Dear Symposium Attendees,

On behalf of the Office of Research and Engagement, I welcome you to UNC Greensboro as presenters and attendees of this momentous symposium, Celebrating 100 Years of Excellence in Research and Teaching as part of the Department of Consumer, Apparel, and Retail Studies’ (CARS) centennial celebrations.

For many of you, UNCG was your home while you completed your graduate degrees. You will find that the campus is as warm and welcoming as it was during your time here as a student, but you will also be impressed with the tremendous growth that has taken place since that time. This growth is reflected in the university’s research and community engagement efforts. In 2016/17 we reached record levels of sponsored research, totaling $33,581,580. UNCG's ongoing research, scholarship, and creative activity create impact in the region, state, nationally, and internationally. In fact, UNCG is one of just 50 doctoral universities in the country classified by the Carnegie Foundation as having both “higher research activity” and a deep, broad, and sustained commitment to community engagement.

2017 is an exciting year for UNCG as it celebrates 125 years of Opportunity and Excellence. At the same time, CARS marks 100 years since it was first formed as an academic department on campus. Over the years, the CARS program has evolved, but like the university, its legacy of scholarship that empowers individuals and engages the community has remained constant. The research symposium highlights this legacy, while at the same time, celebrates the future scholarly contributions that CARS/UNCG alums like you will undoubtedly continue to make to your discipline as well as to the broader academic and industry communities.

The university is proud of the research and teaching accomplishments that CARS alumni have made over the last century. As you listen to fellow faculty and current students present on their recent scholarly endeavors, I am sure that you will be too. Enjoy the symposium!

Sincerely,

Terri L. Shelton, Ph.D.
Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement
It is my pleasure to welcome you to UNCG for our symposium, *Innovation and Leadership: Celebrating 100 Years of Research and Teaching*, in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Department of Consumer, Apparel, and Retail Studies (CARS) at UNCG. For some of you this marks a return to your academic home, while others among you may be visiting us for the first time. Regardless, thank you for joining us for what will undoubtedly be a stimulating and lively series of scholarly presentations by CARS alums and current doctoral students.

The CARS program, now part of the Bryan School of Business and Economics, boasts one of the oldest Ph.D. programs on the UNCG campus and in the field of clothing and textiles. We are deeply proud of the successes of alumni such as yourselves, and appreciate that many of you have traveled from your respective universities where you now serve as distinguished faculty members to be here to join in the centennial celebrations. As scholars and teachers, your efforts provide positive visibility for CARS, the Bryan School, and UNCG. Indeed, you are all excellent examples of what is possible with a Ph.D. in CARS.

As one of the largest business schools in North Carolina, the mission of the Bryan School is built around the four pillars of Innovation, Globalization, Ethics, and Sustainability. Many of the research papers being presented during the symposium reflect these pillars, while addressing problems of importance to the apparel and retail industries as well as to consumers in the marketplace. Such scholarly endeavors are at the heart of what makes the Bryan School unique among its peers.

I hope you enjoy yourselves during the symposium. Do take the time to re-experience the beautiful UNCG campus while you are here celebrating the important legacy of your doctoral program. I am certain you will come away from the centennial celebrations with greater pride in your doctoral degree and even more fond memories of UNCG.

Warm Regards

McRae C. Banks, II
Margaret & Harrell Hill Distinguished Professor and Dean
Bryan School of Business and Economics
We are so excited to be marking our 100th year as a department at UNCG and are thrilled that you are here with us to celebrate this momentous occasion.

The Consumer, Apparel, and Retail Studies (CARS) department has had several names and home units over the years. Indeed, your degree may be in Clothing and Textiles, or Textile Products Marketing, or Consumer, Apparel, and Retail Studies. While you were enrolled as a graduate student, your school might have been Home Economics, or Human Environmental Sciences, or the Bryan School of Business and Economics. Each phase of our department’s long history reflects the intellectual and professional development of so many of you who have gone on to make your mark as scholars, teachers, and mentors.

As part of the year-long celebrations honoring our centennial, the CARS Research Symposium subcommittee has worked hard to ensure that the symposium not only highlights the scholarship that individual CARS Ph.D. alums and current doctoral students are working on, but that it communicates the overall impact that the CARS Ph.D. program at UNCG has through the outstanding work of alums like you. To this end, we will kick things off with a panel of distinguished alumni who are known for their scholarship on topics that span the discipline—from textiles, to apparel, to retail. The panel will fuel discussion of issues and topics that are shaping the future of our field and will be followed by peer-reviewed papers and posters on innovative topics of importance to the subject matter that defines our field. Mixed in with all of the “shop talk” will be plenty of opportunities to catch up with fellow alums, meet current students in the CARS doctoral program, and simply enjoy a return to the UNCG campus.

I know I speak for the CARS faculty when I say we are tremendously proud of the fact that we are a vibrant, highly regarded, stand-alone Ph.D. program in clothing and textiles—one of the few that remain in the field. It is my hope that you will come away from the next two days with a greater sense of pride in this fact, as well as commitment to the idea that, as an alum of the CARS Ph.D. program at UNCG, you are integral to ensuring our participation in the next 100 years of innovation and leadership in higher education, wherever your academic careers may take you.

My Best,

Nancy J. Hodges, Ph.D.
Burlington Industries Professor and Department Head
### FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2017

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>9:30 AM</td>
<td>Meet and Greet (Coffee and Light Breakfast Fare)</td>
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<td>Registration Desk Opens</td>
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<td>10 AM</td>
<td>Welcome Remarks</td>
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<td>Dr. Nancy J. Hodges, CARS Department Head</td>
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<td>10:15 AM</td>
<td>Panel Discussion: Learning from the Past and Looking to the Future:</td>
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<td>What's Next for Higher Education in Clothing and Textiles?</td>
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<td>Presider: Dr. Byoungho Jin</td>
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<td>Panelists:</td>
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<td>Dr. Rinn Cloud (PhD '78), Baylor University</td>
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<td>Dr. Youn-Kyung 'Lydia' Kim (PhD '91), University of Tennessee</td>
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<td>Dr. Elena Karpova (PhD '05), Iowa State University</td>
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<td>Dr. Jung Ha-Brookshire (PhD '07), University of Missouri</td>
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<td>12:15 - 1:15 PM</td>
<td>Buffet Lunch</td>
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<td>1:15 - 3 PM</td>
<td>Presentations: Merchandising/Retail Management and Sustainability</td>
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<td>Presider: Tara J. Konya</td>
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<td>Marketplace as Community: Examining Americana Music Festivals as</td>
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<td>Alternative Retail Settings</td>
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<td>Tom Turner (PhD ‘16), Lenoir-Rhyne University; and Nancy J. Hodges,</td>
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<td>The University of North Carolina at Greensboro</td>
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<td>Should We Trust and Forgive a Retailer? Consumers’ Reactions toward</td>
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<td>Corporate Social Responsibility from the Employee Perspective: An</td>
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<td>Application of Organizational Justice Theory</td>
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<td>Tara J. Konya and Nancy J. Hodges, The University of North Carolina</td>
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<td>3 PM</td>
<td>Merchandising Program Relocation Update</td>
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<td>Kelly Green Atkins and Anna Duggins Roberts (PhD ‘90), East</td>
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<td>Tennessee State University</td>
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<td>Time and Place—Memories of UNCG Legacy Alumnae</td>
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<td>Doris H. Kincade (PhD ‘88), Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State</td>
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<td>University; Elizabeth H. Dull, High Point University; and Alice E.</td>
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<td>Dull, Digital Storytelling by Alice Dull</td>
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**Symposium Ends in Preparation for Centennial Gala (Starts at 6pm)**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2017

9:30 AM
Coffee and Light Breakfast Fare
Registration Desk Opens

10 AM - 12 PM
Presentations: Shopping Behavior
Presider: Dr. Hyo Jung (Julie) Chang (PhD ’12)

Breaking the ‘Fourth Wall’ of Consumption: Examining the Prosumer’s Role Within Consumer-to-Consumer Electronic Markets
Tiffany Machado Blanchflower (PhD ’16), East Carolina University; and Nancy J. Hodges, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Comparison of Product Choices and Levels of Retail Therapy by Age and Gender
Hyo Jung (Julie) Chang (PhD ’12), Texas Tech University; and Junghwa Son (PhD ’13), Sejong University, Korea

A Comparison of Online Shopping Behaviors by Gender
Marianne C. Bickle and Katherine Annette Burnsed (PhD ’09), University of South Carolina

Politicizing the Retail Environment: Who’s Buying In?
Jennifer L. Wilson and Nancy J. Hodges, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Lina M. Ceballos (PhD ’17), Universidad EAFIT, Colombia; Nancy J. Hodges and Kittichai Watchravesringkan, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

NCAA Team Identification: Sport Fan Purchase Behavior of Home Décor and Apparel
Katherine Annette Burnsed (PhD ’09), University of South Carolina; Jessica Strubel, University of North Texas; and Marianne C. Bickle, University of South Carolina

12 - 1:45 PM
Boxed Lunch and Optional Campus/CARS Department Tour

1:45 - 3 PM
Presentations: Social Psychology of Consumer and Retail Studies
Presider: Dr. Lorraine M. Martinez-Novoa (PhD ’16)

Moms at Work: Constructing a Professional Identity During the Postpartum Period
Victoria Brown (PhD ’16), High Point University; and Nancy J. Hodges, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2017

1:45 - 3 PM
Compulsive Clothing Buyers and the Struggle to Decide: An Application of the Dialogical Self-Theory
Lorraine M. Martinez-Novoa (PhD ’16), Marymount Manhattan College; and Nancy J. Hodges, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Intersectionality and Appearance Management in Politics
Minita Sanghvi (PhD ’14), Skidmore College

Mannequins and Self-Image: Exploration of U.S. Women’s Perceptions
Deborah J.C. Brosdahl, Katherine Annette Burnsed (PhD ’09), Joohyung Park, and Amanda Cohen (BS ’12), University of South Carolina

3 - 4 PM
Poster Session and Coffee Break

Key Competencies for Future Apparel Merchandising Professionals: What is Known?
Bertha Jacobs, University of Pretoria, South Africa; and Elena Karpova (PhD ’05), Iowa State University

Why Do We Avoid Online Ads on Social Media? Evidence from Thai Consumers
Thitipong Pongkul, Parinya Teerakasemsuk, Voradech Phudpong, Chompunuch Punyapiroje, Burapha University, Chonburi, Thailand; and Kittichai Watchravesringkan, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Thai Fans’ Self-Concept and Korean Musical Artists as Personal Brand
Kamonphan Argaros and Chompunuch Punyapiroje, Burapha University, Chonburi, Thailand

A Study on US College Student’s Sustainability Knowledge and Perceived Risks of Sustainable Clothing
Jin Su (PhD ’04) and Maria Gil, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

If Not Us, Whom? Helping Our Students Build a Distinct Competitive Advantage
Raedene Copeland (PhD ’10), Seattle Pacific University

Tired of Making Choices? Subscribe! Perceived Utilitarian and Hedonic Values of Subscription-Based Online Services (SOS) for Clothing
Hongjoo Woo (PhD ’16 and MS ’13), Auburn University; and Bharath Ramkumar (PhD ’16), The State University of New York at Oneonta

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8
### Roles of Local Fashion Shows in Promoting Emerging Fashion Designers
Seoha Min and Jennifer Wilson, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

### African American's Product Experience with Hand-me-down Clothing
LaShaun Collins (MS '16) and Seoha Min, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro; Jennifer Yurchisin, The University of Minnesota

### Presentations: Brand Management
Presider: Dr. Michelle Childs (PhD '14)

- **Fashion Brands’ Collaboration with Charity: What, How, and Why**
  Naeun Kim and Byoungho Jin, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

- **The Effect of Fashion Brands’ Cause-Related Marketing Practices on Consumers’ Perceived Brand Prestige and Purchase Intentions**
  Michelle Childs (PhD ‘14), University of Tennessee-Knoxville; and Seeun Kim, Auburn University

- **Antecedents, Moderators, and Consequences of Brand Satisfaction among Fashion Conscious and Non-Fashion Conscious Consumers**
  Delisia R. Matthews (PhD ‘12), North Carolina State University; and Junghwa Son (PhD ‘13), Sejong University, Korea

- **Creating Perceived Value and Intention to Purchase a Smartwatch: A Conceptual Model of the Role of Perceived Brand Image, Objective Price, Perceived Risk, and Perceived Quality**
  Bharath Ramkumar (PhD ‘16) and Yuli Liang, The State University of New York at Oneonta

- **Renting Luxury Brands: The Effects of Increased Access via Modern Product Acquisition**
  Areti Tsitsakis Vogel, Sasikarn C. Cook (PhD ‘17 and MS ‘12), and Kittichai Watchravesringkan, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

- **Fashion Blog or Paid Advertisement? Examining the Implications of Sponsorship for Bloggers and Brands**
  Miranda Williams and Nancy J. Hodges, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

### Closing Reception
**PANEL BIOS**

**DR. RINN CLOUD** *(PHD ’78)*

Dr. Rinn McLellan Cloud is the Mary Gibbs Jones Professor of Textiles and Chair of the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences at Baylor University. Her research focuses on the influence of human factors and environmental attributes on protective clothing for agricultural workers, medical personnel, and police/military personnel. Her work also extends to garments for dance, sports, and posture support. Dr. Cloud received the UNCG Pacemaker Award in 1998.

**DR. ELENA KARPOVA** *(PHD ‘05)*

Elena Karpova is a Professor of Apparel, Events, and Hospitality Management Department, Iowa State University. She has industry and academic experience in Russia and the US. Her research focuses on trends in the global textile and apparel industries, sustainability, and creativity. She is a recipient of the ITAA Mid-Career Excellence Award and a co-author of the textbook, *Going Global: The Textile and Apparel Industry*.

**DR. YOUN-KYOUNG KIM** *(PHD ’91)*

Youn-Kyung Kim, Ph.D., a Professor in the Department of Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism Management at University of Tennessee, published the book, *Experiential Retailing: Concepts and Strategies That Sell* and articles in *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Advertising Research*, and *Psychology & Marketing*. Her research interests are in sustainable consumption, experiential consumption, and branding.

**DR. JUNG HA-BROOKSHIRE** *(PHD ’07)*

Jung Ha-Brookshire is the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies in the College of Human Environmental Sciences and Associate Professor/Director of Graduate Studies in Textile and Apparel Management at the University of Missouri. She is the author of the textbook, *Global Sourcing in the Textile and Apparel Industry* and recently received the Kemper Fellowship for Excellence in Teaching and the Fulbright Core Scholar award.
ABSTRACTS

A COMPARISON OF ONLINE SHOPPING BEHAVIORS BY GENDER

Marianne C. Bickle and Katherine Annette Burnsed
Department of Retailing, University of South Carolina, USA

Technology is constantly changing the retail landscape for both retailers and consumers. Nowadays, consumers can surf the Web, compare prices and product features, and shop from any location that offers an Internet connection. As such, e-tailers provide consumers with convenience (flexibility and reduction in shopping time, decrease in physical effort, aggravation reduction, and the ability to satisfy impulse purchases), more product and service offerings, and more competitive price options not offered by individual brick and mortar retailers (Kwak, Fox, & Zinkhan, 2002; Verma, Sharma, & Sheth, 2016; Vong, 2012). These added values equal big money. In fact, experts predict worldwide retail e-commerce sales to be $2.352 trillion by year-end 2017 (eMarketer, 2016), while the U.S. piece of that pie is projected to be $440 billion (FTI Consulting, Inc., 2016).

E-tailers can benefit from social media sites (Nadeem, Andreini, Salo & Laukkanen, 2015). In fact, studies show that 62% of e-shoppers have read product-related comments from their Facebook friends, 75% have clicked on the product link to visit the retailer’s site, and 53% of those who clicked, made a purchase (Vong, 2012). Vong (2012) also reports that 64% of Twitter users follow brands in order to receive exclusive product promotions and discounts. While malls are often viewed as targeting primarily females, e-tailers target both genders. Prior research reveals gender differences regarding e-shopping perceptions (Van Slyke, Comunale, & Belanger, 2002) and attitudes (Hasan, 2010). Using the technology acceptance model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) as the underlying conceptual framework, which is widely used in conjunction with understanding e-shopping consumer behavior, the following hypotheses are examined: gender differences will exist in the ownership of electronics (H1); social media use (H2); amount of showrooming conducted (H3); reasons for shopping online (H4); and amount of online shopping (H5).

Panel data for the study are collected through the use of a hired survey service (C&T Marketing Group) and funded by Glimcher Realty Trust, which is a recognized leader in the ownership, management, acquisition, and development of retail properties. Participants are randomly selected from a nation-wide panel. The study yields a total of 3,344 respondents—1,451 men (43.4%) and 1,893 women (56.6%).

Use of electronics (H1) is measured using categorical data indicators (0 = No; 1 = Yes). Respondents are asked if they own the following electronics (check all that apply): iPhone or other smartphone; iPad or tablet; eReader; laptop/notebook computer; desktop computer; and/or iPod or other MP3 player. Respondents’ activity level on social media (H2) is measured via a four-point Likert-type scale: (1 = I do not use social media; 2 = I use social media a couple times a month; 3 = I use social media at least once a day; and 4 = I use social media multiple times a day). Showrooming (H3) is measured on a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = Never; 5 = Always). Participants’ reasons for shopping online (H4) are measured using categorical data indicators (0 = No; 1 = Yes) with the following options (check all that apply): greater selection; less stress; more convenient; less costly; and easier to compare prices. The amount of online shopping participants’ complete (H5) is measured using interval level data: 10% or less; 11%-25%; 26%-50%; 51%-75%; and more than 75%. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is conducted to identify significant mean differences between genders for all research questions.

H1 reveals significant gender differences use of an iPhone or other smartphone (F = 7.62, p = .006), iPad or tablet (F = 30.95, p = .0001), eReader (F = 22.24, p = .0001), Laptop computer (F = 11.07, p = .001), Desktop computer (F = 12.58, p = .0001), and iPod or other MP3 player (F = 18.64, p = .0001). Females are shown to have significantly higher mean values on the use of all electronic devices with the exception of desktop computers. H2 reveals significant gender differences in regards to social media use (F = 132.84, p = .000). Both groups use social media at least once a day; however, females use social media multiple times a day.

Significant gender differences exist for use of showrooming (H3) (F = 3.86, p = .04). Females are more prone to showroom prior to purchasing than males. H4 reveals significant gender differences are present for all of the reasons for shopping online: greater selection (F = 6.12, p = .01); less stress (F = 5.55, p = .01); more convenient (F = 11.71, p = .001); less costly (F = 12.48, p = .000); and easier to compare prices (F = 11.75, p = .001). Females are more prone to shop online as a result of selection, stress reduction, convenience, and price comparisons, while males shop online more frequently due to lower prices. Finally, H5 shows that females spend approximately the same amount of time shopping online as males (F = 3.29, p = .07); both groups complete between 11%-25% of their purchases online.

This study investigates differences between genders use of electronics, social media, and online shopping habits. The study reveals females to be the dominant user of different electronic devices compared to males. Contrary to prior research, females are more likely to shop online than males as a result of selection, stress reduction, convenience, and price comparisons. The differences between males and females in relation to the use of social media and online shopping behavior cannot be generalized for the total U.S. population or other countries. A study that compares and contrasts U.S. differences in gender shopping behaviors and desired features, further dissected by gender and age, will be of interest to online retailers.

REFERENCES

ABSTRACTS

A STUDY ON US COLLEGE STUDENT’S SUSTAINABILITY KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEIVED RISKS OF SUSTAINABLE CLOTHING

Jin Su and Maria S. Gil
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, USA

KEYWORDS
College students, perceived risk, sustainability, sustainable clothing, US

RESEARCH BACKGROUND
The rapid increase in the size of the sustainable clothing market implies that global interest in sustainable clothing production and consumption is growing and consumers are concerned about sustainability (Goworek, Fisher, Cooper, Woodward, & Hiller, 2012). As the textile and apparel industry works towards being more environmentally and socially responsible, it is equally important to involve consumers in the process and encourage ethical consumption of apparel products. Literature supports the assertion that knowledge is frequently a prerequisite to engaging in pro-environmental behaviors and that a lack of knowledge is a constraint (Connell, 2010). Moreover, perceived risk, which is the nature and level of uncertainty that a consumer feels when making a particular decision, is a critical factor that must be considered within the context of sustainable apparel consumption. An in-depth understanding of how consumers perceive the risks involved in the consumption of sustainable clothing products is needed to promote the broad diffusion of these sustainable products in the marketplace (Kang & Kim, 2013). However, empirical research integrating consumer sustainability knowledge and their perceived risks in the sustainable apparel context is limited. This study utilizes the theory of reasoned action (TRA) by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) and perceived risk perspective (Kang & Kim, 2013) as theoretical framework (see Figure 1) and it focuses on college students’ perceptions of sustainable apparel products. Current college students are a large and powerful consumer segment with a long future of potential consumer decisions. They are especially socially concerned and are both skeptical and concerned consumers. Understanding their apparel sustainability knowledge and their perspectives of the risks associated with sustainable clothing provides valuable insights to the US apparel industry.

RESEARCH METHOD
A survey instrument in the form of a structured questionnaire was designed based on a careful review of pertinent literature. Empirically tested and established measures of consumer’s sustainability knowledge (6 items), perceived financial risk (3 items), performance risk (3 items), psychological risk (3 items), social risk (3 items), and fashion risk (3 items) were obtained from literature (Dickson, 2000; Kang & Kim, 2013; Park & Kim, 2016). A five-point Likert-type scale was used (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Consumer attitude was assessed using four items on a 5-point semantic differential scale adapted from Ma and Lee (2012). Data were collected in February 2017 at a midsize university in the southeast US. Four hundred and eighty-five responses were received and 473 are valid for examining the research model illustrated in Figure 1. Of the valid 473 responses, 45% were from male and 53% were from female; 50% were 18-20 years old and 44% were 21-25 years old. 75% of respondents were from Business School; 15% were from College of Arts and Sciences; and 4% were from School of Health and Human Sciences. The most prevalent ethnic group was Caucasian (46%), followed by African-American (27%), Asian (14%) and Hispanic (7%).

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS
A two-step structural equation modeling approach was used to examine the research model. Evaluation of the measurement model was conducted using confirmatory factor analysis. A satisfactory fit was achieved for the measurement model (see Table 1). The analysis of the structural model (see Figure 1 which includes standardized parameter estimates and t-values) shows the significant negative linkages between financial risk, social risk and consumer attitude, demonstrating that perceived financial risk and social risk negatively and strongly affect US young consumer’s attitude towards sustainable apparel products.

REFERENCES
INTRODUCTION
The appearance and popularity of second hand stores has increased over the past few years (Sutter, 2016). However, research on the perceptions of thrifting and second hand clothing, particularly for African Americans, is virtually scant in the literature. Given that African Americans comprise a significant portion of buying power (Nielsen, 2013), it is necessary to understand African American consumers’ experiences and perceptions of hand-me-down (hereinafter HMD) clothing. Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to investigate African American’s product experience with HMD clothing and the meaning of HMD clothing to their culture. The findings will contribute to the literature on African Americans’ consumption behavior in retail studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW
1) Cultural Context of African American Consumers: African American culture is collectivistic, defined as a culture that focuses on interdependence and the self within the group rather than the self outside of the group (Coon & Kemmelmeier, 2001; Swaidan, Rawwas, Vitell, 2008). Interestingly, Coon and Kemmelmeier (2001) found that African Americans not only scored high on collectivism but also on individualism. They argue that despite having collectivist cultural values, African Americans have internalized Eurocentric values of individualism based on racial experience and dominant perceptions of white values as superior. Thus, internalized racism or acculturation may cause African Americans to seek personal uniqueness and separation from the group, leading to complex views about hand me down clothing.

2) Product Experience Framework: The product experience framework is a model created by Desmet and Hekkert (2007) applied to affective responses of individuals experience human-product interaction. According to Desmet and Hekkert (2007), product experience refers to “a change in core affect that is attributed to human-product interaction” (p. 59). A product can be experienced on three levels: aesthetic experience, experience of meaning, and emotional experience (Desmet & Hekkert, 2007). Desmet and Hekkert (2007) note that cultural characteristics can shape the users experience with the product. Utilizing the product experience framework the following areas were focused on: (a) aesthetic experience, which focuses the pleasure of the product experienced through one’s senses, (b) experience of meaning, which focuses on the cognition individuals use to place symbolic significance on products, and (c) emotional experience (love, disgust, fear, desire, pride, despair, etc.), which focuses on emotions experienced through the product experience (Desmet & Hekkert, 2007).

METHOD
In order to achieve the research purpose, the researchers addressed two research questions: (1) What is African-American consumers’ perception on HMD clothing? (2) What are African-American consumers’ product experiences with HMD clothing? Upon IRB approval, data collection took the form of in-depth interviews with a purposive sample of female millennial consumers due to their significance in consumer market (Schawbel, 2015). By doing so, the effect of gender and age were also controlled. Due to the purpose of the study, in addition, all participants self-identified as African-American. As a result, 10 female participants whose ages ranged from 19-23 were interviewed. The questions regarding participants’ demographic information, their perception on HMD clothing, and their product experience with HMD clothing were asked during the interviews. Each participant received $20 in compensation. Data analysis utilized analytical coding of the transcriptions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The findings are as follow with numbering indicating the research questions being addressed analyzed from 10 participants. (1) The results of the first question proposed an interesting dynamic within the thoughts of HMD clothing. It was found that participants have positive individual perceptions of HMD clothing. All participants perceive HMD clothing as a good way to increase the number of styles in their closet. However, participants differed in their thoughts of the cultural perception. Majority believed that there is a negative perception of HMD clothing in their culture. Some participants appeared to believe that HMD clothing is a sign of not having anything in their cultural context. Participant C said ‘I think it’s just our culture thinks of it that way (negatively), other groups don’t. Our race is socially inclined to think we are poor, we care about money and the finer things.’ In addition, the participants’ perception on HMD clothing was related to the close-knit nature of the culture. Participant G mentioned that “Everyone helps each other out. No one asks for it. It’s more like I figured you could use this… We all help each other out”. The contradiction between individual perception and thoughts of group perception is a key to the characteristic of African Americans being both collectivistic and individualistic.

(2) All participants expressed positive experiences and feelings towards their product experience with HMD clothing in relation to the three levels. In terms of aesthetic experience, several participants mentioned color being a defining characteristic. Also, participants mentioned the aesthetics of the HMD clothing matching their personality and individual style. With experience of meaning, for example, most participants mentioned that HMD clothing supports self-identity and memories associated with the experience. Lastly, with emotions for example, participants mentioned anticipation of waiting to receive the HMD clothing from a family member, happiness from receiving the clothing, and feeling sentimental due to attachments to the clothing.

CONCLUSION
Through in-depth interviews with African American consumers, the researchers explored the participants’ perception on HMD clothing as well as how they experience HMD clothing within Desmet and Hekkert’s framework. Findings will offer insights to second-hand retailers who seek to better understand and market to African American consumers. Further research on the topic is needed to examine other factors that affect African Americans’ behavior with HMD clothing.

REFERENCES
LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT
Building on the innovativeness and opinion leadership (Hirschman & Adcock, 1978) and congruity (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955) theories, this study proposes five hypotheses.

• H1: A positive relationship between brand impression and brand satisfaction will exist in fashion and non-fashion conscious groups.
• H2: A positive relationship between brand association and brand satisfaction will exist in fashion and non-fashion conscious groups.
• H3: A positive relationship between brand satisfaction and brand loyalty will exist in fashion and non-fashion conscious groups.
• H4: A different moderating effect of brand/store congruity on the relationship between brand impression and brand satisfaction will exist, such that a strong relationship will exist in fashion conscious consumers, but a weak relationship will exist in non-fashion conscious consumers.
• H5: A different moderating effect of brand/store congruity on the relationship between brand association and brand satisfaction will exist, such that a strong relationship will exist in fashion conscious consumers, but a weak relationship will exist in non-fashion conscious consumers.

FINDINGS
This study tested H1 to H3 using linear regression, and H4 and H5 were tested using moderated regression analysis. Results showed that for the fashion conscious group, brand impression (R² = .280, F = 20.578, P < .00) and brand association (R² = .537, F = 61.546, P < .00) toward brand satisfaction were significant. For the non-fashion conscious group, brand impression (R² = .318, F = 69.999, P < .00) and brand association (R² = .510, F = 148.579, P < .00) were found to be significant. In both groups, brand satisfaction had a positive relationship with brand loyalty (R² = .530(fashion group), F = 59.683, P < .00; R² = .655 (non-fashion group), F = 269.039, P < .00). The moderating effects of brand/store congruity on brand impression (R² = .435, F = 13.095, P < .001) and brand association (R² = .613, F = 26.979, P < .022) were only supported in the fashion conscious group. Thus, all proposed hypotheses were accepted.

REFERENCES


ABSTRACTS

BREAKING THE ‘FOURTH WALL’ OF CONSUMPTION: EXAMINING THE PROSUMER’S ROLE WITHIN CONSUMER-TO-CONSUMER ELECTRONIC MARKETS

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Consumers’ need for uniqueness, coupled with the burgeoning craft trend has led to the success of several consumer-to-consumer electronic markets, including Etsy, ArtFire, and eBay. One of the fastest growing consumer-to-consumer electronic markets, Etsy specializes in the retailing of handmade goods, vintage products, and crafting supplies. Between 2014 and 2016 Etsy’s sales revenues increased by 50% to 3.4 million USD, representing 1.7 million sellers and hosting 28.6 million consumers (Etsy, 2017). Like other consumer-to-consumer electronic markets, Etsy is reliant on two groups to function: consumers, or those who evaluate and purchase goods, and producers, or those who create and sell goods (Fourcade, 2007). However, in such markets as Etsy there also is a third market actor, in which the roles of producer and consumer converge, known as the prosumer. A prosumer is defined as a market actor that both buys and sells goods in a single market (Kotler, 1986). The prosumer plays a vital role within most electronic markets because these markets rely on the prosumer to buy into the service as well as to sell products to generate sales within the market (Denegri-Knott & Zwick, 2012). Despite the importance of the prosumer, a review of extant studies on electronic markets reveals that, to date, very little research exists which examines this role (Kim & Wulf, 2010). Thus, this study helps to fill this gap in the literature by exploring the role of the prosumer in consumer-to-consumer electronic markets and specifically within the context of Etsy.

To better understand the prosumer role, an ethnographic and netnographic research design was employed in this study (Kozinets, 2006). Data were collected using two primary methods: (1) participant observation and (2) in-depth interviews. Observation occurred online over a three-month period and focused on text-based interactions (Kozinets, 2005) occurring in different ways on the Etsy site, including blogs, forums, and reviews. In addition, one of the researchers entered the field as a prosumer, operating as both buyer (consumer) and seller (producer) on Etsy. In-depth interviews were then conducted with a total of twenty individuals representing one or more of three primary roles relative to Etsy: buyers, sellers, and Etsy administrators (those who manage the Etsy site). Interviews were audio-recorded with participants’ consent, lasted between one and two hours, and transcribed verbatim. After the completion of data collection, Spiggle’s (1994) suggestions for qualitative data analysis and interpretation were followed. First, a set of categories was established and relationships across these categories were identified to further develop characteristics and dimensions of emergent themes. From this iterative process, three primary themes were identified and used to structure the interpretation of data: Etsy Buyer/Seller, Supporting Producers, and The Fourth Wall.

The first theme, Etsy Buyer/Seller, highlights the path to becoming a prosumer within Etsy’s market. That is, it was found that many Sellers interviewed for this study began their journeys on Etsy as Buyers. Erin, the longest running Seller interviewed, shared, “I did not start out with the intent of selling, so I started buying first. And then I started selling.” She continues, “I started with dog beds, because I have two big dogs that are also filthy, and when you like try and find a big dog bed they are super expensive, or so thick that you couldn’t wash them. So I started making my own.” Similar to other Sellers, Erin started as a Buyer but eventually decided to start selling. Indeed, the majority of Sellers interviewed engaged in both buying and selling, representing the Buyer/Seller role of the prosumer.

Supporting Producers captures an additional aspect of behaviors found among Etsy’s prosumers. For example, the data revealed that some Etsy prosumers purchase items that they use in making products for their own shops, thereby engaging in business-to-business market behaviors. As Sabrina explained, “I buy as much as I can on Etsy all together, the vintage rhinestones, the clips and stuff like that… I buy all of this on Etsy to, you know, support the Etsy Sellers and the community.” By doing so, these Sellers, as prosumers, support other Sellers as well as reinforce the importance of the Buyer/Seller within Etsy’s market.

The last theme, The Fourth Wall, captures the three-fold prosumer role that particularly surfaces within Etsy’s market. The notion of the “fourth wall” comes from film-making, wherein the actor does not directly address the viewer/camera unless there is a narrative-specific reason (e.g., documentaries). Data collected for this study indicated that as employees, Etsy administrators are encouraged to participate in Etsy’s market as Sellers as well as Buyers. For instance, Janice, an Etsy employee since 2007, has owned and operated her own handmade paper-product shop since 2008. Like Janice, other Etsy employees have integrated the “selling” activity into their market behaviors, ultimately blending Administration and Seller roles. In addition to owning a shop and working for Etsy, these Administrative prosumers also purchase goods from other Sellers, thereby engaging in a three-fold market role, as Seller, Buyer, and Etsy Administrator, and thus are prosumers specific to the market, or market prosumers.

Results of this study reveal the extent to which the lines between Buyer, Seller, and Administrator can become blurred, as all of these roles can involve engaging in one or more market activity. Perhaps most revealing is that these activities are particularly interrelated when it comes to an electronic market, and, in the case of Etsy, are essential to shaping the prosumer role. Moreover, this study points to an emerging type of prosumer, the market prosumer, which appears to be a product of the consumer-to-consumer electronic market phenomenon. A market prosumer is a market actor that works (Administration) for the market in which they sell (Seller) and/or buy (Buyer) goods, thereby blending all roles together into one, and ultimately breaking down the “fourth wall” of consumption. Etsy is uniquely positioned to facilitate the market prosumer, in that it is a site where the exchange of goods occurs in a variety of ways and where interaction occurs among and across all members, whether employees, consumers, producers, or prosumers. Future research is needed on the prosumer and what this role means for the electronic market.

REFERENCES

ABSTRACTS

CREATING PERCEIVED VALUE AND INTENTION TO PURCHASE A SMARTWATCH: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF THE ROLE OF PERCEIVED BRAND IMAGE, OBJECTIVE PRICE, PERCEIVED RISK, AND PERCEIVED QUALITY

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KEYWORDS
Smartwatch, Product Value, Purchase Intention, Price-Quality Trade-Off

INTRODUCTION & RATIONALE
A smartwatch is a wearable device with computational power that, in addition to displaying time, can connect to devices such as smartphones via short-range wireless connectivity, provide alert notifications, and collect and store biological data such as heart rate, through a range of sensors (Cecchinato, Cox, & Bird, 2015). Though a smartwatch is an IT product, recent research also categorizes it as a luxury fashion product (Choi & Kim, 2016), thereby making it a viable strategy to increase brand value and market share for both technology and fashion companies. Companies such as Apple, Samsung, Xiaomi, Guess and Fossil introduced smartwatches as extensions of their existing product lines and kept updating them every year. With increase in popularity, a better understanding of consumers’ perceived value of smartwatches is needed to control production cost, while maximizing the perceived value through product design, pricing, and brand positioning.

Since the introduction and application of smartwatch is still at a developing stage, literature is deficient concerning their perceived value, and therefore some gaps exist. Firstly, though studies have addressed the effect of perceived benefits and risks on perceived value of a smartwatch (e.g., Yang et al., 2016) and consumers’ intention to purchase smartwatches (e.g., Choi & Kim, 2016), there is a lack of understanding of the trade-off between price (give) and quality (get), along with perceived risk, to increase perceived value of smartwatches. Secondly, though an understanding of the indirect effect of brand name on perceived value exists (e.g., Yang et al., 2016), there is a lack of understanding of how the perception of brand image of a smartwatch can influence perceived quality in creating perceived value. This conceptual paper aims at filling these research gaps by developing a conceptual framework (see Figure 1) with propositions developed based on Sweeney, Soutar and Johnson’s (1999) perceived value model. If empirically tested, this framework can expose the role of perceived brand image, objective price, perceived risk, perceived quality, and perceived value on perceived value of a smartwatch, thereby influencing purchase intention.

Objective Price. In judging the perceived quality of a product, the actual price of the product, also called objective price, plays a significant role such that, consumers associate high price with high quality. Jacoby, Olson and Haddock (1971) point out that, in addition to using brand image to determine the perceived quality of a product, consumers also rely on the product’s price information to arrive at a quality consensus. Thus, it is proposed that: (P2) Objective price will positively influence consumers’ perceived quality of a smartwatch.

Perceived risk. Perceived risk, defined as consumer’s perception of the uncertainty and adverse consequences of buying a product, is a multidimensional construct that includes functional/performance, physical, financial, social and psychological risk (Sweeney et al., 1999). Prior studies have shown that, with increase in any of the aforementioned types of risk, the perceived value of the product tends to decrease. Thus, it is proposed that: (P4) Perceived risk will negatively influence consumers’ perceived value of a smartwatch.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS
This paper proposed a conceptual framework that explores the role of perceived brand image, objective price, perceived risk and perceived quality in creating perceived value, thereby enhancing purchase intention. If empirically tested, this conceptual model can also be applied to other wearable technology products in assessing value creation.

Theoretically, this study will extend the currently established understanding of value creation through the price-quality trade-off, to a recently emerging wearable technology product, namely, a smartwatch. This conceptual framework, if empirically tested, can also contribute to existing knowledge of the indirect effect of perceived brand image and direct effect of perceived risk on perceived value of wearable technologies, such as a smartwatch. From a managerial perspective, the research results can further provide suggestions for smartwatch retailers on innovative product design, pricing, and brand positioning to maximize perceived value. The pioneers of wearable technology, such as Samsung and Apple, along with innovative apparel brands, are bound to discover a new generation of consumers who will be accustomed to the incorporation of technology into simple, everyday consumer products. This highlights a growing need for future studies to address the perceived value of emerging wearable technology products to better understand and serve this market.

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Full Reference List Available Upon Request
ABSTRACTS

COMPARISON OF PRODUCT CHOICES AND LEVELS OF RETAIL THERAPY BY AGE AND GENDER

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KEYWORDS
Retail therapy, product choice, age, gender

INTRODUCTION
Today, retail therapy has received significant attention from marketers and scholars (Atalay & Meloy, 2011). Retail therapy is considered as either mood-alleviative consumption or compensatory consumption (Yurchisin et al., 2008). That is, consumers make purchases to recover their negative feelings and to compensate themselves for psychological defects. Furthermore, consumer behavior has been studied in relation to demographic characteristics of consumers. It has been found that spending patterns including product choices are different by age and gender (Garbarino & Strahilevitz, 2004). However, little has been done to understand the relationships between demographic factors and retail therapy. Thus, research questions for this study include “Are there differences in product choices for retail therapy by age and gender?” and “Are retail therapy levels different by age and gender?” Applying the generational cohort theory and gender differences in consumer behavior, the purposes of this study are that 1) exploring the relationship between product choice of retail therapy and demographic factors (i.e., age and gender) and 2) examining the relationship between retail therapy levels and demographic factors (i.e., age and gender).

LITERATURE REVIEW
Retail therapy as mood-alleviative consumption has been studied from the explicit perspective of mood repair. People engage in various behaviors including exercising, listening to music, and consumption in order to manage their negative moods. During retail therapy episodes, consumers may buy items which they might not ordinarily purchase (e.g., high-priced apparel items) (Atalay & Meloy, 2011). The negative event can result stress or having a bad day. They go to shopping to get over their experiences of negative events. People can be away from memories of negative events by shopping, the act of buying, or combination of these activities (Kang, 2009). For example, when consumers engage in apparel retail therapy, they purchase apparel to relieve their negative feelings (Yurchisin et al., 2008).

In terms of demographic characteristics of consumers, gender and age differences in consumer behavior have been found in various perspectives. For example, spending patterns including product choice of shopping are different by age and gender (Rath et al., 2014). Regarding age, Millennials (i.e., born 1981 and 2000), sometimes called as Generation Y, tend to seek products to meet both budget and desire for fun in shopping for themselves, while Generation Xers (i.e., born 1965 and 1980) spend more money on products for family and home and Baby Boomers (i.e., born between 1946 and 1964) enjoy traveling, dining out, spas and salons (Rath et al., 2014). Marketers and academics applied the generational cohort theory to understand attitudes and behaviors based on generational cohorts’ experiences and values (Brosdahl & Carpenter, 2011). The similar emotional events experienced by same cohort groups influence attitudes and behaviors of different generational cohorts. Regarding gender, female consumers perceive risk of buying online higher than male consumers (Garbarino & Strahilevitz, 2004). Based on research questions and literature review, a goal of this study is to examine what products/services consumers select for retail therapy with regards to age and gender. Also, this study investigates the levels of retail therapy by age and gender.

Hypotheses for this study are:
H1: Product choices for retail therapy will be different by a) age and b) gender.
H2: Retail therapy levels will be different by a) age and b) gender.

METHODLOGY AND RESULTS
A Qualtrics survey was conducted where participants were recruited from Amazon’s Mechanical Turk. The targeted respondents are the U.S. consumers aged 18 years and older. A total of 239 usable data were collected. Product categories are provided to select to understand what types of products participants choose for retail therapy. Also, the exiting scale was used to measure retail therapy using a 7-point Likert scale (i.e., Kang, 2009).

To test H1a and H1b, chi-square tests were performed. There were significant differences on product choices for retail therapy among three different age groups (i.e., Millennials, Generation Xers, and Baby Boomers) ($\chi^2=18.25^{**}$, p=0.01). Millennials tend to select apparel for retail therapy most frequently (45.8%). The top product choice for retail therapy for Generation Xers is also apparel, but they also choose electronics (28.1%) and food (28.1%) equally and frequently. Millennials tend to select food for retail therapy most frequently (46.9%), followed by apparel (21.9%). Thus, H1a was supported. Regarding H1b, there was a significant difference on product choices for retail therapy between female and male consumers ($\chi^2=41.51^{***}$, p<0.001). Female consumers select apparel most frequently (55.4%), followed by food (28.5%), while male consumer select electronics (35.5%) most frequently, followed by food (32.7%) and apparel (21.5%). Thus, H1b was supported.

To test H2a, a one-way ANOVA analysis was performed. The result showed that there were significant differences in retail therapy levels among three different age groups, F(2,225)=7.34^{***}, p<0.001. Millennials have the highest retail therapy level (M=4.27, SD=1.65), compared to Generation Xers (M=3.58, SD=1.62) and Baby Boomers (M=3.22, SD=1.60). Thus, H2a was supported. To test H2b, an independent sample t-test was performed and there was a significant difference on the retail therapy level between female and male consumers, t(233)=3.07^{**}, p<0.01. Female consumers have a higher retail therapy level (M=4.26, SD=1.68) than male consumers (M=3.60, SD=1.60). Thus, H2b was also supported.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS
This study examined the differences of product choices and levels of retail therapy by age and gender. Interestingly, Millennials and Generation Xers choose apparel the most frequently, while Baby Boomers enjoy buying food for alleviating their negative feelings (i.e., retail therapy). Additionally, female consumers tend to choose apparel items for retail therapy, while male consumers tend to choose electronics for retail therapy. Regarding the levels of retail therapy, Millennials and female consumers tend to have higher retail therapy levels than other groups. As found in the previous literature, retail practitioners can understand what types of products different age and gender consumers like and provide right products depending on their age and gender (Rath et al., 2014). For future research, different demographic characteristics, such as education and income levels, can be examined with regards to retail therapy.

REFERENCES
Three core thematic areas emerged and were used to structure the interpretation. Patterns in the data were identified and labeled, and conceptual links between participants until responses reached saturation. Participants were also asked to provide personal journals for a period of four weeks. Recorded interviews and journals were transcribed verbatim. Responses were analyzed thematically by both authors; patterns in the data were identified and labeled, and conceptual links between patterns were defined and differences resolved through discussion (Spiggle, 1994). Three core thematic areas emerged and were used to structure the interpretation.

For many consumers, making purchase decisions can be tiring and, at times, distressing, especially if complex. However, for compulsive buyers, making even the simplest consumption decisions can be painful and extremely challenging. Studies in psychology and consumer behavior (Mueller, Mitchell, Marino, & Ertelt, 2010; O’Guinn & Faber, 1989) report that compulsive buyers experience repetitive, irresistible, and uncontrollable urges to acquire goods such that they are often preoccupied with shopping to the extent that they devote all their resources (i.e., time and money) to it, and yet, ironically, buy goods out of need, specifically the need to purchase. Mueller et al. (2010) assert that despite the many negative consequences that result from compulsive buying behavior (CBB), including frustration, shame, depression, and financial debt, efforts to curb the behavior often prove unsuccessful, which suggests the presence of cognitive conflicts in compulsive buyers’ decision-making process. Moreover, while some researchers suggest that CBB is not specific to one product category (O’Guinn & Faber, 1989), there is compelling evidence (Johnson & Attmann, 2009) suggesting that compulsive buyers have a strong preference for appearance-related products (ARPs) (e.g., clothing, jewelry, cosmetics, and shoes).

Although research on CBB has increased in the last two decades, little is known about compulsive buyers’ decision-making process or their preference for ARPs. Thus, the purpose of this study was to understand the challenges faced by compulsive buyers considering their preference for ARPs. The Dialogical Self Theory (DST) was used as a conceptual frame as it “provides a framework to attend to the relationships between different thoughts and perspectives in consumers in order to understand how inconsistencies are experienced and dealt with in consumption contexts” (Bahl & Milne, 2010, p. 177). DST considers the self at multiple levels (meta-position, I-position, and Me’s) and allows for an understanding of different voices. Bahl and Milne (2010) posited that DST helps to explain negative consumption behaviors, specifically how people decide whether to engage in them and what they experience in the process.

A phenomenological approach to inquiry was employed to address the purpose of this study. Two data collection methods were used: in-depth interviews and personal journals. Upon receipt of IRB approval, in-depth interviews were conducted with a total of 6 female participants in the US. All participants were recruited on a referral basis and, through a screening questionnaire, were determined to be compulsive buyers. Each participant was interviewed five times over a period of three months. Each interview session lasted from 1 to 3 hours and was conducted via Skype or telephone. To ensure a systematic approach to the process, an outline containing 10-15 questions per interview session was followed. Interviews were conducted with participants until responses reached saturation. Participants were also asked to keep personal journals for a period of four weeks. Recorded interviews and journals were transcribed verbatim. Responses were analyzed thematically by both authors; patterns in the data were identified and labeled, and conceptual links between patterns were defined and differences resolved through discussion (Spiggle, 1994).

The first thematic area, The Need, examines participants’ preference for ARPs and highlights participants’ deep connections with ARPs as well as the meanings they assign to them. Participants preferred ARPs over other consumer goods because of their physical attributes (e.g., color, style, fit), the feelings they evoke (i.e., what these items make them feel - accomplished, happy, etc.), and the things they allow them to do (e.g., gaining control over their lives, expressing who they are). The second area, The Struggle, explores cognitive conflicts during decision-making and points to participants’ inability to decide between items. Participants described experiencing tensions at all points in the process, as their multiple selves (I-positions) debated about whether to engage in CBB. On the one hand, a fragmented sense of self motivated by negative emotions seeks “a quick fix” in shopping, or as Delores stated, “I will feel better about myself if I go shopping.” On the other, a controlled, more conscious self recognizes the lack of need and the consequences of engaging. Multiple I-positions then struggled to evaluate the alternatives and come to a purchase decision. Some participants indicated spending a significant amount of time deciding between items and experiencing extreme preoccupation and anxiety while thinking about the pros and cons of making the purchase. As Lynn explained, “There have been multiple times where I’ve been stressed out or crying or on the verge of tears in the fitting room sitting there, kind of…taking out my phone and calculating numbers and kind of going, What should I do?” Others indicated that they go through the process fast so that there is no time to reflect on their actions, thereby avoiding dealing with opposing I-positions. Finally, The Aftermath reveals how participants deal with conflicting thoughts and post-purchase feelings/behaviors. Some, like Lynn, simply surrender to the compulsive self by purchasing everything and thinking, “Oh, I’ll bring it all home and then I’ll decide and I’ll return some of them.” In most cases, participants admitted to not returning any of it, and explained that the awareness of their breakdown in self-regulation results in feelings of guilt, shame, and regret – “I really like this item but I shouldn’t have spent all this time and money doing this,” Julia stated. Some participants seek to manage these feelings by hiding the items, while all talked about returning to another cycle of CBB to help themselves feel better.

Findings of this study support and expand upon previous research suggesting that compulsive buyers face difficulties controlling their shopping and buying behaviors. This study revealed that compulsive clothing buyers experience tensions at different points within the decision-making process (i.e., before, during, and after). These tensions occur as their multiple selves speak from different “I” positions. Disagreement between “I” positions is resolved only when one of the “I” positions, typically that of the compulsive self, overshadows the rest. Findings indicate that, while aware of the consequences of the behavior, compulsive buyers appear to spend an excessive amount of time in a back and forth debate with multiple levels of the self. Although this study is the first to apply the Dialogical Self Theory to explore the decision-making of compulsive buyers, further research that examines compulsive buyers’ decision-making is needed, and particularly how conflicts within and across multiple levels of the self are resolved.

REFERENCES
CONSUMER PREFERENCE AND APPAREL PRODUCTS: INVESTIGATING THE ROLE OF THE CENTRALITY OF VISUAL PRODUCT AESTHETICS CONCEPT

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When a consumer encounters a product, the outcome of this human-product interaction will be determined not just by the characteristics of the product itself, but by the consumer’s perceptions of and experiences with the product. The outcome is therefore largely dependent on the dispositional characteristics that the individual consumer brings to the interaction (Desmet & Hekkert, 2007), hence the importance of considering consumer characteristics when studying aesthetic phenomena, including that of product design (Bloch, 1995). One consumer characteristic that has received a great deal of attention in the literature is known as the Centrality of Visual Product Aesthetics (CVPA) (Bloch, Brunel, & Arnold, 2003). CVPA is the level of significance that visual aesthetics holds for a consumer in his or her interactions with products. Although research has investigated this concept relative to product design in general, few studies have employed CVPA in investigations specific to apparel products. Thus, the present study addresses this gap by investigating the influence of CVPA in consumer aesthetic preference relative to apparel products.

To operationalize the CVPA concept for the purposes of the present study, the Framework of Product Experience proposed by Desmet and Hekkert (2007) was used as the theoretical frame, allowing for a focus on the aesthetic experience. Aesthetic experience refers to the aesthetic level that generates delight in the consumer and as the theoretical frame, allowing for a focus on the aesthetic experience. Aesthetic experience consumers have in their interactions with products emphasizes individual differences because different consumers respond differently to a given product (Desmet & Hekkert, 2007). One of these differences can be measured through the CVPA construct. When considering the CVPA construct for exploring why individuals prefer specific products, it is important to focus on certain aesthetic properties of those products. Consequently, in the present study, those specific properties were typicality and novelty as related to the Most Advanced, Yet Acceptable (MAYA) principle (Lidwell, Holden, Butler, & Elam, 2010). Lidwell et al. (2010) defined this principle as a method to determine the most commercially viable product, in that a successful product needs to be simultaneously perceived as having a certain degree of “familiarity,” which relates to the typicality of products; as well as a certain degree of “originality” or novelty (p. 162). Based on the literature, the following four hypotheses were developed:

- **H1**: There will be a two-way interaction between typicality and novelty.
- **H2**: There will be a two-way interaction between typicality and CVPA.
- **H3**: There will be a two-way interaction between novelty and CVPA.
- **H4**: There will be a three-way interaction between typicality, novelty, and CVPA.

The proposed conceptual model is illustrated in Figure 1.

To test the hypotheses, a 2 x 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted in SAS 9.4. The overall F test was significant (F(1,320)=4.78, p<.001), indicating strong evidence that the means for the eight scenarios were different. As expected, the typicality x novelty interaction proposed in H1 was significant (F(1,320)=11.61, p<.001). Therefore, H1 was supported. Despite typicality and novelty being different properties, they are intrinsically related and H1 results confirm that consumers search for a balance between those properties. That is, the MAYA principle holds for shirts. For the two-way interaction between typicality and CVPA proposed in H2, results showed a non-significant typicality x CVPA interaction (F(1,320)=.47, p=.49). Similarly, the two-way interaction between novelty and CVPA proposed in H3 showed a non-significant novelty x CVPA interaction (F(1,320)=2.29, p=.13). Thus, H2 and H3 were not supported. Results also indicated a non-significant typicality x novelty x CVPA interaction (F(1,320)=.18, p=.67), therefore H4 was not supported. Consequently, results of H2-4 suggest that CVPA does not have a significant effect on consumers’ aesthetic preference of apparel products, specifically shirts, when considering the aesthetic properties of typicality and novelty. This result suggests that the CVPA construct did not moderate aesthetic preference relative to the stimuli used within this study.

Results of the study offer insight into both aesthetics and product design. Findings indicate that the MAYA principle holds for the evaluation of apparel products, specifically shirts. However, individual differences measured in the CVPA do not moderate aesthetic preference in the evaluation of those products. Further research would help to identify factors that are important to CVPA relative to different types of apparel products and among different consumer groups.

REFERENCES


ABSTRACTS

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FROM THE EMPLOYEE PERSPECTIVE: AN APPLICATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE THEORY

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Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has grown in importance, as expectations that organizations should behave responsibly and sustainably have increased. Low wages and increased production in underdeveloped countries have forced apparel companies into the media spotlight. Consequently, the broad mission of CSR in the apparel industry typically includes alleviating negative environmental impacts and addressing workers’ rights (Rupp & Mallory, 2015). At the same time, due to the size and scope of the industry, firms are often tasked by their stakeholders with the responsibility of balancing CSR initiatives with a profit-driven business strategy. Yet, it is the individual employee who strategizes and implements the various CSR programs offered by a firm (Rupp & Mallory, 2015). Consequently, a firm’s CSR initiatives will often depend on its employees for effective implementation. However, very little research exists on the effects of organizational CSR from the perspective of the employee. Therefore, the goal of the present study was to understand CSR initiatives of apparel firms from the perspective of the employee, thereby serving as one of the first attempts to address this gap in the CSR literature.

To better understand what CSR means to employees, the theory of organizational justice served as a framework for this study. Organizational justice theory is often used to explain the ethical and moral foundations of a firm’s decision-making processes as perceived by employees (Gilliland & Chan, 2001). The theory is comprised of two concepts: procedural justice and distributive justice. Both concepts relate to a firm’s CSR initiatives as part of its overall business strategy. Procedural justice is the extent to which employees believe they will be treated fairly by the firm and experience higher levels of job satisfaction if management supports ethical behavior for all stakeholders (Rupp & Mallory, 2015). In the case of firms that support CSR initiatives, procedural justice is a means of offering added value to the firm for its employees and seen as a reflection of the firm’s ethics and commitment to fairness in the workplace (Rupp & Mallory, 2015). In other words, a firm that practices CSR is perceived as more committed to treating stakeholders, including internal ones like employees, fairly. Distributive justice pertains to the outcomes of a firm’s commitments to fairness (Gilliland & Chan, 2001), and can include CSR initiatives relative to the employee, such as giving paid leave for the purposes of volunteering in the community. Employees that place importance on a firm’s moral and ethical foundation are more likely to value its CSR initiatives, thereby increasing the chances of these initiatives being fully implemented and, in turn, increasing the impact of such initiatives (Rupp & Mallory, 2015). Thus, the objective of the present study was to consider the perceived effects of CSR from the employee perspective and to do so relative to the tenets of organizational justice theory.

Because very little research exists that explores CSR from the perspective of the employee, in-depth interviews were conducted with 17 individuals who are employees of apparel retail firms. After receiving IRB approval from the researchers’ university, participants were recruited via the snowball technique, starting with contacts via one of the researcher’s LinkedIn networks. In-depth interviews were audio-recorded with participants’ consent and completed in-person, over the phone, and online over a five-month period. Each interview lasted between 20 and 60 minutes. Participants were asked to share their perspectives on CSR and specifically the CSR-related goals and practices of their employers. Questions included: What motivates you to participate in these activities? and Do you think that CSR activities have an impact on the community, and if so, in what way? Interviews were administered until saturation in responses was achieved and then each was transcribed verbatim. Once complete, Spiggle’s (1994) suggestions for interpretation and analysis of qualitative data were followed. Patterns in the data were identified and labeled, conceptual links between the patterns were defined and further examined for similarities and differences. A set of thematic categories emerged along with relationships between the categories. Last, dimensions within each theme were identified and interpreted through the lens of organizational justice theory to understand perceptions of CSR. Three main themes emerged and were used to structure the interpretation: Added Benefits, Perceived Value, and Increased Impact.

For participants, CSR programs offer more than donation matching and the opportunity to participate in volunteer events, they also offer Added Benefits. When reflecting on the impact of CSR, one participant stated, “It helps build teamwork, not only among the store staff but in the community” (P8). Perceptions of procedural justice practiced by the firm illustrate how the added benefits of CSR help balance the media backlash often faced by the apparel industry, as another participant pointed out, “I think definitively [a] sense of pride, when you work in an industry that has a bit of a materialism aspect tied into it such as apparel retail, I think it helps balance it, I think it helps give the brand and its people a sense of workplace, truly we are doing more than selling clothes” (P4). According to participants, it is through this balance of workplace satisfaction and CSR priorities that Perceived Value is achieved. As one participant stated, CSR “is just the right thing to do.” (P10). A CSR program can also “build awareness of the needs of the community and a strong store presence” (P8). Ideally, CSR programs facilitate Increased Impact, or “a positive impact on the community, and it helps business because employees are more engaged and customers want to support a company that practices social responsibility” (P6), exemplifying distributive justice. Fairness, or perceived organizational justice of the firm’s business strategy is achieved through the positive results of various CSR initiatives impacting multiple stakeholders by providing a “Substantial impact, by giving back to society. Helping those in need” (P9).

Many employees today are looking for more than just a job, they are looking for the intangible benefits of working for a company that cares about relationships (Rupp & Mallory, 2015). As illustrated by this study, the perceived benefits of CSR include indication that the firm is fair in its treatment of stakeholders while exhibiting ethical and moral motivations for doing so. Results indicate that CSR initiatives can prompt positive reaction from employees and invoke a sense of workplace pride and comradery in doing something good together. Given the need for CSR business strategies within the apparel industry, findings point to the importance of employee engagement along with the potential impact of such strategies on perceptions of fairness and justice within the workplace. Further research on the topic would permit a better understanding of the implications of CSR initiatives for all stakeholders, particularly commitment to a firm and its business strategies on the part of its employees.

REFERENCES

ABSTRACTS

FASHION BLOG OR PAID ADVERTISEMENT? EXAMINING THE IMPLICATIONS OF SPONSORSHIP FOR BLOGGERS AND BRANDS

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Social media platforms have significantly changed the way consumers evaluate and purchase products. Rather than yield to traditional forms of marketing, consumers are taking a more active role in their search for and collection of brand-related information (Chittenden, 2010; Lu, Chang, & Chang, 2014). Among the resources that consumers use to gather data are personal blogs, which provide a platform for “open communication and detailed discussions” on topics ranging from fashion to travel (Rocamora, 2011, p. 408). Indeed, personal blogs are online spaces that allow consumption experiences to be shared from the perspective of the blogger and then reviewed by the consumer (Chittenden, 2010).

Prior research suggests that consumers who engage with personal blogs view them as trusted sources of information, primarily due to the authentic and transparent nature of their posts (Williams & Hodges, 2015). However, the inclusion of sponsored, or promoted, blog posts is starting to change this perception. Considered a form of online advertising, sponsored blog posts are mutual agreements wherein bloggers provide reviews or endorsements in exchange for a form of compensation (Lu et al., 2014). Fashion blogs are a commonly targeted platform for sponsorship, as they allow retailers and bloggers to collectively promote clothing, accessories, and beauty products to consumers (Kulmala, Mesiranta, & Tuominen, 2013). Because these sponsorships tend to result in long-term partnerships, retailers will assess bloggers and their level of influence in the blogging community for months, or years, prior to making a commitment (Kulmala et al., 2013). Fashion bloggers who have a large following and strong rapport with their audience members are ideal for marketing partnerships (Williams & Hodges, 2015). These peer-to-peer relationships allow retailers to introduce new products and brands in an innovative way that transcends traditional marketing practices. Still, these relationships are built on a foundation of trust and genuineness (Kulmala et al., 2013; Lu et al., 2014), which undermines the meaning of sponsorship. As such, the purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of sponsored blog posts and the extent to which they impact consumer perception of fashion blogs.

A qualitative approach to data collection was employed to address the purpose of the study. Upon receiving IRB approval, participants were recruited via referrals and snowball sampling. In-depth interviews were conducted with five fashion bloggers and ten blog audience members over a seven-month period. Each interview lasted between one and two hours and was audio-taped with permission from the participant. Questions asked during the interviews included: What do you think of sponsored blog posts? How have your audience members responded to sponsorships? Has sponsorship affected the popularity of your blog? Interviews were transcribed and pseudonyms were assigned to all participants. The researchers followed Spiggle’s (1994) suggestions for analyzing and interpreting qualitative data. From this iterative process, the researchers identified commonalities and differences across the data which were used to articulate the meanings of experience as expressed by the participants (Silverman, 2006). Participant responses revealed three main themes: Message Congruency, Message Validation, and Message Authority.

Message Congruency emerged from the expectation among participants that sponsorships will align with the personal message of the blogger. Participants indicated that when they perceive sponsored products as a complement to the blogger’s message, they are more likely to accept sponsored blog posts. For example, Melanie preferred a combination of sponsored and unsponsored content from fashion bloggers. She stated, “I enjoy someone who started out unsponsored and then does an occasional sponsored product review because, to me, that means they have become a trusted individual in the community.” Based on the premise of brand loyalty, the Message Validation theme emerged from the relationships that bloggers form with established brands. Participants indicated that when blogs include well-respected brands through sponsorship, the blog posts appear more credible. Moreover, when participants are involved in the process, meaning they are informed of the sponsorship and their feedback is taken into consideration, the posts are more likely to receive validation. Carrie described how her blog was validated after a partnership with Macy’s last year. She recalled, “I recently did a really large collaboration with Macy’s and I felt so official. I think my readers really responded to that because they see it as a brand that has been around forever.” Lastly, Message Authority emerged from the level of influence that bloggers have over the products and brands displayed on their blogs. When bloggers, rather than retailers, select the products for sponsorship, participants indicated that they are generally more receptive to sponsored blog posts. Beth explained this concept using a gift guide she created for her blog. She noted, “I partnered with a few brands on a gift guide last year around the holidays. One of my readers was like, ‘Thank you so much for doing that. That was super helpful. [T]hey are not my most popular posts, but I have gotten good feedback from them.’”

Results of this study indicate the extent to which fashion blogs have shifted from impartial recommendations to online advertisements. As part of a broader business strategy, sponsored blog posts encourage consumers to purchase brands displayed and endorsed by the blogger. Findings suggest that when endorsed brands coincide with the blogger’s message, consumers may be more likely to accept the sponsorship. Furthermore, when sponsorships include established brands and products selected by the blogger, consumers are likely to be more receptive to the blog posts. These findings are similar to those in prior research studies, wherein bloggers are perceived as “trustworthy” and “genuine” when the personal use component is retained and the needs of audience members are addressed (Williams & Hodges, 2015). Future research is needed to explore perceptions and expectations among different groups of consumers, as such research would offer insight into the dynamics shaping the interrelationships between bloggers, brands, and consumers.

REFERENCES
FASHION BRANDS’ COLLABORATION WITH CHARITY: WHAT, HOW, AND WHY

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KEYWORDS
Charity, Collaboration, Limited Edition, Social Marketing

Brand collaborations are an emerging marketing trend in the fashion industry. Fashion brands’ collaboration has occurred in three types. First, fashion brands collaborate with well-known designers as in H & M’s partnership with Karl Lagerfeld and Alexander Wang. Second collaboration form is between fashion brands and large retail chains. Target’s successful collaboration with Missoni in 2011 is one example. Third collaboration is between global fashion brands with leaders in the technology industry such as LG Prada phone. In addition to the above, a newer form of collaboration trend in the fashion industry is one between fashion brands and charity organizations. With fashion brands’ increasing investment on social marketing, the trend is expected to flourish in the fashion industry. The purpose of this paper is to explore the fashion and charity collaboration trend by studying “what”, “how” and “why” of the trend. Various trade/newspaper articles and press releases are studied to monitor the status of the trend, and several global case examples were analyzed.

WHAT
The findings on the trend identify three types of fashion and charity collaboration shown in Table 1 – 1) luxury fashion brand and charity, 2) mass-market fashion brand and charity, and 3) fashion brand, charity, and non-apparel brands.

Table 1. Selected examples for participating in fashion & charity collaboration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaboration Type</th>
<th>Year(s)</th>
<th>Fashion brand</th>
<th>Charity</th>
<th>Non-apparel brand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luxury brands and charity</td>
<td>2005 -</td>
<td>Gucci</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 -</td>
<td>Vivienne Westwood</td>
<td>International Trade Center</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Bulgari</td>
<td>Save the Children</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Topshop</td>
<td>Women’s Interlink Foundation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>The Leather Satchel Co.</td>
<td>Handbags for Hope</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>SPAO</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass-market brands and charity</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Eight Italian designers</td>
<td>Municipality of Milan for Abusmo</td>
<td>Coca-Cola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Valentino</td>
<td>Cash &amp; Rocket</td>
<td>Mophie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First, among many luxury brands that have participated in collaboration projects with charity, Gucci has been on the forefront of the trend. Celebrating its 10-year partnership with UNICEF this year, Gucci has created exclusive products from which a percentage of sales support UNICEF. In 2011, Gucci designed a new “Gucci for UNICEF” Sukey bag with 25 percent of price benefiting UNICEF’s School for Africa initiative. Second, the trend is also observed among several global mass-market brands. A UK fast fashion brand Topshop has participated in the Key to Freedom initiative with Women’s Interlink Foundation since 2013. Topshop launched a collection of kimonos, sarongs, and makeup bags that were produced by women from West Bengal who are victims of domestic abuse. Another example is the partnership between a South Korean fast fashion brand SPAO and UNICEF through a creation of a special edition collection of t-shirts. Third, several fashion brands have collaborated with a charity organization and a non-apparel brand, whose skills or products are used together in launching a special collection of products. An example includes Valentino’s collaboration with a mobile battery case manufacturer Mophie in 2014 to create a limited edition ‘Powerstation’ in aid of charity.

HOW
Two common factors within the collaboration movement have been identified upon research. First, most of the collaboration has occurred through limited edition projects rather than ongoing projects (e.g., Gucci, Vivien Westwood, The Leather Satchel Co., etc.). Limited edition offers limited product quantity and limited time available for purchase. By doing so, fashion brands are able to create a hype created around the collection, generating greater publicity. Limited edition products can create a sense of exclusivity thus making them more desirable for consumers (Ginman, Lundell, & Turek, 2010). Consumers can also benefit through a chance to purchase unique and exclusive products that are not sold continuously. Second, the fashion and charity collaboration movement mostly started with luxury fashion brands and has trickled down to mass-market brands. As shown in Table 1, the luxury fashion brands were among the first ones to partner with charities as early as in 2005. A possible reason is that, as research suggests, charity collaboration favorably influences the tendency to purchase a product even when its price is high. In fact, the association with charity leads to increased purchase intent toward luxury brand by reducing guilt of indulging in extravagant consumption (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2016). Mass-market brands have joined the trend in recent years with increasing commitment to corporate social responsibility.

WHY
The research further demonstrates that the collaboration trend provides several benefits to all of the partaking entities including fashion brands, charity, non-apparel brands, and consumers. The summary of benefits identified by the authors is shown in Table 2. Discussions of the findings, academic and practical implications were suggested further.

Table 2. Summary of benefits of fashion & charity collaboration developed by authors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entities</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fashion brands</td>
<td>• Increased sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charities</td>
<td>• Increased funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-apparel brands</td>
<td>• Capture broader market share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumers</td>
<td>• Purchase of exclusive, limited edition products</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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ABSTRACTS

INTERSECTIONALITY AND APPEARANCE MANAGEMENT IN POLITICS

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Gregory Stone’s (1962) seminal article in the field of appearance management defines appearance as a social transaction that helps to establish identity. That is, according to Stone (1962), identities are “established and mobilized” via appearance (p. 28). Appearances are important for women in as much as the culture places a strong emphasis on how women look, including their clothing and grooming practices (Rudd & Lennon, 2000). A woman’s appearance can affect perceptions of her professionalism and intelligence, and is a critical part of her success in the workplace (Kwon, 1994). Sanghvi (2014) opens a bridge between gender studies, appearance management and political marketing using a Freudian analysis in her research on female politicians. While Sanghvi (2014) and Sanghvi and Hodges (2015) address the role of gender and appearance management in politics in their studies they urge for further research in the area of intersectionality, appearance management and politics. They understand that while the hegemonic assumption of gender is white woman, women of color, or differing gender identities and sexual orientation face a myriad of issues with regards to appearance management in politics. Thus it is critical to understand the intersectional experience of women in politics.

However, there is a paucity of studies in appearance management, fashion, clothing and textile has yielded few studies specifically focusing on intersectionality. This study helps to address this gap by examining how appearance management is used to navigate intersectional experiences of minority women in politics. In the next section we look at the methodology followed to capture data for this study.

METHOD

The purpose of this study is to understand the role and significance of intersectionality and appearance management using the context to politics. To achieve the purpose of this study, data were collected through in-depth interviews with a total of 13 female politicians. The participants included a Governor, a Senator, two Congresswomen, two State Senator, five State Legislators, two Mayors and one city council member. In addition we also spoke to 18 people connected to politics such as political consultants, staff, aides, PAC executives, political party officials, that is, all persons involved in various aspects of a campaign. Pseudonyms are used in place of real names to protect each participant’s confidentiality.

We used semi-structured interviews, which helped give direction to the interview, yet allowed for openness to new directions that unfolded during the interview process (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). By selecting politicians from local, legislative, and executive levels, the role of intersectionality in politics could be examined in depth and detailed descriptions of experiences achieved at a range of levels. Overall, participant selection reflected a purposive sampling method. Once the data were collected, the analysis procedures as outlined by Spiggle (1994) were followed. Analysis was followed by interpretation of the data. Meanings and experiences that emerged from the data provided by participants helped form coherent patterns which were aggregated into larger wholes as parallel structures, themes, and recurring elements.

FINDINGS

For sake of brevity we are using one case, to illustrate our finding. The data indicates that while female politicians face gender bias from many avenues, such as the media, the electorate, and male colleagues; women of color seem to get a larger share of derogatory comments and negative backlash that is specifically tied to their race, gender and appearance. Participants say that bias occurs in varied ways. Alexandra Margozzini explained that female politicians have a tougher time during a campaign, in as much as they are examined more closely than male politicians. Anna Belle Crawford explained, “There is no question that women are judged much more frequently, and often much more harshly, on their appearance than men.” Furthermore, the participants discussed how a politician’s appearance has to be mainstream, regardless of gender, race or sexual orientation. In the case of Donna Alston, an African-American council member who hails from a predominantly Black district in a southern city, her appearance became part of an issue in my research. According to a political consultant, Polly Michaels, Donna Alston wears “dreadlocks” and dresses as someone who is “proud of her heritage.” While Ms. Michaels says Donna Alston is proud of her heritage, her words seem to indicate that they dressing as if one is proud of their heritage is problematic. She believes that some people “just can’t relate to that” and she suggests that “the package [with] all of that…unfortunately works against [Donna Alston] a lot of the time.” Included in the package was not only her appearance but also her gender, race, weight and her persona. What Michaels is saying in a veiled manner is that this city council member does not adhere to the western aesthetic standard but rather her appearance reflects her African-American heritage. According to David Spurlock, it is easier to be “folkzy” or casual at a local level, but the higher up the ladder one goes, the more mainstream one’s appearance should be. By appearing mainstream, the candidate looks more “relatable” to the voters and hence more approachable. As Fearrington put it, “When you are running for office it is important that you look like the fabric of America.” She added that it is about a level of comfort for voters who are concerned that if the politician does not look like them or shop at the same places they shop, then that politician may not represent them well and does not understand their needs or concerns. Wilkes agrees, and thinks that voters are often looking at a politician’s appearance, behavior, or mannerisms in order to see a reflection of themselves. She believes that such cues help voters to feel more confident that the politician understands them and can address their needs. Thus, Polly Michael is asserting that Donna Alston’s appearance creates a disconnect with white voters of the southern city who can’t relate to her because of it. It is not unusual in politics for people to reflect their anxieties over issues such as race or gender in the candidate’s appearance especially for women (Sanghvi, 2014).
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Furthermore, Alston’s appearance becomes a short cut measure people use to assume her legislative priorities, and her policy imperatives and an overall manner in which she may conduct herself. Stereotypes relating to Black women as ‘the angry black woman’ are thus assumed, simply based on her appearance. Women of color and Black women in particular are judged differently. Andrea Fearrington believes that “the bar is higher [for a female politician of color] because of the ‘other’ factor. She believes it is critical for “a woman of color politician to appear as mainstream as you can.” Governor Burns believes that there are many “embedded negative stereotypes” African American female politicians have to fight. In conclusion, my research opens the door to how appearance management issues manifest in the day-to-day lives of female politicians and how they must navigate such issues to succeed in politics.

REFERENCES


KEY COMPETENCIES FOR FUTURE APPAREL MERCHANDISING PROFESSIONALS: WHAT IS KNOWN?

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Merchandising is an essential business function in apparel companies (Kunz, 2010). Apparel merchandisers are pressured to deliver products with unpredictable demand and comply with cost structures and overall company goals. As the merchandising function interacts with all other business functions as well as the entire apparel value chain to address fluctuating market demands, the need for extensive skill and knowledge sets are high. In this study, we analysed extant research on skills, knowledge, and competencies (SKC) needed by merchandisers in the global apparel retail industry. Competencies are the level of skills and knowledge obtained through training, education and experiences as well as how well one can apply them in their workplace (Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012). The purpose of this paper was a) to identify important SKCs needed to function in a merchandising position today; b) to classify these SKCs and develop a competency framework; and c) to make recommendations for addressing preparedness of future merchandising professionals.

METHOD
This study involved conceptual analysis of peer reviewed articles that investigated important SKCs for merchandising positions in apparel retail. Relevant journal articles published in the last 15 years were identified through databases (ProQuest, Emerald, EBSCO, etc.) using keywords search (merchandising skills, knowledge, competencies). A total of 32 articles were found from journals (e.g., International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education, Clothing and Textiles Research Journal, Journal of Knowledge Management, Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management and Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal). A systematic content analysis was conducted to identify all SKCs and generate a matrix, taking into account: type of industry and country where the research was conducted. Pellegrino and Hilton's (2012) competency domain framework was used to examine and classify the SKCs required for merchandising positions and to determine SKCs needed for future merchandisers locally and globally. The competency domain framework consists of the cognitive domain which relates to cognitive processes and strategies, knowledge, and creativity/innovation. The intrapersonal domain denotes self-management in terms of behaviour and emotions and consists of competencies such as intellectual openness, work ethic and conscientiousness and positive core self-evaluation. The interpersonal domain refers to the expressing of ideas, interpreting and responding to messages from others and includes teamwork and collaboration, communication and leadership competencies.

RESULTS
The analysis indicated that many studies focused on identifying SKCs that would make graduates more employable in their respective local retail industries (i.e., Australia, US, South Africa, New Zealand, and UK). Common themes were found across most countries in terms of core/critical SKC important for merchandising/retail/business graduates and were classified using the three-competency domain framework.

Cognitive domain. Sector-specific or discipline-specific knowledge was stressed as very important for performing tasks in merchandising positions. Studies found that having

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Intrapersonal domain. Organizational and multi-tasking skills, and applying ethics in work related decision-making were intrapersonal competencies that are highly valued in the apparel industry (Hodges et al., 2015; Muhammad & Ha-Brookshire, 2011). Global awareness was found to be another important competency for merchandising positions. However, very few studies focused on competencies related to the intrapersonal domain. A gap exists in terms of investigating the importance of competencies related to flexibility, adaptability, initiative, independence and meta-cognition (self-reflective behavior) as well as stress tolerance in a business environment. These intrapersonal competencies might be very relevant to the fast-paced apparel retail industry.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS
The results indicate that knowledge related to merchandising, apparel, retail, production and business alone is not sufficient for merchandising professionals. Interpersonal personal competencies, teamwork, communication and leadership were rated higher than cognitive competencies (i.e. critical thinking, problem solving, and knowledge) in many studies. The classification and results were used to develop a merchandising SKC framework. The framework might be a useful tool for businesses, educators, and students. Businesses might use it for structuring training of new hires as well as evaluating success rate of internship and training programs. Educators can use it for curriculum development and designing learning outcomes assessment to determine graduates’ employability. Students might find it useful for self-assessment of career readiness as well as job hunting process. The framework needs to be further developed and tested, especially, in the light on new SKCs that might be essential for the 21st century workforce. Future research studies should focus on SKC related to creating competitive advantages in global and local retail industries. Additionally, future research can address the topic from multiple perspectives, e.g., HR, employers, graduates, recruiters, and faculty.

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IF NOT US, WHOM? HELPING OUR STUDENTS BUILD A DISTINCT COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE
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A cursory look at any apparel industry periodical will highlight the uncertain future of many apparel retailers as they are forced to close multiple stores nationwide to stay profitable (Loeb, 2017). This means that our students are transitioning into a competitive and saturated industry with fewer jobs (Vedder, Denhart, and Robe, 2013). In comparing unemployment rates prior to 2000, recent graduates over the age of 25 are now facing two times the rate of unemployment, an alarming statistic that is forcing universities to examine the effectiveness of their career prep services (Gallup, 2016). Today employers have access to more sources of information, both online and offline, in regards to potential hires. Graduates are now required to prove their worth through the personal brand, they have intentionally or unintentionally built, to be considered the top candidates for jobs. This paper addresses how I restructured my senior seminar course to address this competitive shift to better prepare my students to land the jobs they desire.

As in most academic programs there is a senior seminar class that galvanizes the students in their major before they transition into their corporate careers. These seminar courses are executed differently at various institutions with learning outcomes focused on improving student communication, both verbal and

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written, on issues and trends in the fashion industry. Ultimately, the goal is to provide a final opportunity to polish and prepare our students for their transition into the fashion industry. This focus is supported by the school career center that is the primary resource for the professional development of students.

The university career center is designed to help students develop a professional toolkit, network, and prepare for interviews. But like any optional resource, the key is frequency of use and perceived valued of services offered. Positively, career centers seem to be used by millennials. A recent nationwide Gallup-Purdue study of 2000-2016 college graduates’ perceptions of the usefulness of career prep services, revealed that 65% of students visited their career centers at least once in comparison to 35% of the 2000-2006 graduates, highlighting a positive shift (Gallup, 2016). However, in regards to the perceived usefulness, 17% of students felt their career centers were “very helpful”, 26% “helpful”, 40% “somewhat helpful” and 17% “not helpful at all” (Gallup, 2016). So, if the current design of career centers are not being deemed as highly valuable by the majority of our students, how can we ensure that our students are getting the best preparation to be competitive in the job market?

In 2015, I took a critical look of our 1 credit seminar course which is designed to prepare students for their careers in the fashion industry. I examined the stated learning objectives, the weekly assignments, and the perceived added value of these goals by examining student course evaluations. When I adopted this course, I thought it necessary to teach it as previously designed for the first 2 years and then use my sales and marketing background, the insights gained from the in-class experience, and student feedback to decide on necessary changes. What I learned from my three-prong approach is that we could serve our students better by helping them identify and communicate their ‘authentic’ personal brand. As structured, students completed course assignments with popular answers and little honesty about who they truly were and what they really wanted. Most could not effectively and confidently answer the Who am I question to be the top candidate for a competitive job. Thus, I ascertained that since major faculty know their students best, it was our job to help them identify their strengths, opportunities for growth, best career paths, and communicate their distinct story and value to a hiring firm. So I restructured the seminar course.

To restructure the course and achieve the learning objectives two key changes were made: (1) increase the course credits from 1 to 2 credit hours; and (2) frame the course from week one on personal branding. The learning objectives for seminar were clear and focused: (1) Exercise critical thinking through the process of analyzing the current fashion and retailing trends; (2) Be competent for future career in understanding the market, role of designers and other professionals working in the industry; (3) Develop a merchandise track portfolio including cover letter, resume, and sample works; and (4) Be prepared for the job market through practical activities such as mock interviews and salary negotiation. However, the time allotted to effectively achieve these goals was grossly inefficient, so the credit hours were increased from 1 to 2 to allow for discussion, role play and feedback. Second, was to create a safe environment and effective class structure to focus on personal branding. After teaching the value of developing a distinct, authentic personal brand, the goal is to have students identify and communicate their strengths, less desirable traits, and career goals in a confident, sincere and marketable message. Open and constructive feedback from both the faculty and their peers was critical to personal branding. These course changes allowed students to make considerable shifts from their student to professional brand, gain confidence marketing themselves, and benefit from the valuable opportunity to hear both positive and constructive feedback on how they marketed themselves. The value of feedback was underscored as a critical component to class, as interview candidates are unable to receive feedback from the hiring company.

These changes caused a positive shift in student feedback in course evaluations on the value gained from this senior seminar. What was integral to the success of this revised structure, was the ability of faculty students trusted to advise students on what made them distinct, valuable, and an asset to any corporation. The safety of the faculty-student relationship made it easier to provide honest and critical feedback to the students to hasten their professional development process. Ultimately, major faculty are uniquely positioned to provide informed and valuable feedback to students as they know them better; A senior seminar course is where this focused work can and should be done.

REFERENCES
MANNEQUINS AND SELF-IMAGE: EXPLORATION OF U.S. WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS

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The fashion and retail industry is often the target of criticism for its use of unrealistic body sizes to promote the sale of clothing. Attention is currently being paid to the use of stick-thin mannequins that do not reflect the body type of a typical American female. As mannequins are an important part of a retailer's visual merchandising tool bag and they provide consumers with a visual image of the garment on a human body (D’Innocenzo, 2014; Jain, Sharma, & Narwal, 2012), it should be expected that consumers will self-compare themselves to mannequins and that these comparisons will influence self-image and body dissatisfaction. Using Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954), the common framework for investigating the effects of media exposure on women, the following hypotheses are examined: (H1) the higher a woman's BMI, the more likely she is to experience social comparison to mannequins; (H2) the higher a woman's BMI, the more likely she is to perceive discrepancy between her own body and a mannequins' body; (H3) social comparison to mannequins positively affects a perceived discrepancy between a woman's body and mannequins' body; (H4) social comparison to mannequins positively affects women's body dissatisfaction; and (H5) perceived discrepancy from mannequins positively affects women's body dissatisfaction.

A snowball convenience sample (obtained via three prominent social networking sites) of 316 U.S. female consumers (aged 18+) are surveyed. The online survey consists of the following measurements: (1) social comparison between the respondent and mannequins; (2) perceived discrepancy from mannequins; (3) body satisfaction; (4) an open-ended response for weight and height, which is used to calculate individual BMI; and (5) demographic questions. BMI is calculated, based on the respondent’s weight (pounds) and height (converted to inches), via the U.S. standard formula of (weight / height2) * 703. Social comparison (how often do you compare aspects of your body to mannequins) is measured using Thompson and Coover’s (1999) 12-item body part/aspect (arms, body shape, body size, buttocks, chest, height, hips, legs, torso, waist, weight, and width of shoulders), seven-point Likert-type scale (1=Never, 7=Always). To alleviate participant confusion, a picture of a mannequin with the body parts listed is provided to participants. The respondents’ social comparison scores for each body part/aspect are averaged to create a social comparison index to mannequins (Cronbach’s α = 0.96). Respondents’ perceived discrepancy between their own body and that of a mannequin (how different are you from mannequins in terms of body shape) is measured using Thompson and Coover’s (1999) 12-item body part/aspect (arms, body shape, body size, buttocks, chest, height, hips, legs, torso, waist, weight, and width of shoulders), seven-point Likert-type scale (1=Very Different, 7=Exactly the Same) adapted from Richins (1991). Body satisfaction is measured via Secord and Jourard’s (1953) 12-item rate your feelings you have about each of your body parts, five-point Likert-type scale (1=have strong feelings and wish change could somehow be made; 5=consider myself fortunate). The same body part/aspect categories used for measuring social comparison are utilized for assessing body satisfaction. The respondent’s satisfaction scores for each body part/aspect are reverse-coded to represent body dissatisfaction and scores for all body parts/aspects are averaged to create an overall body dissatisfaction index (Cronbach’s β = 0.88). Hypotheses one, two, and three are tested via a series of simple regression analyses, while hypotheses four and five are tested by the use of multiple regression.

The study sample characteristics are as follows: 85% of the participants are aged 18-37; 83.5% are Caucasian; 73.5% wear clothing sizes four to 12; and more than 50% have a BMI that is considered normal according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2016). An association between BMI and social comparison with mannequins is positive and significant (β = .19, p < .001). Results indicate that the higher a woman’s BMI, the more likely she is to experience social comparison to mannequins; therefore, H1 is supported. Body shape, waist, and body size are the most compared body parts/aspects to mannequins, while width of shoulders, arms, and height are the least compared. Findings reveal a positive and significant (β = .54, p < .001) association between BMI and perceived discrepancy. Thus, the higher a woman’s BMI, the more likely she is to perceive discrepancy between her own body and a mannequins’ body (H2 is supported). Interestingly, results also show that approximately 80% of respondents perceive some degree of discrepancy between their body and that of a mannequins’ body, and no participant considers their body to be exactly the same as a mannequins’ body.

Hypothesis three is not supported (β = 0.10, p = n.s.); therefore, a relationship between social comparison to mannequins and perceived discrepancy between a woman's body and mannequins' body is not found. Both H4 and H5 are supported. As such, an association between social comparison to mannequins and body dissatisfaction (H4) is positive and significant (β = .31, p < .001); and an association between perceived discrepancy from mannequins and body dissatisfaction (H5) is positive and significant (β = .46, p < .001). These findings indicate that the more women compare themselves with mannequins and the more they feel different from mannequins, the less likely they are to be satisfied with their own body. Further results reveal that respondents are least satisfied with their weight, waist, and body size.

This study extends the Social Comparison Theory as the findings support the fact that women compare themselves to mannequins; a finding undocumented prior to this research. Results of the current research highlight the negative influence (i.e., body dissatisfaction) an unrealistic, stick-thin mannequin has on a woman’s psyche. As such, retailers should incorporate more realistic mannequins into their visual merchandising tool bag, which accurately reflects the average American woman.

Future research will attempt to include a larger and more diverse population with a random sampling method (a limitation of the current study). Increasing the diversity of the sample will allow for further examination into how mannequins affect women from different ethnicities, as well as different age groups (generational cohorts). Furthermore, additional research could focus on the male population.

REFERENCES

Music fans are attending outdoor music festivals like Bonnaroo and Coachella in record numbers. Consequently, music festival revenues have grown from very little a decade ago, to over $4.6 billion in 2011 (Grose, 2011). Within the landscape of music festivals, Americana music festivals are one type of music festival currently enjoying increased popularity throughout the rural U.S. As a form of music, Americana is a contemporary genre that reflects American culture, incorporating elements of various American music styles, including roots-rock, folk, bluegrass, and blues. Most Americana music festivals occur during the early spring through the late fall and these events host a variety of well-known musical performers such as Emmylou Harris and Jackson Browne as well as other regional and local performers. In addition to the musical offerings, these festivals offer alternative retail marketplaces that typically include vendors selling a variety of products such as clothing, hats, jewelry, and camping gear along with arts and crafts. At smaller festivals, it is common to see 10-15 vendors, while larger ones may have up to 100 vendors. Although there is a growing interest in Americana as a music genre, and indication of this interest is seen in high attendance levels at Americana music festivals, there is scant research available that examines the marketplaces at these festivals. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the Americana music festival as an alternative retail marketplace.

Previous literature highlights that music festivals are an important sub-field within event studies due to the universality of festivals and the popularity of festival experiences (Getz, 2008). Due to their fun and festive nature, festivals in general can elicit experiential consumption (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Extant literature has shown how festivals contribute to sustainable economic development (Sundbo, 2004). Larsen and O’Reilly (2009) define music festivals as unique utopian settings where market, consumption, culture, and the human spirit converge. While research has been conducted on festivals more generally, there is limited literature related to the growing Americana music festival phenomenon and the retail marketplaces created within them.

To address these gaps, an ethnographic approach was employed in this study, wherein fieldwork was conducted at ten Americana music festivals throughout the southeastern US. The festivals ranged from single to multi-day festivals that hosted a variety of Americana music artists. A range of sizes was targeted, including small-size festivals (~500 - 3500 participants), mid-size festivals (~5000 – 12000 participants), and large-size festivals (~15000 – 30000 participants). Data collection included observations in the form of field notes as well as interviews. A total of 20 field interviews and 15 formal in-depth interviews were conducted with a variety of participants across the festivals, including festivalgoers, organizers, and festival marketplace vendors. Interviews and fieldnotes were transcribed verbatim and then analyzed for similarities and differences that emerged across the data. A result of the analysis, two primary themes emerged that are used to structure an understanding of the alternative nature of the Americana music festival marketplace.

The first theme, Interactive Bazaar, illustrates the extent to which vendor arrangements are carefully designed by festival organizers in order to establish the overall Americana music festival marketplace feel, or “vibe.” Vendor choice, product choice and promotion methods are all important components of the festival marketplace. Shopping layouts are formal, in the sense of being an organized shopping setting, yet informal, being situated as part of a music festival wherein consumers and vendors, as Americana music enthusiasts, can actively interact. One of the festivalgoers, Jimmy, explained why this interaction with the vendors is important: “You know the vending is part of the experience. It is kind of a rolling community thing that you see, [the same] people.” Thus, the festival marketplace provides options for purchasing goods while offering a lively setting for festivalgoers to socialize within.

Pop up and Go Retail Community, the second major theme to emerge from the data, points to another distinct feature that is shared by all the Americana music festival marketplaces in the study: the mobile nature of the vendor community. Vendors set up their shops when the festival starts and are only on site as long as the festival lasts. Most vendors are mobile and tend to travel to multiple festivals throughout the “season.” From April through October, they travel from festival to festival selling their wares from their ‘pop-up’ tent/shelters in these temporary mobile markets. These modern-day ‘migrant’ sellers live a particular lifestyle and operate their businesses quite differently from a traditional five day, 40 hour work week. One vendor, Bob, explained the mobile nature of the vendors and provided insight on the community aspect of the festival marketplace, “Festie (vendors) people are generally very fun/fun-loving and you meet a lot of the same folks at various festivals and form a bit of an extended family. Some of my best friends are ones I’ve vended next to in the past.” Clearly, vendors do not necessarily see each other as competition, rather, as a community of people who are dedicated to the festival lifestyle and have found a way to make a living by it.

Findings of this study offer insight into how Americana music festivals use alternative retail spaces to establish community among festivalgoers as well as festival vendors. The Americana music festival marketplace is an integral part of the overall festival experience and one that is facilitated by the festival organizers. While this marketplace shares some qualities in common with conventional retail settings, the festival marketplace presents a unique offering for the consumer by providing direct access to the sellers of goods in a highly interactive environment. These alternative retail settings are deliberately crafted to include a variety of customized marketplaces wherein consumers can enjoy live music combined with shopping in an open-air market atmosphere. Future studies could focus on the serialization of this marketplace model for implementation among festival start-ups. Likewise, exploration of consumer preferences among festival attendees would better assist festival organizers in shaping their retail offerings.

REFERENCES


Where does a merchandising program align when a department closes? To fit within the requirements of a new department, what curricular content in merchandising should be retained and what could be removed or combined? The purpose of this study is to describe the successes and challenges of one merchandising program’s relocation from the Department of FACS to the Department of Management and Marketing in the College of Business and Technology. To better understand the necessity for relocation and the mandated curricular revision, a basic explanation of the case history is appropriate.

The Department of Family and Consumer Sciences at a regional southeastern university housed traditional home economics programs for almost 100 years until the child and family studies concentration elected to move to the College of Education and the dietetics programs were moved to the Division of Health Affairs. These events caused a reduction in critical mass of the FACS department and university administrators quickly announced their decision to move all viable FACS concentrations to other departments. College of Business administrators agreed to move the merchandising program to the Department of Management and Marketing, offering undergraduate students a B.B.A. in marketing with a concentration in merchandising. Two full-time merchandising faculty members revised the merchandising curriculum based upon merchandising/retailing curriculum studies (Albanese, O’Neill, & Hines, 1998; Donnellan, 2009; Garner & Buckley, 1988; Hudson, 1978; Laughlin & Kean, 1995) and anecdotal evidence of 30+ years of experience. To meet concentration requirements for a B.B.A. Degree in Marketing (and to meet Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business accreditation requirements), 61 hours were reduced to 31 hours of coursework in merchandising. Basic content areas deemed necessary for a successful merchandising curricula were fashion merchandising (Albanese et al., 1998; Laughlin & Kean, 1995), merchandising internship (Albanese et al., 1998), textiles (Albanese et al., 1998, Laughlin & Kean, 1995), merchandise buying (Garner & Buckley, 1988), and cultural aspects of dress (Laughlin & Kean, 1995). The university calendar required all curriculum changes to take place within a period of only a few short weeks.

The relocation of the merchandising program to marketing caused growing pains and a reduction in student enrollment during the first few years, but the strength of the B.B.A. marketing degree and use of additional channels of communication drew students back to the merchandising program. Merchandising faculty invested a considerable amount of time to create visibility for the merchandising program in the new department. These efforts included an update of the program website with career information, course sequencing, and faculty contact information. In addition, bulletin boards and fliers about the program were placed strategically throughout the business school and across campus to educate the campus community about the program’s new location. Faculty members also spoke to students in Principles of Marketing courses describing the strengths of the merchandising program as one of the three marketing concentrations.

As students moved through the revised merchandising curriculum, faculty members tracked enrollment numbers and analyzed Student Assessment of Instruction feedback to determine the effects of recruitment efforts and to refine course offerings and course content. Based upon student interest and faculty recommendations, the merchandising minor was added back to the program curriculum. These efforts resulted in increased course enrollment in many courses; however, the highest level courses (those not included in the merchandising minor requirements) continue to have smaller class sizes. Merchandising faculty observe that the rigor of the B.B.A. core business courses cause as many as 50% of merchandising students to default to a degree in interdisciplinary studies with a concentration in merchandising instead of completing their degree in marketing.

The program relocation described in this study provides a strategy that may be implemented when curricular decisions must be swift and decisive. In the authors’ experience, the traditional FACS merchandising concentration is well-aligned with a department of marketing in a college of business due to the strength of the required quantitative coursework that is relevant in many merchandising careers. On the other hand, the authors recommend an alternative general business path for merchandising students who may not pursue employment in quantitative fields. Experiences from this program relocation may assist others in developing a merchandising curriculum culminating in a B.B.A. degree in an AACSB accredited college of business.

REFERENCES


MOMS AT WORK: CONSTRUCTING A PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY DURING THE POSTPARTUM PERIOD

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Upon becoming a new mother, a woman has many important decisions to make, including whether she will return to her career after having her child. According to a US Census Bureau report published in 2011, 44.2% of first time mothers in the US went back to work either full- or part-time after three months (Laughlin, 2011). More than half, or 57.4% went back to work after six months, while the majority of new mothers returned to work within 12 months (Laughlin, 2011). If a new mother chooses to return to work after having the baby, she will face challenges associated with having to dress for the workplace during the postpartum period that new mothers who stay at home will not face. Some of the biggest challenges associated with returning to work are finding clothing that is conducive to breastfeeding and that fits a new mother's body shape and size. Other challenges include finding clothing that expresses a professional identity along with that of being a mother.

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of new mothers who return to work after the birth of the first child, and the role that careers play relative to appearance and identity during the postpartum period. Stone (1962) suggests that the process of conveying identity through symbols or objects includes appearing, reflecting upon that appearance, and describing one's identity in response to that appearance. Dress provides the most immediate and apparent visual cues about an individual's characteristics, such as age, gender, ethnicity, social status, and social roles (Sheeshka, Potter, Norrie, Valaitis, Adams, & Kuczynski, 2001), but they must also simultaneously make clothing choices that help to communicate their identities as new mothers in a professional setting. However very little, if any research exists which explores the role that careers play in appearance and identity construction among new mothers.

To address this gap in the research, a qualitative research approach was employed. Upon IRB approval from the researchers' university, in-depth interviews were conducted with 24 women who were mothers for the first time within six months of recruitment. Interviews were audio-recorded with participants’ consent and lasted between one and two hours. Questions focused on the initial transition to motherhood, feelings about returning to work or staying at home with the child in general, and whether clothing played a role in the decision to return to work. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed for emergent themes across the responses (Spiggle, 1994). As a result of this iterative process of analysis, three main themes were identified and are used to structure the interpretation: Not Just a Mother, Looking Professional, and Easing the Transition.

Not Just a Mother reveals the positive aspects of returning to work that participants mentioned after having their children, particularly concerning the notion that working provides an identity in addition to being a mother. Heather stated, “I like to dress nicer now when going to work. It helps me feel more human, like I'm something other than just a mom.” With this statement, Heather indicates that clothing allows her to display a professional identity because she is able to wear more formal and trendier clothing at work. Such clothing makes her feel more like herself, as well as more confident and in control of the transition to motherhood. Participants also suggested that working outside the home provided them with an escape from the often tedious and trying experience of being a first-time mother. Brianna highlighted this idea when she stated, “I'm kind of looking forward to going to work, just to be out of the house for a while.” Moreover, participants mentioned that returning to work allowed them to return to an identity that they were more familiar with, pre-first child. The identity of new mother is one which took most participants several months to accept, whereas many already had developed their professional identities before becoming mothers.

Participants also discussed many challenges in regards to returning to work after having their first child. Looking Professional reveals the challenges associated with returning to work pertaining to clothing and appearance, including finding clothing that fit and was conducive to breastfeeding, being able to wear clothing that was worn before pregnancy, and finding clothing that expressed both a professional identity and that of being a new mother. Brianna stated, “I'm worried that my clothes won't fit. I'm probably going to have to buy some pants, but I hope that's all. I really want to lose the weight quickly so that I can wear my old clothes.” Interestingly, participants who went back to work shortly after having the first child seemed to experience an easier time transitioning to motherhood. This could be due to returning to a “known” routine or because they were able to dress in a way that made them feel more like their pre-baby selves. Some participants mentioned that returning to work helped them to feel like their “old selves” more quickly after having their children, and they also seemed to be happier when at home spending time with them, possibly helping in Easing the Transition to new motherhood. For example, Deidre explained that she wears “scrubs to work, so it’s comfortable and I don’t have to think about what I’m going to wear. The hard part is just missing them.” That is, although her dress routine is streamlined, because she is at work all day, Deidre’s main focus is getting home to see her child.

As this study reveals, when a new mother returns to work after having her first child, the clothing that she wears plays an important role in helping define her identity as a working professional. The opportunity to wear clothing that she may have worn pre-pregnancy or clothing that makes her feel more confident suggests that the professional identity helps with the transition to motherhood. Results of this study offer several implications for research and practice, including indication that apparel companies need to offer female consumers postpartum clothing lines that take into account certain fit issues that new mothers experience, breastfeeding or pumping requirements, and their desire to wear clothing that is professional and helps them to feel confident.

REFERENCES
ABSTRACTS

NCAA TEAM IDENTIFICATION: SPORT FAN PURCHASE BEHAVIOR OF HOME DÉCOR AND APPAREL

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American collegiate athletics is big business. It is estimated that 2015 annual revenues for the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and its member institutions’ athletic programs are $12.4 billion (NCAA, 2016) and total retail sales for collegiate licensed merchandise are approximately $5.8 billion (License Global, 2016). Additionally, the fan base (190 million people) for collegiate athletics is the largest of all sports (IMG College, 2015). Given that sport fans consider their favorite team identification as important as their religious affiliation, and more important than being identified with their work and social groups (Smith, Grieve, Zapalac, Derryberry, & Pope-Tarrence, 2011), it should be expected that team identification will influence consumer behavior. Using Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1982), which states that individuals strive to join social categories which reflect positively on their self-concept, the following hypotheses are examined: team identification positively affects team related home décor (H1), licensed apparel (H2), and non-licensed apparel (H3) purchases; and team identification positively affects the amount spent on team related home décor (H4) and apparel (H5). Social Identity Theory is used extensively in academic research for sport team identification, is an influential framework for exploring sport fans, and it operates as an attitudinal barometer for predicting consumer behavior (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Social Identity Theory, in relation to sport team identification/level of fanship, is commonly associated with the widely-accepted Sport Spectator Identification Scale (SSIS), which assesses “individual allegiance or identification with a sport team” (Wann & Branscombe, 1993, p. 3).

A nationwide random sample of 760 NCAA fans aged 18+ are surveyed, using panel data from C&T Marketing Group. The online survey consists of the following sections: (1) NCAA team preference, (2) measurement of the Sport Spectator Identification Scale (SSIS), (3) home décor and apparel purchase behaviors, and (4) demographic questions. NCAA team preference is selected from a list of 128 Division I-A schools (if not listed, an open-ended response is provided). SSIS is measured using an adaption of Wann and Branscombe’s (1993) seven-item, five-point Likert type scale: (1) the importance of their preferred team winning (1 = Not Important; 5 = Very Important); (2) the degree to which the individual sees themselves as a fan of their preferred team (1 = Not At All A Fan; 5 = Very Much A Fan); (3) the extent to which their friends view them as a fan of their preferred team (1 = Not At All A Fan; 5 = Very Much A Fan); (4) how closely the individual follows the progress of their preferred team (1 = Never; 5 = Almost Every Day); (5) the importance of being a fan of their preferred team (1 = Not Important; 5 = Very Important); (6) the degree to which the individual dislikes their preferred team’s principal rivals (1 = Do Not Dislike; 5 = Dislike Very Much); and (7) how often the individual displays (at work or home) or wears team memorabilia (1 = Never; 5 = Always). An assessment of the SSIS’ internal consistency/reliability (Cronbach’s $\theta = 0.89$; average item-total correlation $= 0.70$) and unidimensional nature (PCA yields a single factor which accounts for 62.2% of the total variance; $\theta = 4.35$), reveals that the seven items can be averaged to form a single index of team identification.

The home décor and apparel sections consist of questions related to their favorite team and are measured using categorical measures. Home décor questions consist of: (1) have you ever purchased home décor because it was related to or reminded you of your favorite team (i.e., had team logo on it, was in team’s color(s)) (0 = No; 1 = Yes); (2) what room in the home it was purchased for (Select All that Apply: Master Bedroom; Children’s Bedroom; Dining Room and/or Kitchen; Home Office; Living/Family Room; Play/Recreation Room and/or Man Cave; or Outdoor Area (Patio/Deck/Balcony)); and (3) on average, how much have you spent on team related home décor ($1-$50; $51-$100; $101-$250; $250-$500; $501-$1,000; $1,001-$2,500; $2,501-$5,000; or greater than $5,000). Apparel questions are: (1) have you ever purchased licensed apparel (0 = No; 1 = Yes); (2) have you ever purchased regular (non-licensed) work and/or casual apparel, because it reminded you of your favorite team (0 = No; 1 = Yes); and (3) on average, how much have you spent on licensed and non-licensed apparel ($1-$50; $51-$100; $101-$250; $250-$500; $501-$1,000; or greater than $1,000). Finally, demographic data are measured using categorical measures. Hypotheses are tested via simple regression analysis.

The study sample characteristics are as follows: gender breakdown is 51.58% males, 48.16% females, and 0.26% transgender; the majority of participants are Caucasian (81.32%), married (56.07%), have annual household incomes between $50,000-$74,999 (26.02%), and have a bachelor degree (32.45%); and the generation breakdown is 38.79% Baby Boomers, 30.34% Gen Y, 22.43% Gen X, 6.20% Swing Generation, and 2.24% iGeneration. The SSIS (team identification) mean score for the total sample is 3.90 (SD = 0.79).

Results reveal that an association between team identification and purchases of home décor (H1) (F = 64.65, p = < .0001), licensed apparel (H2) (F = 54.13, p = < .0001), and non-licensed apparel (H3) (F = 77.70, p = < .0001) is positive and significant. The majority of participants’ state that they had purchased team related licensed apparel (85.79%) and non-licensed apparel (52.84%); however, 55.13% state that they have not purchased team related home décor. Participants asserting that they have purchased team related home décor items, state that they buy more often for the living/family room followed by the play/recreation room and/or man cave, master bedroom, home office, outdoor area, children’s bedroom, and dining room and/or kitchen. A positive and significant association between team identification and amount spent on team related home décor (H4) (F = 25.44, p = < .0001), and apparel (H5) (F = 89.67, p = < .0001) is present; therefore, both hypotheses are supported. The majority of respondents’ state that they spend $101-$250 on home décor items and $1-$50 on apparel items.

Due to the lack of research in this area, this study will fill gaps in the literature and provide the apparel and home décor industries with valuable knowledge of their consumers. Further research will analyze differences among the demographic variables, NCAA conferences, and teams within each conference.

REFERENCES

In recent months, the political dimensions of shopping have moved into the media spotlight, as major retailers like Nordstrom, TJ Maxx, and L.L. Bean have come under scrutiny due to political associations with products and brands (Creswell & Abrams, 2017). At the same time, there are consumers who consider not just the functional aspects of purchases, but the political ramifications of their consumption choices. These consumers feel empowered, employing their right to vote through their spending (Shaw, Newholm & Dickinson, 2006). Although there is some research on the topic of organized consumer action to boycott or buycott (Neilson, 2010), in contrast, there is very little that examines the political messages conveyed by retailers. While media coverage often reports on nationwide consumer movements, little is known about how the current political climate and statements of support for or criticism of policies relate to independently-owned retailers.

Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore how politics shape the ways that some independently-owned retailers operate and the extent to which they seek to communicate political messages to their customers.

Because there is very little research that exists on this emerging topic, a qualitative and specifically ethnographic approach was employed for the purposes of data collection. With IRB approval from the researchers’ university, the field location included retail establishments located in the downtown area of one mid-sized U.S. city. This area was deemed appropriate for this study because it houses a variety of independently-owned retail establishments. Three such establishments were used as specific investigation sites, consisting of one clothing store and makerspace (S1), one gift store (S2), and one specialty food retailer (S3). Specific methods used to collect data included observation, in-depth interviews, field interviews, and netnography. Observations were conducted in the three sites. In-depth interviews were conducted with each store owner alongside more informal field interviews with a total of four store employees. Questions asked included, can you talk about the overall reactions from customers to your publicly posted political statements? and, what are some specific ways customers have indicated support or opposition based on the political messages you display? Visual data included photographs of the retail spaces, including signs posted on store windows, doors and inside the stores. Netnographic data were collected to supplement the data collected in the field and included posts made by the stores on their websites, Facebook pages, Twitter accounts, as well as any posts made via their Instagram and Tumblr accounts.

Upon completion of data collection, Spiggle’s (1994) recommendations for data analysis and interpretation were followed, whereby patterns in the data were identified and labeled. Then, conceptual links between patterns were distinguished and compared. Next, a set of thematic categories emerged and relationships across these categories were examined to cultivate dimensions of each theme. As a result of the analysis, three themes were used to structure the interpretation of data: A Call to Action, Evident Endorsements, and Politically Motivated.

A Call to Action illustrates the ways that the stores promoted awareness of and duty toward the idea of civic engagement. Encouraging consumers to take action through non-partisan promotions included S1’s call to their customers to “Wear your ‘I VOTED’ sticker and receive $1 off drip coffee,” thereby rewarding customers for their civic participation as voters. The owner and employees of S2 provided an opportunity for customers to participate by holding an event at the store and posting “Register to vote here….Friday night from 5-8pm.” Evident Endorsements highlights how some independently-owned retailers use their position within the community to convey more explicit political values and positions to the public. For example, Jane, who owns S1, talked about how her store advocates opposition to an unpopular piece of state legislation: “You can print out a sign, just go to our website…saying you oppose HB2…We hope people will put them in their windows.” Likewise, S2 promotes politically themed merchandise on its social media sites by advertising an “OH CRAP! (Trump actually got elected) kit” for sale, while S3 posted photos of the store owner and another employee participating in political rallies indicating their resistance to the recent presidential inauguration. Demonstrations of political support shown by the retail sites in this study can also be Politically Motivated, that is, used not just to express a political perspective, but to facilitate relationships with like-minded customers. As Beth, an employee at S3 indicated, when she wears a “Not My President” shirt she has found that “...so many people have commented on how much they love my shirt….and that it’s awesome she (the owner) lets me wear it…” Similarly, one of the store owners flies a rainbow flag above the store’s doorway, stating “We’re part of the Gayborhood… it’s a directory of LGBTQ friendly places and we’re a part of it…we get a lot of support from flying our flag.” However, overt politicizing also provokes negative reactions from customers. As Stella, an employee at S2 indicated “One guy said we should be grateful for Trump….he’ll help businesses like ours. He set down his basket and left. We don’t get many like him, we just try to be polite, we don’t want to alienate anyone.” Clearly there is the potential to alienate those customers whose political views do not align with that of the store, or who do not seek to engage in or support political motivations while shopping.

Although Creswell and Abrams (2017) indicate that many major retailers are seeking to keep political affiliations private in order to stay out of the limelight, it appears that some independently-owned stores are content to publicly stake claims and align their stores with customers who support similar political views. Findings are some of the first to reveal how independently-owned retailers play a pivotal role in civic engagement within their local communities. Further research on the politicization of retail at the independently-owned retail level is needed, as are studies that explore the notion of civic engagement among independently-owned retailers. Added perspective of consumers who purchase goods from such shops, as well as consumers who have chosen to take their support elsewhere, is another area in need of examination. Ultimately there is still much to be learned about the implications of politicizing retail environments for small business success.

REFERENCES
RENTING LUXURY BRANDS: THE EFFECTS OF INCREASED ACCESS VIA MODERN PRODUCT ACQUISITION

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KEYWORDS
Renting, luxury brand, consumer brand equity

Renting is a mode of product acquisition that allows for the use of the entity for a specific period of time in exchange for a fee, with no transfer of ownership (Moeller & Wittkowski, 2010). Within the past decade, more modern forms of rental services provide consumers with greater access to certain products, such as those in the luxury industry (Raju, 2014). As luxury brand consumption occurs primarily for status and prestige purposes, luxury brands rely on exclusivity (Weidmann, Henning, & Siebels, 2009). The recent report shows that the luxury apparel, footwear, bags, and accessories accounted for USD 57.7 billion in global sales (Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, 2016). More recently, the luxury market has witnessed more affordable products (priced just above middle-range) that convey similar prestige, often produced by masstige brands (Truong, McColl, & Kitchen, 2009). Rental websites (e.g., Rent the Runway) have made both traditional and masstige luxury brands more accessible and arguably less exclusive. In the current study, there are two types of exclusive brands: traditional and masstige. While traditional luxury brands refer to a well-confined exclusivity in terms of both accessibility and price, masstige luxury brands are priced above those of comparable middle-range products to reach a broader target than the niches of traditional luxury brands (Truong et al., 2009). The research question guiding this study is whether such access affects exclusive luxury brands. Effects are measured via consumer brand equity, represented by the dimensions of brand awareness, brand associations, brand leadership, brand loyalty, and brand credibility (Aaker, 1996). Due to the negativity resulting when the masses gain access to exclusive luxury brands, we believe the equity of both traditional and masstige luxury brands will decrease, once the brands are accessible via renting. Accordingly, we assert the following two hypotheses:

H1: Traditional luxury brand equity decreases when such a brand offers renting as a mode of product acquisition; and
H2: Masstige luxury brand equity decreases when such a brand offers renting as a mode of product acquisition.

METHODOLOGY
The research employs a pre-post-scenario-based survey method, where the pre-scenario provided purchasing as the only available mode of acquisition and the post scenario provided purchasing and renting. The study manipulates luxury brands in accordance with today’s market, resulting in a one-way (traditional vs. masstige luxury brand offered renting option) between-subjects experimental design. Data were collected from a sample of 270 undergraduate college students, a cohort luxury brands target (Doss & Robinson, 2013). The participants were randomly assigned to complete the survey related to either traditional or masstige luxury brand. A total of 240 useable responses were analyzed for further analyses. All brand equity measures were adapted from existing scales (e.g., Acker, 1996) and assessed using 6-point Likert-type scales (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree). Demographic information was obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
All measures displayed acceptable reliability, ranged from 0.75 (i.e., brand leadership) to 0.95 (i.e., brand awareness). Paired samples t-tests (e.g., between pre-scenario and post-scenario) were used to test both hypotheses. With respect to the first hypothesis, results indicated that means of two dimensions of traditional luxury brand equity were decreased significantly after a renting option was offered: brand credibility (MPre-Scenario = 4.28 vs. MPost-Scenario = 3.57, MDiff = 0.70, t = 6.33, p < .001), and brand leadership (MPre-Scenario = 4.35 vs. MPost-Scenario = 3.68, MDiff = 0.67, t = 7.19, p < .001). Thus, H1 was partially supported. Regarding the second hypothesis, results showed that means of all dimensions of masstige luxury brand equity, except brand loyalty, were decreased after a renting option was offered: brand awareness (MPre-Scenario = 4.33 vs. MPost-Scenario = 4.10, MDiff = 0.23, t = 3.50, p < .01); brand association (MPre-Scenario = 4.09 vs. MPost-Scenario = 3.99, MDiff = 0.09, t = 2.04, p < .05); brand leadership (MPre-Scenario = 3.99 vs. MPost-Scenario = 3.55, MDiff = 0.45, t = 6.35, p < .001); and brand credibility (MPre-Scenario = 4.31 vs. MPost-Scenario = 3.65, MDiff = 0.66, t = 6.81, p < 0.01). Thus, H2 was also partially supported.

Both the traditional and masstige luxury brands experienced decreases in brand credibility, which relates to more risk associated with a brand (Erdem, Swait, & Louviere, 2002). This negativity can be explained by the trickle-down effect associated with accessibility of trends by the masses and subsequent relinquishment by the initiators. The decrease in brand leadership for both the traditional and masstige luxury is understandable considering that such brands are often associated with product and/or trend initiation, and increased availability is indicative of movement further along the product/trend lifecycle, which leads to consumers viewing the brands as less innovative and trendsetting. The decrease in masstige brand awareness, which accounts for whether or not consumers know about the brand, suggested that consumers were less likely to recognize the masstige brand when the brand participated in the fee-based rental environments. Likewise, the decrease in masstige brand associations, which here were specifically related to the brand’s ability to convey prestige and distinctiveness from others, indicates that greater access results in decreased prestigiousness of the brand. These results provide insight into the effects of the modern renting phenomenon and reveal how luxury brands (and other trend vanguard firms) are affected by changing consumption patterns. Limitations include sample size. Future research could account for brands with strategies to provide greater access via renting.

REFERENCES
ABSTRACTS

ROLES OF LOCAL FASHION SHOWS IN PROMOTING EMERGING FASHION DESIGNERS

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INTRODUCTION
The apparel industry created 1.9 million jobs in the United States in 2015 and has a significant positive impact on regional economies across the country (Joint Economic Committee, 2015). New York City and Los Angeles are the two largest fashion centers in the United States while other cities, such as Austin and Seattle, are beginning to derive further economic benefits from fashion businesses as well (Hong, 2016). Cities beyond first tier fashion centers also strive to develop their fashion identity and promote their city image while creating jobs and focusing on local economic development (Rantisi, 2011). In this regard, the current study focused on fashion shows that take place in cities that are not considered ‘fashion centers’ (aka local fashion shows). By focusing on them, the researchers will explore the role of local fashion shows as a mechanism for promoting emerging fashion designers.

LITERATURE REVIEW
1) Significance of an Emerging Fashion Designer: Fashion creates numerous jobs within the economy including occupations such as fashion designers, pattern makers, retailers, computer programmers and social media directors to name a few (Joint Economic Committee, 2015). In particular, fashion designers take on cultural significance because they bring their own cultural resources into their collections (Skov, 2015). Emerging fashion designers take on even greater significance because they always bring creative insights to the existing market (Malem, 2008).

2) Roles of Fashion Shows: Fashion shows can be viewed in at least two different ways, first, as a platform for promoting sales and second, as a cultural event (Skov, Moeran, Larsen, & Csaba, 2009). Historically, cities known as fashion centers hold the greatest power and dominate business and style across the country (Skov, 2015). Several researchers have explored the significance of fashion shows in major cities, however, there are few studies conducted focusing on the impact of local fashion shows. Local fashion industries provide an opportunity for cities to showcase local talent and creative capabilities, as a means of increasing their cultural capital (Rantisi, 2011).

METHOD
A qualitative research design was employed utilizing participant observation and in-depth interviews as the primary data collection methods. With IRB approval from the researchers’ university, ten individuals took part in face-to-face, semi-structured interviews that lasted approximately one hour each. Of the ten interviewed, seven were emerging fashion designers from one city who have participated in fashion shows and three were organizers of a local fashion show. A snowball sampling technique was used with participants being contacted via email. The researchers attended two local fashion shows, participating as audience members in order to gain a close familiarity with the people, processes and culture surrounding local fashion shows. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, and thematic analysis was used for this study, responses from the interview questions were grouped together according to themes that emerged.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
After the data analysis, three themes regarding how the local fashion shows promote emerging fashion designers were explored. First, local fashion shows help emerging designers showcase their designs and gain public recognition designating them as ‘emerging designers’. Participants A and C mentioned that the participation in the local fashion show helped their clients recognize them as professional fashion designers. Through participating in the local fashion show, some designers were able to meet their clients and sell their garments. In addition, the participation offers some participants the opportunity to learn about how to manage a fashion show as well as how to build their networks with professionals in the field. Second, local fashion shows can generate potential consumers’ interest and engagement in fashion in the form of entertainment. Participants D and E, founders of a local fashion show, indicated that the fashion show attendees are potential clients of the emerging designers and this will indirectly help emerging designers sell their designs to them. Third, local fashion shows can contribute to establishing design traditions in a city and further shape and promote this image. Participants D and E indicated that their fashion show strives to create their own unique atmosphere through collaboration with local companies. These efforts will assist the city in building cultural resources from which the emerging designers can benefit.

Despite these significant roles, several participants were skeptical about participating in local fashion shows again due to the lack of buyers and inadequate media exposure. In particular, participants indicated that the fashion show does not create a buying atmosphere. Considering the fact that the success of a fashion show is often assessed by the number of transactions taking place, organizers of local fashion shows are advised to identify potential buyers who might have an interest in the designers’ work and invite them to their shows in an attempt to create a buying atmosphere.

CONCLUSION
Through observations and in-depth interviews with local fashion show organizers and emerging designers, three themes regarding roles of a local fashion show in promoting emerging fashion designers were explored. The findings will have implications for emerging fashion designers who need to understand the business and wider environment in which they are operating. Also, the findings could provide insights to fashion show organizers who wish to better support emerging fashion designers. The data collection took place in one city, so it limits the generalizability of the findings. For future research, it would be beneficial to collect data from various cities who strive to promote their local fashion shows.

An emerging designer for the study is defined as one who establishes, independently owns, and manages a business (Carland, Hoy, Boulton, & Carland, 1984).

REFERENCES
ABSTRACTS

SHOULD WE TRUST AND FORGIVE A RETAILER?
CONSUMERS’ REACTIONS TOWARD A FIRM’S RECOVERY STRATEGY WHEN COMMITTING A TRANSGRESSION

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BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES
When a retailer faces negative messages, it can be inferred that the retailer has engaged in transgression via the violation of relationship- relevant norms with its customers, breaking the implicit and explicit rules controlling performance and evaluation (Aaker, Fournier, & Brasel, 2004). According to Magnusson et al. (2014), a transgression is bi-dimensional, consisting of a deep and a wide transgression. A deep transgression is severe and has negative consequences that may have caused fatal or life-threatening impacts. A wide transgression occurs when a large amount of the population is impacted by the act. As Muthukrishnan and Chattopadhyay (2007) state, when negative information arises, it is more significant as compared to when positive information arises. When transgressions occur between the customer and the retailer, it is seen as a breach in the relationship, resulting in a negative impact on consumers’ perceptions of the retailer. Such impacts may cause the retailer to suffer from monetary loss, bankruptcy, decrease in trust, and negative attitudes toward the retailer (Xie & Peng, 2009). Also, unexpected transgressive acts can have an emotional impact on the consumers’ response. Xie and Peng (2009) have suggested that only offering an apology from the firm may not assuage a transgression that has already occurred. Thus, the central purpose of the study is to provide a better understanding of consumers’ responses to retailer recovery strategies given varying degrees of transgression. Specifically, this study examined the impact of retailer-related transgressions and its recovery strategy on consumers’ trust and forgiveness in the apparel industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES
Zourrig et al. (2009) define the willingness to forgive as how open the customer is to resolving the issue by no longer holding resentment about the unpleasant incident. They suggested that an individual uses forgiveness as a coping strategy to support their coping behavior such as venting and avoidance. When the retailer is implicated in bad press, consumers are likely to repatronage that retailer when an apology is given rather than the retailer being defensive (Lyon & Cameron, 2004). By providing the customer with an apology, it allows the firm to avoid blame, reduce punishment, resulting in the hope of forgiveness by the consumer (Zourrig et al., 2009). For an apology to have an effect on the consumer, a combination of verbal and nonverbal remorse along with emotions must be present when giving the apology (Zourrig et al., 2009).

Morgan and Hunt (1994) define trust as confidence in the reliability and integrity of an exchange partner. It is found that consumers form elements of their trust that they have for retailers based on the retailer’s credibility. A retailer’s degree of credibility has an influence on consumer’s perceptions, retailer choice, perceived purchase risk, reduction in search of information cost, confidence in selecting a retailer, and trust (Erdem & Swait, 1998). If there is a transgression, it is likely to impact one or more of the above factors. Thus, consumers tend to trust a retailer with a high level of credibility as oppose to a retailer with low degree of credibility. Thus, it is expected that

H1: Consumers are more likely to a) display a higher degree of trust toward and b) forgive a retailer when the retailer offers recovery options after a transgression occurred as compared to no recovery option offered.
H2: Consumers are less likely to a) trust and b) forgive a retailer when the degree of transgression is high as compared to a low degree of transgression.
H3: There is a relationship between trust and forgiveness.

METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS
A 2 (Firm Recovery Offered: No versus Yes) x 2 (Degree of Transgressions: Low versus High) between-subject experimental design was employed to examine hypothesized relationships. The participants were randomly assigned to one of the four scenarios. Dependent variables included trust and forgiveness. The stimuli used in the final study was T.J. Maxx. Firm recovery strategy included offering an apology and $100 gift card. Degree of transgression included the loss of non-personal (e.g., email address) vs. personal information (e.g., credit card). Trust and forgiveness scales were adapted from previous studies and were assessed using 7-point Likert-type scale.

A series of ANOVA was performed to answer H1 and H2. Results revealed that the retailer’s recovery effort had a significant relationship with trust, $F(1, 201) = 14.99^{***}$ and forgiveness, $F(1, 191) = 8.65^{**}$. Thus, H1 was supported. In addition, results further showed that the degree of transgression did not have a significant relationship with neither trust, $F(1, 201) = 1.10$ nor forgiveness, $F(1, 191) = 0.034$. Thus, H2 was not supported. In testing H3, a simple regression was performed and results showed that trust positively influenced the likelihood of forgiveness, $\beta = 0.50$, $t = 7.93^{***}$; $F(1,189) = 62.85^{***}$.

DISCUSSION
As indicated earlier in the literature, there are differences in consumer trust and consumer forgiveness given firms’ recovery strategies (whether the firm offers the recovery effort or not and varying degrees of transgression (the magnitude of the transgression) (Aaker et al., 2004). Researchers have found that it is imperative that firms should engage in recovery effort after transgressions have occurred because it will allow for stronger relationships that encourage trust and forgiveness. In addition, studies have indicated that the degree of the transgression has an impact on consumers’ responses toward the transgression. When transgressions are too severe, consumers feel as though they must exhaust too much of their energy to forgive the retailer, whereas low transgression do not require the same energy to forgive (Aaker et al., 2004). Also, when the transgression is too severe, it impacts the customer-retailer relationship, which negatively impacts trust, forgiveness, and retailer equity (Aaker et al., 2004). This occurs because trust is required in order to maintain the relationship, which allows the customer to forgive (Xie & Peng, 2009). Previous studies further support the studies’ findings by stating that when transgressions occur when customers trust that the retailer will fix the situation, it is more likely that the retailer will be forgiven for the transgression (Brady et al., 2008).

REFERENCES
Utilitarian and hedonic values of shopping have been significant motives of consumers’ shopping behaviors, by representing utilitarian (e.g., needs for products to use) and hedonic (e.g., pleasure and joy coming from shopping) aspects of shopping (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). Literature has indicated that when consumers perceive higher levels of utilitarian and hedonic values of shopping they are more likely to be involved in the shopping behavior (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). Applying the concepts to the context of online shopping, To, Liao, and Lin (2007) proposed six specific utilitarian values and five hedonic values of online shopping that enhance consumers’ intentions for online shopping.

When consumers perceive the given online shopping channel enables them to save shopping costs (cost saving), time and effort (convenience), access variety of merchandise (selection), product and trend information (information availability), eliminate interaction with sales personnel (lack of sociality), and access customized products/services (customized products/services), their intentions to use the online shopping channel increase (To et al., 2007). In addition, when consumers perceive that the given online shopping channel provides greater hedonic values by enabling them to be adventurous (adventure/explore), share experiences with others (social), learn about latest trends (idea), enjoy deals and bargains (value), and enhance social status through shopping (authority/status), their intentions to use the given online shopping channel increase (To et al., 2007). Based on this, this study hypothesized that each dimension of the perceived utilitarian and hedonic values would increase consumers’ intentions to use a clothing SOS: Consumers’ perceived utilitarian values, including cost saving (H1), convenience (H2), selection (H3), information availability (H4), lack of sociality (H5), and customized products/services (H6), increase their intentions to use clothing SOS. Consumers’ perceived hedonic values, including adventure/explore (H7), social (H8), idea (H9), value (H10), and authority/status (H11) increase their intentions to use clothing SOS.

METHODS & RESULTS

With IRB approval, data were collected among 385 American consumers who are aged 18-66 (male:female = 40:60%) using a structured Mturk online survey. Each respondent received $.60 incentive. The survey measured respondents’ perceived utilitarian and hedonic values of SOS, their intentions to use SOS, and demographic information using existing scales (To et al., 2007). Exploratory factor analyses (EFA) on utilitarian and hedonic values revealed that all the items are correctly assigned to each dimension with acceptable factor loadings that are above .60. Reliabilities of all dimensions were acceptable with Cronbach’s α ranging between .75-.92. For testing hypotheses, results of a series of multiple regression analyses indicated that cost saving (H1), customized products/services (H6), adventure/explore (H7), value (H10), and authority/status (H11) significantly increase intention to use clothing SOS, supporting five hypotheses among eleven. There was no significant relationship between the remaining five hypotheses and intention, while one utilitarian value, lack of sociality, significantly decreased intention to use clothing SOS, in the opposite direction of H5. There were no issues of multicollinearity throughout the analyses. The table below presents these results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>P-value</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cost Saving (β1)</td>
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<td>.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convenience (β2)</td>
<td>.35</td>
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<td>.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Selection (β3)</td>
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<td>-1.31</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information availability</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>.146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of sociality (β5)</td>
<td>-1.17</td>
<td>-2.07*</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customized products/services (β6)</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>2.08*</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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REFERENCES

ABSTRACTS

THAI FANS’ SELF-CONCEPT AND KOREAN MUSICAL ARTISTS AS PERSONAL BRAND

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KEYWORDS
Korean Musical Artists, Fans, Self-Congruence, Actual Self, Ideal Self

BACKGROUND
Korean wave, Hallyu, has been well known throughout Asia since 1990s. In Thailand, the Korean wave began in 2000s when a number of TV drama series were on-aired on Thai television channels, following with several music releases from Korean boy bands and girl groups. As such, these Korean movie stars and musical artists have gained their popularity among Thai people, particularly teenagers. Some of them gathered together to establish Korean community fan clubs. Fans are crucial in determining success of these artists who have worked in the entertainment industry because fans are willing to invest their money, time, social protection for their favorite artists to maintain the relationship with them. Many scholars have addressed the research topics about the Thai Fans’ perception, media exposure and attitudes toward Korean artists, including the consumption of the product related to the artists. However, little study has focused on the relationship between Thai fan’s self and Korean artist brands.

A number of studies have extensively employed self-concept to understand consumer behaviors (Zinkham & Hong, 1991). Several definitions of self-concept have been found in the literature. Driven by Rosenberg’s (1979) definition of self-concept, most scholars agree that self-concept can be described as the sum of the individual’s thoughts and feelings about himself or herself in relation to others (as cited in Sirgy, 1982). Furthermore, Zinkham and Hong (1991) contended that the self-concept deals with cognitive process that is related to behavior and feelings. In Grubb & Grathwohl’s study (1967), they reported that self-concept is the result of an interaction process between an individual and others, and that the individual will act in ways to enhance their self-concept. Sirgy et al. (1997; 2000) proposed that self-concept is multifaceted, consisting of four domains of the self: actual, ideal, actual-social, and ideal-social. Actual self refers to people perceive themselves, whereas ideal self refers to how people would like to perceive themselves. While actual-social self refers to how people believe they are perceived by significant others, ideal-social self refers to how people would like to be perceived by significant others. In addition, Hong and Zinkhan (1995) further suggest two important forces work in the self-concept aspect and self-congruity. That is, people either attempt to preserve self-concept via self-consistency motivation or to enhance self-concept via self-esteem motivation. Studies have reported that in order to build the brand image, the image of user and personality of the brand must be congruent. As a result, consumers tend to like the brands with images that are congruent with their self-image and the quantification of these images indicates that it is not just the brand/product image that is important in consumer decision making, but the relationship between the self-image of the consumer and the respective image is also critical in consumer decision making as well.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY
The objective of this study was to examine the relationships between Thai fans’ psychological constructs and processes of Korean musical artist brand. Results of the study offer information for practitioners who work in entertainment industry to better understand the relationship between the artists, as a personal brand, and fans in order to develop effective branding strategy. Girl’s Generation musical artists were selected in the study because this band was one of the top ten boy bands and girl groups that are popular among Thais during 2015. Driven by qualitative approach, the study employed in-depth interviews with thirty participants. These participants were both leaders and members of Girl’s Generation musical artists’ fan club websites. The data were collected from October to December 2016.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Before analyzing the relationship between Thai fans’ self-congruence to Korean musical artists, Girls’ Generation, the researcher asked Thai fans about their actual selves by describing their lifestyles and personalities. The results showed that Thai fans of Girls’ Generation musical artists can be categorized into two group, i.e., introverts and extroverts. Fifty percent of these participants stated that they seem to be silent, do not like to socialize with people and love to spend time alone. In their free time, they rejuvenated themselves by involving in activities alone, including reading books, surfing internet, and taking rest at home. However, after being a member of the Girls’ Generation musical artists of Thai fan clubs, these participants stated that they liked to be more socialized with others in online spaces and real life spaces. They have more time to hangout with other Thai fans.

In the contrast, the rest of these participants seem to possess extrovert characteristics. That is, they stated that they would rather spend time with other people and friends than stay at home alone. They were also enthusiastic, preferred to talk rather than listening. After being a member of the Girls’ Generation musical artists of Thai fan clubs, these participants further stated that they increased the number of activities that they used to do in the past. They liked to socialize with others in online spaces and real life spaces. They participated any activities that Thai fan clubs hold. They also followed the artists they liked on Instagram to try to make stuff that these artists suggested such as cooking, buying products these artists used, dressing like their artists, having more self-development ambitions because they impress the characteristics of Girls’ Generation musical artists that push themselves to the career success with endeavors.

When analyzing Sirgy’s (1997; 2000)’s the self-concept, we found that Thai fan club did not change their actual self-image much except some behaviors such as being more socialized with others and participating in any fan club activities. However, Thai fans of Girls’ Generation musical artists made changes in their ideal self-image in terms of their daily life activities, their fashion styles and their career success ambitions. Their self-esteem ambition is a drive for them to imitate the artists as personal brand. They wanted to be beautiful like these artists by putting similar make-up or dressing similar to their favorite artists. However, there were no any evidences to support the concept of actual social self-image. Related to ideal social self-image, we found that by acquiring Girls’ Generation musical artists’ Thai fan club membership, these participants stated that they increased their actual social self-image much and that they liked to be socialized with others in online spaces and real life spaces. They have more time to hangout with other Thai fans.

When analyzing Sirgy’s (1997; 2000)’s the self-concept, we found that Thai fan club did not change their actual self-image much except some behaviors such as being more socialized with others and participating in any fan club activities. However, Thai fans of Girls’ Generation musical artists made changes in their ideal self-image in terms of their daily life activities, their fashion styles and their career success ambitions. Their self-esteem ambition is a drive for them to imitate the artists as personal brand. They wanted to be beautiful like these artists by putting similar make-up or dressing similar to their favorite artists. However, there were no any evidences to support the concept of actual social self-image. Related to ideal social self-image, we found that by acquiring Girls’ Generation musical artists’ Thai fan club membership, these participants stated that they increased their actual social self-image much and that they liked to be socialized with others in online spaces and real life spaces. They have more time to hangout with other Thai fans.

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ABSTRACTS

THE EFFECT OF FASHION BRANDS’ CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING PRACTICES ON CONSUMERS’ PERCEIVED BRAND PRESTIGE AND PURCHASE INTENTIONS

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KEYWORDS
Cause related marketing, conspicuousness, donation behavior, brand level

RATIONAL AND PURPOSE
Cause-related marketing (CRM), when a company donates a specified amount to a charitable cause based on consumers’ purchase of a brand’s charitable collection, has become an increasingly popular strategy among fashion brands. One prominent example is Michael Kors’ CRM campaign, where the fashion brand collaborated with the United Nations World Food Program where every branded item sold from the partnering collection would contribute funds to help feed children in hunger-stricken areas. However, despite the prominence of this strategy for fashion brands, it is unclear the direct effects that CRM campaigns have on the brand’s image and whether it influences consumers’ purchase (and donation) behavior. Based on this need, the purpose of this experimental study is to explore whether a CRM campaign can change consumers’ a) perception of the brand and b) purchase (and donation) intentions and whether these changes can vary depending on a brand’s level (i.e., high-end vs. low-end) and conspicuousness of consumers’ compassion (donation behavior) (i.e., high-conspicuousness vs. low-conspicuousness).

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT
Information integration theory provides theoretical support (Anderson, 1981), suggesting that by collaborating with a charity, it can elevate consumers’ perception of the brand. Accordingly, consumers’ perceptions are formed or modified as they receive new information that is then integrated into their previous perceptions. Thus, it is reasonable that when consumers’ receive information of a brand collaborating with a charity, which hold favorable perceptions, it may elevate their impression of the collaborating brand. Based on this rationale, H1 proposes: H1: Collaborating with a charity positively changes consumers’ a) perceived prestige and b) purchase intentions.

High-end brands are characterized as having a high position in the marketplace due to their premium quality, exclusivity, and high price. Whereas, low-end brands hold a lower position in the marketplace due to their accessibility in distribution and price. In this case, it is likely that a low-end brand will benefit the most from a CRM campaign because its image is more elastic to growth, Whereas, a high-end brand, due to a ceiling effect, has less growth opportunities. Thus, H2: Following collaborating with a charity, consumers’ change in a) perceived prestige and b) purchase intentions will be higher for the low-end brand when the charity logo was presented conspicuously compared to the high-end brand.

H3: Following collaborating with a charity, consumers’ change in a) perceived prestige and b) purchase intentions will be higher for the low-end brand when the charity logo is presented conspicuously compared to the high-end brand.

METHOD
College students from a Southeastern University (n=123) were randomly assigned to an experimental condition i) high-end brand, high-conspicuousness (n=29), ii) high-end brand, low-conspicuousness (n=31), iii) low-end brand, high-conspicuousness (n=35), and iv) low-end brand, low-conspicuousness (n=28). Based on a pre-test of college students (n=46), Michael Kors (Mossimo) was chosen as the high (low)-end brands. The stimulus was a t-shirt as part of a CRM campaign where the brand’s name (high vs. low-end) was printed on the shirt and the size of the charity logo (high vs. low conspicuousness) was manipulated. Independent variables (brand level and conspicuousness level) were manipulated and embedded on the t-shirt. Dependent variables (i.e., perceived brand prestige and purchase intentions) were based on previous research and were measured on 7-point likert-type scales before and after the stimulus.

FINDINGS
Findings are presented in Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3.

Table 1. The Effect of Charity Collaborating on a) Perceived Prestige and b) Purchase Intentions (H1) (n=144)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DV</th>
<th>Pre-Test Mean</th>
<th>Post-Test Mean</th>
<th>Change in Measure Mean</th>
<th>t Value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1a) Perceived Prestige</td>
<td>4.726</td>
<td>5.026</td>
<td>.300</td>
<td>3.422</td>
<td>.003**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1b) Purchase Intentions</td>
<td>4.274</td>
<td>4.094</td>
<td>-.420</td>
<td>3.113</td>
<td>.006**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. The Effect of Charity Collaborating on a) Perceived Prestige and b) Purchase Intentions based on Brand Level (H2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Pre-Test Mean</th>
<th>Post-Test Mean</th>
<th>Change in Measure Statistics</th>
<th>t Value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H2a) Perceived Prestige</td>
<td>5.141</td>
<td>5.318</td>
<td>.178</td>
<td>2.950</td>
<td>.003**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2b) Purchase Intentions</td>
<td>3.849</td>
<td>3.754</td>
<td>-.095</td>
<td>.360</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. The Effect of Charity Collaborating on a) Perceived Prestige and b) Purchase Intentions based on High Conspicuousness by Brand Level (H3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Change in Perceived Prestige</th>
<th>t Value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Change in Purchase Intention</th>
<th>t Value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H3a) High Conspicuousness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGH-END BRAND</td>
<td>-.080</td>
<td>33.042</td>
<td>.000***</td>
<td>.047</td>
<td>4.155</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOW-END BRAND</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>39.025</td>
<td>.000***</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>4.155</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISCUSSION
Collaborating with a charity as part of a cause related marketing campaign may increase consumers’ perception of brand prestige (H1a) and purchase intentions of the partnering product (H1b). However, deeper investigation indicates that low-end brand would benefit the most (H2a/b), especially when the collaborating charity logo was presented conspicuously (H3a/b). Future research should investigate why high-end brands risk dilution in high-conspicuous CRM practices. Theoretical and practical implications will be presented.

REFERENCES
Abstractions

Time and Place—Memories of UNCG Legacy Alumnae: The University, the City of Greensboro, and the NC Textile/Apparel Industry

Doris H. Kincade, Virginia Tech, USA; Elizabeth H. Dull, High Point University, USA; Alice E. Dull, USA

The purpose of this research is to provide reflections on fifty years of UNCG with additional focus on the city of Greensboro and the NC textile/apparel industry. With these reflections, the researchers explored similarities and changes. This historical research is based on the phenomenological events of three alumnae and their memory recall as well as print and web documentation. The three alumnae were chosen as a purposive sample (Babbie, 2007) because of their attendance at the university, their interest in art, history, fashion and visual media, and their longevity of time living in or near Greensboro. The UNCG alumnae were interviewed, both individually and collectively, using semi-structured techniques with an oral history protocol (“Southern Oral History,” n.d.). Interview topics covered their memories of UNCG, Greensboro, and the NC textile/apparel industry. Detailed notes taken by hand were used for collecting data. Transcripts of reminiscences were shared with the interviewees to verify findings. Coding processes for data followed guidelines by Straus and Corbin (1990). The alumnae, who have familial relationships, attended UNCG during three subsequent decades. Alumna One (A-1) attended during the 1960s, Alumna Two (A-2) in the 1980s, and Alumna Three (A-3) in the 2000s. Collectively the three women were enrolled at UNCG for over 12 years and have lived in or near the NC Triad area for over 80 years. Their in-depth knowledge of the university, Greensboro and NC's textile/apparel industry provides rich and detailed memories for this study.

A-1 entered a newly minted University of North Carolina at Greensboro with a student population of about 4,500. A few men were day students, admitted in the fall of 1964 following recommendations of the Carlyle Commission (1962), but the residential student body was female. A-1 remembers the freshman quad, walking to Tate Street for a movie, or taking a bus to Friendly Center to shop. Greensboro was a bustling, growing city with an active downtown, dominated by the stately Jefferson Pilot Building, but the city was also a “factory town.” Interested in art, she remembers the annual Art on Paper Show, sponsored by Dillard Paper. One of A-1’s favorite memories was attending a factory baseball game with a church family. The teams were workers at the Vicks plant. A-1 also remembers going with friends to factory outlets located at the back doors of local cut and sew plants. Her navy blue raincoat purchased from the Blue Bell outlet remained a favorite. But, both the new university and the city were facing changes. The NC legislature passed the “Gag Law,” WRAL carried editorials by broadcaster Jesse Helms, and the Greensboro News and Record carried ads for local Ku Klux Klan meetings. Trucks, The Fresh Market, and Biscuitville. Friendly Shopping Center is fashionable everywhere. Outlet stores are at least a 30 minute drive along the interstate. A-3 remembers the Junior League’s Bargain Box as a great place for purchasing designer labels, unfortunately made in China, and not in the NC Triad. Many of the mills are closed leaving shells of buildings, which A-3 used as subjects for photo projects in her classes.

A-2 attended UNCG in the 1980s/1990s when the student population topped 10,000 (“Timeline,” n.d.). A former Blue Bell executive and a former owner of a cut and sew plant were the instructors for two of her classes. Having former executives as instructors was a plus for students but an indicator of the downturn in the textile and apparel businesses that once fueled Greensboro’s growth. She remembers that downtown Greensboro was not a fun place to go and walking off campus was often an intimidating event, especially after dark. Cars became a necessity and parking on or around campus was a major problem. Greensboro was seeing change. Graduates went to work for Vanity Fair, Cone Mills, and Burlington but the future at those companies seemed limited. Old line companies were bought out, plants were closed, and executives were looking for new strategies: Just-in-time, Quick Response, and concurrent engineering (Moncarz & Lee, 1993). Cone Mills provided leadership for the TALC committee. Factory outlets were still available, but they were no longer at the plants (many of which had closed). A-2 remembers outlets being out on the highway in shabby strip centers, where she bought fun canvas tote bags, country of origin unknown.

A-3 attended UNCG in the early 2010s, with a student population over 19,000 (“The History,” 2013). As a TA, she remembers teaching students older than she with ¼th of the undergraduate population over 25, now known as “non-traditional.” Men’s sports are Division I and campus stretches to Market Street. Education and the visual and performing arts, still popular majors, are outranked by CARS, Management and Marketing housed in the Bryan School of Business. VF (with roots in Blue Bell), Kayser-Roth and The International Textile Group (i.e., Cone Denim, Burlington Industries) still represent Greensboro’s textile history, but the city is now diversified with headquarters for such companies as Honda Aircraft, Mack Trucks, The Fresh Market, and Biscuitville. Friendly Shopping Center is fashionable again with high end stores (e.g., Apple, Whole Foods). Downtown is also revitalizing with restaurants, coffee shops, and boutiques; and a weekend farmers’ market is a huge affair. A-3 lived 10 minutes off campus and remembers needing to drive everywhere. Outlet stores are at least a 30 minute drive along the interstate. A-3 remembers the Junior League’s Bargain Box as a great place for purchasing designer labels, unfortunately made in China, and not in the NC Triad. Many of the mills are closed leaving shells of buildings, which A-3 used as subjects for photo projects in her classes.

The montage of alumnae memories and reported events in the past 50 years for Greensboro and the NC textile/apparel industry reflect evolution and overlap, growth and reinvention, and the complex and layered components of a beloved institution, or as A-1 said “The Late Great Women’s College.” Each remembered different experiences that would define her future. But there was more than change in the memories, there was a bond of sisterhood among UNCG alumnae that also defined their future. Although places, companies and activities changed, all three alumnae remember getting ice cream from the Yum Yum (n.d.). Some things never change!

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Online environment does not only offer advertisers a means to effectively target their consumers, but it also has empowered today’s consumers to either welcome or avoid these online ads (Johnson, 2013). Although online ads have been widely used to attract consumers, a number of researchers have mentioned that many tend to view online ads as intrusive, disruptive, and irritating which have caused them to avoid viewing these online ads (Baek & Morimoto, 2012). These researchers have further contended that ad avoidance has been considered a major barrier for online ads. As such, studies have identified factors that have caused consumers to avoid viewing online ads, including perceived ad clutter, prior negative experience with ads on the Internet, and perceived goal impediment (Cho & Cheon, 2004; Seyedghorban, Tahernejad, & Matanda, 2016). Nevertheless, little has examined the role of attitudes toward online ads across three social media. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the role of consumers’ attitudes toward online ads in influencing their online advertising avoidance. Specifically, this study compared consumers’ attitudes toward online ads across three social media: Facebook, YouTube, and mobile application. Also, this study also investigated the relationships between consumers’ attitudes toward online ads and their online ad avoidance across three social media.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES
Speck and Elliott (1997) define ad avoidance as “all actions by media users that differentially reduce their exposure to ad content” (p. 61). Researchers have conceptualized ad avoidance as a tripartite disposition consisting of cognitive, affective, and behavioral components (Cho & Cheon, 2004; Speck & Elliott, 1997). While cognitive ad avoidance refers to psychological defense mechanism that may have caused users to intentionally ignore the ad they are exposed to, affective ad avoidance is the negative feelings and the expression of emotional responses toward an ad (Seyedghorban et al., 2016, p. 121). Behavioral ad avoidance is defined as “consumer avoidance actions other than lack of attendance” (Cho & Cheon, 2004, p. 91). Researchers have stated that the Internet is believed to be goal-, task-, interactivity-, and information-oriented medium and online ad avoidance is different from traditional media. For example, people tend to avoid online ads vigorously when time is limited to perform certain tasks, and to express negative attitudes toward the ads when dealing with slow downloading speed (Cho & Cheon, 2004). Attitude towards online ads, defined the predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to a particular advertising stimulus during a particular exposure occasion (Lutz, 1985), has been employed as a predictor of advertising effectiveness. Previous research has indicated that informativeness, entertainment, and irritation are three beliefs associated with attitude towards online ads (Tsang, Ho, & Liang, 2004). Although studies have found that informativeness, entertainment, and irritation are major parts of consumers’ attitudes toward online ads, little has examined whether these three components of attitudes toward online ads differ across three social media. As mentioned, these three components of attitudes toward online ads have predicted consumers’ behavioral responses toward the online ads. However, few has examined to what extent consumers’ attitudes toward online ads influence online ad avoidance across three social media. Thus, it is expected that

H1: There will be significant differences in consumers’ attitudes toward online ads across three social media (i.e., Facebook, YouTube, and Mobile Application).

H2: There will be significant relationship between consumers’ attitudes toward online ads and online ad avoidance and such relationships will be differ across three social media (i.e., Facebook, YouTube, and Mobile Application).

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