

## THE IMPACT OF STATUS CONSUMPTION ON SHOPPING STYLES: AN EXPLORATORY LOOK AT THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION

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*This study examined millennial consumers' relationships between status consumption and Sproles and Kendall's (1986) Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI). It was found that status consumption was a positive antecedent to five of the eight CSI's shopping style characteristics: brand conscious, novelty and fashion conscious, recreational and shopping conscious, impulsive/careless, and habitual/brand loyal, but not to the characteristics of perfectionist, confused by overchoice, and price conscious. The results suggest that those millennial consumers who are motivated to consume for status will utilize the shopping styles of being brand conscious, novelty/fashion conscious, recreational shoppers, impulsive shoppers, and brand loyal.*

### INTRODUCTION

It is estimated that global expenditures of luxury branded products will reach \$450 billion by 2012 (Verdict, 2007). Truong, Simmons, McColl, and Kitchen (2008, p. 191) and Gardyn (2002) note that luxury goods have become more affordable and accessible to new customers (the "democratization of luxury"), and more consumers are willing and able to pay a price premium for higher quality, higher status products. There is interest in luxury research and the luxury market (Truong, Simmons, McColl & Kitchen, 2008) with a need for additional empirical analysis of status consumption (Shukla, 2010) as the construct of status consumption specifically has been neglected in consumer research (Lertwannawit & Mandhachitara, 2012). "As significant levels of status consumption, therefore, are present in all communities," (Mason, 1992, p. 89); it is becoming more critical for managers to determine if there are differences in the propensity to consume for status and how does this impact shopping behavior.

Generational cohorts are an efficient and valid way to segment markets as different cohorts

have been impacted in a similar, consistent way by external events, and this influence of macro-environment changes impacts customer behavior patterns (Schewe & Noble, 2000; Schewe, Meredith, & Noble, 2000). Norum (2003) suggests generational differences in consumer purchase patterns do exist and need to be further addressed. Given the size of the millennial cohort, 93.4 million in the US alone (Census 2010) and the abundance of media, product, and lifestyle choices, the millennial generation requires a different marketing and retailing approach than previous generations (Neuborne & Kerwin, 1999; Phelps, 1999). Eastman & Liu (2012) found there are generational differences in the motivation to consume for status with higher levels of status consumption for the millennial generation than Generation X or Baby Boomer consumers. Thus, it makes sense for status marketers to specifically look at the millennial generation. Furthermore, Young and Hinesly (2012) stress that research is needed on the motives that underlie millennials' behaviors.

In terms of shopping styles, Bakewell and Mitchell (2004) stress that the consumer shopping styles measure originally developed by Sproles and Kendall (1986) is a meaningful means for segmenting distinct groups of buyers, for both men and women. "When consumers engage with the marketplace they display

relatively consistent decision-making styles by employing certain purchasing strategies and rules to guide their decision making” (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2004, p. 223). Shim (1996) offers that the utilitarian versus social/conspicuous shopping traits relate to different shopping styles. Per Cowart and Goldsmith (2007), different shopping styles can be significantly correlated with online apparel spending. Finally, Bakewell and Mitchell (2003) offer that millennial consumers have developed different shopping styles than previous generations and that more research is needed on millennial shopping styles to provide guidelines to marketers targeting this generation.

What has not been examined in the literature is how the motivation for status impacts differences in shopping styles for the millennial consumer. Given the size and importance of the luxury market (Verdict, 2007), along with a propensity for millennial consumers to be motivated by status (Eastman & Liu, 2012), a better understanding of the millennial status consumer and how their need for status impacts their shopping style is vital for marketers wanting to reach the millennial status consumer segment. There have been no studies that have looked specifically at if one’s motivation to consume for status impacts one’s shopping style. This paper addresses this by examining if the motivation to consume for status is an antecedent to consumer shopping styles as defined by Sproles and Kendall’s (1986) Consumer Styles Inventory. By determining if status consumption is impacting millennials’ shopping styles, marketers can better target and meet the needs of their millennial shoppers.

### STATUS CONSUMPTION

Status consumption is “the motivational process by which individuals strive to improve their social standing through the conspicuous consumption of consumer products that confer and symbolize status both for the individual and surrounding significant others” (Eastman, Goldsmith, & Flynn, 1999, p. 41). It is an individual difference variable that addresses a person’s motivation to consume for status

(Kilsheimer, 1993). This consumption-related need for status is the “tendency to purchase goods and services for the status or social prestige value that they confer on their owners” regardless of income or social class level (Eastman, Goldsmith, & Flynn, 1999, p. 41). This is similar to O’Cass and Frost’s (2002, p. 68) definition of status consumption as “the process of gaining status or social prestige from the acquisition and consumption of goods that the individual and significant others perceive to be high in status.” Chao and Schor (1998) define status consumption as purchases made by individuals who desire status products and brands with the consumption of these products being socially or publicly visible. Shukla (2008; 2010, p. 110) stresses that status consumption is “principally ‘irrational’ (psychological) in its expression and motivation” and significantly influenced by consumers’ ostentation behaviors.

Status is derived from the evidence of wealth provided by conspicuous consumption and the power that results from the associated respect, consideration and envy of others (Eastman, Goldsmith, & Flynn, 1999, p. 2; Veblen, 1899). The conspicuous consumption of luxury goods provides the consumer with satisfaction from others’ reactions to the wealth displayed rather than from the value of the product itself (Mason, 2001). This relates to Packard’s (1959, p. 5) view of status seekers as “people who are continually straining to surround themselves with visible evidence of the superior rank they are claiming.” Per Husic and Cicic (2009, p. 234), “by using status goods as symbols, individuals communicate meaning about themselves to their reference groups.” Finally, attitudes about luxury consumption are linked to the display of wealth and the symbolic meanings from one’s social position as status consumption fulfills hedonic consumption needs (Eng & Bogaert, 2010).

### SHOPPING STYLES

Research understanding the way consumers shop has been around for over half a century with early work developing typologies of

shopping styles (Stone, 1954). More typologies were developed as researchers used a variety of research approaches and different contexts (see Jarratt, 1996 for an overview). However, some consensus has been reached that some shoppers exhibit stable shopping styles and behaviors that may be in opposition to other shoppers (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003). Consumer decision-making style has been defined as “a mental orientation characterizing a consumer’s approach to making choices... has cognitive and affective characteristics” (Sproles & Kendall, 1986, p. 268). Similar to the concept of personality in psychology, individuals are perceived to have a consumption personality that is stable and enduring (Sproles & Kendall, 1986).

Pulling from the literature, Sproles and Kendall (1986) were the first to develop a way to measure decision-making style differences. They conceptualized and empirically tested a Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI) of eight basic decision-making style characteristics with a sample of 482 US high school students (Generation X consumers). The eight shopping styles identified are: perfectionist, brand consciousness, novelty, recreational, price conscious, impulsive, confused by overchoice,

and habitual. See Table 1 for definitions of each style. The CSI has been used in a variety of studies both in its entirety and for studies to focus on specific decision-making characteristics. Numerous studies have evaluated consumer decision-making or shopping styles in a variety of contexts such as online (Brashear, Keshyap, Musante, & Donthu, 2009), age/generational (Coward & Goldsmith, 2007) and gender (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003; Otnes & McGrath, 2000) with many looking through an international or cultural lens (see Hiu, Noel, Wang, & Chang, 2001 for a summary).

Sproles and Kendall (1986) explain each of the eight factors they identified as follows. The *perfectionist* consumer is focused on carefully searching for high-quality products and is not going to compromise with a product that they perceive as being “good enough.” The *brand conscious* consumer is partial to expensive, well-known national brands and believes that higher prices are an indication of higher quality. These shoppers prefer best-selling advertised brands and are likely to favor department and specialty stores. The *novelty* consumer is fashion conscious, trendy, and takes pleasure in discovering new things. Another important

**TABLE 1:**  
**Consumer Shopping Styles**

<b>Consumer Characteristic*</b>	<b>Description*</b>
Perfectionistic, High-Quality Conscious	Consumer searches carefully and systematically for the very best quality in products
Brand Conscious, “Price = Quality”	Consumer is oriented towards buying the more expensive, well-known brands
Novelty and Fashion Conscious	Consumers who like new and innovative products and gain excitement from seeking out new things
Recreational and Shopping Conscious	Consumer finds shopping a pleasant activity and enjoys shopping just for the fun of it
Price Conscious/ Value for the Money	Consumer with a particularly high consciousness of sale prices and lower prices in general
Impulsive/ Careless	Consumer who buys on the spur of the moment and appears unconcerned about how much he/she spends
Confused by Overchoice	Consumer perceiving too many brands and stores from which to choose and experiences information overload in the market
Habitual/ Brand Loyal	Consumer who repetitively chooses the same favorite brands and stores

\*Information from Sproles and Kendall (1986)

characteristic of the novelty consumer seems to be variety-seeking. This shopper likes innovative products (Sproles, 1985). The *recreational* consumer loves to shop just for the fun of it and shopping is a source of entertainment. This shopper enjoys the stimulation of looking for and choosing products (Sproles, 1985). The *impulsive* consumer exhibits little concern for the amount of money spent and have no specific plans for their shopping. However, impulsive shoppers may regret their shopping decisions later (Sproles, 1985). The *confused by overchoice* consumer struggles to make a purchasing decision given the amount of brands and stores. This shopper lacks confidence and experiences information overload. The *habitual* consumer seems to have favorite stores and/or brands that they purchase over and over. Finally, the *price conscious* consumer desires to get the most value for their money and is likely to be a comparison shopper. This shopper is concerned with getting lower prices and is conscious of sales prices (Sproles, 1985).

#### GENERATIONAL COHORTS AND THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION

A generational cohort is a group of individuals with shared similar cultural and historical experiences and unique common characteristics around these experiences (Beldona, Nusair & Demicco, 2009; Young & Hinesly, 2012). Wolburg & Pokrywczynski (2001) suggest three major influences found in generational marketing research: life stage, current conditions, and cohort experiences. Cohorts are significantly influenced by external events that occurred when they were “coming of age” (Schewe, Meredith, & Noble, 2000) and these can include “economic changes, wars, political ideologies, technological innovations, and social upheavals that have consequences on society act to redefine social values, attitudes, and preferences” (Schewe & Noble, 2000, p. 130). Per Young and Hinesly (2012), generational cohorts can also be impacted by the everyday commonplace experiences of culture in their early childhood. Thus, a particular cohort is associated with certain

unique values and priorities that may persist over their lifetimes (Jackson, Stoel, & Brantley, 2011, p. 1; Schewe & Noble, 2000), resulting in each cohort exhibiting distinct attitudes and behaviors (Moore & Carpenter, 2008).

Schewe et al. (2000) notes that a generation is usually 20-25 years in length, while a cohort can vary in length based on the external events that define it. The Baby Boomer generation is typically defined as consumers born between 1946 and 1964 (Norum, 2003; Schewe, Meredith, & Noble, 2000), while Generation X is defined as those born between 1965 and 1976 and Generation Y (millennials) as those born from 1977 to 1987 (Norum, 2003). The literature suggests that there are significant differences between the millennial generation and previous generations (Gurau, 2012). For this study, we are focusing on the millennial cohort (Generation Y).

The literature has found some differences by generational cohort in terms of status consumption. Eastman and Liu (2012) found significant differences in the level of status consumption by generational cohort with the average level of status consumption was highest for Generation Y (millennials), followed by Generation X and then Baby Boomers, with a significant difference between Generation Y and Baby Boomers. Furthermore, they found that holding generation constant, there is no significant relationship between gender, income, or education with status consumption. There is also no significant interaction between generational cohort and the demographic variables of gender, income, and education. This suggests that the relationship between generational cohort and status consumption is due only to generation and not being impacted by other demographic variables (Eastman & Liu, 2012).

Millennials are considered the first high-tech generation (Norum, 2003) and are perceived as consumption-oriented and sophisticated shoppers (Jackson, Stoel, & Brantley, 2011; Wohlburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001) who are confident in making purchasing decisions

(Barber, Taylor & Dodd, 2009). The millennial generation is very concerned about social responsibility and environmental issues (Barber, Taylor & Dodd, 2009; Smith, 2012) as they are seen as the most socially conscious generation in the past fifty years (Meister & Willyerd, 2010). Millennials are very driven and want employers who will provide them a constant stream of feedback with a road map for success (Meister & Willyerd, 2010). Millennials are also seen as the most protected and indulged generation, with an inability to delay gratification (Tucker, 2006). Bakewell and Mitchell (2003, p. 97) suggest that millennials have been more acculturated than previous generations into a materialistic and consumer culture due to technological innovations.

Marketers see millennials as having a high level of spending power (Martin & Turley, 2004; Wolburg & Pokrwczyński, 2001) whose social networks are vital to them (Hewlett, Sherbin & Sumberg, 2009). Millennials look to their peers to determine the merit of a product and considers their peers to be more credible than traditional media or company sources of information (Smith, 2012, p. 87). As a macro-environmental influence, the global recession has influenced the spending habits of millennials, but pre-recession surveys suggested they would be a thrifty generation (Miller & Washington, 2012). Many millennials were raised in working parent(s) households and as a result, they have learned to make shopping decisions earlier than previous generations (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003). Shopping has also become an entertaining experience and a recreational hobby for many millennial consumers (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003; Lehtonen & Maenpää, 1997).

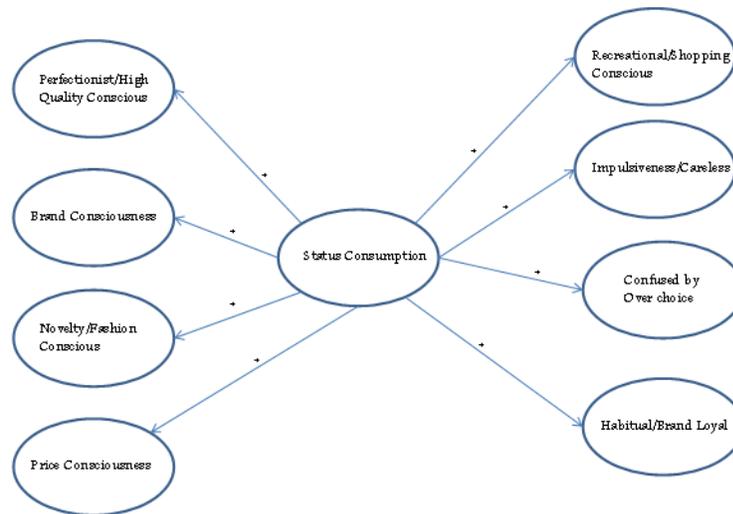
### HYPOTHESES

The literature does not propose specific relationships between the antecedent of status consumption, the motivation to consume for status, and the Sproles and Kendall's (1986) shopping styles, although there are a couple of articles that somewhat relate. Bakewell and

Mitchell (2003) found support for millennials exhibiting a materialistic/opulent shopping style. Shim (1996) related Sproles and Kendall's (1986) shopping styles to three shopping orientations for adolescent consumers. Shim (1996, p. 549) offers that a utilitarian shopper orientation is related more to perfectionism and price/value consciousness traits because quality and price are emphasized; while a social/conspicuous shopping orientation is associated more with brand consciousness, novelty/fashion consciousness, recreational shopping consciousness, and habitual/brand loyal shopping traits as these consumers seek well-known brands or expensive products, and are drawn to the recreational aspects of shopping. Shim (1996) then relates an undesirable shopping orientation to impulsive/careless and confused by overchoice traits as these may lead to poor shopping decisions. In developing our hypotheses, we had to look beyond the shopping styles literature to also consider the millennial and status literature in proposing our hypotheses between status consumption and each of the eight shopping styles.

Per Lachance, Beaudoin, and Robitaille (2003) prestigious brand name clothing is very important to adolescents. O'Cass and Frost (2002, p. 82), in a study of young status-conscious consumers, found they "are more likely to be affected by a status brand's symbolic characteristics, by feelings evoked by the brand and by the degree of congruency between the brand-user's self-image and the brand image." Chao and Schor (1998) suggest that younger consumers spend more on branded products including status products. Finally, Moore and Carpenter (2008) found that millennials are the cohort most likely to buy prestigious clothing, while Boomers are significantly less prestige sensitive. Thus, the literature suggests that branding is a key element of status products, particularly for younger consumers (Chao & Schor, 1998). Finally, millennials are very success-driven (Meister & Willyerd, 2010) and status products may be one way they can demonstrate their success. Based on the literature, we propose

**FIGURE 1:**  
**Conceptual Model of the Hypothesized Relationships**



that millennial consumers who are more motivated by status consumption, will be more likely to have both a perfectionist shopping style and a brand conscious shopping style as illustrated in Figure 1.

*H<sub>1</sub>: Millennials who are more motivated by status consumption will be more likely to perceive themselves as having a perfectionist shopping style.*

*H<sub>2</sub>: Millennials who are more motivated by status consumption will be more likely to perceive themselves as having a brand conscious shopping style.*

Fashion innovators are less price-sensitive and willing to pay more for new fashions (Goldsmith, Kim, Flynn, & Kim, 2005; Goldsmith, Flynn, & Kim, 2010). Status consumption is also positively related to clothing innovativeness (Goldsmith, Flynn, & Kim, 2010). The literature has also discussed the link between luxury consumption and fashion marketing (Ko & Megehee, 2012). McDonald (1993, p. 59) suggests that fashionable shoppers have an interest in the latest clothing styles and a variety of apparel along with being image-oriented and emotional. Recreational shoppers enjoy the fun aspects of

shopping and are less quality and value oriented (McDonald, 1993). In terms of mall shopping, the literature suggests that college aged millennial consumers are objectively motivated shoppers (Martin & Turley, 2004), but we also know that millennials are socially motivated (Hewlett, Sherbin, & Sumberg, 2009) and see their peers as more credible than traditional information sources (Smith, 2012). We offer that due to this social, hedonic motivation, those millennial consumers more motivated by status consumption will be more concerned about the social implications of their shopping as status consumption is a socially-oriented motivation due to the need for conspicuous consumption (Chao & Schor, 1998; Eastman, Goldsmith & Flynn, 1999; Eng & Bogaert, 2010; Husic & Cicic, 2009; O’Cass & Frost, 2002). These more status oriented millennial consumers will be more interested in fashion and the recreation of shopping. Thus, we propose the following hypotheses as illustrated in Figure 1.

*H<sub>3</sub>: Millennials who are more motivated by status consumption will be more likely to perceive themselves as having a novelty/fashion conscious shopping style.*

*H<sub>4</sub>: Millennials who are more motivated by status consumption will be more likely to perceive themselves as having a recreational/shopping conscious shopping style.*

Tucker (2006) suggests that millennials are an indulged generation, with an inability to delay gratification. In terms of status consumption, Shukla (2008; 2010) offers that status consumption is irrational and ostentatious. "Status-seeking consumers are concerned with what relevant consumers consider the best (and by extension, prestigious) choices to help gain group status" as it is important "for the status-seeking consumer to stay within the bounds of the prescribed social norms of the group" (Clark, Zboja & Goldsmith, 2007, p. 45). Eng and Bogaert (2010) offer that status consumption meets hedonic rather than utilitarian needs. Thus, we suggest that the indulged millennial more motivated by status will be impulsive and confused as they are not motivated by utilitarian needs, but rather to impress others. Thus, we propose the following hypotheses as illustrated in Figure 1.

*H<sub>5</sub>: Millennials who are more motivated by status consumption will be more likely to perceive themselves as having an impulsive/careless shopping style.*

*H<sub>6</sub>: Millennials who are more motivated by status consumption will be more likely to perceive themselves as having a confused by overchoice shopping style.*

McDonald (1993, p. 56) describes brand loyalty as "the repetitive purchase of a brand, resulting from consumers learning that one brand can best satisfy their needs." While brand loyalty implies a psychological commitment, repeat purchases can also simply involve habitual repurchasing (McDonald, 1993). In a study of young millennials dealing with search engine loyalty, Veloutsou and McAlonan (2012) found that search engine loyalty was predicted in part by emotional connection, reputation, and satisfaction. Gurau (2012) offers that the

literature is mixed concerning the brand loyalty of millennials and that additional research is needed. Finally, Goldsmith et al. (2010, p. 332) suggests from his sample of college students, that when status-seeking consumers discover which brands convey status that they will stay with those brands for as long as the status effect lasts.

The status literature suggests that with a Veblenian and Snob motivation, price is used as a cue to indicate prestige (Vigneron and Johnson, 1999). With the Veblenian motivation, price is an indicator of prestige as a higher price can impress others as a show of ostentation, while with the Snob motivation, price is an indicator of exclusivity and non-conformity as snob consumers avoid using popular brands (Mason, 1992; Vigneron and Johnson, 1999). We offer that a Veblenian or Snob motivation may not hold with millennials because the literature suggests that even pre-recession, millennials are thrifty (Miller & Washington, 2012) with significant shopping experience (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003). Per Gauzente and Roy (2012, p. 85), price conscious millennials, "tend to spend more time on gathering and processing price-related information and this includes not only explicit price-information but also other product information" suggesting that price conscious millennials will look at non-price features. Thus, for millennials more motivated by status consumption, they will be loyal to what has met their status needs. Additionally, they will be able to indulge their status needs while being price conscious due to their willingness to spend time gathering information. Thus, we propose the following hypotheses as illustrated in Figure 1.

*H<sub>7</sub>: Millennials who are more motivated by status consumption will be more likely to perceive themselves as having a habitual/brand loyal shopping style.*

*H<sub>8</sub>: Millennials who are more motivated by status consumption will be more likely to perceive themselves as having a price conscious shopping style.*

**METHODOLOGY**

In this section we describe our data collection and sample along with the constructs measurement. Then we describe the purification of the measures including construct validity assessment and the structural model estimation.

**Data Collection and Sample**

The survey data was gathered with a pen and paper instrument by the authors utilizing a convenience sample of millennial respondents in a variety of business classes from freshman to graduate level. This convenience sample was considered appropriate, as the purpose of the study was not to provide point estimates of the variables, but to test the relationships among them (Calder et al., 1981). There were 260 surveys collected with 243 fully completed and usable. Of those 17 not utilized, 15 involved missing items and two involved an incorrect response to the item “If you have read this item, please circle 3”. Thus, all of the 243 surveys

analyzed were completely filled out with evidence of the respondents reading the survey items.

The sample was somewhat more male (67.9%) with the age of the sample primarily comprised of the millennial generation, being born after 1977 (Kennedy, 2001; Norum, 2003; Paul, 2001), with the average age being 21.77 years old (standard deviation of 3.34 years). Per AACSB (2013), males make up approximately 59% of business school enrollment. For our purposes of focusing on the millennial generation, we dropped from further analysis three respondents over the age of 35 (1.2%) that were not part of the millennial generation. The majority of the sample was Caucasian (77.8%) though there was a good representation of African Americans (15.6%) in the sample. Per the National Center for Educational Statistics (2013), African Americans make up approximately 14% of college enrollment. Thus, our sample did reflect fairly closely to key college enrollment demographics. Finally, the majority of the sample did not belong to a

**TABLE 2:  
Sample**

<b>Gender</b>		
	Male	67.9%
	Female	32.1%
<b>Age</b>		<b>Mean 21.77 years/SD 3.34</b>
	18-25 years old	93.8%
	26-35 years old	5.0%
	36-46 years old	1.2%%
<b>Ethnic</b>		
	White	77.8%
	African American	15.6%
	Hispanic	1.2%
	Asian	2.1%
	Other	3.3%
<b>Greek Membership</b>		
	Yes	21.8%
	No	78.2%
<b>Currently Employed</b>		
	No	51.9%
	1 -10 hours	15.2%
	11-20 hours	16.9%
	21-30 hours	7.0%
	More than 30 hours	9.1%

Greek social organization (78.2%) and were not employed (51.9%) while attending school.

**Construct Operationalization**

All items used in the analysis utilized established scales with a five point Likert scale as shown in Table 3. The Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI) was measured using the Sproles and Kendall (1986) scale. Status Consumption was measured using the Eastman et al. (1999) scale.

**Measures and Purification**

Following a process recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), the measurement quality of the indicators was evaluated. Anderson and Gerbing (1988) recommend that researchers first refine the measurement model before testing the structural component of the model. The goal is a final set of items with acceptable discriminant and convergent validity, internal consistency, reliability and parsimony. Every factor in this

**TABLE 3:  
Measurement Items (Scale items)**

	<b>Standardized Loading/t-values</b>	<b>Source</b>
<b>Perfectionist/High Quality Conscious (CR=0.90; VE=0.74)</b>		Sproles and Kendall 1986
When it comes to purchasing products, I try to get the very best or perfect choice.	0.82 (15.01)	
In general, I usually try to buy the best overall quality.	0.86 (16.14)	
I make a special effort to choose the very best quality products.	0.91 (17.60)	
<b>Brand Consciousness/Price Equals Quality (CR=0.85; VE=0.65)</b>		
The well-known national brands are for me.	0.82 (14.50)	
The more expensive brands are usually my choices.	0.85 (15.40)	
I prefer buying the best-selling brands.	0.75 (12.95)	
<b>Novelty and Fashion Consciousness (CR=0.92; VE=0.80)</b>		
I usually have one or more outfits of the very newest style.	0.89 (17.34)	
I keep my wardrobe up-to-date with the changing fashions.	0.95 (19.41)	
Fashionable, attractive styling is very important to me.	0.84 (16.01)	
<b>Recreational and Shopping Conscious (CR=0.84; VE=0.64)</b>		
Shopping is not a pleasant activity for me (R)	0.91 (17.01)	
Shopping the stores wastes my time (R)	0.77 (13.44)	
I make shopping trips fast (R)	0.71 (12.04)	
<b>Impulsiveness/Careless (CR=0.80; VE=0.57)</b>		
I should plan my shopping more carefully than I do.	0.66 (10.43)	
I am impulsive when purchasing.	0.80 (12.87)	
Often I make careless purchases I later wish I had not.	0.79 (12.79)	
<b>Confused by Over choice (CR=0.79; VE=0.57)</b>		
Sometimes it's hard to choose which stores to shop.	0.61 (9.43)	
The more I learn about products, the harder it seems to choose the best.	0.84 (13.24)	
All the information I get on different products confuses me.	0.77 (11.97)	
<b>Habitual/Brand Loyal (CR=0.83; VE=0.71)</b>		
I have favorite brands I buy over and over.	0.87 (12.22)	
Once I find a product or brand I like, I stick with it.	0.82 (11.65)	
<b>Status Consumption (CR=0.88; VE=0.66)</b>		Eastman et al. 1999
I would buy a product just because it has status.	0.86 (16.43)	
I am interested in new products with status.	0.87 (16.57)	
I would pay more for a product if it had status.	0.90 (17.41)	
A product is more valuable to me if it has some snob appeal.	0.57 (9.25)	

**TABLE 4:**  
**Construct Correlations, Means, Standard Deviations and Coefficient Alpha**

Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Perfectionist	1							
2. Brand Conscious	0.267**	1						
3. Novelty/Fashion	0.143**	0.304**	1					
4. Recreational	-0.041	0.010	0.514**	1				
5. Impulsiveness	-0.071	0.219**	0.153*	0.174**	1			
6. Confused	-0.147*	0.041	0.045	-0.012	0.124	1		
7. Habitual/Brand Loyal	0.165**	0.313**	0.038	-0.109	0.069 <sup>0</sup>	0.104	1	
8. Status Consumption	0.030	0.443**	0.443**	0.146*	0.177**	0.029	0.141*	1
<b>Mean</b>	4.08	3.00	3.08	3.02	3.03	2.63	4.11	2.65
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	0.66	0.75	1.00	0.99	0.82	0.74	0.56	0.82
<b>Coefficient Alpha</b>	0.83	0.80	0.89	0.79	0.76	0.70	0.72	0.84

study was submitted to a confirmatory factor analysis and all factor loadings were significant at the 0.01 level and all individual reliabilities were above the required value of 0.4 (Bagozzi & Baumgartner 1994). Per Bagozzi and Yi (1988) and Bagozzi and Baumgartner (1994), a composite reliability of at least 0.7 is desirable. This requirement was met with the exception of Sproles and Kendall's (1986) Price Conscious scale. As the Price Conscious construct did not exhibit the required reliability or convergent/discriminant validity, it did not justify the model fit and was not included in the model and thus H8 dealing with Price Conscious was not tested.

After assessing the individual factors, the reduced set of items was subjected together to a confirmatory factor analysis using maximum likelihood estimation via LISREL 8.5. Tables 3 and 4 report construct inter-correlations as well as additional information on the reliability and validity of these measures. Although the chi-square value for the measurement model is significant (534.70 with 224 d.f.,  $p < 0.001$ ), other goodness-of-fit measures indicate a good overall fit of the model to the data: RMSEA = 0.07 (see Baumgartner & Homburg, 1996), NNFI = 0.91, IFI = 0.92 and CFI = 0.92.

### Construct Validity Assessment

Additional analyses were conducted to provide more confidence concerning the measurement

properties of the scale. The next step was assessing the validity of the model. Each of the items exhibited acceptable loadings (path estimate  $> 0.50$ ) and were significant ( $t$ -value  $> 2.0$ ), thus indicating acceptable convergent validity. As evidence of discriminant validity, none of the confidence intervals of the phi matrix included 1.00 (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). In addition, the amount of variance extracted for each construct was compared with the squared phi estimates (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) and the estimates for all constructs was greater than the squared phi estimate, further supporting sufficient discrimination between the variables. All factor loadings were significantly different from zero, as evidenced by their consistently large  $t$ -values. Finally, the reliability of the scales was assessed via the calculation of composite reliability scores. These scores ranged from 0.79 to 0.96, all of which are above the cutoff of 0.6 suggested by Bagozzi, Yi, and Phillips (1991). Based on these results, the measures have sufficient validity and reliability and so allow testing the hypothesized model.

### Structural Model Estimation

The hypotheses were tested within the framework of structural equation modeling through LISREL 8.5 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993) using the items shown in Table 3. Our study tested for common method variance using the marker variable approach (e.g., Fang et al.,

**TABLE 5:**  
**LISREL Results for the Hypothesized Model**

Hypothesis	Path	Completely Standardized Estimate	t-value	Result
H <sub>1</sub>	Status Consumption → Perfectionist/HQ Conscious	0.07	1.00	Not Supported
H <sub>2</sub>	Status Consumption → Brand Consciousness	<b>0.56</b>	<b>7.72</b>	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>3</sub>	Status Consumption → Novelty and Fashion Consciousness	<b>0.52</b>	<b>7.89</b>	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>4</sub>	Status Consumption → Recreational/Shopping Consciousness	<b>0.22</b>	<b>3.08</b>	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>5</sub>	Status Consumption → Impulsiveness/Careless	<b>0.27</b>	<b>3.59</b>	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>6</sub>	Status Consumption → Confused by Over choice	0.04	0.53	Not Supported
H <sub>7</sub>	Status Consumption → Habitual/brand Loyal	<b>0.23</b>	<b>3.89</b>	<b>Supported</b>

2008) and found no evidence that it was biasing the overall results. The results of the hypotheses test are shown in Table 5. The fit of the data to the proposed model is quite good: ( $\chi^2_{(245)} = 670.600$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ; RMSEA = 0.08; IFI = 0.91; CFI = 0.91; NNFI = 0.90), thus supporting the model's structure.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As illustrated in Table 5, we found significant positive relationships with status consumption and five of the seven shopping styles tested (H<sub>2</sub>) Brand Conscious; (H<sub>3</sub>) Novelty/Fashion Conscious; (H<sub>4</sub>) Recreational/Shopping Conscious; (H<sub>5</sub>) Impulsiveness/Careless; and (H<sub>7</sub>) Habitual/Brand Loyal) as illustrated in Table 5. We did not find support between the relationship of status consumption and the shopping styles of either Perfectionist (H<sub>1</sub>) or Confused by Overchoice (H<sub>6</sub>).

In examining the specific hypotheses results, how they relate to the past research and what they suggest for retailers, one needs to consider the status and shopping styles literature along with the qualities attributed to the millennial generation. The status literature suggests that status consumers are interested in a product or brands' level of status or prestige (Eastman, Goldsmith, & Flynn, 1999) and that the products consumed are socially or publically visible (Chao & Schor, 1998). Eng and Bogaert (2010) note that status consumption meets hedonic needs. Finally, Shukla (2008, 2010) stresses that status motivation is irrational.

First, in examining the non-significant finding of H<sub>1</sub> (Perfectionist/High Quality), Sproles and

Kendall (1986) suggest that these consumers are carefully searching for high quality products. Shim (1996) suggests that a utilitarian shopping style is associated with perfectionism and price/value consciousness; what Stone (1954) describes as the economic shopper. Mason (1992) suggests that status consumers explain their motivation for status products by focusing on the superior utility and value of a product. A reason for our non-significant finding could be that status consumers may not be necessarily shopping for the best quality product, but instead focusing on products that convey prestige (Eastman, Goldsmith & Flynn, 1999; Mason, 2001; Phau & Cheong, 2009). Perhaps status consumers are not utilizing perfectionist/high quality as a shopping style, but to instead explain or justify why they bought a status brand. Thus, the need for status may be motivated more by hedonic needs (Eng & Bogaert, 2010) than utilitarian needs. Furthermore, the motivation to consume for status may not be a rational motivation (Shukla, 2008, 2010). For marketers trying to reach the status millennial consumer, they need to highlight those features that are hedonically appealing to this cohort, such as the "affect" elements like color, size, appearance, and product presentation to make the product more appealing.

Second, for H<sub>2</sub> (Brand Conscious), the literature clearly shows a link between ones' motivation to consume for status and brand consciousness, particularly for millennials, as they are concerned with brand image, are prestige sensitive, and spend more on branded products (Chao & Schor, 1998; Moore & Carpenter, 2008; O'Cass & Frost, 2002). For millennial

consumers, this need for prestige may be even stronger than that of other generations (Eastman & Liu, 2012; Moore & Carpenter, 2008). Shim (1996) offers that the social/conspicuous trait is associated with brand consciousness. Smith (2012) stresses the credibility of peers as a source of information with millennials talking about and influencing each other online. Liao and Wang (2009, p. 991) offer that people shop for brand name products not just for material possession purposes, but also for social needs as an important way to keep, save, and gain face and consumers motivated by status will have a high level of brand consciousness as they believe that brands are symbols of status. This suggests that it could be the social impact of peers relating to brand consciousness for status-motivated millennials. For marketing managers targeting millennials, they could utilize social media, celebrity endorsers seen as having status that are identifiable to millennials, and/or utilizing product placement in status entertainment pieces to better communicate about their brand to status conscious millennials.

Third, for H<sub>3</sub> (Novelty/Fashion Conscious), the literature suggests that this consumer is trendy and interested in new things (McDonald, 1993; Sproles & Kendall, 1986). Lertwannawit and Mandhachitara (2012) found an interest in status consumption related to fashion consciousness. Bakewell and Mitchell (2003) recommend that retailers offer a selection of prestigious brands that emphasize quality and fashion to reach the recreational quality-seeking shopper. Shim (1996) offers that the social/conspicuous trait is associated with novelty/fashion conscious and that peers and TV commercials positively impact adolescents with this shopping style. Wolburg and Pokrywczynski (2001) suggest that television and direct mail have been found to be more informative for millennials. The literature offers that even men are interested in fashion (Bakewell & Mitchell, 1996; Lertwannawit & Mandhachitara, 2012). Thus, millennial status consumers may be concerned with the newest trends in their social circles. We suggest that

marketers have to continue to innovate in terms of their status product lines (particularly those that relate to fashion), communicate these innovations utilizing television, direct mail, and social media to both men and women, and cannot rely on past successes.

Fourth, for H<sub>4</sub> (Recreational/Shopping Conscious), the literature suggests that these consumers love to shop as a form of entertainment (McDonald, 1993; Sproles & Kendall, 1986). Status products can provide an affective, hedonistic benefit to consumers (O'Casey and Frost, 2002) and shopping has been related to the hedonic value of shopping to fun, playfulness, enjoyment, and shopping as entertainment (Babin, Darden & Griffin, 1994). In terms of millennials, the literature suggests that shopping has become an entertaining experience and a recreational hobby (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003; Lehtonen & Maenpaa, 1997). This fits with Shim (1996) who notes that the social/conspicuous trait is associated with recreational/shopping conscious and is positively impacted by peers and TV commercials. Our results suggest that for retailers to reach the millennial status consumer, they have to make the shopping experience fun and entertaining, especially given the social needs of millennials (Hewlett et al., 2009) and social aspects of status consumption (Kilsheimer, 1993). We offer that shopping malls are the place to hang out for this generation of consumers. Shopping helps them enjoy time with their friends and peers. Per Bellenger and Korgaonkar (1980), atmospherics and in-store merchandising are the most effective strategies in reaching the recreational shopper. This suggests that retailers need to focus on better store atmospherics to meet the fun and social needs of the millennial status motivated recreational shopper.

Fifth, for H<sub>5</sub> (Impulsive/Careless), Sproles and Kendall (1986) suggest that these consumers are not concerned with the amount of money spent and do not plan their shopping carefully. While this conflicts with Miller and Washington's (2012) idea of millennial

consumers being thrifty, it does relate to Shukla's (2008, 2010) idea that the motivation to consume for status is irrational and Podeshen and Andrzejewski (2012) suggestion that prestige products can be purchased impulsively for social needs. Thus, the results do make sense that for those millennials more motivated to consume for status, they could be more impulsive and careless in terms of money and shopping plans. For retailers, this suggests that millennial status consumers may be less concerned with price, but further research specifically looking at reliable and valid measures of price consciousness or sensitivity is needed before this could be determined. This was not able to be done in this study utilizing Sproles and Kendall's (1986) price conscious shopping style measure. We offer that these consumers are not concerned about how much they spend as they are looking for instant gratification per Tucker (2006). They just want the product now. Thus, retailers need to make sure that they have quantities in stock to satisfy these consumers.

Sixth, for  $H_6$  (Confused by Overchoice), Sproles and Kendall (1986) suggest that this consumer struggles to make purchasing decisions. The literature suggests that millennial consumers are confident making purchasing decisions (Barber et al., 2009) and have learned to make shopping decisions at a younger age than previous generations (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003). As status consumers have a specific motivation to consume, it makes sense that there is not a relationship between status consumption and confused by overchoice for millennial consumers. For status conscious millennial consumers, they know what they are seeking. Marketers need to be clear in their message and state the key attributes that would differentiate their status product from competitive offerings.

Finally, for  $H_7$  (Habitual/Brand Loyal), Sproles and Kendall (1986) suggest that this consumer has favorite brands that they consume repeatedly. Podeshen and Andrzejewski (2012) suggest that consumers of prestige products are more likely to be brand loyal. Per McDonald

(1993), loyalty shoppers are also concerned with quality and image. This relates with Shim (1996) that the social/conspicuous trait is associated with a habitual/brand loyal shopping style and is positively impacted by peers and TV commercials. For status consumers, it makes sense that they would be brand loyal to brands that provide them status benefits (Goldsmith, Flynn, & Kim, 2010) as the congruency between a brand's image and their self-image is important to them (O'Cass & Frost, 2002). We offer that marketers need to continually illustrate how their status brands continue to fit the social, hedonic needs of their millennial consumer.

#### LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Our study was the first to focus on relating status consumption to shopping styles and found that for millennial consumers who are motivated to consume for status, they are more likely to demonstrate the shopping styles of being brand conscious, novelty/fashion conscious, along with being recreational and impulsive shoppers and brand loyal. There were several limitations to this study though including the use of a convenience sample that focused on the southeast region of the United States. Future research suggests utilizing a national randomized study. Another limitation was that we were unable to look at price consciousness in this study due to problems with the measure. Future research is needed to more closely examine the construct of price consciousness/sensitivity. A related idea is looking at the idea value consciousness or value shoppers as McDonald (1993) suggests that these shoppers are the least image oriented. One means to look at this would be to utilize the consumer decision-making style measure of price-value consciousness as developed by Bauer, Sauer, and Becker (2006). A final limitation is that we only looked at one generational cohort, millennials. Research is needed to compare the relationship between status consumption and shopping styles for other cohorts. Research is also needed to

expand beyond cohorts to also consider other variables, such as life-stage segmentation (Gurau, 2012), and demographic differences, such as gender (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2004).

Future research could examine what other factors could be impacting the effect that status consumption has on shopping styles and what that means for retailers. For example, does hedonic consumption play a role? Status products can provide an affective, hedonistic benefit to consumers (O’Cass & Frost, 2002) and status consumption fulfils hedonic consumption needs (Eng & Bogaert, 2010). People can buy luxury brands for their subjective emotional benefits, intrinsically pleasing aspects, and sensory gratification and pleasure, rather than for functional features (Vickers & Renand, 2003; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Kapferer & Bastien, 2009; Eng & Bogaert, 2010). “Luxury-seekers are considered hedonic consumers when they are looking for personal rewards and fulfillment acquired through the purchase and consumption of products evaluated for their subjective emotional benefits and intrinsically pleasing properties, rather than functional benefits” (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004, 490). “Luxury should have a very strong personal and hedonistic component otherwise it is no longer luxury but simple snobbery” (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009, p. 314). Thus, future research is needed to determine what constructs moderate and mediate the impact status consumption has on shopping styles.

Jackson et al. (2011) found millennial shoppers to have some of the lowest mall attitude (in terms of hygiene factors, location convenience, and entertainment) means compared to other cohorts. Given the size of the millennial cohort (Census, 2010), it is critical that retailers develop a better understanding of how to attract the millennial shopper. For retailers trying to reach millennial status shoppers, they need to ensure that their stores have the latest status brands in a fun environment and treat their customers well so they will be loyal. More research is needed to further examine these relationships in terms of specific shopping behaviors and specific retailer actions. This

study makes a contribution to the literature by looking at status consumption as an antecedent to shopping styles and hopes to spur more research in this area.

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