Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 begins with a review of the self and self-concept—cores of this investigation—in general and in the social psychology discipline in particular. Following the review is a discussion of the multidimensional nature of self-concept, as preview for the theoretical position taken in Chapter 3. Dimensions of self-concept to be adopted in this study—values, personality traits, and motives—are discussed with regard to their conceptual connections to self-concept and their action-stimulating property. Nine constructs—four belonging to values, two to personality traits, and three to motives—are discussed as variables to be operationalized in Chapter 3.

Chapter 2 continues with a focus on relationships between self-concept and its motivations in the context of physical attractiveness. Literatures on social comparison theory, self-discrepancy theory, corporal theory of the body, and resource advantage theory are reviewed as bases for conceptualizations and predictions in the form of research propositions and research hypotheses discussed in Chapter 3. Chapter 2 ends with a summary of what is considered a gap in the literature and with conceptual observations to be discussed, expanded, and operationalized in Chapter 3.

2.2 Self

One of the most comprehensive and influential definitions of the self is proposed by Baumeister (1998) in which the self is viewed as an entity having three important roots. The first root is the experience of reflexive consciousness, that is, a person's conscious attention

that turns back toward its own source and gradually constructs a concept of oneself. For example, after hearing about a heroic or heinous action, one may pause to wonder whether he/she is the sort of person who could ever do such a thing. Without reflexive experience, the self would have no meaning or value and could not exist. The second root is the interpersonal aspect of self or the self as a vehicle for relating to other people. This idea can be exemplified by instances where one tries to make a good impression on someone or to live up to someone's expectations. The self is almost unthinkable outside a social context and selves are vital for making interpersonal interactions and relationships possible. The third root is the executive function of the self, by which the self is perceived as the agent, controller, or origin of its own thoughts and actions. Examples include situations where one decides what it is that he/she really wants to become, do, or buy. In sum, the self has an internal, evaluative aspect (the first root) and two external, interactional, and executive aspects (the second and third roots). Internal and external aspects of the self combine to have an impact on how an individual acts.

Many researchers propose ideas consistent with the concept of duality of the self. Rosenberg and Kaplan (1982), for example, suggest that each person has two selves: an overt or revealed self and a covert or concealed self. The overt self represents aspects of the self that are public and visible, such as each person's physical, demographic, or behavioral characteristics, and that reflect each person's social exterior. Each person also has a psychological interior, a private world of thoughts, feelings, and wishes that is relatively or totally inaccessible to the world outside. Similarly, Agrawal and Maheswaran (2005) distinguish between the chronic self and contextually activated self. Chronic self is a regularly activated construct across numerous contexts whereas the contextually activated self depends on specific, experienced situations. A number of other pairs of selves are distinguished as well: global selves versus

differentiated selves, real versus ideal selves, multiple selves versus the unified self, and true selves versus false selves (Harter 1996, pp. 5-29).

The literature defines the self as separated into a nominative self-as-subject ("I") and an accusative self-as-object ("Me"). Self-as-subject is defined as self as knower, doer, or thinker. Self-as-object is defined as self as known by the content of one's experience (Johnson 1985). Self-as-object has a collection of components—the material self (bodies and possessions), inner self (values, attitudes, beliefs), and social self (identities as parents, friends, employees)—that are recognized by individuals and others (e.g., James 1890; Johnson 1985). Self-as-object includes the idea of self as a social object to others and the idea of self as a social and psychological object unto oneself. Various disciplines address the self across both self-as-subject and self-as-object dimensions, although emphasis often is applied to one rather than both dimensions. For example, the self-as-subject or agent that initiates action is a common research construction in psychology and social psychology. In contrast, research in sociology has focused on self as a social object defined and determined by actions occurring within a collectivity of "others" (Johnson 1985, p. 93).

Over lengthy discussions of self, the fundamental distinction between self-as-subject and self-as-object has become recognized and accepted (Hall and Lindzey 1957; Symonds 1951; Wylie 1974). Further recognized and accepted is the self's ability to serve as subject and object simultaneously. Thus, statements such as "I have brown hair" or "I am a moral person" express a curious perspective. The individual is standing outside himself, looking at an object, describing it, evaluating it, and responding to it—but the object being perceived, evaluated, and responded to is himself. With regard to every other object in the world,

subject and object are different; only with respect to this object are they the same (Rosenberg 1979, p. 6).

To summarize, the concept of self has been described by many scholars and lacks consensus on a global definition. This is not surprising given that the self is construed as unknowable by an individual and by others. Common among all definitions of self is the evaluative function, by which feelings and attitudes with reference to oneself are formed. Common also is that the existence of self allows formation of a self-concept.

2.3 Self-Concept

This section begins by describing the self-concept, primarily as the topic is treated in the social psychology literature. The section discusses the conceptual distinction between self and self-concept and self-concept as found in the consumer marketing literature. The section concludes with observations that will be further conceptualized in Chapter 3.

As with self, many definitions of self-concept can be found in various literatures. Rosenberg (1979), for example, defines self-concept broadly as the totality of an individual's thoughts and feelings with reference to himself as an object (1979, p. 7). Turner (1968) provides a more specific definition:

> *"Typically my self-conception is a vague but vitally felt idea of what I am like in my best moments, of what I am striving toward and have some encouragement to believe I can achieve, or of what I can do when the situation supplies incentives for unqualified effort" (1968, p. 98).*

Markus (1977) considers the self-concept to be a collection of cognitive generalizations that organize the processing of self-relevant information. Gecas (1982) conceptualizes the self-concept as an organization of identities and attributes, and of their evaluations that develop

out of an individual's reflexive, social, and symbolic activities. Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton (1976) define self-concept as a person's self-perceptions formed through experience based on interpretations of his or her environment. Self-perceptions are influenced by evaluations from significant others, reinforcements, and attributions for the individual's own behavior. Blascovich and Tomaka (1991) define self-concept as a relatively broad construct that includes cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects and distinguishes self-concept from self-esteem, a more limited evaluative component of the self-concept. More recently, Agrawal and Maheswaran (2005, p. 841) define self-concept ("self-construal" in their terminology) as a construct that reflects the extent to which individuals view themselves either as an individuated entity or as an entity related to others.

These and other definitions of self-concept come from two areas of social psychology: sociological social psychology and psychological social psychology. Within the sociological tradition, self-concept has been studied as part of role theory (Gordon 1976; Turner 1978); the concept of identity (Burke 1980; Gordon 1968; Guiot 1977; McCall and Simmons 1978; Stryker 1980); the interest in social structure and personality (House 1981; Kohn 1969, 1981; Rosenberg 1979; Turner 1976); and the study of small groups (Alexander and Knight 1971; Alexander and Wiley 1981; Webster and Sobieszek 1974). Within the psychological tradition, interest in self-phenomena (e.g., self-awareness, self-esteem, self-image, and self-evaluation) arose from a "cognitive revolution" (Dember 1974; Manis 1977) with self-concept conspicuous in: behaviorism via Bem's (1972) theory of self-attribution; social learning theory via Bandura's (1977) focus on self-efficacy; and cognitive dissonance theory via Aronson's (1968) and Bramel's (1968) formulations. Self-concept also appeared in theories of attitude and value formation and change (Rokeach 1973, 1979), in attribution

theory (Epstein 1973; Bowerman 1978), and in other theories of cognitive processes (Wegner and Vallacher 1980).

The two social psychologies differ in focus. Sociological social psychology tends to focus on antecedents of self-concept and development of self-concept, with an emphasis on influences of social interaction, social structure, and social context. Psychological social psychology tends to focus on consequences of self-concept, especially as consequences relate to behavior. It is more likely than sociological social psychology to study questions of motivation (i.e., self-efficacy motive and self-esteem motive; Gecas 1982). Those of a sociological orientation focus largely on the "Me," as an effect of a person's behavior (for a review, see Backman 1983). Those of a psychological orientation (the disciplinary bent of most consumer psychologists) focus largely on the "I" and how it influences behavior (for a summary, see Wylie 1979). Still, many aspects are common to the two social psychologies. Both view the self-concept as active and attempt to capture the active aspect of the self-concept empirically. Both recognize that self-concept and its social world are reciprocally determined (Gecas 1982). Both agree that the self behaves according to meanings derived from encounters between the self and its symbolic environment, consisting of objects and people, including oneself (Blumer 1969; Solomon 1983; Stryker 1980). Both consider self-concept important; each orientation has biases that are complementary (Gecas 1982).

A major contribution to the understanding of self-concept comes from the field of education by Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton (1976). According to Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton, self-concept is not an entity within a person but a hypothetical construct useful in explaining and predicting how a person acts. Self-concept is based on a person's self-perceptions and on

inferences from other people. Self-concept has seven features critical to the construct's definition (p. 422 - 437):

1. *Theoretical organization:* Self-concept is organized. People categorize the vast amount of information they have about themselves and relate categories to one another.

2. *Multifaceted nature:* Self-concept is multifaceted. Particular facets reflect a self-referent category system adopted by an individual and/or shared by a group.

3. *Hierarchical structure:* Self-concept is hierarchical. Perceptions of personal behavior in specific situations sit at the base of the hierarchy; inferences about self-concept in broader domains (e.g., social and physical) lie in the middle; and a global, general self-concept occupies the apex.

4. *Stability:* The general self-concept—the hierarchy apex—is stable. As one descends, self-concept becomes increasingly situation-specific and less stable. Changes in self-perceptions at the base may be attenuated by conceptualizations at higher levels; changes in general self-concept at the apex may require changes in many situation-specific instances.

5. *Developmental nature:* Self-concept becomes increasingly multifaceted as the individual moves from infancy to adulthood. Infants tend not to differentiate themselves from their environment and young children have self-concepts that are global, undifferentiated, and situation-specific. Only with increasing age and acquisition of verbal labels does self-concept become differentiated and integrated into a multifaceted, hierarchical construct.

6. *Evaluative underpinnings:* Self-concept has an evaluative aspect. Evaluations can be made against some absolute ideal ("I am happy"), a relative standard based on comparisons with peers ("I do well in mathematics"), or expectations of significant others ("I satisfy my parents"). Individuals may differentially weight dimensions. Distinctions between self-evaluations and self-descriptions have not been clarified conceptually or empirically, so that the terms self-concept and self-esteem often are used interchangeably in the literature.

7. *Differentiated from other constructs:* Self-concept can be differentiated from other constructs to which it is theoretically related. For example, academic achievement will be more highly correlated with academic self-concept than with social or physical self-concept.

Features 1, 2, and 6 are relevant to the conceptualization of self-concept for the present study and will be discussed in Chapter 3.

"Self" and "self-concept" often are used interchangeably in the literature regardless of whether they are intended to refer to the same thing. Gecas (1982) addresses this confusion and provides a clear distinction. He refers to self as a process of reflexivity that emanates from the dialectic between the "I" and "Me" (as discussed, for example, by James 1890; Johnson 1985; and Lewis 1979). The self provides the philosophical underpinning for social psychological inquiries into the self-concept but is itself not accessible to empirical investigation. Self-concept, on the other hand, is a product of this reflexive activity and is accessible to empirical investigation.

Self-concept has been underutilized in consumer research in marketing (Onkvisit and Shaw 1987). The handful of published studies are mostly qualitative in nature and set in a variety of somewhat uncommon consumption situations, including high-risk leisure consumption (Celsi, Rose, and Leigh 1993), self-gifts (Mick and Demoss 1990), gift giving (Joy 2001), and the consumption of aesthetic plastic surgery (Schouten 1991). Only one consumer research study (Malhotra 1981) has used self-concept as an object of quantitative measurement but the scale employed falls short of being a generalized scale for measuring self-concept.

Five observations follow as summary of the self-concept literature. First, self-concept can be understood by contrasting it with self. Self is a *process* of reflexivity that develops in social interaction; self-concept is a *product* of reflexive activity in terms of the perceptions a person has of himself/herself. Self provides a philosophical basis for inquiry into the self-concept; self-concept serves as a construct to be measured in an empirical investigation. Second, the self-concept is a cumulative product of interactions between the self and social environments. The self-concept contains in itself motivational drives that lead an individual to actions and

behaviors. Self-concept, motivations, and behaviors are areas amenable to academic research in general and to this study in particular.

Third, research on self-concept uses both a self-as-subject approach and a self-as-object approach. Research based on the sociological orientation tends to focus on antecedents (the "Me", self-as-object); research based on the psychological orientation tends to focus on consequences of self-concept (the "I", self-as-subject). Fourth, because self-concept reflects ideas about the self, duality of the self also should apply to self-concept. Gecas (1982) implies this by stating that "self-concept is the concept the individual has of himself as a physical, social, and spiritual or moral being." This leads to the idea that self-concept, like self, is context dependent in terms of physical, social, and moral surroundings. Fifth, self-concept has been infrequently studied in the areas of marketing and consumer behavior.

2.4 Dimensions of Self-Concept

This section reviews three dimensions of self-concept as found in the literature—values, personality traits, and motives. Particular emphases are put on arguments for these dimensions as central to self-concept and on descriptions of their roles in consumer research.

The idea of multiple dimensions of self-concept dates to James (1890) and his concept of the "Me-self," defined as the sum total of all a person can call his or her own. This sum total was divided into three "constituents" (Harter 1996, p. 2): material self (bodily self and possessions); social self (characteristics of the self recognized by others); and spiritual self (inner self comprising thoughts, dispositions, moral judgments). However, despite James's multidimensional conceptualization, self-concept was studied for many decades as a single dimension. That is, until 1980, most studies of self-concept were equated with self-esteem

(Wells and Marwell 1976), using self-concept instruments linked to no specific theory. Further, of the self-concept instruments that were theoretically conceived, most were based on the notion that self-concept is unidimensional (Byrne 1996) and, thus, measured only a global aspect of the construct (Harter 1990). However, after 1980, evidence began to accumulate that substantiated the multidimensional nature of self-concept (e.g., Hattie 1992; Marsh 1990). In keeping with this evidence, most self-concept instruments developed since 1980 are closely tied to a theoretical model and multidimensionally structured (Byrne 1996).

As examples of such research, a study of self-concept among female undergraduates used three dimensions: self-esteem, body satisfaction, and sexual satisfaction (Kimlicka, Cross, and Tarnai 1983). A study of Australian Indigenous and non-Indigenous students used family, self-acceptance, academic achievement, peer, and career as dimensions of self-concept (Purdie and McCrindle 2004). In a study of body dissatisfaction among minority college students, physical, social, academic, and personal competence were considered salient dimensions of self-concept (James, Phelps, and Bross 2001). From these and other studies, it is important to note that self-concept applies to many different contexts and that only certain self-concept dimensions are appropriate in any particular context.

In the consumer research literature, the multidimensional nature of self-concept has been regularly acknowledged. In an early example (Kassarjian 1971), the failure to find strong associations between people's personalities and products they choose is attributed to the fact that the self was conceptualized as an indivisible entity, rather than as a composite of facets (Kleine, Kleine, and Kernan 1993, pp. 209-210). However, Douglas, Field, and Tarpey (1967) and Wylie (1975) agree to three basic dimensions: ideal self ("the person I would like to be" or self-actualization), actual self ("the person I am" or objective self), and social self

("the person as I believe other people see me" or looking-glass self). Douglas, Field, and Tarpey (1967) add self-image ("the way a person sees himself" or subjective self) as an additional dimension. Abe, Bagozzi, and Sadarangani (1996) adopted private self-consciousness, public self-consciousness, and social anxiety as three dimensions of their self-consciousness scale to operationalize self-concept. However, the call for an alternative conceptualization and measurement of self-concept generally has received little attention among consumer researchers compared to other disciplines such as educational or developmental psychology, where developments in self-concept measurement have been far more advanced.

As summary, self-concept is a multidimensional construct given its bases in the several dualities of self and in the multitude of contexts where the construct is applied. Content of the conceptual dimensions of self-concept is wide and varied but always contains evaluative aspects as well as action influencing aspects (reflecting both self-as-object and self-as-subject). The literature identifies three dimensions considered relevant to the present study, consistent with the definition and conceptualization of the self-concept (see more in Chapter 3): values, personality traits, and motives. Each dimension is reviewed next.

2.4.1 Values

As with self and self concept, a number of definitions of values can be found (e.g., Alicke 1983; Assael 1998; Rokeach 1973; Schwartz 1992). The present study construes values to be concepts or beliefs about desirable behaviors or end states that transcend specific situations, guide selection or evaluation of behavior and events (Schwartz and Bilsky 1987, p. 551). Values are cognitive representations of three human requirements: biologically based needs, social interaction customs for interpersonal coordination, and social institution demands for

group welfare and survival (Schwartz 1992). Values are a small number of centrally held evaluative beliefs that provide criteria by which large numbers of human judgments are made (Rokeach 1973). Values are responsible for the selection and maintenance of goals toward which people strive and, at the same time, regulate the manner in which such striving takes place (Gutman and Vinson 1979). In short, values are desirable, trans-situational goals that vary in importance as guiding principles in people's lives (Schwartz 1992).

Values are learned and become part of a value system in which each value is ordered in priority relative to others (Rokeach 1973, pp. 9-17). The value system is an important tool for an individual to use to resolve conflicts and make decisions. Because most situations an individual faces activate more than one value, conflict between values often arises (such as a conflict between striving for salvation and taking hedonic pleasure) and the individual will rely on his or her value system to resolve the conflict. The value system, rather than a single value, provides a more complete understanding of motivational forces driving an individual's attitudes and behaviors (Schwartz and Bilsky 1987).

Values are tied intimately to the self (Feather 1992; Sherif 1936; Smith 1991). Values are incorporated into the self-concept (Brewer and Roccas 2001) in the form of value expressive attitudes, the latter seen as central to the self-concept (Katz 1960). Individuals regularly incorporate a large number of socially shared values into their self-concept (Smith 1991). As an example, studies of gift-giving values have been shown conceptually to be related to self-concept and to the presentation of one's self to others (Belk 1979; Crosby and Taylor 1983; Joy 2001). Values drive the self-concept and in turn drive gift-giving beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (Beatty *et al.* 1985).

The study of values often involves questions about what motivates behavior (Karp 2000). That is, values are not simply abstract conceptions about the desirable but are motivational, as explanations of overt behavior (Feather 1995; Schwartz 1994). Values describe a core set of beliefs central to people's lives in terms of what they rate highly, hold in esteem, and nurture. Because of this importance, values influence behavior (Kahle and Timmer 1983). A similar argument says that values express basic human needs and these needs, by definition, compete with normative pressures to motivate public and private behavior (Rokeach 1973; Schwartz 1992; Schwartz and Bardi 2001).

In terms of empirical research, Verplanken and Holland (2002) found that values central to the self will orient and regulate value-congruent action. In a review of the literature on value-behavior consistency, Williams (1979) concluded that ample evidence exists to assert that values are not mere mental states without causal influence on physical states. Yankelovich (1981) reviewed survey data that corroborate Williams' (1979) conclusion. Kahle and Timmer (1983) reviewed laboratory and survey studies showing that values lead to commensurate behaviors. Such studies focus on a wide variety of behavioral phenomena, including charity contributions (Manzer and Miller 1978), mass media usage (Becker and Connor 1981), cigarette smoking (Grube *et al.* 1984), drug addiction (Toler 1975), and political inclination (Rokeach 1973).

Schwartz (2004) links values and actions through four processes: Values must be activated (see also Verplanken and Holland 2002). Values influence attention, perception, and interpretation within situations. Values influence the planning of actions. Values privilege certain actions over others through their motivational nature (see also Feather 1992). Similarly, Wojciszke (1989) offers three preconditions for the influence of a value structure

on behavior. The value structure must be a well-established entity in a person's cognitive system, activated from long-term memory, and accepted by the person as relevant and proper for the current situation.

Given their abstract nature, values were found by Hitlin and Piliavin (2004) to be only distally related to behavior. Values were found by Maio and Olson (1994) to predict attitudes and behavior only if the attitude was value-expressive—if feelings about an object saw the object as a vehicle for self-expression. Values had low predictive power if the attitude was instrumental—if feelings about an object were based on a joint function of attributes believed present in the object and the importance of those attributes. Thus, the psychological function of an individual's attitude is matched by the psychological function of his or her values only if the attitude is value-expressive.

Values and Consumer Research

Values have been researched extensively in consumer research, with a substantial number of studies centering around two areas: relationships between values and consumption behavior and values as a basis for market segmentation. Beyond the charity contribution, mass media usage, cigarette smoking, and political inclination topics mentioned earlier, Henry (1976) found that values correlate with ownership of generic automobile categories. Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991) found that values predict the decision to purchase cigarettes, the choice of one type of cigarette over another, and the choice of one cigarette brand over another.

Often studies of relationships between values and consumption behavior are based a means-end chain model proposed by Gutman (1982). A means-end chain model explains how a product or service selection facilitates realization of desired end states that consumers seek to

achieve for themselves. Means-end chain models in consumer research consist of elements that represent linkages between perceived product attributes to values and values to behaviors. The models have been employed in a variety of applications including advertising strategy (Reynolds and Rochon 1991), product positioning (Walker and Olson 1991), and analysis of brand persuasion (Reynolds, Gengler, and Howard 1995). Attempts also have been made to identify consequences arising from consumption choices and the personal values related to those choices (Gutman 1991).

The other notable role of values in consumer research is in their use as a basis for market segmentation, with results regularly deemed beneficial (Kahle and Kennedy 1989). For example, value segmentation found strong relationships between values and consumer choice criteria for several product types including automobiles, weekend travel attractions, and deodorants (Pitts and Woodside 1983). Beatty, Kahle, and Homer (1991) found that consumers in active, social value segments reported higher levels of gift giving and greater exertion of effort in gift selection than did individuals in passive, nonsocial value segments. Relationships were found in both the United States and in Oriental cultures. Kahle (1986) found value segmentation to partially support geographic regions as determined by the U.S Bureau of Census. Values also were found to be productive candidates for discriminating between segments of people based on their cultural backgrounds (Munson and McIntyre 1978).

Three reasons explain interest in the use of values as a basis for market segmentation. First, as discussed earlier, values are related to behavior. Second, values are less numerous, more central, and more immediately related to motivations than are attitudes (Maio and Olson 1994). Third, values carry abstract meanings that can be related to product and service

benefits. The underlying concept here is the principle of abstraction, which states that tying "something specific" like a product or a service to an abstract concept like values imbues the something specific with attributes of the abstract concept (Kahle and Kennedy 1989). For example, if a company could tie a specific remedy that is effective against colds to an abstract value for conscientious motherhood, doing so would increase the attractiveness of the cold remedy to people who value motherhood (especially when they need a cold remedy for child). Therefore, acting on a segment that values motherhood would contribute to a successful marketing of the remedy.

Measurement of Values

A commonly used instrument for the measurement of values is the Rokeach's Value Survey (RVS). Respondents to an RVS are asked to rank a list of values in order of importance as guiding principles in their lives. However, the ranking process often is criticized as difficult, time-consuming, and questionable in terms of validity (Gutman and Vinson 1979). In addition, the RVS covers collective and societal domains (for example, a world at peace, a world of beauty) that might not be of interest to a consumer researcher.

An instrument of greater relevance in a consumer behavior context for market segmentation studies is the List of Values (LOV) developed by Kahle (1983). LOV is an abbreviated measurement instrument that uses a reduced list of values that meet the criterion of generality across life's major roles. Subjects using the LOV rank a list of values and then are classified into groups on the basis of their top-ranked value. However, the use of ranking instead of rating scales for values has raised questions regarding scale validity. Further, the LOV's classification of individuals on the basis of a single most important value may be influenced by measurement error since it uses only a single observation per respondent (Kamakura and

Mazzon 1991). To address the criticism of ranking, Herche (1994) developed a Multi-Item List of Values (MILOV) that uses rating instead of ranking as a more accurate way of measuring values.

In summary, values help individuals to know and evaluate their interpersonal worlds, to decide, and to behave in these worlds. As learned or acquired conceptions, values and value systems tell a good deal about individuals who hold them. Individuals refer to values and value systems to understand objects, actions, situations, and people without engaging in a great deal of cognitive effort. Thus, values serve as latent guides that facilitate quick and relatively effortless evaluations and choices of actions and behavior patterns.

Four values relevant to the present study are examined next. The four values are fun and enjoyment, excitement, being well-respected, and self-fulfillment.

2.4.1.1 Fun and Enjoyment

The fun and enjoyment value is a belief that people should find their actions and environments to be pleasant, entertaining, and satisfying. Fun and enjoyment represents an independence value, with people high on the value not depending on others for value attainment. People high on this value are autonomous and tend not to be overly concerned with what others think about their enjoying life (Piner 1983). This value group takes the time to enjoy the simple and complex pleasures of life and is cautious not to be overwhelmed by life's problems. Fun and enjoyment valuers are unconventional, creative, artistic, and optimistic.

Fun and enjoyment valuers are considered to be strong-willed, aesthetically sensitive, and original in thought. These positive attributes are reflected in the way this value group handles its problems. The particularly creative and unconventional nature of these value holders makes it easy for them to be versatile and tackle new problems with new solutions. Holders of this value have a tendency to engage in fun-filled, social, sensual, risky, and self-gratifying activities.

Overall, fun and enjoyment value holders are optimistic about their future. They have experienced happiness in the past and expect to experience more happiness in the future. They are high on subjective well-being, in part due to their sense of control over events occurring in their lives. Instead of being obsessed with achieving tangible goals or pleasing others, people who value fun and enjoyment prefer to go through life enjoying and appreciating what they have. Instead of being overwhelmed by life's problems, this value group opts for achieving subjective happiness and satisfaction. Members of this group are more concerned with achieving a degree of subjective satisfaction than they are with gaining the respect or approval of others. The cliché that best describes these people is "stop and smell the roses" (Kahle and Kennedy 1989).

Fun and enjoyment valuers are less likely to have close relationships with others because close relationships could jeopardize their autonomy and independence. Holders of this value want to avoid routinization and conformity. They are often rebellious and unpredictable, making it hard for them to commit themselves to anything other than the attainment of this value. Fun and enjoyment people like sports and entertainment (Kahle and Kennedy 1989). They prefer leisure activities that offer them fun, enjoyment, and excitement. They are less likely to engage in home-oriented activities (Kamakura and Novak 1992). They tend to be

highly involved with a wide range of sports and outdoors activities (Kamakura and Novak 1992). In sum, holders of this value tend to enjoy an active life full of leisure, entertainment, and socializing.

2.4.1.2 Excitement

The excitement value is a belief that people should look for varied, novel, and complex sensations and experiences and take physical and social risks for the sake of such experience (Zuckerman 1979). Excitement is a hedonic value (Veroff, Douvan, and Kulka 1981). Excitement is related to the proneness to highly stimulating activities such as adventure sports, exotic meals, sex, intake of drugs, and so forth (Aluja, Garcia, and Garcia 2003). These behaviors also can be attributed to extraverted individuals, with excitement found to be positively related to extraversion (Roccas *et al.* 2002; Zuckerman, Eysenck, and Eysenck 1978).

With a few exceptions (e.g., Kennedy, Best, and Kahle 1988), most studies investigating excitement use a ranking scale context in which excitement is merged with fun and enjoyment to form fun-enjoyment-excitement (e.g., Beatty, Kahle, and Homer 1991; Kahle, Poulos, and Sukhdial 1988; Piner 1983). In most of these studies, excitement is collapsed into fun and enjoyment because few respondents select excitement as their first choice; individuals who do rank excitement first most often select fun and enjoyment second (Kahle and Kennedy 1989). Nevertheless, excitement and fun and enjoyment are two different constructs (Beatty, Kahle, and Homer 1991; Herche 1994) but share the same underlying dimension (e.g., Beatty, Kahle, and Homer 1991; Kamakura and Novak 1992). Thus, high correlations between excitement and fun and enjoyment are expected in the present study.

2.4.1.3 Being Well-Respected

The being well-respected value is a belief that people should try to win esteem and regard from others. The value is based on concerns (sometimes excessive) and sensitivities to feelings of others toward oneself. Being well-respected valuers often think about and worry about what others think of themselves (Piner 1983). On an internal-external continuum, being well-respected is the most external of all values under study here because value fulfillment depends entirely on receiving positive feedback from others.

Being well-respected is considered a deficit value, since individuals high on this value tend to have low self-esteem. The low self-esteem of this group's members is reflected in their pessimistic view of the future. Being well-respected valuers have little sense of control over their destinies. Empirical results in the Western culture show that people who endorse being well-respected believe that they do not get the respect they deserve but want to be held in high esteem by others. People high on this value are likely to have both a low education and a low income. Psychologically, people high on this value tend to be depressed and defensive (Kahle, Poulos, and Sukhdial 1988).

Being well-respected valuers place great importance on respect, perhaps because they feel they lack the resources to obtain such respect. Being very concerned about what others think perhaps makes the being well-respected group have a less accurate self-perception than high self-respect people. Being well-respected valuers may alter their self-perceptions and actively place themselves in situations that they believe will render such respect.

In the Western cultural environment where studies on being well-respected were conducted, the following results were reported. The external orientation of the being well-respected

value group is likely to show up in purchase behavior. The group tends to purchase products that others may perceive positively because the being well-respected value implies great concern for the opinion of others (Piner 1983). Because these people often cannot afford status symbols, they are likely to consume inexpensive non-durables that are conspicuous. For example, they like national brands more than house brands. This group responds well to "upward pull" advertisements and to testimonials. In the Western cultural environment, being well-respected seems to be associated with negative psychological states (e.g., negative self-esteem, depressed, and defensive) and consumption behavior that reflects a lower socio-economic status. Being well-respected also reflects negative perceptions that people have toward a value that depends on others' respect and approval or on excessive concern about what others think about oneself, in a country such as the U.S. However, given that the Thai culture highly values interpersonal sensitivity (Triandis 1988), being well-respected may not necessarily be considered a deficit value in the present setting. Securing respect from others is not uncommon in Thai culture and can be viewed even as a sign of maintaining harmony.

Other empirical results were reported with regard to being well-respected in relation to other constructs within the Western cultural environment. Being well-respected was found to fall within an achievement motivational domain (Kamakura and Mazzon 1991; Schwartz and Bilsky 1987, 1990) and to be correlated positively with achievement vanity (Netemeyer, Burton, and Lichtenstein 1995).

The effect of cultural values on individuals is of particular relevance in the case of an external value such as being well-respected. Results presented so far reflect situations from an individualist country (U.S.) where privacy is respected and valued over interpersonal concern. In a collectivist culture like Thailand (Hofstede 1980; Steenkamp 2001), people care what

others think or say about them. Thai society emphasizes fitting in with other people (Markus and Kitayama 1991), interpersonal sensitivity, and conformity (Triandis 1988). Therefore, empirical results with regard to being well-respected presented earlier may or may not replicate in the Thai cultural setting.

2.4.1.4 Self-Fulfillment

The self-fulfillment value is a belief that people should make the most of their abilities and strive to be the best they can be (Easterlin and Crimmins 1991). As a consumer value, self-fulfillment can be understood as a lifestyle concept whereby people express their sense of uniqueness through the purchase and consumption of goods and services. Self-fulfillment carries to fruition one's deepest desires (Gewirth 1998) in a self-satisfying way. For example, self-fulfillment can be construed as driving a retreat from the boredom of bureaucratic work by exhilarating experiences such as high-risk consumption (Thompson and Troester 2002). Most values studies in consumer research treat self-fulfillment as a self-oriented value. A few studies treat it as an internal value that does not depend on external agents for fulfillment, as self-fulfillment value holders look to themselves for value attainment and satisfaction (Piner 1983).

Self-fulfillment value holders may feel that they are not living up to their full potential. Self-fulfillers tend to strive for perfection. They are always looking for more challenges in work, relationships, and leisure (Piner 1983). Reflecting their well-adjusted nature, people who value self-fulfillment are positive about life in the future.

Unlike some other more external values that involve low self-respect, self-fulfillment value holders have an extremely positive self-description. Self-fulfillers often are referred to as the

value group most nearly approaching self-actualization, as in Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs. They exhibit a personal strength and are not satisfied to settle for tangible goals. Most adaptation problems that members of this value group experience are due to their desires for perfection and greater challenge. Self-fulfillment value holders strive to achieve a high degree of subjective satisfaction. To value self-fulfillment is to rely on one's individual strength to attain a level of personal satisfaction that goes beyond the tangible or observable.

Self-fulfillment is particularly relevant in a context in which people move away from status goods toward the acquisition of individualistic, unique consumption experiences such as travel, virtual reality games, or appreciation of beauty (Solomon 1996). Indeed, Maslow (1970) placed aesthetic needs (the needs to create and/or experience beauty, balance, structure, etc.) at the top of his hierarchy of needs. People need beautiful imagery or something new and aesthetically pleasing in order to continue towards self-actualization. People need to refresh themselves in the presence and beauty of nature and the arts while carefully absorbing and observing their surroundings to extract the beauty that the world has to offer.

Self-fulfillment was found to be positively correlated with achievement vanity (Netemeyer, Burton, and Lichtenstein 1995) and with sense of accomplishment (Kahle, Poulos, and Sukhdial 1988). Self-fulfillment and sense of accomplishment have relatively similar proponents (Kahle, Poulos, and Sukhdial 1988). Differences, however, lie in the fact that sense of accomplishment implies more tangible evidence of interaction with the world. For example, a first poem could be a fulfilling but modest accomplishment, whereas a salary increase could be an accomplishment but not especially self-fulfilling (Kahle, Poulos, and Sukhdial 1988). It should be noted that the self-fulfillment value mostly investigated in the

consumer marketing literature places emphasis on an individual dimension (see Gewirth 1998) that is more related to personal consumption, as opposed to a social dimension that concerns public issues.

2.4.2 Personality Traits

Personality traits are the second dimension of the self-concept discussed in Chapter 2. Four different conceptual approaches have been applied to personality: traits, motives, cognitions, and social context (Winter 1996). Among these, the trait approach has received the most extensive investigation (e.g., Bilsky and Schwartz 1994; Buss 1989), with many studies founded conceptually on the Five-Factor model of personality (John 1990), described later.

Personality has been defined as "the complex organization of cognitions, affects, and behaviors that gives direction and pattern (coherence) to the person's life" (Pervin 1996, p. 414). Personality refers to "an individual's characteristic patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior, together with the psychological mechanisms—hidden or not—behind those patterns" (Funder 1997, p. 1). Consistently, personality is viewed as "temporally and situationally invariant personal characteristics (i.e., dispositions) that distinguish different individuals and lead to consistencies in behavior across situations and over time" (Baumgartner 2002). In personality psychology, the concept of traits has been used to denote consistent inter-correlated patterns of behavior, especially expressive or stylistic behavior (Winter *et al.* 1998, pp. 232-233). Traits are viewed as a major element of personality and many would say that traits are the only personality element (e.g., Buss 1989). Based on such a view, the present study adopts the term "personality traits" to convey the meaning of personality throughout the study.

Personality traits are integral to the self. The idea can be found in the writings of the most influential theorists of the first half of the twentieth century such as Mead (1934), Murphy (1947), and Allport (1955). One basic theme recurs in these broad conceptions of the person is that the self is fundamental to social behavior and personality; thus, the self is seen as an executive body coordinating the thoughts, feelings, and behavior of a complex, dynamic organism.

Robins, Norem, and Cheek (1999) point out three reasons why personality research should pay attention to the study of the self. First, people's consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behavior—that is, personality—influence how people think about themselves. Second, personality shapes how people feel about themselves. And third, the self plays a critical role in influencing how people act, think, and feel in particular situations. It is important to note that Robins, Norem, and Cheek's (1999) suggestions were made from the perspective of a personality researcher who tends to place primary focus on personality and the role of the self on formation of personality. Robins, Norem, and Cheek's (1999) three reasons imply that: relationships exist between the self and personality; and, as has been observed in Subsection 2.4.1 (Values), the self can be viewed here again as both constituting an evaluative function and a behavior influencing function, with personality acting as an orienting agent toward certain behaviors that are accepted or rejected.

The literature suggests that personality traits differ from values in three ways that support their separate conceptual treatment (Bilsky and Schwartz 1994; Roccas *et al.* 2002). First, personality traits are typically seen as descriptions of observed patterns of behavior which may be positive or negative based on values or criteria used to judge the desirability of behavior or end states. People may explain observed behavior by referring either to traits or

to values, but they refer only to values when they wish to justify choices or actions as legitimate or worthy (Roccas *et al.* 2002). Second, personality traits of individuals vary in terms of frequency and intensity of their occurrence, whereas values vary in terms of the importance that individuals attribute to particular goals (or importance as guiding principles). Thus, personality traits are enduring dispositions while values are enduring goals. Third, personality traits describe actions presumed to flow from "what people are like" regardless of their intentions, whereas values refer to people's intentional goals that are available to consciousness (Bilsky and Schwartz 1994; Roccas *et al.* 2002). For example, one may have a disposition toward being aggressive (a trait) but may not highly value aggression (Epstein 1989).

Many personality psychologists support the Five-Factor Model (FFM) as a comprehensive taxonomy of personality traits (John and Srivastava 1999; McCrae and Costa 1999) and the basis for an adequate representation of the structure of personality. The FFM was derived by inference from empirical analyses rather than deduced from theory. Factor analyses of descriptions of self and of others, using trait adjectives from the English lexicon (Goldberg 1990; John 1990; Tupes and Christal 1992) and from personality questionnaires (Costa and McCrae 1988; Lanning 1994), yielded five robust factors: neuroticism, openness to experience, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. The FFM claims to represent comprehensively the basic factors that organize human traits (e.g., Saucier and Goldberg 1998) and has been shown to demonstrate cross-cultural generalizability (McCrae and Costa 1997). Researchers have used the model to predict individual differences in numerous settings including consumer research (e.g., Mooradian 1996).

Despite considerable supporting evidence, many researchers maintain that the FFM is not a complete theory of personality traits (e.g., Costa and McCrae 1992b; Saucier and Goldberg 1995). And, there is evidence in the literature supporting the existence of higher-order factors of the FFM. For example, Digman (1997) found an even broader and more abstract level of factors, alpha and beta, as two higher-order factors underlying the FFM. Following this line of argument, many studies opt for certain factors within the FFM that best suit their research context as their core target of investigation. For example, extraversion and agreeableness were used to empirically examine the impact of personality traits on service loyalty (Anuwichanont 2003).

In sum, personality traits are invariant personal characteristics that distinguish different individuals and lead to consistencies in behavior across situations and over time. Personality traits are related to the self and can be viewed as an orienting agent favoring certain behaviors. Conceptual distinctions exist between personality traits and values. Personality traits typically refer to the description of enduring dispositions based on which certain behaviors are performed, whereas values are criteria an individual uses to evaluate these behaviors. Following subsections review two personality traits relevant to the present study, extraversion and openness to experience.

2.4.2.1 Extraversion

The personality trait of extraversion was introduced by Carl Jung to describe people whose motives and actions are directed outward from themselves. Extraverts are more prone to action than to contemplation, make friends readily, adjust easily to social situations, and generally show warm interest in their surroundings (*Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary* 1995). Individuals who score high on extraversion tend to be sociable, assertive, gregarious,

active, affectionate, outgoing, optimistic, cheerful, talkative and energetic; those who score low tend to be retiring, reserved, and cautious (Pavot, Diener, and Fujita 1990; Watson and Clark 1997). As a result, an extravert tends to be more of a leader, to be more physically and verbally active, and to be more friendly and outgoing around others than most people (Watson and Clark 1997).

In terms of its relationship to values, extraversion is compatible with the goals of stimulation values, such as pursuing excitement, novelty, and challenge (Roccas *et al.* 2002). The active and assertive aspects of extraversion are compatible with the goals of achievement values such as pursuing success and demonstrating competence according to social standards. Extroverted behavior also is likely to facilitate the pursuit of pleasurable experience, the goal of hedonic values. Extraversion correlates positively with achievement, stimulation, and hedonic values. It correlates negatively with tradition values that emphasize humility, moderation in feelings and actions, and submission to life's circumstances (Roccas *et al.* 2002). The passivity and self-abnegation inherent in tradition values conflicts with the novelty, excitement, and assertiveness that characterize the extraversion trait. Roccas *et al.*'s (2002) findings affirm the view that extroverted behavior—assertive, active, and sociable, as against reserved and cautious—performs in agreement with values that define activity, challenge, excitement, and pleasure as desirable general goals in life.

2.4.2.2 Openness to Experience

Characteristics that make up the personality trait of openness to experience include an active imagination, a willingness to consider new ideas, divergent thinking, and intellectual curiosity. People high on openness to experience tend to be broad-minded, creative, curious, imaginative, intelligent, and original, unconventional, and independent thinkers (Costa and

McCrae 1992a; McCrae and John 1992; Pervin 1993). Those low in openness to experience tend to be more conventional and prefer the familiar rather than something new.

Openness to experience is highly compatible with the motivational goals of self-direction (autonomy of thought and action and openness to new ideas and experiences) and of universalism (understanding and tolerance for all people and ideas and appreciation of beauty and nature). The trait also is compatible with the motivational goals of stimulation values (novelty and excitement). In other words, openness to experience is most compatible with values that emphasize intellectual and emotional autonomy (self-direction), acceptance and cultivation of diversity (universalism), and pursuit of novelty and change (stimulation). Openness to experience conflicts with the motivational goals of conformity, tradition, and security—all of which concern preserving the status quo and avoiding what is new and different. Openness to experience is antithetical to values that emphasize maintaining structure and stability.

2.4.3 Motives

Motives are the third dimension of the self-concept discussed in Chapter 2. In consumer research, motives are general drives that direct a consumer's behavior toward satisfying his or her needs (Assael 1998). The greater the disparity between a consumer's current situation and desired goals, the greater the motivational drive to act in order to satisfy these needs. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow 1970), consumers are motivated to act by first satisfying the lowest level of needs before the next higher level of needs becomes activated. Once these needs have been satisfied, the individual then attempts to satisfy needs at the next higher level, and so on. Thus, only unfulfilled needs lead to action.

Maslow defined seven levels of needs, from lowest to highest: physiological (food, water, shelter, sex), safety (protection, security, stability), social (affection, friendship, acceptance), ego (prestige, success, self-esteem), self-actualization (self-fulfillment, self-realization), cognitive (intelligence, knowledge), and aesthetic (one's own beauty, beauty of nature). Whereas Maslow's hierarchy is a universal theory of human motives, a host of narrower theories were proposed to account for individual differences in motives. Among these theories are: need for achievement (McClelland 1961), need for cognition (Cohen, Scotland, and Wolfe 1955), need for affiliation (Atkinson 1958), and need for power (Atkinson 1958).

Conceptually, motives and values are closely related. Schwartz and Bilsky (1987, 1990) found nine domains of values, each represented by facets that are built on cognitive representations of needs, the causes of motives. Motivations are translated consciously in terms of personal goals and values. Murray (1951) indicated that motivations are represented by seven types of values as centered on the body (comfort, well-being), property (objects of value, financial ease), authority (the power of decision making), sociability (affection, friendship, charity), knowledge (facts, theories, history, science), aesthetic shapes (beauty, art), and ideology (religion, philosophy).

The following subsections review three constructs in the form of motives: self-esteem, physical vanity, and achievement vanity. Self-esteem represents the fourth level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and is widely studied as a major motive associated with self-concept. Physical vanity and achievement vanity are two aspects that form the general construct of vanity. Vanity is a primary (biogenic) drive (Durvasula, Lysonski, and Watson 2001) as well as a psychological construct that describes a person's excessive concern with both physical appearance and achievement (Netemeyer, Burton, and Lichtenstein 1995). In Murray's

(1951) interpretation, physical vanity can be considered as values on the body, whereas achievement vanity could be considered as an ideology that one pursues.

2.4.3.1 Self-Esteem

Self-esteem refers to a person's subjective appraisal of himself or herself as intrinsically positive or negative (Rosenberg 1965). Self-esteem is a sense of personal worth, measurable by self-report testing. The original definition presented self-esteem as a ratio found by dividing one's successes in areas of life that are important to a given individual by the failures in them or as one's "success / pretensions" (James 1890). However, a problem with this approach comes from making self-esteem contingent upon success: this implies an inherent instability because failure can occur at any moment (Crocker and Park 2004). The present study views self-esteem as an individual's self-worth. Although criticized for including only the evaluative aspect, this definitional approach also views self-esteem as a part of or background to all of an individual's thoughts, feelings and actions (Branden 1969). Thus, this approach has behavioral-related elements (e.g., confidence, caution, etc.) that motivate action as well.

Self-esteem as a motive can be traced back to cognitive dissonance theory. The original version of cognitive dissonance theory perceived a motivational factor in terms of an incongruity between two cognitive elements (Festinger 1957). A later version of cognitive dissonance theory posited that self-esteem motivates dissonance-reducing actions (Aronson 1968). Aronson (1968) and Rokeach (1968, 1973) argued that cognitive dissonance is a significant motivational force only when the self-concept is involved. In a similar vein, Rokeach (1979) located the motivating mechanism in the discrepancy between a cognitive or

a behavioral element and the person's self-concept. Such discrepancies are motivating because they threaten self-maintenance and self-enhancement (Rokeach 1979, p. 53).

As an aspect of the self-esteem motive, self-enhancement emphasizes growth, expansion, and increasing one's self-esteem, while self-maintenance focuses on keeping what one has (Gecas 1982). In their examination of self-esteem in the classroom, Covington and Beery (1976) describe self-enhancement and self-maintenance as "striving for success" and "fear for failure." In general, people with low self-esteem are motivated more by self-maintenance than by self-enhancement, while people with high self-esteem are motivated in an opposite fashion. In sum, self-esteem is widely studied as a motive to enhance and maintain a positive conception of self (Rokeach 1979; Rosenberg 1979; Wells 1978).

Empirical studies in the field of physical attractiveness involving self-esteem as a construct have predominantly investigated relationships between self-esteem and self-perceived physical attractiveness or body satisfaction (e.g., Frost and McKelvie 2004; Lerner *et al.* 1980; Thornton and Ryckman 1991). For example, with regard to the general relationship between self-esteem and the body, self-esteem is positively related to a slimmer physical build as measured by the Body Mass Index (Yeung and Hemsley 1996). Extensive evidence finds that self-esteem is positively related to body satisfaction (Hayes, Crocker, and Kowalski 1999; Henriques and Calhoun 1999; Mendelson and White 1985; Russell 2002), with the relationship being stronger for women than for men (Furnham, Badmin, and Sneade 2002; Wade and Cooper 1999). High self-esteem is associated with a positive evaluation of one's body and serves as a buffer against events that threaten one's perception toward one's own body (Cash 2002). Conversely, low self-esteem may heighten one's negative perception toward one's own body.

2.4.3.2 Physical Vanity

Vanity is a psychological construct that describes a person's excessive concern with both physical appearance and achievement (Netemeyer, Burton, and Lichtenstein 1995). Physical vanity is defined as an excessive concern for one's physical appearance (Netemeyer, Burton, and Lichtenstein 1995). Physical vanity is the focus of a growing body of academic research devoted to physical appearance and its effects on consumer behavior. Physical vanity has numerous marketing implications, as demonstrated by the demand for a wide variety of appearance-related products such as cosmetics and clothing (Solomon 1985, 1992). Concern for physical attractiveness leads to positive consumption behaviors (e.g., exercising and healthier eating habits) and to negative behaviors as well (e.g., addictive behaviors and eating disorders; Bloch and Richins 1992; Hirschman 1992; Schouten 1991). However, little has been done by consumer researchers in examining relationships between psychological predispositions toward physical vanity, marketing practices, and body-altering behaviors.

Outward appearance frequently is emphasized in Western culture, especially in the U.S. (Bar-Tal and Saxe 1976; Bloch and Richins 1992; Netemeyer, Burton, and Lichtenstein 1995; Richins 1991). Both the popular and academic press are replete with books and articles relating to physical appearance and its impact on consumer demand for products and services. Television programs, magazines, and advertising also provide the public with a constant stream of beautiful women and handsome men, spreading such imagery throughout the world. Numerous products are advertised based on claims of enhancing one's appearance and/or the benefits associated with being considered physical attractive (Solomon 1985, 1992) to the extent that appearance is one of the primary concerns of a teenage girl (Peirce 1990).

Empirically, physical vanity was shown to have a positive correlation with grandiosity, an egocentrism where an individual possesses an inflated view of his/her physical attributes. Physical vanity also was correlated positively with public body consciousness, the degree to which people are aware of their physical features when out in public. In addition, physical vanity was correlated positively with consideration for cosmetic surgery, cosmetics use, clothing concern, and money spent on clothing (Netemeyer, Burton, and Lichtenstein 1995). Many studies have reported that physical attractiveness is positively related to benefits such as increased perceived social popularity and power, as well as increased self-esteem (e.g., Adams 1977; Goldman and Lewis 1977). Feingold (1992) concluded that attractive people are perceived to be "more sociable, dominant, sexually warm, mentally healthy, intelligent, and socially skilled than unattractive people" (p. 304). Given the substantial benefits of attractiveness, it is not surprising that many women are highly concerned with their appearance and keenly pursue physical attractiveness (Bloch and Richins 1993).

2.4.3.3 Achievement Vanity

Achievement vanity is defined as an excessive concern for one's personal achievements (Netemeyer, Burton, and Lichtenstein 1995). Achievement vanity can be observed in American culture when consumers use consumption as a means of conveying success and status (Dholakia and Levy 1987). Material and sometimes symbolic possessions demonstrate or document personal achievement, often in the form of conspicuous consumption (Dholakia and Levy 1987; Kahle and Kennedy 1989).

Using VALS (Values and Lifestyles) typology on data from a large-scale survey, Mitchell (1983) classifies 22 percent of respondents as "achievers", those concerned with personal goals, and another 9 percent as "emulators", those aspiring to be achievers. Kahle, Poulos,

and Sukhdial (1988) identify 16 percent of a probability sample of adult consumers as endorsing a sense of accomplishment value. Researchers believe that personal and career goals are strongly associated with consumer aspirations (Dholakia and Levy 1987; Mason 1981). Belk (1985) suggests that some individuals demonstrate and justify their drive for achievements through conspicuous consumption. Hirschman (1990) contends that a dominant theme in the U.S. culture is the documentation of personal achievement via consuming in a prescribed way (e.g., status is exemplified by "showing off" material possessions). Richins and Dawson (1992) also show that materialism is used as a symbol of achievement, a result also supported by Netemeyer, Burton, and Lichtenstein (1995). In sum, product consumption often is a behavioral manifestation of achievement vanity and achievement vanity has extensive implications for consumer marketing.

The relationship between achievement vanity and material possessions can be viewed from a different perspective. Some individuals use material possessions not as a way to demonstrate achievements but as a way to pursue achievements. An example is women's aspirations for career success. Women's orientation to achievement is more heavily tied to their physical appearance than men's (i.e., a woman's physical appearance may be viewed as an instrument of career achievement in a man's world). For example, Striegel-Moore, Silberstein, and Rodin (1985) studied attitudes based on socio-cultural values that "attractiveness increases the likelihood of professional success". Results showed that bulimic women, who view beauty or physical attractiveness to be associated with bulimia, expressed substantially greater acceptance of these attitudes than non-bulimic women (Striegel-Moore, Silberstein, and Rodin 1985).

Empirical evidence reveals that achievement vanity is positively correlated with status concern, a measure of the degree to which individuals are concerned with their social standing in the community (Netemeyer, Burton, and Lichtenstein 1995). Evidence also shows that achievement vanity is positively correlated with self-oriented values such as self-fulfillment and being well-respected. Achievement vanity was found in a student sample to be correlated with public body consciousness and clothing concern, the two variables indicative of concern over physical appearance. Correlations were even higher in a fashion model sample where achievement vanity was found to be highly correlated with cosmetics use, consideration of cosmetic surgery, and money spent on clothing (Netemeyer, Burton, and Lichtenstein 1995). This pattern of correlation is not surprising: for fashion models, their appearance is their career.

2.5 Physical Attractiveness

Preceding discussions of self-concept indicate high potential of the construct to evoke actions such as those of interest in the present study that enhance an individual's physical attractiveness. By "physical" is meant some aspect of one's corporeal body visible to others; by "attractiveness" is meant pleasuring or interesting to others. This section discusses female physical attractiveness, with a focus on the role of breasts in contributing to attractiveness, and motivational factors that drive the desire for physical attractiveness.

Most people accept the proposition that to be physically attractive is socially advantageous. Physical attractive people are perceived to possess good mental health (Jones, Hansson, and Phillips 1978) and everyone knows of cases where cute children receive more attention from their teachers or where a good looking person is chosen for the job (Adams 1977). Compared to their less attractive counterparts, physically attractive people are seen to be

more intelligent (Kanazawa and Kovar 2004), possess more competence and ability (Lewis and Walsh 1978), and have higher potential for achievement (Umberson and Hughes 1987). The popular culture including marketing continues to exploit physical attractiveness as an ideal and even as an index of credibility (Domzal and Kernan 1993).

The study of physical attractiveness is usually traced to the classic article of Dion, Berscheid, and Walster (1972), where the "what-is-beautiful-is-good" finding originated. Since then, numerous studies have tested this position in a variety of settings. Reviews (Berscheid and Walster 1974), meta-analyses (Eagly *et al.* 1991), and narratives (Hatfield and Sprecher 1986) conclude that physically attractive people are liked more and are perceived in more favorable terms than their less attractive counterparts.

Three measures are used in the literature to quantify physical attractiveness for women: weight (e.g., Furnham, Dias, and McClelland 1998), waist-to-hip ratio or WHR (e.g., Singh 1993a, 1993b, 1994), and breast size (e.g., Furnham, Dias, and McClelland 1998; Kleinke and Staneski 1980). Assessment of female physical attractiveness is not absolute but relative among these indices. For example, the effect of breast size on attractiveness judgments depends on a woman's weight and her WHR (Furnham, Dias, and McClelland 1998). WHR is emphasized in some studies (e.g., Singh 1993a, 1993b, 1994) for contributing to overall physical attractiveness. In these studies, it is argued that the distribution of body fat, as measured by WHR, is one of the main features that determine women attractiveness. The studies found that men and women in the age range of 18 to 85 years regard normal weight female figures with low WHR (0.7) as more attractive and more healthy than female figures with a higher WHR who had the same or even lower body weight.

Although breasts are representative of female identity and are considered a unique body part contributing to women's physical attractiveness (Spadola 1998), studies show mixed results in the role that breasts play in the assessment of female attractiveness (Fisher 1992; Furnham and Greaves 1994). The majority of studies investigating relationships between breasts and attractiveness emphasize breast size (e.g., Furnham, Hester, and Weir 1990; Gitter *et al.* 1983; Kleinke and Staneski 1980; Singh and Young 1995). For example, a study of college students' ratings based on first impressions shows that women with medium breast sizes are given higher ratings on liking and personal appeal than are those with small and large breast sizes (Kleinke and Staneski 1980). In contrast, Gitter *et al.* (1983) found that male subjects rated larger breasts more favorably and that female subjects rated smaller breasts more favorably. However, large breasts on overweight women are not considered attractive and Low (1979) suggests that only slim young females with large breasts can be thought of as attractive. Singh and Young (1995) found that the figures with slender bodies, low WHR, and large breasts were rated as the most attractive, healthy, feminine looking, and desirable for casual and long-term romantic relationships. Overall, evidence seems to support the fact that breast sizes that fit or agree proportionately with weight and WHR are most preferable (e.g., Kleinke and Staneski 1980; Low 1979; Singh and Young 1995).

Most young adult women in Thailand are slim with breast sizes smaller than those of women in Western countries. Small breasts are a common source of dissatisfaction among young Thai women given that they are exposed to thin-body/big-breasts ideal body types in the form of Western women prevalent in the Thai mass media. In a survey conducted on students in major universities in Bangkok, women aged 20-30 were asked through a confidential self-completion instrument to report their current height, weight, hips, waist, and breast measurements and to rate how satisfied they were with each of these body descriptors.

Results revealed that smaller-breasted women were the most dissatisfied with their bodies. Breast size explained more of the variance of body satisfaction than did other body elements (Mandhachitara and Mahaekkanant 2005). Results found a mean body mass index of 19.7, waist of 26 inches, hips of 36 inches, and mean WHR of 0.72, confirming the basic slimness of Thai women.

In summary, it is widely accepted that to be physically attractive not only puts one in a socially advantageous position, but also contributes to positive psychological well-being. Weight, WHR, and breast size all have been shown to contribute to women's overall physical attractiveness in the Western literature. Although empirical evidence in the Western literature is mixed, breast size exerts more influence in explaining body satisfaction than other body elements for young Thai women.

2.5.1 Self-Oriented Motivation of Physical Attractiveness

Discussions on motivations to pursue physical attractiveness in the realm of social psychology of the body can be traced back to the basic notion that bodies have tasks that must or can be performed on them (Domzal and Kernan 1993; Frank 1991; Turner 1984). For example, feeding, sleeping, bathing, dressing, exercising, and medicating are tasks performed on the body for the purpose of maintaining physical well-being; manicures, hair styling, and skin care treatments are tasks performed on the body for the purpose of physical attractiveness. As described earlier, motivations to perform bodily tasks divide broadly into self-driven and social-driven categories. Self-driven versus social-driven motivations also apply when bodily tasks are related to the pursuit of physical attractiveness. For example, exercising aimed to make oneself slim so that one can preen in a narcissistic manner is self-

driven, whereas undertaking skin care treatments to improve one's look in public is social-driven.

Bodily tasks can be motivated simultaneously by both a self-drive and a social-drive: an individual may dress to feel good about oneself (self-driven) but how an individual dresses is affected by norms and role expectations, all as operating within a society (social-driven). Domzal and Kernan's (1993) definition of self-versus-social motivation can be extended to an expected psychological outcome (e.g., personal satisfaction) that often serves as an underlying motive for a particular bodily task. For example, in an ethnographic investigation of motivations to undergo aesthetic plastic surgery, Schouten (1991) found that in almost all cases studied, subjects' dissatisfaction with a particular body part motivated them to have surgery. However, Schouten also found that subjects' desires for impression management in their self-presentations to particular audiences often played a part in their decisions. Thus, a decision to undergo aesthetic plastic surgery is driven both by the need to satisfy oneself (self-driven) and by social pressure (social-driven).

Other empirical studies show that motivations for the pursuit of physical attractiveness can be grouped into self-driven and social-driven categories. For example, intrapsychic and interpersonal drives were found to influence the decision to seek breast reconstruction (Schain, Jacobs, and Wellisch 1984). Role transitions (major transitions in life, such as career changes or divorce), sexual and romantic concerns (desires to improve body images in the context of sex or romance), control (use of aesthetic plastic surgery as a means of exercising control over one's body), and role identity play (representations of actual or possible roles one might perform) repeatedly surfaced as motivational bases for aesthetic plastic surgery (Schouten 1991). As interpretation, the motive for sexual and romantic

fantasies is aimed at improved intimate relations and is primarily social-driven. The motive for role identity play also is primarily social-driven because one would expect positive perceptions and desirable interactions with others as a result of improved physical appearance. On the other hand, the desire to exercise control over one's body through surgery is primarily self-driven. Role transitions have motivations that can be either self- or social-driven or both, depending on the specific situation. For example, the motivation for breast augmentation surgery for a small-breasted woman who has just started a career as a public relations officer may reside in an expected "femininization" and vitalization of her womanhood that plastic surgery could bring and, thus constitutes self-driven. On the other hand, the motivation for breast reconstruction for a woman seeking to revitalize a romantic relationship with her husband may be considered social-driven.

Still, it is difficult in discussing physical attractiveness to distinguish self-driven from social-driven. Taking the above examples, while the motivation to vitalize womanhood serves personal purposes (self-driven), bodily norms that are considered desirable for a woman within a society (social-driven) determine how such womanhood should be achieved. Similarly, while the motivation to revitalize a romantic relationship serves an interpersonal purpose (social-driven), the expectation that self-esteem would eventually increase may be working as well (self-driven). It is important to note that in either case, self-drive is the ultimate drive that influences the pursuit of physical attractiveness. Self-drive may originate the formation of a motivation by itself (e.g., I want to vitalize my womanhood). Or, self-drive may be working behind or in the disguise of social-drive (e.g., I want to reestablish my relationship because I know that I would regain my self-esteem).

The self-driven approach as an explanation of the pursuit of physical attractiveness has a theoretical basis in motivations of the self-concept. Two types of motivations of the self-concept are relevant. People may seek physical attractiveness because they have a *self-efficacy motive*, defined as an individual's beliefs about his or her capabilities to produce levels of performance that exercise influence over events (Gollwitzer 1999). For example, a woman may join a weight control program because she believes that a slim and attractive body can attract attention from her colleagues and thus give her capabilities to control relationships with these colleagues. Alternatively, people may seek physical attractiveness because they have a *self-esteem motive*, defined as a desire to maintain and enhance a positive conception of oneself (Rokeach 1979; Rosenberg 1979; Wells 1978). For example, an overweight woman may go on a diet because she wishes to see herself slim again in the mirror.

The self-driven approach also has theoretical basis in social comparison theory, which states that an innate comparison process takes three forms based on motives to meet an individual's goals. As discussed later (Section 2.6.1), these motives are self-evaluation, self-improvement, and self-enhancement. Evidence discussed later provides strong support that the self is a major motivational drive in the pursuit of physical attractiveness.

Four conclusions can be reached from discussions of motivations to pursue physical attractiveness. First, motivations can be categorized broadly as self-driven and social-driven. Second, each type of motivation can extend to phenomena in the social psychological domain. Third, the boundary between self-driven and social-driven is not clear-cut and leads to a conclusion that the pursuit of physical attractiveness involves both motivations in varying degrees. Fourth, the self is the ultimate drive and it is fair to include ultimate motivations

underlying the pursuit of physical attractiveness under a single umbrella of self-drive. These four observations will serve as bases for conceptualizing self-oriented motivation, one of the present study's two clustering variables, discussed in Chapter 3.

2.6 Theoretical Foundations

Chapter 2 now turns to theoretical foundations used to tie the study's nine central concepts together. The nine concepts are: fun and enjoyment, excitement, being well-respected, self-fulfillment, extraversion, openness to experience, self-esteem, physical vanity, and achievement vanity. Literature reviewed in this section addresses social comparison theory, self-discrepancy theory, corporal theory of the body, and resource advantage theory. This section is the basis for conceptualization and prediction in the form of research propositions and research hypotheses discussed in Chapter 3.

2.6.1 Social Comparison Theory

Social comparison theory posits that humans have an innate drive to evaluate their opinions and abilities and that comparison with other people is an important basis of evaluation (Festinger 1954). To function effectively, people must know their capacities and limitations and must be accurate in their opinions of objects and other people (Jones and Gerard 1967). People often meet the need for *self-evaluation* by measuring their attributes against objective standards.

When objective standards are unavailable, individuals compare themselves with other people. Social comparison theory's "similarity hypothesis" holds that individuals prefer to compare themselves with similar others. However, similar others are not always the comparison target. For example, people with *self-improvement* interests may make comparisons with superior

others who are seen as better in some way; these are called upward comparisons (Wheeler 1966). People with *self-enhancement* interests may make comparisons with inferior others who are seen as lesser in some way; these are called downward comparisons (Wills 1981).

Using perspectives of social cognition and self, Wood (1989) was among the first to provide insights about the social comparison process. Wood showed that domains of social comparison, previously limited to a person's opinions and abilities, may include attributes such as personality and wealth. She found that an individual is not always an unbiased self-evaluator but may seek many goals or motives (such as self-improvement and self-enhancement) through social comparisons. She found that an individual's social environment is not always passive or inactive but that it may impose comparisons. Finally, Wood showed that the social comparison process involves more than simply selecting a comparison target and instead takes three forms based on an individual's goals or motives—self-evaluation, self-improvement, and self-enhancement. In short, Wood's work showed that social comparison may occur with respect to personal traits and circumstances, for reasons other than self-evaluation, and with others who are dissimilar.

Relevant others may include reference groups (Hyman 1968) and social categories (Merton 1957). As examples, college students' relative standing among their peers is an important predictor of career aspirations (Davis 1966). Further, students who earn high grades at a college where it is easy to earn high grades tend to have higher career aspirations than an equally qualified student at a more competitive college. This phenomenon has been called

> *"the campus as a frog pond"; for the frog in a shallow pond aims his sights higher than an equally talented frog in a deep pond (Pettigrew 1967, p. 257).*

The “frog pond” study and similar studies (e.g., Marsh and Parker 1984; Morse and Gergen 1970) show that social environments impose comparisons that shape an individual’s self-perceptions. Such comparisons impinge on the individual, whether or not the individual has “selected” them. Comparisons are automatic, taking place with others who are salient or are simply available and with whom one has interacted with frequently or recently, whether one wanted to or not (Goethals 1986).

Social comparison theory has been applied extensively in studies of physical attractiveness. An important finding is that people compare themselves with idealized images present in mass media and advertisements rather than with their peers. For example, Richins (1991) found that idealized advertising images are comparison targets for female college students and that idealized images both raised comparison standards for attractiveness and lowered satisfaction with the subjects’ own attractiveness. Her findings reflect social demands for women’s attractiveness (Cash, Ancis, and Strachan 1997) and the tendency for young women to be involved in upward social comparisons. A consequence often is negative body-image evaluations (Cash, Cash, and Butters 1983; Garner 1997; Heinberg and Thompson 1992, 1995; Irving 1990). Martin and Kennedy (1994) found that upward social comparisons were motivated by self-evaluation and self-improvement. Their evidence also indicated that the tendency of female adolescents to compare themselves to models in advertisements increases with age and that this tendency is greatest for female adolescents having low self-perceptions of physical attractiveness and/or self-esteem.

In summary, social comparison is an innate, goal-oriented, human activity that shapes an individual’s self-perceptions. Social comparisons are made with peers, dissimilar others, and with idealized images. However, research on social comparisons perhaps has underestimated

the impact of social environments in shaping self-perceptions (Wood 1989). By focusing on active selection of comparisons, research has largely ignored what may be the most prevalent and potent type of social comparisons, those that individuals do not seek but arrive passively and unbidden (Brickman and Bulman 1977).

2.6.2 Self-Discrepancy Theory

Self-discrepancy theory describes how different types of disagreements between self-state representations are related to different kinds of emotional vulnerabilities (Higgins 1987). One domain of the self (actual; ideal; ought) and one viewpoint on the self (own; significant other) constitute each type of self-state representation. For example, the ideal/own self-state is a representation of a perceived ideal self seen from one's own viewpoint; the actual/significant other self-state is a representation of how one's current self-state is reflected in the eyes of a significant other.

Self-discrepancy theory posits that different types of self-state representations produce different types of negative psychological situations associated with different kinds of emotional discomfort. Discrepancies between the actual/own self-state and the ideal self-states (i.e., representations of an individual's beliefs about his or her own hopes, wishes, or aspirations) signify the absence of positive outcomes and are associated with dejection-related emotions (e.g., disappointment, dissatisfaction, sadness). In contrast, discrepancies between the actual/own self-state and the ought self-states (i.e., representations of an individual's beliefs about his or her own beliefs about duties, responsibilities, or obligations) signify the presence of negative outcomes and are associated with agitation-related emotions (e.g., fear, threat, restlessness).

Higgins (1987) coins the terms “desired end state” and “self-guides” for use in his self-discrepancy theory. Ideal self-guides refer to an individual’s representations of his or her ideal characteristics, hopes, wishes, aspirations, or maximal goals. The failure to achieve ideal end states results in negative, dejection-related emotions. Chronically or situationally accessible ideal self-guides increase an individual’s concern about approaching desired end states. People are motivated to approach psychologically desired end states and to avoid undesired end states (Higgins 1998). Focusing on desired end states fosters an active search for ways to regain psychological well-being, referred to as a promotion or pleasure seeking focus.

2.6.3 Corporal Theory of the Body

The corporal theory of the body holds that people’s perceptions of their bodies affect how people deploy their bodies. Three premises underlie the theory (Domzal and Kernan 1993). The first is that *bodies are innately corporal* or physical in nature. This point is obvious but rarely given explicit concern in psychological models of behavior. Whether to wear an attractive shirt, take a nap, or work in an office, everything people do requires their bodies. The second premise is that *bodies provide corporal experience*. People are aware of their corporality and experience their corporality. To experience corporality is to be aware of and understand the salience of one’s body in one’s sense of self. As examples, outgoing, other-directed people sense more of themselves in their bodies as they interact with others than do withdrawn, inner-directed people as they sit alone at home. Thus, corporal experience and bodily behavior covary.

The third premise is that *bodies have tasks*. Domzal and Kernan (1993) posit that bodily tasks fall into two categories: personal tasks that concern body maintenance and social tasks

that concern interpersonal presentation. The distinction between personal and social tasks resides in motivation. If motivation for the task is purely somatic (e.g., sustaining one's health), it is called personal. If motivation for the task is purely parasomatic (e.g., enhancing one's appearance), it is called social. Bodily tasks can be both personal and social. For example, people require food and water (personal motivation) but what and where people eat often is socially determined (social motivation). Similarly, good grooming stems from personal motivation but has social motivations as well, particularly in the use of personal care items like cosmetics and lotions.

The corporal theory of the body includes the notion of self, conceiving the self to be self-as-subject (I-self) as well as self-as-object (Me-self). Corporal theory holds that people separate their minds from their bodies, examine what they think about their bodies, and exhibit behaviors based on these impressions. Corporal theory holds that people include the body as a component of self, to understand why and how people pursue behaviors and end states such as attractiveness. The theory considers people as sentient beings, alert simultaneously to their bodies, physical environments, and social environments. The theory holds that self must incorporate the corporal body because corporality influences self-identity, self-presentation, and self-evaluation (despite social influences on these concepts as well). Corporal theory argues that people regard personal attractiveness through the mechanism of self—the thinking "I" considering the bodily "Me"—and that this phenomenon is driven by a corporal as well as a psychological theory of the body (Domzal and Kernan 1993).

Because the self-as-object (Me) includes all material things a person possesses, it would be inconsistent to assume that one's principal possession (the body) does not figure prominently in any self-relevant process. Thus, it would be illogical to ignore the corporal body in

considering such an utterly corporal phenomenon as physical attractiveness. The body-as-object is the most visible expression of self; it is the vehicle that contains (and therefore through which people express) their psychological selves. The I has a natural concern over corporal sustenance and enhancement, even if the body is considered little more than an instrumentality. This explains why people inherently understand the difference between what Bloch and Richins (1992) call the body's innate (essentially unchangeable) characteristics and its mutable characteristics. People recognize that the former can be improved through camouflage (dressing to convey an impression that one is taller) and enhancers (making up one's naturally pretty eyes) and the latter in a variety of ways (e.g., maintaining a healthy weight or grooming regimen). Materials that people put in or on their bodies are thus important to an understanding of self and self-concept, whether these things are used to sustain life or to pursue beauty.

Domzal and Kernan (1993) propose a typology of bodily experience and deployment based on how much people sense that they are represented by their bodies (associatedness) and their inner- or other-directedness focus regarding their bodies. People of high associatedness regard themselves as little more than their bodies while people of low associatedness regard themselves as a great deal more. People with an inner focus undergo self-contained bodily experience without regard to other people's bodies, having what Markus and Kitayama (1991) call an individuated sense of self. People with outer focus think of their bodies in a more instrumental fashion, to be used for communicating with, submitting to, or dominating other bodies. The two dimensions lead to identification of four corporal body types: disciplined body (disassociated, inner focus), particularizing body (disassociated, outer focus), communicative body (associated, outer focus), and mirroring body (associated, inner focus). Each body type leads to different modes of body deployment (Domzal and Kernan 1993).

Bourdieu (1984) takes the corporal theory of the body a step further. Rooted in a mode of thought that conceives of all social practices as directed toward the maximization of material and symbolic profit, Bourdieu views bodies as a form of physical capital deriving from a societal process of commodification. Commodification is a pervasive process that links people's identities to social values based on sizes, shapes, and appearances of their bodies. As bodies develop, they become related to material circumstances and management of bodies thus becomes central to the acquisition of status and distinction. As a form of physical capital, bodies possess power, status, and distinctive symbolic forms that are integral to accumulation of resources (Shilling 1993).

The production of physical capital refers to the development and use of bodies in ways that are recognized as possessing value by particular social groups (Bourdieu 1978, 1984, 1986). Each group has a relative autonomy from other groups and bestows values to bodies based on social practices according to its internal organization. As examples, in the field of women's fashion, value is given for a model's body weight and body height, as combined in the form of a body mass index. In sports, value again depends on an individual's body weight and height, along with speed, agility, and particular talents and skills as required by individual sports. In professional sports, value is placed ultimately on performance and winning over participation and effort (Lash 1990, p. 261). In the airline industry, flight attendants must meet company imposed regulations for body height, weight, and physical performance (Tyler and Abbot 1998). In the general workplace, corporate fitness or wellness centers encourage employees to achieve and maintain fit bodies as a way to reduce job absenteeism, job turnover, and healthcare costs (Baun, Bernacki, and Tsai 1986).

Physical capital of the body is not an end in itself and is eventually converted (Bourdieu 1986). Conversion of physical capital refers to the translation of bodily participation in work and leisure into different forms of capital. Physical capital is most usually converted into economic capital (money, goods and services, physical assets), cultural capital (knowledge, skills, education), and social capital (group membership, position within a group, networks of group influence and support).

In sum, the corporal theory of the body posits that people differ in how their bodies constitute a sense of self and how these differences lead to characteristic modes of body deployment. Depending on how people regard their bodies, their interests and behaviors in improving and maintaining their bodies and in pursuing physical attractiveness of their bodies will vary.

2.6.4 Resource-Advantage Theory

This section reviews a recently developed theory of interfirm competition, resource-advantage theory. The section then relates resource-advantage theory to a description of the breast augmentation business in Thailand's health and beauty industry and to a discussion of market segmentation in consumer research.

Hunt (1997) and Hunt and Morgan (1995) propose a resource-advantage theory of interfirm competition using heterogeneous demand and firm resources as conceptual bases. The authors view inter-industry and intra-industry demand for goods and services as inherently varied, diverse, and dynamic, resulting in small fragments of near uniform demand exhibited by customer segments at any point in time. Segments are defined as identifiable groups of customers whose tastes and preferences with regard to an industry's output are relatively homogeneous within a group but significantly heterogeneous across groups. Firm resources

describe interfirm diversity in terms of unique possessions of heterogeneous and imperfectly mobile assets, capabilities, processes, and knowledge. Resources are tangible and intangible entities available to the firm that enable it to produce efficiently and/or effectively a market offering that has value for one or more market segments. Resource-advantage theory directs firms to analyze heterogeneous demand for goods and services to identify customer segments responsible for this demand and to design and produce product and service offerings to satisfy each segment.

Resource-advantage theory is a process explanation of competitive firm behavior. Firms are seen as continually competing organizations trying to achieve a sustainable advantage in resources, i.e., a market position such that competitors cease efforts to render the advantage redundant or superfluous. Competitors attempt to neutralize or to overcome an advantaged firm by better managing existing resources, acquiring new resources, imitating the advantaged firm, or innovating. If competitors fail in these attempts, the advantaged firm will earn above-average profits in the long term (Porter 1985). Thus, resource-advantage theory has substantial implications for marketing strategy and practice. Marketing managers in a firm need to identify and understand segments in consumer markets so that they can respond in such a way that their firm reaches a position of sustainable advantage over all rivals, based on the limited resources it possesses.

Given the centrality of market segments in resource-advantage theory and the segmentation methodology used in the present study, a brief review of market segmentation studies in consumer research is appropriate. As a general statement, market segmentation studies emphasize methods and benefits of dividing consumer markets of interest into meaningful, manageable, and actionable collections of buyers. Members of each collection or segment

possess similar values on characteristics used to form the collections including household income, purchasing behaviors, usage rates, psychological predispositions, and benefits sought in the consumption activity. These and other characteristics are identified as bases for segmentation and can be broadly categorized into geographic, demographic, psychographic, and behavioral groupings.

As an example, Yankelovich and Meer (2006) suggest that to identify market segments correctly, a researcher should evaluate the expectations consumers bring to a particular transaction. They propose a "gravity of decision" spectrum from which consumers' motives, concerns, and psychological predispositions can be probed. At the shallow end of the spectrum, consumers seek products and services that will save them time, effort, and money. Thus, segmentation studies for items such as toiletries and snacks might use price sensitivity, buying habits, and impulsiveness of the target consumer as segmentation bases. In the middle of the spectrum, consumers are concerned about quality, design, complexity, and status that products of higher perceived risk might confer. Thus, segmentation studies for purchases of cars, expensive electronic devices, and household furniture might be based on relevant attitudes and beliefs. At the deepest end of the spectrum, such as the purchase of a vacation home or an object of art, consumers' emotional investments are greatest, their core values and beliefs are engaged, and effective segmentation studies need to be based on fundamental ideas such as personal virtues, values, and norms.

Segmentation studies regularly use one or more statistical techniques including multidimensional scaling (Sinha and DeSarbo 1998), conjoint analysis (Kamakura 1988; Kennedy, Best, and Kahle 1988), and linear regression (Brusco, Cradit, and Tashchian 2003). However, the most common technique is cluster analysis. Cluster analysis procedures

classify objects under study according to natural relationships observed among objects on variables used as segmentation bases (Punj and Stewart 1983). The procedures identify groupings of objects that are similar within each cluster yet widely separated from other clusters on the segmentation bases.

Perhaps the most commonly used form of cluster analysis, hierarchical agglomerative clustering, begins by locating objects to be clustered in a *p*-dimensional space based on each object's possession of the *p* segmentation variables. Distances between objects are computed in the space by using one or more distance definitions (e.g., Euclidean, city-block, Mahalanobis). Based on inter-object distances, the closest pair of objects is placed into a first grouping or cluster. In subsequent steps, either the next closest pair of objects forms a new cluster or one object joins an already formed cluster. Steps continue until all objects under study form a single cluster. At any point in the clustering process, the researcher can stop, choose a *k*-cluster solution, and identify objects located in each cluster. Additional details on clustering procedures are found in Chapter 4, including descriptions of hierarchical and *k*-means clustering as used in the present study.

Validity issues have been raised in the literature, critical of cluster analysis in its being descriptive, atheoretical, and non-inferential (Hair Jr. *et al.* 1998). The issues are well-founded. Cluster analysis always produces solutions that identify *k* clusters, regardless of the existence of any "true" separability structure or object density locations in the data. Cluster solutions are replicable but not unique, as cluster membership for any solution depends on subjective decisions made during the analysis procedure. Cluster solutions depend on variables used as segmentation bases; addition or deletion of other relevant variables can have a substantial impact on cluster solutions. In response to these criticisms, Punj and

Stewart (1983) and Singh (1990) propose a rigorous clustering procedure. The procedure uses a combination of hierarchical and non-hierarchical clustering approaches to internally validate clustering results and address the instability of cluster solutions. Cluster solutions then are compared to data not used as part of the clustering procedure to evaluate the solution's external validity.

As an example of an early segmentation study in consumer research, Cunningham and Crissy (1972) found that motivational, attitudinal, socioeconomic, and demographic variables define segments in the compact car market. Pitts and Woodside (1983) found consumer values a sound basis for segmentation using consumer choice criteria in the automobile, weekend travel, and underarm deodorant markets. Novak and MacEvoy (1990) found that segmentation based on both demographic and values variables yielded better results than a segmentation model based on values alone. Many segmentation studies in consumer research have used values taken from consumer psychographics or lifestyle with remarkable results (Aurifeille and Valette-Florence 1995; Botschen and Thelen 1999; Hofstede, Steenkamp, and Wedel 1999; Prakash 1986). In contrast, segmentation studies have used self-concept in only a few instances (e.g., Sirgy 1982).

In sum, literature suggests no single conventional approach for a market segmentation study. An effective segmentation study must be able to identify expectations, motives, concerns, and psychological predispositions that consumers bring to a particular transaction. In addition, an effective segmentation study must be able to establish the true existence of segments and that derived segments are not a mere product of statistical manipulation.

The concepts of heterogeneous demand and market segments discussed in resource-advantage theory apply to the market for breast enlargement for young Thai women in Bangkok, the context of the present study. The market consists of fragments of demand for products and services that satisfy a variety of needs and levels of affordability, as reflected by wide-ranging enlargement alternatives available in the market. While plastic surgery is a widely known breast enlargement procedure, its relatively high cost creates barriers to access for many consumers. Some consumers try more affordable herbal creams and herbal pills and those expecting immediate efficacy with low investment consider special bras or silicone pads as alternatives, despite their temporary effect. Health conscious individuals who want a sustainable effect might try the "bosom firming dance", an exercise campaign sponsored by the Ministry of Public Health that attempts to convince Thai women to improve their breasts without resorting to surgery or other kinds of risky alternatives such as direct injections of silicone into the breasts (*Bangkok Post* 2003).

Segments can be formed on the basis of heterogeneous demand such as the demand for breast enlargement products and services, as discussed above. Similarly, segments also can be formed according to consumer values, personality traits, and motives, as is the case of this study. Discussion of consumer segments for breast enlargement market for young women in Bangkok is the core of this study and will be elaborated in Chapter 5.

The concept of firm resources discussed in resource advantage theory also applies to the market for breast enlargement for young Thai women in Bangkok. As indicated earlier in this section, a number of firms compete in the market, including medical professionals, manufacturers, and retailers. Important resources to these firms include their capabilities and processes based on information and knowledge of technical matters and of market segments.

Thus, information and knowledge in these firms can be treated as an asset that generates sales and profits, as well as customer satisfaction. Knowledge of relevant values, personality traits, and motives of one or two market segments should lead to increased efficiently and effectiveness of decision making in these firms, particularly with respect to product positioning and marketing communications.

2.7 Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 reviews and discusses self-concept, its theoretical bases in the self, and its dimensions as related to the context of the study. Both antecedents of self-concept (the "Me", self-as-object) and consequences of self-concept (the "I", self-as-subject) approaches are discussed based on the literature. The literature reveals that conceptual content of the dimensions of self-concept varies depending on research context but always contains evaluative aspects as well as action influencing aspects. However, the self-as-subject approach has been largely neglected in research on physical attractiveness and constitutes a major gap in the literature.

The literature identifies three dimensions relevant to the present study, consistent with the definition and conceptualization of the self-concept: values, personality traits, and motives. The three dimensions share three common characteristics. First, they are conceptually tied to self-concept. Second, they are cognitive entities that have both evaluative and action-influencing aspects. Third, they are motivational and lead to corresponding behaviors. Nine constructs belonging to each dimension of the self-concept and considered relevant to the study context are reviewed from both conceptual and empirical perspectives.

The literature on the motivation behind the pursuit of physical attractiveness reveals that while self-driven and social-driven bases exist, the boundary between these two types of motivation is not clear-cut. The self always is influential and is the ultimate drive. Finally, four theoretical foundations also were reviewed. These theoretical foundations serve as bases for stating research questions, conceptualizing constructs of interest, and stating propositions hypotheses in Chapter 3.