

ABSTRACT

GIOVANNINI, SARAH MARIE. The Influence of Brand Consciousness on Young Consumers' Self versus Social Consumption for Luxury Fashion Products. (Under the direction of Dr. Yingjiao Xu, Dr. Marguerite Moore, and Dr. Nancy Cassill).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of brand consciousness on young consumers' consumption for luxury fashion products. The luxury market in the United States has seen an increase in consumption from young consumers. With the increasing purchase power and growing size of the young consumers in the US market, it is of strategic importance for the luxury industry to understand the consumption behaviors of this group. This study specifically focuses on the luxury fashion industry.

The focus of this study is to investigate young consumers' personality traits, motivations, and behaviors for their consumption of luxury fashion products. This study explores the influence of young consumers' brand consciousness on their luxury consumption. The consumption behaviors that this study examines are the brand loyalty of consumers toward luxury fashion products and their intention to purchase these products. The motivations behind these consumption behaviors, including both social-oriented (conspicuous consumption) and self-oriented (brand-self congruency) motivations, will be explored.

This study uses a quantitative approach by distributing an online survey to United States consumers. The results were analyzed using a structural equation model to determine the existence of relationships between the variables. Results show a significant relationship between the personality traits of consumers and their brand consciousness of luxury fashion consumers. The results also show that both social and self-motivations have a significant impact on the consumption behaviors of luxury fashion consumers. By unveiling the

motivations behind these luxury fashion products, the findings of this study will help luxury retailers understand the consumption behaviors of their targeted consumers.

The Influence of Brand Consciousness on Young Consumers' Self versus Social
Consumption for Luxury Fashion Products

by
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A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
North Carolina State University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Science

Textiles

Raleigh, North Carolina

2012

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to both of my grandfathers, Carl Peter Giovannini and William Charles McGrath, Jr. Although you both cannot be with me, I know both of you are looking over me each and every day with constant support, guidance, and love. I love you.

BIOGRAPHY

Sarah Marie Giovannini was born in Summit, New Jersey on March 1, 1988. She moved to Hickory, North Carolina before the age of 2 and was raised there. She is the daughter of Kathleen and Joseph Giovannini. Sarah has three older brothers—David, Michael, and Brian—and three sister-in-laws—Shannon, Laura, and Christelle. Sarah graduated from Hickory High School in 2006. She continued her education at North Carolina State University in the College of Textiles. Sarah was selected to receive a *Centennial Scholarship*, a merit based scholarship for Textile majors. In 2010, Sarah graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelors of Science Degree in Textile and Apparel Management and a concentration in Brand Marketing Management. During her undergraduate career, Sarah was a member of Delta Zeta Sorority, Phi Psi National Textile Fraternity, and Sigma Tau Sigma Textile Honor Fraternity.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my graduate advisory committee for their constant support and supervision over the course of my graduate degree. In particular, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Yingjiao Xu for the important role she has played in my life over the past 2 years. I would like to thank her for the endless support, motivation, patience and encouragement that she has given me. She has provided me with countless hours of guidance and I would not have been able to do this without her. Next, I would like to thank Dr. Mawrguerite Moore for helping, supporting, and encouraging me throughout both my undergraduate and graduate careers. I am thankful for her constant positive motivation and encouragement. Additionally, I am thankful for Dr. Nancy Cassill, who has believed in me and guided me in every way for the past 6 years.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for being my lifelong cheerleaders. I am so thankful for my wonderful parents for always believing in my every hope and dream, loving me unconditionally, and constantly pushing me to be the best I can be. I would like to thank my amazing brothers for always being there no matter what. I am thankful for my brothers for fulfilling even the silliest of requests, the constant teasing, and the never-ending love. I am also thankful for my encouraging sisters-in-law, who I can't imagine not being a part of my family. Also, I would not be where I am today if it were not for my two wonderful and supportive grandmothers. Lastly, I would like to thank Lee for being my best friend, my strength when I didn't have it, and my support when I needed it the most (and even when I didn't). I am truly thankful for all of the wonderful people in my life, and would not be here without any one of you.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Luxury products are those that have a one of a kind feeling of exclusivity. Typically, these products are the “highest-priced and highest-quality items” within a product category (Bendell and Kleanthous, 2007). Providing consumers with a feeling of prestige, luxury products are ones that people aspire to own. All luxury products offer fulfillment of some sort of emotional need within consumers (Lyon, 2010). Luxury fashion products—which include handbags, clothing and accessories—account for \$75.6 billion of the total United States’ luxury market (Fionda and Moore, 2008).

In 2008, the United States experienced an extreme downturn in its economy. The effects of this recession were felt by businesses in all markets. There was a decrease in revenues across the board. While the luxury market did experience a slight decline in sales in 2008, the market was among the quickest to recover by 2010 as most luxury brands experienced significant growths synonymous with pre-recession figures (Panteva, 2011). While it is not resistant to feeling the effects of a nationwide recession, key luxury players in this market have shown to experience significant growth, while lower priced competitors are struggling to show signs of recovery (Panteva, 2011).

Traditionally, the typical luxury consumers were those with an annual household income of at least \$200,000 (Jackson, 2011). Recently, the luxury market has seen more young consumers who are not traditionally associated with luxury consumption. The main motivation for these consumers’ luxury consumption is for personal fulfillment (Yeoman, 2010). Jackson (2011) identified these consumers as aspirational consumers who do not have

the financial means to regularly purchase luxury products. These individuals are defined as “middle-income earner[s] who display high-end taste (Jackson, 2011)”.

One reason that these middle-class consumers entered into the luxury market is the emergence of “New Luxury” products (Lode, 2008). These products are ones “that possess higher levels of quality, taste, and aspiration than other goods in the category, but are not so expensive as to be out of reach” (Silverstein and Fiske, 2003). Middle-class consumers are willing to pay the high price for these New Luxury products and, therefore, luxury has become more accessible to many consumers (Lode, 2008).

Individuals aged 25-40 are reported to make single luxury purchases that average \$300 (Panteva, 2011). Therefore, while the selection of luxury products under \$300 is limited, luxury brands are beginning to change their product offerings to offer selections within the budgets of these aspirational shoppers (Panteva, 2011). Per Jackson’s (2011) study, these aspirational consumers are those aged 29 – 46. In the United States market, consumers in this age range make up Generation Y and part of Generation X (Kincade and Gibson, 2010).

Studies have been conducted to examine the influence that product attributes have on consumers when purchasing luxury products. Salient product attributes for luxury consumption have been defined, which includes: uniqueness, price, functionality, and quality (Wiedmann et al, 2009). Wiedmann et al (2009) examined consumers’ perceptions of the value of luxury products based on these attributes. Amatulli and Guido (2011) examined the effect of product attributes on luxury consumption and determined that while product attributes are important, intangible motivations are more significant in luxury consumption.

Other studies also have been conducted examining consumers' luxury consumption from a personality perspective. Workman and Lee (2011) found that the traits of vanity, public self-consciousness, self-esteem, and fashion consciousness influence consumers' consumption of luxury fashion products. Sproles and Kendall (1986) found the trait of brand consciousness to be a mental orientation within consumers that influences them to make certain purchasing decisions. Consumers with a high level of brand consciousness view brands as status symbols (Liao and Wang, 2009). Fernandez (2009) found that young consumers (ages 25-40) are highly brand conscious individuals.

Panteva (2011) found that consumers' are motivated to purchase luxury products for the intangible values that luxury fashion products offer consumers. Truong (2010) identified both social and self-motivations behind consumers' luxury purchases, such as self-directed pleasure, happiness, and social recognition. One self-oriented motivation for consumption is brand-self congruency (Mittal, 2006). Consumers who seek to feel a personal connection with their purchases have a high level of brand-self congruency. A high level of brand-self congruency influences consumers' purchase decisions (Sirgy, 1985). One social motivation for consumption is conspicuous consumption. Conspicuous consumption is the motivation of a consumer to purchase products that display a certain status to others (Chaudhuri, et al, 2011). Other motivations include the desire for the exclusivity, image, and status associated with luxury products (Jackson, 2004).

Luxury products are found in a wide range of product categories including fashion, cosmetics, wines, airlines, hotels, automobiles, and home furnishings (Fionda and Moore, 2008). Luxury fashion products include handbags, apparel, and accessories and account for

42% of the entire luxury market (Fionda and Moore, 2008). This research study focuses on luxury fashion products in particular.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of brand consciousness on young consumers' consumption for luxury fashion products. With the increasing purchase power and growing size of the young consumers in the US market, it is of strategic importance for the luxury industry to understand the consumption behaviors of this group. This study investigated the influence of personality traits on consumers' brand consciousness. Specifically, the personality traits of public self-consciousness and self-esteem were explored.

Considering the high level of brand consciousness in young consumers (Fernandez, 2009), this study also examined the influence of young consumers' brand consciousness on their self-oriented (brand-self congruency) and social-oriented (conspicuous consumption) motivations for luxury fashion consumption. These motivations explain the factors that drive consumers to make certain purchases, and can be for self or social attainment. Brand consciousness was also studied in terms of its influence on the consumption behaviors of brand loyalty and purchase intention.

Finally, this study explored the influence of young consumers' self-oriented and social-oriented motivations on their luxury consumption behaviors. The consumption behaviors investigated in this study were brand loyalty and purchase intention.

Research Objectives

The following research objectives were developed to guide this study:

Research Objective 1: To identify young consumers' consumption level for luxury fashion products.

Research Objective 2: To explore the degree of young consumers' brand consciousness and how this brand consciousness influences their consumption for luxury fashion products.

Research Objective 3: To determine how young consumers' brand consciousness is influenced by their personality traits.

Research Objective 4: To investigate young consumers' social-oriented (conspicuous consumption) versus self-oriented (brand-self congruency) consumption motivations for luxury products and the influence of these motivations on their consumption behaviors.

Significance of Study

This study has significant implications for the retail industry. In order to be successful, all brands must fully understand the consumers whom they are targeting. The personality traits as well as driving motivations behind purchases are key in understanding consumer behavior (Montgomery, 1999). The targeted segment for this study was young consumers who had the financial means to indulge in luxury fashion products, if desired. For the past several years, the luxury fashion brands have been targeting luxury consumers that are affluent, middle-aged, and loyal to certain brands (Gandel, 2011). The luxury fashion market, however, has seen a new consumer emerge. This consumer is one who is young

(ages 25-40), middle-class, and willing to try new brands (Little, 2012). Therefore, understanding the personality dimensions and consumption motivations of these consumers will help retail companies understand how to target this demographic that is relatively new to the luxury market (Jackson, 2011).

Personality traits help to describe the consumer segment. Knowing the personality traits of a target consumer and how these personality traits affect their motivations and behaviors is the first step in understanding how to market to them. Also, consumers' consumption motivations explain why the consumers make the purchases that they do. Specifically, understanding the social and self-consumption motivations of young consumers will explain the driving factors behind their purchasing of luxury fashion products. Luxury retailers can use these motivations as strategies for implementing new marketing approaches.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to provide an overview of previous research that has been conducted to study the consumer behaviors for luxury fashion products. This review provides a summary of the luxury industry including a more in-depth explanation of how luxury products are defined, a summarization of the current luxury market in the United States, and a synopsis of a growing segment of luxury consumers. Consumers' self-oriented and social-oriented motivations for luxury consumption are discussed. Also, in this review, past studies regarding consumers' brand consciousness are reviewed. The literature review also provides a discussion of consumers' personality traits, including public self-consciousness and self-esteem, and their influence on consumer behavior.

Overview of the Luxury Industry

The Luxury Market in the United States

Luxury fashion brands have the following characteristics that help keep each brand unique: clear brand identity, effective communication strategy, product integrity, brand signature, prestige price, exclusivity, heritage, consumption experience, and luxury culture (Fionda and Moore, 2008). Luxury products have a low functionality to price ratio. In other words, these products provide relatively little function and have a much higher price than other more functional products of the same type. Consumers are attracted to luxury products for their intangible values (Nueno, and Quelch, 1998). These values can include a number of things such as status, happiness, pleasure, or self-identity (Panteva, 2011).

In the luxury market, three trends have emerged: globalization, consolidation, and diversification (Ostapenko, N., 2011). The globalization is the expansion of brands across most cultures. The consolidation is the mergers and acquisitions of companies that result in an extensive product offering. The diversification of luxury brands is the changing of market strategies in order to target new consumers (Ostapenko, N., 2011).

The premier global luxury brands include Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Chanel, Hermés and Tiffany & Co. The average price for products from each of these brands is greater than \$1,000. Luxury brands, however, do offer a selection of lower priced goods in certain product categories. Luxury products can be purchased from a number of distribution channels including: online, retail stores, department stores, outlet stores, catalogs and phone orders, and specialty boutiques.

Panteva (2011) found that certain key players in the luxury industry experienced a growth in revenues in 2010, while other lower tiered brands in the same market were still seeing significant declines. This trend for growth among the luxury brands is shared among high-end retailers in jewelry, handbags, luggage, and other accessories industry. The driving factors of consumers that contribute to this thriving industry are important to understand.

Fionda and Moore (2008) defined luxury fashion products as both couture and ready-to-wear apparel, handbags and accessories. This segment of the luxury industry accounts for a little more than 40% of total luxury sales (Fionda and Moore, 2008). These luxury fashion products have helped to strengthen the economy in the United States (Panteva, 2011).

The United States is the country with the greatest number of high net-worth individuals in the world and has a \$400 billion annual luxury industry (Nucifora, 2009). Panteva (2011) showed the impact of the recession in the United States that began in 2008 on the luxury

market as well as other industries. While the key players in the luxury market did experience a decline in revenues, they were among the first in the industry to show signs of recovery.

In the past decade, the United States luxury market has grown 32%. It is now expected to grow at an annual rate of 15% (Nucifora, 2009). An industry overview report conducted by Euromonitor (2011) defined several factors that can be attributed to the growing luxury market in the United States. One reason behind the quick economic rebound of luxury retailers was that with the increased presence of social media outlets, consumers are able to gain instant accessibility to luxury fashion brands (Euromonitor, 2011).

The United States' wealthy population is also getting richer (Nucifora, 2009). Currently, there are approximately 1.2 million households with total net worth of \$5 million in the United States. The top 5% of the population accounts for 27% of the income earned in the United States (Nucifora, 2009). Therefore, as the rich are getting richer, they are spending more money on luxury fashion goods. Another reason for this growing luxury market is the emergence of a new luxury consumer (Jackson, 2011). A growing influential group, Generation Y consumers have reached unprecedented numbers for their purchasing power in the United States market (Noble et al, 2008).

An economic study by Gandel (2011) focused on the spending habits and effects of high-class consumers in the United States whose annual household income is greater than \$380,000. Gandel (2011) acknowledged the impact of these consumers' luxury purchasing habits on the recovery of luxury fashion retailers. This study emphasized the strength of the luxury retailers in the United States due to affluent consumers.

Frank (2010) examined five different types of luxury consumers in the United States market: "Aspirationals", "Rising Middle Class", "New Money Households", "Old Money

Households”, and “Beyond-Money Households”. The “Aspirationals” are consumers who have annual household incomes of approximate \$85,000. Individually, the consumers in this segment are not financially capable of making many high priced purchases. However, as a segment, the “Aspirationals” account for one-third of luxury spending (Frank, 2010).

Young Consumers in the U.S. Luxury Market

Recently, the luxury market has seen more consumers who do not fall into a wealthy income segmentation. These new consumers are reported as having only an average of \$300 to spend on each luxury purchase (Panteva, 2011). The young consumer market is an expanding one that consists of consumers who are “trading up to higher levels of quality and taste” by investing in luxury products (Silverstein, et al, 2003).

In the U.S., young consumers have grown to become the largest consumer segment (Noble et al, 2008). This segmentation also now ranks as one of the most influential consumer groups in the history of the United States (Rajamma, 2010). Generation Y consumers are now spending money on luxury purchases that they were not previously making (Jackson, 2011). Before the recession, the typical older affluent luxury consumer made up 10% of the luxury market in terms of size and 70% in terms of spending. However, by 2011, this group was only responsible for 40% of the spending in the luxury market. Generation X and Generation Y consumers shared the other 60% of the luxury market (Rubin, 2012). In 2011, Generation Y consumers’ spending on luxury fashion goods increased 33% from the year before (Hutzler, 2012). Therefore, due to the increasing size and dominance of this consumer segment, many past studies have been conducted regarding the behaviors of Generation Y consumers.

Accounting for 41% of the total United States population, Generation Y consumers represent a significant portion of the market share with an annual spending power of more than \$600 billion (Noble et al, 2007). Typically, Generation Y consumers are just out of college and working their first jobs. Fernandez (2009) found that Generation Y consumers are highly brand conscious. The purchases of these consumers are influenced by the advertisement and prominence of these brands in the market.

Generation Y consumers are also publicly self-conscious individuals. In general, this segment of young consumers makes their purchasing decisions based on the influence and opinions of their peers (Fernandez, 2009). These young consumers are not as brand loyal as older consumers, as they enjoy having the option of a large assortment of brands (Little, 2012). These young consumers are also concerned about what their peers think about them and, therefore, tend to make purchases based on the approval of those around them (Fernandez, 2009). Generation Y consumers also tend to have a high level of self-esteem (Logan, G., 2008). These attributes of this young generation allow for further research investigating the motivations behind their luxury purchases.

Consumption Motivations for Luxury Products

Many studies have been conducted exploring the reasons that consumers indulge in non-commodity items. Consumers' consumption of luxury products can be for self or social reasons (Truong, 2010). These motivations were divided into extrinsic and intrinsic classifications based on the needs that consumers are hoping to satisfy with their purchases (Truong, 2010). Truong (2010) defined various motivations that are related to consumers'

goals to personal fulfillment through the consumption of luxury products. The intrinsic motivations included self-acceptance, affiliation, and hedonic value. Vigneron and Johnson (1999) explored consumption motivations in terms of social-oriented and self-oriented dimensions. Consumers who purchase products based on self-motivations have different perceptions of luxury brands based on the value they receive from the products (Wiedmann et al, 2009).

Self-Oriented Motivations

Wiedmann et al (2009) defined several self-oriented motivations of consumption including hedonic self-gift giving, self-directed pleasure, life enrichment, and brand-self congruency. Consumers who are driven by self-motivations consume goods for personal reasons (Tsai, 2005). Consumers who are motivated by hedonic self-gift giving motivations purchase products that have an emotional value. These consumers purchase products that provide them with a personal fulfillment (Wiedmann et al, 2009).

Silverstein et al (2003) found that consumers who consume luxury goods for self-aspirational reasons purchase these products for their attributes such as value and quality. The consumers who are driven by self-oriented motivations when purchasing luxury products are doing so with one of four main goals in mind: to take care of themselves, to experience a new adventure, to build a connection with a product or brand, or to showcase their individual style (Silverstein et al, 2003). Amatulli and Guido (2011) found that consumers who consider luxury products to be a personal pleasure are likely to purchase these products exclusively for their own personal needs, not for external reasons (Amatulli and Guido, 2011).

Brand-Self Congruency

Consumers seek out products whose lifestyles, personalities, and values match their own (Mittal, 2006). Quester et al (2000) defined two key parts to brand-self congruency: the perceived self-image and the product image. Brand self-congruency is the motivation of consumers to seek out products with which they feel a strong connection (Mittal, 2006). Sirgy (1985) concluded that brands have personality traits just as consumers do and, therefore, consumers seek out those brands to whose personality they can relate. Tsai (2005) categorized brand-self congruency as a self-motivation for the luxury consumption behaviors of consumers.

Sirgy proposed a three-fold brand-self congruency theory (1980). The three parts were as follows: 1) Some consumers are more expressive than others, and prefer to convey their personalities to people around them; 2) Brands express certain traits or images that are congruent with personalities that people have; and 3) Consumers are likely to prefer brands that match their own perceived self-image. Sirgy (1980) found that consumers with brand-self congruency motivations purchased products with which they shared a personality.

Erikson (1996) segmented the perception of self into both ideal and actual. In his study, Erikson distinguished that a consumers' view of their self-image may not be congruent with their actual self-image. Erikson (1996) found that a significant relationship exists between consumers' actual self-image and their intention to purchase brands with a similar image.

Quester et al (2000) introduced the influence of culture on the concept of brand-self congruency by conducting similar studies within two different cultures. The countries of

focus were Australia and Malaysia. The results showed that culture placed an influence on the role of brand-self congruency in consumers' purchasing decisions

Amatulli and Guido (2011) related the role of brand-self congruency to luxury consumption among consumers. Their findings showed that consumers desire luxury products that had a personality congruent with theirs. These products offer consumers the opportunity to express their individuality. Amatulli and Guido (2011) also indicated that consumers who feel a strong connection with the luxury products that they purchase are less likely to feel regret from making such a high priced purchase.

Social-Oriented Motivations

Truong (2010) defined another classification of purchase motivations as being for social purposes. These social-oriented motivations include consumers' desires to be perceived as wealthy, popular, or high-class (Truong, 2010). Social-oriented motivations include conspicuous consumption and prestige value (Vigernon and Johnson, 2004). The prestige value of luxury goods helps individuals be recognized as part of a certain group (Vigernon and Johnson, 2004). Vigernon and Johnson (2004) found that consumers driven by social motivations purchased goods that offered them a high prestige value.

Conspicuous Consumption for Luxury Products

Conspicuous consumption is a consumption motivation in which consumers make purchasing decisions based on the status associated with that particular product. The concept of conspicuous consumption was initially introduced in 1899 due to a rich American's acting frivolously with their money, as well as time, by spending these resources on "unnecessary

and unproductive” items (Chaudhuri, et al, 2011). Today, conspicuous consumption is more than just simply purchasing products at will; it has become the act of purchasing products in order to attain a certain social status (Chaudhuri et al, 2011). Conspicuous consumption is when consumers deliberately partake in visible consumption of products in order to portray a particular self-image to their peers (Vigneron and Johnson, 2004).

The desire to conspicuously consume in order to obtain a certain status is not limited to those who are wealthy. Levine (1997) stated that many consumers “would rather have a Rolex than a home”. This observation shows the desires of consumers to indulge in conspicuous consumption. The findings of Levine’s (1997) study were that consumers prefer luxury products and status over their basic needs, although they do not typically have the means to purchase these luxury items.

Consumers’ conspicuous consumption behaviors have been studied in a variety of contexts. O’Cass and McEwen (2006) explored the relationship between status seeking behaviors of consumers and their conspicuous consumption intentions. Their findings showed that a strong link between status seeking behaviors and conspicuous consumption exists, and the two can be attributed to one another.

Chaudhuri et al (2011) focused on the differences in consumers’ conspicuous consumption decisions. Their research attributes personality traits as well as social motivations of consumers as contributing factors to conspicuous consumption. Chaudhuri et al (2011) found that conspicuous consumption behaviors are influenced by consumers’ characteristics, including individualism, social visibility, as well as their desires for uniqueness, self-esteem, and materialism (2011).

Teimourpour and Hanzae (2011) focused on the relationship between brand consciousness and conspicuous consumption of Generation Y consumers in Iran. Their research showed that consumers who are brand conscious have the tendency to purchase well-known and expensive products in order to relay a certain level of wealth or status.

Brand Loyalty

Companies convey the image of their products to the consumers through brand names in hopes that consumers will develop the same appreciation and regards for the brand that the company does (Palumbo and Herbig, 2000). Brands add a certain level of value to a product through its familiarity, reliability, and risk reduction (Palumbo and Herbig, 2009). In the past, the goal of marketing for each company has been to figure out new ways to attract new customers and bring in a bigger consumer base. However, recently, this aim has shifted to an attempt to retain the customers that have already shown a certain level of patronage to the company (Palumbo and Herbig, 2000). The repeated purchases of consumers and the preferences of consumers to a certain brand over another is brand loyalty (Palumbo and Herbig, 2000).

Wood (2004) studied the influence of both income and price consciousness on consumers' brand loyalty. The results from this study showed that income is directly related to brand loyalty. According to Hansen (2006), one important aspect of achieving brand loyalty in the eyes of the consumer is to build brand trust. One of the main benefits of developing customer brand loyalty is that it is much less expensive for the company to keep a current customer than to attract a new one (Hansen, 2006).

Long-Yi (2010) defined two types of brand loyalty: affective and action. Affective loyalty is the recognition of consumers' satisfaction with a certain brand, with no pattern of consumption. The trait of action brand loyalty can be seen when consumers show repeat consumption patterns for a particular brand.

Brand loyalty is influenced by many factors including personality traits of both the brand and the consumers including: extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness (Long-Yi, 2010). The Big Five Model proposed by McRae et al (1986) model has been frequently adapted to study the influence of personality traits on brand loyalty. The results showed that agreeableness and openness to brands influenced both consumers' affective and action brand loyalty (Long-Yi, 2010).

Brand Consciousness

Brand consciousness is the orientation of consumers to purchase well-known brand-name products over other brands (Sproles and Kendall, 1986). Consumers use brands to portray their fashion consciousness, express personality traits, and reduce risk in purchase decisions (Liao and Wang, 2009). While similarities exist, brand consciousness does not relate to consumers' actual materialistic consumption behaviors, or conspicuous consumption, but rather a personality characteristic. The brand consciousness of a consumer is a mental orientation in which consumers choose brand-name products based on their familiarity with this brand due to advertising and market awareness (Sproles and Kendall, 1986).

Brand consciousness has been studied to test its relationship to consumer behavior (Liao and Wang, 2009, Fan and Xiao, 1998, Nelson and McLeod, 2005). Well-known

brands provide consumers with a sense of familiarity, and therefore, reduce the amount of risk involved in purchasing behavior. When consumers have a high level of brand consciousness, they are likely to believe that brands are symbols of both status and prestige (Liao and Wang, 2009). Because of this perception of brand-name products, consumers who are highly brand conscious prefer to purchase expensive, well-known products rather than lesser-known brands (Lehmann and Winer, 1997).

Fan and Xiao (1998) suggested that brand consciousness is the most important factor in Chinese consumers' consumer decision-making. Taking the study one step further, Fan and Xiao (1998) also studied the effects that brand consciousness plays on young Chinese consumers. Responses were also gathered from young consumers in Korea as well as the United States. The results of Fan and Xiao's (1998) cross-cultural study showed that the factor of brand consciousness had an influence on consumer behaviors across all three cultures.

Walsh and Mitchell (2010) studied the effect of brand consciousness on consumers' intention to purchase private label brands. Their study indicated that the perception that consumers have of a brand is more influential on their purchase intention than whether or not the product is a private or public label.

Liao and Wang (2009) focused on the influence of material value on consumers' brand consciousness. The "face" of consumers is their consumption of products based on the status or image it portrays to others. Liao and Wang (2009) used face as a mediating factor to define a relationship between material value and brand consciousness. The results of the study showed that the stronger the belief that wealth indicates status, the greater the chance a consumer was likely to possess a higher face consciousness and, therefore, also possessed a

higher level of brand consciousness. Because highly brand conscious consumers consider brands status symbols, they are more likely to purchase more expensive and well-known brands (Liao and Wang, 2009, Lehmann and Winer, 1997).

Public Self-Consciousness

Fenigstein et al (1975) proposed self-consciousness as being the tendencies of individuals to have different levels of self-awareness. This personality dimension of consumers was further broken down into two classifications, private self-consciousness and public self-consciousness (Fenigstein et al, 1975).

Public self-consciousness is a dimension of personalities in which an individual acts with a view that the self is a social object. People who have a high public self-consciousness worry about how they appear to others (Workman, Lee, 2010). Public self-consciousness, when considered high in individuals, is a trait that dictates how certain individuals compose themselves in public. Highly public self-conscious individuals are concerned about the way others perceive them, and so they act in a way that they believe will create a positive public image (Workman and Lee, 2010). According to Burnkrant and Page (1981), public self-consciousness is also a factor influencing consumers' consumption of products for social reasons.

High public self-consciousness positively relates to fashion opinion leadership, perceived fashionability, and clothing interest. These personality characteristics showed that fashion is viewed as a way to enhance self-image. Bushman (1993) investigated the relationship between public self-consciousness and consumers' brand loyalty. The results showed that consumers who ranked high in public self-consciousness were likely to prefer

national brand labels rather than bargain brand labels in an attempt to increase their self-image to others.

Sun et al's (2009) defined a relationship between factors affecting public self-consciousness and, in turn, the effect of public self-consciousness on purchase intention. While the study focused on dietary behaviors, the results can be applied to any field of consumer behavior, specifically the luxury fashion market. The results showed that public self-consciousness has a positive effect on consumers' consumption behaviors.

Malär et al (2011) studied the influence of public self-consciousness on consumers' brand attachment. Their studied showed that the concern to fit in and create a favorable public image is associated with high public self-consciousness. Consumers who show high levels of public self-consciousness are more likely to be attached to certain brands (Malär et al, 2011). Gould and Barak (2001) found that public-self consciousness had a significant impact on consumers' conspicuous consumption behaviors.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is another personality dimension that has been widely explored in consumer behavior literature. Self-esteem is the way that one evaluates, or the opinion one has regarding him or herself (Pyszczynski et al, 2004). Pyszczynski et al (2004) found that the level of self-esteem had an influence on the way people act and serves as a motivation for some of their behaviors.

Rook and Fisher (1995) found that the self-esteem of consumers causes them not to make impulse purchases for fear that they will lose the respect of others. Hausman (2000) found that the self-esteem of consumers does influence consumers to purchase goods

impulsively, because it is a way for consumers to gain acceptance with others and satisfaction with themselves. While the studies by Rook and Fisher (1995) and Hausman (2000) had contradicting findings on behaviors of consumers, both studies found that self-esteem did have an influence on the (impulse) purchasing behaviors of consumers.

Malär et al (2011) also studied the role of self-esteem as a moderating factor in the relationship between self-congruence and brand attachment of consumers. Their study found that because consumers are driven to feel good about themselves through their self-esteem, they are more likely to purchase brands to which they feel some level of attachment.

Hypotheses

Based on the review of relevant research, the following hypotheses are developed for this study.

H1. According to studies by Bushman (1993), Fenigstein et al (1975), Rook and Fisher (1995) and Hausman (200), the personality traits of consumers have been found to have an effect on the consumption motivations and behaviors of consumers. This hypothesis proposes that young consumers' personality traits will significantly influence their brand consciousness. In this study, two particular personality traits are studied: public self-consciousness and self-esteem. Therefore, two sub-hypotheses are developed:

H1a. Young consumers' public self-consciousness will positively influence their brand consciousness.

H1b. Young consumers' self-esteem will negatively influence their brand consciousness.

H2. Referring to the study by Sproles and Kendall (1986), which states that brand consciousness has an influence on conspicuous consumption motivations, this hypothesis focuses on the influence of brand consciousness on consumption motivations. This hypothesis proposes that young consumers' brand consciousness will significantly influence their consumption motivations for luxury fashion products. In this study, two consumption motivations are examined: self (brand-self congruency) and social (conspicuous consumption). Therefore, two sub-hypotheses are developed:

H2a. Young consumers' brand consciousness will positively impact their brand-self

congruency motivations for luxury fashion products.

H2b. Young consumers' brand consciousness will positively impact their conspicuous consumption motivations for luxury fashion products.

H3. Walsh and Mitchell's (2010) study focuses on the effect that the brand consciousness has on consumption behaviors. This hypothesis relates to the findings of their study by proposing that young consumers' brand consciousness will significantly influence their consumption behaviors for luxury fashion products. In this study, consumption behaviors are examined in the terms of brand loyalty and purchase intention. Therefore, two sub hypotheses are developed:

H3a. Young consumers' brand consciousness will positively impact their brand loyalty.

H3b. Young consumers' brand consciousness will positively impact their purchase intention of luxury fashion products.

H4. Sirgy's (1985) study focused on the effect of brand self-congruency on the consumption behavior of purchase intention. Staying consistent with Sirgy's study, this hypothesis proposes that young consumers' brand-self congruency will significantly influence their consumption behaviors for luxury fashion products. In this study, the consumption behaviors of brand loyalty and purchase intention are examined. Therefore, the following sub-hypotheses are developed:

H4a. Young consumers' brand-self congruency will positively influence their brand loyalty of luxury fashion products.

H4b. Young consumers' brand-self congruency will positively influence their purchase intention of luxury fashion products.

H5. Teimourpour and Hanzaee (2011) studied the influence of conspicuous consumption on consumption behaviors of Iranian Generation Y consumers. Their findings contributed in developing this hypothesis which proposes that young consumers' conspicuous consumption motivation will significantly influence their consumption behaviors for luxury fashion products. In this study, the consumption behaviors of brand loyalty and purchase intention are studied. Therefore, the following sub-hypotheses are developed:

H5a. Young consumers' conspicuous consumption motivations will positively impact their brand loyalty of luxury fashion products.

H5b. Young consumers' conspicuous consumption motivations will positively influence their purchase intentions for luxury fashion products.

CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate young consumers' behavior for luxury fashion products and their driving motivations for luxury consumption. This study examined the relationship between two personality traits—public self-consciousness and self-esteem—and consumers' brand consciousness. This study also explored the influence of young consumers' brand consciousness on their self-oriented (brand self-congruency) and social-oriented (conspicuous consumption) consumption motivations. The consumption behaviors of brand loyalty and purchase intention were explored. The relationship between brand consciousness and these consumption behaviors was studied. Also, the relationships between the self-oriented and social-oriented consumption motivations and the consumption behaviors (brand loyalty and purchase intention) were examined. The intention of this study was to provide an insight into the continuously changing luxury industry in the United States by studying young consumers' behavior for luxury fashion products.

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework (Figure 1) was developed based on the literature reviewed and hypotheses proposed. It was stated that young consumers' purchasing motivations for luxury fashion products are affected by their brand consciousness for luxury fashion products. The model also stated that there is a strong influence of public self-consciousness and self-esteem on consumers' brand consciousness. The motivations were measured in terms of self-oriented and social-oriented consumption motivations. An influence of brand

consciousness on these consumption motivations was proposed. Brand consciousness was also proposed to influence the consumption behaviors of brand loyalty and purchase intention. Finally, the relationships between the consumption motivations and the consumption behaviors were explored.

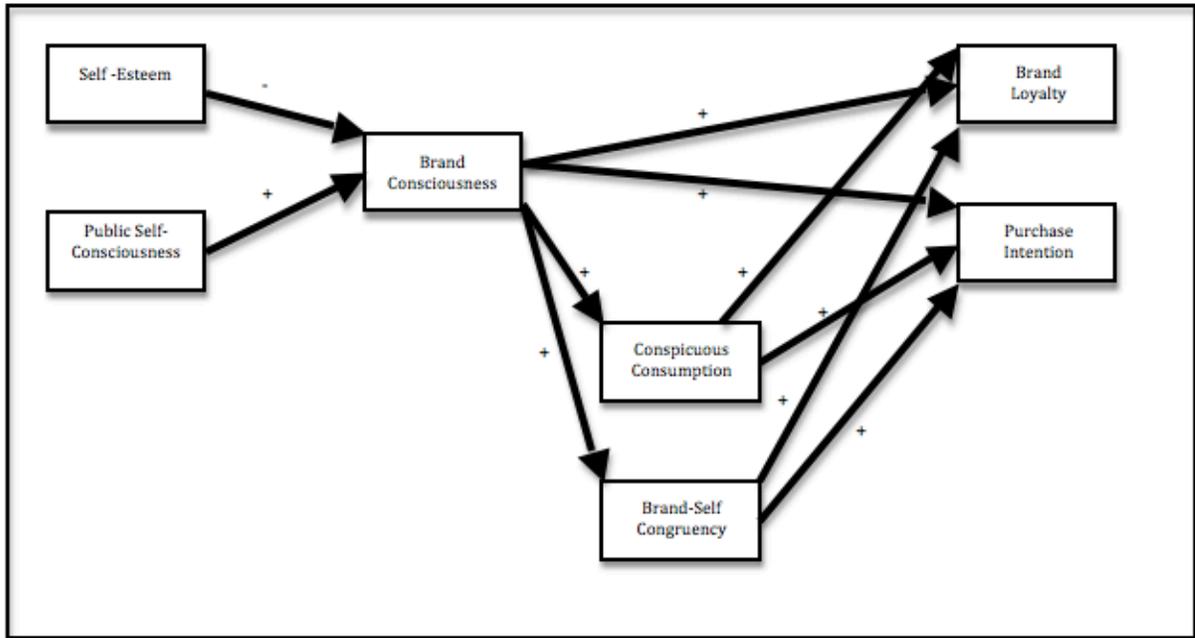


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

Research Design

A survey was used to collect the data for this study (Appendix A). An online survey was created using the online survey software and questionnaire tool, SurveyMonkey®.

Respondents were given a web link, which directed them to the questionnaire.

SurveyMonkey® automatically recorded and stored the responses for data analysis. The data collection took place over a two-week duration in October 2011. An IRB approval was obtained through North Carolina State University in order to conduct this survey (Appendix

B). A third party research group, FGI Research, was contracted to recruit subjects for this study. The desired number of complete and valid surveys was 300.

FGI Research is a provider of full-service research that conducts studies through their online community of panelists. These panelists are people from all over the United States and account for many different demographic segments. This research group has panelists in 924,469 households in the United States. Panelists are recruited across many aspects of the Internet including websites, social media, other panels and affiliates. FGI separates this community into a number of panels based on demographic characteristics as well as areas of both expertise and interest.

Upon creation of the survey, the information and link was passed along to FGI Research. The company then distributed the survey to panelists that met certain demographic specifications. These respondents had also previously indicated that they were willing to complete surveys on a broad range of topics.

The target population for this study was consumers between the ages of 25 and 40. An annual household income of \$40,000 or greater was desired for single consumers, and \$75,000 for married ones. This target income was specified in order to effectively capture middle-class consumers, yet still insure that those targeted are financially able to purchase luxury fashion products. A balanced gender response was also desired in order to receive a sample of the consumers in the United States.

Using the specified sample parameters in terms of gender, age and marital status/income combinations, 6800 invitations to participate in the survey were distributed to a random sample of consumers that desired demographic specifications. Upon receiving the survey, panelists were instructed that the survey would take between 10 and 15 minutes to

complete. FGI Research sent out a small batch of invitations each day to the panelists. The purpose of these small distributions was to not exceed the desired sample size. The method of daily distributions also allowed for the survey to be monitored daily, which made invalid responses easily recognizable. Each day, the responses were evaluated to monitor that respondents fell within the specified demographics. An incentive was offered to the respondents to participate in the survey and to provide accurate answers that reflect their consumption behavior.

In order to track the respondents, and properly reward them, each respondent was given a unique identification number. This id was also used as a way to record any incomplete, invalid, or inappropriate responses and be able to eliminate those answers from the final results used in this research. Respondents who provided valid, complete surveys were rewarded with a monetary incentive in an amount that was distributed by FGI Research. The amount of this incentive was not released by FGI Research.

Survey Instrument

The survey was estimated to take approximately 10 to 15 minutes for a thorough completion. The survey included a variety of questions. These included demographic questions, scales that evaluated different aspects of personality and behavior as well as open-ended questions to evaluate shopping behaviors. The demographic categorization questions were presented in either multiple choice or open-ended formats, in order to ensure that the respondent fell within the desired specifications. The survey ended with open-ended and multiple-choice questions regarding each individual's experience with luxury fashion

products. These questions inquired about their past purchase behaviors, favorite luxury brands, and luxury consumption of their peers.

The research used in this study was a part of a larger consumer behavior research study. Therefore, while a number of other constructs were measured in this survey, only a number of items on the survey pertained to this particular study. Existing scales were adopted or modified to measure the following variables: public self-consciousness, self-esteem, brand consciousness, brand-self congruency, conspicuous consumption, brand loyalty, and purchase intention. Each of these constructs was measured using a 7-point Likert scale, with 7 being strongly agree and 1 being strongly disagree. The consumers' intention to purchase the products was measured by asking the subjects if they would like to buy at least one luxury fashion item in the near future. Also, past luxury purchases of consumers were evaluated by asking about respondents' favorite brands and past purchasing behaviors.

Public Self-Consciousness

Public self-consciousness refers to the extent to which individuals care about how others view them (Simon, 2004). The 7-item scale developed by Fenigstein et al (1975) was adopted in this study. A sample question is: "I'm concerned about what other people think of me."

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem refers to an individual's sense of personal value (Cherry, 2010). The self-esteem scale used in this present research study is a revised version of Rosenberg's

(1965) original scale, as introduced by Richardson et al (2009). Richardson et al (2009) omitted four factors on Rosenberg's original ten-item scale, using the remaining six for their data collection. A sample question is: "I feel that I have a number of good qualities."

Brand Consciousness

This study adopted the scale developed by Nelson and McLeod (2005) to measure consumers' brand consciousness. There are 6 questions in this scale. These questions evaluate the level of importance that consumers place upon the brand name of the clothing items they buy. A sample question from this scale is as follows: "Sometimes I am willing to pay more money for clothing because of its brand name."

Brand-Self Congruency

The concept of brand-self congruency can be attributed to the luxury purchases of many consumers (Puntoni, 2001). Tsai (2005) used a scale for the congruency with internal self to measure brand-self congruency within consumers' luxury consumption behaviors. A sample question from this scale is: "I never buy a luxury brand inconsistent with the characteristics with which I describe myself".

Conspicuous Consumption

Conspicuous consumption refers to an innate trait of consumers that drives them to make visible purchases for status reasons (Chaudhuri et al, 2011). Chaudhuri et al (2011) developed an 11-item scale in order to measure the conspicuous consumption orientation of

consumers. Five items of that scale that are relevant to the subject of this study were adopted. A sample question is “I buy luxury fashion products to gain respect from others”.

Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty refers to consumers’ repeated purchases of the same brands (Palumbo and Herbig, 2000). This study used a scale developed by Bennett and Rundle-Thiele (2002) as a guideline to measure the brand loyalty in consumers. The scale consists of four items measuring brand loyalty. The first two questions evaluate the loyalty of consumers to luxury fashion brands over other non-luxury brands. A sample question from this measure is: “I would be willing to pay a higher price for luxury fashion brands over other brands.” The next two questions in the scale measure the consumers’ brand loyalty to particular luxury fashion brands. A sample question from this measure is: “when purchasing luxury fashion products, I usually only choose from the brands I purchased before.”

Purchase Intention

The purchase intention of a consumer refers to the intention of consumers to purchase a particular product. In this study, the purchase intention for luxury fashion products was evaluated. This construct was measured with one question: “I would like to buy at least one piece of luxury fashion product”.

Data Analysis

A total of 399 surveys were received. However, upon a screening for any incomplete surveys or invalid surveys, a total of 94 surveys were removed based on these parameters.

This screening was completed periodically throughout the time period when the survey link was open. Incomplete and invalid surveys were removed efficiently as to ensure the total number of surveys did not overly exceed the desired number of approximately 300. 27 of the 94 removed surveys were removed because the respondents submitted the surveys without answering every question.

Among the six questions on the self-esteem scale, there was one negatively oriented question: “All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.” This question was strategically used in this study to screen invalid responses. Some respondents that quickly answered the survey without actually reading and considering their answers indicated that they agreed with each statement, including the negatively oriented one. This high ranking of the negatively oriented question contradicted their high level of agreement for the other positively oriented questions, and, thus, was ruled invalid. Respondents on 23 surveys answered the self-esteem scale with either all agrees or all disagrees, without noting the question that was of negative wording. Therefore, these surveys were removed due to response error.

Finally, another 44 surveys were excluded for future analysis due to the following reasons:

1. Answers were obviously filled out randomly (e.g. straight lining answers).
2. Time spent was under 2 minutes.
3. Inappropriate responses not pertaining to the study were given to open-ended questions.
4. Non-luxury brands were provided for favorite luxury brands.

- a. Brands that are not considered luxury brands (e.g. Nike and Abercrombie & Fitch) were given on some of surveys for the open-ended question that read, “Please list 5 of your favorite luxury fashion brands.” Respondents that identified brands that are not considered luxury were removed. These respondents may have provided inaccurate answers regarding their behavior for luxury fashion products if they were not familiar with what these products are.

After the screening process was complete, a total of 305 surveys remained. The results were based on these surveys.

In order to determine the impact of consumers’ behaviors associated with luxury fashion product consumption, a structural equation model (SEM) was used. Once the data was uploaded into an SPSS format, AMOS statistical software was used to conduct a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to check the adequacy of the measurement model. Next, an SEM was used to evaluate all of the hypothesized relationships between the variables. A satisfactory model fit was confirmed based on the evaluation of the values of these relationships.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Sample Characteristics

A descriptive analysis of the results showed the general demographic information of the sample (Table 1). The final sample (N=305) consisted of approximately an even gender ratio. While a few respondents fell outside of the desired 25-40 age range, the majority of respondents were fairly evenly split among the three age ranges of focus (25-30, 31-35, 36-40). The majority of consumers in this sample were married. A majority of the sample had an annual household income of greater than \$75,000. Most of the respondents had at least a four-year college degree. The majority of respondents indicated that they had previously purchased at least one luxury fashion item. Respondents listed some of their favorite luxury fashion brands to be: Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Ralph Lauren, and Coach.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

	Answer Options	Response Percent
Gender	Male	51.8
	Female	48.2
Age	18-24	0.3
	25-30	33.8
	31-35	32.5
	36-40	32.1
	41	1.3
Marital Status	Single	38.4
	Married	61.3
Housing Situation	Rent	25.2
	Own, paying mortgage	62.3
	Own, no mortgage	12.5
Annual Household Income	<\$40,000	5.6
	\$40,001 - \$50,000	8.5
	\$50,001 - \$60,000	10.2
	\$60,001 - \$75,000	7.2
	\$75,001 - \$100,000	29.5
	\$100,001 - \$125,000	23.9
	>\$125,000	15.1
Highest Level of Education	High School Graduate	5.9
	Technical School / Some College	16.7
	4-year College Graduate	46.6
	Graduate Degree	30.8

Summary of Results

The results from the path model analysis showed the relationships that exist between the variables tested including: public self-consciousness, self-esteem, brand consciousness, brand-self congruency, conspicuous consumption, brand loyalty, and purchase intention. Each of the variables in this study was measured with a number of items. Each of these items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly

agree”. An average rating for each variable was calculated. This average rating was calculated on a scale from 1 – 7. The median score on this scale was 4.

Personality Profile

In terms of personality traits, the average rating for the public self-consciousness of the sample was 4.41 (Table 2). This rating indicates that the respondents exhibited a high level of public self-consciousness. The self-esteem of the sample had an average rating of 5.79 (Table 2). This rating indicates that the overall sample had a high level self-esteem. These personality dimensions are consistent with Fernandez’s research (2009), which concluded that young consumers are concerned about how others view them.

Table 2. Personality Profile of Respondents

Variable Measured	Average Rating
Public Self-Consciousness	4.41
Self-Esteem	5.79

Brand Consciousness and Motivations

The results from this survey also showed the respondents exhibited a high level of brand consciousness (Table 3). This classification of the sample supports Fernandez’s (2009) research that found that young consumers are highly brand conscious. The respondents had an average brand-self congruency rating of 4.64. This rating indicates that the sample had a high level brand-self congruency motivations. However, the sample ranked below the median (with a rating of 3.73) for their conspicuous consumption motivations. These results indicate that the sample had a low level of conspicuous consumption motivations.

Table 3. Brand Consciousness and Consumption Motivations Profile of Respondents

Variable Measured	Average Rating
Brand Consciousness	4.29
Brand-Self Congruency	4.64
Conspicuous Consumption	3.73

Consumption Behaviors

The sample ranked below the median for brand loyalty (Table 4). This rating means that the overall group had low brand loyalty tendencies. Finally, the average rating for the purchase intention showed that the sample had a high level of intention to purchase luxury fashion products. These average ratings help to give a depiction of the respondents from this study.

Table 4. Consumption Behavior Profile of Respondents

Variable Measured	Average Rating
Brand Loyalty	3.49
Purchase Intention	4.56

Measurement Model

The initial CFA revealed several poor loaded items (based on standardized regression weights smaller than 0.5). Each of these items cross-loaded with other items in the model. Therefore, six items were removed from the initial CFA. Two items were removed from both the initial public-self consciousness and self-esteem scales. One item was removed from both the brand loyalty and conspicuous consumption scales. After removing these items with poor loading, the CFA revealed satisfactory goodness of fit indices ($\chi^2(df = 259, n = 305) = 515.812, p = .000; RMSEA = .057; GFI = .881; CFI = .952$). Table 5 below depicts

the standardized regression weights of the factor loadings in the final CFA (A depiction of this CFA can be found in Appendix C).

In the revised model, the standardized regression weights for the estimates were adequate. The estimates ranged from .521 – .928. While most of these estimates were above the commonly used 0.7 mark (Hair et al, 2006), some did fall below this mark. These estimates that were less than the typically accepted value were kept in order to have a sufficient number of items per scale.

Table 5. Standardized Regression weights of Factor Loadings for CFA Model

Relationship	Standardized Estimate	P-value
BL4 ← BL	.860	***
BL3 ← BL	.914	***
BL2 ← BL	.810	***
PSC6 ← PSC	.760	***
PSC4 ← PSC	.840	***
PSC3 ← PSC	.745	***
PSC2 ← PSC	.693	***
PSC1 ← PSC	.612	***
BC6 ← BC	.856	***
BC5 ← BC	.788	***
BC4 ← BC	.867	***
BC3 ← BC	.834	***
BC2 ← BC	.862	***
BC1 ← BC	.822	***
SE5 ← SE	.781	***
SE4 ← SE	.692	***
SE2 ← SE	.862	***
SE1 ← SE	.854	***
BSC3 ← BSC	.682	***
BSC2 ← BSC	.926	***
BSC 1 ← BSC	.521	***
CC5 ← CC	.928	***
CC4 ← CC	.720	***
CC3 ← CC	.857	***
CC2 ← CC	.866	***

(Note: *** indicates values that are significant with p-value < .001)

Structural Equation Model Analysis

Once it was confirmed that the items loaded and a sound measurement model was established, reliability test was conducted on the items left in the scale. The reliability test was conducted in order to evaluate the consistencies of the scales in the model. The Cronbach's alpha found for each of the factors ranged between .747 - .933 (Table 6).

Table 6. Cronbach's Alpha from Reliability Test

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Public Self-Consciousness	.860	5
Self-Esteem	.872	4
Brand Consciousness	.933	6
Brand-Self Congruency	.747	3
Brand Loyalty	.896	3
Conspicuous Consumption	.909	4

Next, the factor scores were calculated by finding the mean of the items that loaded on each factor. These factors represented each of the scales that were measured in this study. An SEM model was then proposed to test the relationships between these variables. After modification was made to improve the model fit, the SEM had the following results: $\chi^2(df = 8, n = 305) = 20.101, p = .010$; RMSEA = .071; GFI = .982; CFI = .986. Table 7 below shows the estimates from the SEM with the best-fit model.

Table 7. SEM Estimates and P-Value for Significance

Relationship	Estimate	Critical Ratio	P
Brand Consciousness ← Self-Esteem	.285	3.523	***
Brand Consciousness ← Public Self-Consciousness	.586	8.506	***
Conspicuous Consumption ← Brand Consciousness	.706	14.666	***
Conspicuous Consumption ← Public Self-Consciousness	.194	2.981	.003
Brand-Self Congruency ← Self-Esteem	.262	4.079	***
Brand-Self Congruency ← Brand Consciousness	.309	7.653	***
Brand Loyalty ← Brand Consciousness	.318	5.539	***
Purchase Intention ← Brand Consciousness	.361	4.767	***
Brand Loyalty ← Brand-Self Congruency	.046	.844	.399
Purchase Intention ← Brand-Self Congruency	.209	2.938	.003
Brand Loyalty ← Conspicuous Consumption	.566	11.306	***
Purchase Intention ← Conspicuous Consumption	.417	6.327	***

*(Note: *** indicates values that are significant with p-value < .001)*

Hypotheses Testing Results

The following is a summary of the results from the hypotheses testing. All ten hypotheses were tested for significance. Eight of the original ten hypotheses were supported in the expected direction. A p-value of .05 was used to determine statistical significance of each relationship in the path model (*Figure 2* shows the direction of these relationships).

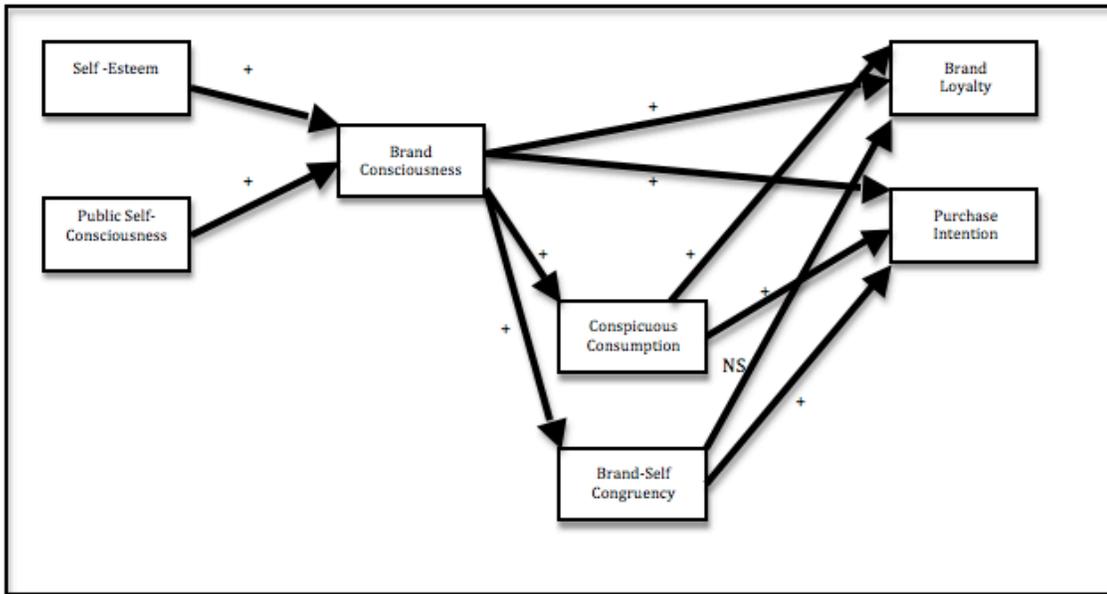


Figure 2. Path Model with Relationship Directions

Hypothesis One

Hypothesis one (H1) states that young consumers' personality traits (public self-consciousness, H1a; self-esteem, H1b) will have a significant influence their brand consciousness. For H1a, a positive relationship between public self-consciousness and brand consciousness was proposed. For H1b, a negative relationship between self-esteem and brand consciousness was proposed. The results showed significant positive standardized estimates for H1a and H1b. Therefore, these results partially supported hypothesis one, because H1a is supported and H1b is rejected.

Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis two (H2) states that young consumers' brand consciousness will significantly influence their self (brand-self congruency, H2a) and social (conspicuous

consumption, H2b) consumption motivations for luxury fashion products. A positive relationship was predicted for both hypotheses. The results produced positive standardized estimates. Both relationships were also significant. Therefore, hypothesis two is supported.

Hypothesis Three

Hypothesis three (H3) states that young consumers' brand consciousness will significantly influence their consumption behaviors (brand loyalty, H3a; purchase intention, H3b) for luxury fashion products. Both relationships were hypothesized to be positive. The standardized estimates for H3a and H3b were both positive. The p-values for both relationships were smaller than .001, making both hypotheses statistically significant. Therefore, hypothesis three is supported.

Hypothesis Four

Hypothesis four states that young consumers' self-motivation for brand-self congruency will significantly influence their consumption behaviors (brand loyalty, H4a; purchase intention, H4b) for luxury fashion products. A positive direction for both relationships was hypothesized. The results produced positive standardized estimates for the relationships. For H4a and H4b, the p-values were .399 (greater than .05) and .003 (smaller than .05), respectively. Only one of these relationships was significant and, therefore, hypothesis four is only partially supported by the results.

Hypothesis Five

Hypothesis five stated that young consumers' social motivation for conspicuous consumption will significantly influence their consumption behaviors (brand loyalty, H5a; purchase intention, H5b) for luxury fashion products. A positive direction was hypothesized for both of these relationships. The standardized estimates that were found in the results were both positive. Both relationships were also statistically significant with both p-values smaller than .001. Therefore, hypothesis five was supported by the results.

CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to determine the personality traits and the motivations that influence consumers to purchase luxury fashion products. More specifically, this study was conducted using the following objectives as a guideline: (1) to identify young consumers' consumption level for luxury fashion products; (2) to explore the degree of young consumers' brand consciousness and how this brand consciousness influences their consumption for luxury fashion products; (3) to determine how young consumers' brand consciousness is influenced by their personality traits; (4) to investigate young consumers' social-oriented (conspicuous consumption) versus self-oriented (brand-self congruency) consumption motivations for luxury products and the influence of these motivations on their consumption behaviors. Statistical analysis on data collected through a quantitative study addressed each of these objectives, successfully.

Overall, the sample consisted of young consumers ages 25-40. The majority of these consumers were college educated, married, and had high levels of both public self-consciousness and self-esteem. These personality traits were shown to influence the level of brand consciousness in these young consumers. The sample exhibited a high level of brand consciousness. The respondents were driven by both self-oriented motivations. The sample, on average, had a medium level of brand loyalty toward luxury fashion products. The respondents indicated that they had a high level of intent to purchase luxury fashion products.

A total of ten hypotheses were proposed and tested in this research study. After analyzing the results of the hypotheses testing using a path model, results showed that nine of

these hypothesized relationships were significant. Eight of these significant relationships were supported by the results in the direction originally proposed in the hypotheses. A practical discussion is given below for each of the relationships that were supported by the results.

Summary of Results

Overall, the sample was both publicly self-conscious and brand conscious, had high self-esteem, was motivated by self-oriented and social-oriented consumption factors, and had the intention to purchase luxury fashion products. This classification of the respondents of young consumers supports Fernandez's (2009) research that describes Generation Y consumers as being both publicly self-conscious and brand conscious and not exhibiting brand loyal consumption behavior. This summary of the sample population can help to explain the relationships that were found by the results of this study.

Hypotheses Analysis

Personality Traits and Brand Consciousness

Hypothesis one predicted the effects that the personality traits of both public self-consciousness and self-esteem have on the consumers' brand consciousness. The results from the hypotheses testing supported that both of these personality traits had a significant, positive impact on brand consciousness.

These results showed that the level of public self-consciousness an individual has positively impacted their brand consciousness. Therefore, the more concerned an individual is with how others see him/her, the more conscious they are about the brands that they are

purchasing. These results correspond with the research by Fernandez that classifies Generation Y consumers as being public self-conscious (2009). Fernandez concluded because these young consumers were concerned with how their peers viewed them, they preferred to purchase branded clothing (2009). The results from this study support this relationship that the more publicly self-conscious these consumers are, the more brand conscious about brands they are.

Self-esteem was also found to have a positive relationship with brand consciousness. That is, the higher the level of self-esteem an individual has, the more likely that individual is to be brand conscious when making purchasing decisions. While this relationship was hypothesized to have the opposite direction, this contrasting direction has been found in self-esteem related consumer behavior studies before. Rook and Fisher (1995) and Hausman (2000) conducted similar studies regarding the influence self-esteem on consumer behaviors (i.e. impulse purchases). The results of both of these studies, however, found contrasting directions for the influence of self-esteem.

Brand Consciousness and Self and Social Consumption Motivations

It was proposed that there are positive relationships between brand consciousness and both self-oriented and social-oriented consumption motivations. Hypothesis two predicted significant, positive relationships between the brand consciousness and both the brand-self congruency (H2a) and conspicuous consumption (H2b) motivations for luxury consumption.

The relationship between the brand consciousness of consumers and consumption motivation of brand-self congruency was supported by the results. The study found that a high level of brand consciousness of consumers positively influenced their brand-self

congruency motivations. This relationship means that consumers who are more brand conscious are more motivated to purchase products with which they feel they have a connection. Sirgy (1985) determined that consumers who are driven to feel a connection with the products they purchase are likely to seek out these brands.

A positive influence of brand consciousness on conspicuous consumption was proposed. The results also supported this prediction that individuals with a high level of brand consciousness also have a high level of conspicuous consumption motivations. This conclusion is consistent with Liao and Wang's research (2009), which stated that consumers who are brand conscious view brands as symbols of status or prestige. Sirgy (1985) suggested that a high level of brand consciousness in consumers impacts their conspicuous consumption motivations.

Brand Consciousness and Consumption Behaviors

The relationship between the consumers' brand consciousness and their consumption behaviors was proposed in hypothesis three. The effect of brand consciousness on the consumption behaviors of brand loyalty and purchase intention was tested. The results showed that the brand consciousness of consumers has a positive, significant relationship with both their brand loyalty and purchase intention.

The results showed that consumers who have a high level of brand consciousness are more brand loyal. This relationship supports the research by Palumbo and Herbig (2000), which suggested that in order to be brand loyal and make repeated purchases of brands, consumers must first be conscious of the brands available to them.

Brand-Self Congruency and Consumption Behaviors

The self-motivation of brand-self congruency was proven to only significantly impact the consumption behavior of purchase intention. The results supported the hypothesis that initially proposed this relationship. These results indicate that the self-motivation of brand-self congruency has a positive relationship with consumers' purchase intention for luxury fashion products. The results are consistent with Amatulli and Guido's (2011) that found that consumers with high brand-self congruency motivations consume luxury products that are congruent with their self-image.

The influence of brand-self congruency on purchase intention is important in guiding the marketing strategies of luxury fashion brands. Luxury fashion companies could market their brands as portraying a certain symbol or meaning. These brands could also introduce limited exclusive product lines to which certain consumers feel a connection (e.g. sustainability, greek organization, birth month). By marketing a brand as have a personal connection with consumers, luxury retail companies will attract consumers who are driven by self-oriented motivations. These consumers will also then have a high intent to purchase these products.

The study proposed a significant relationship between the brand-self congruency and brand loyalty. The results did not support this relationship. Sirgy (1980) found the proposed relationship between brand-self congruency and brand loyalty. This non-significant relationship may be attributed to a small sample size.

Conspicuous Consumption Motivation and Consumption Behaviors

The results supported the hypothesis that the social-motivation of conspicuous consumption had a positive and significant influence on the consumption behaviors of brand loyalty and purchase intention. This relationship shows that consumers who are motivated by conspicuous consumption are both brand loyal. Consumers who are motivated by conspicuous consumption also have a high level of purchase intention for luxury fashion products. This relationship between conspicuous consumption and brand loyalty can be explained by consumers who consume products for social reasons are more loyal to brands that portray a certain status.

The results indicated that conspicuous consumption motivations positively influence the purchased intention for luxury fashion products. Chaudhuri et al (2011) concluded that conspicuous consumption is the motivation of consumers to purchase products that will help them attain a certain status. Consumers that are driven to consume by social motivations are likely to purchase products that portray the status they are hoping to attain, such as luxury goods.

Research Objectives

Research Objective One

The first research objective is to investigate the consumption level of young consumers for luxury fashion products. Previous research evaluating the purchase behaviors of young consumers for luxury fashion products shows that young consumers are becoming a significant part of the luxury fashion market. In the year 2011, these young consumers increased their spending on luxury fashion products by 33% (Hutzler, 2012). While

Generation Y only represent 3% of the luxury fashion market in terms of spenders, they share 60% in terms of spending with Generation X (Hutzler, 2012; Rubin, 2011). The previous research studies explain the significant purchasing power that Generation Y consumers hold in the U.S. luxury fashion market.

The results from this study also contribute to describing the consumption level for luxury fashion products among young consumers by reporting that approximately two-thirds of the respondents indicated that they had purchased at least one luxury fashion item in the past. A majority of Generation Y consumers had purchased luxury fashion products in the past. The majority of the sample also indicated that they would like to purchase at least one luxury fashion item.

Research Objective Two

The second research objective is to examine the trait of brand consciousness among young consumers. This trait was measured with a pre-established scale in the survey. The results suggested that young consumers have a high level of brand consciousness. This finding is consistent with Fernandez (2009) who found that Generation Y consumers are a highly brand conscious segment.

The second part of this research objective is to explore the effects of brand consciousness on young consumers' consumption of luxury fashion products. The results showed that consumers with a high brand conscious trait are likely to be motivated to consume luxury fashion products due to both self-oriented and social- oriented motivations. These motivations include brand-self congruency (self) and conspicuous consumption (social). The results from this study show that the brand consciousness of young consumers

had a positive impact on consumers' brand loyalty and purchase intention. All of these relationships indicate that the brand consciousness trait in consumers has a positive impact on their consumption for luxury fashion products. Therefore, young consumers that are brand conscious are likely to consume luxury fashion products for self- and social-motivations and are likely to buy and be loyal to luxury fashion products.

Research Objective Three

The purpose of research objective three is to understand how brand consciousness is affected by consumers' personality traits. Hypotheses 1a (public self-consciousness) and 1b (self-esteem) addressed this objective. The results showed that the personality traits of public self-consciousness and self-esteem do have a positive impact on consumers' brand consciousness. That is, consumers who possess a high level of public self-consciousness are also likely to have a high level of brand consciousness. Similarly, consumers who have a high self-esteem are also likely to be more brand conscious, than those with lower self-esteem.

Research Objective Four

The fourth research objective of this study is to examine the self-oriented and social-oriented motivations for consumption and how these affect the consumption behaviors of consumers for luxury fashion products. The results showed that overall the respondents were driven by self-oriented. These consumers were slightly more motivated to purchase products based on self-reasons (Table 4). Tsai (2005) used the brand-self congruency motivation as a self-motivation for consumption in his study regarding luxury consumption. Chaudhuri et al

(2011) defined conspicuous consumption as a type of social-motivation for consumption. The research conducted in this study used these motivations as a means of addressing consumers' consumption motivations.

The second part of research objective four is to explore the influence of consumption motivations (brand-self congruency and conspicuous consumption) on the consumption behaviors of brand loyalty and purchase intention for luxury fashion products. The results show that the self-motivation (brand-self-congruency) positively impacted consumers' purchase intention for luxury fashion products. The relationship between the brand-self congruency of consumers and their brand loyalty, however, was statistically insignificant. Therefore, the brand-self congruency motivation of consumers does not significantly influence the brand loyalty toward luxury fashion products.

The social-motivation of conspicuous consumption was shown to positively influence both the brand loyalty and purchase intention for luxury fashion consumers. Therefore, consumers motivated to make purchasing decisions by social means are more likely to be loyal to luxury fashion brands as well as to purchase these luxury fashion products.

Implications

With a new consumer emerging in the luxury market, retailers must revise their marketing strategies to target these consumers. Effective marketing strategies will help to connect with these younger consumers. Recently, luxury fashion brands have begun to focus on targeting young consumers. Successful strategies will result in lifetime branding to these consumers. Therefore, the first step in effectively targeting this relatively new demographic

is to understand the personality dimensions and consumption motivations of these consumers.

The implications for the influence of public-self consciousness to brand consciousness are significant to luxury fashion brands. The results support that young consumers are highly public self-conscious. The marketing strategies of these brands could increase awareness by addressing this personality dimension. Marketing strategies could implement slogans that relay the message of popularity and respect from others. These advertisements could show how certain brands can lead to the approval of other people. Since a majority of young consumers are purchasing products online (Little, 2012) Luxury fashion brands should increase their online advertisements through social media and fashion-oriented websites. Another way to increase their awareness would be to provide a history or fact about their brand to consumers on their websites, social media pages, or giveaways with purchases. Providing information or stories about a brand, will help to build brand awareness as well as help the consumers feel a connection with the brand.

The implications of the relationship between brand consciousness and brand-self congruency are important to the retail industry. The results support that Generation Y consumers are brand conscious. Luxury fashion brands could modify their marketing to appeal to these self-oriented motivations of consumers. The marketing messages could portray advertisements that relate to the values of consumers (e.g. family and lifestyle).

The purpose of conspicuous consumption is to show-off. Therefore, the luxury fashion brands could enhance their product attributes to draw attention to the products. Luxury brands could add visible logos and bright colors to their lower priced products.

Products with an average price of \$300 are the ones that these young consumers are purchasing (Panteva, 2011).

Luxury fashion brands must understand the consumers whom they are targeting. These young consumers are likely to be brand conscious. Therefore, the luxury fashion brands should build awareness of their products through increased advertising in the right media (e.g. fashion magazines and runway shows), visible logo on their products, and endorsements of celebrities that are relevant to younger consumers to build awareness. Because brand consciousness has a positive influence on purchase intention, when brands build awareness, they will also build intent to purchase. Currently, some luxury fashion brands such as Marc Jacobs (Sweet, 2012) are enhancing their product lines to appeal to younger consumers. However, a focus of luxury fashion retailers should also be on promoting their lower priced products.

The results supported that a high level of conspicuous consumption motivations led to a high intent to purchase, luxury fashion brands must appeal to the conspicuous consumption motivations of consumers. Luxury fashion brands could market their products as having a high status. These brands could also offer limited time or exclusive product lines. These product lines will give consumers a feeling of exclusivity or status that is associated with luxury fashion products. Luxury fashion brands could also offer more lower priced products (around \$300) containing visible logos or recognizable styles.

Overall, luxury retailers must focus on the personality dimensions of their consumers. In the past, luxury consumers have not been as brand conscious or public self-conscious as this new Generation Y segment of luxury consumers is. Current marketing strategies that display affluence and heritage may not be the most effective way to advertise luxury products

anymore. These luxury fashion retailers must build brand awareness, prestige, and exclusivity in a fun, trendy way that appeals to a younger generation of consumers.

Limitations and Further Research

This research examined a number of relationships dealing with the traits, motivations, and behaviors of young consumers in the United States in relation to luxury fashion products. This research study designed a general model of consumer behavior to test the relationships specifically for luxury fashion product consumption of young consumers centered around their brand consciousness. The findings of this study contribute to the field of consumer behavior as well as the luxury fashion market, however, as with any research study, a number of limitations exist within the context of this research. These limitations are important to note as they could influence the results and could be improved upon in future research.

The first of these limitations is that in order to target likely consumers of luxury fashion products, certain demographic specifications were set. As luxury products are those of higher costs, the targeted respondents for this research were those who had a total annual household income of \$75,000 if they indicated they were married, and \$40,000 if they were single. Therefore, this survey did not include a complete spectrum of the United States consumer population.

Response error among respondents is always a possibility with consumer research studies. One scale (self-esteem) included in the questionnaire had items on both negative and positive dimensions. This particular scale was used as an indicator of possible response error that could occur, as respondents who did not fully read the questions were apt to answer each

of the items with similar ratings. If the questions were read to the full extent, respondents would realize the contradiction in items.

The length of this survey caused some respondents to stop halfway through or complete the survey with invalid answers. Future research could allow for a shorter survey to ensure less time commitment from the respondents. As this research study was a part of a larger study, several constructs were measured on the survey that were not tested in the data analysis.

The questionnaire was not limited to consumers who indicated that they have purchased luxury fashion products in the past. Therefore, it focuses on the purchase intention of luxury fashion products among all consumers. Respondents may not have any experience with luxury fashion products, and their responses could, therefore, be skewed. Future research could focus on luxury consumers specifically. Since this study did not pre-screen the respondents to ensure that they were indeed luxury consumers, a more comprehensive screening process could be implemented in future studies. The exclusivity of luxury fashion consumers would give a better depiction of the actual luxury market in the United States.

Focusing only on the United States market, this research study eliminated the influence of culture to luxury consumers' consumption. A similar research study could be conducted by selecting a multi-national sample of respondents. Using the same conceptual model as presented in this research, the results could be analyzed from a cross-cultural perspective. A cultural examination of the consumption of luxury products is likely to introduce new relationships and influencing factors to the results.

The model developed in this study could be used to study other segments of the United States population, such as affluent consumers. The model presented in this study was

developed based on a combination of several previous research studies. These studies had mainly focused on affluent consumers; however, the combination of all of the traits, behaviors, and motivations in this study have not been evaluated in a study of affluent consumers.

The influence of other aspects of purchasing experience on luxury consumers' consumption could be explored in future research. First, the influence of customer service and store environment may influence consumers' consumption behavior. Also, Weidmann et al (2009) found that the product attributes of luxury products (price, style, color, uniqueness) are a factor in consumers' luxury purchasing decisions. Further research could be conducted to include how consumers' personality traits, consumption motivations, and consumption behaviors influence their concern for certain product attributes in their luxury purchases.

The respondents of this survey were fairly equally split in terms of gender. A future research study could focus on the differences in personality traits, motivations, and behaviors of male versus female young consumers. These results may further indicate how to target specific segments of luxury consumers.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
Survey Instrument

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study, which is designed to investigate consumers' shopping behavior for fashion products. It will take about 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Your participation is completely voluntary. Your completion and submission of the survey implies consent to use the data provided. Your confidentiality will be strictly maintained and the results will only be reported in a summary form.

If you would like to learn more about this project, you can contact the researchers at the following email address: luxuryconsumers@gmail.com

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

1. Demographic Information

Q1. What is your gender?
Male
Female
Q2. Which of the following best describes your age?
18-24
25-30
31-35
36-40
41
Q3. What is your present marital status?
Single
Married
Other
Q4. Which of the following best describes your housing situation?
Rent
Own, paying mortgage
Own, no mortgage
Q5. Please check the category that identifies your (or household if married) income last year:
<\$40,000
\$40,001 - \$50,000
\$50,001 - \$60,000
\$60,001 - \$75,000
\$75,001 - \$100,000
\$100,001 - \$125,000
>\$125,000
Q6. Please indicate your highest level of education:
High School Graduate
Technical School / Some College
4-year College Graduate
Graduate Degree
Q7. What is your occupation?

2. Time Orientation

Q8. Please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.							
	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly Agree
I think mostly about what is happening here and now.							
It is really no use worrying about the future,							
because whatever will be, will be.							
I live for today.							
I am mostly concerned about how I feel in the present.							

2. Interdependence

Q9. Please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.							
	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly Agree
I would rather depend on myself than others.							
My personal identity, independent of others, is important to me.							
I rely on myself most of the time, rarely on others.							
It is important that I do my job better than others.							
I enjoy being unique and different from others.							
I often do "my own thing".							

3. Public Self-Consciousness

Q10. Please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.							
	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly Agree
I'm concerned about my style of doing things.							
I'm concerned about the way I present myself.							
I'm self-conscious about the way I look.							
I usually worry about making a good impression.							
One of the last things I do before leaving my house is look in the mirror.							
I'm concerned about what other people think of me.							
I'm usually aware of my appearance.							

4. Self-Esteem

Q11. Please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.							
	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly Agree
I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.							
I feel that I have a number of good qualities.							
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.							
I am able to do things as well as most other people.							
I take a positive attitude toward myself.							
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.							

5. Brand Consciousness

Q12. Please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.							
	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly Agree
I pay attention to the brand names of the clothes I buy.							
Brand names tell me something about quality,							
Brand names tell me something about how "cool" an item of clothing is.							
Sometimes I am willing to pay more money for clothing because of its brand name.							
Brand name clothes that cost a lot of money are good quality.							

6. Brand Loyalty (Trait)

Q13. Please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.							
	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly Agree
I would rather stick with a brand I usually buy than try something I am not very sure of.							
If I like a brand, I rarely switch from it just to try something different.							
I rarely introduce new brands and products to my colleagues.							
I rarely take chances by buying unfamiliar brands even if it means sacrificing variety.							
I usually buy the same brands even if they are only average.							
I would rather wait for others to try a new brand than try it myself.							
I would rather stick to well-known brands when purchasing directly based on advertising.							

7. Purchase Motivations: Personal Oriented – Self-Directed Pleasure

Q14. Please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.							
	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly Agree
I buy a luxury brand only because it pleases me, I do not care about what pleases others.							
Luxury brands are one of the sources for my own pleasure without regard to the feelings of others.							
I can enjoy luxury brands entirely on my own terms no matter what others may feel about them.							

8. Purchase Motivations: Brand-Self Congruency

Q15. Please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.							
	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly Agree
I never buy a luxury brand inconsistent with the characteristics with which I describe myself.							
The luxury brands I buy match what and who I really am.							
My choice of luxury brands depends on whether they reflect how I see myself but not how others see me.							

9. Purchase Motivations: Personal Oriented Hedonic Value - Self-Gift Giving

Q16. Please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.							
	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly Agree
Purchasing luxury brands can be seen as giving myself gifts to celebrate an important occasion.							
I may regard luxury brands as gifts I buy for treating myself.							
I buy luxury products in reward for my hard work.							

10. Purchase Motivations: Hedonic Value - Life Enrichment

Q17. Please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.							
	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly Agree
Purchasing luxury brands provides deeper meaning in my life.							
Self-actualization is an important motivator for my luxury consumption							
Luxury consumption enhances the quality of my life.							

11. Brand Image/Personality

Q18. Please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.							
	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly Agree
Luxury fashion products are a statement of success.							
Luxury fashion products are a statement of a person's fashion taste							
Luxury fashion products can enhance a person's image.							
Luxury fashion products indicate one's wealth.							
Luxury fashion products are a symbol of prestige.							
Luxury fashion products are a statement of high quality.							

12. Conspicuous Consumption

Q19. Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.							
	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly Agree
I buy luxury fashion products to gain respect from others.							
It says something to people around me when I buy a luxury fashion product.							
I buy luxury fashion products to match my financial status.							
I choose products or brands to create my own style that everybody admires.							
Luxury fashion products show to others that I am sophisticated.							

13. Personal Orientation toward luxury-brand consumption

Q20. Please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.							
	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly Agree
I buy luxury fashion products as a way of self-reward.							
I buy luxury fashion products as a means of enjoyment.							
I buy luxury fashion products to express who I am.							

14. Behavior Intention

Q21. Please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.							
	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly Agree
I would like to buy at least one luxury fashion product.							
I would be willing to pay a higher price for luxury fashion brands over other brands.							
I will not buy other brands if there is a luxury fashion brand that offers similar products.							
I consider myself loyal to the luxury fashion brands that I have purchased in the past.							
When purchasing luxury fashion products, I usually only choose from the brands I purchase before.							

15. Product Attributes

Q22. Please indicate the importance of the following attributes to the luxury fashion products that you would like to buy							
	1 Not at all Important	2	3	4	5	6	7 Very Important
Reasonable Price							
Style							
Quality							
Uniqueness							
Comfortable Material							
Brand Name							
Visible Logo							
Country of Origin of the Brand							
Country of Origin of the Product							

16. Past Purchase Behavior

Q23. Have you ever purchased any luxury fashion products in the past?
Yes
No

17. General information about luxury fashion product knowledge.

Q24. Do you wear luxury fashion products often?
Yes
No
Q25. Please list 5 of your favorite luxury fashion brands.
Q26. Do many of your friends/colleagues own products of the above luxury brands?
Yes
No
I don't know
Q27. Please indicate where you typically get luxury fashion products? (Choose all that apply).
Answer Options
Brand owned stores
Department stores
Specialty retailers
Outlet stores
Consignment shops
Online
Received as gifts
Comments
Q28. Please provide any additional comments about your experiences with luxury fashion products.

Appendix B

IRB Form for Approval of Surveying

North Carolina State University is a land-grant
university and a constituent institution of the
University of North Carolina

Office of Research and Innovation
Division of Research Administration

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Campus Box 7514
Raleigh, North Carolina 27695-7514

919.515.2444 (phone)
919.515.7721 (fax)

From: Carol Mickelson, IRB Coordinator
North Carolina State University
Institutional Review Board

Date: May 6, 2011

Title: A Cross-culture Study of Consumer Behavior for Luxury Fashion Products

IRB#: 2033

Dear Dr. Xu,

The research proposal named above has received administrative review and has been approved as exempt from the policy as outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations (Exemption: 46.101. b.2). Provided that the only participation of the subjects is as described in the proposal narrative, this project is exempt from further review.

NOTE:

1. This committee complies with requirements found in Title 45 part 46 of The Code of Federal Regulations. For NCSU projects, the Assurance Number is: FWA00003429.
2. Any changes to the research must be submitted and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.
3. If any unanticipated problems occur, they must be reported to the IRB office within 5 business days.

Please forward a copy of this letter to your faculty sponsor, if applicable. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Carol Mickelson
NC State IRB

Appendix C

Final CFA Model

