomly replications on the collected data. Bootstrapping estimates standard errors and confident intervals based on empirical simulated distribution, overcoming the normality assumption.

4 Research

4.1 Study 1

The goal of Study 1 was to assess the extent to which Vanity and Self-Esteem interact with stages of professional life. Theory of Social Comparison Process (Festinger, 1954) has shown that people examine their abilities in comparison to others. Thus the opinion formed by these comparisons provides a benchmark in which individuals evaluate themselves in areas that are important to them. As the difference between an individual's opinions and the benchmark decreases, changes the definition of what "best" is, towards a more uniform group emerge.

Theory of Social Comparison Process proposed by Festinger (1954) has a robust theoretical contribution regarding how individuals compare themselves with their peers on issues of appearance, education, finance, and social, in order to enhance their own status. However, it does not explore the difficulty of individuals to obtain the highest standard (reaching the benchmark) and also the effect on those who reached the highest standard. For example, a high standard can be seen in Olympic athletes, which train in excess of 5 hours a day under rigorous conditions to be judged “the best” in their field.

Although this might be an extreme example, nonetheless it is useful on explaining individuals who: take up a sport after a favorite match only to quit shortly afterwards because the effort is too great; obtain a new gym membership only to quite because “the effort is too strenuous”; or take up a new profession because the money is better, only to quit when they lack the will to learn a new trade. Lay people may find the high standards, set not only by athletes but also by models and by professional workers, hard to achieve. In essence, the high standards are not easily obtainable; it is gained under hard work. On the surface, people can feel gratified that others are highly successful, but this may lead to a naive impression of standards and a feeling of inadequacy, which might have a negative impact on self-esteem.
Methods

First we corrected data using Winsor at 0.1 standard to further estimate our model by the following equation:

\[ DV = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Age} + \beta_2 \text{Education}_1 + \beta_3 \text{Education}_2 \]  

in which \( \text{Education}_i \) is a dummy variable for educational level. More precisely, two dummies were built: the first one considered 1 for undergraduate students and zero otherwise, and the second dummy consisted in the group with more than 15 years of education. Further, Wald test was used to assess the significance from the difference between \( \beta_2 \) and \( \beta_3 \).

After this initial model, to account for gender the same equation was estimated, but considering a dummy for gender (1 for women, 0 otherwise). In practical terms, it is the same as estimating two separate regressions, one for each sex, but with the advantage of it allows us to use Wald tests to verify the effect of education and age for men and women, by computing the baseline differences in the intercept.

Participants

Six hundred and thirty-six participants agreed to the Term of "Free and Informed Consent" shown prior to the survey. However, two hundred and fifteen failed to complete the survey, leaving 421 respondents (68% woman), mean age 27.40 (SD = 8.48), most with incomplete higher education (45%). Participants answered an online survey with a Vanity Scale base on (Netemeyer et al., 1995) instrument, Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale, adapted to Brazil by (Vazquez, Hutz, Pacico, Nunes, & Petrolli, 2014), and sociodemographic questions. The former instrument has 21 items, and four dimensions (Physical-View; Physical-Concern; Achievement-View, Achievement-Concern). Each question was measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree with the occurrence suggested. Additionally, Self-Esteem measure included ten questions, in which five are reversed, scored in a four-point scale.

Results

Outcomes suggested educational level is associated with vanity achievement view (hereafter AV). More precisely, participants that did not attend university yielded a negative relation with AV...
(B = -3.27, SE = 1.34, z = -2.42), contrary to results of the group with highest educational level. Thus, it is possible to conclude that respondents with higher educational degree perceive themselves as achievers. Surprisingly, results have shown a positive correlation between age and self-esteem, suggesting that older people have higher sense of worthiness than younger ones.

Moreover, age correlated negatively with vanity physical concern (hereafter PC) and with vanity achievement concern (hereafter AC). In other words, over life, people focus less on causing a positive impact on others. Results are condensed in Table 3. These findings are contrary to previous research, in which suggest that levels of self-esteem and PC tends to decrease over time (McAuley et al., 2005).

Table 3 - Regression from Study 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>(1) SE</th>
<th>(2) PC</th>
<th>(3) PV</th>
<th>(4) AC</th>
<th>(5) AV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.07**</td>
<td>-0.12**</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.16***</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.01)</td>
<td>(-3.19)</td>
<td>(-0.72)</td>
<td>(-5.56)</td>
<td>(-0.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education1</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>-1.98</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.37)</td>
<td>(-1.24)</td>
<td>(0.25)</td>
<td>(0.49)</td>
<td>(0.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education2</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>-2.32</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>3.26*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.02)</td>
<td>(-1.43)</td>
<td>(0.18)</td>
<td>(1.39)</td>
<td>(2.49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>30.21***</td>
<td>26.57***</td>
<td>22.63***</td>
<td>27.50***</td>
<td>21.97***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(23.87)</td>
<td>(14.57)</td>
<td>(10.31)</td>
<td>(18.33)</td>
<td>(14.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wald Test (χ²)</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>8.95**</td>
<td>20.64***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: SE = Self-Esteem, PC = Vanity Physical Concern, PV = Vanity Physical View, AC = Vanity Achievement Concern, AV = Vanity Achievement View

z statistics in parentheses

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Next, we segmented the sample by gender (Table 4) and run regression analysis for all the dependent variables. Once again age have a positive correlation with self-esteem, for both genders, yet stronger on women. Campbell and Foster (2006) assert that high self-esteem facilitates mating success, especially for men. Additionally, for women, age have a negative effect on PC. However, for men, PC has shown a negatively relationship with educational level. Ergo, at high level of education, men are less concerned in making others notice their appearance. For all other latent variables results have shown to be consistent with previous analysis.
Finally, vanity can be considered a good predictor of mating effort (Egan & McCorkindale, 2007), ergo, evolutionary psychology may offer a possible explanation for sex difference findings. Because men have a tendency to desire short-term relationship, they value more youth and beauty, on the other hand, women are more prone to desire long-term relationship, valuing more good financial prospects and elevated social status (Buss, 2007). Therefore, age might be a spurious correlation, in place of marital status. We address this issue on Study 3.

4.2 Study 2

A possible limitation of the first study is that relies on the assumption that age and educational level are reliable predictors of professional stages. Study 2 addressed this issue by collecting field data from a high performance team. Thus, this study was planned to achieve a two-fold objective: (1) provide field evidence of vanity link to performance; and (2) test tenure as control variable. Furthermore, to our knowledge, the present research is the first demonstration that vanity dimensions can influence work performance, conducted on an organizational environment.

Add to that, the decision to control for tenure underlies in previous studies on organizational behavior, in which suggest different implications on performance according to tenure. Conjointly, findings indicate that levels of narcissism at early tenure of CEOs are significantly positively related to company outcomes (e.g.: strategic dynamism, extreme performance, and fluctuating performance) in the later years of the CEO's tenure (Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007).

Table 4 - Regression segmented by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SE</th>
<th></th>
<th>PC</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.01**</td>
<td>0.12**</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>-0.13**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4.40)*</td>
<td>(0.25)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education₁</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>-4.80*</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
<td>(3.33)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education₂</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>-6.07**</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.86)</td>
<td>(4.87)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>31.84***</td>
<td>29.05***</td>
<td>27.93***</td>
<td>24.59***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.31)</td>
<td>(0.93)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: remaining sub-scales were not reported as they kept the pattern from Table 1. 
χ² for Wald test in parentheses 
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001
Methods

In order to assess the trend, we calculate by tenure each participant vanity scores. In detriment of the small sample, extra caution was taken in order to maintain anonymity. In this sense no further sociodemographic questions were asked besides tenure. Performance was obtained with secondary source collected by outcomes from periodical meeting, in which managers from different work-teams evaluate and discuss how far all teams reach or not the goals pre-establish by company. Combined with that, participants answered vanity scale identical to Study 1.

Participants

We collected data from all members of a high-performance team on technology sector, belonging from a big size media company in Brazil. The entire sample consisted of five members, in which one was the head manager. Participants first were exposed to information's about data confidentiality, privacy, voluntary participation, and instructions of the field study. Further, after agreeing with the consent term, directions were reproduced in the heading of each instrument.

Results

To compare difference of means by vanity dimension, we ran an unpaired t-test, with Welch correction. Despite limitations of this field study, interesting points were highlighted. Primarily, findings indicated a significantly difference between AC and PC ($t = 2.70, p < .05$). Additionally, in comparison with previous studies our sample has the lower outcome for PV, meaning that they do not perceive themselves as attractive persons (see Table 5). Moreover, the trend presented lower scores on physical dimension of vanity and higher on achievement dimensions. Similar to Netemeyer et al. (1995) "Who's who" sample, with also is characterized by prominent individuals.
As expected, vanity scores behaved differently according to time experience in the field. As we can see in Figure 1, the worker with the lower tenure (six years) yielded a unique trend, which followed almost in the opposite direction to the line of the individual with higher tenure. Interesting, AC showed similar outcomes across participants, independently from years of experience, and (except from junior outcome) was the dimension with higher means ($M_{AC} = 23.8$, CI = 21.11 - 26.49). Moreover, it is possible to infer that after a tenure threshold, achievement view and concern converge, suggesting that participants are satisfied with their professional life, at the same time that they worry on causing a positive impression among peers.
In spite of the optimistic findings, technology is a very distinct sector, in which work dynamics is more isolated, once it is highly focused on machines and techniques and not on public attendance. Conclusively, results are encouraging to further investigations.

4.3 Study 3

Our first study demonstrated a significant relationship between age and PC, mainly for women. However, such behavior can be a result of the evolution of human mating. Moreover, wishing for fertility cues, men are more attracted to younger women, which establishes a high importance on female physical attractiveness, regarding romantic relationship (Buss, 2007). To examine whether this justification plays a role in explaining vanity mechanism, marital status was added to our equation. Additionally, Study 3 aims to test whether the salience of a professional scenario impact on personal standards. To address these issue, we created advertising pieces promoting a shake drink beverage, each with two possible treatments: relative to professional context or relative to wealth context (Appendix). As a cover story, participants were told that the study was designed to test marketing approach from a new beverage product.

Methods

This experiment follows an empirical methodology similar to Study 1. We estimate the follow equation:

Figure 1 - Means by tenure - Self-Esteem and Vanity dimensions
DV = β₀ + β₁Tc + β₂Tp + β₃Age + β₄MaritalStatus

(2)

where \(T_p\) is a dummy variable (consisting in 1 for being in a group, zero otherwise) for being in the treatment professional and, analogously, \(T_c\) is the dummy for receiving the casual treatment. The standard deviations were calculated using bootstrap, due to small sample size (\(N = 95\)). In addition, Wald test was used to measure the difference between treatments. Finally, considering findings from Study 1, age was added as a control variable, and marital status was accounted for due its relevance, according to evolutionary psychology literature (Egan & McCorkindale, 2007).

**Procedure**

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two treatment group, or to control group (with no priming exposure). For each participant from treatment groups was given five versions of stimulus advertising, presented one at a time, in a random order. Ninety five Brazilian women, mean age 30.79 year old (SD = 12.01), most single (57%), answered the same survey from study 1. Add to that, no statistical significant difference was shown between groups. More precisely, the sample was as follows:

**Group 1**: Twenty nine women participated in the control group, with no exposure to priming. Their mean age was 27.31 (SD = 9.94), 69% single.

**Group 2**: Primed with wealth ads, showing model women as "what successful persons have". Respondents were twenty five women with mean age of 30.72 (SD = 12.15), 68% single.

**Group 3**: Forty women were expose to professional life priming, showing model women as "what successful persons do". Sample mean age consisted in 33.29 year old (SD = 12.90), 42% single.

**Results**

As expected, results indicated a positive relation between age and self-esteem. Further, the experiment revealed both AC and AV being affected by the treatment. Moreover, participants in the casual condition, primed with ads showing women in a relaxed environment, presented higher levels of AC (compared to control group). Women stimulated with professional cues, showed the highest levels of AV. For further dependent variables, treatments were not significant, highlighted on the graph of dependent variable results by condition (Figure 2). Moreover, results are presented in Table 6.
In sum, in conformity with Social Comparison Theory, outcomes indicates that achievement vanity dimensions are affected by standards of accomplishment, in which the most salient result regard the effect on AV of priming with direct cues of professional status ($B = 2.98, \ SE = 1.41$). Therefore, the self-perception of high performance increased in light of women being exposed to models of female professional success.

**Table 6 - Regression Table from Study 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
<th>(4)</th>
<th>(5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\beta_1$</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>PV</td>
<td>AC</td>
<td>AV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>-0.64</td>
<td>-1.20</td>
<td>2.32**</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(-0.41)</td>
<td>(-0.73)</td>
<td>(1.98)</td>
<td>(0.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\beta_2$</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>-0.81</td>
<td>-1.70</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>2.98**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.21)</td>
<td>(-0.55)</td>
<td>(-1.07)</td>
<td>(0.98)</td>
<td>(1.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\beta_3$</td>
<td>0.09**</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.10*</td>
<td>0.12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.18)</td>
<td>(-0.64)</td>
<td>(0.36)</td>
<td>(-1.80)</td>
<td>(1.73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\beta_4$</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>-0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.74)</td>
<td>(0.71)</td>
<td>(-0.13)</td>
<td>(0.91)</td>
<td>(-0.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wald ($\beta_1=\beta_2$)</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>2.72*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$N$</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$z$ statistics in parentheses

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$
5 General Discussion

In short, study 1 shows how different stages in professional life are related to vanity and self-esteem, considering educational level and age to address professional stages. Study 2 approaches career through tenure, in a field study to explore the relationship between vanity and high performance team. Finally, Study 3 replicates these findings through an experiment with women by priming lifestyle. We conclude by discussing the relevance of our results and suggesting questions for future research.

In general, findings from Study 1 and 3 have shown a consistent positive relationship between age and self-esteem. Contrary to previous literature, in which suggested a decrease of self-esteem during life (McAuley et al., 2005). Additionally, in this concern, we did not found significant gender difference, contrasting to which is suggested in Vazquez, Hutz, Pacico, Nunes, and Petrolli (2014) for Brazilian sample. Building upon these differences we outlined a few directions of discussion that could help build a body of research that captures the richness and variety of this issue.

Our findings offer some grasp to research on self-esteem and career life. Kammeyer-Mueller et al. (2008) argues that individual perceptions of self-worth are significantly related to extrinsic career success-oriented outcomes, but self-esteem is not affected by indicators of occupational accomplishment. According to our sample, younger respondents had lower levels of self-esteem. It is reasonable to believe that people on this age group are at the beginning of their professional life, and, possibly, are more sensitive to social pressures regarding career expectations. On the other hand, long-term career-oriented outcomes emerges from labor experience. Interestingly, older participants reported higher scores of self-esteem. In addition, occupational prestige composes vanity achievement dimension, in which is affected by individual self-perception of accomplishments in comparison to others. Thus, tenure may impact vanity levels, affecting individual sense of self-worth, and consequently, causing effect on performance. Study 2 support for this idea by showing that vanity achievement dimensions increase with job experience. Additionally, previous literature has suggested that performance may be predicted by self-esteem factor (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2008; Rosenberg et al., 1995; Whelpley & McDaniel, 2016). Future work should examine deeper the mechanism of this relationship.

Early work has explored the link between age and Vanity dimensions (Durvasula et al., 2001; Worst et al., 1991). This resonates with our findings from Study 1, in which PC and AC decrease with
age. Similar to previous research, Study 1 outcome shows gender differences towards PC. For instance, Wang and Waller (2006) has shown that Chinese and American women reported higher concerns about physical attractiveness than men. Moreover, we found that for men, education diminished PC, while for women, age is negatively related to PC. A possible explanation for these results is due the relation between income and education, given occupational prestige. Consistent with this idea, Morris et al. (1993) outcomes yielded that men report grater vanity by Social Ascendancy and by vanity of parents.

In an experimental context, we have seen that the salience of success standards framed in professional activities arouse a positive and inflated view of own achievements. This may open new avenues for further research. For example, one may question to what extent does the work environment affect such a high-performance view. Moreover, presuming it does, does a "highly professional" environment affect performance? For example, consider the different environmental cues of a law firm versus the less structured workplace of, say, Google. Assuming the environment primes towards a view of high achievement, does that entail higher peer pressure? It is possible that someone who self-perceives as a high achiever may exhibit higher peer pressure towards others. A broader view of appraisals could focus on theoretical frameworks which explore the interaction issues here.

This research provides a critical first step toward understanding how vanity is associated to performance. Study 2, conducted in the field demonstrated that employees who were considered high performance, also had high scores on Vanity Achievements dimensions. In this context is interesting that in Study 3, through an experiment, we provide evidences that if a group is primed in regards to professional cues they tend to perceive themselves as high-achievers. However, considering that assignment to treatment was randomly distributed, ergo all three groups should not present statistical significant differences between them. Thus, this perception of achievement is mostly illusory, effect of stressing professional standard. An intriguing question that emerges from these results is if it is possible that organizational performance reports could actually be a measure of the repercussion of leaders’ vanities.

Furthermore, attitudes toward money, regarding its power-prestige, appears to impact on individuals AV, particularly for young adults (Durvasula & Lysonski, 2010). Thus, financial resources send important information to oneself and to others about one's status in society, as the potential influence of extrinsic career success on self-image, and granting control over others. Ergo,
vanity may "grease the wheels" to pursue certain professional result, in addition to contributing to increased materialism. In our days the consumption is characterized as more subjective, emotional or experiential, in which the satisfaction is focused on the self, thereby, ways of fulfilling desires are focus on those directions. In this sense, we suggest that vanity may play an important role in human behavior, whether in career choice, or consumer ones. Moreover, vanity can be understood as a motivator, with sources either external or internal to the self (Workman & Lee, 2011), in which its seems to be influenced by the prevalent social and economic environment (Durvasula et al., 2001). Hence, behaviors may be affected by vanity, as culture may influence vanity.
References


Science Quarterly, 44(2), 350–383.


A Appendix

A.1 Priming

*sem (Vanity -> vpc1, ) (Vanity -> vav1, ) (Vanity -> vpv1, ) (Vanity -> vpc2, ) (Vanity -> vpv2, ) (Vanity -> vpv6, ) (Vanity -> vav2, ) (Vanity -> vpc3, ) (Vanity -> vpv3, ) (Vanity -> vac1, ) (Vanity -> vac2, ) (Vanity -> vav3, ) (Vanity -> vav4, ) (Vanity -> vac4, ) (Vanity -> vpc4, ) (Vanity -> vac3, ) (Vanity -> vav5, ) (Vanity -> vav6, ) (Vanity -> vac5, ) (Vanity -> vav7, ) (Vanity -> vac6, ) vce(oim) latent(Vanity ) nocapslatent
*estimate store Model1
*estat gof, stats(all)

A.2 Do File

CFA

*sem (PC -> vpc1, ) (PC -> vpc2, ) (PC -> vpc3, ) (PC -> vpc4, ) (PC -> vpc5, ) (PV -> vpv1, ) (PV -> vpv2, ) (PV -> vpv3, ) (PV -> vpv4, ) (PV -> vpv5, ) (PV -> vpv6, ) (AC -> vac1, ) (AC -> vac2, ) (AC -> vac3, ) (AC -> vac4, ) (AC -> vac5, ) (AV -> vav1, ) (AV -> vav2, ) (AV -> vav3, ) (AV -> vav4, ) (AV -> vac5, ) cov( PC*PV PC*AC PC*AV PV*AC PV*AV AC*AV) covstruct(_lexogenous, diagonal) vce(oim) latent(PC PV AC AV )
*sem, standardized
*estimate store Model2
*estat gof, stats(all)
*lrtest Model2 Model1,st

Note: Example of the professional treatment and the wealth treatment, respectively
(AV -> vav4, ) (AV -> vav5, ) (Vanity -> PC, ) (Vanity -> PV, ) (Vanity -> AC, ) (Vanity -> AV, ), vce(oim) latent(PC PV AC AV Vanity ) nocapslatent

*sem, standardized
*estat gof, stats(all)
*lrtest Model2 Model3, st

Study 1

*gen SE = ae1+ae2+(5-ae3rev)+ae4+(5-ae5rev)+ae6+ae7+(5-ae8rev)+(5-ae9rev)+(5-ae10rev)
*gen PC = vpc1+vpc2+vpc3+vpc4+vpc5
*gen PV = vpv1+vpv2+vpv3+vpv4+vpv5+vpv6
*gen AC = vac1+vac2+vac3+vac4+vac5
*gen AV = vav1+vav2+vav3+vav4+vav5
*winsor SE, gen(oSE) p(0.1)
*winsor PC, gen(oPC) p(0.1)
*winsor PV, gen(oPV) p(0.1)
*winsor AC, gen(oAC) p(0.1)
*winsor AV, gen(oAV) p(0.1)
*tabulate sexo, gen(dummy_g)
*tabulate escolaridade, gen(dummy_school)
*gen dummy_s1=dummy_school1+dummy_school2
*gen dummy_s2=dummy_school3+dummy_school4
*gen dummy_s3=dummy_school5+dummy_school6
*reg oSE idade dummy_s2 dummy_s3, vce(bootstrap, reps(200))
*reg oPC idade dummy_s2 dummy_s3, vce(bootstrap, reps(200))
*reg oPV idade dummy_s2 dummy_s3, vce(bootstrap, reps(200))
*reg oAC idade dummy_s2 dummy_s3, vce(bootstrap, reps(200))
*reg oAV idade dummy_s2 dummy_s3, vce(bootstrap, reps(200))

Study 3

*gen PC = VPC1+VPC2+VPC3+VPC4+VPC5
*gen PV = VPV1+VPV2+VPV3+VPV4+VPV5+VPV6
*gen AC = VAC1+VAC2+VAC3+VAC4+VAC5
*gen AV = VAV1+VAV2+VAV3+VAV4+VAV5
*gen IV = 1 if Click1NP!=. 
*replace IV = 2 if Click1P!=.
*replace IV = 0 if IV==.
*tabulate IV, gen(dummyIV)
*winsor SE, gen(oSE) p(0.1)
*winsor PC, gen(oPC) p(0.1)
*winsor PV, gen(oPV) p(0.1)
*winsor AC, gen(oAC) p(0.1)
*winsor AV, gen(oAV) p(0.1)
*eststo: reg oSE dummyIV2 dummyIV3 Age MaritalStatus if Sex==2, vce(bootstrap, reps(200))
*test (dummyIV2=dummyIV3)
eststo:  reg oPC dummyIV2 dummyIV3 Age MaritalStatus if Sex==2, vce(bootstrap, reps(200))
est (dummyIV2=dummyIV3)
eststo:  reg oPV dummyIV2 dummyIV3 Age MaritalStatus if Sex==2, vce(bootstrap, reps(200))
est (dummyIV2=dummyIV3)
eststo:  reg oAC dummyIV2 dummyIV3 Age MaritalStatus if Sex==2, vce(bootstrap, reps(200))
est (dummyIV2=dummyIV3)
eststo:  reg oAV dummyIV2 dummyIV3 Age MaritalStatus if Sex==2, vce(bootstrap, reps(200))
est (dummyIV2=dummyIV3)
B Appendix

B.1 Model 1

Note: Factor loaded fixed value in 1. Errors omitted
B.2 Model 2

Note: Standardized coefficient. Errors omitted
B.3 Model 3

Note: Standardized coefficient. Errors omitted
FERNANDA MARTINS CONCATTO

VANITY FAIR - HOW PROFESSIONAL LIFE AND VANITY WORK TOGETHER.

Dissertação apresentada ao Curso de Mestrado em Administração da Escola Brasileira de Administração Pública e de Empresas para obtenção do grau de Mestre em Administração.

Data da defesa: 19/09/2016

ASSINATURA DOS MEMBROS DA BANCA EXAMINADORA

[Signatures]

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Orientador (a)

Ishani Aggarwal

Adam Debachek