Status Enhancement Perception, Brand Loyalty, and Brand Involvement: A Quantitative Study

Submitted by

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between consumers’ perceptions of status and both brand loyalty and brand involvement among the customers of a female lingerie company located in Southwestern Canada. Age and income were the moderating variables in the study. Veblen’s (1899) theory of conspicuous consumption provided the theoretical foundation for this study, known more recently as status consumption. The researcher used a non-experimental correlational research design. The researcher collected 190 completed surveys via mall-intercept method on public property near the lingerie store. The results from this study showed there was a strong positive relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and both brand loyalty and brand involvement. However, this relationship was slightly negatively influenced by both age and income; however, the decrease in influence was not practically significant. The results of this study suggest customers who perceive the lingerie brand as enhancing their status may tend to stay with the brand, and lingerie brand organizations should market their products as status goods. Overall, lingerie marketers should advertise lingerie products with symbolic meaning.

Keywords: brands, brand loyalty, attitudinal brand loyalty, behavioral brand loyalty, brand involvement, status consumption, status, conspicuous consumption, and status goods
Dedication

I express my sincere gratitude to my late godfather, Paul Lee, for believing in me that I had the capability and potential to complete the DBA journey. I will never forget you! I am also deeply indebted to my wife Jacqueline, who has been supportive and allowed me to spend countless hours researching and writing, particularly during the moments when I was unable to look after our son Anthony, who is now nearly 4 years old. Her overwhelming love and encouragement have motivated me to continue moving forward and to accomplish my enduring goal of earning a doctoral degree. You are the pillar of my life! The completion of this doctoral degree signifies a model for our son to learn to persevere if he wishes to succeed in his future endeavors.
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I acknowledge Dr. Robert Goldwasser, my dissertation chair, and Dr. David Castle, my committee member, for their continuous encouragement and guidance. A special thanks to Dr. James Ready, who has provided insightful comments and constructive suggestions leading to the approval of the entire dissertation. I also extend my appreciation to my wife for her unwavering support and unconditional love throughout this journey. Writing this dissertation was a fascinating and yet challenging process. I especially thank God for granting me strength and wisdom in completing this work.
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Consumers’ emotional desire for status may induce them to purchase product brands that confer status by conspicuous consumption (Chao & Schor, 1998; Eastman, Goldsmith, & Flynn, 1999; Goldsmith, Flynn, & Kim, 2010). Conspicuous consumption was derived from Veblen’s (1899) theory which distinguishes upper class from lower class individuals through individuals’ acquisition and display of luxury goods to confer their status in others’ perceptions (Eastman et al., 1999). Hence, consumers seeking high status tend to select brands that will convey that status by making purchases of and displaying certain branded goods (Goldsmith, Flynn, & Clark, 2012; O’Cass & Frost, 2002). In particular, brands that convey the high status of consumers through associated brand attachment may pose positive influences on consumers’ brand loyalty (Baek, Kim, & Yu, 2010; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Hwang & Kamdumpully, 2012; O’Cass & Frost, 2002; Papista & Dimitriadis, 2012).

Researchers have investigated the question of whether perceiving a branded good as status-enhancing influences consumers’ brand loyalty and brand involvement (e.g., Goldsmith et al., 2010; Piong, 2013). Goldsmith et al. (2010) found consumers’ status consumption positively correlated with clothing brand loyalty and brand involvement. Similarly, Piong (2013) concluded consumers’ perceptions of Starbucks coffee as status-enhancing were positively associated with attitudinal brand loyalty and brand involvement, however they were not related to consumers’ behavioral brand loyalty. In this study, the researcher aimed to extend this body of research to investigate a female lingerie brand product, in order to understand how consumer perceptions of the brand as status-enhancing impact brand loyalty and brand involvement. These results contribute
to the literature on status consumption and provide new insights to lingerie marketers as a reference when developing marketing strategies on the relationships between consumer perceptions, brand loyalty, and brand involvement. In this chapter, this researcher provides the background of the study, the problem and purpose statements, the research questions and hypotheses, how the study advances theoretical knowledge and its significance, the methodology and research design, a definition of terms, the study’s assumptions, limitations, and delimitations; and a summary and organization of the remainder of the study.

**Background of the Study**

Consumers often develop emotional attachments to a brand, particularly when they like and use the brand for a long time (Petzer, Mostert, Kruger, & Kuhn, 2014; Round & Roper, 2012; Sharma & Sharma, 2012). This attachment may be impacted by consumers’ behavioral responses after they experience the brand (Pinson & Brosdahl, 2014). Consumers’ emotional attachments reflect their passion and desire to possess the brand, making emotional attachment a leading factor in brand loyalty (Gounaris & Stathakopoulos, 2004; Tsai, 2011).

Individuals perceive others’ social standing through the consumption of goods, which are a symbol of their class (Shipman, 2004). The desire for status drives customers to purchase and consume branded products or services (Belk, 1988). The theory of conspicuous consumption accounts for this behavior (Veblen, 1899). Veblen (1899) created this theory to explain how individuals purchase and display luxury goods to signify their wealth, while others do not. In other words, Veblen identified the wealthy class through their consumption of conspicuous objects as compared to lower class
individuals. Conspicuous consumption has a positive influence on brand loyalty, for when customers view a product as status-enhancing, it leads to brand involvement (Candan, Ünal, & Erciş, 2013; Goldsmith et al., 2010; Piong, 2013). This researcher used the theory of conspicuous consumption (Veblen, 1899) as the study’s theoretical framework to investigate the relationship between status consumption, brand loyalty, and brand involvement.

Some researchers use the terms conspicuous consumption and status consumption interchangeably to refer to Veblen’s (1899) theory (Bevan-Dye, Garnett, & De Klerk, 2012; Hanzae, Teimourpour, & Teimourpour, 2012; Piong, 2013). Researchers have expanded the theory of status consumption in recent years to include a wider range of products that individuals consider to be status goods. Examples include inexpensive goods such as cosmetics or wine evaluated by taste rather than price; Chaudhuri & Majumdar, 2010; Fernández Moya, 2012; Jiang & Cova, 2012; Piong, 2013; Rao & Schaefer, 2013). Similarly, customers may opt to evaluate lingerie products by taste.

This researcher aimed to follow Piong’s (2013) recommendation that “future studies be conducted to examine the relationships between perceiving a brand as status enhancing to brand involvement and brand loyalty” (p. 106). As such, this study’s findings “may help enhance customers’ attitudinal loyalty toward those brands and the brands’ personal relevance to customers” (Piong, 2013, p. 106). Goldsmith et al. (2010) also stated that “future research is needed to replicate and extend [the study’s] findings” into “different product categories” (p. 327). This identified gap in the literature created the basis for this study, as evident by this research and the literature review.
Problem Statement

In a study of students at two universities in the Southeastern United States ($N = 376$), Goldsmith, Flynn, and Eastman (1996) found that status consumption was moderately related to clothing involvement. In a study of clothing purchase behavior in college students ($N = 409$), Goldsmith et al. (2010) found a strong relationship between brand involvement and both brand loyalty and status consumption. In a study of status consumption of U.S. high school students ($N = 243$), Eastman, Iyer, and Thomas (2013) found that customers who desire to consume due to status would use the brand loyal shopping style. This result further suggests that status consumption may enhance brand loyalty. Piong (2013) extended Goldsmith et al.’s (2010) research by examining the relationship between status enhancement perception, attitudinal and behavioral brand loyalty, and brand involvement construct in a study of Starbucks coffee users ($N = 170$). Piong concluded that consumers’ perception of Starbucks coffee as status-enhancing were positively associated with both attitudinal brand loyalty and brand involvement; however they were not related to consumers’ behavioral brand loyalty. However, no research could be located that has examined the status enhancement, brand loyalty, and brand involvement in a female lingerie brand.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this non-experimental correlational study was to examine the relationship between consumers’ perceptions of status enhancement and both brand loyalty and brand involvement in a female lingerie company located in Southwestern Canada. The researcher administered an 11-item survey instrument to a sample of lingerie retail store customers. The instrument measured three dimensions: brand loyalty,
brand involvement scales, and customers’ perceptions of status enhancement in relation to the brand. The findings from this study provide empirical support for status consumption theory, as well as new information for lingerie marketers on the subject of status consumption, brand loyalty, and brand involvement. This may help marketers to incorporate status enhancement into their marketing strategies to help build market shares and increase profits.

**Research Questions and Hypotheses**

Six research questions and hypotheses guided this research:

**RQ1:** What is the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty?

**H1:** Customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand are positively associated with brand loyalty.

**RQ2:** What is the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement?

**H2:** Customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand are positively associated with brand involvement.

**RQ3:** What influence does a customer’s age have on the relationship between perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty?

**H3:** Age does not significantly moderate the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty.
H3A: Age significantly moderates the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty.

RQ4: What influence does a customer’s age have on the relationship between perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement?

H40: Age does not significantly moderate the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement.

H4A: Age significantly moderates the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement.

RQ5: What influence does a customer’s income have on the relationship between perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty?

H50: Income does not significantly moderate the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty.

H5A: Income significantly moderates the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty.
RQ6: What influence does a customer’s income have on the relationship between perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement?

H$_{60}$: Income does not significantly moderate the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement.

H$_{6A}$: Income significantly moderates the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement.

To answer the research questions, this researcher examined one independent variable (customers’ perception of the status-enhancing character of the brand/product), two dependent variables (brand loyalty and brand involvement), and two moderating variables (age and income). The researcher measured the independent variable through one item in a survey instrument. The researcher measured the dependent variables by collapsing specific items of an instrument to form interval variables.

**Advancing Theoretical Knowledge**

Prior researchers (Goldsmith et al., 2010; Piong, 2013) have investigated whether perceiving the branded good as status-enhancing influences consumers’ brand loyalty and/or brand involvement. The researcher of this study aimed to provide further empirical support relevant to the status consumption theory (Veblen, 1899). In addition, the research contributes new insights for lingerie marketers as a reference to develop marketing strategies.
Conspicuous consumption theory (Veblen, 1899) provided the theoretical foundation for the present study. As noted, conspicuous consumption may positively influence brand loyalty as well as brand attachment, leading to consumers’ brand involvement (Candan et al., 2013; Goldsmith et al., 2010; Piong, 2013). As such, the theory of conspicuous consumption is particularly relevant to the variables of the present quantitative correlational study (i.e., brand loyalty and brand involvement).

**Significance of the Study**

Lingerie marketers may benefit from this examination of status enhancement, brand loyalty, and brand involvement. Marketers may be able to use the findings as a reference to help develop marketing strategies to build market share and profits, and to inform how they position lingerie products in the market. Retail organizations, especially lingerie retailers, may further be able to use this research to help in formulating marketing choice. Other companies that incorporate status enhancement as part of their marketing strategy as well as consumer markets based on multicultural characteristics may also benefit from the insights in this research.

**Methodology**

The researcher aimed to utilize a quantitative research method to examine the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand’s goods (independent variable) and both brand loyalty variable and brand involvement (dependent variables). According to Sadeghi and Pihie (2012), a quantitative method is the proper research method to identify whether possible relationships exist between the independent and dependent variables. Previous researchers have also demonstrated that a quantitative method is appropriate to
investigate the relationship between brand loyalty and brand involvement (e.g., Fatema, Azad, & Masum, 2013; Lada, Sidin, & Cheng, 2014; Nasirabadi & Bokaei, 2013; Romaniuk & Nenycz-Thiel, 2013; Shirazi, Zeynvand Lorestan, & Karimi Mazidi, 2013).

Borrego, Douglas, and Amelink (2009) proposed the nature of the research questions determines the proper methodological design. Borrego et al. (2009) stated that a quantitative method is appropriate when the research questions are narrowly defined and the research focus uses a deductive approach with theory or hypotheses to justify the variables. The goal of quantitative research is to use samples to generalize findings to a large population using statistical analysis methods to investigate whether there are significant relationships between the variables under examination (Borrego et al., 2009; Carpenter, Harding, Finelli, Montgomery, & Passow, 2006). A qualitative method requires textual data analysis including interviews and observation (Borrego et al., 2009), which are outside the scope of the study. A qualitative method takes an inductive approach to collect in-depth contextual data (Borrego et al., 2009).

The research questions in the study were narrowly defined and aimed to examine only the relationships among customers’ perceptions of status enhancement on the lingerie brand’s goods, and their brand loyalty and brand involvement. Textual data were not necessary for the study because participants responded to the questionnaire based on Likert and semantic differential scales administered on an 11-item survey. As such, a quantitative method is most appropriate for the study.

**Research Design**

The researcher used a non-experimental correlational research design. The researcher administered a survey to a sample of female lingerie brand’s customers from a
local retail outlet located in a shopping center in Southwestern Canada to determine customers’ perceptions of status enhancement. Willing customers completed a survey after they had completed their purchases. According to Kamarposhti and Bagheri (2015), a survey is a standard method to collect field data to test hypotheses in quantitative research. A survey is a common data collection method used in behavioral and attitudinal brand loyalty and brand involvement research (Erdoğmuş & Çiçek, 2012; Komunda & Osarenkhoe, 2012; Lada et al., 2014; Lee & Kang, 2012; Rizvi, Malik, & Zaidi, 2012; Şahin, Zehir, & Kitapçı, 2012; Vazifehdoost, Rahnama, & Mousavian, 2014; Yasin & Shamim, 2013).

**Definition of Terms**

The following terms are used throughout the study:

**Attitudinal brand loyalty.** Customers’ attitude commitment to the brand, as shown by their intention to repurchase goods from the brand in the future (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

**Behavioral brand loyalty.** Customers’ actual repeated purchases in relation to past purchasing behavior, and their willingness to rebuy the same brand in the future (Bianchi, Drennan, & Proud, 2012; Ling et al., 2014; Moolla & Bisschoff, 2012a; Nasirabadi & Bokaei, 2013).

**Brand attachment.** The intensity of the affective and cognitive bonding customers connect to a brand (Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerich, & Iacobucci, 2010).

**Brand equity.** The financial and marketing values associated with a brand’s capability in a given market consisting of several subdivided concepts, i.e., brand assets,
brand loyalty, brand associations, perceived brand quality, and brand name awareness (Pride & Ferrell, 2003).

**Brand image.** Consumers’ feelings and judgments about a brand (Ekhlassi, Nezhad, Far, & Rahmani, 2012).

**Brand involvement.** Customers’ commitment to the product brand based on their emotional attributes such as feelings or sensations (Gordon, McKeage, & Fox, 1998).

**Brand loyalty.** Consumers’ commitment to rebuy from a particular brand (attitudinal brand loyalty), leading to the repetitive brand purchase of products or services (behavioral brand loyalty) (Fatema et al., 2013).

**Brand personality.** Distinctive attributes connected with a brand (Mathur, Jain, & Maheswaran, 2012).

**Brand prestige.** The high-status rank of products and services aligned with a brand, which has a significant impact on the customers’ purchasing trends (Kirmani, Sood, & Bridges, 1999; Mahjoub & Naeij, 2015).

**Conspicuous consumption.** A theory which distinguishes upper class from lower class individuals through individuals’ acquisition and display of luxury goods to confer their status in others’ perceptions (Eastman et al., 1999; Veblen, 1899).

**Social status.** A term to classify individuals’ hierarchical level of prestige, power, and wealth according to individuals’ income class, education attainment, and career type (Schiffman, Kanuk, & Wisenblit, 2010).

**Status.** The ranking of an individual in a society (Eastman et al., 1999).
**Status consumption.** Individuals’ attempt to advance social ranking, recognition, and prestige through the purchase of products that grant high status through conspicuous consumption (Eastman et al., 1999; Zareei & Ashtiani, 2015).

**Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

This researcher made several assumptions, limitations, and delimitations in this study, as listed below.

**Assumptions**

Assumptions are elements that are essential to facilitate the study which are beyond the researcher’s control (Simon, 2011; Simon & Goes, 2013).

The following assumptions are associated with this study:

- Respondents answered the survey items honestly and accurately to the best of their ability. Preserving identity and confidentiality may have helped the response rate.

- The status enhancement perception item on the survey was valid and reliable. If not valid or reliable, the results of this research are questionable.

**Limitations**

Limitations are possible drawbacks in the study outside the researcher’s control (Simon, 2011; Simon & Goes, 2013).

The following limitations are associated with this study:

- The researcher invited willing customers to engage via a mall-intercept method on public property near the lingerie store to participate in the survey after they had completed their purchases. Thus, if some of the respondents...
were in a rush, they may have answered in inattentive way, especially when children and friends were present (Gates & Solomon, 1982).

- The study faced time constraints, which may have limited the scope of the survey. Similar to Piong (2013), these time constraints may also have impacted the accuracy of the study to measure brand loyalty.

- The study considered only one independent variable (perceptions of status enhancement), thus limiting the results on the two dependent variables (brand loyalty and brand involvement). Other variables may also be associated with brand loyalty and brand involvement, such as brand association and brand attitude (Buil, De Chernatony, & Martínez, 2013; Emari, Jafari, & Mogaddam, 2012); however, they were not studied as part of this research.

**Delimitations**

Delimitations are attributes that restrict the research extent and outline the limits of the study which are in researcher’s control (Simon, 2011; Simon & Goes, 2013).

The following delimitations are associated with this study:

- Since only one brand was studied, the results may not be generalizable to other brands and other kinds of goods.

- The study did not apply other brand-related concepts to the theoretical framework, such as customer satisfaction or brand image, as they were not classified under the definition of status consumption. Though brand image may be associated with measuring status, measuring brand image is time-consuming and more sophisticated than measuring the perception of the status-enhancing character of a branded good.
Summary and Organization of the Remainder of the Study

This researcher examined customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and its association with both brand loyalty and brand involvement. Goldsmith et al. (2010) identified that consumers’ status consumption was positively related to brand loyalty and brand involvement in the case of clothing. Similarly, Piong (2013) concluded that customer perception of Starbucks coffee as status-enhancing was positively associated with attitudinal brand loyalty and brand involvement. These two empirical studies set out a foundation to the present study that the customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand may have association with brand loyalty and brand involvement. A non-experimental correlational research design was selected with six research questions and associated hypotheses.

In the following chapter, the researcher further reviews the concepts of brand loyalty, brand involvement, and status/conspicuous consumption in relation to the literature. In Chapter 3, the researcher describes the methodology, research design, and procedures that are used to collect and analyze data. In Chapter 4, the researcher presents the results of the data analysis in written and graphic format, followed by discussion and interpretation of the results as pertinent to the existing body of knowledge in Chapter 5.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between consumers’ perceptions of status enhancement, brand loyalty, and brand involvement in a female lingerie company located in Southwestern Canada. Overall, the literature has revealed that customers’ perceptions of status enhancement are positively related to brand loyalty and brand involvement (Piong, 2013). Three related notions stemmed from this observation. First, consumers’ emotional desire for status may induce them to purchase brands that confer status (Chao & Schor, 1998; Eastman et al., 1999; Goldsmith et al., 2010). Second, brands that confer high status on consumers may pose positive influence on consumers’ brand loyalty (Baek et al., 2010; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Hwang & Kamdumpully, 2012; Papista & Dimitriadis, 2012). Third, customers’ feelings and attachment may contribute to their brand experience, which may also enhance brand relevance and involvement (Kirmani et al., 1999). These three notions provide a foundation for this study.

Chapter 2 has two primary sections. The first section focuses on the theoretical foundation of the study, conspicuous consumption. The second section is a literature review of scholarship on status enhancement, brand loyalty, and brand involvement. The researcher located this literature through an in-depth search of peer-reviewed journals published within the last five years via Google Scholar. The keywords searched included: brands, brand loyalty, attitudinal brand loyalty, behavioral brand loyalty, brand involvement, status consumption, status, conspicuous consumption, and status goods. A summary then concluded the chapter.
Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation for this study is rooted in Veblen’s (1899) theory of conspicuous consumption, known more recently as status consumption (Hanzae et al., 2012; O’Cass & McEwen, 2004; Piong, 2013). Conspicuous consumption explains how the upper class and lower class may be differentiated through their consumer behavior. Upper class individuals acquire and display luxury goods to confer their status in others’ perceptions (Eastman et al., 1999). In turn, these goods then inspire others to also achieve more status (Hudders, 2012). Recently, status consumption researchers have also included less expensive goods in their analysis, such as wine and cosmetics, which play a role in individuals’ lifestyles (Fernández Moya, 2012; Jiang & Cova, 2012; Piong, 2013; Rao & Schaefer, 2013). This contemporary theory is most relevant to this study, as this researcher aimed to examine the perceptions of lingerie consumers. Today, lingerie marketers tend to instill lingerie brands with passion to “help consumers define and express a strong personality, serving their psychological well-being and/or their social status” (Hemetsberger, 2014, p. 35). Under this conception, less expensive passion brands (lingerie) can also be perceived as a form of status consumption.

Status Consumption

Historically, status has referred to individuals’ positions within a social hierarchy system achieved either through birthright or as commanded by the King (Han, Nunes, & Drèze, 2010). In the 18th century, individuals began to gain status according to their achievements as well as their accumulated wealth (De Botton, 2004). From this point onward, the association between social status and wealth became inseparable (Han et al., 2010). Subsequently, Congleton (1989) perceived status as a status-seeking game,
implying the concept that the relative expenditure on status-seeking activities determines a person’s utility. In the 20th century, this status-seeking game concept is extended as a zero-sum game, a concept focuses on individual’s increase in relative status will decrease others’ relative status in the associated social reference group (e.g., Clark, Frijters, & Shields, 2008; Heffetz & Frank, 2008). Kaus (2013) more recently defined status as the expected value of a person’s earnings in relation to his or her visible expenditure on status goods and the social group the person fits in. In our society, status offers advancement opportunities particularly for individuals who have previously acquired some status levels, e.g., social status (Magee & Galinsky, 2008).

Social status is a popular term used to classify individuals’ hierarchical level of prestige, power, and wealth according to individuals’ income class, education attainment, and career type (Schiffman et al., 2010). Consumers (particularly youth) demonstrate wealth by engaging in status-seeking consumption (O’Cass & Frost, 2002). Consumers attempt to enhance their social position through status consumption, to signify status and express their identity (Ahmad, Arshad, Sabir, & Ashraf, 2013; Eastman et al., 1999; Hemetsberger, 2014; Kastanakis, 2014). Consumers thus select brands according to their social identity, and choose the appropriate brand that can reveal that identity (Alam, Usman Arshad, & Adnan Shabbir, 2012). This status-seeking consumption behavior explains why consumers favor branded products when they are more aware of social status (Malik et al., 2013a). Such consumers may use these goods to gain respect and to influence their social relationships (Nelissen & Meijers, 2011). Thus, consumers may buy what others consume to fit into a social group and to search for support in the purchases they make (Goldsmith & Clark, 2012).
Clark, Zboja, and Goldsmith (2007) argued status consumption links with the trend to match group norms while conveying the distinctiveness of the individuals’ needs. If consuming the conspicuous goods produces individuals’ self-identity through emphasizing the brand’s symbolic value (O’Cass & Siahtiri, 2013; Veblen, 1899), then consuming these products may promote status (Goldsmith et al., 2012; Rhee, 2012). Status-conscious consumers have specific consumption patterns that aim to display wealth and social position (Eastman, Iyer, Liao-Troth, Williams, & Griffin, 2014).

**Conspicuous Consumption**

The search for status through conspicuous consumption is a universal trend irrespective of culture and era (Hanzaee et al., 2012). For example, in the Roman Empire, Mark Antony demonstrated social status through having wild animals and chariots in his surroundings (Patsiaouras & Fitchett, 2012). Similarly, when Rome conquered Egypt, the Egyptian pharaohs flaunted their wealth through symbols of gold and through the pyramids, representing the power in their throne (Griskevicius et al., 2007).

In more recent times, Sheff (2012) has argued that wealth has little social value except to demonstrate the signal implying wealth to others. Veblen (1899) established that consumers seek status through conspicuous consumption aiming to reach to a higher social class (as cited in Patsiaouras & Fitchett, 2012). Individuals with higher status in society purchase conspicuous products to separate themselves from the lower class (Kaus, 2013; Segal & Podoshen, 2013; Veblen, 1899; Yang & Mattila, 2017). Similarly, individuals in the lower-class attempt to gain status through consuming conspicuous goods (Veblen, 1899). Today, conspicuous consumption is not a privilege reserved only
for upper-class individuals (Kim & Jang, 2014). Conspicuous consumption is a fundamental belief shaping social value. Consumption operates as a social class symbol, while luxury products focus primarily on product image (Candan et al., 2013; Ekinci, Sirakaya-Turk, & Preciado, 2013; Liu, Li, Mizerki, & Soh, 2012; Roper, Caruana, Medway, & Murphy, 2013).

**Conspicuous Consumption versus Status Consumption**

Status consumption intends to advance individuals’ prestige and social ranking through consuming goods that award high social status (Eastman et al., 1999; O’Cass & Frost, 2002; Zareei & Ashtiani, 2015). While some researchers used the terms conspicuous consumption and status consumption interchangeably, O’Cass and McEwen (2004) claimed the two are different constructs. Status consumption implied a personal level of owning status goods, for which the users may or may not display the products in public. In contrast, conspicuous consumption demonstrated the status goods or wealth to the public in the presence of other people (O’Cass & McEwen, 2004). O’Cass and McEwen examined an undergarment example where consumers purchased a luxury lingerie brand due to its image symbolizing wealth and status. As the user could not show off the undergarment to signify high status to sustain the social standing, lingerie purchase did not belong to conspicuous consumption because of the difficulty to display the private goods to the public (O’Cass & McEwen, 2004). Singh (2014) argued the most significant attributes lingerie shoppers search for in today’s lingerie markets include the lingerie brand name, similar to clothing, which shoppers prioritize over product fit, quality, and materials. Customers consuming lingerie products assimilate gradually into the product lifestyle the lingerie product tries to sell, and customers internalize the
product’s taste and style (Ma, Shi, Chen, & Luo, 2012). Thus, advertising lingerie products with symbolic meaning can impact customers’ loyalty and involvement (Ma et al., 2012).

Crisnaro (2014) argued that the lingerie fashion trend has developed into a channel to facilitate women’s confidence and alter their place in the society. The fact that lingerie may increase women’s confidence provides a psychological motive for consumption (Abdolvand & Reihani, 2013). When lingerie customers perceive the lingerie brand as symbolizing luxury, they enhance their self-image through self-image congruence, or matching self-image with the brand and store image to create a brand association that fulfills their self-image enhancement (Abdolvand & Reihani, 2013; Nurafni & Nur, 2014; Sung & Choi, 2012; Turri, Smith, & Kemp, 2013). When lingerie customers perceive the brand as status-enhancing, this impacts their brand loyalty and brand involvement (the variables of the study). As a result, the present study followed the premise that status consumption and conspicuous consumption are in essence the same concept, and the two terms are used interchangeably (Bevan-Dye et al., 2012; Hanzaee et al., 2012; Piong, 2013).

**Status Goods**

Individuals use status goods to display status and prestige to others (Grossman & Shapiro, 1988). Wei, Zhang, and Liu (2012) considered housing a detectable type of status good that is easy to perceive; a more expensive house could make its owner more appealing and raise their status. Status products are unique because they satisfy social needs and help to sustain social status (Abdolvand & Reihani, 2013; Belk, 1988; Goldsmith & Clark, 2012; Hristova, 2012). Status goods also contribute to recognizing
users’ place within social groups (Kuksov & Xie, 2012). In an economic sense, status goods have a high-income elasticity of demand, meaning the demand increases with rises in individuals’ income (Rhee, 2012).

The contemporary status consumption has expanded to include a wider range of products (Piong, 2013; Rao & Schaefer, 2013). Now, status consumption is not limited to the acquisition of luxury items but also includes inexpensive goods and household consumption (Jiang & Cova, 2012; Sharma & Sharma, 2012; Van Staveren & Odebode, 2007).

**The Signaling Functions of Status Consumption**

An important signaling role behind status consumption is its ability to influence other people through purchasing and consuming specific brands and products (Lertwannawit & Mandhachitara, 2012). Another signaling function is its willingness to correspond to group norms, where status consumption facilitates individuals’ social acceptance toward the reference group (Eastman et al., 2014; Goldsmith & Clark, 2012; Kaus, 2013). Indeed, social impact has become an essential motivator in consuming luxury goods: individuals who express a high need for status are likely to demand social status from conspicuous purchases (Yang & Mattila, 2017; Zhan & He, 2012).

**Review of the Literature**

In this section, the researcher investigated the recent empirical research on conspicuous consumption as well as psychological aspects of status consumption in two subsections. Then the researcher examined themes related to brands, brand loyalty, and brand involvement in three subsections. The first of these three subsections focused on the contemporary concept of brands. The second subsection concentrated on the idea of
brand loyalty and its relation to emotional aspects. The third subsection focused on the concept of brand involvement as related to status consumption.

Conspicuous Consumption

In this study, conspicuous consumption will be examined using three factors: income, race, and gender.

**Income.** Recent empirical research on conspicuous consumption has revealed that income is the primary factor influencing the seeking of social status. Sivanathan and Pettit (2010) investigated the relationship between income levels and status consumption from a representative sample of US consumers. The study findings revealed that income is associated with self-esteem, and self-esteem is related to status consumption. Sivanathan and Pettit further concluded that individuals who earn less income consume the largest amount of conspicuous goods. Similarly, Vijayakumar and Brezinova (2012) examined the critical determining factors for conspicuous consumption among 300 low-to middle-class individuals in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. Vijayakumar and Brezinova reported 68% of the respondents distributed their income for sustaining social status and resisted the notion that they were poor, while 41.2% connected to their conspicuous consumption to seeking social status or satisfaction. These important findings signify the phenomenon that low- to middle-income earners express more eagerness to acquire durable and conspicuous products due to status seeking. Vijayakumar and Brezinova further affirmed a positive association between income and revenue distribution for status seeking utilizing linear regression analysis. However, this analysis did not confirm the assumptions of normal distribution pattern, and the authors did not report the construct
validity or reliability. Moreover, these results may not be generalizable due to unclear definitions of the stratified and simple random sampling methods employed.

**Race.** Recent empirical studies on conspicuous consumption have also exhibited that race is a determining factor on the visible goods’ consumption. Kaus (2013) alternatively investigated consumption in South African households, finding that Black and Colored families consumed 35–50% more on visible spending than White households. The first group subsequently consumed less health and medical services on average to compensate for the significant spending related to conspicuous consumption (Kaus, 2013). Charles, Hurst, and Roussanov (2009) similarly found that Blacks and Hispanics consumed more conspicuous goods than Whites with the intention of improving status, a finding also confirmed by Mazzocco, Rucker, Galinsky, and Anderson (2012). These findings are consistent with Vijayakumar and Brezinova’s (2012) study, in which the majority of respondents (68%) distributed their income on visible consumption to sustain status and resist the notion that they were poor.

**Gender.** Men traditionally use conspicuous consumption to imply sexual distinctiveness and enhance their value as a mate for women (Hudders, De Backer, Fisher, & Vyncke, 2014; Memushi, 2013). Men use status goods especially when the objects are clear and prominent (Griskevicius et al., 2007). However, women may also use conspicuous consumption to compete with other women in search of high-status mates (Hudders et al., 2014; Wang & Griskevicius, 2014).

In the contemporary women’s market, fashion clothing and cosmetic products typically reveal women’s conspicuousness personality (O’Cass, 2001; Segal & Podoshen, 2013). Women tend to be more engaged than men in consumption within the fashion...
sector (O’Cass, 2001). Women who acquire luxury goods may do so as the luxury brands offer greater status than nonconspicuous brands (Chao & Schor, 1998). Displaying the luxury goods may enhance the attractiveness of the user to find partners (Sundie et al., 2011). Such consumption also relates to emotional value, or the product’s capability to stimulate feelings (Crísnaro, 2014). Stokburger-Sauer and Teichmann (2013) reported that female luxury brands offer superior perceived symbolic and social value than men’s luxury brands, and female consumers have higher purchase intentions on luxury brands than men. Therefore, female consumers looking for luxury brands may provide themselves more status and hedonic values (Stokburger-Sauer & Teichmann, 2013). The ability to gain more status is likely the primary reason why women consume luxury goods. Applying this concept to the present study’s examination of the lingerie market, women may attempt to improve self-image and others’ perceptions of them through the consumption of lingerie products.

**Psychological Aspects of Status Consumption**

Conspicuous goods may bring consumers various psychological and functional benefits (Ma et al., 2012; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). Conspicuous goods users may believe they are happier than people around them such as friends and colleagues (Linssen, van Kempen, & Kraaykamp, 2011). Such consumers may feel the brand image provides emotional advantages toward their status and personality (Chao & Schor, 1998).

Shukla (2008) examined luxury car consumption among 277 middle-aged people in England. Shukla concluded that psychological components and brand association had a significant impact on luxury car consumption. Shukla (2008) argued that individuals’ personality aspects had more impact on conspicuous consumption than their desire to
advance social status. Such findings implied the important association between psychological aspects and conspicuous consumption. However, the author did not provide the questionnaire or evidence of validity or reliability to further verify and explain the study.

In another quantitative study, Abdolvand and Reihani (2013) investigated the consumption behavior of luxury goods among a random sample of 525 young consumers aged 18–35 in Tehran, Iran. The consumers owned luxury watches from 12 markets in different regions within Tehran. The findings revealed psychological antecedents such as prestige symbol, advancing self-image, achieving status, and displaying wealth had the most significant impacts on the consumption behavior. This implies that if an organization shapes its brand to symbolize prestige, success, or status-enhancing, young consumers are more likely to purchase the brand (Abdolvand & Reihani, 2013).

Abdolvand and Reihani (2013) confirmed the findings’ reliability and validity using Cronbach’s alpha and the composite validity analysis method. The findings from this study are applicable to the present study, for marketers could restructure the brand image to attract more young customers by linking the brand with prestige.

Another empirical study reported that individuals purchase status products to restore their ego when under a self-threat situation (Sivanathan & Pettit, 2010). A self-threat situation is where individuals are under psychological threat to their self-worth (McQueen & Klein, 2006). Sivanathan and Pettit (2010) presented a photograph involved in the high-status condition to 150 university students, and asked them to describe whether the picture was “rare, unique, or available for a limited time” (p. 565). They also showed participants a photograph in the no-status condition to describe
whether it was “common, mass-produced, or widely available” (p. 565). In both situations, the researchers required the participants to state the highest amount they would be willing to spend on the item in the photograph. The photograph in the study had symbolic significance to lead participants to imagine they viewed at the actual products in both high-status and no-status conditions. Sivanathan and Pettit (2010) explained individuals under self-threat tended to seek high-status goods possession to repair their psychological wounds. The participants assessing the high-status photograph were ready to pay more than those evaluating the no-status photograph. This result also suggests the self-threat state enhances individuals’ craving of status consumption, especially when their self-worth was harmed (Sivanathan & Pettit, 2010).

The same study continued to provide participants alternative ways to repair their psychological wounds, and confirmed that individuals had less need to consume status goods when introducing alternate paths to reduce the self-threat extent. Sivanathan and Pettit (2010) further concluded the mental intention to restore an individual’s self-worth was the motivation behind status consumption. Low self-esteem or “bruised self-esteem” (p. 565) also guided the motivation to consume high-status products in a similar way to repairing the ego when under self-threat. Low-income individuals prepared to spend a significant portion of their income on status consumption (Sivanathan & Pettit, 2010).

The strength of this study is that the study provided important empirical support for status consumption in which the psychological aspect provided motivation to acquire status goods. However, the weaknesses of this study included not providing the validity results on the self-esteem test. The self-esteem construct had four items, but the study only listed two questions. Thus, no further evidence was possible to verify the validity of
the questionnaire instrument and whether all loadings in the questionnaire were correct. Additionally, this study focused the research sample only on college students, and therefore the results may not be generalizable to other populations. Tracy and Robins (2008) further demonstrated that pride is linked to high status. Demonstrating pride after an individual’s success transmits information to the social group that the person is worthy of higher status (Tracy & Robins, 2008). This study supported the notion that individuals’ emotional needs such as pride and self-esteem are a critical element in status consumption.

Huberman, Loch, and Önçüler’s (2004) experimental research among undergraduate students in universities in the United States, Turkey, Hong Kong, Germany, and Finland similarly found people pursue status from emotional purposes. The researchers used a two-stage betting game to test participants’ desire for public recognition. Participants could win either status recognition or $20. The researchers found that respondents were willing to invest more in Stage 1 in order to win status in the manner of praise. This desire for status is also linked to the emotional attachment consumers develop over time. Consumers learn to commit to a brand as a friend from which users derive status and demonstrate self-expression (Sharma & Sharma, 2012). High brand personality enriches customers’ emotional attachment to the brand (Farhat & Khan, 2011).

In sum, consumers’ emotional attributes have significant impacts on status consumption (O’Cass & Frost, 2002). Emotional attachment, in turn, has a substantial impact on brand loyalty and brand involvement (Hwang & Kandampully, 2012; Quester & Lim, 2003). The existing literature has established that customers’ status enhancement
perceptions are positively related to brand loyalty and brand involvement (Piong, 2013). In the remainder of the chapter, the researcher focused on the literature in more detail, specifically examining brand loyalty and brand involvement.

**Brands**

A Norse word *brandr* is the original form of *brand*, which means “to burn as brand” or to mark livestock to identify its owners (Maurya & Mishra, 2012; Zareei & Ashtiani, 2015). In contemporary contexts, brands are products or services that enhance dimension to distinguish from other goods or services initially intended to fulfill similar needs (Hakala, Svensson, & Vincze, 2012). Brands facilitate customers to perform other sides of them, e.g., different aspects of personality, and allow customers to experience resembling a different person (Hemetsberger, 2014). Brands are symbols to convey the products’ emotional implications onto customers (Aghdaie & Honari, 2014; Goldsmith et al., 2012). Such psychological effects improve customer-brand relationships and connections (Turri et al., 2013). Brands allow customers to express themselves and signify the individuals’ achievement and social identity (Daneshian, Dehnavi, & Moeinadin, 2014; Mahjoub & Naeij, 2015; Nurafni & Nur, 2014; Shirazi et al., 2013). Therefore, consumers select brands according to their social status, and they choose the appropriate brand that matches their identity (Alam et al., 2012; Ranjbarian, Kazemi, & Borandegi, 2013). In general, a brand can be seen as a psychological process that builds up in customers’ minds to develop deep emotional bonds with the product or service (Shirazi et al., 2013; Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005; Turri et al., 2013; Vazifehdoost et al., 2014).
Brands help maintain market shares; higher brand acceptability levels occur when brands’ market shares are greater (Erciş, Ünal, Candan, & Yildirim, 2012; Fatema et al., 2013). Hence, brands embody a significant value in the firm’s assets and play a major role in modern society (Fatemeh & Houriyeh, 2014; Lobschat, Zinnbauer, Pallas, & Joachimsthaler, 2012; Nasirabadi & Bokaei, 2013). For example, marketers could use the significant association between a fashion brand and its customers to impact the firm’s profitability (Daneshian et al., 2014). The traditional way to perceive a brand centers on the brand’s intangible characteristics. As such, it is uncertain how external perceptions of a brand’s features convert into the firm’s values (e.g., the status-enhancing character of the brand; Sharma & Sharma, 2012).

Brand Loyalty

Copeland (1923) conducted seminal work on brand loyalty and proposed that customers have different ways to approach a given brand for which they may experience preference or insistence from that given brand. Brand loyalty in the 1940s and 1950s then took on a unidimensional orientation (i.e., only considered behavioral intentions) (e.g., Guest, 1944). Later, Day (1969) transformed the brand loyalty concept into a two-dimensional concept including attitudinal and behavioral considerations. Jacoby (1971) then suggested brand loyalty originated from a series of psychological and emotional processes that help create repeated purchases. Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) further confirmed brand loyalty as the consumers’ tendency to repurchase a specific product brand or to consume a particular service. Subsequently, Oliver (1997) modified the brand loyalty definition into a commitment to repurchase the particular product or service on a regular basis.
Past empirical research on brand loyalty has focused on customer satisfaction, brand trust, and perceived value (He, Li, & Harris, 2012). Today, the term brand loyalty may refer to repeat purchases made due to mental processes, where the feelings emitted by the brand determine the extent of brand loyalty (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Ghorbani & Mousavi, 2014). If a brand creates a symbolic association with its customers, the customers attach and demonstrate trust in the brand (Vazifehdoost et al., 2014). According to Malik, Ghafoor, Iqbal, Riaz et al. (2013b), consumers’ purchase intentions have a positive relationship with the associated brand loyalty.

Attitudinal brand loyalty. Attitudinal brand loyalty is the result of customers’ emotional responses from psychological change (Hawkins & Vel, 2013). It shows customers’ intentions as well as their commitment to repurchase (Jacoby, 1971; Khan & Mahmood, 2012; Khani, Imanikhah, Gheysari, Kamali, & Ghorbanzadeh, 2013; Nasirabadi & Bokaei, 2013; Rajumesh, 2014; Russell-Bennett, Härtel, & Worthington, 2013). Customers improve the emotional commitment associated with the brand when they indicate preference on brand containing symbolic advantages (So, Parsons, & Yap, 2013). Customers who also demonstrate the brand’s self-connection enhance the brand’s attitudinal loyalty (Hwang & Kandampully, 2012). The commitment to repurchase generates loyal customers on the same brand and, subsequently, leads to repeat purchase behavior (Erciş et al., 2012; Farzana, 2012; Schmitt, 2012). A higher level of brand commitment to repurchase therefore induces a higher level of brand loyalty (Fullerton, 2005).

True attitudinal loyalty measures customers’ devotion to the brand from their attitudes (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Hawkins & Vel, 2013; Jacoby & Chestnut,
1978; Quester & Lim, 2003). High attitudinal loyalty persists when customers’ attitudes and commitment toward the brand are strong, leading to strong emotional attachment; while self-congruity (matching self-concept to the brand) fits within the emotional attachment’s antecedent (Biscaia, Correia, Rosado, Ross, & Maroco, 2013; Hawkins & Vel, 2013; Japutra, Ekinci, & Simkin, 2014; Ling et al., 2014).

When brands evoke an emotional bond in customers’ minds, this attachment stimulates customers to trust the brand (Hwang & Kandampully, 2012). Hwang and Kandampully (2012) examined emotion as a psychological factor from the perspective of brand relationships in younger consumers. The researchers collected data through a self-administered online survey among 107 undergraduate students at a Midwestern university, and used structural equation modeling as well as multidimensional scaling to analyze data. The questionnaire required respondents to select one brand from five given brands, and then to provide responses according to the chosen brand. The study findings revealed that emotional attachment carried the highest influence on brand loyalty among the other two psychological factors (brand love and self-concept connection).

This study established the phenomenon that young customers tend to institute emotional connections with product brands. This research is applicable to the present study as it may help lingerie brand managers to identify the potential of customers’ emotional attachment to brand loyalty and to formulate valuable brand management strategies.

Hwang and Kandampully (2012) noted several weaknesses of the study, including using college students as a sample. The researchers expressed that the respondents belonged to a representative group of younger consumers but did not specify the
characteristics or the criteria of the sample. Thus, the findings’ generalizability may be restricted. A broader selection of younger consumer groups may improve the overall generalizability of the results (Hwang & Kandampully, 2012). Furthermore, the researchers did not provide a full set of the questionnaire questions and the relevant Cronbach’s alpha on each survey item. Such information could help assess and verify the instrument’s validity and reliability. For example, to evaluate the emotional attachment, the researchers adopted the three-item construct from Thomson et al. (2005), but only listed out one item (e.g., “I feel emotionally bonded with this brand”) with an alpha value of .97.

In another empirical study, Shuv-Ami (2012) developed a brand commitment scale to measure consumer behavior based on four core dimensions: loyalty, involvement, satisfaction, and relative performance. Shuv-Ami employed a study sample of 964 cellular phone users chosen by an internal panel and adopted calibration and confirmation approach from Worthington and Whittaker (2006) to subdivide the sample into two halves. Shuv-Ami found no major differences between the two samples. The loyalty dimension of scale measured the customers’ emotional attachment to the leading cellular phone providers using a 10-point agree–disagree Likert scale. *Brand commitment*, in the research, meant the extent of the customers’ overall attachment to a brand and likelihood to purchase again. Shuv-Ami only measured the attitudinal dimension of brand commitment, focusing the evaluation on customers’ emotional attachment.

Shuv-Ami (2012) found strong construct validity and discriminant validity. The factor loadings in involvement-loyalty, involvement-satisfaction, involvement-
performance, satisfaction-loyalty, satisfaction-performance, and loyalty-performance were above .70, indicating good convergence of items onto their particular factor. Shuv-Ami (2012) concluded that brand commitment has a positive association with purchase intentions and overall attitude toward the brand.

The strengths of the study include that the researcher used a large sample size and conducted a thorough data analysis on each brand commitment construct including the reliability and validity analyses. However, Shuv-Ami (2012) displayed a few weaknesses in the research. First, the researcher did not explain how the respondents were recruited from the internal panel. Without this information, readers are unable to justify how representative the samples are (although Shuv-Ami claimed the data sample was representative). Second, the research centered only on cellular users. Future research could incorporate various kinds of products and services (Shuv-Ami, 2012). Third, the study only measured emotional loyalty but not the behavioral loyalty. Therefore, the research findings could not estimate whether customers will display purchase behavior, even when emotional loyalty is present (Shuv-Ami, 2012).

In a third empirical study, Yasin and Shamim (2013) examined the effect of the emotional commitment, brand trust, and brand experience on customers’ purchase intentions among 265 mobile phone users in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The quantitative study used a questionnaire asking respondents to specify the brand name they preferred in a series of questions on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = “strongly disagree” and 5 = “strongly agree.” Yasin and Shamim (2013) employed a simple random sampling technique to collect data from the total 102,779 million cell
phone users in Pakistan. Subsequently, the researchers used correlation and regression analyses to conduct data analysis in SPSS.

Yasin and Shamim’s (2013) findings supported the hypothesis that emotional commitment (independent variable), brand trust, and brand experience have a significant and positive influence on purchase intentions (dependent variable). Sixty-three percent of purchase intentions were explained by the independent variable. The emotional commitment scale had a Cronbach’s alpha value .86, signifying the emotional commitment instrument was reliable. Overall, the strength of the influence of emotional commitment on purchase intentions was higher than brand experience and brand trust. Thus, the researchers concluded that emotional commitment has a deeper function than brand trust and brand experience in forming the customers’ purchase intentions.

The results of Yasin and Shamim (2013), similar to Hwang and Kandampully (2012) and Shuv-Ami (2012), are relevant to the current proposed study in which the researcher examined how brand loyalty may evolve from status enhancement perception resultant from emotional rationales. The strengths of Yasin and Shamim (2013) include conducting a detailed correlation analysis and demographic statistic examination to justify all correlation values in each hypothesis were greater than .50, suggesting the values were significant ($p < .05$, two-tailed test). However, the study encountered a few weaknesses. First, Yasin and Shamim (2013) did not specify how they obtained the full population of cellular phone users’ information in Pakistan before extracting the samples from the simple random techniques. Any inaccuracy in determining the total population size would have impacted how representative the sample size was. Second, the researchers did not include the whole questionnaire, making it hard to replicate the study
or to analyze the results. Additionally, the researchers did not conduct a normality test to identify outliers in the data distribution. The researchers further used regression analyses without confirming the data distribution was normal. Any non-normal data in the linear regression analysis would have deformed the relationships among variables and distorted significance tests (Osborne & Waters, 2002).

Other brand loyalty antecedents may help customers develop an emotional tie or attachment to a particular brand (Piong, 2013). These may include:

- Brand association (Buil et al., 2013);
- Brand attitude (Emari et al., 2012);
- Brand awareness (Buil et al., 2013);
- Brand credibility (Alam et al., 2012);
- Brand image (Chahal & Bala, 2012; Fatema et al., 2013; Tu, Li, & Chih, 2013);
- Brand love (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Thomson et al., 2005);
- Brand personality (Khani et al., 2013; Ling et al., 2014; Sorayaei & Hasanzadeh, 2013; Zhang, Wang, & Zhao, 2014);
- Brand identity (Shirazi et al., 2013);
- Customer satisfaction (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Moolla & Bisschoff, 2012a; Tu et al., 2013; Vazifehdoost et al., 2014);
- Brand trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Shariff, Setyawati, & Kristina Anindita, 2012);
- Self-concept image congruity (Kang & Hur, 2012; Mahjoub & Naeij, 2015; Rotereto & Mosca, 2012; Wagner, Wilson, & Vescovi, 2014); and
- Repurchase intention or brand commitment (Lee & Kang, 2012; Şahin et al., 2012).

Regarding self-concept image congruity, if a specific brand symbolizes aspects of an individual’s distinctiveness, and the product’s significance is coherent with vital essentials of that individual, the individual will be more likely to develop emotional attachment and to become loyal to the particular brand (Rocereto & Mosca, 2012). This concept is particularly relevant to the present study because lingerie marketers could use product-brand image congruity to link customers’ commitment to the particular lingerie company.

Behavioral brand loyalty. Brand loyalty also includes behavioral brand loyalty, which focuses on customers’ actual repeated purchases and their willingness to rebuy the same brand in the future as a result of past purchase behaviors (Jumaev, Dileep, & Hanaysha, 2012; Ling et al., 2014; Martínez & Del Bosque, 2013; Ranjbarian et al., 2013; Uslu & Cam, 2014). True brand loyalty has to include both attitudinal loyalty and behavioral loyalty to form emotional attachment and to establish positive bonding with the brand (Evanschitzky et al., 2012; Liu et al., 2012). Otherwise, any brand loyalty is spurious (Lee & Lee, 2013). Dick and Basu (1994) explained that spurious loyalty contains low customers’ attitude, although it is high in repurchase possibility. As a guiding principle, attitudinal loyalty is an essential motivator to influence behavioral loyalty positively to guide the purchase behavior, and behavioral loyalty has a significant impact on attitudinal loyalty (Ajzen, 2001; Biscaia et al., 2013).

Liu-Thompkins and Tam (2013) investigated how to affect repeated purchase behavior based on attitudinal loyalty and habit in customers’ responses toward
promotional stimuli. The researchers performed four studies to explore how attitudinal loyalty and habit shape consumer behavior. One of the four studies exhibited how to evaluate habit from transaction history and revealed the involvement of attitudinal loyalty and habit on repeat purchases toward a retail service brand. The research data came from two methods. The first method used a convenience chain store’s loyalty program containing 25,970 customers within 12 months of transaction records between April 2006 and March 2007. The second method used an online survey of the chain store’s loyalty program members conducted at the 2006 year-end \( (N = 618) \). Combining the two methods produced 181 finished responses. In particular, the survey measured customers’ attitudinal loyalty toward the convenience chain store containing four statements adapted from Yi and Jeon (2003) using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”: “I like this store more than other convenience stores,” “I have a strong preference for this store,” “I give first considerations to this store when I need to buy convenience store items,” and “I would recommend this store to others.” The associated Cronbach’s alpha value for this particular construct was .88.

Employing the above two methods, Liu-Thompkins and Tam (2013) revealed both attitudinal loyalty and habit have a significant influence on repeat purchases. Furthermore, the researchers found a weak correlation between attitudinal loyalty and habit, implying that the two concepts do not regularly apply to the same customer. Also, the researchers concluded that the attitudinal loyalty could direct unique relationships with purchase behavior. Such association provides further empirical evidence to the concept that true brand loyalty must include both attitudinal and behavioral loyalty.
The strengths of the study included that the research contributed to marketing research and practices (Liu-Thompkins & Tam, 2013). The researchers listed all survey questions to provide precise data analysis and indicated a high Cronbach’s alpha value for scale reliability. Other factors influencing repeat purchases such as favorable attitudes and switching barriers were also considered in the study. Regarding the study’s weaknesses, Liu-Thompkins and Tam (2013) did not examine factor analysis on the scale adopted from Yi and Jeon (2003) and did not carry out validity tests on the scale. Whether all factors could load onto the construct properly remains unknown. The survey was based on past transaction history to study habitual patterns, which may not reflect how attitudinal loyalty and habit affect repeated purchase behavior in future. The researchers suggested future studies use other attitudinal loyalty measures to expand the population and to widen the sample size and variety.

In another empirical study, Şahin et al. (2012) examined brand experience on repurchase intention in the automobile sector within in Istanbul, Turkey. The researchers collected data from 258 respondents through questionnaires using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”). The researchers adapted the survey items on brand experience from Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009), and the repurchase intention measures from Fullerton (2005) and Johnson, Herrmann, and Huber (2006). Şahin et al. (2012) selected the sample randomly from the population of automobile consumers residing within the metropolitan area in the city of Istanbul. Structural equation modeling was the primary research analysis tool.

Şahin et al. (2012) found brand experiences have a positive influence on repurchase intention, and gradually turn into emotional bonds. Brand experience can be
interpreted as behavioral responses emitted by “brand-related stimuli” (p. 52). That is, over time, behavioral responses with emotional bonding attached to the brand may have significant impacts on repurchase intention. This finding provided further evidence that true brand loyalty must include both attitudinal and behavioral loyalty. However, Şahin et al. encountered a few weaknesses. First, the researchers did not discuss how they selected the population. Second, the sample size was small due to the large city population size. Thus, enlarging the sample size in additional geographical areas could improve the study. Third, to measure consumers’ past and future behaviors, using the self-reported measures from the study may not have been the most appropriate method. Fourth, since the research encountered only one unique product (automobile), generalization of the results to other domains may be limited. Finally, Şahin et al. did not consider other brand loyalty antecedents in the study.

As previously discussed, two prior studies (Goldsmith et al., 2010; Piong, 2013) have investigated whether perceiving the branded good as status-enhancing influences consumers’ brand loyalty and/or brand involvement. Goldsmith et al. (2010) administered a questionnaire survey to 409 college students with five primary constructs in a study of status consumption and price sensitivity. The results revealed that status consumption has a significant impact on price sensitivity, and positively influences brand loyalty, innovativeness, and involvement. The age of respondents were between 18 and 51 ($M = 22.1$). The strengths of Goldsmith et al. (2010) study included an explicit description of all questionnaire items, along with the corresponding Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) values. The data analysis explanation thorough with supporting evidence of how each hypothesis was evaluated. The construct
validity was confirmed on all five constructs implying all loadings were greater than .50, and further verifying that status-seeking customers tend to pay more. However, Goldsmith et al. (2010) employed the status consumption construct rather than status enhancement, and the clothing brand loyalty construct contained items, which only considered attitudinal brand loyalty. Thus, the survey instruments did not fit the purpose of the current study and were not considered. A weakness of the Goldsmith et al. (2010) involved the use of college students as the primary data source, which may limit the generalizability of the results to other research settings. Another weakness of the study was the one product category choice of clothing without consideration of other products such as fast-moving consumer goods or electronic products (Goldsmith et al., 2010).

Similarly, Piong (2013) used a quantitative method to examine whether perceiving a branded product (Starbucks brewed coffee) as status-enhancing related to customers’ attitudinal loyalty, behavioral loyalty, and involvement toward the brand \( N = 170 \). The survey included four sections. The first section measured the customers’ attitudinal and behavioral loyalty toward the Starbucks brand employing Chaudhuri and Holbrook’s (2001) brand loyalty scales (two items each). The Cronbach’s alpha on the brand loyalty attitude scale was .83 and the brand loyalty behavior scale was .90.

Prior researchers have adopted Chaudhuri and Holbrook’s (2001) brand loyalty scale (four items) to measure attitudinal and behavioral brand loyalty with strong reliability and validity evidence. For example, Chinomona, Mahlangu, and Pooe (2013) used the 4-item brand loyalty scale to measure the direct impacts of brand service quality on consumer brand satisfaction and brand trust from South African consumers in Gauteng on nondurable consumer goods. The researchers used the mall-intercept method to
BRAND STATUS, LOYALTY, AND INVOLVEMENT

collect 151 completed questionnaires. The overall results revealed factor loadings (.87, .81, .83, .84), Cronbach’s alpha .84, composite reliability .90, AVE value .68, and $R^2$ value .37. The Cronbach’s alpha was greater than the .70 threshold minimum value indicating strong reliability on the measurement instrument (Nunnally, 1978). All factor loadings were greater than .70 confirming convergent validity. Chinomona et al. (2013) also confirmed that the scale measurements had high discriminant validity demonstrating the square root of the AVE from each construct was greater than the associated correlations with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Kuikka and Laukkanen (2012) similarly found these brand loyalty scales to have strong reliability and validity. In this study, the researchers explored brand loyalty antecedents (i.e., brand satisfaction, brand equity, brand value, and brand trust) in the chocolate market. The researchers collected 808 responses via an online questionnaire from a Finnish confectionery organization’s Facebook wall. Kuikka and Laukkanen (2012) reported the attitudinal loyalty’s construct reliability alpha value was .66, with composite reliability value .67 and the overall square root of AVE value .71. The behavioral loyalty’s construct reliability alpha value was .57, with composite reliability value .62 and the overall square root of AVE value .71. The correlation between behavioral and attitudinal constructs was .67. Therefore, the attitudinal loyalty of square root AVE was greater than the correlation between behavioral and attitudinal constructs indicating discriminant validity on the attitudinal construct. Both Cronbach’s alpha values of attitudinal and behavioral loyalty were greater than .50 and less than .70, implying adequate internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). Piong (2013) further noted the overall Cronbach’s alpha value of Chaudhuri and Holbrook’s (2001) brand loyalty scales
was .92, indicating high internal consistency. Rajumesh (2014) also obtained satisfactory Cronbach’s alpha value .81 using Chaudhuri and Holbrook’s (2001) brand loyalty scales.

The second section of Piong’s (2013) survey measured brand involvement with Starbucks’ coffee using Kirmani et al.’s (1999) brand involvement scale, which consisted of three items with Cronbach’s alpha value .88. Researchers who adopted Kirmani et al.’s (1999) brand involvement item, “I relate to this brand” include: (a) Fuchs (2008) – Cronbach’s alpha from .80–.91 and factor loading between .77 and .94; (b) Josiassen and Assaf (2010) – overall Cronbach’s alpha .89; and (c) Völckner and Sattler (2006) – Cronbach’s alpha from .80 to .92 indicating high reliability with significant factor loading supporting convergent validity. Josiassen and Assaf (2010) adopted Kirmani et al.’s (1999) brand involvement item, “This brand is important to me” with overall Cronbach’s alpha .89. Similarly, De Vries and Carlson (2014) created the brand involvement item “For me personally, this brand is important” and received factor loading .91 with AVE .70 and composite reliability .93.

Regarding the last item on the Kirmani et al.’s (1999) brand involvement scale, “Are you involved or uninvolved with this brand,” the response format was on a 7-point semantic differential scale. To avoid possible confusion understanding the question, the researcher of the present study improved the question’s clarity into, “How would you categorize the extent of your involvement with this brand of lingerie products?” (see Appendix A). In the branding literature, De Vries and Carlson (2014) used the brand involvement item, “I am involved in/with this brand” and obtained factor loading .70 with AVE .70 and composite reliability .93 in its brand involvement construct. Also, Carlson and O’Cass (2012) used the brand involvement item, “How involved are you
with my favorite sports team?” and received factor loading .75. Thus, the empirical findings from the literature supported the reliability and validity of Kirmani et al.’s (1999) brand involvement scale and its use in the present study.

The third section of the survey measured perceptions of the status-enhancing nature of Starbucks coffee based on a single question (“Does drinking Starbucks brand coffee tend to reduce or enhance a person’s status?”) using a 7-point semantic differential scale. The status enhancement perception question (Does using this brand of lingerie products tend to reduce or enhance a person’s status?) used a 7-point and has only one specific meaning in context. Sackett and Larson (1990) and Wanous, Reichers, and Hudy (1997) note this survey item fulfilled the clear context and confined meaning criteria for respondents. Empirical findings also revealed single-item measures can encompass satisfactory reliability values (e.g., Dolbier, Webster, McCalister, Mallon, & Steinhardt, 2005; Kwon & Trail, 2005; Wanous et al., 1997). Thus, the suitability of using the single-item measure should rest on evaluating the appropriateness to use it in the particular research (Wanous et al., 1997). The final section of Piong’s (2013) survey included demographic questions about respondents’ gender, age, and yearly income. The present study adopted Piong’s (2013) survey (see Appendix A), with modifications on each item to fit in the lingerie context (see Appendix F).

Piong (2013) concluded that perceiving Starbucks coffee as status-enhancing was positively associated with attitudinal brand loyalty and brand involvement, but was not related to behavioral brand loyalty. Piong’s research enhanced Goldsmith et al.’s (2010) study by using a non-clothing product and selecting more diverse study respondents. The reliability test and factor analyses verified the internal reliability of the multi-item
constructs on the brand loyalty and brand involvement scales (Piong, 2013). Also, the study results contributed to status consumption theory by providing empirical support on how perceiving a branded as status-enhancing relates to associated brand loyalty and brand involvement (Piong, 2013).

Piong’s (2013) study encountered two weaknesses. First, the researcher used linear regression to analyze data without first confirming the independent variable and the dependent variables have a linear relationship. Linear regression is a conventional analysis method to determine whether a relationship exists between an independent variable and dependent variables (Hwang & Kandampully, 2012; Kamarposhti & Bagheri, 2015; Komunda & Osarenkhoe, 2012). For example, Komunda and Osarekhoe (2012) adopted regression analysis for dependent variables of brand loyalty using both behavioral and attitudinal variables. The linear regression method assumes variables bear normal distribution patterns with a linear relationship between independent and dependent variables (Osborne & Waters, 2012; Zou, Tuncali, & Silverman, 2003). Any non-normal data in the linear regression analysis could deform the relationships among variables and distort significant tests (Osborne & Waters, 2002). Second, Piong (2013) did not provide validity findings relating to the status enhancement perception item. As a result, the only possible way to determine discriminant validity is to assess whether the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) from each construct is greater than the associated correlations with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Piong (2013) further commented that no other studies had performed the association between perceiving a brand as status-enhancing and brand loyalty; only Choi, Ok, and Hyun (2011) had examined the related concept of brand prestige and brand loyalty.
Choi et al. (2011) examined the functions of brand experience and brand personality in building brand prestige and how it could inspire brand loyalty. The study surveyed 309 U.S. Coffeehouse customers through online surveys on consumers’ brand perceptions toward coffeehouses using validated measurement constructs from prior studies. The survey included constructs on brand experience, brand personality, brand prestige, brand trust, customer satisfaction, attitudinal loyalty, and behavioral loyalty. The study’s findings revealed that brand experience and brand personality have a positive influence on brand prestige, affecting attitudinal brand loyalty. While brand prestige perceptions are different from a brand’s status enhancement perceptions, the results from Choi et al. (2011) imply that the perception of a brand as status-enhancing may be positively related to brand loyalty. Choi et al. (2011) provided empirical support to the roles of brand experience and brand personality in shaping brand prestige. However, the researchers collected survey data from a pool of online marketing research organizations, which may demonstrate data choice bias (Choi et al., 2011). The researchers were subsequently unable to gather responses together from assorted brands.

Although not directly related to Goldsmith et al.’s (2010) study, Eastman et al. (2013) examined the relationships between status consumption and customers’ shopping style characteristics with a sample of 243 US high school students. Eastman and associates concluded that customers who desire to consume due to status would use the brand loyal shopping style, which further suggests that status consumption may enhance brand loyalty. The Cronbach’s alpha for the status consumption construct was .84 and the brand loyalty construct was .72. The researchers reported that the convergent validity and discriminant validity were reached in both constructs. A weakness in the study
involves the use of high school students that concentrated on the Southeastern part of the United States (Eastman et al., 2013).

**Brand Involvement**

Sherif and Cantril (1948) established the concept of *brand involvement*, a psychological construct related to social judgment theory. Park and Young (1986) proposed that the affective aspect of involvement highlights the emotional significance that customers may stimulate. Subsequently, Shuv-Ami (2012) recommended that brand involvement acting as engagement attachment is the affective constituent of brand commitment due to brand involvement’s emotional nature. Bhattacharya and Saha (2013) considered that involvement is a “motivating variable” (p. 23) with a series of outcomes on the customers’ purchase behavior. Aghdaie and Honari (2014) then explained that the involvement concept concerns the psychological state that signifies personal relevance on a subject or product, and elicits the emotional mind to develop ties between the subject and product. Vazifehdoost et al. (2014) suggested to analyze involvement in a multidimensional structure and various settings such as social issues, beliefs, objects, and activities. Heidarzadeh Hanzaee, Khoshpanjeh, and Rahnama (2011) stated that emotional influence is one of the five dimensions used for describing consumers’ brand involvement.

As discussed, consumers develop an emotional attachment to a brand (Petzer et al., 2014; Round & Roper, 2012). The customers’ emotional feelings and attachment may contribute to their brand experience (Pinson & Brosdahl, 2014). As noted by Celsi and Olson, customers’ brand experience may enhance their personal brand relevance influencing their brand involvement (as cited by Kirmani et al., 1999). Furthermore,
Hwang and Kandampully (2012) argued emotional attachment provides the largest impact on brand loyalty. According to Gordon et al. (1998), customers’ brand involvement focuses on the customers’ commitment to the product brand in relation to their emotional attributes such as feelings and sensations. While attitudinal brand loyalty measures customers’ commitment to purchase, a relationship exists between customers’ brand involvement and brand loyalty (Jacoby, 1971; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Khan & Mahmood, 2012; Knox & Walker, 2003; Nasirabadi & Bokaei, 2013; Russell-Bennett et al., 2013).

An empirical study examined 12 influences on brand loyalty within the fast-moving consumer goods category (e.g., toothpaste; Moolla & Bisschoff, 2012b). The researchers collected 541 completed questionnaires from postgraduate management students located in four South African business schools within major cities. The respondents selected had full-time employment and were either middle or top managers. The researchers believed that the chosen respondents represented middle to higher income individuals who had larger purchasing power and brand selections. The questionnaire survey contained 12 key brand loyalty influences using a 7-point Likert scale including customer satisfaction, switching costs, brand trust, relationship proneness, brand involvement, perceived value, brand commitment, repeat purchase, brand affect, brand relevance, brand performance, and culture.

Moolla and Bisschoff (2012b) revealed that all items were true impacts of brand loyalty, suggesting brand involvement and brand commitment have a significant impact on brand loyalty. This finding also suggested customers’ emotional attributes may have a connection to brand loyalty and brand involvement, since customers’ brand involvement
focuses on their commitment to the product brand and customers’ emotional attributes such as feelings and sensations (Gordon et al., 1998). The strengths of Moolla and Bisschoff’s (2012b) study included listing the 12 influences on 36 questions in the questionnaire and conducting a factor analysis to conclude all factors loaded to single factors with acceptable reliability and variance explained findings. However, this study used only college students as its sample, therefore limiting generalizability.

Another empirical study considered the influence of brand involvement, brand experience, brand satisfaction, and brand trust on brand loyalty, with the target on Apple mobile phones in Tehran, Iran (Vazifehdoost et al., 2014). The researchers collected 282 questionnaires from a simple random sample taken from all Tehran city residents who currently or previously owned Apple mobile phones. The findings demonstrated that brand experience has a positive impact on brand satisfaction, and brand involvement has a direct influence on brand loyalty. These results suggest that brand satisfaction fulfilling customers’ emotional attachment needs may have a positive relationship with brand involvement, and such brand involvement may have an influence on brand loyalty.

The strengths of Vazifehdoost et al.’s (2014) study included conducting a pilot test and confirmed content validity. The researchers identified several aspects of brand loyalty antecedents in determining the impact on brand loyalty to widen the possible impact factors. Vazifehdoost et al. (2014) assessed the normality of the variables using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to determine the data distribution pattern before applying the analysis tools. Moreover, the researchers provided results from factor loading, AVE, and Cronbach’s alpha on each construct to establish reliability and validity. However, the study exhibited two weaknesses. First, the researchers did not specify how they
collected data concerning the total population. Second, the study only encompassed one category of product, which reduced the generalizability of the findings to other product settings.

This literature is particularly relevant to the present study as they contributed empirical support to the relationship between customers’ emotional attachment toward a brand and their associated brand involvement. The empirical evidence from these studies further suggests that if perceiving a product as status-enhancing enhances a brand’s emotional attachment, then the perception of status enhancement may also improve brand involvement. The present study extended this research to examine brand loyalty and brand involvement in relation to a female lingerie brand.

Summary

This literature was divided into two main parts. The first half centered on the theoretical and research literature on status, status goods, and status/conspicuous consumption. The second part concentrated on the research literature on brands, brand loyalty, and brand involvement. Overall the literature review established that customers’ status enhancement perceptions may be positively related to brand loyalty and brand involvement. Two prior studies (Goldsmith et al., 2010; Piong, 2013) are particularly relevant to this research. Goldsmith et al. (2010) demonstrated consumers’ status consumption positively correlated with brand loyalty and brand involvement in the case of clothing, while Piong (2013) concluded perceiving Starbucks coffee as status-enhancing positively associated with attitudinal brand loyalty and brand involvement, but was not related to behavioral brand loyalty. This study contributes to the literature by providing insight on these concepts within the lingerie market.
In Chapter 3, the researcher describes the study in greater detail, presenting the methodology, research design, and procedures that are used to collect and analyze data. The researcher specifically provides the rationale for selecting the methodology, the nature of the research design, population and sample selection, the data collection instruments, procedures that are employed to determine data reliability and validity, and data collection and analysis procedures.
Chapter 3: Methodology

The researcher employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationships between status enhancement perceptions, brand loyalty, and brand involvement with a female lingerie brand located in Southwestern Canada. The researcher administered an 11-item questionnaire survey to a sample of lingerie retail store customers. In this chapter, the researcher details the methodology, research design, and procedures that are used to collect and analyze data.

Problem Statement

Goldsmith et al. (1996) found that status consumption was moderately related to clothing involvement. Goldsmith et al. (2010) also found a strong relationship between brand involvement and both brand loyalty and status consumption. Eastman et al. (2013) found that customers who desire to consume due to status would use the brand loyal shopping style. This result further suggests that status consumption may enhance brand loyalty. Piong (2013) extended Goldsmith et al.’s (2010) research by examining the relationship between status enhancement perception, attitudinal and behavioral brand loyalty, and brand involvement construct in a study of Starbucks coffee users ($N = 170$). Piong concluded that consumers’ perception of Starbucks coffee as status-enhancing were positively associated with both attitudinal brand loyalty and brand involvement; however they were not related to consumers’ behavioral brand loyalty. However, no research could be located that has examined the status enhancement, brand loyalty, and brand involvement in a female lingerie brand.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Six research questions and hypotheses guided this research:
RQ1: What is the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty?

H1: Customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand are positively associated with brand loyalty.

RQ2: What is the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement?

H2: Customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand are positively associated with brand involvement.

RQ3: What influence does a customer’s age have on the relationship between perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty?

H3₀: Age does not significantly moderate the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty.

H₃ₐ: Age significantly moderates the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty.

RQ4: What influence does a customer’s age have on the relationship between perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement?

H₄₀: Age does not significantly moderate the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement.
H4A: Age significantly moderates the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement.

RQ5: What influence does a customer’s income have on the relationship between perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty?

H50: Income does not significantly moderate the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty.

H5A: Income significantly moderates the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty.

RQ6: What influence does a customer’s income have on the relationship between perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement?

H60: Income does not significantly moderate the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement.

H6A: Income significantly moderates the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement.

The present study has one independent variable (IV), two dependent variables (DV), and two moderating variables:
• STATUS: The degree to which customers perceived the female lingerie brand to be a status-enhancing product (IV).

• LOYALTY: The customers’ attitudinal, behavioral, and combined loyalty to the female lingerie brand (DV).

• BINVOLVE: The customers’ brand involvement with the female lingerie brand (DV).

• AGE: A moderating variable representing the participants’ age.

• INCOME: A moderating variable representing the participants’ income.

A moderating variable shapes the intensity or path of the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The researcher utilized an existing survey instrument, along with demographic items, to collect the information to form these variables.

**Research Methodology**

A quantitative research method was used to examine the relationships among the study variables within the context of a female lingerie brand in Southwestern Canada. This quantitative correlational study aligned with the study purpose and research questions. According to Sadeghi and Pihie (2012), a quantitative method is the proper research method to identify whether a possible correlational relationship exists between the independent and dependent variables. Previous researchers have also demonstrated the viability of using a quantitative method to investigate correlational relationships related to brand loyalty and brand involvement (e.g., Fatema et al., 2013; Lada et al., 2014; Nasirabadi & Bokaei, 2013; Romaniuk & Nenycz-Thiel, 2013; Shirazi et al., 2013).
Borrego et al. (2009) proposed that the nature of the research questions should determine the study methodology, noting a quantitative method is appropriate when the research questions are narrowly defined and the research focus uses a deductive approach using theory or hypotheses to justify the variables. The goal of the quantitative research is to use samples to generalize findings to a larger population using statistical analysis methods to investigate whether there are significant relationships between the variables under examination (Borrego et al., 2009; Carpenter et al., 2006). In contrast, qualitative methods require textual data analysis employing interviews and observation (Borrego et al., 2009), which are outside the scope of the study. A qualitative method takes an inductive approach to collect in-depth contextual data (Borrego et al., 2009). The research questions in this study were narrowly defined and aimed to examine the relationships among customers’ status enhancement perceptions and their brand loyalty and brand involvement. Textual data were not necessary for the study because responses were captured on Likert and semantic differential scales. As such, a quantitative method is most appropriate for the proposed study.

**Research Design**

In this non-experimental correlational study, the researcher administered a questionnaire survey to a sample of female lingerie brand’s customers from a local retail outlet located in a shopping center in Southwestern Canada to determine customers’ perceptions of status enhancement. Willing customers completed a survey after they had completed their purchases. According to Kamarposhti and Bagheri (2015), a questionnaire survey is a standard method to collect field data to test hypotheses in quantitative research. A questionnaire survey is a common data collection method, and
has been used in behavioral and attitudinal brand loyalty and brand involvement research (Erdoğmuş & Çiçek, 2012; Komunda & Osarenkhoe, 2012; Lada et al., 2014; Lee & Kang, 2012; Rizvi et al., 2012; Şahin et al., 2012; Vazifehdoost et al., 2014; Yasin & Shamim, 2013).

To obtain the sample, the researcher invited willing customers, excluding the protected classes such as minors and pregnant women, to engage via a mall-intercept method on public property near the lingerie store to participate in the survey. The researcher also informed willing participants that the study was part of a doctoral research. The researcher has obtained written permission from the store’s CEO to conduct the study (see Appendix C). The study participation took no more than 5 minutes. First-time clients were excluded from the study.

In this study, the survey had 11 items, which included: (a) the brand loyalty and brand involvement scales (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Kirmani et al., 1999), (b) a single item to measure customers’ perceptions of status enhancement (Piong, 2013), and (c) three additional items to measure respondents’ demographic characteristics (see Appendix A).

As stated, the independent variable (customers’ perceptions of status enhancement) was measured with a single item. Single-item measures are appropriate from a psychometric perspective (Nagy, 2002); especially when the construct is unidimensional (Sackett & Larson, 1990; Wanous et al., 1997). When a construct’s attribute is concrete (i.e., all respondents perceive the characteristics of the construct in a similar way), the use of single-item measures is preferable (Rossiter, 2002). Participants responded to this item (“Does using this brand of lingerie products reduce or enhance a
person’s status?), on a 7-point semantic differential scale from 1 (“reduces status”) to 7 (“enhances status”). This response had a clear and confined context and meaning for respondents (Sackett & Larson, 1990; Wanous et al., 1997). Research has revealed that single-item measures can also demonstrate satisfactory reliability on Cronbach’s alpha value (e.g., Dolbier et al., 2005; Kwon & Trail, 2005; Wanous et al., 1997). Thus, the suitability of using a single-item measure rests upon its appropriateness for the particular research being undertaken (Wanous et al., 1997). As a result, findings from the literature supported the use of the single-item measure on the customers’ perceptions of status enhancement in this study based on the unidimensionality and clear context characteristics.

Additionally, this researcher conducted four Spearman rank-order correlation analyses to examine the first two hypotheses, whether the findings supported the hypotheses. The first correlation analysis compared the data from the independent variable to behavioral brand loyalty to find out if a significant relationship existed between the two variables. The second correlation analysis compared the data from the independent variable to attitudinal brand loyalty. The third correlation analysis compared the data from the independent variable to the combined attitudinal and behavioral brand loyalty, while the fourth correlation analysis compared the data from the independent variable to the brand involvement measure. If the independent and dependent variables were not normally distributed, the use of Spearman rank-order correlation analysis would be proper for the present study based on three reasons: (a) this research involved variables evaluated at the ordinal format and managed on data rank (Hauke & Kossowski, 2011; Mukaka, 2012); (b) this study did not include any assumptions relating the
frequency distributions of the variables, that is, a distribution-free association between the variables (Hauke & Kossowski, 2011; Mukaka, 2012); and (c) this research may contain outliers in the data distribution to which Spearman correlation analysis is not sensitive and therefore could still provide valid results (Zou et al., 2003).

**Population and Sample Selection**

The target population was customers of a lingerie brand located in a city center shopping mall in Southwestern Canada. To determine the sample size, the researcher conducted a power analysis. In a power analysis, a researcher develops a sample size that limits Type I and Type II errors while selecting an appropriate sample size to identify the desired effect size. A Type I error is defined as accepting the alternative hypothesis (false positive) when no true effect occurs (Lieberman & Cunningham, 2009). A Type II error is defined as rejecting the null hypothesis when true effect occurs. To limit Type I errors, an alpha of .05 was established. This is standard in inferential testing (Lieberman & Cunningham, 2009). To avoid a Type II error, a power level of .95 was established. This exceeds the minimum statistical power of .80 normally associated with social science research (Cohen, 1992). To determine the sample size, first the weighted average of similar studies was computed. Based on the results, \( r = .34 \), G*Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009; Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007) was used to calculate a sample size of 85 (Figure 1).
Figure 1. Sample size determination using G*Power

Next, estimated confidence intervals were evaluated. Using Creative Research Systems Sample Size Calculator (n.d.), a confidence interval of over 10 was calculated (Figure 2).
To increase precision, a confidence interval of 7 was set and a sample size of 194 was determined (Figure 3).
The sample size calculated would balance both the estimated effect size and confidence interval requirements.

**Instrumentation**

This research used a survey instrument that measures four distinct dimensions: behavioral loyalty, attitudinal loyalty, brand involvement, and perception of status enhancement (Appendix A). Table 1 shows the Item Numbers by *a priori* dimensions, the variable name used in this research, and their respective scales.

**Table 1**

*Matrix of Survey Instrument*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Numbers</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Measurement Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Behavioral Loyalty</td>
<td>BELOYAL</td>
<td>Interval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>Attitudinal Loyalty</td>
<td>ATLOYAL</td>
<td>Interval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-7(^a)</td>
<td>Brand Involvement</td>
<td>BINVOLVE</td>
<td>Interval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8(^b)</td>
<td>Perception of Status Enhancement</td>
<td>STATUS</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>GENDER</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>AGE</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Income</td>
<td>INCOME</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Item 7 was reverse-coded. \(^b\)Item 8 was reverse-coded.

Behavioral loyalty and attitudinal loyalty comprise brand loyalty (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Chaudhuri and Holbrook reported a reliability analysis of $\alpha = .90$ on the brand loyalty behavior scale, and $\alpha = .83$ on the brand loyalty attitude scale. Piong (2013), using the same instrument, found similar results ($\alpha = .91$ and .84, respectively). The researchers also reported a discriminant validity test on the two brand loyalty scales
by employing a confirmatory factor analysis using LISREL 8.14 software (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996), and discovered discriminant validity held for both brand loyalty constructs individually. The responses to each loyalty scale and both loyalty scales encompassing all four items were averaged to form the first research question’s dependent variables.

The researcher measured brand involvement using three items, following Kirmani et al. (1999). As noted in Table 1, Item 7 was reversed-coded prior to the construction of the variable. Kirmani et al. reported a reliability analysis of $\alpha = .88$. Piong (2013), using the same instrument, found similar results ($\alpha = .71$).

In addition, the researcher measured perception of status enhancement by a single item (Item 8). The response format was in a 7-point semantic differential scale, where 1 = “reduces status” and 7 = “enhances status.” As noted in Table 1, Item 8 was reversed-coded prior to the construction of the variable. The survey instrument also included three demographic items (Gender, Age, and Income). This study used Age and Income as moderating variables.

Validity

Validity identifies the degree to which an instrument or a measure could essentially assess what it is aimed to measure and how accurate the results are (Babbie, 2004; Gravetter & Forzano, 2003; Joppe, 2006). Validity has been regarded as construct validity in quantitative research to guide what kind of data to collect and how the data are arranged (Wainer & Braun, 1988). In this study, the researcher focused on convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity is defined as whether items on a particular scale unite on a single construct (Steenkamp & van Trijp, 1991). A satisfactory
level of convergent validity occurs when the factor loadings on the intended variables are larger than .70 and the AVE is greater than .50 threshold for all constructs (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). For discriminant validity, two constructs should vary from each other because their concepts are different (Zhang et al., 2014). In addition, items in each construct do not overlap to support the particular construct (Severi & Ling, 2013). In other words, discriminant validity examines the possible irrelevance extent between constructs (Wang, Zhang, & Lee, 2013a). The manual way to validate discriminant validity is to assess whether the square root of the AVE from each construct is greater than the associated correlations with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

The first four items of the brand loyalty instrument constituted the scales adopted from Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), which attained satisfactory results on discriminant and convergent validity based on the following evidence. Chaudhuri and Holbrook reported a discriminant validity test by employing a confirmatory factor analysis from LISREL 8.14 software (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996), and discovered discriminant validity held for both brand loyalty constructs individually. Chinomona et al. (2013) stated the discriminant validity on the brand loyalty scales was attained. Kuikka and Laukkanen (2012) also described achieving the discriminant validity on the attitudinal loyalty construct. Wang et al. (2013a) confirmed the behavioral loyalty item, “I will buy this brand the next time I buy [product name]” achieved discriminant validity.

For convergent validity on Chaudhuri and Holbrook’s (2001) brand loyalty scales, Chinomona et al. (2013) revealed factor loadings (.87, .81, .83, .84) and AVE value .68. Researchers have adopted the behavioral loyalty item, “I will buy this brand the next I
buy [product name]” and reported factor loadings .71 (Kang & Hur, 2012), .84 (Lee, Seong-Yeon, Rapert, & Newman, 2012), and .93 (Wang et al., 2013a). In addition, researchers have adopted the behavioral loyalty item, “I intend to keep purchasing this brand” and reported factor loadings .51 (Alam et al., 2012), .94 (Wang, Chan, & Yang, 2013b), and .90 (Wang et al., 2013a). Alam et al. (2012) recorded factor loading .56 on the attitudinal loyalty item, “I am committed to this brand,” and factor loading .71 on the attitudinal loyalty item, “I would be willing to pay a higher price for this brand.”

Regarding the brand involvement item, Fuchs (2008) reported factor loading between .77 and .94. As a result, the only possible way to validate discriminant validity is to do the manual calculation by demonstrating the square root of the AVE from each construct is greater than the associated correlations with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). To test the convergent validity, the method is to examine whether the factor loadings on the brand involvement scales and the status enhancement perception item are larger than .70 and the AVE is greater than .50 threshold for all constructs (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

To examine the convergent validity of the status enhancement perception, the correlation between the single-item scale and its multi-item equivalency as prescribed by Dolbier et al. (2005) was applied. While Piong (2013) investigated the relationship between customers’ status enhancement perceptions and both brand loyalty and brand involvement, a multi-item equivalency related to the single-item scale was not available from the literature. Piong (2013) also did not provide validity findings relating to the status enhancement perception item. As a result, the only possible way to validate discriminant validity is to assess whether the square root of the AVE from each construct
is greater than the associated correlations with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). However, previous research revealed satisfactory results on a single-item measure to assess convergent and discriminant validity (De Boer et al., 2004; Dolbier et al., 2005; Gardner, Cummings, Dunham, & Pierce, 1998; Nagy, 2002). The researcher of this study aimed to extend Piong’s (2013) work to a female lingerie brand product by investigating the relationships on how consumers perceive the lingerie brand product as status-enhancing in relation to their brand loyalty and brand involvement. Therefore, the researcher of this study made the assumption that the status enhancement perception item on the survey was valid.

**Reliability**

Reliability is defined as the measurement of consistency on an instrument (Jahanshahi, Gashti, Mirdamadi, Nawaser, & Khaksar, 2011). Cronbach’s alpha measure is commonly used to measure an instrument’s internal consistency to estimate reliability (Akabogu, 2013; Safari Kahreh & Safari Kahreh, 2012). A Cronbach’s alpha value larger than .70 specifies satisfactory data reliability and internal consistency (Cronbach, 1951; Nunnally, 1978). Also, Zhou, Zhang, Su, and Zhou (2012) suggested using Cronbach’s alpha score to determine the internal consistency of data reliability. Cronbach’s alpha is the widely-accepted method to measure the internal consistency of data in marketing literature (Field, 2007; Tiwari & Singh, 2012). This researcher determined Cronbach’s alpha for each of the responses to the attitudinal brand loyalty, behavioral brand loyalty, combined attitudinal and behavioral brand loyalty, and brand involvement items.
Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) stated the Cronbach’s alpha on the brand loyalty attitude scale was .83 and the brand loyalty behavior scale was .90. Table 2 shows that other researchers indicated strong reliability using the same 4-item brand loyalty scale to measure attitudinal and behavioral brand loyalty.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researchers</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Cronbach’s α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinomona et al. (2013)</td>
<td>Attitudinal and Behavioral Loyalty</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuikka and Laukkanen (2012)</td>
<td>Attitudinal Loyalty</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuikka and Laukkanen (2012)</td>
<td>Behavioral Loyalty</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piong (2013)</td>
<td>Attitudinal and Behavioral Loyalty</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajumesh (2014)</td>
<td>Attitudinal and Behavioral Loyalty</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kuikka and Laukkanen’s Cronbach’s alpha of .66 is acceptable because Nunnally (1978) indicated a minimum Cronbach’s alpha of .50–.60 is satisfactory. Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2010) further stated a Cronbach’s alpha higher than .70 represents a high level of internal consistency.

Other researchers have adopted Chaudhuri and Holbrook’s (2001) specific brand loyalty items into other brand loyalty constructs and obtained similar results. For behavioral brand loyalty item, “I will buy this brand the next time I buy [product name]”

- Kang and Hur (2012) – Cronbach’s alpha .76;
- Lee et al. (2012) – Cronbach’s alpha .90;
- Maden, Arikan, Telci, and Kantur (2012) – Cronbach’s alpha .92;
- Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar, and Sen (2012) – Cronbach’s alpha .80; and
Turri et al. (2013) – Cronbach’s alpha .89.

For behavioral brand loyalty item, “I intend to keep purchasing this brand”:

- Alam et al. (2012) – Cronbach’s alpha .79;
- Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012) – Cronbach’s alpha .80;
- Turri et al. (2013) – Cronbach’s alpha .89; and
- Wang et al. (2013b) – composite reliability .95.

For attitudinal brand loyalty item “I am committed to this brand”:

- Alam et al. (2012) – Cronbach’s alpha .79; and
- Doyle, Filo, McDonald, and Funk (2013) – Cronbach’s alpha between .89 and .91.

For attitudinal brand loyalty item “I would be willing to pay a higher price for this brand”, Alam et al. (2012) identified an overall Cronbach’s alpha of .79. These empirical findings from the literature supported the reliability of Chaudhuri and Holbrook’s (2001) brand loyalty scales and their use in the present study.

Kirmani et al.’s (1999) brand involvement scale consisted of three items with Cronbach’s alpha value of .88. Other researchers have used Kirmani et al.’s (1999) brand involvement item, “I relate to this brand” and reported high reliability, with Cronbach’s alpha varying from .80–.91 (Fuchs, 2008) and .80–.92 (Völckner and Sattler, 2006). In addition, Josiassen and Assaf (2010) adopted Kirmani et al.’s (1999) brand involvement item, “This brand is important to me” and reported overall Cronbach’s alpha .89. This literature supported the use of this brand involvement scale in the present study.

Piong (2013) again did not include reliability findings on the single-item measure, though a single-item measure can be assessed for reliability using the correction of
attenuation formula. Nunnally (1978) created a method to assess the minimum reliability of a single-item measure, with the aid of correction for attenuation formula, which is a part of the classical psychometric theory (Ginns & Barrie, 2004). Wanous and Reichers (1996) demonstrated how the use of the correction of attenuation formula approximates the single-value reliability value. The formula is as follows (Nunnally, 1978; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994):

\[ r_{xx} = \text{reliability of variable } x \]
\[ r_{yy} = \text{reliability of variable } y \]
\[ r_{xy} = \text{correlation between two variables } x \text{ and } y \]
\[ r_{xy}^* = \text{estimated true correlation between } x \text{ and } y \]
\[ r_{yy} = \frac{(r_{xy})^2}{[(r_{xx})(r_{xy}^*)]^2} = \left( \frac{\text{correlation of } x \text{ and } y}{\text{reliability } x}\right)^2 / [(\text{estimated true correlation between } x \text{ and } y)]^2 \]

For a perfect relationship between \( x \) and \( y \), \( r_{xy}^* = 1 \). Dolbier et al. (2005) recommended using a more conservative assumption of \( r_{xy}^* = .90 \) to increase the single-item reliability estimation and such estimation could be comparable to the relevant multiple-item measures if available. This method was used to predict the minimum estimated reliability on the status enhancement perception item in the present study.

**Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection began after IRB approval was given. Respondents were required to read and sign the informed consent form before taking the survey. The survey questionnaire contained no identifying information about the participants. Only the informed consent form contained respondent’s name and signature. No other personal details such as address were collected. At the end of each survey completion, the
researcher collected the completed questionnaire and the informed consent form and placed them in separate nontransparent envelopes. Thus, the respondents’ names and signatures are not linked with the questionnaire. As a result, respondents’ names are not traceable in the survey.

Subsequently, the researcher input completed survey data into the SPSS software from a password secured computer on a daily basis. The researcher examined all daily input data for precision, and then stored and backed up all data to an external hard drive with activated password protection. The process of daily data input continued until all 190 completed surveys had been entered into SPSS. The last step was to ensure data security and confidentiality. Before and after the daily data input into the SPSS software, the researcher stored and locked all completed surveys with a key. The researcher committed to keep all data confidential, destroy all survey questionnaires including all informed consent forms, and delete all related computerized data three years after the completion of the study.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis consisted of four steps: descriptive analysis, reliability analysis, exploratory data analysis, and hypothesis testing.

Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive statistics involved three demographic items inquiring respondents’ gender, age, and annual income. Replies to these items helped represent the demographic distribution on the survey samples. The formation of means and standard deviation revealed the result on each of the survey item and variable responses. In addition, the responses to both the brand loyalty and brand involvement scales helped
describe which of the age and income group individuals demonstrated the highest level of brand loyalty and brand involvement. Such information provided a guideline on how age and income influence the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty and brand involvement.

**Reliability Analysis**

The researcher assessed the reliability of the instrument by calculating the Cronbach’s alpha for the instrument and each subscale. Data analysis included individual reliability analyses on each of the four constructed scales: brand loyalty and its two components (behavioral brand loyalty and attitudinal brand loyalty), and brand involvement. Nunnally (1978) posited that a minimum Cronbach’s alpha value of .70 is needed to demonstrate reliability.

**Exploratory Data Analysis**

Once survey and dimensional reliability are assessed, items were collapsed to form scales. Once scales are formed, descriptive statistics were reported and each scale was examined following a two-step approach: outlier detection and analysis, and tests of normality.

**Outlier detection and analysis.** Cousineau and Chartier (2010) indicated that eliminating outliers could lower Type I and Type II probability errors because sometimes a small number of outliers is sufficient to alter the overall results. However, removing outliers needs to have justifiable reasons (Osborne & Waters, 2002). Histograms, boxplots, and scatterplots can assist in identifying outliers (Osborne & Waters, 2002). In this step, the researcher examined outliers and removed records that displayed a pattern of respondent disinterest.
Test of normality. To test for normality, the researcher used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test. The K-S test specifies that if the \( p \)-value is greater than .05, then it can be concluded that the sample is normally distributed (Fatemeh & Houriyeh, 2014). However, if the \( p \)-value is less than .05, this can be viewed as the data not following a normal distribution. If the items were not normally distributed, then data transformation was attempted. Data transformation is a technique for normalizing data to approximate normality from nonlinear data (Bishara & Hittner, 2012). The result of the K-S tests and data transformation influenced which form of test to use in the hypothesis testing phase.

Hypothesis Testing

Based on the tests of normality and data transformation, the researcher either used parametric or nonparametric tests. For H1 and H2, if both variables were treated as normally distributed, the researcher would calculate Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (\( r \)). However, if one of the variables was not normally distributed, the researcher would calculate Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient (\( r_s \)). The Spearman method does not use the actual data points; instead, it uses the ranked order of the variables (Mukaka, 2012). For H3-H6, either Pearson correlation or Spearman partial correlation was used. Partial correlation specifies a direct relationship between two variables following the removal of the outcome of all other variables (Kim, 2015).

Ethical Considerations

The survey was administered via a mall-intercept method on public property near the lingerie store within an enclosed shopping center. Taking the survey in the shopping center was safe, with no harm or risk to potential respondents following guidelines of the
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1979). To respect willing respondents’ freedom and autonomy (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 1979), respondents had the right to answer at their will and may stop at any time without penalty. Any survey associated data would be removed from the study when the respondents’ withdrawal notices have been received. For withdrawal identification purpose, each informed consent form and each related questionnaire was marked with a set of unique reference number at each survey completion. The reference number would only be used to identify respondents in the case of withdrawal. Researcher’s e-mail address was provided on the informed consent form. At the end of the research, the lingerie brand organization may receive benefits to decide whether using status enhancement as a marketing strategy affects customers’ loyalty and involvement. In the survey participation, respondents bore no burdens except a few minutes to complete the questionnaire, and in return, the respondents did not receive any reward; therefore the justice rule within the core ethical principals in the Belmont Report applied (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 1979).

Regarding data protection, the survey did not collect personal information except respondents’ names and signatures. To ensure data security and confidentiality, the researcher stored and locked all completed surveys with a key. The researcher also committed to keep all data confidential, destroy all survey questionnaires including all informed consent forms, and delete all related computerized data three years after the completion of the study.

Before conducting the onsite data collection, the researcher sought permission from the IRB. The data collection process only began upon receiving the IRB approval.
Before respondents commenced on the survey questionnaire, the researcher handed over an informed consent form to every participant. Respondents in the study must first read and sign the informed consent form before taking the survey. At the end of each survey completion, the researcher separated and put the completed survey and the informed consent form in separate nontransparent envelopes.

Most importantly, the present researcher had obtained written permission from the lingerie brand and store’s CEO to conduct a survey of the lingerie customers after they had completed their purchases. The study’s results were summarized and provided to the brand organization.

**Limitations**

As discussed in Chapter 1, there are several limitations in this research:

- The researcher invited willing customers to engage via a mall-intercept method on public property near the lingerie store to participate in the survey after they had completed their purchases. Thus, if some of the respondents were in a rush, they may have answered in inattentive way, especially when children and friends were present (Gates & Solomon, 1982).

- The study faced time constraints, which may have limited the scope of the survey. Similar to Piong (2013), these time constraints may also have impacted the accuracy of the study to measure brand loyalty.

- The study considered only one independent variable (perceptions of status enhancement), thus limiting the results on the two dependent variables (brand loyalty and brand involvement). Other variables may also be associated with brand loyalty and brand involvement, such as brand association and brand
attitude (Buil et al., 2013; Emari et al., 2012); however, they were not studied as part of this research.

**Summary**

This chapter described the methodology, research design, and procedures that were used to collect and analyze data for the present study. Specifically, this chapter revisited the statement of the problem and research questions and hypotheses, and provided details concerning the specific correlational analyses that were used to determine the significance of relationships between variables. The researcher also reviewed the methods for assessing validity and reliability that were employed. Finally, the researcher discussed ethical considerations related to the respondents. In Chapter 4, the researcher outlines the data analysis procedures and presents the study results in written and graphic format. Finally, in Chapter 5, the researcher discusses and interprets these results in relation to the existing body of knowledge in the related literature associated with the dissertation focus.
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between consumers’ perceptions of status enhancement and both brand loyalty and brand involvement in a female lingerie company located in Southwestern Canada. In addition, a person’s age and income was used as moderating variables. The findings from this study provide empirical support for status consumption theory, as well as new information for lingerie marketers on the subject of status consumption, brand loyalty, and brand involvement. The researcher employed a non-experimental correlational method in this study by collecting information using a mall-intercept approach and an 11-item questionnaire.

Six research questions and hypotheses guided this study:

RQ1: What is the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty?

H1: Customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand are positively associated with brand loyalty.

RQ2: What is the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement?

H2: Customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand are positively associated with brand involvement.

RQ3: What influence does a customer’s age have on the relationship between perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty?
H3₀: Age does not significantly moderate the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty.

H₃ₐ: Age significantly moderates the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty.

RQ₄: What influence does a customer’s age have on the relationship between perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement?

H₄₀: Age does not significantly moderate the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement.

H₄ₐ: Age significantly moderates the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement.

RQ₅: What influence does a customer’s income have on the relationship between perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty?

H₅₀: Income does not significantly moderate the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty.
H5A: Income significantly moderates the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty.

RQ6: What influence does a customer’s income have on the relationship between perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement?

H60: Income does not significantly moderate the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement.

H6A: Income significantly moderates the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement.

In this chapter, the researcher outlines the data analysis procedures and presents the study results in written and graphic format. Overall, data analysis consisted of four steps: descriptive analysis (demographic distribution, mean, and standard deviation), reliability analysis (Cronbach’s alpha measure), exploratory data analysis (outliers and normality tests), and hypothesis testing (for hypotheses relating to RQ1–6).

Descriptive Data

A total of 190 people completed the survey in a city center shopping mall in Southwestern Canada during the period of August and October 2017. While slightly lower than the required sample size of 194, detailed in Chapter 3, the collected sample size of 190 was sufficient for this study. All participants were female. Half of the
respondents were 40 years of age and older. Over 70% reported income under CDN$40,000 per year (Table 3).

Table 3

*Demographic Distributions of the Respondents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Feature</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age in years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 25</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–39</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40+</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000 or less</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,001 to $40,000</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,001 to $60,000</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,001 or more</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(N = 190\)

**Data Analysis Procedures**

In addition to the descriptive data presented, data analysis included three essential steps: reliability analysis, exploratory data analysis including outliers detection and analysis and normality tests, and hypothesis testing for each research question.

**Reliability Analysis**

A reliability analysis was performed for the survey instrument and each subscale. Specifically, Cronbach’s alpha was calculated to determine the reliability of behavioral brand loyalty, attitudinal brand loyalty, overall brand loyalty items, and brand involvement items. All alpha levels exceeded Nunnally’s (1978) guidance (Table 4).
Table 4

Reliability Analysis by Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand Loyalty</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Loyalty</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudinal Loyalty</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Involvement</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( N = 190 \)

Using attenuation formula (Nunnally, 1978; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), the minimum estimated reliability on the status enhancement perception item was .46. When correlated with the brand involvement scale, such minimum estimated reliability on the status enhancement perception item became .49, giving a resultant minimum estimated reliability value of .48. Nunnally (1978) suggested a minimum Cronbach’s alpha of .50–.60 is satisfactory. Thus, the reliability of the status enhancement perception item is considered acceptable because the difference between the estimated reliability value (.48) and the minimum satisfactory level (.50) is minimal.

Exploratory Data Analysis

Upon conclusion of the reliability analysis, scales were formed by collapsing items following \textit{a priori} dimensions identified by Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) and Kirmani et al. (1999). Table 5 depicts relevant information for each scale.
Table 5

*Descriptive Statistics for Each Scale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>M (SD)</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand Loyalty</td>
<td>3.60 (1.30)</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>-1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Loyalty</td>
<td>3.29 (1.38)</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>-.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudinal Loyalty</td>
<td>3.92 (1.49)</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>-.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Involvement</td>
<td>3.83 (1.24)</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>-.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status Enhancement</td>
<td>3.35 (1.37)</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N = 190*

Once scales were formed, potential outliers were evaluated, and each scale was evaluated for normality.

**Test of outliers.** As described in Chapter 3, outliers can influence the placement of the mean and a variables distribution. Following guidance from Osborne and Waters (2002), boxplots were used to graphically depict outliers in each scale. No outliers were found.

**Test of normality.** The researcher employed the K-S test for normality to evaluate the variables used in the study. Since the *p*-values were less than .05, none of the scales followed a normal distribution (Fatemeh & Houriyeh, 2014; Table 6).
Table 6

*Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Normality*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand Loyalty</td>
<td>.112*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Loyalty</td>
<td>.105*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudinal Loyalty</td>
<td>.142*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Involvement</td>
<td>.158*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status Enhancement</td>
<td>.202*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 190, *p < .001

Attempts were made to transform each variable via logarithmic and exponential transformations; however, no variable could be mathematically transformed to follow a normal distribution. As a result, the original data form would be used for hypothesis testing.

**Hypothesis Testing**

Since the distribution of all variables used in this research was not normally distributed, nonparametric tests were used for hypothesis testing. As described in Chapter 3, if this situation were to occur, the Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient would be used as the test statistic.

**Results**

This section is divided into six subsections to address each research question and hypothesis pairing.

**Status Enhancement and Brand Loyalty**

The first research question focused on the relationship between customers’ perception of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty. The researcher calculated the $r_s$ for each combination of variables (Table 7).
Table 7

*Spearman Rank-Order Coefficient - Status Enhancement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Status Enhancement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand Loyalty</td>
<td>.622*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Loyalty</td>
<td>.633*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudinal Loyalty</td>
<td>.524*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(N = 190, \quad * \ p < .001\)

As shown in Table 7, Brand Loyalty and its sub dimensions are positively correlated with Status Enhancement. The 95% Confidence Interval (CI) was \([.526, .702]\). Following guidance from Cohen (1992), the strength of the relationship should be considered strong. As a result, the hypothesis that customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand are positively associated with brand loyalty (H1) was supported. The implication of these results will be discussed in Chapter 5.

**Status Enhancement and Brand Involvement**

The second research question focused on the relationship between customers’ perception of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie and brand involvement. The results of Spearman Rank-Order Correlation test was significant, \(r_s (190) = .585, \ p < .001, \ 95\% \ CI [.489, .677]\). Following guidance from Cohen (1992), the strength of the relationship should be considered strong. Thus, the hypothesis that customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand are positively associated with brand involvement (H2) was supported. Similar to H1, the implication of this result will be discussed in Chapter 5.
Status Enhancement and Brand Loyalty controlling for Age

The third hypothesis focused on the relationship between Status Enhancement and Brand Loyalty controlling for Age of the respondents. As reported in H1, the relationship between status enhancement and brand loyalty was significant, $r_s(190) = .622, p < .001$, 95% CI [.526, .702]. With the variable Age as a moderating variable, the strength of the relationship, while still statistically significant, was reduced from .622 to .577, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.473, .664]. Since there is a 95% chance that moderated value (.577) could fall within the confidence interval of the original test statistic (.526-.702), the null hypothesis that age does not significantly moderate the relationship between status enhancement and brand loyalty could not be rejected.

Status Enhancement and Brand Involvement controlling for Age

The fourth hypothesis focused on the relationship between Status Enhancement and Brand Involvement controlling for Age. As reported in H2, the relationship between status enhancement and brand involvement was significant, $r_s(190) = .585, p < .001$, 95% CI [.489, .677]. With the variable Age as a moderating variable, the strength of the relationship, while still statistically significant, was reduced from .585 to .534, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.423, .628]. Since there is a 95% chance that moderated value (.534) could fall within the confidence interval of the original test statistic (.489-.677), the null hypothesis that age does not significantly moderate the relationship between status enhancement and brand involvement could not be rejected.

Status Enhancement and Brand Loyalty controlling for Income

The fifth hypothesis focused on the relationship between Status Enhancement and Brand Loyalty controlling for the effect of Income. The result of the nonparametric
Spearman correlation between status enhancement and brand loyalty was significant, \( r_s (190) = .622, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [.526, .702] \). With the variable Income as a moderating variable, the strength of the relationship, while still statistically significant, was reduced from \( .622 \) to \( .559, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [.452, .649] \). Since there is a 95\% chance that moderated value (.559) could fall within the confidence interval of the original test statistic (.526-.702), the null hypothesis that income does not significantly moderate the relationship between status enhancement and brand loyalty could not be rejected.

### Status Enhancement and Brand Involvement controlling for Income

The final hypothesis focused on the relationship between status enhancement and brand involvement controlling for Income. As reported in H2 and reiterated in H4, the relationship between status enhancement and brand involvement was significant, \( r_s (190) = .585, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [.489, .677] \). Similar to Age, using Income as a moderating variable, the strength of the relationship, while still statistically significant, was decreased from \( .585 \) to \( .515, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [.402, .612] \). Since there is a 95\% chance that moderated value (.515) could fall within the confidence interval of the original test statistic (.489-.677), the null hypothesis that income does not significantly moderate the relationship between status enhancement and brand involvement could not be rejected.

### Summary

In this chapter, the researcher described the data analysis procedures employed to evaluate the hypotheses. A total of 190 females participated in the mall-intercept survey. All six hypotheses relating to customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand were positively associated with brand loyalty and brand involvement. Age and income reduced the strength of the relationship between status-
enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and both brand loyalty and brand involvement; however, the level of moderation was not practically significant. In Chapter 5, the researcher discusses and interprets these results in relation to the existing body of knowledge in the related literature associated with the dissertation focus.
Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The importance of this study is evident in its practical implication, particularly within the lingerie market. Lingerie marketers may benefit from this examination of status enhancement, brand loyalty, and brand involvement. Marketers may be able to use the findings as a reference to help develop marketing strategies to build market share and profits, and to inform how they position lingerie products in the market. Retail organizations, especially lingerie retailers, may further be able to use this research to help in formulating marketing choice. Specifically, marketers need to first distinguish the existing customers who have exhibited high brand loyalty, high brand involvement, and perceived consuming this lingerie brand as status-enhancing. The next step would be to develop proper marketing schemes and strategies to sustain and enhance further their brand loyalty, brand involvement, and the status enhancement perception of the lingerie status products. Other companies that incorporate status enhancement as part of their marketing strategy as well as consumer markets based on multicultural characteristics may also benefit from the insights in this research. Such companies may consider making their brands and products as status goods. Findings from this study illustrate that marketing a brand as status goods improves customers’ behavioral brand loyalty, attitudinal brand loyalty, combined brand loyalty, and brand involvement.

This chapter contains a discussion and interpretation of the results in relation to the existing body of knowledge in the related literature associated with the dissertation focus. In particular, this chapter includes a summary of the study, findings and conclusion, implications including theoretical and practical applications, recommendations for future research and for practice, and concluding remarks.
Summary of the Study

In this study, the researcher aimed to extend the research by Goldsmith et al. (2010) and Piong (2013) by examining how consumer perceptions of a brand as status-enhancing influence both brand loyalty and brand involvement. The findings contribute to the literature on status consumption and provide new insights to lingerie marketers, serving as a reference for developing marketing strategies on the relationships between consumer perceptions, brand loyalty, and brand involvement. Six research questions and hypotheses guided this study:

RQ1: What is the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty?

H1: Customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand are positively associated with brand loyalty.

RQ2: What is the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement?

H2: Customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand are positively associated with brand involvement.

RQ3: What influence does a customer’s age have on the relationship between perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty?

H3: Age does not significantly moderate the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty.
H3$_A$: Age significantly moderates the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty.

RQ4: What influence does a customer’s age have on the relationship between perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement?

H4$_0$: Age does not significantly moderate the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement.

H4$_A$: Age significantly moderates the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement.

RQ5: What influence does a customer’s income have on the relationship between perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty?

H5$_0$: Income does not significantly moderate the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty.

H5$_A$: Income significantly moderates the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty.
RQ6: What influence does a customer’s income have on the relationship between perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement?

H6₀: Income does not significantly moderate the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement.

H6ₐ: Income significantly moderates the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand involvement.

In this study, the researcher used a mall-intercept research design to deliver a survey instrument to 190 respondents. Once data was collected, descriptions of the population were reported, data was analyzed, and hypotheses were tested.

**Summary of Findings and Conclusion**

This section is segmented into two sections: one focusing on brand loyalty and the other focusing on brand involvement.

**Brand Loyalty, Status Enhancement, Age, and Income**

A series of research questions focused on the relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand and brand loyalty, along with how a person’s age or income level could moderate the strength of this relationship. The status-enhancing characteristics of a female lingerie brand were all positively related to brand loyalty and its sub dimensions (Behavioral and Attitudinal). These findings are similar to Goldsmith et al. (2010) and Piong (2013) who examined clothing and coffee consumption, respectively. However, Piong found that such
perception on status enhancement was not related to consumers’ behavioral brand loyalty. One reason may be due to the differences in store image between Starbucks Coffee and the lingerie store.

The literature has specified that store image has positive influence on brand loyalty and purchase intentions. Law and Yip (2010) specified that the physical properties had a significant impact on lingerie purchase decisions. Bell and Ternus (2002) proposed that the store’s interior and exterior designs had a strong impact on purchase decisions. Such interior and exterior lingerie store designs could impact the consumers’ behavioral responses (Law & Yip, 2010). In addition, the perception of a favorable store image could influence hedonic shopping experiences and behavioral intentions (Hosany & Martin, 2012; Michon, Yu, Smith, & Chebat, 2008). Shoppers who encounter a match between the store image and their self-image could derive store loyalty and will therefore be inspired to make purchase intentions (He & Mukherjee, 2007; Sirgy, Grewal, & Mangleburg, 2000). Badrinarayanan, Becerra, and Madhavaram (2014) suggested that consumers’ attitude toward the hedonic dimension of a store (e.g., store image) is positively associated to their purchase intentions. Similarly, consumers’ self-image matching with the image of a sponsorship event has a positive effect on brand loyalty (Sirgy, Lee, Johar, & Tidwell, 2008). This may also imply that customers matching their self-image with the image of an object, such as a store, may have direct impact on brand loyalty. Hence, the positive association between customers’ perception on the status enhancement and their behavioral brand loyalty in this study may be due to the lingerie store image that customers reflected on themselves and aligned with their self-image. The lingerie store provides a shopping atmosphere with its interior design
focusing on vintage cabinets and crystal chandeliers that offer the feelings of romance and elegance. The lingerie store emphasizes the symbol of femininity which offers customers a sensual escape and aims to restore their confidence in their own femininity images.

Female luxury brands offer superior perceived symbolic and social value, and female consumers looking for luxury brands may provide themselves more status and hedonic values (Stokburger-Sauer & Teichmann, 2013). The ability to gain more status is likely the primary reason why females consume luxury goods. Applying this concept to the present study’s examination of the lingerie market, females may attempt to improve self-image and others’ perceptions of them through the consumption of lingerie products. When lingerie customers perceive the lingerie brand as symbolizing luxury, they enhance their self-image through self-image congruence, or matching self-image with the brand and store image to create a brand association that fulfills their self-image enhancement (Abdolvand & Reihani, 2013; Nurafni & Nur, 2014; Sung & Choi, 2012; Turri et al., 2013). When lingerie customers perceive the brand as status-enhancing, this therefore impacts their brand loyalty. If consuming the conspicuous goods (lingerie products) produces individuals’ self-identity through emphasizing the brand’s symbolic value (O’Cass & Siahtiri, 2013; Veblen, 1899), then consuming the products may promote status (Goldsmith et al., 2012; Rhee, 2012). Similarly, Chao and Schor (1998) suggested that the brand image provides emotional advantages in relation to customers’ status and personality. Thus, customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of this brand’s lingerie products were positively associated with their behavioral brand loyalty, unlike Piong’s (2013) Starbucks results.
Findings from this study also indicated that both Age and Income reduced the strength of the relationship between status enhancement and brand loyalty. As respondents’ age increased, the variability and median values of both “enhances status (level 3)” and “enhance status (level 1)” were lower, indicating higher brand loyalty and status enhancement perception (Figure 4).

![Moderation of age on status enhancement and brand loyalty](image)

Figure 4. Moderation of age on status enhancement and brand loyalty

However, as respondents’ age increased, the variability of “enhance status (level 2)” was higher but with lower median value. As a result, age slightly reduced the relationship between status enhancement and brand loyalty by a value of $r_s = .045$. The researcher found no pattern of disinterest in the outliers’ data, and therefore the outliers remained in the dataset.
As respondents’ income increased, respondents tended to express greater behavioral and attitudinal brand loyalty. Also, as respondents’ income increased, the variability of “enhances status (level 3)” became higher and then adjusted lower at higher income. The associated median values were also lower, implying higher brand loyalty and status enhancement perception at higher income (Figure 5).

![Figure 5. Moderation of income on status enhancement and brand loyalty](image)

Similarly, as respondents’ income increased, the variability of “enhance status (level 1)” was lower and then adjusted higher at income $60,001 or more, and the median values were also adjusted downward and then slightly increased at income $60,001 or more. As a result, income slightly reduced the relationship between status enhancement
and brand loyalty by a value of $r_s = .063$. Also, the researcher found no pattern of disinterest in the outliers’ data, and therefore the outliers remained in the dataset.

**Brand Involvement, Status Enhancement, Age, and Income**

In the second research question, customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand were positively associated with brand involvement. This finding is similar to Goldsmith et al. (2010), in that status consumption was positively correlated with brand involvement. Additionally, the findings are similar to Piong (2013), who found consumers’ perception of Starbucks coffee as status-enhancing was positively associated with brand involvement.

This study provides empirical evidence that if perceiving a product as status-enhancing enhances a brand’s emotional attachment, then the perception of status enhancement may also improve brand involvement. This study also contributes empirical support to Vazifehdoost et al. (2014) regarding the relationship between customers’ emotional attachment toward a brand and their associated brand involvement. Vazifehdoost et al.’s results suggested that brand satisfaction fulfilling customers’ emotional attachment needs may have a positive relationship with brand involvement, and such brand involvement may have an influence on brand loyalty. The present study further adds empirical foundation to Moolla and Bisschoff (2012b), in that customers’ emotional attributes may have a connection to brand loyalty and brand involvement. Gordon et al. (1998) noted that customers’ brand involvement focuses on their commitment to the product brand as well as customers’ emotional attributes such as feelings and sensations.
Findings from this study also indicated that both Age and Income reduced the strength of the relationship between status enhancement and brand involvement. As respondents’ age increased, the variability of both “enhances status (level 3)” and “enhances status (level 2)” was decreased and their median values became lower, indicating higher brand loyalty and status enhancement perception (Figure 6).

**Figure 6.** Moderation of age on status enhancement and brand involvement

However, in “enhances status (level 1)”, the variability became larger although the median value was decreased when respondents’ age increased. Thus, age slightly reduced the relationship between status enhancement and brand involvement. Similarly, the researcher found no pattern of disinterest in the outliers’ data, and therefore the outliers remained in the dataset.
Middle- and higher-income individuals expressed stronger brand involvement in lingerie goods (Figure 7).

*Figure 7. Moderation of income on status enhancement and brand involvement*

This brand involvement is likely because they evaluate lingerie products by taste rather than price, similar to the recent change in status consumption theory toward including a wider range of inexpensive products that individuals consider to be status goods (e.g., cosmetics or wine evaluated by taste instead of price; Chaudhuri & Majumdar, 2010; Fernández Moya, 2012; Jiang & Cova, 2012; Piong, 2013; Rao & Schaefer, 2013).

Also, low-to-middle income earners express more eagerness to acquire durable and conspicuous products due to status seeking, as also demonstrated by Sivanathan and
Pettit (2012) and Vijayakumar and Brezinova (2012). In addition, Figure 7 indicates that as respondents’ income increased, the variability of “enhances status (level 3)” was largely decreased first and then greatly increased at income $60,001 or more. The median value was also adjusted downward, indicating higher brand loyalty and status enhancement perception. However, in “enhances status (level 2)”, the variability became lower but the median value was higher when respondents’ income increased. Thus, income slightly reduced the relationship between status enhancement and brand involvement. Similarly, the researcher found no pattern of disinterest in the outliers’ data, and therefore the outliers remained in the dataset.

In this study, the researcher aimed to provide further empirical support relevant to the status consumption theory (Veblen, 1899). Lingerie marketers may be able to use the findings as a reference to help develop marketing strategies to build market share and profits, and to inform how they position lingerie products in the market. For instance, as a result of lingerie marketers linking their store image with customers’ brand loyalty, customers who perceive the lingerie brand as status-enhancing may enhance their attitudinal and behavioral loyalty.

**Implications**

Two forms of implications will be discussed - theoretical and practical.

**Theoretical Implications**

In this study, the researcher found a strong, positive relationship between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of this brand’s lingerie products and both brand loyalty and brand involvement. These findings imply that customers who perceive the lingerie brand as enhancing their status will tend to stay with the brand and
may even achieve a higher brand involvement and brand loyalty both attitudinally and behaviorally. When customers like and use the brand for a long time, they often develop emotional attachments toward the brand (Petzer et al., 2014; Round & Roper, 2012; Sharma & Sharma, 2012). Customers’ behavioral responses after they experience the brand may also contribute to their emotional attachments toward the brand (Pinson & Brosdahl, 2014). Thus, customers who perceive the lingerie brand as increasing their status are likely to desire to possess the brand, making emotional attachment an imperative element in brand loyalty (Gounaris & Stathakopoulos, 2014; Tsai, 2011).

This study provides evidence supporting prior research (e.g., Goldsmith et al., 2010; Piong, 2013) on a different branded product and concluded similar results. The study used a quantitative method and a brief survey that contained no direct benefits to the respondents to minimize study bias. The mall-intercept method of data collection within a multicultural city shopping mall provided a more diverse sample of respondents than Goldsmith et al. (2010), which may enhance the generalizability of the findings.

While evidences support prior research, the results may not be generalizable to other product brands or kinds of goods because the research centered on a specific female lingerie brand within a specific region. However, this study offers empirical support and insights to lingerie marketers as a reference for how customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of lingerie brand products may be associated with their brand loyalty and brand involvement. Also, similar to Piong (2013), due to time constraints, this study did not apply other brand-related concepts to the theoretical framework, such as customer satisfaction or brand image. Though brand image may be associated with measuring
status, measuring brand image is time-consuming and more sophisticated than measuring the perception of the status-enhancing character of a branded good (Piong, 2013).

The study results contribute to the theory of status consumption originally advocated by Veblen (1899), which explains how the upper class and lower class may be differentiated through their consumer behavior. Upper class individuals acquire and display luxury goods to confer their status in others’ perceptions (Eastman et al., 1999). In turn, these goods then inspire others to also achieve more status (Hudders, 2012).

Today, lingerie marketers tend to instill lingerie brands with passion to “help consumers define and express a strong personality, serving their psychological well-being and/or their social status” (Hemetsberger, 2014, p. 35). Under this conception, less expensive passion brands (lingerie) can also be perceived as a form of status consumption. As a result, this study advances status consumption theory in that customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand have a positive association with their brand loyalty and brand involvement, supporting findings from the prior studies examined (Goldsmith et al., 2010; Piong, 2013). That is, perceiving a brand as status-enhancing may help customers to develop their commitment to the brand, to continue purchasing the brand, and to enhance their personal relevance to the brand.

**Practical Implications**

In the study, 47.1% of participants selected responses 5 to 7 toward the enhance status anchor point on the status enhancement survey question. This figure suggests that almost half of the respondents perceived that using this brand of lingerie products would enhance status. The main study findings also suggest that the lingerie brand company could enhance customers’ brand loyalty and brand involvement by promoting their
perception that consuming this lingerie brand’s products could foster status. Hence, lingerie brand organizations should market their products as status goods.

Simultaneously, the lingerie brand company could consider expanding the younger customers’ market share (below aged 25) by linking the brand and store image with prestige. Abdolvand and Reihani (2013) suggested that if an organization shapes its brand to symbolize prestige, success, or status enhancement, young consumers are more likely to purchase the brand. The researchers revealed that psychological antecedents such as prestige symbol, advancing self-image, achieving status, and displaying wealth had the most significant impacts on the consumption behavior. Similarly, Hwang and Kandampully (2012) established that young customers tend to institute emotional connections with product brands. Therefore, expanding the younger customers’ market share within the lingerie brand may deepen their brand loyalty in the long run.

Overall, lingerie marketers may distinguish their own brands by advertising lingerie products with symbolic meaning. This study offers empirical evidence that incorporating emotional aspects of a brand may sustain and enhance brand loyalty and brand involvement. In the branding literature, consumers seeking high status tend to select brands that will convey that status by making purchases of and displaying certain branded goods (Goldsmith et al., 2012; O’Cass & Frost, 2002). In particular, brands that convey the high status of consumers through associated brand attachment may pose positive influences on consumers’ brand loyalty (Baek et al., 2010; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Hwang & Kamdumpully, 2012; O’Cass & Frost, 2002; Papista & Dimitriadis, 2012). Similarly, Ma et al. (2012) proposed that customers consuming lingerie products assimilate gradually into the product lifestyle the lingerie product tries
to sell, and customers internalize the product’s taste and style. Thus, advertising lingerie products with symbolic meaning impacts customers’ loyalty and involvement (Ma et al., 2012). Thereby, the lingerie brand in this study may advertise their products with symbolic meaning to sustain and enhance brand loyalty and brand involvement.

**Recommendations**

Two types of recommendations will be provided. First, recommendations for future research, followed by recommendations for practice.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The findings of this study support a number of different paths for future investigation. The researcher thus proposes four recommendations for future research. First, future research could incorporate other kinds of brand and product categories when examining the relationships between perceiving a brand as status-enhancing, brand loyalty, and brand involvement. Alternatively, future researchers could replicate this research using samples from various demographic regions to extend the results’ generalizability. Future researchers may also investigate at which level of age or income interacts significantly with the covariates in this study. In addition to the current study’s lingerie brand, Goldsmith et al.’s (2010) clothing products, and Piong’s (2013) Starbucks’ coffee, future studies involving a wider selection of brands and products could further confirm whether perceiving a brand as status-enhancing is also positively associated with brand loyalty and brand involvement.

Second, future research could conduct a more in-depth examination of how brand loyalty may evolve from status enhancement perception resultant from emotional rationales. The findings may help brand managers to identify the potential of customers’
emotional attachment to brand loyalty and to formulate valuable brand management strategies. Future researchers may develop a structured status enhancement scale or model to examine this study further. The branding literature specifies that high attitudinal loyalty persists when customers’ attitudes and commitment toward the brand are strong, leading to strong emotional attachment, while self-congruity (matching self-concept to the brand) fits within the emotional attachment’s antecedent (Biscaia et al., 2013; Hawkins & Vel, 2013; Japutra et al., 2014; Ling et al., 2014). When brands evoke an emotional bond in customers’ minds, this attachment stimulates customers to trust the brand (Hwang & Kandampully, 2012). Thus, brand loyalty may evolve from status enhancement perception as a result of emotional basis.

Third, future research could further explore how self-congruity may improve brand loyalty and brand involvement, both in relation to lingerie brands and other brands in different product categories. The results may help marketers use product-brand image congruity to link customers’ commitment to the particular company. Rocereto and Mosca (2012) suggested that if a specific brand symbolizes aspects of an individual’s distinctiveness, and the product’s significance is coherent with vital essentials of that individual, the individual will be more likely to develop emotional attachment and to become loyal to the particular brand. For instance, a brand may symbolize values in connection with brand image and store image to reflect on individuals’ distinctiveness. Hence, the self-congruity concept may enhance brand loyalty and brand involvement.

Finally, future research could focus on concepts related to brand loyalty and brand involvement by considering other brand loyalty antecedents in the study such as brand association, brand attitude, and brand experience (Buil et al., 2013; Emari et al., 2012;
Şahin et al., 2012). For example, Şahin et al. (2012) found brand experience has a positive influence on repurchase intention, and gradually turns into emotional bonds. Şahin et al. (2012) also recommended to focus on brand experience’s long term effects and brand experience’s antecedents for further research. Brand experience can be interpreted as behavioral responses emitted by “brand-related stimuli” (p. 52). That is, over time, behavioral responses with emotional bonding attached to the brand may have significant impacts on repurchase intention. Thus, the addition of other brand loyalty antecedents to this study may contribute to status consumption theory further.

**Recommendations for Practice**

First, lingerie marketers may benefit from the examination of status enhancement, brand loyalty, and brand involvement. The main study findings suggest that this lingerie brand company could enhance customers’ brand loyalty and brand involvement by promoting the perception that consuming this lingerie brand’s products could foster status. In other words, this lingerie brand may market its products as status goods. Ultimately, perceiving this lingerie brand as status-enhancing may encourage customers to develop their commitment to the brand, to continue purchasing the brand, and to enhance their personal relevance to the brand. Eastman et al. (2013) concluded that consumers who desire to consume due to status would use the brand loyal shopping style, which further suggests that status consumption may enhance brand loyalty.

Second, marketers may be able to use the findings from this research as a reference to help develop marketing strategies to build market share and profits, and to inform how they position lingerie products in the market. Retail organizations, especially lingerie retailers, may also be able to use this study to help in formulating marketing
choice. Specifically, marketers need to first distinguish the existing customers who have exhibited high brand loyalty, high brand involvement, and perceived consuming this lingerie brand as status-enhancing. The next step would be to develop proper marketing schemes and strategies to sustain and enhance further their brand loyalty, brand involvement, and the status enhancement perception of the lingerie status products.

Third, other companies that incorporate status enhancement as part of their marketing strategies may benefit from the insights in this research. Such companies may illustrate marketing their brands and products as status goods. Findings from this study illustrate that marketing a brand as status goods improves customers’ behavioral brand loyalty, attitudinal brand loyalty, combined brand loyalty, and brand involvement.

**Concluding Remarks**

The present study extends the body of knowledge on brand loyalty and brand involvement. The study findings demonstrated a positive association between customers’ perceptions of the status-enhancing character of a female lingerie brand’s products and their behavioral brand loyalty, attitudinal brand loyalty, combined brand loyalty, and brand involvement. Specifically, perceiving a brand as status-enhancing may encourage customers to develop their commitment to the brand, to continue purchasing the brand, and to enhance their personal relevance to the brand. Lingerie marketers may use such relationships to market their products as status goods and to help sustain and increase market share, in addition to improving business profits.
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Appendix A

Survey Questionnaire

For each of the following items, please circle the number that best reflects your belief:

1. I will buy this brand the next time I buy lingerie products.

   1 strongly agree 2 agree 3 somewhat agree 4 neither agree nor disagree 5 somewhat disagree 6 disagree 7 strongly disagree

2. I intend to keep purchasing this brand of lingerie products.

   1 strongly agree 2 agree 3 somewhat agree 4 neither agree nor disagree 5 somewhat disagree 6 disagree 7 strongly disagree

3. I am committed to this brand of lingerie products.

   1 strongly agree 2 agree 3 somewhat agree 4 neither agree nor disagree 5 somewhat disagree 6 disagree 7 strongly disagree

4. I would be willing to pay a higher price for this brand of lingerie products over other brands.

   1 strongly agree 2 agree 3 somewhat agree 4 neither agree nor disagree 5 somewhat disagree 6 disagree 7 strongly disagree

5. I relate to this brand of lingerie products.

   1 strongly agree 2 agree 3 somewhat agree 4 neither agree nor disagree 5 somewhat disagree 6 disagree 7 strongly disagree

6. This brand of lingerie products is important to me.

   1 strongly agree 2 agree 3 somewhat agree 4 neither agree nor disagree 5 somewhat disagree 6 disagree 7 strongly disagree

For the next two questions, please circle the number on the scale that most accurately reflects your perception:

7. How would you categorize the extent of your involvement with this brand of lingerie products?

   uninvolved 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 involved
8. Does using this brand of lingerie products tend to reduce or enhance a person’s status?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reduces status</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Enhances status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

For each of the next three questions, please mark X beside the answer that pertains to you.

9. What is your gender?

_____ Male
_____ Female

10. In which age category do you belong?

_____ Below 25
_____ 25–39
_____ 40+

11. What is your personal (not family) pre-tax annual income?

_____ $25,000 or less
_____ $25,001 to $40,000
_____ $40,001 to $60,000
_____ $60,001 or more

THANK YOU!
Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

Status Enhancement Perception, Brand Loyalty, and Brand Involvement: A Quantitative Study

What is the study about? You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted for a dissertation at Columbia Southern University in Alabama, Orange Beach. The study is interested in your thoughts and opinions about our lingerie brand. No deception included in this study.

What will be asked of me? You will be asked to answer some questions about how you view the lingerie brand and a few demographic questions. It should take no longer than 5 minutes to fill out the survey.

Who is involved? The following people are involved in this research project and may be contacted at any time: Alex Lam and Dr. Robert Goldwasser.

Are there any risks? There are no known risks in this study. However, you may stop the study at any time. You can also choose not to answer any question that you feel uncomfortable answering.

What are some benefits? There are no direct benefits or incentives to you at the time when participating in this research. The results will have scientific interests that may have benefits for some businesses.

Is the study anonymous and confidential? The data collected in this study are confidential. Your name or personal information will not be linked to data. Only the researchers in this study will see the data.

Can I stop participating in this study? You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. You can skip any questions on the survey if you do not want to answer them.

We would be happy to answer any question that may arise about the study. Please direct your questions or comments to: Alex Lam at alexkslam@gmail.com or Dr. Robert Goldwasser at Robert.Goldwasser@columbiasouthern.edu.

Signatures
I have read the above description for the Status Enhancement Perception, Brand Loyalty, and Brand Involvement: A Quantitative Study. I understand what the study is about and what is being asked of me. My signature indicates that I agree to participate in the study.

Participant’s Name: ___________________ Researcher’s Name: ___________________

Participant’s Signature: _______________ Researcher’s Signature: _______________

Date: _________________
Appendix C

Permission to Perform Research at Site Location

From: xxxxx.xxxxxx@shaw.ca
To: alexkslam@gmail.com
Subject: RE: Permission to conduct survey
Date: Thu, Mar 26, 2015 at 12:30 PM

Dear Alex,

I am delighted to know your desire to help boost the company’s sales in terms of conducting this survey. On behalf of and as a CEO of the company, I grant you permission to conduct your doctoral research study about our lingerie brand and to collect survey data from our customers. To assist in data collection, the company will provide an incentive of extra 5% discount reward to each survey customer redeemable for the next purchase. One month before the data collection begins, please have the final version of the questionnaire survey ready for final approval. And please forward the results from your study directly to me when it is completed, along with a copy of your completed dissertation.

I wish you every success with your studies and feel free to contact me if necessary.

Sincerely yours,
Wendy Ng
CEO

From: alexkslam@gmail.com
To: xxxxx.xxxxxx@shaw.ca
Subject: Permission to conduct survey
Date: Thu, Mar 26, 2015 at 11:17 AM

Dear Ms. Ng,

My name is Alex Lam working at this lingerie brand organization as a finance manager. And I am a doctoral student seeking a Doctor of Business Administration degree from Columbia Southern University. My proposed dissertation research area concerns how consumers’ perception of this company’s brand as status-enhancing is related to their brand loyalty and brand involvement. In essence, the research result may have some positive impact on the organization on how to market the products based on the results on the consumers’ perception on this brand and the associated brand loyalty and brand involvement results.

In particular, the research study will include a short 11-item questionnaire survey for the company’s customers in which the survey will take no more than 5 minutes to complete.
Please see attachment for details. The survey is to be taken place in the organization’s local lingerie retail store; the target participant in this survey is 150. To facilitate in the survey, the store staff will invite willing participants to read and sign the informed consent form before allowing the participants to take the short survey based on answering those short questions. The researcher will not appear in the store. The completed survey and consent form will be brought to the researcher’s attention on a daily basis. There are no personal details to be collected on the informed consent form except the participant's name and signature.

I sincerely request your permission in order to conduct this research study and to have the store customers complete the questionnaire survey after they have completed their purchases.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Alex Lam
Appendix D

Permission to use Brand Loyalty Instrument

From: AChaudhuri@fairfield.edu
To: alexkslam@gmail.com
Subject: RE: Permission to use your brand loyalty scale
Date: Tue, Mar 24, 2015 at 1:41 PM

It’s public domain. Good luck. Arjun

Best Regards,
Arjun
ARJUN CHAUDHURI, Ph.D.
Rev. Thomas R. Fitzgerald, S.J. Professor of Marketing
Department of Marketing
Charles F. Dolan School of Business
Fairfield University
1073 North Benson Road,
Fairfield, CT 06824-5195
Email: AChaudhuri@fairfield.edu
Phone: 203 254 4000 (ext. 2823) Fax: 203 254 4105 https://twitter.com/achaudhuri

From: alexkslam@gmail.com
To: AChaudhuri@fairfield.edu
Subject: Permission to use your brand loyalty scale
Date: Tue, Mar 24, 2015 at 1:02 PM

Dear Dr. Chaudhuri,

My name is Alex Lam. I am a doctoral candidate working on a dissertation with title “Evaluating Relationships among Status Enhancement Perception, Brand Loyalty, and Brand Involvement: A Correlational Study on a Female Lingerie Brand.” I would like to seek your permission to use your brand loyalty scale for my research study.

Thank you.

Respectfully,
Alex Lam
Appendix E

Permission to Use Brand Involvement Instrument

From: akirmani@rhsmith.umd.edu
To: alexkslam@gmail.com
Subject: RE: Permission to use your brand involvement scale
Date: Wed, Mar 25, 2015 at 4:50 AM

Sure, but please cite that you got it from our paper.

Thanks,
AK
Amna Kirmani
Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Consumer Psychology
Professor of Marketing
Robert H. Smith School of Business
3467 Van Munching Hall
College Park, MD 20742
Phone: (301) 405-2202

From: alexkslam@gmail.com
To: akirmani@rhsmith.umd.edu
Subject: Permission to use your brand involvement scale
Date: Tue, Mar 24, 2015 at 1:10 PM

Dear Dr. Kirmani,

My name is Alex Lam. I am a doctoral candidate working on a dissertation with title “Evaluating Relationships among Status Enhancement Perception, Brand Loyalty, and Brand Involvement: A Correlational Study on a Female Lingerie Brand.” I would like to seek your permission to use your brand involvement scale for my research study.

Thank you

Respectfully,
Alex Lam
Appendix F

Permission to Use Instrument

From: cpiong@hotmail.com
To: alexkslam@gmail.com
Subject: RE: Permission to use your questionnaire survey
Date: Wed, Mar 25, 2015 at 10:19 AM

Hi Alex,

Thank you for your explanation. I applaud you on the interest in the topic. Yes, you can use the survey instrument and as well modify it to fit your research topic.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Chee Piong, Ph.D.

From: alexkslam@gmail.com
To: cpiong@hotmail.com
Subject: Permission to use your questionnaire survey
Date: Tue, Mar 24, 2015 at 12:57 PM

Dear Dr. Piong,

My name is Alex Lam. I am a doctoral candidate working on a dissertation with title “Evaluating Relationships among Status Enhancement Perception, Brand Loyalty, and Brand Involvement: A Correlational Study on a Female Lingerie Brand.” I would like to seek your permission to use your questionnaire survey for my research study.

In addition, I would also like to seek permission to amend the first eight items in the questionnaire survey in order to fit for my study only to the wordings from “Starbucks” to “this,” and from “coffeehouse brewed coffee” to “lingerie products.”

In particular, the items to be revised in the questionnaire survey will become:

1) I will buy this brand the next time I buy lingerie products.
2) I intend to keep purchasing this brand of lingerie products.
3) I am committed to this brand of lingerie products.
4) I would be willing to pay a higher price for this brand of lingerie products over other brands.
5) I relate to this brand of lingerie products.
6) This brand of lingerie products is important to me.
7) Are you involved or uninvolved with this brand of lingerie products?
8) Does using this brand of lingerie products tend to reduce or enhance a person’s status?

Thank you.

Respectfully,
Alex Lam