

**THE EFFECT OF PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT ON
SOCIALY RESPONSIBLE CONSUMER BEHAVIOR**

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the Degree of Master of Science**

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And hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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To my little sister:

Mahboobeh

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ABSTRACT

Consumers show dissimilar behaviors towards products at their purchase intention considering companies' socially responsible practices. In addition, consumers may not show same practices for both low and high involvement products while purchasing. Literature review suggests that consumers in the U.S expect companies to be socially responsible in both environmental and social dimensions. This is more critical in apparel industry due to several violations regarding these both dimensions. On the other hand, socially responsible consumers pay more attention to these practices compared to other clusters of consumers including browns.

This study sought to investigate the relation between information related to socially responsibility (SRI), consumers' profile (PRFL), and product involvement (INV) on consumers purchase intention. For this study, SRI was considered to have 2 dimensions: present and absent. The PRFL also had two categories, socially responsible and brown consumers. Similarly, INV had two levels of involvement, high and low. A 2X2X2 matrix was designed and each participant was exposed to two of profiles in a random order.

The study supports that consumers have concern about clothing products and companies' practices affect their purchase intention. Also, the effect of information related to SRI is associated with consumers' profile. In addition, products' level of involvement is associated with SRI and consumers' profile on their purchase intention. Moreover, this study compliments the former studies by suggesting that not all groups of consumers want to be good citizens by purchasing higher involvement

products with related SRI. Implications, limitations and scope of further research are also discussed.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 contains the following sections (a) background of the study, (b) purpose of the study, and (c) significance of the study.

Background of the study

Consumers' social responsibility behavior toward companies' practices are rapidly growing (Roberts, 1995), however different groups of consumers show dissimilar practices depending on their purchase intention (Roberts, 1995; Roberts, 1996; Mohr, Webb , & Harris, 2001). Socially responsible consumer behavior (SRCB) can be defined as behavior toward minimizing any harmful effect and maximizing any useful effect on society in one or more of the consumption stages. The consumers may want to be responsible in either some particular steps or through the entire process (Mohr, Webb , & Harris, 2001; Ha-Brookshire & Hodge, 2007). SRCB covers both environmental responsibility and social responsibility (Ha-Brookshire & Hodge, 2007). Consumer behavior may be represented by supporting and purchasing a certain product that helps their view on society and responsibility toward the environment, while boycotting others that may cause harm (Ha-Brookshire & Norum, 2011).

According to Antil, 1984, a products level of involvement is considered as an important and effective variable in marketing research. High involvement products are defined as less frequently purchased, more complex, naturally expensive, or requiring high amounts of time and effort from consumers (Murphy & Enis, 1986; Radder & Huang, 2008; Fish, 2009; Tanner & Raymond, 2012), while low involvement products are defined as more frequently purchased products for which consumers pay a minimum amount of time and price. Low involvement

products have less complexity compare to high involvement products. (Murphy & Enis, 1986; Radder & Huang, 2008; Fish, 2009; Tanner & Raymond, 2012).

In addition to product involvement as a category for consumer preference, the degree of a product's level of involvement, which is due to the product's characteristics, is capable of determining a consumer's attitude toward entire product categories. As a result, consumer response remains dissimilar and they show different purchase behavior based on the involvement level. (Martin, 1998; Soloman, Surprenant, Czepiel, & Guttman, 1985; Ha & Lennon, 2010; Bian & Luiz, 2011; Tanner & Raymond, 2012).As the level of involvement goes higher, the level of risk increases and consumers show more engagement in finding extensive information in their purchase behavior (Bin & Koh, 1999; Tanner & Raymond, 2012).

Purpose of this study

Despite the growing importance of social responsibility among consumers and the expectations from companies as the result of increasing consumption in the U.S. (Roberts, 1995) and the importance of a product's level of involvement on purchasing behavior, little research has been done that focuses on all these effective factors in influencing the level of involvement, and how the level of involvement can affect the purchase intention of consumers in the clothing industry. To fill this gap this study aims to research on how different levels of a product's involvement influence the levels of a socially responsible consumer's preferences and the resulting purchase intention of the consumer.

Although most literature just focuses on one aspect of social responsibility- either environmental or social aspects- (Mohr, Webb , & Harris, 2001), this study covers both environmental and social concerns and their related practices in the society.

Significance of this study

The positive relationship between a company's social responsibility activities and the consumer's purchase intention has a well-studied beneficial correlation (Roberts, 1995; Roberts, 1996; Creyer, 1997; Hustvedt & Bernard, 2010). Research indicates that consumers in U.S expect companies to be socially responsible to the society and environment (Creyer, 1997; Hustvedt & Bernard, 2010). Since the textile and apparel market industry have a history of violations concerning labor and environmental factors, companies are considering these as important factors for consumers purchasing products (Hustcedt & Bernard, 2008). Further, research shows consumers will pay higher prices for the products from companies showing such awareness (Creyer, 1997; Dickson, 2001; Prasad, Kimeldorf, Meyer, & Robinson, 2004; Ha-Brookshire & Hodge, 2007; Hustcedt & Bernard, 2008; Hustvedt & Bernard, 2010). On the other hand, consumers are more likely to punish and boycott companies that do not meet compliance expectations by not purchasing their products (Creyer, 1997; Klein , Smith, & John, 2004; Webb, Mohr, & Harris, 2008).

The research on classifying and categorizing U.S consumers in different clusters based on their concern to social and environmental responsibilities has resulted in different purchase behaviors based on the profile (Roberts, 1995; Roberts, 1996; Durif et al 2011). Since, this study focuses on the acquisition and usage stages of clothing consumption, but not the discarding stage, the Roberts profiles include the socially responsible profile, middle American profile, green profile and brown profile (Winakor, 1969; Roberts, 1995, Roberts, 1996).

The former studies on these profiles show that different consumer consumption behavior based on product involvement (Murphy & Enis, 1986; Radder & Huang, 2008; Fish, 2009; Tanner & Raymond, 2012). Similarly, the presented information related to social responsibility

will affect purchase intention differently (Ha & Lennon, 2010). By purchasing high involvement products which have higher rate of social responsibility in their production processes; consumers would consider themselves good consumers and citizens. Meanwhile, this behavior and consideration is not obvious in low involvement products. (Ha & Lennon, 2010). However, little studies focus on the effect of product's level of involvement on the consumer's social responsibility in clothing industry.

This study first improves the literature on the effect of information related to social responsibility on different levels of products and emphasizes its importance in the apparel consumption scenario. Second, it helps firms to understand the effect of their products level of involvement as well as their consumers profile in consumers' purchase intention. Third, it shows the importance of consumers' clusters regarding their practices towards environmental and social responsibilities in their purchase intention. And finally, suggests firms attaching information related to social responsibility to all levels of products in order to increase consumers' purchase intention in total

This study emphasizes the importance of the socially responsible consumption behavior in the textile and apparel marketplace and attempts to fill the gap presented on the effect of consumption behavior due to the level of a product's involvement and consumer's level of social responsibility. It will also help companies producing different products to decide the importance of their behavior their effects on different consumer profiles.

Chapter II: Literature Review

The literature review section includes the following: (a) corporate social responsible (CSR), (b) socially responsible consumption, (c) the dimensions and scales of socially responsible consumptions, (d) profiles of socially responsible consumers, (e) SRCB in clothing consumption, (f) involvement as an important factor for consumer clothing purchase decision, and (g) research gaps, hypothesis development, and conceptual model.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is defined as the corporate expectation of a society's ethical and legal issues in addition to economic issues (Mahesh, 2011). Since 1990s, as a result of the consumers' increasing worries about the environment, human rights and other aspects of ethical behaviors, more and more corporations have started to follow CSR regulations (Sitnikov & Bocean, 2012). Most research about CSR focuses on a firm's strategy toward social responsibility and how objectives other than financial goals should be considered by corporate decision makers.

Consumers in the United States expect ethical behavior from corporations; they pay attention to the level of a company's ethical behavior during their purchase decision and would pay higher prices for products produced by such companies (Creyer, 1997). Recent research also confirms the consumers' willingness toward buying products from ethical corporations (Hustvedt & Bernard, 2010). Although consumers may buy products from unethical companies, they punish such companies by paying less money and expecting the products to be cheaper, switching brands, or not buying the company's stock (Creyer, 1997; Webb, Mohr, & Harris, 2008). However, studies have showed that consumers are more willing to support social

responsible companies rather than punishing irresponsible corporations, especially when the target product is something that they rely on (Simon, 1995).

Although many companies are willing to exhibit socially responsible behavior because they inherently believe in being socially responsible, some companies only want to do so when can get some financial benefit (Webb, Mohr, & Harris, 2008).

Although consumers care about corporate social responsibility in their purchase intention, their attitude is not the same as their intention toward buying ethical products. This gap shows that purchasing socially responsible products is not the primary choice of consumers; they still care more about price, quality, and convenience rather than ethical considerations (Boulstridge & Carrigan, 2000; Hustvedt & Bernard, 2010).

Socially Responsible Consumption

Most of consumer behavior research focuses on socially responsible consumer behavior (SRCB). According to Mohr, Webb & Harris (2001) SRCB is defined as behavior of a consumer who has a tendency toward minimizing or eliminating any harmful effect and maximizing any useful outcome for society in all of his or her activities such as acquisition, usage and disposition. Ha-Brookshire & Hodge (2007) redefined the definition by adding some other important consumption stages such as product information search, storage, and post-disposal evaluations of products and services. They also defined socially responsible consumer behavior as a consumer's behavior toward minimizing any harmful effect and maximizing any useful effect on society in one or more of the consumption stages, since the consumer may want to be responsible in either some particular steps or through the entire process. In addition to this, both environmental responsibility and social responsibility are two main parts of SRCB because a

socially responsible consumer pays attention to the environment as well as the people as an important part of society (Ha-Brookshire & Hodge, 2007). These two aspects of SRCB are not necessarily equal, since some consumers may pay more attention to environmental aspects while others are more concerned about people. Each may support some aspect of this by purchasing certain products that help society or environment and boycotting products that do harm (Ha-Brookshire & Norum, 2011).

The dimensions and scales of socially responsible consumptions

The dimension of socially responsible consumption has become more defined through research in this field in the starting in the early 1990s. Roberts (1993) developed a 40-item scale to measure socially responsibility consumer behavior using two main dimensions - societal and ecological. Roberts (1995) & Roberts (1996) used a 26-item scale (18 items for ecologically conscious consumer behavior, an 8 items for socially conscious consumer behavior) in his publications. This scale covers environmental dimension and societal dimension which included boycotting purchases from all companies that cause negative impacts on environment and society. Consumer attention toward social responsibility has also been increasing over time. According to the 2004 Cone Corporate Citizenship Study in 2004, consumer's concern about corporate socially responsibility has increased 21% since 1997 (Webb, Mohr, & Harris, 2008).

More recently, Webb, Mohr, and Harris (2008) revealed a 26-item scale named the Socially Responsible Purchase and Disposal (SRPD), by expanding Roberts' scale. They added recycling behavior and modes of consumption that respect the environment, such as using public transport or favoring non-polluting products, and revealed three main dimensions included purchasing based on a firm's corporate social responsibility (CSR) performance, recycling, and the reduction or avoidance of products based on their environmental impact.

Finally, Durif et al (2011), distinguished 49 item scales and revealed eight dimensions based on past declared behavior, including, (1) citizen behavior (consumer behavior to support ethical corporations); (2) consumer behavior to support the environmental protection (3) recycling behavior;(consumer behavior to support recycling behavior); (4) composting behavior; (5) local consumption behavior (selecting the local businesses over other products); (6) consumer behavior protecting animals; (7) de-consumption behavior (behavior to try to not over-consume); and (8) sustainable transport behavior. Their scales include different modalities such as purchase, non-purchase and post-purchase behavior. All of mentioned scales attempt to profile consumers and identify each category's characteristics.

Profiles of socially responsible consumers

Using the previously mentioned scales researchers has derived different profiles for each group of consumers. Some researchers believe that there is a clear relationship between a consumer's demographic and their socially responsible consumption behavior. For this branch of research, for example, well-educated older women as consumers are assumed to have more socially responsible consumption (Robert, 1996; Webster, 1975). In contrast to this group of researchers, there are some scholars who revealed no significant relation between demographic and SRCB (Durif et al 2011).

Using his scale Roberts created unique profiles of different types of consumers based on their socially responsible consumption behavior toward two main dimensions, ecological and social consciousness. According to Roberts (1995), an unevenness on all attempts before 1995 to profile socially responsible consumer demographics could be seen. These inconsistencies could be because of sampling techniques, unsuitable or poor scales from other disciplines, or lack of repetitions in the studies. Although consumer demographics are not consistent, past researchers

could find some correlations between consumer attitudes and their SRCB during 1970s and 1980s including very strong relationships between SRCB and perceived consumer effectiveness, liberalism, environmental concern, and alienation (Roberts, 1995).

Roberts used a cluster sampling method of U.S consumers and distinguished four clusters according to the ecologically conscious consumer behavior (ECCB) and socially conscious consumer behavior (SCCB) of the SRCB scale as:

(a) Socially responsible consumers; (b) Middle American; (c) Greens; and (d) Browns.

(a) Cluster 1 is socially responsible consumers which represents 32% of the sample.

Members of this group are likely to have some college education, married and be homeowners. This cluster has higher scores for ECCB scales than other groups except Greens. In addition, they have the highest scores in SCCB dimension. They are more liberal than Middle American and Browns and more environmentally concerned and have higher Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (PCE) than Browns but make significantly less money. Moreover, they tend to be more democratic compared to other clusters.

(b) Cluster 2 represents the members of the Middle-American group located in the middle of the socially responsible and Greens. They are mostly married and homeowners. This group covers 45% of the sample and reports the lowest scores for ECCBs, along with the Brown cluster. They are more environmentally conscious rather than socially conscious and less liberal than socially responsible members. In addition, Middle-Americans are the most educated among other clusters, and are likely to be Democrat or Independent.

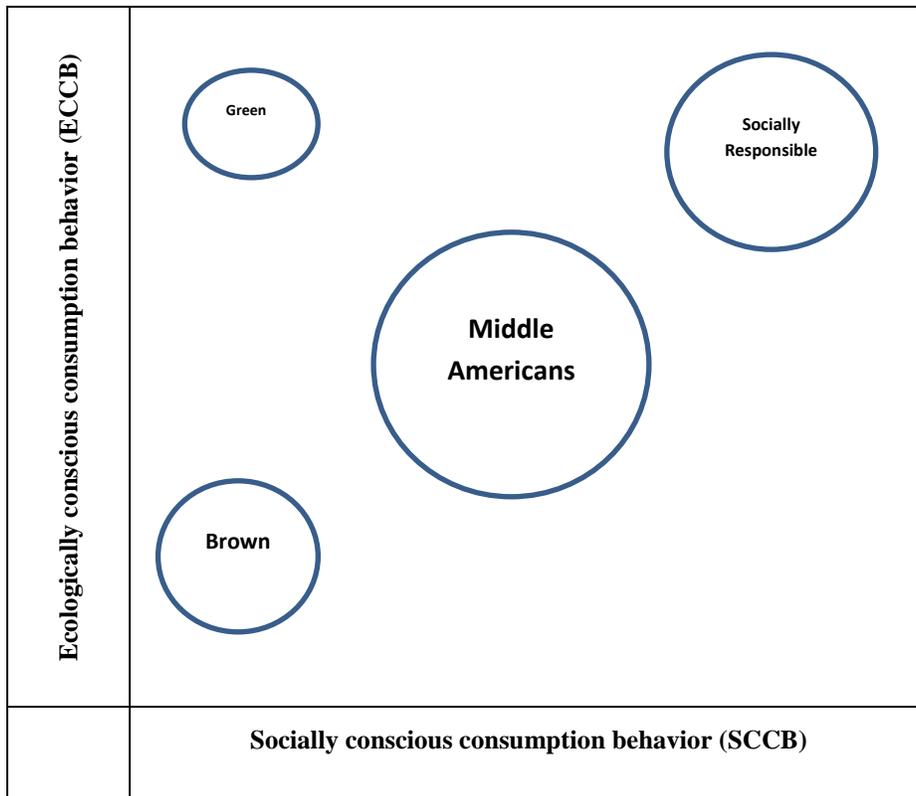
(c) Cluster 3 expresses Green consumers who are only 6% of the population. This group has the highest ratio of women who own their own homes and are likely to be married with a

college degree. They have the highest scores in ECCBs and are highly ecologically conscious compare to other clusters. They report the highest level for PCE.

(d) The last group of consumers is Browns who are 17% of the population. This cluster contains the highest number of men, with highest income of all clusters (even higher than national average). They have the lowest scores for environment and PCE. These group members are have the higher incidence to be Republican and mostly have some college or college degree and are married.

Green cluster has the highest score in ECCB while the socially responsible cluster has the highest score in SCCB.

Figure 2.1. Socially Responsible Consumer Cluster



Adapted from (Roberts, 1995)

Durif et al (2011) represented six clusters for Canadian consumers using two-step clustering analysis of 752 consumers, including (a) Pro Socially responsible consumption [SCR]; (b) Average – Socially responsible consumption [SCR]; (c) Average + Socially responsible consumption [SCR]; (d) Average Socially responsible consumption [SCR]; (e) Pro + Socially responsible consumption [SCR]; and (f) Anti – Socially responsible consumption [SCR].

(a) Group 1 is named Pro SCR which represents approximately 22% of the study population.

The group is made of only women with average ages of 50 years old and who live in single family dwellings. Except the composting dimension, they have the highest score on all other dimensions.

(b) Group 2 is made up both men and women with name “Average – SCR”. The average age is 43 and they live in an apartment or duplex. They are willing to recycle but not compost.

(c) Group 3 is named “Average + SCR” which represents 23% of total population. This group is combined of more women than men, with an average age of 41. This group’s members live in single family dwellings and have higher scores than 4 out of 5 groups in composting dimension, but lower in sustainable transport part.

(d) “Average SCR” is the name of group 4 which is made up by only men with average age of 46. This group represents 15% of the tested population. They score higher than 4 out of 5 groups in sustainable transport but they have middle score on SRC.

(e) Group 5 is named “Pro + SCR” and is made up with only women with an average age of 51 years old and represent 16% of the population. Except for the composting and recycling part, their score in other dimensions are the highest scores.

(f) Finally, group 6 is named; “Anti – SCR” is made up with both men and women, with an average age of 41. They live in a townhouse or mobile home and have the lowest score in SCR dimensions, with an obvious disinterest in social and environmental concerns.

These clusters identify different varying profiles of socially responsible consumption behavior based on two main dimensions suggested by Roberts (1995) and eight dimensions suggested by Durif et al (2011).

SRCB in Clothing Consumption

Social responsibility is an important factor for consumers purchasing apparel products (Hustvedt & Bernard, 2008). Regardless of the amount and complexity of messages, social-responsibility-related information on apparel products would affect consumer willingness to make purchases (Hustvedt & Bernard, 2010). For instance, boycotting in the apparel industry has caused companies to examine their social responsibility behaviors, especially their behavior toward the labor they employ (Klein , Smith, & John, 2004), since apparel industry is one of the most labor intensive industries. Labels such as “No sweat” or “Sweatshop free”, which are labor related labels, have become a primary need in apparel products (Dickson, 2001).

This difference in apparel labeling shows that consumer concern about labor issues in this industry is a marketable factor (Hustvedt & Bernard, 2010). For example, 25% of consumers are willing to pay more money for those socks with fair trade labels over unlabeled products (Prasad, Kimeldorf, Meyer, & Robinson, 2004) and consumers pay more for socks with “non-GM” labels over unlabeled socks (Hustvedt & Bernard, 2008). Also, apparel labels including environmental claims or ethical production information are an effective way for companies to provide information for consumers about their efforts toward socially responsible practices (Hustvedt & Bernard, 2010). However, a small percentage of consumers are influenced by social labels such a

“no sweat” (Dickson, 2001). Nowadays, 'Made in the USA' products labeling is part of socially responsible behavior, especially after 9/11 and the economic recession. More and more people are willing to buy American made products to support jobs in the U.S and help the economy (Ha-Brookshire & Norum, 2011).

Although social responsibility covers many areas including environmental issues and ethical financial transactions, in the apparel industry social responsibility studies mostly focus on labor issues that concern consumer purchasing behavior (Ha-Brookshire & Hodge, 2007; Hustvedt & Bernard, 2010).

Involvement as an important factor for Consumer Clothing Purchase Decision

Clothing consumption, including the product information search, acquisition, usage, storage, and disposal stages, are a unique and complicated process that is experienced by everyone every day (Winakor, 1969; Ha-Brookshire & Hodge, 2007). Clothing consumption is different from food consumption, or even housing consumption, since in the food consumption process when food is eaten it cannot be stored or restored for further uses (Winakor, 1969). Also, in housing the acquisition and disposal stages do not happen frequently and its inventory and usage is constant compared to clothing consumption (Winakor, 1969; Ha-Brookshire & Hodge, 2007).

Due to this unique characteristic of clothing consumption many researchers argue that some unique criteria, such as fit, quality, brand power, garment design, ease of care, and country of origin are important factors for consumers decision making (Norum & Clark, 1989; Veale & Quester, 2009; Ha-Brookshire J. E., 2012; Iyer & Kalita, 1998; Dickson, 2001). Among these criteria, involvement, defined here as the degree of a consumer's perception toward a product, has been on the focus of many researchers in different areas.

Involvement is considered as one of the most important variables in marketing research (Antil, 1984, P. 203). According to Tyebjee (1979), there is little agreement about what exactly constitutes consumer involvement and finding a clear definition accepted by all researchers is hard. Upon doing a review of the literature, the reason behind these claims becomes clear. In general, involvement is defined as "the general level of interest in the object, or the centrality of the object to the person's ego-structure" (Day, 1970, p. 45). In another definition, involvement is defined as a consumer's durable perception toward product importance based on their personal values, needs and interests (Wells & Prentiss, 1996; De Wulf, Odekerken-Schröder, & Lacobucci, 2001; Bian & Luiz, 2011). In addition, consumers with no prior purchasing history in a particular product are found to experience more involvement for that product than someone who had a previous purchase familiarity in the past (Tanner & Raymond, 2012).

High involvement products are defined as those that are less frequently purchased, invariably, more complex, expensive in nature, which the buyer is prepared to spend considerable time and effort in searching. Therefore, consumers engage in an "extended problem solving" process for high involvement products (Murphy & Enis, 1986; Lefcowitz, 1998; Fish, 2009; Tanner & Raymond, 2012). Automobiles and homes are two classic examples of high involvement products. High involvement products yield higher levels of risk for buyers if they fail to meet the buyer's expectation (Tanner & Raymond, 2012). Bettman (1973) called this risk an inherent risk.

Low involvement products are defined as those that are more frequently purchased and less costly. They are bought frequently and with a minimum of thought and effort because they are not of vital concern nor do they have any great impact on the consumer's lifestyle (Murphy & Enis, 1986; Radder & Huang, 2008; Fish, 2009; Tanner & Raymond, 2012). Low involvement

products have lower risks for buyers if consumers make mistakes in buying them (Murphy & Enis, 1986; Radder & Huang, 2008; Fish, 2009; Tanner & Raymond, 2012). In a low involvement product's purchasing process consumers are known to engage in a "routine response behavior" based on their limited current information or their past gathered information (Tanner & Raymond, 2012). For example, if a person wants to buy fat-free milk, they engage in a routine response behavior based on available information available at the point of sale, and do not think about other researching other kinds of milk (Tanner & Raymond, 2012). In addition, products with nostalgic linkages to consumers' childhood and their past tend to be more involving than those readily bought (Martin, 1998). The other important factor for high involvement products is the level of uniqueness (Martin, 1998). For example, collectibles, limited editions, or mass produced models no longer commercially available may be perceived as unique, as well as those assembled by, crafted by, once owned by, autographed by, or otherwise personalized by significant others or celebrities (Martin, 1998).

Therefore availability is the key point in marketing strategy for low involvement products. That is, if consumers cannot find the desired brand for a low involvement product they will buy the most available one and do not spent a vast amount of time, thoughts, energy and budget to buy a specific brand. On the other hand, for high involvement products, consumers would spend a considerable amount of time, thought, energy and budget to find what exact product they are willing to own (Tanner & Raymond, 2012).

At first look, it seems the degree of involvement with different products is decided by their prices. This could be true but is may not always be the case. For some products, even though the price is not high consumers spend a high portion of their time trying to locate a specific brand (Tanner & Raymond, 2012). In some products with high social value as well as

high personal and symbolic meaning consumers will spend more effort to find the right product rather than just factoring in the product's functionality or price (Martin, 1998). Clothes, jewelry and automobiles are more socially visible than dishwashers, hair dryers, and dental floss. To elevate product meaning and involvement the brand must not only be socially visible, but also must convey a symbolic statement about the consumer that is congruent with the consumer's self-identity (Martin, 1998). Moreover, their decision making process is more complicated and contains a series of sequential stages involving information search and evaluation of criteria (Soloman, Surprenant, Czepiel, & Guttman, 1985; Bian & Luiz, 2011; Tanner & Raymond, 2012). In general, product categories including dresses, bras, TV sets, calculators, or washing machine are identified as products with higher level of involvement than coffee, oil, breakfast cereals, and mouthwashes. (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985; Zaichkowsky, 1985; Martin, 1998).

As the level of involvement and the level of perceived risk in purchasing gets higher consumers do more extensive information searches about the product. A similar process is expected in clothing purchase (Bin & Koh, 1999; Tanner & Raymond, 2012). Some clothing, such as basic everyday clothing, is considered low involvement products. Meanwhile, other clothing can be considered high involvement products, especially when it provides consumers with psychological satisfaction, symbolic meaning and image reinforcement for their specific tastes (Solomon, 1986).

According to Martin 1998, there is considerable overlap between some products in clothing categories. For example shoes and boots are considered as high involvement products while socks are categorized in low involvement products, while coats receive both high and low involvement perception (Martin, 1998).

According to Radder & Huang (2008), for low involvement products like coffee consumers pay more attention to only brand name, while in high involvement products such as sportswear they pay more attention to other elements such as logo as well as branding (Martin, 1998; Radder & Huang, 2008).

Particularly, with regard to high involvement clothing products, some consumers believe that by purchasing and using some particular products that they would consider themselves good people or good citizens. (Ha & Lennon, 2010). In addition to this consideration consumers expect receiving a lot of product information before purchasing those products (Ha & Lennon, 2010). Examples of this type of high involvement clothing are two pairs of pants that were selected by consumers as high involvement products based on their attractiveness, fissionability and likability among several pairs of pants.

Another example of high involvement clothing products is found in luxury, personalized clothing products. Since high involvement products are distinguished by their complexity, personal selling is the selected method of connecting the businesses to the final users even though this is a costly and time consuming method. In this sales model the consumer's specific need should be identified and the salesperson can adapt a message, such as social responsibility information, based on need (Ha & Lennon, 2010; Tanner & Raymond, 2012).

Research Gaps, Hypothesis Development, and Conceptual Model

Although the rate of clothing purchases, consumption and attention having to do with SRCB practices are dramatically increasing in the U.S little research has been done by the clothing industry. The scant research that has been done has not focused on the effect of product involvement and consumer levels of social responsibility toward purchase intention in the clothing marketplace. This study has been conducted to fill this gap.

The previous literature on SRCB and clothing consumption showed that information related to social responsibility available on apparel products would affect consumers' willingness to purchase and is an important factor for consumers while purchasing apparel products (Hustvedt & Bernard, 2010; Prasad, Kimeldorf, Meyer, & Robinson, 2004). Therefore, the study hypothesized:

Hypothesis 1: The product information related to social responsibility influences a consumer's clothing purchase intention.

Different consumers use such information differently for their purchase decision making since they value social and environmental responsibility differently (Roberts, 1995; Roberts, 1996). For example, socially responsible consumers care a lot about ECCB and have the highest score in SCCB, which means they consider both social and environmental aspects in their purchasing decisions, while Browns have almost the lowest scores in both social and environmental concerns in their purchasing behaviors. Brown category people have the lowest perceived consumer effectiveness and feel the individual can do a little by purchasing items to improve social or environmental dimensions (Roberts, 1995). In this study social responsibility includes both social and environmental dimensions as suggested by Roberts 1995 and 1996. Therefore, the study hypothesized:

Hypothesis 2: The effect of the product information related to social responsibility on consumers' clothing purchase intention is greater in "socially responsible" consumers than "brown" consumers.

The previous literature on product involvement and clothing consumption showed that any type of product information helps consumer purchase decision making when the product is

high involvement. More specifically, for products that would help people to think they are good and responsible citizens in the society, the product information related to social responsibility would matter even more if the products are high involvement rather than low involvement ones (Ha & Lennon, 2010). Therefore, the study hypothesized:

Hypothesis 3: The effect of the product information related to social responsibility on consumers' clothing purchase intention is greater in high involvement products than low involvement products.

On the other hand, since consumers feel less effective about their actions on social or environmental dimensions, purchasing high involvement products would not have as great an impact as it would for socially responsible consumers, but still has greater effect than low involvement products (Roberts, 1996; Ha & Lennon, 2010). In addition, for high involvement products consumers try to find as much as information they can regarding the products, but for low involvement product they engage in “routine response behavior” process and care most about availability, rather than finding much information (Bin & Koh, 1999; Tanner & Raymond, 2012). Therefore, the study hypothesized:

Hypothesis 4: A three way interaction is expected.

Figure 2.2 shows the research model of this study and figure 2.3 shows the interaction between variables represented in hypothesis 4.

Figure 2.2 The Study's Conceptual Model

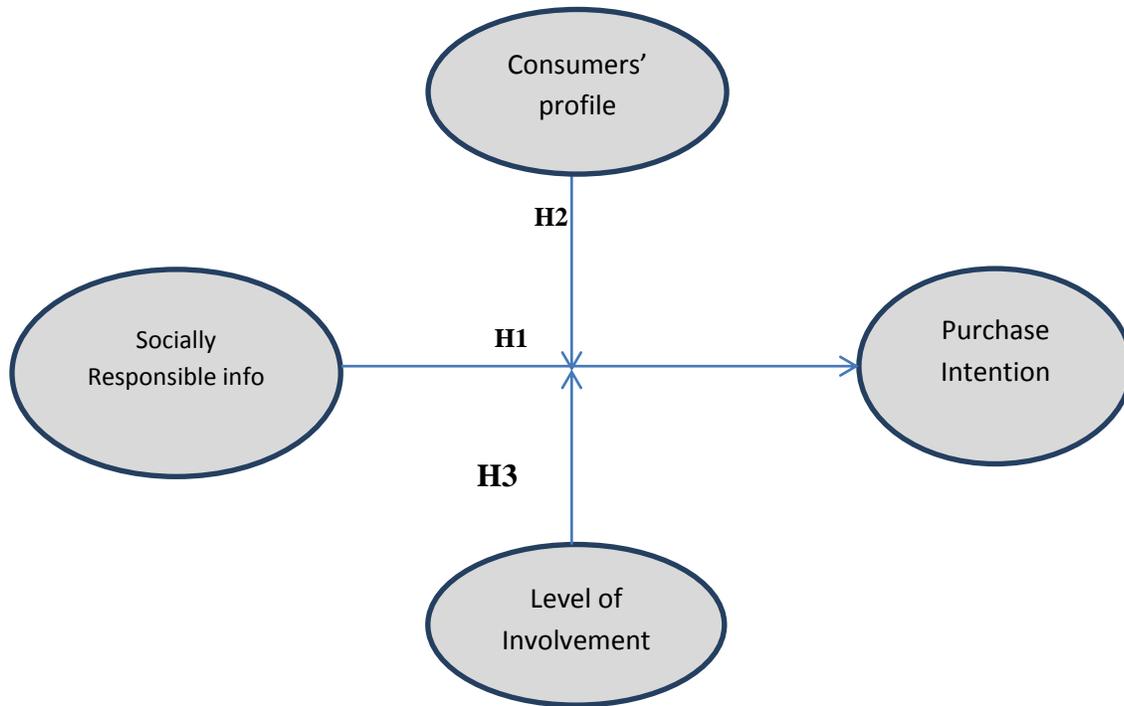
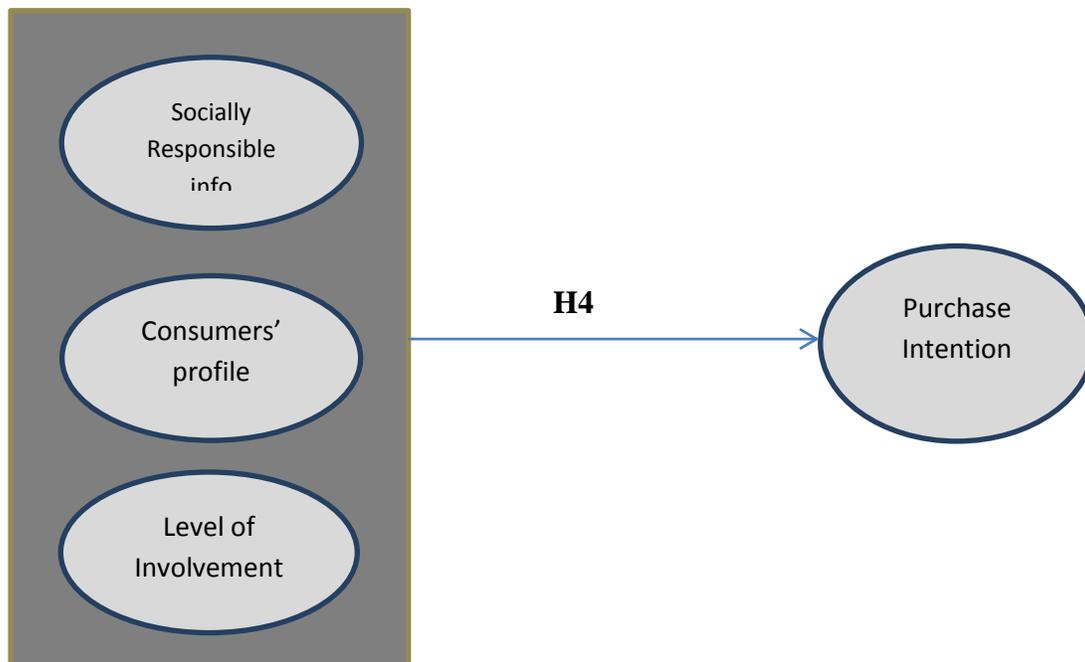


Figure 2.3. Conceptual Model for Hypothesis 4



CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter III provides the following sections: (a) research design, (b) sampling information, (c) research instrument and internal validity (d) data collection (e) pilot tests, and (f) data analysis techniques.

Research Design

A web-based questionnaire survey was designed for this study. Online survey platforms allow researchers to expose participants to a variety of multi-media stimuli in addition to making the study faster and cheaper compared to traditional methods such as mail, telephone or personal interview. Moreover, an online survey has higher incidence rate (percentage of people who actually respond to a survey) and lets participants to finish at their own pace without revealing their identities (Gingery, 2011).

The disadvantages of online survey might include the rate of internet users. In 2012 only 46% of U.S population use internet which means an online survey may does not represent the whole U.S population for a study (Gingery, 2011; Internet world stats usage and population statistics, 2012). Despite this mentioned disadvantage, many researchers use this method as their first data gathering method since the advantage is still higher than its disadvantage.

A 2*2*2 mixed experiment was designed for this study. Consumers were divided into two groups: (a) socially responsible group; and (b) brown [less concerned with social responsibility] group. A product's level of involvement is classified as within group variable while availability of information on a product and consumer profile is classified as between group variables. This means each participant was exposed to both high and low involvement products but only in one SRI condition (presence or absence). This design was selected in order

to not to show a participants one product with and without SRI which could lead him/her to guess the purpose of the study.

Stimuli

High and low involvement products

A hiking shoe with high functionality was chosen as the sample of high involvement product for this experiment. Sportswear is known as high involvement clothing among consumers as they have been shown to put more time and money into a purchase of sportswear than normal casual wear (Radder & Huang, 2008). In general, sportswear and specifically sport shoes are directly related to the health and therefore to consumer emotion. Studies have shown that people spend more time and effort in making buying decisions about hiking shoes which show that hiking shoes are categorized as high involvement products (Murphy & Enis, 1986; Lefcowitz, 1998; Fish, 2009; Tanner & Raymond, 2012). Also, because high price is one of the main characteristics of a high involvement product, the retail price of \$170 was also chosen to ensure these shoes require high involvement before consumers make a decision. (Murphy & Enis, 1986).

Meanwhile, everyday cushion ankle socks are selected to represent the low involvement product for this study. This was because ankle socks are not a complicated product, not normally related to emotions and do not have a high price. Consumers do not put much effort, time or money in to buying them. (Murphy & Enis, 1986; Lefcowitz, 1998; Fish, 2009; Tanner & Raymond, 2012).

Other product attributes

All other product attributes, such as color, brand names, and styles, were identical throughout manipulations for both high and low involvement products. In addition, unisex products were chosen for both high and low involvement products in order to eliminate the gender role in this study.

Social responsible information (SRI)

For this study both social and environmental activities were considered as social responsible activities and were used for both high and low involvement products. For hiking shoes the recycled polyester and polyurethane was used to create this factor. For cushion ankle socks, the organic cotton as well as recycled nylon blend represents the environmental responsibility. In addition to these environmental factors, fair trade labels and helping charities labels showed the social responsibility of products.

Figure 3.1 and 3.2 shows a high involvement product with and without social responsible information. Figure 3.3 and 3.4 also represent a low involvement product with and without social responsible information.

Figure 3.1. High Involvement Product with Social Responsible Information

WATERPROOF HIKING SHOES MID-CUT

PRODUCT DESCRIPTIONS:

- Premium waterproof leather
- Padded collar and tongue
- Metatomical footbed design
- Patented toe protection
- Mesh hiking shoes
- Polyurethane stability shank
- Dual-density EVA midsole
- Non-marking carbon rubber sole

SOCIAL / ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS:

- 20% of profits goes to charity
- Fairtrade production
- Outsole is from 50% recycled rubber
- No business with sweatshops



Figure 3.2. High Involvement Product without Social Responsible Information

WATERPROOF HIKING SHOES MID-CUT

PRODUCT DESCRIPTIONS:

- Premium waterproof leather
- Padded collar and tongue
- Metatomical footbed design
- Patented toe protection
- Mesh hiking shoes
- Polyurethane stability shank
- Dual-density EVA midsole
- Non-marking carbon rubber sole



\$ 169.99

Figure 3.3. Low Involvement Product with Social Responsible Information

EVERYDAY CUSHION ANKLE SOCKS

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>PRODUCT DESCRIPTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Machine wash warm- Tumble dry medium- Do not iron- Fits shoes size 4 to 12 | <p>SOCIAL / ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Organic cotton / Recycled Nylon- No business with sweatshops- 20% of profits goes to charity- Fairtrade product |
|---|---|



Figure 3.4. Low Involvement Product without Social Responsible Information

EVERYDAY CUSHION ANKLE SOCKS

PRODUCT DESCRIPTIONS:

- Machine wash warm
- Tumble dry medium
- Do not iron
- Fits shoes size 4 to 12



Manipulation sets

Four different stimuli were considered for this study. These include (1) high involvement product with social responsible information, (2) low involvement product with social responsible information, (3) high involvement product without social responsible information, and (4) low involvement product without social responsible information. Table 3.1 and 3.2 show the manipulation sets.

Table 3.1: Manipulation sets for Socially Responsible Cluster

| | High involvement product | Low involvement product |
|-------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| SRI present | Hiking shoes With SRI | Cushion ankle socks With SRI |
| SRI absent | Hiking shoes Without SRI | Cushion ankle socks Without SRI |

Table 3.2: Manipulation sets for Brown Cluster

| | High involvement product | Low involvement product |
|-------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| SRI present | Hiking shoes With SRI | Cushion ankle socks With SRI |
| SRI absent | Hiking shoes Without SRI | Cushion ankle socks Without SRI |

Sampling Information

An online survey experiment was employed for this study to determine how information available about social responsibility on different levels of products' involvement affect purchase intention of two main consumers' clusters (socially responsible and brown consumers).

After receiving the approval from the University of Missouri Institutional Review Board, survey participants were recruited through two different online sources. First source was recruiting participants through advertisements in the university news media at the University of Missouri – Columbia (MU Info). Second source of data collection was an online commercial recruitment site namely FindParticipants.com (FP). This website is created and operated by a number of academic researchers in different disciplines helping academic researchers or students performing academic research studies to recruit appropriate research participants for their studies. This study aims to have participants of 18 years old and above. No any other restriction on gender, income, occupation or education is considered for this study. The total number of usable responses both sources was 333 (214 responses from MU Info and 119 from FP).

Before data collection, a sample size of 588 was supposed to prepare enough responses for each cell of experiment. Since Minimum 20 participants are expected for each cell of experiment (Ha-Brookshire, 2012) and according to Roberts 1995, 17% of participants was found to be brown and 33% to be socially responsible. This number of participants could support the minimum number of responses even if the percentage of brown consumers was 5% (less than one third of what Roberts reported). After collecting 333 responses and doing the profile division, the percentage of brown consumers [who scored low social and environmental average scores] was 33% (109 responses) which was twice of what was expected from Roberts' outcome, while SR consumers [who scored high social and environmental average scores] covered 39%

(129 responses) of total respondents. This numbers prepared the minimum number for each cell of experiment, so the data collection was stopped after receiving enough responses.

Research Instruments and Internal Validity

Consumer profiles

In the questionnaire, Roberts scale was used as the first part of the survey to indicate different clusters of consumers. All 24 items were used. Since the Roberts scale was developed in 1995, some questions include items which are no longer important to U.S consumers such as aerosol containers or investment in South Africa. In order to eliminate the effect of these items, a modified questionnaire was made according to the more updated conditions.

Table 3.3 shows all the modifications were made on Roberts scale in order to make it more relevant to consumers' today's life.

Table 3.3: The Modified Scale Compare to Roberts' Scale

| | Roberts's scale | New suggested scale for this study |
|---|--|---|
| <i>Ecologically Conscious Consumer behavior (ECCB) factors</i> | | |
| 1 | I have purchased products because they cause less pollution | I have purchased products because they cause less environmental pollution |
| 2 | When I purchase products, I always make a conscious effort to buy those products that are low in pollutants. | When I purchase products, I always make a conscious effort to buy those products that are low in environmental pollutants. |
| 3 | I make every effort to buy paper products made from recycled paper. | No modification |
| 4 | When I have a choice between two equal products, I always purchase the one which is less harmful to the environment. | No modification |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| 5 | I try only to buy products that can be recycled. | No modification |
| 6 | I use a recycle center or in some way recycle some of my household trash. | No modification |
| 7 | When there is a choice, I always choose that product which contributes to the least amount of pollution. | When there is a choice, I always choose that product which contributes to the least amount of environmental pollution. |
| 8 | Whenever possible, I buy products packaged in reusable containers. | No modification |
| 9 | If I understand the potential damage to the environment that some products can cause, I do not purchase. | No modification |
| 10 | I use a low-phosphate detergent for my laundry. | I use Eco-friendly detergent for my laundry |
| 11 | I have convinced members of my family or friend not to buy some products which are harmful to the environment. | No modification |
| 12 | I do not buy household products that harm the environment. | No modification |
| 13 | I do not buy products in aerosol containers. | I do not buy non-biodegradable plastic. |
| 14 | I buy paper towels made from recycled paper. | I use fabric towels rather than paper towels |
| 15 | To reduce our reliance on foreign oil, I drive my car as little as possible. | No modification |
| 16 | I buy toilet paper made from recycled paper. | No modification |
| 17 | I normally make a conscious effort to limit my use of products that are made or use scarce resources. | No modification |
| <i>Socially Conscious Consumer Behavior (SCCB) factors</i> | | |
| 1 | I do not buy products with advertising that depicts minority groups in a negative way. | No modification |
| 2 | I do not buy products from companies who discriminate against minorities. | No modification |
| 3 | I do not buy products from companies who have | I do not buy products from |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| | investments in south Africa. | companies who have investment in countries with poor labor conditions. |
| 4 | In the past, I have not purchase a product because its advertising depicted women in a negative way. | No modification |
| 5 | I will not buy products from companies involved in a labor dispute. | No modification |
| 6 | I do not buy table grapes because of the condition under which the workers who pick them must live. | I will not buy Coffee if I know workers who pick them do not have good working condition. |
| 7 | I try to purchase products from companies who make donation to charities. | No modification |

Dependent variable: Purchase intention was the dependent variable for this study. Purchase intention was measured using a three items of 7-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree). The reported reliability of this scale was 0.83 (Bhattacharjee, 2002).

Independent variables: The independent variables for this study were availability of social responsible information on products (absence and presence), the level of involvement (high involvement and low involvement) of products and consumers' profile (socially responsible and brown).

Each participant in the study was exposed to two different conditions in random order. All possible conditions were 1) high involvement product with social responsible information, 2) high involvement product without SRI, 3) low involvement product with SRI, and 4) low involvement products without SRI. The survey questionnaire was made using Qualtrics Survey Software, each participant saw two of these four conditions, but both conditions were with SRI

or without SRI in a random condition. The complete and full survey questionnaires are in Appendix A.

Data Collection

Data were collected between May 10, 2013 and Jun 10, 2013. Each participant first read the consent form and was asked to continue the research only if they agree to all terms and conditions. Participants were given brief instructions about the purpose and the method of the study. It was reinforced that participation in the study is totally voluntary and that participants have the right to withdraw or refuse to answer a question at any time during the survey. They were also assured that the data collection would be totally anonymous, would be kept secure and destroyed within three years of the end of the study. First, participants were exposed to the Roberts' scale in order to profile them in four groups and then all were exposed to the online stimuli which were followed by the survey questions. This was a randomized complete block design where each participant were exposed to two stimuli (both stimuli were with or without SRI) in random order. And finally, they were required to answer a set of demographic questions. Each participant was estimated to take 15 minutes for answering related questions.

Pilot Tests

In order to ensure the reliability and validity of the study, two pilot tests were conducted using 22 students from University of Missouri. The first pilot study was conducted in order to have the highest reliability for profiling consumers. For this pilot study, the modified Roberts scale (Table 3.3) was used. The desired level of Chronbach's alpha was to be 0.8 and more.

Another pilot test also ensured the study stimuli representing high and low product involvement in order to see if selected products could represent their suggested categories well or

not. Manipulation test on SRI was not necessary as the existence or non-existence of information was apparent. Pilot study participants were excluded from the main data collection.

For second pilot study testing high vs. low involvement products, both selected items were shown to participants and then the following questions shown by Table 3.4 were asked. Figures 3.5 and 3.6 show item were shown to participants for pilot test.

“Now you are exposed to two different products that offer two product categories. Please review them carefully so you can answer the following questions” (Zaichkowsky, 1994).

Figure 3.5. High Involvement Product using for Pilot Test



Figure 3.6. Low involvement product using for pilot test

EVERYDAY CUSHION ANKLE SOCKS



PRODUCT DESCRIPTIONS:

- Machine wash warm
- Tumble dry medium
- Do not iron
- Fits shoes size 4 to 12

Table 3.4 Level of Involvement Scale

To me object to be judged is:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|
| Very important* | | | | | | Very unimportant |
| Not needed at all | | | | | | Highly needed |
| Means a lot to me* | | | | | | Means nothing |
| Very worthless | | | | | | Very valuable |
| Very Involving* | | | | | | Very Uninvolving |
| Very Unexciting | | | | | | Very exciting |
| Very unappealing | | | | | | Very Appealing |
| Mundane | | | | | | Fascinating |
| Not needed at all | | | | | | Highly needed |
| Boring | | | | | | Interesting |
| Irrelevant | | | | | | Relevant |

Note. * indicates reverse coded items.

Also, as table 3.4 shows, three of the items were used in reverse way which were very important/very unimportant, means a lot to me/means nothing to me and very involving/very uninvolved.

Results of pilot studies

A group of 22 students from The University of Missouri were recruited to participate in this pilot study in order to test the reliability of modified Roberts’ scale as well as the level of product involvement. Every attempt was made to recruit participants for the pilot study from all departments rather than only Textile and Apparel Management (TAM) department since students

from TAM department may have more knowledge related to the represented information and their answers could be different from average of students.

Mean difference between high and low involvement products

After measuring the reliability of scale for level of involvement, a t-test ran to see the mean differences between two represented products in terms of level of involvement. As Table 3.5 shows, the results suggested that hiking shoes with mean of 3.75 have significantly higher level of involvement than everyday cushion sock with mean of 3.33 ($t = 2.26, df = 42, p = .027$). This means that on average consumers pay more time and effort in purchasing hiking shoes than what they spend for cushion socks. This result supports the assumption of using hiking shoes as high involvement and everyday cushion socks as low involvement products for this study.

Table 3.5: Independent Sample t-test for Different Levels of Involvement Products

| Variable | N | Mean | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | |
|-----------------------------|----|------|---|------|------------------------------|----|-------|
| | | | F | Sig | t | df | Sig |
| <i>scale of involvement</i> | | | | | | | |
| Hiking shoes | 22 | 3.75 | | | | | |
| | | | 2.99 | 0.85 | 2.26 | 42 | 0.027 |
| Cushion socks | 22 | 3.33 | | | | | |

Reliability of suggested scales

The reliability of involvement scale were ranges from 0.910 for low involvement product which in this study was everyday cushion socks to 0.944 for hiking shoes which represented high involvement product for this study. In addition, the reliability of scale for modified Roberts' scale ranged from 0.956 for socially conscious consumer behavior to 0.964 for ecologically

conscious consumer behavior and total reliability score was 0.975 for all 24 items together. Table 3.6 shows the reliability of the study scales.

Table 3.6 Reliability of Scales

| Scale | No. of Items | Reliability (Cronbach's α) |
|---|---------------------|---|
| <i>Level of involvement scale</i> | | |
| High involvement product | 10 | 0.944 |
| Low involvement product | 10 | 0.910 |
| <i>Modified Robert's scale</i> | | |
| Ecologically conscious consumer behavior (ECCB) | 17 | 0.964 |
| Socially conscious consumer behavior (SCCB) | 7 | 0.956 |
| Total | 24 | 0.975 |

Data Analyses

Although Roberts indicated the four main clusters which are Socially responsible, Middle American, Green, and Brown (Robert, 1995), this study only focused on two clusters out of four at the two extremes, Socially responsible and Brown. According to Robert (1996), we expected 33% of the total consumers belong to the SR cluster and 17% belong to the Brown cluster similar to Roberts's results. But different percentages were resulted. In order to divide consumers to different clusters, first, the total mean of each dimension (ECCB and SCCB) was calculated. In this study, the total mean for ECCB dimension was abbreviated to TME and the total mean for SCCB dimension was TMS. Second, for each participant, two means were calculated, one for ECCB and another for SCCB. In this study, the mean of each participant's score in ECCB is named PME and the mean of each participant's score in SCCB is named PMS. Third, each participant's score in two dimensions were compared to the total scores. If each of PME and

PMS were lower than the total mean in related dimension, a score of 0 was allocated to it, and if it was higher than total mean, a score of 1 was defined for it. Finally, those participants who receive two 1 scores were categorized to the SR group and those who receive both 0 scores were categorized to the Brown group. All other data will be dismissed. Table 3.7 shows how consumers' profiling was fulfilled.

Table 3.7. Consumers' Profiling Procedure

| | | TMS ^c = 45 | | | | |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|--|------------|-----------------------|----|
| | | TME ^d = 65 | | | | |
| Participant Number | PME ^a | PMS ^b | Number allocated based on Comparing to the total means | | Participant's cluster | |
| | | | PME to TME | PMS to TMS | | |
| 1 | 37 | 30 | 0 | 0 | Brown | - |
| 2 | 56 | 33 | 0 | 0 | Brown | - |
| 3 | 78 | 48 | 1 | 1 | | SR |
| 4 | 45 | 55 | 0 | 1 | - | - |
| 5 | 68 | 46 | 1 | 1 | - | SR |

a. Mean of each participant's score in ecologically conscious consumer behavior (ECCB)

b. Mean of each participant's score in socially conscious consumer behavior (SCCB)

c. Total mean for SCCB dimension

d. Total mean for ECCB dimension

The computer programs, IBM SPSS (Version 20) Statistics were used for statistical data analysis for this study. Once the study reached the desired number of respondents, all responses were transferred on to the SPSS software for initial descriptive data analysis of demographic information of respondents. Then two wanted clusters were identified based on Roberts' scale and then the rest of the data analysis only were done on these two clusters using the Ordinary Least Square regression to test the hypothesis presented for this study in chapter II.

Dependent variables

Purchase intention was the only dependent variable for this study which was measured by a 3-item scale (Bhattacharjee, 2002). Item scores for each question averaged to construct the final dependent variable score.

Independent variables

Socially responsible information, profile of consumers, and products level of involvement were the independent variables for this study. All independent variables were converted to dummy variables and entered into the regression equation.

Socially responsible information (SRI): SRI was coded as “0” if the information was absent on a product and “1” if it was present. For this study presence and absence of SRI was the two levels of socially responsible information on products. Therefore, the presence of SRI served as the comparison category in the interpretation of results. According to the suggested hypotheses products with SRI present have higher purchase intention (*H1*), the effect of SRI present on purchase intention of socially responsible profile of consumers is higher than Brown consumers (*H2*) and the effect of SRI present on purchase intention is higher in high involvement products than low involvement products (*H3*).

Profile of consumers (PRFL): Final samples were categorized into two main clusters: Socially Responsible (SR) versus Brown. Other responses that did not fit into these two groups were deleted from the data set. Consumer profiles had two levels of outcome for either SR and brown for this study. Thus, the dummy variable was coded as a “0” for socially responsible consumers and as a “1” for brown consumers. It was hypothesized that consumers in socially

responsible profile show higher purchase intention when SRI is present compare to brown consumers (*H2*).

Level of involvement (INV): two levels of product involvement were used for this study (High vs. Low). Hiking shoes represented a high involvement product and was coded as a “0” while everyday cushion socks symbolized a low involvement product and was coded as a “1” for this study. It was hypothesized that the effect of SRI present on consumers purchase intention is higher for high involvement products rather than low involvement products (*H3*).

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Chapter IV includes (a) mean differences between two different courses of data; (b) descriptions of the sample including demographic characteristics; (c) scale reliability; (d) mean and standard deviation of variables; (e) hypothesis tests, and (f) summary of results.

Mean Difference between Two Different Sources of Data

For consistency, the data from two sources, MU Info and Findparticipants.com (FP) were compared together to see if there is any significant mean differences between consumers purchase intentions in the four different study conditions. As results in Table 4.1 show there were no statistically significant differences in means between Mu Info and FP sources of data for any of the conditions namely High involvement/ SR info absent ($t=-1.569$, $df=96$, $P= 0.120$), Low involvement/ SR info absent ($t=-0.455$, $df=116$, $P= 0.65$), High involvement/ SR info present ($t=-0.8.8$, $df=123$, $P= 0.421$), and Low involvement/ SR info present ($t=-0.955$, $df=122$, $P= 0.342$). This result suggested that participants from Mu Info and FP had similar purchase intention in this study. Therefore, all data were combined together and other data analyses were done on all participants regardless their source of data.

Table 4.1: Independent Sample T-test for Different Sources of Data

| Variable | Source | N | Mean | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | |
|-------------------------------|--------|----|-------|---|-------|------------------------------|-----|-------|
| | | | | F | Sig | t | df | Sig |
| <i>Purchase Intention</i> | | | | | | | | |
| High involvement/ SRI absent | MI* | 79 | 3.573 | 4.24 | 0.042 | -1.569 | 96 | 0.120 |
| | FP** | 42 | 4.073 | | | | | |
| Low involvement/ SRI absent | MI | 76 | 4.173 | 1.301 | 0.256 | -0.455 | 116 | 0.65 |
| | FP | 42 | 4.328 | | | | | |
| High involvement/ SRI present | MI | 77 | 5.124 | 0.727 | 0.395 | -0.808 | 123 | 0.421 |
| | FP | 48 | 5.333 | | | | | |
| Low involvement/ SRI present | MI | 76 | 5.711 | 0.484 | 0.488 | -0.955 | 122 | 0.342 |
| | FP | 48 | 5.898 | | | | | |

*Mu Info source of data

**Findparticipants.com source of data

Description of the Sample

In total 430 participants from both sources started the survey and 351 of them completed the survey. Out of 351 responses, 18 participants were excluded due to missing data. This resulted in a total of 333 usable surveys. Respondents consisted of 65 (19.5%) males and 268 (80.5%) females. The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 80, with the mean age being 33.37 years. The demographic questions also asked about participants' educational level. At the time of data collection, 15 (4.5%) of the participants had high school education, 98 (29.4%) had some college education, 123 (36.9%) had a college degree, 96 (28.8%) had graduate degree and 1 (0.3%) did not wish to provide information about his/her education.

Thirty nine participants (11.7%) had an annual household income less than \$10,000, 79 (23.7%) between \$10,000 to \$29,999, 69 (20.7%) between \$30,000 to \$59,999, 63 (18.9%) between \$60,000 to \$89,999, 32 (9.6%) between \$90,000 to \$119,999, 14 (4.2%) between \$120,000 to \$ 149,999, 11 (3.3%) had over \$150,000 and 26 (7.8%) did not wish to provide information about their income.

Of the 333 participants, 87 (26.2%) were in a relationship, 102 (30.7%) were married, 118 (35.5%) were single, 23 (6.9%) were divorced and 3 (0.9%) did not wish to provide information about the marital status. 49 (14.7%) of participants consider themselves as republican, 131 (39.3%) considered as democrat, 93 (27.9%) as independent and 60 (18%) did not wish to reveal their political affiliation.

Of the 333 participants 108 (32.4%) were home owner while 186 (56.7%) live in a rental house and 39 (11.7%) did not wish to provide answer to this question. And finally, 255 (76.6%) of participants were Caucasian, 18 (5.4%) African American/Black, 21 (6.3%) Hispanic, 20 (6%) Asian and 19 (5.7%) were from other ethnicities (See Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Survey Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 65 | 19.5% |
| Female | 268 | 80.5% |
| Ethnicity | | |
| Caucasian | 255 | 77.0% |
| African American/Black | 18 | 5.4% |
| Hispanic/Latino | 21 | 6.3% |
| Asian (including Indian) | 20 | 6.0% |
| Others | 17 | 5.1% |
| Political affiliation | | |
| Republican | 48 | 14.5% |
| Democrat | 131 | 39.5% |
| Independent | 93 | 28.0% |
| Do not wish to provide | 60 | 18.1% |
| Home ownership | | |
| Owner | 108 | 32.9% |
| Rent | 186 | 56.7% |
| Do not wish to provide | 34 | 10.4% |
| Marital Status | | |
| In a relationship | 87 | 26.2% |
| Divorced | 23 | 6.9% |
| Single | 118 | 35.5% |
| Married | 102 | 30.7% |
| Do not wish to provide | 2 | 0.6% |
| Education Level | | |
| Less than high school | 0 | 0.0% |
| High School degree | 15 | 4.5% |
| Some college education | 98 | 29.4% |
| College degree | 123 | 36.9% |
| Graduate education | 96 | 28.8% |
| Do not wish to provide | 1 | 0.3% |

| Income | | |
|------------------------|----|-------|
| Less than \$10,000 | 39 | 11.7% |
| \$10,000-\$29,999 | 79 | 23.7% |
| \$30,000-\$59,999 | 69 | 20.7% |
| \$60,000-\$89,999 | 63 | 18.9% |
| \$90,000-\$119,999 | 32 | 9.6% |
| \$120,000-\$149,999 | 14 | 4.2% |
| \$150,000 or above | 11 | 3.3% |
| Do not wish to provide | 26 | 7.8% |

NOTE: Total number of participants = 333

According to the explained method in Chapter 3, 129 participants (39%) out of 333 were identified as SR consumers and 109 (33%) were brown. The average mean of all consumers was 4.0 for ecologically conscious consumer behavior dimension (with 17 items) and 4.2 for socially conscious consumer behavior dimension (with 7 items).

Scale Reliability

The reliability of the modified Roberts' scale 24-item ranged from 0.912 (Cronbach's α) for socially conscious consumer behavior (7 items) to 0.942 (Cronbach's α) for ecologically conscious consumer behavior (17 items), and total reliability of the scale is 0.953 (Cronbach's α). Also, the reliability of the 3-item purchase intention scale ranged from 0.896 to 0.956 (Cronbach's α) for different conditions of high/low involvement product with presence/absence of SR information. Table 4.3 shows the scales reliability and their number of items as well.

Table4.3 Reliability of Scales

| Scale | No. of Items | Reliability (Chronbach's α) |
|--|---------------------|--|
| <i>Roberts scale</i> | | |
| Ecologically conscious consumer behavior (ECCB) | 17 | 0.942 |
| Socially conscious consumer behavior (SCCB) | 7 | 0.912 |
| Total | 24 | 0.953 |
| <i>Purchase Intention</i> | | |
| High involvement/ SR info present | 3 | 0.950 |
| High involvement/ SR info absent | 3 | 0.956 |
| Low involvement/ SR info present | 3 | 0.896 |
| Low involvement/ SR info absent | 3 | 0.905 |

Mean and Standard Deviation of Variables

Table 4.4 shows the means of the eight different conditions based on three independent variables for both sources of data. The dependent variable for all conditions was purchase intention. As Table 4.4 shows, there are higher mean of purchase intention for products containing socially responsible information in both high and low involvement products compared to products without SRI. In addition to this, socially responsible consumers have higher means in purchase intention on average for products with SRI compared to brown consumers. Although socially responsible people have lower means for both high and low involvement products without SRI than brown people, they show larger change for both products after adding SRI than the brown cluster.

Table 4.4. Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

| Consumers' profile | Condition | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|--------|----------------|
| Socially Responsible | High involvement / SRI absent | 3.6063 | 1.63804 |
| | Low involvement / SRI absent | 4.1852 | 1.58932 |
| | High involvement / SRI present | 5.6417 | 1.11226 |
| | Low involvement / SRI present | 5.9521 | 1.06782 |
| Brown | High involvement / SRI absent | 3.9000 | 1.88354 |
| | Low involvement / SRI absent | 4.2754 | 1.95131 |
| | High involvement / SRI present | 4.6113 | 1.54343 |
| | Low involvement / SRI present | 5.5566 | 1.02629 |

Hypothesis test

Hypothesis 1 predicted that consumers' willingness to purchase apparel would be affected by information related to social responsibility available on apparel products and is an important factor for consumers while purchasing apparel products (Hustvedt & Bernard, 2010; Prasad, Kimeldorf, Meyer, & Robinson, 2004).

According to Hypothesis 2, different consumers value social and environmental information in different ways to use in their purchase intention (Roberts, 1995; Roberts, 1996). To support this condition hypothesis two suggested that the effect of the product information related to social responsibility on consumers' clothing purchase intention is greater in "socially responsible" consumers than "brown" consumers. In order to address this condition a regression model was designed to see the interaction effect of consumers' profile and SRI. In this model purchase intention is dependent variable.

Since presence of the product information related to social responsibility is an important factor for consumers in their purchase intention in high involvement products rather than low involvement products (Ha & Lennon, 2010), hypothesis 3 suggests that the effect of the product information related to social responsibility on consumers' clothing purchase intention is greater in high involvement products than low involvement products. To address this hypothesis, a regression model was considered in which purchase intention was dependent variable and interaction between INV and SRI was independent variable.

Finally, hypothesis 4 predicted that there is an interaction effect among all three main independent variables in this study. An interaction effect of SRI*PRFL*INV was assumed to be effective in the last regression model.

To address all mentioned conditions, the following model was tested:

$$\text{Purchase Intention} = \beta_1 (\text{SRI}) + \beta_2 (\text{PRFL}) + \beta_3 (\text{INV}) + \beta_4 (\text{SRI*PRFL}) + \beta_5 (\text{SRI*INV}) + \beta_6 (\text{SRI*INV*PRFL}) + \varepsilon$$

Although two variables, PRFL and INV were not hypothesized in any of the hypothesis, they were added in the suggested model as well to see their main effects in the model. In this proposed model purchase intention is dependent variable while products information related to social responsibility, consumers profile and levels of involvement are independent variables.

Overall, the study model had adjusted R^2 of .233, 23.3% of the variances were explained by the study model. As Table 4.5 shows SRI was found to be statistically significantly associated with purchase intention (standardized Beta (β_1) = 0.579, $p < 0.000$). According to the result, presenting SRI has more impact on purchase intention compare to when the SRI is absent. Also,

since standardized β of SRI is the highest ones among other independent variables, SRI seemed to have the biggest effect on dependent variable. Moreover, social responsibility information is positively related to consumers' purchase intention since B1 is 1.987 and it has a positive sign. It means that by keeping other variables consistent, the presence of SRI has 1.987 unit higher purchase intention than the absence of SRI which supports *H1* (Unstandardized B1 = 1.987).

As Table 4.5 indicates, the regression coefficient of SRI*PRFL was found to be statistically significantly associated with purchase intention (standardized Beta (β_4) = -0.299, $p < 0.000$). According to the unstandardized coefficient B4, it is predicted that keeping other variables consistent, purchase intention will decrease by -1.250 units by one unit increase in the interaction of SRI and PRFL. Therefore, this result suggested that keeping other variables consistent, brown consumers in presence of SRI has lower purchase intention than socially responsible consumers in SRI presence which supports *H2*.

According to the Table 4.5 the regression coefficient for SRI*INV was not found to be statistically significant (standardized Beta (β_5) = -0.043, $p < 0.590$). This result suggests that there is no difference between consumers purchase intention between high and low involvement products when SRI is present. This result does not support *H3*.

In addition, as table 4.5 shows, a three way interaction effect was found to be statistically suggestive association with purchase intention (standardized Beta (β_6) = 0.118, $p < 0.093$), which means the effect of one variable on purchase intention depends on two other variables. This result rejected hypothesis four in significant level of 0.05, but if 0.1 is considered for suggestive level, this hypothesis could be accepted with cautions.

Moreover, consumers profile was not found to be statistically significantly associated with purchase intention (standardized Beta (β_2) = 0.056 $p = 0.322$). This result suggests that

keeping other variables consistent, consumers purchase intention is independent from their profile.

Finally, level of involvement was found to be statistically significantly associated with purchase intention (standardized Beta (β_3) = 0.140, $p=0.014$). Also, according to B3 which is 0.481, by keeping other variables consistent, low involvement product (cushion socks) has 0.481 unit higher purchase intention than high involvement product (hiking shoes) [Unstandardized coefficient B3 = .481]. This could be explained due to the lower price of low involvement products than the higher price of high involvement products. Consumers, in general, have lower purchase intention for high-priced items.

Table 4.5 Results of Regression Analysis^{a b}

| <i>Independent Variable</i> | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | <i>t-value</i> | Sig | R ² | Adj. R ² |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|----------------|------|----------------|---------------------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | | |
| SRI^c | | | | | | | |
| SRI absent (=0) | 1.987 | .243 | .579 | 8.188 | .000 | | |
| SRI present (=1) | | | | | | | |
| PRFL^d | | | | | | | |
| SR consumers (=0) | .193 | .195 | .056 | .991 | .322 | | |
| Brown consumers (=1) | | | | | | | |
| INV^e | | | | | | | |
| Hiking shoes (=0) | .481 | .195 | .140 | 2.470 | .014 | .243 | .233 |
| Cushion socks (=1) | | | | | | | |
| Interactions | | | | | | | |
| SRI*PRFL | -1.250 | .336 | -.299 | -3.720 | .000 | | |
| SRI*INV | -.173 | .320 | -.043 | -.539 | .590 | | |
| SRI*PRFL*INV | .655 | .390 | .118 | 1.681 | .093 | | |

a. Dependent Variable: PI

b. The equation was run without intercept B0

c. Social responsible information

d. Consumers' profile

e. Level of involvement

Summary of the Results

This study has demonstrated that product information related to social responsibility is effective on consumers' purchase intention. Particularly, this SR-related product information had more effects on socially responsible consumers who care more about socially and environmentally effects of their purchase. Moreover, product information related to social

responsibility was more effective on consumers when they consider purchasing high involvement products rather than low involvement ones. However, consumers purchase intention in general was higher in presence of SRI when they consider purchasing low involvement products rather than high involvement products:

High involvement/ SR consumers:

$$\text{When SRI}=1, \text{involvement} = 0, \text{ and PRFL} = 0, \text{ PI} = 1.987 + 0+0+0+0+0 = 1.987$$

Low involvement/ SR consumers:

$$\text{When SRI} = 1, \text{involvement} = 1, \text{ and PRFL} = 0, \text{ PI} = 1.987+0+.481+0 -.173+0 = 2.295$$

High involvement/ brown consumers:

$$\text{When, SRI} = 1, \text{involvement} = 0, \text{ and PRFL} = 1, \text{ PI} = 1.987+.193+0 -1.250+0+0 = 0.93$$

Low involvement/ brown consumers:

$$\text{When SRI}=1, \text{involvement} = 1, \text{ and PRFL} = 1, \text{ PI} = 1.987+.193+.481 -1.250-.173+.655 +0= 1.893$$

Table 4.6 Summary of the Results

| Hypothesis | Result |
|--|---------------|
| Hypothesis 1: The product information related to social responsibility influences consumers' clothing purchase intention. | Supported |
| Hypothesis 2: The effect of the product information related to social responsibility on consumers' clothing purchase intention is greater in "socially responsible" consumers than "brown" consumers. | Supported |
| Hypothesis 3: The effect of the product information related to social responsibility on consumers' clothing purchase intention is greater in high involvement products than low involvement products. | Not Supported |
| Hypothesis 4: A three way interaction is expected | Supported |

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

This chapter includes (a) summary of the study, (b) discussion of the major findings, (c) contributions and implications, and (d) limitations and scope of future research

Summary of the Study

Although consumers' attention to socially responsible practices is dramatically growing, they do not show similar practices towards products at their purchase intention. Consumers may want to be socially responsible, in one or both dimensions of environment and society, in one or more than one steps of their purchase. Moreover, consumers' attitude towards different products is dissimilar. They may not show same practices for both low and high involvement products while purchasing. (Roberts, 1995; Roberts, 1996; Creyer, 1997; Hustvedt & Bernard, 2010).

Literature review suggests that consumers in the U.S expect companies to be socially responsible in both environmental and social dimensions. In addition, socially responsible consumers pay more attention to these practices compared to other clusters of consumers including browns. On the other hand, consumers show dissimilar purchase intention towards different levels of products involvement (Murphy & Enis, 1986; Creyer, 1997; Radder & Huang, 2008; Fish, 2009; Hustvedt & Bernard, 2010; Tanner & Raymond, 2012).

This study sought to investigate the relation between information related to socially responsibility (SRI), consumers' profile (PRFL), and product involvement (INV) on consumers purchase intention. The study hypothesized the following:

Hypothesis 1: The product information related to social responsibility influences consumers' clothing purchase intention.

Hypothesis 2: The effect of the product information related to social responsibility on consumers' clothing purchase intention is greater in "socially responsible" consumers than "brown" consumers.

Hypothesis 3: The effect of the product information related to social responsibility on consumers' clothing purchase intention is greater in high involvement products than low involvement products.

Hypothesis 4: A three way interaction is expected.

For this study, SRI was considered to have 2 dimensions: SRI present and absent. The PRFL also had two distinctly categorized consumer groups, socially responsible and brown. Finally, the last independent variable had two levels of engagement, high and low involvement level. A 2X2X2 matrix was designed and each participant was exposed to two of profiles in a random order. These profiles were SRI present/ Socially responsible/ high involvement, SRI present/ Socially responsible/ low involvement, SRI present/ brown consumers/ high involvement, SRI present/ brown consumers/ low involvement, SRI absent/ Socially responsible/ high involvement, SRI absent/ Socially responsible/ low involvement, SRI absent/ brown consumers/ high involvement, SRI absent/ brown consumers/ low involvement. First, participants were asked to answer to the modified Roberts' scale, in order profile them to four groups (including 17-item environmental and 7-item social). For each cell, participants were asked to indicate their purchase intention for targeted product (3 item 7-point Likert scale).

A total of 351 participants were recruited for the study through two sources (advertisement in the university news media and an online website- findparticipants.com). Out of those 351, 333 usable responses were used for data analysis. Age of the participants ranged from

18 to 80 with average of 33 years old. In total, 65 of them were men and 268 women. Participants consisted of both students and non-students and represented a wide range of ethnic origins.

Discussion of Major Findings

Before doing data analysis on responses, the respondents were subjected to independent sample t-test to test differences between two sources of data (Mu Info and FP). Results revealed that two sources were not significantly different; therefore, all responses were combined together. In addition, after receiving responses for modified Roberts' scale, participants were divided into four clusters. Out of these four clusters, two groups of participants (the socially responsible and the browns) were selected in order to do other data analysis on them and the rest of responses were deleted from data base.

According to the aforementioned calculations first, SRI plays a positive role to increase consumers purchase intention for all kind of products regardless of their clusters. In general, when consumers see information related to social responsibility, they seemed to have higher intention to buy any level of products compare to when they do not see any.

Second, consumer profiles do not seem to solely play a role in consumers purchase intention, meaning that both profiles have similar purchase intention if other conditions are not the subject of the study and are controlled.

Third, in general, all consumers seem to be more willing to purchase cushion socks representing low involvement product that have lower price (\$2.99) than hiking shoes which represent high involvement products with significantly higher price (\$169.99), regardless of the presence or absence of information. A very possible reason for this result is that consumers have more purchase intention in buying the proposed low involvement products because of the lower

price especially because of the large difference in prices which suggested in this study. In addition, everyday cushion socks are something all consumers may need every day, but reason is not applicable in hiking shoes.

Forth, information related to social responsibility seems to have higher effect on socially responsible consumers compare to brown consumers regardless of type of the products. Therefore, when socially responsible consumers see information related to social responsibility, they show more change in their intention to purchase them than browns in positive way.

Fifth, SRI is not related to all consumers purchase intention, between high and low involvement. This means that there is no difference in consumers' purchase intention between high and low involvement products in presence and absence of SRI.

And finally, all independent interactions were found to be significantly related to purchase intention. The effect of SRI presence is higher on socially responsible consumers for high involvement than low involvement product, while this effect seems to be opposite in brown consumers. Therefore, the effect of SRI present is higher for high involvement products compare to low involvement products for socially responsible consumers. In contrast to this, when brown consumers see information related to social responsibility, their willingness to purchase products, does not increase considerably, and interestingly. Its effect on their purchase intention of high involvement products is smaller than low involvement products. However, attaching information related to social responsibility will increase their purchase intention in total.

Contributions and Implications

Responding to the increasing rate of consumers' expectation from companies regarding socially responsible practices and their attention to information related to social responsibility on different levels of products, this study examined the effect of information related to social responsibility on clothing products, consumers' cluster regarding socially and environmentally conscious, and products' level of involvement on consumers' clothing purchase intention. The findings of this study have several important implications.

First, filling a gap in the literature, this study explored the effect of information related to social responsibility on products in the clothing industry. Since, social and environmental responsibility information has been widely used in the marketing and consumer behavior literature in various industries but not in apparel shopping behavior, this study focuses on the clothing industry. However, in this extremely competitive business environment, companies are trying to utilize various practices to capture consumers' attention and receive more money from them. Social and environmental practices are two of the very important expectations consumers have from companies. This is especially true for the apparel and clothing industry due to several violations regarding labor and environment that occurred in this industry. The study supports that consumers have concerns about clothing products and companies' practices affect their purchase intention. In representing their products to consumers, it might be an option for apparel firms to add some information related to their social responsibility practices (if there is any). Even though if they are not targeting any specific group of consumers such as socially responsible consumers, having information related to social responsibility is better than having no information and will improve consumers' purchase intention significantly.

Second, the finding of this study suggest that the effect of information related to socially responsible information is associated with consumers' profile which might be considered by corporations and consumers as well as researches. Findings suggest that if apparel firms want to have the maximum possible outcome of their showing information, they might want to select their target consumers. Or in the other words, if their target consumers are among socially responsible consumers they might want to prepare as much as information consumers need to assure them about the social responsibility practices. As the result, consumers will have more purchase intention to their products. On the other hand, this could be considered as an interesting topic for researchers to find how much information is enough for each consumer's profile. This could be expanded to other profiles which were deleted from this study as well. In addition, consumers might want to find companies which meet their expectation and cover all practices they expect by knowing their level of interests about social responsibility information

Third, this study advocate that products' level of involvement is associated with social responsibility information and consumers' profile on their purchase intention. This means that different groups of consumers (socially responsible vs. brown) react dissimilarly to different levels of products (high vs. low). Although all consumers show positive change in their purchase intention after attaching information, socially responsible consumers show bigger change in high involvement products, while brown consumers show smaller change in their intention of high involvement than low involvement. This could be justified by their profile's characteristics. Since brown consumers have the lowest score in both dimension (social and environmental) and are in the extreme negative side of the Roberts' model (see Figure 2.1), they might not interested in paying more money for these practices since most of these practices seems to lead the final product to be more expensive. This justification is considerable for expensive products which

high involvement products could be categorized in this group. Brown consumers might not be interested in helping apparel firms doing their socially responsible practices by paying more prices because they do not believe in those practices. Therefore, they do not show higher purchase intention for them. But they show to be not very restrict about low price product (one of the low involvement products' characteristics) since the tested amount of money was very low in this study (\$2.99). On the other hand, this justification could be seen in opposite way for socially responsible consumers, since they show high interest in both dimensions and are agreeable to help companies doing these practices. They might be willing to pay higher price, therefore, they show a huge change in purchase intention after attaching information.

In other words, this study compliments the former studies that mentioned in purchasing high involvement products, people are willing to think they are good and responsible citizens in the society, the product information related to social responsibility would matter even more if the products are high involvement rather than low involvement ones (Ha & Lennon, 2010). The result of this study suggests that not all groups of consumers want to be good citizens. Therefore, apparel firms might be considering this difference according to their products. This means that companies that produce high involvement products, might not get as much as outcome they expect by attaching SRI to their products if the majority of their consumers are browns. Therefore, they might be interested in providing other information such as information about product's functions and characteristics as well (this also could be tested by other researchers to see what specific information brown consumers care more about) to obtain the maximum results. In contrast, companies producing low involvement products may receive their desired results by attaching SRI information from both groups of consumers.

Limitations and Scope of Future Research

The study has certain limitations. First limitation is about its experimental design. The study used only online survey and expanded it to real shopping. This means that other variables could effect on consumers' purchase intention when they purchase an item in person. Therefore, future research measuring both real and online shopping is suggested.

Second limitation lies in the selected products, this study only used footwear products. More research may be conducted in future using other kind of products as well ad also comparing results together.

Third, the study includes only, 19.5% males compared to 80.5% females, additional study with an even distribution of males and females might be better for result generalization. Although brown participants stated higher means in their purchase intention of both products than socially responsible consumers, regression result did not support this difference, further study can be conducted to examine in details the effect of consumers profile on their purchase intention.

Forth, this study only focuses on two out of four clusters of consumers adopted from Roberts (1995), future research can be directed focusing on all four clusters including Middle Americans as well as greens in order to see the effect of SRI and products level of involvement on their purchase intention.

Fifth, this study combined bot dimensions environmental and social practices as socially responsible practices, future research can be conducted to explore in details of each practice in different groups of consumers and also compare them.

Lastly, this study kept other products' attributes identical for both products, and did not use any attributes such as brand name or country of origin for products. Future research

including brand name or country of origin for products that participants were exposed to might be interesting to see the impact on consumers purchase intention.

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APPENDIX A
SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

Consent Form and Survey Questionnaire

Page one: written consent

This survey is developed by Mona Emadi to explore the effect of information of social responsibility on different levels of products' involvement effect on purchase intention of two main consumers' clusters in the Department of Textile and Apparel Management at the University of Missouri. You will be required to participate in a laboratory experiment.

Data including online surveys and demographic questionnaires will be stored electronically in a password protected computer in the investigator's office. The content of the data files saved in computer will be permanently deleted and destroyed within three years of the initial date of data collection.

NO risks for participants taking part in this project are expected. Your privacy will be protected because you will not be identified by name as a participant in this project. By completing this study, you acknowledge that you are 18 years or older. The study will take you about 20 minutes to complete. Questions or concerns about the study may be directed to Mona Emadi (MSEPN6@mail.missouri.edu). For information about your rights as a research subject, please contact the MU IRB (573.882.9585; irb.missouri.edu). Please respond to all questions, as incomplete questionnaires create serious problems in data analysis. If you are not sure of an answer to a question, please provide your best estimate. You may contact Mona Emadi at any time if you have any questions or concerns in this matter.

Mona Emadi

MSEPN6@mail.missouri.edu

Textile and Apparel Management

University of Missouri

Page two: Experimental study

You will now be first exposed to 24 questions to determine your profile. Please rate the following statement on a scale of 1 (always true) to 7 (never true).

1. I have purchased products because they cause less environmental pollution

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Always true | | | | | | Never true |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

2. When I purchase products, I always make a conscious effort to buy those products that are low in environmental pollutants.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Always true | | | | | | Never true |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

3. I make every effort to buy paper products made from recycled paper.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Always true | | | | | | Never true |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

4. When I have a choice between two equal products, I always purchase the one which is less harmful to the environment.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Always true | | | | | | Never true |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

5. I try only to buy products that can be recycled.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Always true | | | | | | Never true |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

6. I use a recycle center or in some way recycle some of my household trash.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Always true | | | | | | Never true |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

7. When there is a choice, I always choose that product which contributes to the least amount of environmentally pollution.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Always true | | | | | | Never true |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

8. Whenever possible, I buy products packaged in reusable containers.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Always true | | | | | | Never true |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

9. If I understand the potential damage to the environment that some products can cause, I do not purchase.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Always true | | | | | | Never true |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

10. I use an Eco-Friendly detergent for my laundry.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Always true | | | | | | Never true |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

11. I have convinced members of my family or friend not to buy some products which are harmful to the environment.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Always true | | | | | | Never true |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

12. I do not buy household products that harm the environment.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Always true | | | | | | Never true |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

13. I do not buy non-biodegradable plastic.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Always true | | | | | | Never true |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

14. I use fabric towels rather than paper towels

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Always true | | | | | | Never true |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

15. To reduce our reliance on foreign oil, I drive my car as little as possible.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Always true | | | | | | Never true |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

16. I buy toilet paper made from recycled paper.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Always true | | | | | | Never true |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

17. I normally make a conscious effort to limit my use of products that are made or use scarce resources.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Always true | | | | | | Never true |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

18. I do not buy products with advertising that depicts minority groups in a negative way.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Always true | | | | | | Never true |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

19. I do not buy products from companies who discriminate against minorities.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Always true | | | | | | Never true |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

20. I do not buy products from companies who have investment in countries with poor labor conditions

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Always true | | | | | | Never true |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

21. In the past, I have not purchase products a product because its advertising depicted women in a negative way.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Always true | | | | | | Never true |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

22. I will not buy products from companies involved in a labor dispute.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Always true | | | | | | Never true |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

23. I will not buy Coffee if I know workers who pick them do not have good working condition.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Always true | | | | | | Never true |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

24. I try to purchase products from companies who make donation to charities.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Always true | | | | | | Never true |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Based on what you just saw and read, you are now considering making a purchase from these products. Please rate the following statement on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7

(Strongly Agree). [These questions will be presented in the random order].

1. I will consider this product for some of my future apparel shopping

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | | | | | | Strongly Disagree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

2. I am inclined to purchase this product

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | | | | | | Strongly Disagree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

3. I am likely to purchase this product

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | | | | | | Strongly Disagree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Page three: Demographic information

Before we begin the study, we would like you to answer the following demographic questions.

These will help us to understand your answers better.

1. Your gender:

Male

Female

Other

2. Your age:

3. Your education:

Less than school graduate

High school graduate

Some college education

Graduate education

Do not wish to provide

4. Marital status:

Single

In a relationship

Married

Divorced

Do not wish to provide

5. How would you classify yourself?

Caucasian

African American/Black

Hispanic/Latino

Asian (including Indian)

Other

6. What is your household income:

Less than \$10.000

\$10.000-29.999

\$30.000-59.999

\$60,000-89,999
\$90,000-119,999
\$120,000 - \$149,999
\$150,000 above
Do not wish to provide

7. Political affiliation

Republican
Democrat
Independent
Do not wish to provide

8. Home ownership

Home owner
Rental
Do not wish to provide

Thank you for your participation. If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact

Mona Emadi (msepn6@mail.missouri.edu)

APPENDIX B

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DOCUMENTS

April 29, 2013

Principal Investigator: Emadi, Mona Sadat

Department: Textile and Apparel Mgmt

Your Application to project entitled *THE EFFECT OF PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT ON SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE CONSUMER BEHAVIOR* was reviewed and approved by the MU Campus Institutional Review Board according to terms and conditions described below:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| IRB Project Number | 1208155 |
| Initial Application Approval Date | April 29,2013 |
| IRB Expiration Date | April 29, 2014 |
| Level of Review | Exempt |
| Project Status | Active-Open to Enrollment |
| Regulation | 45 CFR 46.101b(2) |
| Risk Level | Minimal Risk |

The principal investigator (PI) is responsible for all aspects and conduct of this study. The PI must comply with the following conditions of the approval:

1. No subjects may be involved in any study procedure prior to the IRB approval date or after the expiration date.
2. All unanticipated problems, serious adverse events, and deviations must be reported to the IRB within 5 days.
3. All modifications must be IRB approved by submitting the Exempt Amendment prior to implementation unless they are intended to reduce risk.
4. All recruitment materials and methods must be approved by the IRB prior to being used.
5. The Annual Exempt Form must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval at least 30 days prior to the project expiration date.
6. Maintain all research records for a period of seven years from the project completion date.

7. Utilize the IRB stamped document informing subjects of the research and other approved research documents located within the document storage section of eIRB.

If you have any questions, please contact the Campus IRB at 573-882-9585 or umcresearchcirb@missouri.edu.

Thank you,
Charles Borduin, PhD
Campus IRB Chair

Print Recruitment (MU Info)

Research Opportunity!

Interested in participating in a study related to social responsibility in clothing marketplace? All surveys completed before May 15 will be entered into a drawing to win a Target gift card. Click [here](#) to take the survey. Participation will involve completing questionnaires over the internet for about 10 minutes. For more information contact Mona Emadi at msepn6@mail.missouri.edu

Print Recruitment (Findparticipants.com)

Research Opportunity to win a gift card!

“The Effect of Product Involvement on Socially Responsible Consumer Behavior”

This survey is a research developed by Mona Emadi as part of MSc thesis in the Department of Textile and Apparel Management at the University of Missouri. Your participation is voluntary and minimal risks in this project are expected. Your privacy will be protected because you will not be identified by name as a participant in this project.

By completing this study, you acknowledge that you are 18 years or older. The study will take you about 10 minutes to complete. Questions or concerns about the study may be directed to

Mona Emadi (MSEPN6@mail.missouri.edu). If you are not sure of an answer to a question, please provide your best estimate. You may contact Mona Emadi at any time if you have any questions or concerns in this matter.

Also, by completing this survey your name will be entered into a drawing to win a 10 dollar Target gift card. Thank you in advance for your assistance and time.

APPENDIX C

PRETEST SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

Now you are exposed to two different products that offer two product categories. Please review them carefully so you can answer the following questions.

High involvement product using for pilot test

WATERPROOF HIKING SHOES MID-CUT

PRODUCT DESCRIPTIONS:

- Premium waterproof leather
- Padded collar and tongue
- Metatomical footbed design
- Patented toe protection
- Mesh hiking shoes
- Polyurethane stability shank
- Dual-density EVA midsole
- Non-marking carbon rubber sole



Low involvement product using for pilot test

EVERYDAY CUSHION ANKLE SOCKS

PRODUCT DESCRIPTIONS:

- Machine wash warm
- Tumble dry medium
- Do not iron
- Fits shoes size 4 to 12



Table 3.4 level of involvement scale

To me object to be judged is:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|
| Very important* | | | | | | Very unimportant |
| Not needed at all | | | | | | Highly needed |
| Means a lot to me* | | | | | | Means nothing |
| Very worthless | | | | | | Very valuable |
| Very Involving* | | | | | | Very Uninvolving |
| Very Unexciting | | | | | | Very exciting |
| Very unappealing | | | | | | Very Appealing |
| Mundane | | | | | | Fascinating |
| Not needed at all | | | | | | Highly needed |
| Boring | | | | | | Interesting |
| Irrelevant | | | | | | Relevant |

Note. * indicates reverse coded items.