

U.S. Luxury Fashion Consumption: Factors Affecting Attitude and Purchase Intent

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With the widespread economic downturn, luxury fashion goods sales in the U.S. seem to be at risk. However, the U.S. remains the world's largest luxury goods market, accounting for over one-fourth of the overall value sales of luxury goods in 2012 (CPP-LUXURY.COM, 2012). As the U.S. economic situation slowly recovers, the growth of the U.S. luxury goods market is expected to be more positive (Silverstein, 2012). In line with this issue, luxury retailers are well advised to understand the U.S. consumers' attitude towards luxury goods and purchase intent and the differences and similarities to consumers' attitudes in other regions to better address the customers' unique characteristics.

Zhang and Kim (2013) examined the influencing factors which affect Chinese consumers' attitude towards purchasing luxury fashion goods and purchase intent. The five key factors considered were brand consciousness, materialism, social comparison, fashion innovativeness, and fashion involvement. Expanding upon Zhang and Kim (2013), this study investigated key factors that influence the U.S. consumers' attitude towards purchasing luxury fashion goods and purchase intent and compared how the findings differed from the study on Chinese consumers. Markus and Kitayama's (1991) theory of independent and interdependent self-construals was used as a theoretical framework for this study to address the significant factors that affect the U.S. consumers' attitude towards purchasing luxury fashion goods and purchase intent in comparison to the Chinese consumers study.

An online survey questionnaire was completed by 401 respondents (M=128; F=273). Approximately 74% of the respondents were between the ages of 24 and 30 and 40% held bachelor degrees. Approximately 71% were single and 57% had full-time jobs. Approximately 29% of the respondents' household income ranged from \$25,000 to 49,999. Over 21% of participants purchased luxury fashion goods often or very often. Approximately 25% spent \$100 to \$500 on one item when purchasing luxury fashion goods.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using LISREL 8.80 was employed to assess construct validity and reliability. The model provided an adequate fit with $\chi^2 = 453.54$, $df = 160$, CFI = .99, NNFI = .98, IFI = .99, RMSEA = .068 after removing items that were loaded on the wrong factor and exhibited large standardized residuals. All CR values exceeded .60 and the AVE exceeded .50. In addition, the AVE exceeded the squared correlations between that factor and all other factors. These results provide substantial support for the convergent validity and discriminant validity. Cronbach alpha values ranged from .89 to .95. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to investigate key factors which affect the U.S. consumers' attitude towards luxury fashion goods and purchase intent. The research model provided an adequate fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 1164.67$, $df = 283$; CFI = .97; NNFI = .97; IFI = .97; RMSEA = .088). The

model fit indexes all exceeded their respective common acceptance levels. Of the five factors, four factors were significant predictors of the U.S. consumers' attitude towards purchasing luxury fashion goods (i.e., brand consciousness, materialism, fashion innovativeness, and fashion involvement). The relationship between attitude and purchase intent was significantly positive.

The findings of the current study were not consistent with Zhang and Kim (2013) which indicated that brand consciousness, social comparison, and fashion innovativeness were key predictors which affect Chinese consumers' attitude towards purchasing luxury fashion goods. The differences provide vital implications to luxury fashion retailers by showing that one size does not fit all and one strategy does not fit all markets. Luxury fashion retailers need to pay close attention to the U.S. consumers' unique characteristics in relation to their luxury consumption to better approach and meet their needs.

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