Young consumers' perceptions and purchase intentions towards mass-designer lines

Yuanwen Zeng
Iowa State University

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Young consumers’ perceptions and purchase intentions towards mass-designer lines

by

Yuanwen Zeng

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major: Textiles and Clothing

Program of Study Committee:
Linda Niehm, Major Professor
Ann Marie Fiore
Kay Palan

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
2009

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

A mass-designer line is an exclusive line that a fashion designer develops for a specific mass market retailer. This line may include apparel, accessories, shoes, and home items. There are increasingly more high-end fashion designers and mass market retailers cooperating with mass line development, such as Vera Wang with Kohl’s, Issac Mizrahi with Target, Todd Oldham with GAP, and Karl Lagerfeld with H&M. The three largest mass market retailers currently carrying mass-designer lines are Kohl's, H&M, and Target (Newman, 2007). The benefits of mass-designer branding are many from the designer’s perspective. The designer obtains marketing, manufacturing, distributing, and a huge customer base from the mass retailer. Conversely, the retailer acquires differentiation and designer prestige, important for creating greater customer value and an enhanced store brand image. Consumers also procure access to designer fashions of style and quality at affordable prices (Puente, 2007).

The current trend of “luxury to the masses” is one that will likely continue (Nguyen, 2004). Opportunities at the lower bargain end of the market will flourish, given demographic trends projected for the marketplace over the next 10 to 20 years. Two generations of consumers, who will continue to have a strong impact on the luxury market, are the baby boomers and Generation Y (Danziger, 2005). Baby boomers are consumers born between 1946 and 1964. This consumer group consists of about 76 million people. Generation Y, the children of the baby boomers, born from 1977 to 1994, number about 72 million, nearly as many people as in the baby boomer generation. While baby boomers are aging, Generation Y
is emerging, developing careers, and increasing spending power. Generation Y consumers’ spending increased from $84 billion in 1997 to $94 billion in 1998 to $153 billion in 1999 (Barrett, 2000; Danziger, 2005). This market has been characterized as one of the most coveted segments because of its “1) spending power, 2) ability to be trendsetters, 3) receptivity to new products, and 4) tremendous potential for becoming lifetime customers” (Bush, Martin & Bush, 2004, p. 109). Martin and Bush (2000) also discuss the increased importance in consumer research focused on specific motivators that govern young customers’ purchasing attitudes and patterns. Young consumers may logically be a major force in the mass-designer brand market, because they are economy shoppers, often demonstrate high fashion and trend involvement, and desire unique product offerings (Frings, 2008).

From a fashion designers’ perspective, a mass-designer line is an extension of a designer’s existing brand. There have been a number of empirical studies addressing consumer evaluation of brand extension and the impact of different types of extensions of an original brand. Aaker and Keller (1990) distinguish two types of extensions. First, a line extension is “a current brand name that is used to enter a new market segment within a specific product class”. By comparison, a brand extension is “a current brand name used to enter a completely different product class” (p. 27). According to Aaker and Keller’s (1990) description, a mass-designer line is a line extension of the designers’ existing brands. Line extensions may account for more than 75% of new product introductions (Shapiro, 1994). However, most of the relevant literature focuses on brand versus line extensions (Aaker & Keller, 1990; Sunde & Brodie, 1993). Furthermore, line extension research focuses more narrowly on issues such as cannibalization and optimal entry time with management level
respondents, while using experimental designs (Lomax, Hammond, East, & Clemente, 1996; Wilson & Norton, 1989). Heskett (1976) defined cannibalization of line extensions as “the process by which a new product gains sales by diverting them from an existing product” (p. 581). In Wilson and Norton’s (1994) study, they found that timing is an important factor when a firm is considering line extension. They concluded the line extension of a product should be made early in the product’s life cycle or not at all.

Only one study has addressed the area of designer fashion bridge lines (Ling, Taylor, & Lo, 1997). A designer bridge line is a secondary line of a designer label with lower and competitive pricing. Designers usually have bridge lines in their own specialty stores with signature lines or in better department stores. The price points vary, but often secondary lines retail for less than $300. Examples include Donna Karan’s bridge line DKNY, Dolce & Gabbana with D&G, and Giorgio Armani with Armani Exchange (A/X). Ling, Taylor, and Lo (1997) have investigated designer bridge lines in Hong Kong fashion retail operations from the perspective of brand differentiation, brand strategies, and customer purchasing behavior. However, a mass-designer line is different from a designer bridge line. A mass-designer line has a much lower price, which usually retails at less than $100. In addition, a mass-designer line generally involves only one mass market retailer rather than a group of retailers and exists for only a few months for a season. For example, mass designer lines for Target and H&M are limited-edition lines; whereas, Vera Wang's association with Kohl's is a long-term agreement.

From the mass market retailers’ perspective, a mass-designer line is a special private label. Private labels are produced exclusively for one retailer and carry “only the name of the store that sells it or a brand name that is owned by the store” (Jornow, Guerreiro, & Judelle,
Mass retailers either employ their own development and design team, or collaborate with designers to create this merchandise. They specifically differentiate themselves from other mass merchants by using these associations as a means of offering exclusive mass-designer lines (designer discount apparel with high name recognition).

The ultimate success of mass-designer lines depends on consumers’ acceptance of the offering. To date, there have been no empirical studies regarding the attitudes and purchase intentions of consumers towards mass designer lines. Additionally, there is uncertainty regarding what factors influence consumers to respond favorably to these offerings. Previous studies have been conducted to investigate consumer perceptual factors associated with private label attitude and purchase (Buton, Lichtenstein, Netemeyer, & Garretson, 1998; Garretson, Fisher, & Burton, 2002; Jin & Suh, 2005; Sinha & Batra, 1999). Consumer perceptual variables that have been identified include price-quality perception, perceived quality, price consciousness, value consciousness, smart shopper self perception, familiarity with private label, brand loyalty, perceived risk, and general deal proneness (Bettman, 1974; Burton et al., 1998; Garretson et al., 2002; Schindler, 1992; Richardson, Jain, & Dick, 1996).

1.2 Significance of the study

This study will provide deeper understanding of young consumers’ purchase intentions within the mass-designer line shopping context. A preliminary study investigated the integrated impact of consumer-oriented variables (i.e., fashion involvement, price consciousness, value consciousness, past experience, and perceived mass store image) as predictors of mass-designer line attitudes and purchase intentions. An important theoretical contribution of the present study lies in determining the relative influence of specific
consumer variables on young consumers’ attitudes and purchase intentions toward mass-designer lines. Another significant aspect lies in identifying whether such influences are direct, or whether a particular variable may exert its influence indirectly through attitudes on purchase intentions. Moreover, this research may provide valuable information for both designers and mass market retailers to make effective decisions regarding brand cooperation and marketing. Consumers may also receive benefits from expanded brand choices to meet their needs.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate young consumers’ perceptions and purchase intentions towards mass-designer lines within the attitude-intentions paradigm (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The aim is to understand the relationship between perceptual variables and their influence on young consumers’ decisions when they purchase mass-designer line products. Specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Develop a conceptual framework based on the Theory of Reasoned Action that integrates five consumer-oriented variables (fashion involvement, price consciousness, value consciousness, past experience, and perceived mass store image) related to mass-designer line attitudes and purchase intentions.

2. Empirically test a model that depicts relationships between consumer-oriented variables, mass-designer line attitudes, and purchase intentions.
1.4 Definitions of terms

**Mass-designer line:** An exclusive line that fashion designers develop for a specific mass market retailer, which may include apparel, accessories, shoes, and home items.

**Mass market retailer:** In this study, mass market retailers includes two types of stores—discount department stores (e.g., Wal-mart, Target, Kohl’s, etc.) and mass specialty stores (e.g., H&M, GAP, etc.). Mass market retailers sell merchandise at budget (usually less than $50) to moderate price points (usually less than $100) to the general public (Levy, M., & Weitz, B. A., 2001).

**Generation Y:** Generation Y is a generational consumer cohort born between 1977 and 1994, who are the children of baby boomers (Danziger, 2005).

**Attitudes:** Consumers’ attitudes towards purchasing mass-designer line products, in general. A manner due to product evaluations, purchase evaluations, and/or self evaluations associated with mass-designer line products (Burton et al., 1998).

**Fashion involvement:** A consumer’s perceived importance of fashion products, based on the aggregate effect of a variety of important fashion behavioral activities, including 1) fashion innovativeness and time of purchase, 2) fashion interpersonal communication, 3) fashion interest, 4) fashion knowledge, and 5) fashion awareness and reaction to changing fashion trends (Tigert, Ring, & King, 1976).

**Price consciousness:** The degree to which the consumer focuses exclusively on paying low prices (Lichtenstein, Ridgway, & Netemeyer, 1993).

**Value consciousness:** The quality one receives for the price one pays (Lichtenstein et al., 1993).
Past experience: Consumers’ past experiences (knowledge) about the designer of the mass-designer line.

Perceived mass store image: Customers’ positive perceptions of a mass retail store, where they purchase or expect to purchase mass-designer line products, particularly with regard to the pleasantness of shopping at a given store.
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides the theoretical framework and literature review for the study. The first section begins with a discussion about mass-designer line in the U.S. The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is then introduced as the theoretical framework of this study. A literature review of attitude, purchase intentions, five consumer-oriented variables (fashion involvement, price consciousness, value consciousness, past experience, and perceived mass store image) follow. Based on the literature review, a proposed conceptual model and research hypotheses are presented.

2.1 Mass-designer lines in the U.S.

Fashion designers play a very important role in the fashion market. They create innovative and exclusive styles for fashion followers, manufacturers, and the general public (Ling et al., 1997). There are three main categories of fashion design—haute couture, ready-to-wear, and mass fashion. “Haute couture stands for dressmaking; in the United States it has become to mean high fashion.” (Diamond, J. & Diamond, E., 2002, p. 90). Haute couture is made from high-quality, expensive fabric, sewn with extreme attention to detail, and finish for an individual customer. Ready-to-wear clothes are a cross between haute couture and mass market. While ready-to-wear clothes comprise a wide range of apparel, they also have designer labels and “are mass-produced rather than custom-made” (Diamond, J. & Diamond, E., 2002, p. 90). Designers usually present their ready-to-wear collections each season during market weeks.
Currently, many high-end designers pay close attention to the mass fashion market. Designers introduce their bridge (secondary) lines to expand price points, which also expand their business. However, the market has been inundated with a large number of designer bridge lines, such that carrying them no longer makes a store stand out among multiple retailers, who carry largely the same set of offerings (Baugh & Davis, 1989).

Moreover, consumers’ fashion attitudes and shopping habits are changing. According to research from Barnard's Retail Consulting Group, “There is a tremendous amount of money being spent on fashion apparel, but not in department stores” (Valenti, 2002, p.1). Nearly a decade ago, only 31 percent of the shoppers would admit to shopping at mass retail stores in addition to department stores. Today, this number is 67 percent. Consumers are confident about their fashion choices so they can shop for style and price at both department stores and mass retailers (Helyn, 2007).

The needs of both designers and retailers are also changing. Designers have profit motivation to expand their business and are also attracted to the utilitarian value of getting their products out to as many people as possible (Valenti, 2002). Retailers need a means of building differentiation in the market place, offering consumers good value at a better mark up, and expanding their consumer base. With these changes, mass-designer lines are emerging and growing. These lines give consumers access to designer fashions at affordable prices in a comfortable shopping environment.

Halston, a fashion designer, developed a line of low-priced clothing for J.C. Penney in 1982. Target is famous for collaborating with designers (e.g., Issac Mizrahi, Liz Lange, Massimo) to offer designer discount apparel with high name recognition. Following Target’s example, other mass-market retailers have been offering exclusive mass-designer lines to
differentiate themselves from the competition, for example, Kohl’s with Vera Wang, H&M with Karl Lagerfeld, and GAP with Todd Oldham. According to the NPD Group market analysis, “in 1975 only 25% of U.S. retail sales involved private-label branded products; today it's 53%. Retailers used to have 20 private-label products, now they still have 20, but half are designer co-branded labels” (Puente, 2007).

### 2.2 Conceptual model and hypotheses

For the current study, a modified version of Fishbein and Ajzen’s (1975) Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is used as the theoretical framework to examine young consumers’ attitudes and purchase intentions towards mass-designer line products. The attitude-intentions paradigm of modified TRA has successfully explained consumer behavior in various consumption settings (Jin & Suh, 2005; Kim, Fiore, Niehm, & Jeong, 2008). To gain a more comprehensive understanding of factors that drive young consumers’ attitudes towards mass designer lines and the consequent purchase intentions, an attitude-intention model, based on the TRA, was extended to include five consumer-oriented variables. These five variables are: fashion involvement, price consciousness, value consciousness, past experience, and perceived mass store image.

It is currently unknown whether the consumer-oriented variables discussed above influence mass-designer line purchase intention, and, if so, whether they influence it directly or indirectly via mass-designer line attitudes. A discussion of the constructs introduced in the proposed model and theoretical support for the hypothesized relationships follows.
2.2.1 Attitudes and purchase intentions

In the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) related attitudes to behavior by suggesting that attitudes toward an attitude object, in this case a behavior, will predict an individual’s intention to engage in a particular behavior. Studies that address attitude using the TRA often measure it in two ways—using a global scale (e.g., good, pleasant), or by summing the beliefs and weighting their importance. In this study, attitude toward purchasing mass-designer brand apparel is defined as the global attitude that individuals related to the purchase of mass-designer lines.

Many previous TRA studies support the strong linkage between attitudes and intentions regarding fashion product purchases (Belleau, Summers, Xu, & Pinel, 2007; Kim, Kim, & Kumar, 2003; Summers, Belleau, & Xu, 2006). Kim et al. (2003) measured attitudes toward online apparel shopping and found that attitude significantly predicted the intention to purchase clothing online. Summers et al. (2006) conducted a study to determine affluent female consumers’ purchase intentions of a controversial luxury product, and revealed that attitudes were significant predictors of purchase intentions. Belleau et al. (2007) conducted a similar study to examine Generation Y consumers’ purchase intentions towards the fashion merchandise made of emu leather. Significant associations were identified between attitude and purchase intentions in this study.

A positive relationship between private label attitudes and purchase intentions was also determined in previous studies. Garretson et al. (2002) found that attitudes toward private labels attitude positively affected the percentage of actual purchase in a grocery store chain in the USA. Jin and Suh (2005) tested the TRA model on two product categories—groceries and home appliances—in a South Korean discount store context. They found that
private label attitude was positively related to purchase intentions. Based on these findings, the first hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Young consumers’ attitudes towards a mass-designer line will be positively and significantly related to their purchase intentions.

2.2.2 Consumer-oriented variables, attitudes and purchase intentions

Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) also proposed that the relative weight of the attitude may be influenced by external variables, including consumer demographics (i.e., sex, age, race, and major), attitudes toward targets (i.e., mass designer brand products), and personality traits (i.e., social acceptance and self-worth). These identified external variables could provide a better understanding and prediction of consumer behavior in the present study. Other researchers have suggested that additional consumer characteristics could aid in explaining attitude. These characteristics include fashion involvement, price consciousness, value consciousness, consumer innovativeness, and past experience (Bagozzi, Wong, Abe, & Bergami, 2000; Jin & Suh, 2005; Shim, Morris, & Morgan, 1989; Summers et al., 2006). For this study, four variables were selected, based on their frequent use in research concerning consumer behavior and fashion products. The variables include: fashion involvement, price consciousness, value consciousness, and past experience. Another variable relevant to the context of the present study is perceived mass store image; thus, it was included as an external variable. Additional reasoning for the inclusion of these variables in the analysis will be discussed next.
Fashion involvement

Fashion involvement is a consumer’s perceived importance of fashion products (Tigert et al., 1976). Tigert et al. (1976) found that fashion involvement is composed of five dimensions of fashion behavioral activities: 1) fashion innovativeness and time of purchase, 2) fashion interpersonal connection, 3) fashion interest, 4) fashion knowledgeability, and 5) fashion awareness and reaction to changing fashion trends.

A measure of fashion involvement is included as one of the consumer-oriented variables in this study because of researcher interest in fashion-related products and young consumers. As mentioned earlier, mass designer lines intend to target consumers, who seek designer fashions, but cannot afford the high prices of designer signature brands. Consumers who are highly fashion involved are likely to form positive attitudes toward mass designer brands and, thus, have greater purchase intentions. In addition, previous studies suggest that young consumers tend to have high fashion involvement (Auty & Elliott, 1998; O’Cass, 2001).

Auty and Elliott (1998) conducted a study of fashion involvement, self-monitoring, and the meaning of brands. Perceptions of brands were perceived differently, according to age and sex of the respondent. The findings suggested that younger people were most positive about their trendiness. O’Cass (2001) examined relationships between gender, self-monitoring, motives for clothing consumption, materialism, age, and fashion involvement towards clothing. Fashion involvement was separated into sub-categories of fashion purchase decision and fashion product involvement. Age was shown to have a significant impact on purchase decision and product involvement, with younger consumers being more fashion-conscious than older consumers.
Research has supported the positive relationship between fashion involvement and consumption of fashion products. Howard and Sheth (1969) proposed that consumers’ greater involvement with products will lead to: 1) greater perception of attribute difference, 2) perception of greater product importance, and 3) more commitment to brand choice. Other researchers also noted that different involvement levels might lead to different consumer responses (Foxall, Goldsmith, & Brown, 1998; Zaichkowsky, 1985). Shim et al. (1989) included a measure of fashion involvement in their study of consumer attitudes toward domestic and imported clothing. They found the attitude toward performing a behavior was strongly influenced by the level of involvement and suggested that fashion involvement be included in future studies using the TRA model. Summers et al. (2006) found that fashion involvement significantly predicted consumers’ purchase intention of a controversial luxury product—apparel made with American alligator leather. The greater the respondent’s fashion involvement, the more likely they were to purchase American alligator leather apparel. Based on this rationale, it is hypothesized that:

H2a. Fashion involvement will be positively and significantly related to young consumers’ attitudes towards purchasing mass-designer lines.

H2b. Fashion involvement will be positively and significantly related to young consumers’ purchase intentions towards purchasing mass-designer lines.

**Price consciousness and value consciousness**

Price consciousness in this study is defined as “the degree to which the consumer focuses exclusively on paying low prices,” and value consciousness is defined as “the quality one gets for the price one pays” (Lichtenstein et al., 1993, p. 235). Consumers can receive
benefit from a mass-designer line by gaining access to designer style and quality at affordable prices (Puente, 2007). Thus, it is posited that consumers’ attitudes and purchase intentions toward mass-designer lines may likely be related to consumers’ orientation toward and perception of price. For example, consumers might have positive attitudes and purchase intentions toward mass-designer line products, due to a desire to pay low prices (i.e., price consciousness), or a strong desire to maximize the ratio of quality received to the price paid (i.e., value consciousness).

Two concepts relevant to this study within the price-perception construct are price consciousness and value consciousness. Price consciousness refers to a consumer’s propensity to focus on low prices as a major driver in purchasing behavior. A number of findings from the studies on private label purchases showed a strong positive link between price consciousness, and both attitude and purchase intentions. Burton et al. (1998) developed a measure of consumers’ attitudes toward private labels, positively related to consumers’ price consciousness. These researchers suggest that consumers with favorable attitudes towards private labels are extremely price conscious and tend to focus almost exclusively on paying low prices. Batra and Sinha (2000) found data from 12 different product categories indicating that price consciousness is a strong predictor that directly increases private brand purchase. A positive association was also found between price consciousness and food private brand purchase intention in a study conducted in the Korean discount store context (Jin & Suh, 2005).

Price may also be perceived at a broader level, in that consumers consider the ratio of quality received to price paid in a purchase, and thus signaling “value consciousness” (Lichtenstein et al., 1993). Value consciousness implies consideration of quality not in
absolute terms, but in relationship to the price of a brand (Jin & Suh, 2005). Empirical research has confirmed that value consciousness is positively related to attitudes toward both private brands and national brands (Garretson et al., 2002; Jin & Suh, 2005). In sum, both price consciousness and value consciousness are expected to positively influence consumers’ attitudes and purchase intentions toward mass-designer lines. Thus, it is proposed that:

H3a. Price consciousness will be positively and significantly related to young consumers’ attitudes towards purchasing mass-designer lines.

H3b. Price consciousness will be positively and significantly related to young consumers’ purchase intentions towards purchasing mass-designer lines.

H4a. Value consciousness will be positively and significantly related to young consumers’ attitudes towards purchasing mass-designer lines.

H4b. Value consciousness will be positively and significantly related to young consumers’ purchase intentions towards purchasing mass-designer lines.

**Past experience**

In this study, consumer past experience is defined as consumer experience (knowledge) regarding the designer of the mass-designer line. Ajzen (1991) indicated that “past experience can be used to test the sufficiency of any model” (p. 202), which means, past behavior provides a control for at least some of the omitted variables, so the motivation for including past experience as a consumer-oriented variable is primarily methodological (Bagozzi et al., 2000). Consumer knowledge is made up of two components, familiarity and expertise (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987). Familiarity is the number of product-related experiences accumulated by consumers and expertise is the ability to perform product-related
tasks successfully. Grime, Dimantopoulos and Smith (2002) proposed that the higher the level of consumer knowledge, the greater the impact of fit on consumer evaluations of a brand extension. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

**H5a.** Past experience with the designer of mass-designer lines will be positively and significantly related to young consumers’ attitudes towards purchasing mass-designer lines.

**H5b.** Past experience with the designer of mass-designer lines will be positively and significantly related to young consumers’ purchase intentions towards purchasing mass-designer lines.

**Perceived mass store image**

In this study, perceived mass store image refers to customers’ positive perceptions of a mass retail store, where they purchase or expect to purchase mass-designer line products, particularly with regard to the pleasantness of shopping at a given store. Perceived mass store image is included in the present study because it is the context where consumers can purchase mass-designer line products. Consumers develop their image of a store from their perception of various store attributes (e.g., advertising, décor, store policy, etc.) (Baugh & Davis, 1989). Several studies support the notion that store image is an important input in the consumer decision-making process (Buckley, 1991; Nevin & Houston, 1980). Baugh and Davis (1989) determined that store image affects the rating of styling characteristics of private label shirts, but not of designer label shirts, which they discuss in terms of congruity theory. This suggests a greater need to rely on store image cues to assess apparel labels when the consumer is unfamiliar with the designer label. However, these researchers did not
investigate the interaction between store image and consumers’ attitudes and purchase intention. Bloemer and Odekerken-Schroder (2002) found that a more positive store image leads to a higher level of satisfaction and positively influence the consumers’ purchase intentions. More specifically, Grewal, Krishnan, Baker and Borin (1998) discovered that store image had a direct, positive relationship with purchase intentions. These researchers also find that low knowledge respondents’ purchase intentions are influenced more by store image than were high knowledge respondents. As such, a positive association is anticipated between perceived mass store image and both mass-designer line attitudes and purchase intentions, leading to the final series of hypotheses:

H6a. Perceived mass store image will be positively and significantly related to young consumers’ attitudes towards purchasing mass-designer lines.

H6b. Perceived mass store image will be positively and significantly related to young consumers’ purchase intentions towards purchasing mass-designer lines.

2.3 Proposed model

Based on the preceding literature review, a research model (Figure 2.1) is proposed to examine young consumers’ perceptions and purchase intentions towards mass-designer lines. Relationships are posited between five consumer-oriented variables (fashion involvement, price consciousness, value consciousness, past experience, and perceived mass store image), mass-designer line attitude, and purchase intention in this model.
Figure 2.1 Proposed research model of relationships between consumer-oriented variables, attitudes, and purchase intentions.
CHAPTER 3. METHODS

The purpose of this study is to understand influences on young consumers’ purchase intentions towards mass-designer lines. To meet the research objective, a proposed research model (Figure 2.1) is empirically tested. This chapter includes a description of a preliminary study regarding young consumers’ purchase intentions towards mass-designer line apparel. The preliminary study serves as a starting point for the present research, particularly in regard to instrument development. Sampling, data collection, development of the research questionnaire, and data analysis methods are also discussed.

3.1 Preliminary study

A preliminary study related to young consumers’ purchase intentions towards mass-designer line apparel, was conducted to understand more about the mass-designer line issues. Research questions in the preliminary study included: What are consumers’ perceptions about mass-designer line apparel? Are consumers familiar with mass-designer lines? Would they buy mass-designer line apparel?

An online questionnaire was developed to measure consumers’ perceptions and purchase intentions towards mass-designer line apparel, based on relevant literature. Measures included a central variable (attitude) and three consumer-oriented variables (fashion involvement, past experience, and perceived mass store image). Two hundred and thirty-five students from three AMDP (Apparel Merchandising, Design and Production) courses at a major midwestern university were invited to participate in the preliminary study.

Considering the short history of mass-designer lines in the U.S., it may be difficult to secure participants with experience purchasing mass-designer line products. To increase
understanding, a description of mass-designer lines was provided at the beginning of the questionnaire. Respondents were presented a question that asked whether they had purchased any mass-designer line products before. An open-ended question followed, asking the respondent to write down the designer name, the mass retailer name and the product categories (Apparel/Accessories/Shoes/Home items/Others) they had previously purchased. These two questions served as a manipulation check to ascertain respondents’ knowledge of the mass-designer line concept.

Participants were asked to answer all questions based on their past purchasing experience, and, in particular, if they had purchased mass-designer line products before. If not, they were asked to answer the questions with the assumption of purchase, and based on their expectations and preferences toward purchasing mass-designer line products.

A total of 131 usable responses were obtained from the online survey. Seventy-five percent of the participants indicated they had purchased mass-designer line products before. Although the majority of them indicated the product category they purchased was apparel, 45% of them also mentioned they purchased other items besides apparel. Based on their answers, it was determined that some of the participants may have had a misunderstanding about mass-designer lines. They gave examples of Ralph Lauren/Tommy Hilfiger at Macy’s (examples of designer bridge lines) or Coach at TJ Maxx (an example of an off-price store carrying a designer label). Findings generated from the preliminary study aided in development of the survey instrument for the present study, which will be discussed later in the instrument development section.

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 15.0. Exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis were used to examine underlying dimensions of the scales. Multiple
regression analyses, employing the entry method of enter, were performed to test hypothesized links in the research model. According to these findings, attitude was the most significant predictor of purchase intentions. Moreover, perceived mass store image was also a significant predictor of purchase intentions. By testing the role of attitude as a mediating variable, it was discovered that past experiences with designers influenced purchase intentions toward mass-designer lines through attitudes. However, no significant relationship was found between fashion involvement and attitudes or purchase intentions.

Findings from this preliminary study were used as input for the present study. Details are discussed below.

3.2 Sample and data collection procedure

In the present study, a larger and more diverse group of young consumers was identified for the sample. The sample was comprised of college students from a large midwestern U.S. university. This university is regionally-located (within 25 miles) near two large mass-market retail stores (Kohl’s and Target) that carry the mass-designer lines not far from campus. Research on consumer behavior has found no significant differences between the purchase behavior of students and non-students (Lichtenstein & Burton, 1989; Yavas, 1994). Therefore, a student sample was used to investigate young consumers’ perceptions and purchase intentions towards mass-designer lines. A non-probability convenience sampling was deemed acceptable for this study because the purpose of this study was theory testing rather than describing the characteristics of a general population (Calder, Philips, & Tybout, 1981).
The data were collected in June 2008 over a one-week period through a web-based survey. This study followed a modified method for web survey design as suggested by Dillman (2000). The survey URL was distributed through a university email list, obtained from the university with approval from the University Institutional Review Board (IRB), regarding involvement of human subjects (See Appendix A). A random sample of 3,500 college female students from 2008 summer semester was invited to participate in the web-based survey. Female students were selected for this study, since the majority of mass-designer lines are women’s fashion products. As an incentive to participate in this study, three randomly-selected respondents were awarded a $25 gift card.

Two email messages were sent to contact the sample. The first email was an invitation to participate. This email explained the purpose of the study, the potential implications of the study, assured confidentiality, and the award selection process. In addition, a hyperlink to a webpage for the survey was provided in this email. A second email was sent three days after the invitation email to thank those who had responded and also to remind those who had not responded to complete the survey. The questionnaire and email invitation letter can be found in Appendix B and C, respectively.

3.3 Instrument development

A self-administered questionnaire (see Appendix B) was developed, based on multiple-item measurement scales from the literature and the preliminary study. Based on results of the preliminary study, scales were revised to fit the mass-designer line context. The instrument contained eight parts, including: fashion involvement, price consciousness, value
consciousness, past experiences, perceived mass store images, attitudes, purchase intentions, and demographic information.

Instructions were provided at the beginning of the questionnaire. The instructions included a description of mass-designer line and an open-ended question about the participants’ purchase experience with mass-designer line products. The instructions also emphasized the scale items in this study referred to mass-designer lines, in general, and not to lines sold in any specific mass retailer store nor specific product category. To help participants better understand the definition of mass-designer lines, three images across major product categories of Simple Vera Wong at Kohl's, Roberto Cavalli at H&M, and Isaac Mizrahi at Target were provided, following a definition of mass designer lines. These retailers were used as references, since they comprise the three largest mass-market retailers currently carrying mass designer lines (Newman, 2007). In addition, one image of a non-mass-designer line was also provided. Finally, the participants were asked to indicate which image was not a mass-designer line product for a manipulation check.

Measures

Fashion involvement

To measure fashion involvement, five items were developed, based on Tigert et al.’s (1976) Fashion Involvement Index. This index included five dimensions—fashion innovativeness and time of purchase, fashion interpersonal communication, fashion interest, fashion knowledgeability, and fashion awareness and reaction to changing fashion trends. This index is a valid and reliable measure of fashion involvement (e.g., Jin & Koh, 1999; Summers et al., 2006). Reliability analysis produced a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.88 in the
preliminary study, indicating high consistency among the five items used to measure fashion involvement in the mass-designer line study. All items were measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7).

**Price consciousness and value consciousness**

Four price consciousness and five value consciousness items were adopted from Lichtenstein et al.’s (1993) study. In their study, they developed these measures by using scale development procedures similar to those recommended by Churchill (1979). These two constructs, along with five other price-related constructs were used as independent variables to predict marketplace behaviors in five domains—price search, generic product purchases, price call, sale responsiveness, and coupon redemption. Strong internal consistency was reported in their study (above .78 for alpha). Garretson et al. (2002) used seven items of value consciousness adapted from Lichtenstein et al.’s (1993) study and reported an alpha of .86. Jin and Suh (2005) used four price consciousness measures and value consciousness measures Lichtenstein et al.’s (1993) study and reported an alpha above .67. In this study, all measurements were plotted on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1= strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree).

**Past experience**

To measure consumers’ past experience regarding the designer of the mass-designer line products they purchased or expect to purchase, a “brand familiarity” scale was adapted from Kent and Chris (1994). Three 7-point bipolar adjectives, including “unfamiliar-familiar,” “inexperienced-experienced,” and “not knowledgeable-knowledgeable,” were used in this study. In the preliminary study, reliability analysis resulted in a Cronbach’s alpha of
.91, indicating high correspondence among the three items used to measure past experience with designers.

**Perceived mass store image**

An eight-item scale developed by Ghosh (1994) measured the degree to which a customer holds a positive perception of a retail store. This was utilized to measure perceived mass store image. Reliability analysis in the preliminary study resulted in a Cronbach’s alpha of .86, indicating correspondence among the items used to measure consumers’ perceptions of a mass retail store was high. Using 7-point Likert-type scales with endpoints of “strongly disagree” (1) and “strongly agree” (7), participants were asked to indicate their perception of the mass retail store where they purchased or expected to purchase mass-designer line products.

**Attitudes**

In the preliminary study, five global attitude items were adapted (Kim et al., 2008) to measure the degree to which a mass-designer brand is good, appealing, favorable, and valuable. In the present study, two more items were added to better measure this construct, including “Buying mass-designer line products makes me feel good,” and “I love it when mass-designer lines are available for the product categories I purchase.”

**Purchase intentions**

Purchase intentions have been widely used as a predictor of subsequent purchase in the literature. In this study, purchase intentions refer to the consumers’ intentions to purchase mass-designer line products. In the preliminary study, purchase intentions were measured by
adapting three purchase-intention items developed by Baker and Churchill (1977) with the 7 point Likert-type scale—strongly disagree–strongly agree—and three willingness to buy items from Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal (1991) with a 7 point Likert-type scale—very unlikely–very likely. However, one item, willingness to buy mass-designer line apparel, was dropped prior to the final model testing because of its low factor loading (lower than .50). Therefore, the present study used the same three purchase intention items and two “willingness to buy” items. It has been shown that placing a specific time constraint on the intention improves the accuracy the attitude predicts the behavior itself by limiting the temporal context of the behavior (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993), so “the next time” was added to two items. The sample item is, “I would like to buy mass-designer line product the next time I go shopping.”

Demographics

The background information of the respondents was collected in the last section of the questionnaire. Items included age, gender, academic major, ethnicity, annual income, and clothing/accessory purchase habits.

3.4 Pretest

A pretest was conducted for the purpose of examining the questionnaire’s wording and website’s function, as well as length of time need to complete the survey. This step confirmed the face validity and content validity of the survey questions. The pretest was conducted using a convenience sample of about 10 young female consumers. Results indicated that the items performed well and were consistently interpreted by the participants.
Thus, no revisions were deemed necessary to the instrument and the researcher proceeded to the data collection phase.

### 3.5 Data analysis

Data were analyzed by using SPSS version 15.0. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine initial factor structures. Principal components analysis with varimax rotation was employed to obtain the factor loadings. An eigenvalue of 1 or higher and factor loading of .50 or higher were used to determine items retained in each factor (Stevens, 1992). Reliability analyses were employed to test consistency of measures using coefficient alpha. A minimum value of .70 was employed for assessing internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). Descriptive statistics were used to present an overview of consumers' purchasing behaviors regarding mass-designer brands and provide respondents’ demographic background profiles. To examine relationships among variables and test the hypotheses for this study, path analysis was conducted using Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) version 6.0.
CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

In this chapter, the results of the study are reported. This includes the sample profile, descriptive statistics of the research variables, and results of the hypothesis tests.

4.1 Sample profile

Three thousand five hundred female students from a large Midwest university in the United States were invited to complete the online questionnaire employed in this study. A total of 335 responses were obtained with a total response rate of 10%.

For the manipulation check questions at the beginning of the questionnaire, 80% of the 335 respondents (269) correctly identified that Ralph Lauren at Macys’ was not a mass-designer line. Of these 269 responses, 268 were usable and one respondent, who did not have a consistent answer with the following questions—write the designers’ names, the mass retailers’ names and the product categories of mass-designer lines they had previously purchased, was removed from the sample. For those 66 respondents who made the wrong choice with the “non mass-designer line” question, answers to the following manipulation check questions were also assessed to ascertain respondents’ knowledge and understanding of the mass-designer line concept. Based on this assessment, 24 respondents showed correct understanding of mass-designer lines and thus their responses were retained, and remaining 42 were eliminated from the data. The manipulation check resulted in 292 (268 plus 24) final usable responses for this study. Table 4.1 shows a summary of the demographic characteristics of the sample, including age, gender, ethnicity, major, income, spending on clothing and accessories, and prior experiences of purchasing mass-designer lines.
Results showed the average age of the respondents was 25, and approximately 70% of the 292 female respondents were between the ages of 18 to 25. The majority of the respondents were white or European (85%), followed by Asian (6%), and Native American (4%). Nearly 45% of the respondents earned less than $25,000 annually. The mean score for “how much do you spend on clothing and accessories for yourself per year” was 3.78 with 3 as “$300-499” and 4 as “$500-799.” In terms of past purchasing experience, 208 (72%) of the 292 survey respondents indicated they purchased a mass-designer line before.
Table 4.1  Sample profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic information</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age (n=290)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-21</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>37.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-25</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;31</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender (n=292)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>37.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity (n=291)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African-American</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White or European</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>84.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Annual Income (n=289)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $25,000</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000-49,999</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000-74,999</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000-$99,999</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $100,000</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spending on clothing/Accessories per year (n=291)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $100(or none)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100-299</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$300-499</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500-799</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$800-999</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1000-1199</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $1200</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prior mass-designer line purchasing (n=292)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The N varies because of missing data
4.2 Factor analysis of model constructs

Exploratory factor analysis was used to examine underlying dimensions of the scales. The principal component approach with varimax rotation was used to obtain the factor loadings. An eigenvalue of 1 or higher and factor loading of .50 or higher were used to determine salient factors (Stevens, 1992). Two items of value consciousness (“When making purchasing decision, I compare the prices of different brands to be sure I get the best value for the money” and “I always check the price to be sure I get the best value for the money I spend”) were eliminated due to cross-loading issues. In addition, two perceived mass store image items (“The mass retail store can easily be reached” and “The mass retail store offers value-for-money”) loaded on different factors than did the other five items. For conceptual clarity, these two items were removed to increase the reliability of the factors. Therefore, another factor analysis was performed with the retained 32 items. The results are summarized in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2  Results of exploratory factor analysis showing retained items for the proposed variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Standardized factor loadings</th>
<th>Eigenvalue</th>
<th>% Variance Explained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fashion involvement (α = .92)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>13.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, I buy fashion products earlier in the season than most.</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I give a great deal of information about new fashion products to my friends.</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more interested in fashion products than others are.</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compared with most others, I am more likely to be asked for advice about new fashion products than most.</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I read fashion news regularly and try to keep my wardrobe up-to-date with fashion trends.</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Price consciousness (α = .82)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>8.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The money saved by finding a lower price is usually worth the time and effort.</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tend to buy the lowest-priced brand that will fit my needs.</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am willing to go to extra effort to find lower prices.</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would shop at more than one store to take advantage of low prices.</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2 (Continued)

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Value consciousness</strong> (α = .81)</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>6.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am very concerned about low prices, but I am equally concerned about product quality.</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I generally shop around for lower prices, but they still must meet certain quality requirements before I buy them.</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I buy products, I like to be sure that I am getting my money’s worth.</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Past experience</strong> (α = .94)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How familiar are you with the designer of the mass-designer line products you purchased or expect to purchase?</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How experienced are you with the designer of the mass-designer line products you purchased or expect to purchase?</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How knowledgeable are you with the designer of the mass-designer line products you purchased or expect to purchase?</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perceived mass store image</strong> (α = .87)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mass retail store has friendly personnel.</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mass retail store has an extensive assortment.</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mass retail store has a nice atmosphere.</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mass retail store has attractive promotions in the store.</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mass retail store provides excellent customer service.</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mass retail store offers an attractive loyalty program.</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitude &amp; purchase intentions</strong> (α = .96)</td>
<td>8.29</td>
<td>25.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buying mass-designer line products makes me feel good.</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love it when mass-designer lines are available for the product categories I purchase.</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, mass-designer lines are appealing to me.</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, mass-designer lines are favorable to me.</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, mass-designer lines are good to me.</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, mass-designer lines are valuable to me.</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to buy mass-designer line products the next time I go shopping.</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I find mass-designer line product the next time I go shopping, I will buy it.</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would make a special effort to buy mass-designer line products.</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The likelihood of purchasing mass-designer line products is...</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My willingness to buy mass-designer line products is...</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total variance explained** 73.63

**Fashion involvement**

Fashion involvement included five items with an eigenvalue of 4.33. This factor explained 13.53% of the variance with a Cronbach’s alpha of .92, which showed high
internal consistency for this scale. For fashion involvement, respondents had a mean score of 2.96 on a 7-point Likert-type scale (Table 4.3). This result was different from the preliminary study, where participants had a higher level of fashion involvement with the mean score of 5.21. This result reflects the diverse sample composition in the present study, where student participants were included from all departments at a large Midwest university. The sample from the preliminary study was only limited to AMDP (Apparel Merchandising, Design and Production) students, who may have higher fashion innovativeness, knowledge, and awareness than other younger consumers.

**Price consciousness and value consciousness**

The price consciousness factor consisted of all four initial items. This factor had an eigenvalue of 2.79, explaining 8.71% of the variance. The value consciousness factor retained three items with an eigenvalue of 2.19, explaining 6.85% of the variance. Reliability analysis resulted in Cronbach’s alpha of .82 and .81, respectively, indicating sufficient intra-correlation for each scale. The mean score was 5.10 for price consciousness and 5.73 for value consciousness (Table 4.3), which show the respondents had a higher likelihood to focus on low price and also the relationship between quality received and price paid for their purchases.

**Past experience**

Past experience included three initial items. The eigenvalue was 2.19, Cronbach’s alpha was .94, and 6.85% of the variance was explained by this factor. The mean score was 3.30 on a 7-point Likert-type scale (Table 4.3). This indicated the respondents had lower familiarity, experience, and knowledge about the designer of mass-designer line, consistent with their lower level of fashion involvement (M=2.96). This was compared to the mean
Table 4.3 Correlation matrix among all variables in research model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Fashion involvement</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Price consciousness</td>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>-0.20**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Value consciousness</td>
<td>5.73</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.51**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Past experience</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>0.60**</td>
<td>-0.00</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Perceived mass store image</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>0.13*</td>
<td>0.26**</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.21**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Attitudes</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>0.33**</td>
<td>0.19**</td>
<td>0.16**</td>
<td>0.49**</td>
<td>0.39**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Purchase intentions</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>0.27**</td>
<td>0.14*</td>
<td>0.16**</td>
<td>0.46**</td>
<td>0.31**</td>
<td>0.82**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

score of Past Experience in the preliminary study, which was 5.04 on a 7-point Likert-type scale. For respondents who indicated they had purchased a mass-designer line before, the top two designer names mentioned were Issac Mizrahi (56%) and Vera Wang (20%). This result may be attributed to the fact that Issac Mizrahi launched his mass-designer line for Target in 2003. Since then, they have kept the line for several seasons until recently. This helps consumers become more familiar with the mass-designer line. Another possible reason for this result is that most of respondents were from the Midwestern U.S. and had less chance to experience other designers. Also, Target and Kohl’s are mass retail stores that carry these two mass-designer lines and are located not far from campus.

**Perceived mass store image**

A total of six items were identified for the perceived mass store image factor. The eigenvalue of the factor was 3.77 and 11.79% of the variance was explained by this factor. Reliability analysis produced a Cronbach’s alpha of .87, indicating that intra-correlations among the items used to measure consumers’ perceptions of a mass retail store were sufficient. With a mean of 4.51, respondents indicated they would like to go to a retail store with a higher store image when they purchase mass-designer line product. About 80% of the respondents, who had purchased mass-designer lines before, mentioned they purchased some
clothing or accessories items in Target, and the other store often mentioned was Kohl’s (26% of respondents). Compared with other discount retailers, such as Wal-Mart and Kmart, Target differentiates its stores by offering more upscale, trend-forward merchandise at low cost in a more attractive environment, while targeting younger and more educated consumers (Target Corporation, 2007). Target and Kohl’s are also two of the three largest mass retailers currently offering mass-designer lines (Newman, 2007). Moreover, they are more easily accessed for the participants in our study, as other retailers with mass designer lines (e.g. H&M, Old Navy) are not available in the local market.

Attitudes and purchase intentions

All six initial items measuring attitudes and five initial purchase intention items loaded together as one factor. The eigenvalue was 8.29 and accounted for 25.91% of the variance in the scale. This can be explained from the high correlation ($r=.82$, Table 4.3) between attitudes and purchase intentions in the present study. However, these two factors were treated as two separate research variables in the later hypothesis testing because of construct difference in nature and research need. As shown in Table 4.3, the mean scores for attitudes (4.08) and purchase intentions (3.82) indicate a generally neutral response to attitude and purchase intention towards mass-designer lines. This was not consistent with the results of the preliminary study, where participants from the AMDP program indicated a positive attitude (M=5.59) towards mass-designer line apparel. Furthermore, they were somewhat likely to purchase mass-designer line apparel the next time they went shopping (M=4.72).

Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for all factors ranged from .81 to .96, which exceeded the minimum accepted standard of .70 (Nunnally, 1978). Therefore, all factors were reliable
for hypothesis testing in this study. Means of summated multiple items were used as input for hypothesis testing.

### 4.3 Correlation matrix

Table 4.3 provides correlation coefficients among variables included in the proposed research model. Results of correlation analysis revealed that almost all variables were significantly related to each other. However, a significant correlation was not found between price consciousness and past experience with designers of mass-designer lines. In addition, value consciousness was not significantly related to three other variables (fashion involvement, past experience with designers, and perceived mass store image), which indicated that value consciousness might not be a good variable for the present study.

The correlations of all the variables with purchase intention were from .13 to .82. The highest correlation \( r = .82 \) was between attitudes and purchase intentions. It was also found that price consciousness was negatively related to fashion involvement, which could explain respondents’ neutral attitudes and purchase intentions towards mass-designer lines. Based on the literature review for this study, if consumers possessed high fashion involvement, they may also have favorable attitudes and purchase intentions. However, at the same time, high fashion involvement means low price consciousness, which might imply a negative attitude toward purchasing mass-designer lines and correspondingly lower purchase intention.
4.4 Research model and hypothesis testing

A research model was developed to examine young consumers’ purchase intentions toward mass-designer lines, based on the literature and preliminary research. The model included two endogenous variables (Attitudes and Purchase Intentions) from the modified Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), as well as five exogenous variables (fashion involvement, price consciousness, value consciousness, past experience, and perceived mass store image) shown in other studies to predict end behavior. Figure 4.1 illustrates a graphical representation of all model paths. Covariance routes between price consciousness and past experience, as well as value consciousness and three other variables (fashion involvement, past experience, and perceived mass store image) were not drawn because significant correlations were not produced.

To test the model, hypotheses H1 to H6, a maximum-likelihood estimation procedure of Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) version 6.0 was used. The fit of the model was examined through the Chi-squared statistic, root mean square of error approximation (RMSEA), and selective fit indices, including goodness of fit index (GFI), adjusted GFI (AGFI), comparative fit index (CFI), and Akaike's Information Criterion (AIC). Standardized path estimates ($\beta$) and $t$-values for each statistically-significant structural path, as well as the amount of variance explained by predictor variables for each endogenous variable ($R^2$) are also reported.

4.4.1 Overall model fit

The RMSEA estimates lack of fit compared to the saturated model. Values of .05 or less indicate a close fit, those between .05 and .08 indicate a fair fit, and those between .08
and .10 indicate a mediocre fit. GFI measures the proportion of the variance in the sample and the variance-covariance matrix accounted for by the model. This should exceed .95 in a good model. Values of AGFI exceeding .90 indicate good fit. CFI ranging from .90 or greater indicate good fit (Kline, 1998). For the research model, the results revealed a Chi-square of 12.822 with 4 degrees of freedom (p<0.05). The GFI was .988, AGFI was .915, CFI was .988, and RMSEA was .087. These indices show that the proposed research model fits the data, but only at a moderate level (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1  Research model of the causal relationship among consumer-oriented variables, attitudes, and purchase intentions

Note: FI=Fashion involvement, PC= Price consciousness, VC= Value consciousness PE= Past experience, SI= Perceived mass store image AT=Attitudes, PI=Purchase intentions
4.4.2 Hypothesis test results

Table 4.4 presents test results of the research model. Hypothesis 1 proposed that young consumers’ attitudes toward a mass-designer line will positively and significantly influence their purchase intentions. The results revealed that purchase intention was significantly predicted by attitude ($\beta = .80$, $t=19.65$, $p<.05$), supporting Hypothesis 1. The more favorable the participants’ attitudes were toward mass-designer brand apparel, the higher the purchase intentions.

Hypothesis 2a predicted a positive effect of fashion involvement on attitudes and Hypothesis 2b predicted a positive effect of fashion involvement on purchase intentions did not receive statistical support. Hypothesis 3 predicted that price consciousness would be positively associated with attitudes (H3a) and purchase intentions (H3b). However, no significant relationship was found, failing to support H3a and H3b. Hypothesis 4 proposed that value consciousness would be positively related to attitudes (H3a) and purchase intentions (H3b). No significant relationship was determined between value consciousness and attitudes, as well as value consciousness and purchase intentions. Therefore, H4a and H4b were not supported.

Hypothesis 5 posited relationships between past experience and attitude (H5a), and past experience and purchase intentions (H5b). Results revealed that past experience positively and significantly affected both attitude ($\beta = .37$, $t=6.10$, $p<.05$) and purchase intentions ($\beta = .10$, $t=2.30$, $p<.05$). The more familiarity, experience, and knowledge that young consumers had about the designer of mass-designer line, the more favorable attitude towards mass-designer lines and the higher purchase intentions. Therefore, H5a and H5b were both supported.
Hypothesis 6 predicted young consumers’ perceived mass store images would positively influence their attitude towards mass-designer lines (H6a) and also purchase intentions (H6b). The results showed that perceived mass store image was positively related to attitude ($\beta = .26$, $t=5.23$, $p<.05$), supporting H6a. The higher the mass store image consumers perceived, the more favorable the participants’ attitude was toward the mass designer line. However, the relationship between perceived mass store image and purchase intentions was not statistically significant. Therefore, H6b was rejected.

In sum, the results showed that five consumer-oriented variables (fashion involvement, price consciousness, value consciousness, past experience, and perceived mass store image) explain 35% of the variance in consumers’ attitudes. When the five consumer-oriented variables and the variable of attitude were integrated in the conceptual model, they explained a substantial amount of variance in purchase intentions ($R^2 = .68$) for mass designer lines by young consumers.

Table 4.4 Results of the research model testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>S. Est.</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>$t$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1 Attitudes → Purchase intentions</td>
<td>.684</td>
<td>.800</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>19.645*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2a Fashion involvement → Attitudes</td>
<td>.106</td>
<td>.112</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>1.858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2b Fashion involvement → Purchase intentions</td>
<td>-.046</td>
<td>-.057</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td>-1.356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3a Price consciousness → Attitudes</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td>.110</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>1.928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3b Price consciousness → Purchase intentions</td>
<td>-.050</td>
<td>-.049</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>-1.220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4a Value consciousness → Attitudes</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>.074</td>
<td>1.193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4b Value consciousness → Purchase intentions</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>.045</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>1.185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5a Past experience → Attitudes</td>
<td>.328</td>
<td>.365</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>6.099*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5b Past experience → Purchase intentions</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td>2.304*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6a Perceived mass store image → Attitudes</td>
<td>.371</td>
<td>.264</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>5.234*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6b Perceived mass store image → Purchase intentions</td>
<td>-.013</td>
<td>-.011</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>-2.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Est. = parameter estimate; S. Est.=standardized estimate of parameter; SE=standard error

*p < .05
4.4.3 Decomposition of effects

To better understand the results and the role of attitude as a mediating variable, decomposition of effects was calculated (see Table 4.5). The results showed an indirect effect for consumers’ past experiences through attitude on purchase intentions. The estimate of the indirect effect was .29, which indicated that 29% of the indirect effect of consumers’ past experience on purchase intentions was through attitude. Perceived mass store image also had a significant indirect effect on purchase intention ($\beta = .21, p < .05$), suggesting that it was not the perceived mass store image itself that created the purchase intention, but rather purchase intentions were mediated by attitude associated with perceived mass store image.

Table 4.5 Decomposition of direct, indirect, and total effects of independent variables on attitudes and purchase intentions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variables</th>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Total effects</th>
<th>Direct effects</th>
<th>Indirect effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>Past experience</td>
<td>.37*</td>
<td>.37*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perceived mass store image</td>
<td>.26*</td>
<td>.26*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase intentions</td>
<td>Past experience</td>
<td>.39*</td>
<td>.10*</td>
<td>.29*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perceived mass store image</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>.80*</td>
<td>.80*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$.

4.4.4 Revised final model

Based on the results of the path analysis of the research model, a more parsimonious model was explored by removing all non-significant paths and three variables (fashion involvement, price consciousness, and value consciousness). In this model, past experience with designers of mass-designer lines and perceived mass store images were exogenous variables, and attitudes and purchase intentions were endogenous variables. A graphical
representation of the revised model testing, presented in Figure 4.2, shows significant casual relationships among all research variables.

Parsimony refers to “the number of estimated parameters required to achieve a specific level of fit” (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004, p. 104). Williams and Holahan (1994) found that the AIC performed the best among all parsimony-based fit indices (such as AGFI, NC, PNFI, etc.) for multiple indicator models. AIC is used in the comparison of two or more models, with smaller values representing a better fit of the hypothesized model. Compared to the proposed research model with an AIC of 60.822, the revised parsimonious model was a better fit with obtaining an AIC of 18.678. Moreover, the results of the revised model revealed a Chi-square of .278 with 1 degree of freedom. The RMSEA was .000, GFI of 1.000, AGFI of .995, and CFI of 1.000. These fit indices demonstrate excellent model fit and a significant improvement, compared to the proposed research model. Therefore, the revised parsimonious model is presented as the revised final model.
Figure 4.2 Revised final model of the causal relationship among past experience, perceived mass store image, attitudes, and purchase intentions

Note: PE= Past experience, SI= Perceived mass store image
AT=Attitudes, PI=Purchase intentions
CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter summarizes the research findings, and provides both theoretical and practical implications. Also, limitations and recommendations for future study are presented.

5.1 Discussion and summary

A mass-designer line is an exclusive line that a fashion designer develops for a specific mass-market retailer, new to the fashion market. This research proposed a model that integrated consumer-oriented variables (fashion involvement, price consciousness, value consciousness, past experience, and perceived mass store image) related to mass-designer line attitudes and purchase intentions. This model was next tested to examine the relationship between those variables and to determine what influence young consumers’ purchase decisions. Table 5.1 provides a summary of the results for the hypotheses test results.

Table 5.1 Summary of research model hypotheses testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HP</th>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Proposed Effect</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>Attitudes $\rightarrow$ Purchase intentions</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2a</td>
<td>Fashion involvement $\rightarrow$ Attitudes</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>n.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2b</td>
<td>Fashion involvement $\rightarrow$ Purchase intentions</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>n.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3a</td>
<td>Price consciousness $\rightarrow$ Attitudes</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>n.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3b</td>
<td>Price consciousness $\rightarrow$ Purchase intentions</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>n.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4a</td>
<td>Value consciousness $\rightarrow$ Attitudes</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>n.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4b</td>
<td>Value consciousness $\rightarrow$ Purchase intentions</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>n.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5a</td>
<td>Past experience $\rightarrow$ Attitudes</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5b</td>
<td>Past experience $\rightarrow$ Purchase intentions</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6a</td>
<td>Perceived mass store image $\rightarrow$ Attitudes</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6b</td>
<td>Perceived mass store image $\rightarrow$ Purchase intentions</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>n.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: + Positive effect
s. Significant
n. Non-significant
This research indicated that attitude was an exceptionally strong predictor to purchase intention for the young consumers, which supported the hypothesized positive effects of attitude on purchase intention (H1). The more favorable the attitude young consumers have toward a mass-designer line, the more likely they are to purchase from it. This finding supports the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) and also confirmed TRA is a good theoretical framework to explain consumer behavior in various fashion consumption settings.

Because product attributes are a key part of attitude toward purchasing intentions, educating consumers about mass-designer line product attributes may increase their favorable attitudes and then correspondingly increase their purchase intentions. One of the most important attributes may be brand name, related to one of the consumer-oriented variables, and past experience with the designer of mass-designer lines.

This study found that past experience with the designer had a significant influence on young consumers’ attitudes towards mass-designer lines ($\beta =.37$, $p<=.05$). This was consistent with Grime et al.’s suggestion (2002) that the level of consumer brand knowledge has a positive influence on the fit of consumer evaluations of a brand extension. The results also showed that past experience with a designer had significant, but little, impact on purchase intention ($\beta =.10$, $p<=.05$). This can be explained that past experience with the designer influences consumers’ purchase intentions mostly via their attitudes ($\beta =.29$, $p<.05$). In addition, use of the constraint statement “the next time” on the purchase intention items might have influenced the results. Mass-designer lines are a new concept for most customers, so they might still just browse products without purchase intentions when they shop the next time. These two results supported the hypothesized relationships between past experiences
and attitudes (H5a), and past experiences and purchase intentions (H5b). Also, it was interesting to note that the relationship between past experiences and purchase intentions was non-significant in the preliminary study (sample composition was homogeneous of students from only ADMP), which was different from the present study. This could be explained by the fact that past experiences with the designer of mass-designer lines have a bigger and more positive influence on purchase decisions of consumers with lower fashion knowledge than consumers with higher fashion knowledge. The findings of H5a and H5b are very important to both designers and retailers, especially for those retailers who choose emerging designers. They should make a greater effort together to educate consumers about brand names and designers through different marketing strategies.

The results also revealed that perceived mass store images significantly influenced young consumers’ attitudes. It was hypothesized that young consumers, who had a higher perceived mass store image with the retail store where they purchased mass-designer lines, would have a favorable attitude (H6a). This hypothesis was supported. However, no significant relationship was found between perceived mass store image and purchase intentions, which failed to support Hypothesis 6b. This was the first time that the perceived mass store image variable was included in the full TRA Model, together with a central variable (attitude) to test the relationship with purchase intention. However, the factor was not strong enough to predict consumers’ purchase intentions directly. This finding is also very important to designers and retailers. Consumers’ attitudes towards mass-designer lines could be positively influenced by the perceived store image with the retail store in which that line is sold, which means that consumers could get some amount of “added value” from the store’s image. Therefore, designers need to choose the cooperative mass retailer carefully,
which should be consistent with their brand and product image. Retailers, on the other hand, need to offer more valuable things to enhance their store image to attract consumers and also increase consumers’ satisfaction. This will then positively influence the consumers’ purchase intentions (Bloemer & Odekerken-Schroder, 2002).

It was a bit surprising that neither attitude nor purchase intentions were significantly influenced by fashion involvement (H2a and H2b) in this study, although the literature suggested that fashion involvement might have some influence on both attitude and purchase behavior. It may be better to clarify and strengthen this construct in a future study. Contrary to expectations, young consumers’ price consciousness (H3a and H3b) did not provide any significant association with their attitudes and purchase intentions towards mass-designer lines, neither did value consciousness (H4a and H4b). Even though a number of findings from previous studies on private label purchasing showed that price had a strong role in predicting attitudes and purchase intentions (Burton et al., 1998; Batra & Sinha, 2000; Jin & Suh, 2005), and value consciousness positively influenced attitude and provided stronger impact than price consciousness (Hock & Banerji, 1993; Jin & Suh, 2005), the results of this research were not consistent with earlier studies. The reasons for these findings could be that mass-designer lines are a new and different concept from normal private labels in terms of price points for customers. Consumers have positive attitudes and purchase intentions towards purchasing normal private labels because they are less expensive than other national brands in the same store. This indicates that consumers are simultaneously price consciousness and value consciousness. However, compared to other national brands in the same store, the price of mass-designer lines are usually higher. Therefore, it requires further study to better understand young consumers’ price perceptions and purchase behavior
towards mass-designer lines. Another suggestion might be made to retailers that emphasizing low price of mass-designer lines may not be effective for young consumers. Instead, retailers should focus on education about designers and also the mass store image.

5.2 Conclusions and implications

This study bridges the gap of understanding consumers’ perceptions and purchase intentions of mass-designer lines by using the modified TRA. To understand the relative influence of certain consumer variables on consumers’ attitudes and purchase intentions toward mass-designer lines, this study specifically developed and tested a framework that integrates five consumer-oriented variables (fashion involvement, price consciousness, value consciousness, past experience, and perceived mass store image) related to mass-designer line attitudes and purchase intentions.

This study contributes to the literature by confirming that the TRA can successfully serve as a tool for predicting young consumer’s purchase intentions toward the new category of mass-designer lines. Attitude was the most significant predictor of purchase intentions in this study. Moreover, it is concluded that both the central variable (attitude) and consumer-oriented variables (fashion involvement, price consciousness, value consciousness, past experience and perceived mass store image) contributed to the main model fit and provided explanatory power. Using this approach, it was shown that past experience with designers is also a significant predictor of purchase intention. By testing the role of attitude as a mediating variable, it was determined that past experience with designers exert influence indirectly through attitudes on purchase intentions towards mass-designer lines.
As previously discussed, young consumers may be a key segment for mass-designer lines market. Results of this study may be useful for both fashion designers and mass retailers, who target younger consumers. Especially now, U.S consumers are changing their apparel shopping habits because of a sluggish economy. Increasingly price-conscious, consumers are shifting their business to mass merchants, buying more clothing on sale, and making trade-offs in their purchase decisions (Cotton Incorporated, 2008). In Cotton Incorporated’s Lifestyle Monitor™ survey (2008), it was shown that women are still shopping for clothes today, just not as much as they do when the economy was stronger. In, an average month, the amount an American female consumer spends on clothes decreases slightly, while her age increases. For example, women ages 13 to 24 spend $87.16, and the amount declines as women age. Women ages 25 to 34 spent $82.91, ages 35 to 55, $80.33 and ages 56 to 70, $74.55. Therefore, both designers and mass retailers can benefit from results of this study in terms of how they can keep their businesses strong during economic downturns and differentiate themselves from other mass-merchants. In sum, findings from this study may assist retailers in making effective strategic decisions in regard to brand cooperation and product development, as well as marketing of mass designer brands.

5.3 Limitations and future studies

This study has a number of limitations. First, the random samples were drawn from students enrolled at a major Midwest university during a specific summer semester, thus limiting the generalizability of the findings. Second, while this study did not find significant effects of fashion involvement, price consciousness and value consciousness on mass-designer line attitudes and purchase intentions, it might because of the sample composition of
young consumers in the U.S. For those young consumers usually shop at mass retailer stores and seldom buy any designer brands before, mass-designer lines are actually more expensive choices. Designer name, rather than price, is the main reason young consumers want to purchase mass-designer line products. However, those affluent consumers, who normally purchase designer brands, might have positive attitudes and purchase intentions toward mass-designer line products due to their increasing price consciousness. There may also be a combined effect of age and cultural dimensions on purchase behavior. Therefore, examination of cross-age and cross-cultural effects of the model may provide more accurate interpretation and increase external validity. In addition, these constructs need to be further clarified and strengthened in the future study.

To help participants better understand the concept of mass-designer lines, text descriptions and three image examples were provided at the beginning of the questionnaire. However, the differences between designer bridge lines and mass-designer lines may not be clear to some participants, indicating a need for further research. Also, consumers’ attitudes and purchase intentions toward Karl Lagerfeld with H&M, Vera Wang with Kohl’s, and Issac Mizrahi with Target may be different because of their pricing strategy, mass store setting, and other factors. Other experimental designs, like conjoint analysis, may also be used in future studies to identify the most important product attributes considered by consumers purchasing mass-designer line products.
APPENDIX A. APPROVAL OF THE USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

DATE: June 6, 2008
TO: Yuanwan Zang
1062 Delaware, Unit 3, Ames, IA
CC: Linda Niehm
1066 LeBaron Hall
FROM: Jan Canny, IRB Administrator
Office of Research Assurances
TITLE: Young consumer's perceptions and purchase intentions towards mass-designer lines
IRB ID: 06-213
Study Review Date: 6 June 2008

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair has reviewed this project and has declared the study exempt from the requirements of the human subject protections regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.111(b). The IRB determination of exemption means that:

- You do not need to submit an application for annual continuing review.

- You must carry out the research as proposed in the IRB application, including obtaining and documenting (signed) informed consent if you have stated in your application that you will do so or if required by the IRB.

- Any modification of this research should be submitted to the IRB on a Continuing Review and/or Modification form, prior to making any changes, to determine if the project still meets the Federal criteria for exemption. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an IRB proposal will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.

Please be sure to use the documents with the IRB approval stamp in your research.

Please note that you must submit all research involving human participants for review by the IRB. Only the IRB may make the determination of exemption, even if you conduct a study in the future that is exactly like this study.
SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

**Principal Investigator (PI):** Yunwen Zeng  
**Phone:** 515-522-1722  
**Fax:**

**Degrees:** M.S.  
**Correspondence Address:** 1502 Delaware, Unit 3

**Department/Division:** ABE/IDM Department  
**Email Address:** yzeng@iastate.edu

**Center/Institute:** College of Human Science

**PI Level:**  
**Title of Project:** Student consumption perceptions and purchase intentions towards mass-designer lines  
**Project Period (include Start and End Date):** (06/01/2004) to (06/30/2006)

**FOR STUDENT PROJECTS**

**Name of Major Professor/Supervising Faculty:** Linda Nielan  
**Phone:** 515-294-1939  
**Email Address:** mnelan@iastate.edu

**Department:** Textile and Clothing  
**Type of Project:** research, thesis

**KEY PERSONNEL**

List all members and relevant experience of the project personnel. This information is intended to inform the committee of the training and background related to the specific procedures that each person will perform on the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME &amp; DEGREE(S)</th>
<th>SPECIFIC DUTIES ON PROJECT</th>
<th>TRAINING &amp; EXPERIENCE RELATED TO PROCEDURES PERFORMED, DATE OF TRAINING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yunwen Zeng, M.S. in Textile and Clothing, Iowa State University, estimated graduation date December 2006</td>
<td>Graduate Student at ISU, Principle Investigator</td>
<td>ISU Human Subjects Training 10/8/2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Linda Nielan</td>
<td>Major Professor/Supervisor</td>
<td>ISU Human Subjects Training 11/18/2002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To list additional personnel please attach separate sheet.
FUNDING INFORMATION

| Internally funded, please provide account number: N/A |
| Externally funded, please provide funding source and account number: N/A |
| Funding is pending, please provide OSPA Record ID or GoldSheet: N/A |
| Title on GoldSheet if Different From Above: N/A |
| Other: e.g., funding will be applied for later: N/A |

SCIENTIFIC REVIEW

Although the assurance committees are not intended to conduct peer review of research proposals, the federal regulations include language such as “consistent with sound research design,” “rationale for involving animals or humans,” and “scientifically valuable research,” which requires that the committees consider in their review the general scientific relevance of a research study. Proposals that do not meet these basic tests are not justifiable and cannot be approved. If an assurance review committee(ies) has concerns about the scientific merit of a project and the project was not competitively funded by peer review or was funded by corporate sponsors, the project may be referred to a scientific review committee. The scientific review committee will be ad hoc and will consist of your ISU peers and outside experts as needed. If this situation arises, the PI will be contacted and given the option of agreeing that a consultant may be contacted or withdrawing the proposal from consideration.

☑️ Yes ☐ No Has or will this project receive peer review?

If the answer is “yes,” please indicate who did or will conduct the review: The research design and instruments were reviewed by my Program of Study Committee (Dr. Linda Niemcuk, Dr. Ann Marie Linro, and Dr. Kay Pelcat).

If a review was conducted, please indicate the outcome of the review: The outcome was positive; minor modifications were made to wording on instrument.

NOTE: RESPONSE CELLS WILL EXPAND AS YOU TYPE AND PROVIDE SUFFICIENT SPACE FOR YOUR RESPONSE.

COLLECTION OR RECEIPT OF SAMPLES

Will you be: (Please check all that apply.)

☐ Yes ☐ No Receiving samples from outside of ISU? See examples below.
☐ Yes ☐ No Sending samples outside of ISU? See examples below.

Examples include: genetically modified organisms, body fluids, tissue samples, blood samples, pathogens.

If you will be receiving samples from or sending samples outside of ISU, please identify the name of the outside organization(s) and the identity of the samples you will be sending or receiving outside of ISU:

☐ Yes ☐ No Does this project involve human research participants?

Research Assurance 4/18/08
☐ Yes ☑ No Does this project involve laboratory chemicals, human cell lines, or tissue culture (primary or immortalized), or human blood components, body fluid or tissues?

ASSURANCE

- I certify that the information provided in this application is complete and accurate and consistent with any proposal(s) submitted to external funding agencies.
- I agree to provide proper surveillance of this project to ensure that the rights and welfare of the human subject or welfare of animal subjects are protected. I will report any problems to the appropriate assurance review committee(s).
- I agree that I will not begin this project until receipt of official approval from all appropriate committee(s).
- I agree that modifications to the originally approved project will not take place without prior review and approval by the appropriate committee(s), and that all activities will be performed in accordance with all applicable federal, state, local and Iowa State University policies.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A conflict of interest can be defined as a set of conditions in which an investigator’s or key personnel’s judgment regarding a project (including human or animal subject welfare, integrity of the research) may be influenced by a secondary interest (e.g., the proposed project and/or a relationship with the sponsor). ISU’s Conflict of Interest Policy requires that investigators and key personnel disclose any significant financial interests or relationships that may present an actual or potential conflict of interest. By signing this form below, you are certifying that all members of the research team, including yourself, have read and understand ISU’s Conflict of Interest policy as addressed by the ISU Faculty Handbook (http://www.policies.iastate.edu/faculty) and have made all required disclosures.

☐ Yes ☑ No Do you or any member of your research team have an actual or potential conflict of interest?
☐ Yes ☑ No If yes, have the appropriate disclosure form(s) been completed?

SIGNATURES

[Signature of Principal Investigator] [Date: 6/14/08]

[Signature of Department Chair] [Date: 5/16/08]

Major Professor/Supervising Faculty: Please sign cover page.

PLEASE NOTE: Any changes to an approved protocol must be submitted to the appropriate committee(s) before the changes may be implemented.

Please proceed to SECTION II.
SECTION II: IRB SECTION - STUDY SPECIFIC INFORMATION

STUDY OBJECTIVES

Briefly explain in language understandable to a layperson the specific aim(s) of the study.

The purpose of this study is to investigate young consumers’ perceptions and purchase intentions towards mass-designer lines within the attitude intentions paradigm. A mass-designer line is an exclusive collection that fashion designers develop for a specific mass market retailer, which may include apparel, accessories, shoes and home items. The aim is to understand the relationship between these variables and find out what influence young consumers’ decisions when they purchase mass-designer line products.

Specific objectives of the study are:
1. Develop a conceptual framework that integrates five consumer-oriented variables (fashion involvement, price consciousness, value consciousness, past experience, and perceived mass store image) related to mass-designer line attitudes and purchase intentions.
2. Empirically test the relationships between consumer-oriented variables, mass-designer line attitudes and purchase intentions.

BENEFITS TO SOCIETY AND PARTICIPANTS

In language understandable to a layperson how the information gained in this study will advance knowledge, and/or serve the good of society. Please also describe the direct benefits to research participants; if there are no direct benefits to participants, indicate that. Note: monetary compensation cannot be considered a benefit to participants.

This study will provide deeper understanding of young consumers within the mass-designer line shopping context. As an initial study investigating the integrated impact of consumer-oriented variables (e.g., fashion involvement, price consciousness, value consciousness, past experience, and perceived mass store image) to predict mass-designer line attitudes and purchase intentions, this study may have both academic and practical implications. An important theoretical contribution of this study lies in determining the relative influence of certain consumer variables on consumers’ attitudes and purchase intentions toward mass-designer lines. Another significance lies in identifying whether such influences are direct, or whether a particular variable may exert its influence indirectly via other variables. Moreover, this research may provide valuable information for both designers and mass market retailers to make effective decisions in brand cooperation and marketing. Consumers may also receive benefits from an expanded choice to meet their needs.

PART A: PROJECT INVOLVEMENT

1) Yes ☒ No  Is this project part of a Training, Center, Program Project Grant?
   Director Name: Overall IRB ID:
2) Yes ☒ No  Is the purpose of this project to develop survey instruments?
3) Yes ☒ No  Does this project involve an investigational new drug (IND)? Number:
4) Yes ☒ No  Does this project involve an investigational device exemption (IDE)? Number:
5) Yes ☒ No  Does this project involve existing data or records?
6) Yes ☒ No  Does this project involve secondary analysis?
7) Yes ☒ No  Does this project involve pathology or diagnostic specimens?
8) Yes ☒ No  Does this project require approval from another institution? Please attach letters of approval.
9) Yes ☒ No  Does this project involve DEXA/CT scans or X-rays?

Research Assurances 4/18/08
PART B: MEDICAL HEALTH INFORMATION OR RECORDS

1) ☐ Yes ☐ No  Does your project require the use of a health care provider’s records concerning past, present, or future physical, dental, or mental health information about a subject? The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act established the conditions under which protected health information may be used or disclosed for research purposes. If your project will involve the use of any past or present clinical information about someone, or if you will add clinical information to someone’s treatment record (electronic or paper) during the study, you must complete and submit the Application for Use of Protected Health Information.

PART C: ANTICIPATED ENROLLMENT

| Estimated number of participants contacted to reach required enrollment: 3800 |
| Number of participants to be enrolled in the study Total: 250 | Males: 0 | Females: 250 |
| Check if any enrolled participants are: | Check below if this project involves either: |
| ☐ Minors (Under 18) | ☐ Adults, non-students |
| Age Range of Minors: | ☐ Minor ISU students |
| ☐ Pregnant Women/Infants | ☐ ISU students 18 and older |
| ☐ Cognitively Impaired | ☐ Other (explain) |
| ☐ Prisoners |

List estimated percent of the anticipated enrollment that will be minorities if known:

- American Indian: 1%
- Asian or Pacific Islander: 1%
- Latino or Hispanic: 3%
- Other: 1%
- Alaska Native: 1%
- Black or African American: 3%

PART D: PARTICIPANT SELECTION

Please use additional space as necessary to adequately answer each question.

11. Explain the procedure for selecting participants including the inclusion/exclusion criteria and how participants will be contacted or recruited (i.e., Where will the names come from? Will a sample be purchased, will ads, flyers, word of mouth, mail list, etc., be used?).

The current study will use both a random and convenience sample, a random sample drawn from ISU female students who are enrolled in Summer 2009 and a convenience sample from the Department of Apparel, Educational Studies, and Hospitality Management and College of Business. The main survey will be conducted via an Internet (Online survey), using both a random sample drawn from ISU students and convenience sample from AHS/AF and Business classes. For the random sample, lists of subjects' email addresses will be provided by the Office of the Registrar. The web site link will be distributed to subjects via email. For the convenience sample, instructors of the classes will be contacted to announce the survey in their classes, and the survey announcement will be posted on the class WebCT. However, the convenience sample will be used only if I don't secure enough responses (250) from the random sampling approach. Also, the students will be informed that they are not eligible to participate in the research more than once.

12. Attach a copy of any recruitment telephone scripts or materials such as ad, flyers, e-mail messages, etc. Recruitment material must include a statement of the voluntary and confidential nature of the research. Do not include the amount of compensation, (e.g., compensation available).

Note: Please answer each question. If the question does not pertain to this study, please type not applicable (N/A).

PART E: RESEARCH PLAN

Research Assurances 4/18/08
Include sufficient detail for IRB review of this project independent of the grant, protocol, or other documents.

13. The information needed here is similar to that in the "methods" or "procedures" sections of a research proposal—it should describe the flow of events that will occur during your interactions with subjects. Please describe in detail your plans for collecting data from participants, including all procedures, tasks, or interventions participants will be asked to complete during the research (e.g., random assignment, any qualifying or treatment groups into which participants will be divided, mail survey or interview procedures, sensors to be worn, amount of blood drawn, etc.). This information is intended to inform the committee of the procedures used in the study and their potential risk. Please do not respond with "see attached" or "not applicable."

Random sample: A list of 3500 subjects' email addresses will be provided by the office of the registrar. The principal researcher will send email with description of study, and a website link. If students decide to participate in this study, they will access the general instruction and questionnaires by clicking the website link. Participants will read the consent form and continue to the survey. The principal researcher will inform participants that their participation is completely voluntary and that they can quit anytime if they do not want to continue. The participants will be also informed that their responses will not be associated with their personal information such as email address or name.

Convenience sample: The principal researcher will contact the instructors of classes in the Department of Apparel, Educational Studies, and Hospitality Management and College of Business. Participants will be alerted in classes regarding the opportunity to take part in the survey. The survey website link will be posted on the class WebCT site and participants will voluntarily participate in the survey. The principal researcher will inform participants that their participation is completely voluntary and they can quit anytime if they do not want to continue. Also, the students will be informed that they are not eligible to participate in the research more than once.

14. For studies involving pathology/diagnostic specimens, indicate whether specimens will be collected prospectively and/or already exist "on the shelf" at the time of submission of this review form. If prospective, describe specimen procurement procedures. Indicate whether any additional medical information about the subject is being gathered, and whether specimens are used at any time by code number to the participant's identity. If this question is not applicable, please type N/A in the response cell.

N/A

15. For studies involving deception, please justify the deception and indicate the debriefing procedure, including the timing and information to be presented to participants. If this question is not applicable, please type N/A in the response cell.

N/A

PART F: CONSENT PROCESS

16. Describe the consent process for adult participants (those who are age 18 and older). If the consent process does not include documented consent, a waiver of documentation of consent must be requested.

The consent form will be provided to participants in the email invitation before the website link. The principal researcher will clearly indicate that if participants do not feel comfortable to participate in the survey, they can quit anytime. Also, if they are under 18, they will be asked not to participate in the survey. If someone younger than 18 participates, as indicated in the demographics, his or her data will be eliminated.

17. If your study involves minors, please explain how parental consent will be obtained prior to enrollment of the minor(s).

N/A

Research Assurance 4/18/08
18. Please explain how assent will be obtained from minors (younger than 18 years of age), prior to their enrollment. Also, please explain if the assent process will be documented (e.g., a simplified version of the consent document). According to the federal regulations, consent... means a child's affirmative agreement to participate in research. More failure to object should not, absent affirmative agreement, be construed as assent.

N/A

PART G: DATA ANALYSIS

19. Describe how the data will be analyzed (e.g., statistical methodology, statistical evaluation, statistical measures used to evaluate results).

Data will be analyzed using AMOS and SPSS. Primarily quantitative data analysis methods will be used. Factor analysis will be conducted to determine an appropriate number of factors and the pattern of factor loadings. Descriptive statistics will be used to explore overall consumers' purchasing behavior regarding mass-designer lines. Path analysis using AMOS will be performed to explain the relationships among the variables (fashion involvement, perceived mass store image, attitudes, and purchase intentions).

20. If applicable, please indicate the anticipated date that identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments and/or audio or visual tapes will be erased:

07/31/2011 Month/Day/Year

PART H: RISKS

The concept of risk goes beyond physical risks and includes risks to participants' dignity and self-respect as well as psychological, emotional, legal, social or financial risk.

21. [ ] Yes [ ] No Is the probability of the harm or discomfort anticipated in the proposed research greater than that encountered ordinarily in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests?

22. [ ] Yes [ ] No Is the magnitude of the harm or discomfort greater than that encountered ordinarily in daily life, or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests?

23. Describe any risks or discomforts to the participants and how they will be minimized and precautions taken. Do not respond with N/A. If you believe that there will not be risk of discomfort to participants, you must explain why.

There are no foreseeable risks from participating in this study. The principal researcher will inform participants that if they do not feel comfortable to respond, they can omit items or quit anytime. Also, the participants will be informed that their responses will not be associated with their personal information (e.g., emails and names).

24. If this study involves vulnerable populations, including minors, pregnant women, prisoners, the cognitively impaired, or those educationally or economically disadvantaged, what additional protections will be provided to minimize risks?

This study will use a student sample. In using a random sample, because this study will be conducted through the
PART I: COMPENSATION

25. ☒ Yes ☐ No  Will participants receive compensation for their participation? If yes, please explain.

Do not make the payment an inducement, only a compensation for expenses and inconvenience. If a person is to receive money or another token of appreciation for their participation, explain when it will be given and any conditions of full or partial payment. (E.g., volunteers will receive $5.00 for each of the five visits in the study or a total of $25.00 if he/she completes the study. If a participant withdraws from participation, they will receive $5.00 for each of the visits completed.) It is considered undue influence to make completion of the study the basis for compensation.

Each participant will be asked to type their email address and name at the end of the survey if they want to have a chance to win a $25 certificate. However, their names and email addresses will be automatically saved in a different file separated from their responses.

Two participants will be randomly selected, using an EXCEL random number generation program, and be given a $25.00 gift certificate from a major retailer (Target, Walmart) of their choice as a compensation.

PART I: CONFIDENTIALITY

26. Describe below the methods that will be used to ensure the confidentiality of data obtained. (For example, who has access to the data, where the data will be stored, security measures for web-based surveys and computer storage, how long data or specimens will be retained, etc.)

Information obtained will be kept strictly confidential. Participants’ responses will be collected and saved separately and will not be associated with participants’ email addresses and names. After selecting participants who will receive the incentives, the email addresses and names will be destroyed. The data file will be retained for three years and destroyed after completing the research.

PART II: REGISTRY PROJECTS

To be considered a registry: (1) the individuals must have a common condition or demonstrate common responses to questions; (2) the individuals in the registry might be contacted in the future; and (3) the names/data of the individuals in the registry might be used by investigators other than the one maintaining the registry.

☐ Yes ☒ No  Does this project establish a registry?

If “yes,” please provide the registry name below:

N/A

Checklist for Attachments

Listed below are the types of documents that should be submitted for IRB review. Please check and attach the documents that are applicable for your study:

☒ A copy of the informed consent document OR ☐ Letter of introduction containing the elements of consent
☐ A copy of the consent form if minors will be enrolled
☐ Letter of approval from cooperating organizations or institutions allowing you to conduct research at their facility

Research Assurance: 4/18/08
Data-gathering instruments (including surveys), Recruitment fliers, phone scripts, or any other documents or materials participants will see or hear.

The original signed copy of the application form and one set of accompanying materials should be submitted for review. Federal regulations require that one copy of the grant application or proposal be submitted for comparison with the application for approval.

FOR IRB USE ONLY:

Initial action by the Institutional Review Board (IRB):

☐ Project approved. Date: 8/6/07
☐ Pending further review. Date: 
☐ Project not approved. Date: 

Follow-up action by the IRB:

Jerry A. Agnello  June 6, 2007
IRB Approval Signature  Date

SECTION III: ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION

☐ Yes ☐ No  Does this project involve human cell or tissue cultures (primary or immortalized), or human blood components, body fluids or tissues?

PART A: HUMAN CELL LINES

☐ Yes ☐ No  Does this project involve human cell or tissue cultures (primary or immortalized cell lines/strains) that have been documented to be free of bloodborne pathogens? If the answer is “yes,” please answer question 1 below and attach copies of the documentation.

1) Please list the specific cell lines/strains to be used, their source and description of use:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CELL LINE</th>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF USE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add New Row</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Please refer to the FSU “Bloodborne Pathogens Manual,” which contains the requirements of the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard. Please list the specific precautions to be followed for this project below (e.g., retractable needles used for blood draws):

Anyone working with human cell lines/strains that have not been documented to be free of bloodborne pathogens is required to have Bloodborne Pathogen Training annually. Current Bloodborne Pathogen Training dates must be listed in Section I for all Key Personnel. Please contact Environmental Health and Safety (294-5389) if you need to

Research Assurance #14008
PART B: HUMAN BLOOD COMPONENTS, BODY FLUIDS OR TISSUES

☐ Yes ☐ No  Does this project involve human blood components, body fluids or tissues? If “Yes,” please answer all of the questions in the “Human Blood Components, Body Fluids or Tissues” section.

1) Please list the specific human substances used, their source, amount and description of use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBSTANCE</th>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF USE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E.g., Blood</td>
<td>Normal healthy volunteers</td>
<td>2 ml</td>
<td>Approximate quantity; assay to be done</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Add New Row

2) Please refer to the [OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Manual](http://www.osha.gov/bbsr/otgn/), which contains the requirements of the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard. Specific sections to be followed for this project are:

Anyone working with human blood components, body fluids or tissues is required to have Bloodborne Pathogen Training annually. Current Bloodborne Pathogen Training dates must be listed in Section I for all Key Personnel. Please contact Environmental Health and Safety (294-5359) if you need to sign up for training and/or to get a copy of the Bloodborne Pathogens Manual [http://www.osha.gov/bbsr/otgn/].
APPENDIX B. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Appendix A

Mass-designer line Purchase Behavior Survey

We are interested in your views concerning mass-designer line purchasing. A mass-designer line is an exclusive collection that a fashion designer develops for a specific mass market retailer. This line may include apparel, accessories, shoes and home items. The questionnaire takes about 15 minutes to complete. Your responses will be anonymous and used ONLY for this research project.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Yuanshen Zeng, yzeng@kstate.edu or Dr. Linda Niehml, niehml@kstate.edu.

In this questionnaire, we would like to ask about your experiences and attitudes toward purchasing mass-designer line products. Before moving on to the questions, we would like to briefly explain what the mass-designer line is.

- A mass-designer line is an exclusive collection that a fashion designer develops for a specific mass market retailer. This line may include apparel, accessories, shoes and home items.
- For example, Vera Wang for Kohls (launched in Sept. 2007), Isaac Mizrahi for Target (launched in 2003), Todd Oldham for Old Navy (will be launched soon), Karl Lagerfeld for H&M (launched in 2004).
- Most of the designers are widely known or emerging.
- It generally involves only one mass market retailer rather than a group of retailers.
- The mass market retailer types include discount department store (e.g., Walmart, Target, Kohls, etc) and mass specialty store (e.g., H&M, GAP, etc). They sell merchandise at budget (usually less than USD 100) to moderate price points (usually less than USD 100) to the general public.
- A mass-designer line may exist only a few months for one season, such as Karl Lagerfeld for H&M, and sometimes may exist over a period of many seasons, such as Isaac Mizrahi for Target.
- Examples of NON-mass-designer lines: Ralph Lauren/Tommy Hilfiger at Macy’s, which are examples of designer bridge lines; Coach at TJ Maxx, which is example of an off-price store carrying a designer label.
- What is the benefit of a mass-designer line? The designer gets marketing, manufacturing, distribution and the huge customer base of a mass retailer. The retailer gets differentiation and designer prestige, important for transforming an outdated image. Consumers also get access to designer fashions at affordable prices.
Based on your understanding about mass-designer lines, please look at the following four pictures and choose which one is NOT a mass-designer line.

A ( ) Roberto Cavalli at H&M

B ( ) Isaac Mizrahi for Target (shoes, clothing, and tote)

C ( ) Lauren by Ralph Lauren at Macys
1. Have you purchased any mass-designer line products before?  
   Yes  No

2. If yes, please list the designer name:
   
   Please list the retail store name:

   Please list the product category you purchased:
   (e.g. Apparel, Accessories, shoes, Home items, others)
questions based on your past purchasing experience. If you have not purchased mass-designer line products before, please answer the questions with the assumption of purchase, and based on your expectation and preference toward purchasing these products. All the scale items referred to mass-designer lines in general, and neither to lines sold in any specific mass retailer store nor specific product category.

Section 1. Fashion Involvement. The questions below ask about your degree of fashion involvement, which is your perceived importance of fashion products. Please indicate your response to each question by choosing the number that best describes your feelings and opinions about each question.

1. In general, I buy fashion products earlier in the season than most.
2. I give a great deal of information about new fashion products to my friends.
3. I am more interested in fashion products than others are.
4. Compared with most others, I am more likely to be asked for advice about new fashion products than most.
5. I read fashion news regularly and try to keep my wardrobe up-to-date with fashion trends.

Section 2. Price Consciousness. The questions below ask about your price consciousness, which refers to your likelihood to focus on low prices as a major reason for your purchasing behavior. Please indicate your response to each question by choosing the number that best describes your feelings and opinions about each question.

1. The money saved by finding a lower price is usually worth the time and effort.
2. I tend to buy the lowest-priced brand that will fit my needs.
3. I am willing to go to extra effort to find lower prices.
4. I would shop at more than one store to take advantage of low prices.
Section 3. Value Consciousness. The questions below ask about your value consciousness. Which means you focus on the relationship between qualities received and price paid in a purchase. Please indicate your response to each question by choosing the number that best describes your feelings and opinions about each question:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>When making purchasing decisions, I compare the prices of different brands to be sure I get the best value for the money.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I always check the price to be sure I get the best value for the money I spend.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I am very concerned about low prices, but I am equally concerned about product quality.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>I generally shop around for lower prices, but they still must meet certain quality requirements before I buy them.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>When I buy products, I like to be sure that I am getting my money's worth.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 4. Past Experience. The questions below ask about your past experience (knowledge) about the designer. Think about the designer of the mass-designer line products you purchased or expect to purchase. Please indicate your responses to each question by choosing the number that best describes your feelings and opinions about each question:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unfamiliar</th>
<th>Familiar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>How familiar are you with the designer of the mass-designer line products you purchased or expect to purchase?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>How experienced are you with the designer of the mass-designer line products you purchased or expect to purchase?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>How knowledgeable are you with the designer of the mass-designer line products you purchased or expect to purchase?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 6. Perceived Mass Store Image: The questions below ask about your perceptions of mass retail stores. Think about the mass retail store where you purchased or expect to purchase mass-designer line products, please indicate your response to each question by choosing the number that best describes your feelings and opinions about each question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The mass retail store has friendly personnel.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The mass retail store has an extensive assortment.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The mass retail store can easily be reached.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The mass retail store offers value-for-money.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The mass retail store has a nice atmosphere.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The mass retail store has attractive promotions in the store.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The mass retail store provides excellent customer service.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The mass retail store offers an attractive loyalty program.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 6. Attitudes: The questions below ask about your attitudes toward purchasing mass-designer line products. Please indicate your response to each question by choosing the number that best describes your feelings and opinions about each question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Buying mass-designer line products makes me feel good.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I have it when mass-designer lines are available for the product categories I purchase.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Overall, mass-designer lines are appealing to me.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Overall, mass-designer lines are favorable to me.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Overall, mass-designer lines are good to me.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Overall, mass-designer lines are valuable to me.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 7. Purchase Intentions: The questions below ask about your purchase intentions regarding mass-designer line products. Please indicate your response to each question by choosing the number that best describes your feelings and opinions about each question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I would like to buy mass-designer line products the next time I go shopping.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. If I find mass-designer line product the next time I go shopping, I will buy it.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I would make a special effort to buy mass-designer line products.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The likelihood of purchasing mass-designer line products is...</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My willingness to buy mass-designer line products is...</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 8. Demographic questions. Please check or fill in the appropriate information.

1. What is your age? _______ Years

2. Gender of person completing the questionnaire: _______ Male _______ Female

3. What is your academic major? _______________________

4. What is your ethnicity? Please check one.
   - Native American
   - Black or African-American
   - Asian American
   - Hispanic or Latino
   - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
   - White or European
   - Two or more races
   - Other (Please specify _______________________

7. What is your annual income? Please check one. (If you are a dependent student, please list your parents’ income)
   - Less than $25,000
   - $25,000 - $49,999
   - $50,000 - $74,999
   - $75,000 - $99,999
   - Over $100,000
   - Do not know

8. On the average, how much do you spend on clothing and accessories for yourself per year? Please check one
   - Less than $100
   - $100 - $299
   - $300 - $499
   - $500 - 799
   - $800 - $999
   - $1000 - $1199
   - Over $1200

If you would like to have a chance to win a $25 certificate, please type your email address and name here. However, your email addresses and names will be collected and saved separately and will not be associated with your responses. After selecting participants who will receive the incentives, the email addresses and names will be destroyed.

Your email address _______________________
Your name _______________________

Thank you very much for your time.

If you would like a copy of results from this study, please contact Yuanwen Zeng via email.
Yuanwen Zeng
Graduate Student
Textiles and Clothing Program
Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50011-1120
Email: yzeng@iastate.edu
APPENDIX C. INVITATION EMAIL

Dear Iowa State Students,

My name is Yuanwen Zeng. I am a Master’s Degree student in Textiles and Clothing program at Iowa State University. I am conducting my thesis research study to understand young consumers’ perceptions and purchase intentions toward mass-designer lines. The purpose of this study is to increase understanding how young consumers’ attitudes and other consumer-oriented variables, including fashion involvement, price consciousness, value consciousness, past behavior and perceived mass store image, influence their purchase intentions toward mass-designer lines.

You are invited to participate in this research project. It should take about 10 minutes to complete the survey. By completing it, you will be eligible for a random drawing to win a $25 gift certificates from a major retailer (Target, Wal-Mart) of your choice. In order to be included in the drawing you must enter your email address and name at the end of the survey.

If you decide to participate, please click on the link to advance to the survey questions:

http://humansciences.massdesigner.sgizmo.com

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time without any penalty or prejudices. However, your assistance with filling out this survey would be of great importance to this study. Your opinions are very important and will help in making this research project a success.

You must be 18 years of age or older to participate. Information obtained will be kept strictly confidential. Your responses will be collected and saved separately and will not be associated with your email addresses and names. After selecting participants who will receive the incentives, the email addresses and names will be destroyed. The data file will be retained for three years and destroyed after completing the research. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me through yzeng@iastate.edu or Dr. Linda Niehm through niehmlin@iastate.edu.

Thank you for your participation in this research.

Yuanwen Zeng
REFERENCES


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