ABSTRACT

SHIN, DA EUN. Animal Fur Coats: A Symbol of Status or Stigma? (Under the direction of Dr. Byoungho "Ellie" Jin).

Clothing made from animal fur has historically served as a status symbol. By the 1970s, fur garments transformed from a status symbol to a target of animal rights activism. At the forefront of the anti-fur movements were animal rights organizations such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). By highlighting the malpractices in the fur farming industry, PETA has heavily stigmatized animal fur consumption for fashion. PETA's campaigns received much attention from the media. The ample media coverage has shaped perceived stigma, the individual's perception of how much the public stigmatizes wearing animal fur, which is likely to vary across individuals. Some people might think that wearing animal fur is only slightly stigmatized while others might think that it is a cultural taboo.

In spite of the growing presence of animal rights activism, the fur apparel market size is still considerable. It is, however, facing competition from synthetic alternatives, often referred to as faux fur. Now, faux fur can be made to look genuine due to technological innovation. Faux fur that looks real can be easily mistaken as genuine by any observers without prior knowledge about its true identity. For this reason, Stella McCartney, a well-known vegetarian brand, attaches a label that says "Fur Free Fur" to the right cuff of their synthetic fur coats to signify their faux-ness. Despite such dynamic shifts in the 1.57-billion-dollar fur apparel market, very few studies have examined the changes in the consumer perceptions of and the attitudes toward animal fur garments and their alternatives.

The purpose of this thesis was threefold. Firstly, it was to examine if consumers with a strong need for social status still desire real animal fur coats, despite the heightened stigma around wearing animal fur. Secondly, it was to examine if attaching a label that states

"FAUX FUR" to real-looking faux fur coats can increase the purchase intention. Thirdly, it was to examine if perceived stigma moderates the purchase intention toward both real animal fur coats and real-looking faux fur coats with the label.

Based on stigma theory, four hypotheses were developed, and two studies, a survey and an experiment, were conducted. The survey examined the relationship between need for status and purchase intention, in addition to the moderating effect of perceived stigma. In the between-subject experimental study, the individual's perception of the extent to which a faux fur coat appears fake to others (i.e., explicitness in faux-ness) was manipulated by the presence of the "FAUX FUR" label: high explicitness in faux-ness (with label) vs. low explicitness in faux-ness (without label). Two-hundred usable responses were collected through MTurk. The results supported two out of the four hypotheses. As hypothesized, participants with a higher need for status showed higher purchase intention toward real animal fur coats (H1), and participants with higher perceived stigma had lower purchase intention toward real animal fur coats (H2). However, participants showed no difference in their purchase intention toward real-looking faux fur coats with and without the "FAUX FUR" label (H3). Participants with higher perceived stigma also did not show higher purchase intention toward real-looking faux fur coats with the label (H4).

By identifying stigma as a driver of the change and empirically examining its effect, this study provided further support for the fluid nature of status symbols and showed that stigma is one possible mechanism by which the symbolic value of status products can be tainted. The findings suggest to brand managers and product designers that the assumption about fake alternatives – the more a fake alternative looks genuine, the better – may not hold true for faux fur coats.

Animal Fur Coats: A Symbol of Status or Stigma?

by
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BIOGRAPHY

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In this chapter, the background of the study is discussed, from how public attitude toward animal fur consumption for fashion has changed to how distinguishing real animal fur from faux fur has become extremely difficult. Based on this backdrop, three research questions are raised. Next, contributions of the study from academic and industry perspectives are discussed, followed by the scope of the study, the definition of key terminologies, and the outline of this thesis.

Background

Status Consumption and Fur Fashion

Because of its public nature, clothing has long been used to communicate identity-relevant messages to others (Belk, Bahn, & Mayer, 1982; Packard, 1959). For example, clothing made from expensive and rare materials, such as animal fur, has historically served as a status symbol, sought after by those who seek to signal their membership to high social class through a public display (O'Cass & Frost, 2002). This sentiment was well reflected in the mass media. A 1929 Vogue article titled "The Fur Story of 1929" argued that the type of fur a woman wears shows "the kind of woman [she is] and the kind of life [she leads]" and advised the readers to invest in fur fashion (Hines, 2015). A New York Times article from the same year highlighted how desirable fur coats were:

> Lapin or nutria for sports, caracul for street, mink or breitshwanz for afternoon, ermine for evening - how simple the choosing of fur coats would be if the matter of finance did not have to be considered! For fur coats are more luxurious and more

> diversified than even before. There is now a fur coat for every frock and every hour of the day (The New York Times, 1929).

Integral to women's wardrobes were fur garments, as athleisure is today. Beyond its practical utilities like providing warmth, animal fur has historically been highly valued and prized, so much so that it was reserved for the elite classes. Between the 1300s and the 1600s, there were legal mandates in place, collectively called the sumptuary laws, that explicitly restricted the consumption of the most expensive thus exclusive furs to the ruling class, further solidifying the perception that fur symbolized wealth and high status (Emberley, 1997).

Fur Fashion, from a Status Symbol to a Stigma Symbol

By the 1970s, fur coats transformed from a highly desired status symbol to a target of animal rights activism. The spearhead of the anti-fur movements were animal rights organizations such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). Founded in 1980, PETA is an American animal rights organization with a mission to end animal suffering in research laboratories as well as in the food, fashion, and entertainment industries. The organization strives to ensure that animals are not experimented on, eaten, worn, used for entertainment or abused in any other way through various means, from public education and animal rescue to political lobbying and street protests. By doing so, PETA has pushed animal welfare to the forefront of public discourse. In particular, PETA set out to educate the public about the provenance of fur. Fur pelts used for clothing come from fur farms where wild animals such as foxes and minks are farmed in captivity. According to PETA, trapping snares can easily injure animals, and trapped animals can languish for days. Farmed animals are typically cramped in small, poorly maintained cages. As a result, many suffer

tremendously and display behaviors indicative of distress, such as pacing and biting, only to be brutally killed for their pelts (PETA, n.d.a). By highlighting the malpractices in the fur farming industry, PETA not only raised public awareness but also branded fur consumption as unethical.

On the other hand, pro-fur farming organizations, such as Fur Commission USA and International Fur Trade Federation, contend that the fur farming industry is well regulated and that most fur farms follow high standards for animal welfare. According to these organizations, when harvesting fur pelts, fur farmers adhere strictly to methods recommended by the American Veterinary Medical Association and use gas (carbon monoxide or carbon dioxide) to immediately render animals unconscious so that they do not have to feel pain (Fur Commission USA, n.d.).

In contrast to such claims, PETA's campaign contents show farmed animals being treated more like commodities, rather than sentient beings. A number of video clips released by PETA show animals such as angora rabbits and angora goats being subjected to abuse (PETA, n.d.b). In these videos, animals show clear signs of pain and distress. As emotionally charged as the videos are, they elicit strong reactions such as shock and disgust, heavily stigmatizing those who, whether inadvertently or advertently, patronize the fur farming industry by consuming fur fashion products.

Perceived stigma

Perceived stigma, the extent to which individuals believe that most people devalue or socially reject a person with stigma (Link, 1987) or, in this study, a person who wears animal fur, is likely to vary across individuals. Some people might think that animal fur consumption is only slightly stigmatized while others might think that it is a cultural taboo. This variance

in the perception would depend on a number of factors such as a varying exposure to the media coverage on the anti-fur consumption movements, evidenced by the previous findings that people infer public opinion from the media contents (Gunther, 1998). Another factor that might contribute to the variance in the perceived stigma is the climate because wearing animal fur may be the norm in some geographic locations where winter is extremely long and cold.

The Rise of Faux Fur

Despite the growing presence of animal rights activism, fur apparel is still a considerable market worldwide, amounting to 1.57 billion, according to 2016 trade data (Collective learning, 2016a). However, it is facing competition from man-made alternatives, often referred to as faux fur. In the US, for instance, the market for faux fur apparel has grown 2% between 2012 and 2016 and is now worth $114.6 million (Ahmed, 2017). In line with the growing demand, fashion brands that specialize in faux fur products such as Shrimps (2013) and House of Fluff (2017) have sprung up. The mainstream reception of faux fur is more than average, as evinced by Vogue Paris's August 2017 issue, dedicated to faux fur fashion with its cover featuring a faux fur-clad model and activist Gisele Bündchen (Combs, 2017).

Blurring Difference in the Visual Aesthetics of Faux Fur and Real Animal Fur

Although faux fur was initially considered an inferior alternative because it was typically lower in quality, now faux fur and genuine fur look indistinguishable to the naked eye, due to technological advancements. An unintended consequence of the technological advancements is the mislabeling of real fur as faux fur (Creswell, 2013). Seven retailers including Boohoo, TK Maxx, and Amazon sold genuine fur products that were mislabeled as

synthetic, according to an investigation conducted in 2017 by Humane Society International, an animal rights organization, and Sky News. In the previous year, 17 retailers were accused of the same misconduct. Among them were major retailers such as Neiman Marcus, Kohl's, and Nordstrom (O'Connor, 2017).

Mislabeling persists partly because of the long and complex supply chain, which makes it difficult to trace the provenance of fur pelts used for apparel. The top exporters of pelts are Denmark ($873M), Canada ($361M), and Poland ($360M). The top importer of pelts and exporter of fur apparel is China whereas the top importers of fur apparel are the United States ($180M), and Hong Kong ($158M) (Collective Learning, 2016b; Collective Learning, 2016c). Much of fur apparel is manufactured in China, but pelts used for apparel is sourced from distant countries like Denmark. The finished products travel a long distance again to be exported to countries like the United States. Low price is no longer an accurate indicator of whether a product is synthetic, because of mega-fur farms in China and Poland that produce animal fur at a low price point (O'Connor, 2017). However, these issues would not have mattered as much if it was easy to distinguish synthetic fur from real animal fur. The prevalence of mislabeling indeed attests to the striking visual resemblance between synthetic and real animal fur.

Of course, this does not mean that all faux fur products look genuine. Although faux fur products can be made to look real, there is variability in the degree to which they look authentic. Those that do look real, however, can be easily mistaken as genuine by any observers without prior knowledge about the true identity of the products. For this reason, Stella McCartney, a well-known vegetarian brand which uses alternative materials instead of leather, fur or feathers, has pioneered a way to signal the true identity of real-looking faux fur

coats. The brand attaches a label that says “Fur Free Fur” to the right cuff of their synthetic fur products to signify their faux-ness, lest their products are mistaken for real animal fur due to their high visual resemblance (Stella McCartney, n.d.). This industry practice, though not mainstream, is another example that attests to the visual resemblance between synthetic and real animal fur. Affixed conspicuously for all to see, this label is not like typical ones attached to the inside of garments that show legally mandated product information, such as fiber contents or country of origin. Unlike typical labels that are intended to inform the buyer about the product, this label is intended to inform the passerby who, without prior knowledge about the true identity of the product, could conclude that the product is real animal fur upon seeing it. This label makes the product’s faux-ness explicit to others, which may be important to consumers who do not wish to be falsely accused of wearing real animal fur.

Research Questions

Based on these recent developments, the following research questions are raised.

1. Despite the stigma, do consumers, particularly those with a high need for social status, still perceive animal fur coats as a status symbol and desire them?

Animal rights organizations’ vigorous campaigns like those of PETA have paired animal fur coats with negative associations. This study examines whether the negative associations have tainted the symbolic meaning of animal fur coats, or whether they still hold the same level of luster and desirability, particularly for those who seek to enhance their social status through overt consumption of products that symbolize prestige.

2. Given that faux fur coats can now look like real animal fur coats which are stigmatized, what can brands do to mitigate potential consumers’ fear that their faux fur coats may be misidentified as real animal fur, which may adversely impact purchase intention?

Can attaching a label that explicitly states that the coat is made of faux fur mitigate this fear and increase purchase intention?

Even though faux fur coats are not made from real animal fur, there is a likelihood that they are mistaken as real animal fur coats if they highly resemble real animal fur. As a result, consumers may still feel uncomfortable about wearing them in public, lest they are misidentified as a person who wears real animal fur and consequently misjudged by others. If consumers think that real animal fur consumption is highly stigmatized, they are likely to believe that the cost of being misidentified as a consumer of animal fur is high. Such consumers are then likely to choose not to purchase faux fur coats with a high resemblance to real animal fur, even though they want them. A label that explicitly states that the product is faux may help solve this dilemma by making the product's faux-ness explicit to others, thereby reducing the likelihood of misidentification. If so, the explicitness of faux-ness, the extent to which a faux fur coat appears faux to those without prior knowledge about the true identity of the product, can influence purchase intention. This study examines whether a label that explicitly signals to others the faux-ness of a real-looking faux fur coat can increase the purchase intention toward real-looking faux fur coats.

3. Would perceived stigma moderate the purchase intention toward real animal fur coats as well as real-looking faux fur coats with the label?

The more individuals think that wearing animal fur is stigmatized by the mainstream, the less likely they are to desire real animal fur coats because the stigma taints the symbolic meaning of animal fur coats. Similarly, they are less likely to purchase real-looking faux fur coats, thinking that the likelihood of being falsely stigmatized is high. Therefore, the label that explicitly states that the coat is made of faux fur is expected to be effective in increasing

the purchase intention of those who think that fur consumption is highly stigmatized. The effectiveness of the label is expected to be minimal to none for consumers who do not think that wearing animal fur is highly stigmatized because the high resemblance would not be an inhibiting factor for this group. This study examines the moderating effect of perceived stigma on the purchase intention toward real animal fur coats and toward real-looking faux fur coats with the label.

Contributions of the Study

The findings of this study provide contributions to both the academia and the fashion industry.

To the best of the author's knowledge, there is no prior study on how perceived stigma plays a role in the consumption of fashion products made from animal fur. By examining the effect of stigma on the symbolic meaning of animal fur coats and the effect of the label on purchase intention, this study extends the literature on status consumption, stigma, consumer attitudes toward animal skin/fur fashion products, and product labeling.

First, for the literature on status consumption which has primarily focused on consumption patterns (e.g., Han, Nunes, & Drèze, 2010), this study enhances the understanding of the fluid nature of status symbols by investigating how the meaning of a status symbol can change in response to social and cultural changes. In particular, by identifying stigma as a potential driver of the change and empirically examining its effect, this study adds to the understanding of the mechanism by which the meaning of status symbols is transformed.

Second, while there is a significant body of research on stigma and its effect on consumer behavior, the literature primarily focuses on a few consumer products, such as

cigarettes (e.g., Stuber, Galea, & Link, 2009), alcohol and drugs (e.g., Room, 2005), and food (e.g., McFerran, Dahl, Fitzsimons, & Morales, 2010). This study extends the stigma literature by adding a new consumer product category.

Third, it also extends the literature on consumer attitudes toward animal skin/fur fashion products, which is an understudied topic. There are only a handful of previous studies: a qualitative study on consumer attitudes toward third-party certifications that guarantee animal rights (Sneddon, Lee, & Soutar, 2010), a mixed methods study on consumer attitudes toward ethical and product attributes of wool apparel products (Sneddon, Soutar, & Lee, 2014), a quantitative study on consumer perceptions of and attitudes toward American alligator leather accessories (Xu, Summers, & Belleau, 2004), and a quantitative study on consumer attitudes toward eco-friendly faux leather (Kim, Kim, Oh, & Jung, 2016). This study goes beyond probing consumer attitudes and, through an experiment, examines what the fashion companies can do with their product design to boost the sale of their faux-fur products.

Fourth, for the literature on product labeling which has primarily focused on the conventional use of labels and hang tags, which is its use in informing or educating the end consumers about the product's attributes (e.g., Hyllegard, Yan, Ogle, & Lee, 2012), this study introduces an unconventional and novel usage of product labeling - informing the observer who would be seeing the product in public. In addition, this study tests the effect of unconventional usage on consumer behavior.

From the industry perspective, the results of this study can answer if the assumption about fake alternatives - the more a fake alternative looks genuine, the better - holds true for faux fur coats. They will provide insights into the demand for real-looking faux fur coats,

serving as a guideline for product design decisions. The results will also show whether the current industry practice of attaching a label to the cuff of real-looking faux fur coats actually fulfills its intended purpose, a finding that will prove valuable for fashion brands as a small adjustment, such as attaching a label to garments, can be a cost-effective way to boost sales.

Scope of the Study

This study does not attempt to make a value judgment on animal fur and faux fur products, whether one is more ethical or environmentally-friendly than the other. Instead, this study strives to acknowledge the controversial nature of the topic and to remain impartial by presenting both sides of the argument. At one side of the debate is the pro-animal fur farming group which argues that animal fur products can be ethically produced and that what is circulated by animal rights organizations, such as PETA, are anomalies or even staged. This group also contends that faux fur harms the environment because they are made with non-renewable materials. The other side is the anti-animal fur consumption group which argues that animal fur products are unethical and that faux fur products are cruelty-free, ethical alternatives with an ample room for innovation in biodegradable, environmentally-friendly materials. Rather than weighing which side has more corroborating evidence, this study focuses on understanding how the symbolic meaning of fashion products made with animal fur has changed amid the debate between the diametrical opposites, and how it affects consumer behavior.

In addition, this study limits its focus to animal fur consumption for fashion and excludes animal fur uses for any other purpose. Also excluded from this study are other animal products, such as those made from leather, as well as other product categories besides coats, such as accessories, handbags, and shoes. While faux fur coats are chosen as a product

category of interest, this study looks only at real-looking faux fur coats – fake fur coats that look like real animal fur coats. The moderating variable of interest is perceived stigma around wearing animal fur, as opposed to how much individuals themselves stigmatize animal fur consumption for fashion. Additionally, the geographic location is limited to the United States and the gender of research participants, to female.

Definition of Key Terminologies

- Status consumption: Consuming goods that are perceived to be high in status (i.e., luxury goods) to gain social prestige (Kilsheimer, 1994).
- Status symbol: Something that signals prestige, power, and wealth because they are both socially desirable and scarce (Blumberg, 1974). Examples include luxury material goods such as expensive jewelry, cars, and clothing. Animal fur also has served as a status symbol throughout history.
- Need for status: Individuals' consistent desire for "visible evidence of the superior rank" in society (Packard, 1959, p. 7).
- Faux fur: A fake alternative of animal fur, made from synthetic fibers such as acrylic, modacrylic, and polyester.
- Stigma: An "attribute that is deeply discrediting" to the extent that it reduces the worth of a stigmatized person "from a whole … to a tainted, discounted one" (Goffman, 1963, p. 3).
- Public stigma: Negative views of a discrediting attribute endorsed by the general population (Corrigan, 2004).
- Perceived stigma: The extent to which individuals believe that most people devalue or socially reject a person with stigma (Link, 1987). In this study, perceived stigma around

wearing animal fur is of interest and it is defined as the extent to which individuals believe that most people devalue or socially reject a person who wears animal fur.

- People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA): An American animal rights organization with a mission to end animal suffering in research laboratories, as well as in the food, fashion, and entertainment industries.
- Product labeling: Affixing labels or hangtags to products in order to provide basic product information legally mandated by law or to communicate promotional messages at the point-of-purchase.

Thesis Outline

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter One provides the background of the study – the changing landscape in the animal fur apparel market. Based on this backdrop, three research questions are raised. In addition, the contributions of the study, the scope of the study, and the definition of key terminologies are stated. In Chapter Two, relevant literature is reviewed to develop a research framework. Three major concepts - stigma, status consumption, and product labeling - and previous studies on these topics are discussed. Based on the literature review, four hypotheses are developed to answer the research questions. Chapter Three explains research methods including data collection, stimuli development, study procedures, as well as development and validation of measurements. Chapter Four provides the results of this study. Chapter Five discusses the findings and provides theoretical and practical implications, in addition to the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

In this chapter, the literature on the major concepts of this study is reviewed. First, status consumption and status symbol are defined, followed by a discussion on how status symbols are social constructs. Second, the definition, properties, and types of stigma are explained, in addition to its consequences. After animal fur consumption for fashion is discussed in the context of stigma, the role of product labeling is discussed. Next, based on the literature review, four hypotheses are developed.

Status Consumption

First, status consumption is defined. Then, need for status is discussed as a driver of status consumption. After status symbol is defined, how status symbols are social constructs is explained.

Definition of Status Consumption

Status means one's standing in society, which denotes one's value and importance as perceived by others (Scitovsky, 1992). Status consumption refers to consuming goods that are perceived to be high in status (i.e., luxury goods) to gain social prestige. The primary goal of status consumption is to enhance one's position in society by publicly displaying affluence to others (O'Cass & Frost, 2002). Social status can be conferred through a public display of luxury goods (Eastman, Fredenberger, Campbell, & Calvert, 1997; Veblen, 1899), as people choose particular products to communicate desired identities (Belk, 1988) and infer others' social identities based on what they consume (Belk, Bahn, & Mayer, 1982; Calder & Burnkrant, 1977).

Historically, status was typically attained through birth (e.g., born into nobility) and

handed down to generations. Starting in the mid-eighteenth century, status transformed into something people could earn through their own merits (de Botton, 2005). Although individual achievements have increasingly become a key determinant of status, the main outcome of individual achievements is still an accumulation of great wealth, the same as that of being endowed with status through birth. As a result, wealth has continued to denote status, and luxury goods have continued to symbolize status due to their high price tags.

The idea that luxury goods symbolize class distinction is not new. In the late Middle Ages in European countries, most notably in Britain, when a shifting social hierarchy threatened the aristocracy's social status, the nobility tried to protect their increasingly precarious status by forbidding the rising bourgeoisie from consuming luxury goods. This was achieved through the sumptuary laws that stipulated what each social class was permitted to wear. The laws mandated each social class to wear items that were commensurate to their social status. For example, knights could wear clothing that costed up to six marks but were forbidden from wearing gold or jeweled embroidery (Berry, 1994). This was the time when the idea that status can be conferred through a display of wealth started to emerge. In response to this budding idea about class distinction and social mobility, the nobility sought to preserve the status quo by controlling the access to goods that had been traditionally reserved for the ruling class. They believed that if the bourgeois appeared to be as wealthy or even wealthier than the ruling nobility, the class distinction would be blurred, and their status as powerful and legitimate rulers would be challenged (Emberley, 1997).

Need for Status

Status consumption is one of the key motivating forces of consumer behavior (Kilsheimer, 1994; O'Cass & Frost, 2002). Those most likely to engage in status

consumption are people with a strong need for social status, "who are continually straining to surround themselves with visible evidence of the superior rank" (Packard, 1959, p. 7). For example, they tend to seek luxury products with visible brand logos because the conspicuousness ensures that others recognize the brand and consequently make desired inferences about them (Han et al., 2010).

Status Symbol

Blumberg (1974) argued that status symbols must satisfy two conditions: they must be both socially desirable and scarce. Something that is scarce yet not desirable cannot be a status symbol because what is undesirable is rather antithetical to what the upper class represents. Something that is highly desirable but not scarce also cannot be a status symbol because what is plentiful does not have to be sought after. Perceived to be exclusive and desired by most people, status symbols not only signal wealth of the owners and membership to high social class but also evoke admiration in the perceiver, leading them to judge and treat the owners favorably (Goffman, 1951; O'Cass & Frost, 2002). One category of status symbols is expensive material goods (Veblen, 1899). Because the precondition of status symbols is other people's recognition, material goods that symbolize status fall under highly conspicuous product categories such as cars, clothing, and, jewelry, in which greater spending generally indicates higher discretionary income (Charles, Hurst, & Roussanov, 2009). In particular, for its luxuriousness, scarcity, and high price tag, clothing made with animal fur has served as a status symbol throughout history.

Status symbol as a social construct. Status symbol is not a static concept because what is considered a status symbol is determined by the society, which is constantly in flux. What was once considered a status symbol can lose its title and what was once considered

ordinary can gain the title. One prime example is corpulence. Once considered a status symbol, it is now not only stigmatized (Puhl & Heuer, 2010) but also recognized as a serious public health problem because of its increasing prevalence and costly consequences (Visscher & Seidell, 2001). In most ancient societies where food shortage persisted, corpulence was celebrated because it represented affluence and power: only those who were wealthy and powerful could afford superfluous food. However, as agricultural productivity increased as a result of the Industrial Revolution, food became abundant and available at cheap prices. Consequently, the association between wealth and corpulence started to weaken. Furthermore, as medical research advanced, being obese was recognized as a cause of ill health. These developments in concert reversed the symbolic meaning of corpulence. Corpulence not only lost its meaning as a status symbol but also gained negative associations (Eknoyan, 2006). Similarly, this study examines if social and cultural shifts in society such as growing presence of animal rights activism have tarnished the symbolic meaning of another status symbol, animal fur. In particular, this study examines whether animal fur coats that have become the target of stigmatization still retain their symbolic meaning.

Stigma

First, stigma is defined, and its properties explained. Then, types of stigma are explained with a focus on perceived stigma. After animal fur consumption for fashion is discussed in the context of stigma, how stigma is socially constructed is discussed. Next, the stigmatization process is delineated with PETA as the main stigmatizer, followed by a discussion on the primary response to anticipated stigma.

Definition of Stigma

Although there are no set features of stigma necessary or sufficient for identifying the

stigmatized (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998), it is generally accepted that stigma is an "attribute that is deeply discrediting" to the extent that it reduces the worth of a stigmatized person "from a whole … to a tainted, discounted one" (Goffman, 1963, p. 3). Stigma labels the bearers of discrediting attributes and associates them with a host of negative characteristics, all of which often culminate in social rejection and discrimination (Jones, 1984). The labels are social demarcations that separate “them,” those with discrediting attributes, from “us.” One prime example of stigma is mental illness (Link & Phelan, 2001). Having a mental illness is often seen as a discrediting attribute. People with mental illnesses are categorized and labeled as a group of people who are dangerous, unreliable, and incompetent. As a result, they are marginalized as they face social rejection and discrimination. Stigmatization includes both a cognitive and a behavioral process where the stigmatizer use labels and negative associations to mark the stigmatized (cognitive) and socially reject them (behavioral) (Link, Struening, Rahav, Phelan, & Nuttbrock, 1997). There are many other groups of people who are often stigmatized. Among them are sexual minorities (Bockting, Miner, Swinburne Romine, Hamilton, & Coleman, 2013), people with sexually transmitted diseases (Kelly, St Lawrence, Smith Jr, Hood, & Cook, 1987; Parker & Aggleton, 2003), people with alcohol and drug addiction (Room, 2005), formerly incarcerated people (Austin, 2004; LeBel, 2012), physically disabled people (Kleck, Ono, & Hastorf, 1966), and people with obesity (Latner & Stunkard, 2003).

However, not all groups are stigmatized to the same extent; some groups are more stigmatized than others (Frable, 1993). Stigmas vary in the extent to which they are socially salient, in the number of negative associations, and in the strength of their connection to the negative characteristics (Link et al., 1997; Link, Yang, Phelan, & Collins, 2004). Not only

the degree of separation from the mainstream society but also the intensity of the responses to stigmatized individuals varies. They vary widely ranging from avoidance to genocide. The stigmatized can be "avoided, ridiculed, viewed with ambivalence, imprisoned, exiled [or] executed" (Neuberg, Smith, & Asher, 2000, p. 33). How people treat stigmatized individuals is dependent on the type of stigma. For example, according to a study that examined which stigma invites most social rejection, respondents wanted to distance themselves from people with cocaine addiction the most, followed by people with alcohol addiction, people with schizophrenia, and people with major depression (Link, Phelan, Bresnahan, Stueve, & Pescosolido, 1999).

Properties of Stigma

To better understand the rather all-encompassing definition of stigma, previous research has identified and expounded on the properties of stigma. Not all properties must be strongly present for a discrediting attribute to be considered stigma. Each stigma has a different mix of these properties with different consequences on self-concept, psychological well-being, and interpersonal relationships of the stigmatized (Jones et al, 1984). Crocker et al. (1998) cited concealability and controllability as the two most critical properties of stigma. Concealability refers to how conspicuous a discrediting attribute is to others. Some attributes such as obesity are readily visible and difficult to conceal whereas others such as having a sexually transmitted disease are not as readily detectable and easier to conceal. Generally, the more visible a stigma is, the more likely it is to be stigmatized (Jones et al., 1984). Controllability refers to the extent to which stigmatized individuals are perceived to be responsible for their discrediting attributes. Even with the same condition, such as a loss of limb, an individual can be perceived to be responsible for it, if it resulted from drunk

driving as opposed to a genetic disorder. Such individual circumstances determine the perceived origin of attributes and consequently elicit different affective responses from the stigmatizer (Frable, 1993). Generally, when individuals are held responsible for their problems, they are more likely to elicit responses of blame and moral judgment (Weiner, 1995). Likewise, when discrediting attributes are attributed to causes outside of an individual's control, sympathy and compassion are likely, whereas attribution to causes under the individual's control lead to negative emotions, such as blame and anger, followed by avoidance and punishment (Albrecht, Walker, & Levy, 1982; Feldman & Crandall, 2007).

Wearing animal fur lies on the extreme ends of these two properties, as it is extremely difficult to conceal and wholly under an individual's control. Wearing animal fur apparel, such as a fur coat, is in fact rather incompatible with the idea of concealment, as wearing any apparel is, except undergarments. And wearing animal fur is a conscious choice, a decision that is under complete control of the consumer. Given these properties, wearing fur can be easily framed as a stigma since high controllability invites blame and moral judgment (Weiner, 1995), and high visibility invites stigmatization (Jones et al., 1984).

Perceived Stigma

In the literature on stigma, there are quite a few constructs that measure stigma: perceived stigma, enacted stigma, felt stigma, and anticipated stigma. Perceived stigma measures the extent to which individuals believe that most people will devalue or discriminate against a person with stigma (e.g., Link, 1987; Link et al., 1989, Link & Phelan, 2001; Rosenfield, 1997). Enacted stigma refers to instances of overt social rejection and discrimination experienced by the stigmatized. Felt stigma refers to both a feeling of shame and fear of rejection (e.g., Gray, 2002; Scambler & Hopkins, 1986). Anticipated stigma

measures the extent to which individuals with concealable stigma - stigmatized attributes that are not readily apparent to others such as an HIV-positive diagnosis - believe that others will devalue them if they reveal their concealed identity (Quinn & Chaudoir, 2009).

All these measures were constructed with specific types of stigma in mind such as mental illness. What they share in common is a premise that individuals already possess an enduring stigma, whether it be a mental illness or drug addiction. One important distinction between such stigmas and animal fur consumption for fashion is that the latter is not as severely stigmatized as the former. In contrast to stigmas such as drug addiction, animal fur consumption for fashion is subject to milder consequences such as devaluation and social rejection rather than outright discrimination like being denied a job. In this study, perceived stigma around wearing animal fur is thus defined as the extent to which individuals believe that most people *devalue* or *socially reject* animal fur consumption for fashion, independent of whether they themselves stigmatize wearing animal fur. By definition, there are two dimensions to this construct: devaluation and social rejection. On the other hand, the extent to which individuals *themselves* stigmatize wearing animal fur is referred to as individual stigmatization in this study.

Stigma as a Social Construct

Crocker et al. (1998, p. 505) defined stigma as a discrediting attribute that "conveys a social identity that is devalued in a particular social context." By definition, stigma is socially constructed. It arises from social interactions and varies across time and cultures in which attributes are stigmatized. Through past life experiences and an exposure to the mainstream culture, virtually all members of a culture develop a shared awareness and understanding of which attributes are stigmatized and what the consequences are for the stigmatized (Crocker

et al. 1998). As society constantly evolves, stigma is also transformed. Once heavily stigmatized attributes may no longer be a stigma or even be celebrated. Conversely, once celebrated attribute can turn into a stigma (Goffman, 1963; Jones et al., 1984).

The case of homosexuality aptly illustrates how stigma is a fluid concept, shaped by political, social, and cultural forces. Homosexuality in and of itself refers to a sexual orientation devoid of any value judgment. Nonetheless, it has been stigmatized across cultures, albeit to a different degree (Donaldson, Handren, & Lac, 2017). In the United States, it was once classified as a mental disorder by the American Psychiatric Association (APA), the largest psychiatric organization in the world (Drescher, 2015). However, in 1973, instigated by the gay rights movement, APA declared that homosexuality was not a mental illness by removing it from the second edition of its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, which defines and classifies mental disorders for the purpose of improving diagnoses, treatment, and research. Since then, the status of homosexual people has significantly improved, as evinced by the legalization of same-sex marriage in all 50 states, even though homosexuality is still not completely free of stigma (Kite & Bryant-Lees, 2016). As social shifts lightened the stigma associated with homosexuality, it is reasoned that social forces such as growing animal rights activism have influenced the symbolic meaning of animal fur coats by turning once celebrated fur consumption for fashion into a stigma.

It is important to note that not all deviances from the norm are stigmatized. Which attributes are stigmatized partly depends on the social, economic and political power of the stigmatizer. Although both the powerful and the powerless may attempt to devalue the other, the former group's view is likely to prevail because the powerful, with access to resources, can ensure that their views are propagated and broadly identified in the mainstream culture

(Link & Phelan, 2001). In the case of animal fur consumption, PETA, one of the largest animal rights activist groups, is the powerful stigmatizer that has branded it as unethical and propagated this view.

PETA, the stigmatizer. PETA has stigmatized wearing animal fur mainly by appealing to strong emotions, capitalizing on the power of anthropomorphism, and enlisting the powerful who shape the public opinion such as the media, celebrities, and luxury fashion brands.

PETA has elicited strong emotions from the viewers of its campaign contents to propagate stigma around wearing animal fur. For example, PETA taps into people's strong emotional bonds with their pets, namely dogs, by juxtaposing dogs and animals used for fashion products such as minks and foxes with a campaign slogan, "If you wouldn't wear your dog. Please don't wear any fur" (PETA, n.d.c). In addition, PETA uses graphic images and videos that document the plight of animals farmed for their pelts to elicit strong negative visceral reactions such as shock and disgust. The uncensored images and videos released by PETA show distressed animals trapped in wire cages, left to suffer from untreated injuries (Benedictus, 2014; PETA, n.d.d). Using graphic contents to send a message across is an effective strategy because they tend to go viral: people are more likely to share contents that evoke emotions characterized by high arousal (Berger, 2011). PETA's video of a conscious angora rabbit screaming in pain as its fur is being hand-plucked from its body received nearly 2.1 million views since it was released in 2013 (Sherman, 2016). Furthermore, strong negative emotions enhance the likelihood that the central message is remembered (Adolphs, Denburg, & Tranel, 2001; Kensinger, Garoff-Eaton, & Schacter, 2007). Through its provocative campaigns, PETA has raised the public awareness of where the fur used for

fashion comes from, and of the malpractices in the fur industry. What is more, the subsequent visceral reactions make the farmed animals' suffering enduring in the minds of the viewers.

Yet another campaign featured an actress Pamela Anderson in paint markings that mimic a butcher's diagram along with a slogan, "All animals have the same parts." This juxtaposes animals with humans, a comparison that implies that farmed animals are sentient beings just like human beings because they too possess not only the same body parts but also the same range of senses and emotions (Bekhechi, 2010). What these campaigns are doing is anthropomorphizing animals by attributing "humanlike physical features … (e.g., a face, hands)" and "a humanlike mind … (e.g., intentions, conscious awareness, secondary emotions such as shame or joy)" to animals (Waytz, Cacioppo, & Epley, 2010, p. 220). The power of anthropomorphizing lies in its role in fostering a strong social connection with the anthropomorphized entities (Tam, Lee, & Chao, 2013). Such campaigns encourage the viewers to empathize with animals farmed for fashion and consequently to find the consumers guilty of insensitivity.

All these provocative campaigns certainly have attracted much attention from the media. In fact, PETA openly admits that they "try to make [their] actions colorful and controversial, thereby grabbing headlines around the world and spreading the message of kindness to animals to thousands—sometimes millions—of people" (PETAUK, n.d.). PETA claims that, thanks to the ample media coverage, they were able to make differences through legislative changes and cooperation from the private sector. In addition to the mass media, PETA has enlisted other powerful institutions and influencers that shape public opinion such as celebrities, fashion brands, and the local governments.

Celebrities have long appeared in PETA's print and digital advertisements. Its iconic

"I'd rather go naked than wear fur" campaign that started since 1992 prominently features celebrities (PETA, n.d.b). PETA has also goaded luxury fashion brands to ban fur. Following years of protests by animal rights activists, a number of fashion brands including Gucci, Burberry, and Chanel decided to ban animal fur (O'Connor, 2018). It is not just fashion brands but also cities that now ban the sale of fur. In the United States, as of April 2019, four cities in California (West Hollywood, Berkeley, San Francisco, and Los Angeles) have banned the sale of fur fashion products (Bromwich, 2018). It cannot be definitively concluded that PETA's campaigns led to the ban, but it is noteworthy that Bob Blumenfield, a Los Angeles City Council member who motioned the ban, said in an interview that he was moved by an undercover expose on fur farms released by an animal rights organization, Animal Hope and Wellness Foundation (Chou, 2018). PETA's success with enlisting the powerful such as celebrities, luxury fashion brands, and local governments to lead the anti-fur movement lends credibility to the cause, sending a loud and clear message that fur consumption is bad.

It is not clear to what extent PETA's campaigns actually lead people to change their behaviors. However, they have certainly raised the public awareness while stigmatizing fur consumption for fashion: anyone who wears fur is either cruel, unethical, callous, and insensitive for wearing it, or ignorant at best for not knowing about it.

Avoidance as the Primary Response to Anticipated Stigma

Although there is great variability in how people cope with and respond to stigmas, one primary response is avoiding any high-risk situations that might lead to stigmatization (Major, 2006). One way is limiting social interactions to avoid the possibility of rejection

(Link, Mirotznik, & Cullen, 1991). There is ample empirical evidence that anticipated stigma leads people to avoid social interactions (e.g., Perlick et al., 2001).

The immediate impulse to avoid stigmatization is perhaps most prominently shown in individuals with concealable stigma - socially devalued attributes that are not readily apparent to others such as an HIV-positive diagnosis, or a mild mental illness with a few overt symptoms. Unlike those whose stigmas are readily visible, individuals with concealable stigmas have the choice of hiding or disclosing any personal information that may trigger stigmatization (Goffman, 1963). For instance, mentally ill patients may choose to hide their treatment history or refuse mental health services that label them as mentally ill patients (Corrigan & Matthews, 2003). Just as mentally ill patients seek to avoid high-risk situations that could subject them to stigmatization, consumers are likely to avoid putting themselves in high-risk situations by simply not wearing animal fur coats or real-looking faux fur coats, as high perceived risk reduces purchase intention (Chang & Chen, 2008). For apparel brands, such high perceived social risk is problematic as it hurts sales. One way to reduce the perceived risk is making the faux-ness of real-looking faux fur coats explicit, possibly by attaching a conspicuous label that explicitly says, “faux fur.”

Product Labeling

In this section, the role of product labeling in apparel products is explained. Next, the labeling of animal skin or fur apparel in the fashion industry and previous research on this topic are discussed. Lastly, this study’s unconventional use of labels is explained.

The Role of Product Labeling in Apparel Products

In the fashion industry, labels and hang tags are used to provide consumers with legally mandated information (e.g., manufacturer, fiber content, care instructions, and

country of origin) as well as information about the points of difference, such as special production techniques and sustainability initiatives, all of which are intended to nudge consumers to buy the products (Chowdhary, 2003). Labeling is part of branding efforts, a mechanism by which companies create and reinforce their brand narratives, in addition to promoting their products at the point-of-purchase (Golan, Kuchler, Mitchell, Greene, & Jessup, 2001).

Previous research on apparel product labeling has focused on the label's use in informing or educating consumers about products and its usefulness in influencing consumer attitudes and the purchase intention (e.g., Hyllegard, Yan, Ogle, & Lee, 2012). Hyllegard, Yan, Ogle, and Lee (2012) examined the effect of socially responsible (SR) hangtags on consumer attitude and patronage intention toward an apparel brand. The role of SR hangtags is informing consumers that the product meets rigorous standards in regard to environmental friendliness and/or fair trade. In Hyllegeard et al.'s study, SR hangtags varied in three aspects: message content (eco-friendly or fair trade), presence of third-party certification logo, and the level of detail in the message. The findings showed that consumers evaluated hangtags with more detailed messages and third-party certification logos more favorably than hangtags with less detailed messages and no third-party certification logos, a positive evaluation which predicted more favorable attitudes and higher patronage intention toward the brand (Hyllegard et al., 2012).

In the U.S., garments with fur are required to bear a label with the true English name of the animal from which the fur was harvested along with the country of origin, as mandated by the Truth in Fur Labelling Act which came into effect in 2010 (O'Connor, 2017). In academia, there is scant research on this topic. In one qualitative study, the consumer

perception of third-party sustainability certifications for wool garments was explored (Sneddon et al., 2010). In this study, participants were presented with two extant certification labels along with a short description of each and asked to share their attitude toward the labels. The two certifications were Certified Humane (CH) and Zque. CH was described as an "independent certification label for animal products sold in the USA meeting the Humane Farm Animal Care program standards (i.e., nutritious diet without antibiotics or hormones, animals raised with shelter, resting areas, sufficient space, and the ability to engage in natural behaviours)" (Sneddon et al., 2010, p. 5). Zque was described as a "New Zealand wool fibre accreditation scheme used by wool apparel brands such as SmartWool, assuring environmental, social and economic sustainability, animal welfare (non-mulesed), and traceability back to the source (i.e., sheep farm)" (Sneddon et al., 2010, p. 5). The findings showed that factors such as credibility and transparency were important determinants of consumer attitudes toward the certification labels.

An Unconventional Usage of the Label

Unlike previous studies that focused on the conventional role of labeling, which is informing the end consumers about the product's attributes, this study focuses on the likes of Stella McCartney's "Fur-Free-Fur" label, which is intended to communicate the product's attribute to observers who would be *seeing* the product in public. Specifically, the primary purpose of the label is to make the faux-ness of real-looking faux-fur coats explicit to those without prior knowledge about the true identity of the product, thereby mitigating the fear of misidentification for consumers who are concerned about being misjudged by others. This study, through an experiment, tests whether such labels affixed to the cuff of real-looking faux fur coats can increase the purchase intention.

Research Framework and Hypotheses Development

To answer the three research questions, two studies were conducted: a survey and an experiment. Each study has two hypotheses. The survey, as the first study, investigated whether consumers with a high need for status have a stronger desire for animal fur coats and whether perceived stigma moderates the relationship between the need for status and the purchase intention. The experiment, as the second study, tested whether attaching a conspicuous label that says "FAUX FUR" to real-looking faux fur coats can increase the purchase intention, in addition to whether this effect is more pronounced among consumers who think that the stigma around wearing animal fur is severe. Figure 1 shows the variables of interest as well as the hypothesized relationships. In this section, each study is introduced with corresponding hypotheses.

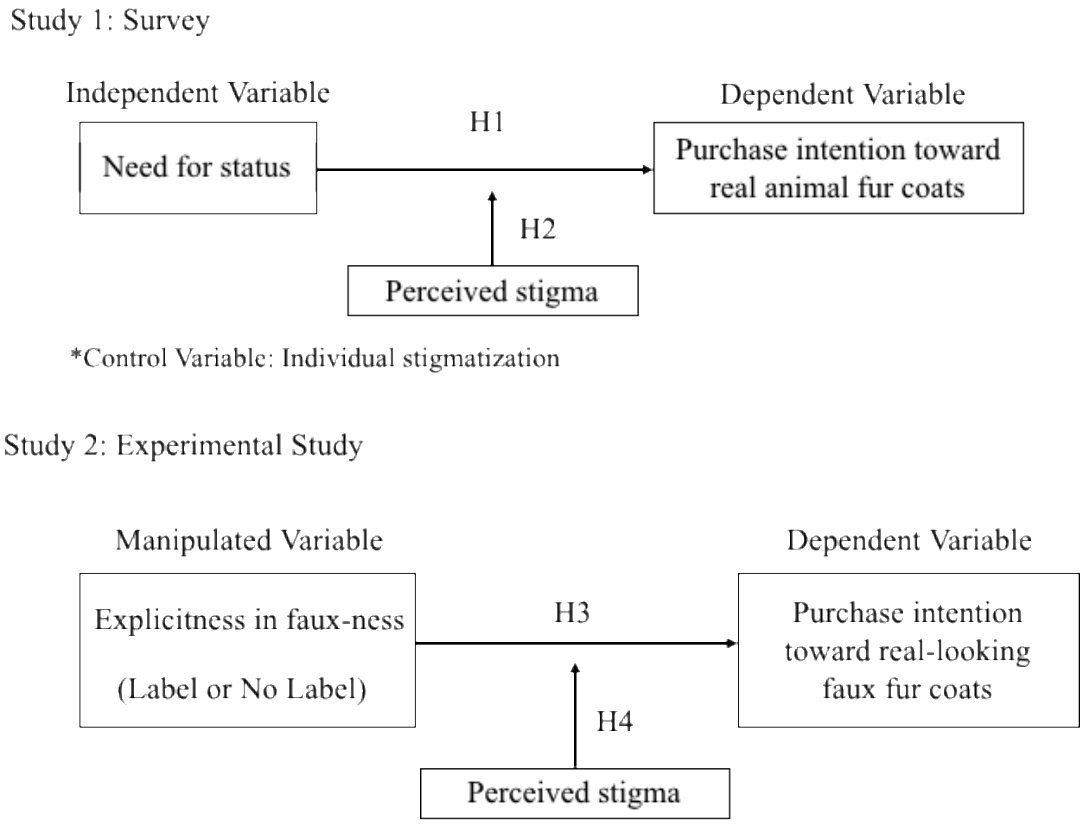

Figure 1. Proposed Research Framework

Study 1: Survey

The goal of Study 1 is to test the effect of the need for status on the purchase intention toward animal fur coats, and the moderating effect of perceived stigma around wearing animal fur. The findings will reveal if the stigma around wearing animal fur has tarnished the symbolic meaning of fur coats.

The effect of need for status on purchase intention. Due to its public and identity-relevant nature, clothing has long been used to signal status (Belk et al., 1982; Packard, 1959). Clothing made from high-quality, expensive, and rare materials historically has been deemed as status symbols, evidenced by the sumptuary laws that tightly regulated items made with such materials. Among them was clothing made with fur (Emberley, 1997). For its luxuriousness, scarcity, and high price tag, clothing made with fur such as fur coats has long been regarded as a status symbol. For what they represent, status symbols are sought after by those who seek to enhance their position in society through a public display of wealth (Han et al., 2010). Following this logic, it is proposed that those with a high need for status desire animal fur coats because of their symbolic value. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H1. There will be a positive relationship between the need for status and the purchase intention toward animal fur coats.

The moderating effect of perceived stigma. While animal fur coats have been vigorously stigmatized by animal rights organizations by PETA, the perceived stigma around wearing animal fur is expected to vary across individuals. Not everyone is exposed to the social debate on fur consumption to the same extent: some might not have seen the videos released by PETA, or read newspaper articles on PETA's expose while others might have

seen and read both, in addition to participating in the debate themselves. It is reasoned that the perceived stigma influences the symbolic meaning of animal fur coats, which in turn is expected to influence the purchase intention toward animal fur coats. For those who do not think that animal fur consumption is highly stigmatized, the meaning of fur coats might have remained untarnished. On the other hand, for those who think that fur consumption is highly stigmatized, it is likely that animal fur coats no longer represent status, but rather something to be avoided, as they have transformed from an emblem of prestige to an emblem of stigma. Based on this rationale, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2. Perceived stigma will moderate the relationship between the need for status and the purchase intention, such that a negative relationship will exist for consumers with high perceived stigma around wearing animal fur.

Control variable. Individual stigmatization was chosen as a control variable because it is another factor that can also influence the purchase intention toward real animal fur coats.

Individual stigmatization. While perceived stigma around wearing animal fur is the extent to which individuals believe that *most people* devalue or socially reject animal fur consumption for fashion, individual stigmatization is the extent to which individuals *themselves* stigmatize wearing animal fur. Individual stigmatization can influence purchase intention because people with a high need for status may not want to purchase animal fur coats despite their symbolic value, if they are personally opposed to animal fur consumption on moral grounds. This is especially true when there are alternatives, such as luxury handbags, that can equally satisfy their need for status without compromising moral principles. Therefore, individual stigmatization was included as a control variable.

Study 2: Experiment

The goal of Study 2 is to test if attaching a label that says "FAUX FUR" to the cuff of real-looking faux fur coats can increase the purchase intention. This study examines the effect of making the faux-ness of the coat explicit through labeling on the purchase intention toward real-looking faux fur coats, and the moderating effect of perceived stigma.

The effect of labeling on purchase intention. Outers like coats cannot be worn discreetly. They are seen by others, by any passerby. Because of the conspicuousness of fur coats, it is virtually impossible to avoid the consequences of the stigma around wearing animal fur. Even though they are in fact fake, faux fur coats with a high resemblance to real animal fur can be misidentified as genuine, which makes the wearer the target of stigmatization. This anticipation of misidentification can erode purchase intention because the cost of misidentification is high: there is a risk of being tied to a host of negative associations and seen as an unethical, insensitive consumer. Given that the immediate response to anticipated stigma is avoiding risky situations (Link et al., 1997; Quinn et al., 2009), consumers are expected to choose not to consume real-looking faux fur coats to avoid being falsely accused of wearing animal fur. This is a higher-stake decision than it appears to be because clothing is an identity-relevant domain where most people express their identity and infer identity about others. People indeed make conscious consumption choices to avoid sending undesired identity signals to others. For example, people often diverge from dissimilar outgroups to avoid the cost of misidentification (Berger & Heath, 2008). While aspirational consumers prefer explicit signals such as conspicuous logos, consumers with more cultural capital prefer subtle signals such as a distinct pattern under a collar to avoid looking like or being treated like members of lower status groups (i.e., aspirational

consumers) (Berger & Ward, 2010). Similarly, consumers would be reluctant to purchase real-looking faux fur coats unless they are confident that the misidentification will not occur. However, they may think that the conspicuous "FAUX FUR" label reduces the likelihood of misidentification and be more willing to buy a real-looking faux fur coat with the label. Therefore:

H3. Explicit faux fur labeling will increase the purchase intention toward real-looking faux fur coats.

The moderating effect of perceived stigma. If people do not think that wearing animal fur is highly stigmatized, they will not worry about the misidentification as much, thinking that the likelihood of facing negative consequences is low. Therefore, the label would not play a critical role in their buying decision. Alternatively, it may be that they actually want misidentification if the reason for purchasing a real-looking faux alternative is because they cannot afford a genuine one, which typically has a higher price tag. If consumers want others to perceive their faux alternative as genuine, the label can actually decrease the purchase intention. In contrast, for those who think that animal fur consumption is highly stigmatized, they are likely to believe that the probability of facing the negative consequences of stigmatization is high. Therefore, they may find the explicit labeling particularly reassuring as it can decrease the likelihood of misidentification. As a result, the label can nudge consumers who are on the fence of buying the coat to make the purchase. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H4. The effect of explicit faux fur labeling on increasing the purchase intention will be greater for consumers with high perceived stigma around wearing animal fur.

CHAPTER 3

Methods

This chapter explains the methods of the following three studies: Pre-Test, Study 1, and Study 2. For Pre-test, the stimuli selection method as well as the scale development and validation processes are detailed. For Study 1 and Study 2, the following are discussed: (1) Measurements, (2) Data collection, and (3) Procedure.

Pre-Test

The purpose of the pre-test was to establish internal consistency, to discover the factor structure of a scale that measures perceived stigma around wearing animal fur, and to select images of faux fur coats with high resemblance to real fur coats. A sample of 50 females aged 18 and above recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) website participated in the pre-test. These individuals did not participate in the main study. First, they rated 20 images of fur coats (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) on the extent to which the coats looked like they were made from real animal fur. Then, the participants rated the extent to which they agreed with 11 statements that were developed to measure perceived stigma (e.g., "Most people think that it is unethical to wear animal fur"; see Table 1 for the full list).

Stimuli Selection

Because the experimental study's product of interest is faux fur coats that look like real animal fur coats, a pre-test was conducted to ensure that research participants would perceive the presented images of faux fur coats as real-looking faux fur coats. To select stimuli, fur coats were searched with a keyword, "faux fur coat," on an online retailer Farfetch, and 20 fur coat images with a varying degree of resemblance to real animal fur were chosen at the author's discretion. The results of the pre-test showed that the 20 fur coats

were indeed perceived to vary in their resemblance to real animal fur (M = 4.08; SD = 1.27). For generalizability, two fur coats - as opposed to just one - with the highest ratings (6.42 & 6.26) were selected. Each rating was 1.72 and 1.84 standard deviations above the mean, respectively.

Perceived Stigma Scale Development and Validation

The scale that measures perceived stigma around wearing animal fur was developed by modifying the following three scales that were developed in the context of other stigmas (mental illness and drug addiction). The first is an 11-item Devaluation-Discrimination scale (α = .78) that measures the extent to which people diagnosed with mental illnesses believe that most people devalue or discriminate against individuals with mental illnesses (Link, 1987). The second is a 15-item perceived devaluation/discrimination scale (α = .78) that measures the extent to which people diagnosed with mental illnesses and drug addiction believe that most people devalue or discriminate against individuals with mental illness and drug addiction. The third is a 12-item rejection experience scale (α = .80) that asks whether these individuals actually experienced social rejection and discrimination such as being avoided and treated differently (Link et al., 1997). Eleven items that measure the two dimensions of the construct (devaluation and social rejection) were selected. To reflect the research context of this study, items that do not fit the theoretical conceptualization of the construct (i.e., items that measure discrimination) were removed from consideration. The first five items measure devaluation and the remaining six, social rejection (Table 1).

Factor analysis and reliability check. For the selected 11 items, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with Varimax rotation with eigen value above one as an extraction criterion was performed. The results of EFA showed that the scale was unidimensional with

total variance explained as 67.4% (Table 1). All items were retained because they all had factor loadings greater than .50, the threshold deemed appropriate for inclusion (Hair et al., 2010). With the Cronbach alpha value of .94, the scale was deemed reliable (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 1. The Results of EFA and Reliability Check: Perceived Stigma Scale

Item (11)	Factor loadings	Eigen value	Variance explained	Cronbach α
1. Most people think that it is unethical to wear real animal fur	.64	7.12	67.4%	.94
2. Most people think less of a person who wears real animal fur	.89			
3. Most people look down on a person who wears real animal fur	.87			
4. Once they know that a person wears real animal fur, most people will take his or her opinions less seriously	.86			
5. Most people think that a person who wears real animal fur is insensitive	.73			
6. Most people think that a person who wears real animal fur is less educated	.75			
7. Most people would be reluctant to become close friends with a person who wears real animal fur	.89			
8. Most people in my community would treat a person who wears real animal fur differently	.65			
9. Most people would be reluctant to date a person who wears real animal fur	.79			
10. Most people would be reluctant to accept a person who wears real animal fur as a close neighbor	.84			
11. Most people would be reluctant to socialize with a person who wears real animal fur	.89			

Study 1: Survey

The survey consisted of five sections: 1) need for status, 2) purchase intention toward real animal fur coats, 3) perceived stigma, 4) individual stigmatization, and 5) demographic information of respondents.

Measurements

Need for status was the independent variable; purchase intention toward a real animal fur coat, the dependent variable; perceived stigma, the moderator; and individual stigmatization, the control variable. Measures for these five variables were adopted or modified from valid and reliable scales from previous studies. All items were measured on a seven-point Likert-scale. A summary of the items can be found in Table 3, and a full copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

Need for status. A five-item scale that measures an individual's proclivity for social status was adopted from Eastman, Goldsmith, and Flynn (1999). Participants rated the extent to which they agreed with the five statements (e.g., I would buy a product just because it has status) on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

Purchase intention toward real animal fur coats. To measure the purchase intention toward real animal fur coats, a three-item purchase intention scale was adopted from Jang, Ko, Morris, and Chang (2015). Participants chose an option that best reflected their purchase intention by completing three statements about the likelihood of purchasing a real animal fur coat (e.g., "The probability that I would consider buying a real animal fur coat is") on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = extremely unlikely, 7 = extremely likely).

Perceived stigma. The 11-item perceived stigma scale developed based on previous studies (Link, 1987; Link et al., 1997) was used to measure the extent to which people believe that others devalue or socially reject individuals who wear animal fur. Participants rated the extent to which they agreed with the 11 statements (e.g., "Most people think that it is unethical to wear real animal fur") on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

Individual stigmatization. Because the only difference between individual stigmatization and perceived stigma is who the doer of stigmatization is (most people vs. I), the 11-item perceived stigma scale was modified by changing "Most people" to "I" in all 11 items to develop a scale that measures individual stigmatization. For example, a statement "*Most people* think that it is unethical to wear real animal fur" was modified to "*I* think that it is unethical to wear real animal fur." Participants rated the extent to which they agreed with the 11 statements (e.g., "I think that it is unethical to wear real animal fur") on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

Demographic information. The following demographic information was collected: gender, age, ethnicity, education, household income, and living area. All measures except age were treated as a categorical variable.

Data Collection

Two-hundred females aged 18 and above were recruited on MTurk (M_{age} = 44; *SD* = 13). The participants received $.80 USD for compensation. Given the topic of this study, only female participants were selected, as it is a common practice in research on fashion products (e.g., Berger & Ward, 2010). MTurk workers are also commonly used in social science research (Paolacci, Chandler, & Ipeirotis, 2010)**.** Previous research has shown that MTurk participants are slightly more demographically diverse than standard Internet samples and are significantly more diverse than typical college samples. In addition, data obtained from MTurk workers were shown to be as reliable as those obtained through traditional methods. Low compensation rates typical of MTurk were also shown to have no significant impact on data quality (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011)**.**

Descriptive statistics of participants. Table 2 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the participants. A total of 200 respondents participated in this research. All participants were females and the average age was 44 (*SD* = 13). The majority of the participants identified themselves as White (n = 164, 82%), followed by Black/African American (n = 13, 6%) and Asian (n = 13, 6%), Hispanic/Latino (n = 5, 2.5%), American Indian/Alaska native (n = 2, 1%) and Other (n = 2, 1%), and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (n = 1, 0.5%). The majority of participants reported finishing 4 years of college or higher (n = 116, 58%), and there were more participants who reported finishing some years of college (n = 65, 32.5%) than those who reported high school as their highest level of education they completed (n = 19, 9.5%). Income was well distributed with the highest number of participants indicating their annual household income as between $20,000 - $29,999 (n = 37, 18.5%). About a half of the participants reported living in a suburban area (n=103, 51.5%) and the rest were roughly evenly divided between urban (n=52, 26%) and rural (n=45, 22.5%).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Participant Characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency (n=200)	Percentage
Ethnicity		
White	164	82
Black/African American	13	6.5
American Indian/Alaska native	2	1.0
Asian	13	6.5
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1	0.5
Hispanic/Latino	5	2.5
Other	2	1.0
Education		
Less than high school	0	0.0
High school graduate	19	9.5
Some college	39	19.5
2-year college	26	13.0
4-year college	83	41.5
Master's or Professional degree	28	14.0
Doctorate	5	2.5
Income		
Less than $1,000	18	9.0
$10,000 - $19,999	15	7.5
$20,000 - $29,999	37	18.5
$30,000 - $39,999	16	8.0
$40,000 - $49,999	22	11.0
$50,000 - $59,999	16	8.0
$60,000 - $69,999	16	8.0
$70,000 - $79,999	17	8.5
$80,000 - $89,999	11	5.5
$90,000 - $99,999	0	0.0
$100,000 or more	32	16.0
Living Area		
Rural	45	22.5
Suburban	103	51.5
Urban	52	26.0

Procedure

Because Study 1 and Study 2 shared the same variable (perceived stigma), Study 1 and Study 2 were combined and distributed as one online study for the sake of efficiency. The procedure of Study 1 is detailed under Study 2's procedure section.

Study 2: Experiment

This study employed a 2 between-subject design (explicitness in faux-ness: high explicitness in faux-ness vs. low explicitness in faux-ness) to avoid carry-over effects (Charness, Gneezy, & Kuhn, 2012) and survey fatigue (Porter, Whitcomb, & Weitzer, 2004).

Stimuli

The stimuli used in the experiment were images of two different real-looking faux fur coats (see Appendix A). The images of the two coats were duplicated to create two sets of each, so in total there were four images of faux fur coats. Each set included two identical faux fur coats with the only difference being the presence of the label: one had the label affixed on the right cuff, and the other did not have the label. To affix the label (8 in. x 4 in.) on the right cuff, the duplicated images of the coats were edited, using Adobe Photoshop. The dimension of the label (8 in. x 4 in.) was chosen because it was deemed big enough to ensure readability without hurting the aesthetics of the coats.

Measurements

The independent variable was explicitness in faux-ness, the individual's perception of the extent to which a faux fur coat appears fake to others. It was manipulated by the presence of the label that says, "FAUX FUR." The presence of the label was expected to make the faux-ness of the real-looking faux fur coat salient and the absence of the label, not-salient. The dependent variable was the purchase intention toward a real-looking faux fur coat, and the moderator was perceived stigma. Items for checking the effectiveness of manipulation were developed by the author whereas items for the dependent variable and the moderating variable were modified from valid and reliable measurement scales from previous studies.

All items were measured on a seven-point Likert-scale. A summary of the items can be found in Table 3, and a full copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

Manipulation check. To check for the effectiveness of the manipulation, a three-item scale that measures explicitness in faux-ness was developed (Table 3). Participants rated the extent to which they agreed with the three statements (e.g., "When other people see me in this coat in public, they will think that I am wearing a faux fur coat") on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

Dependent Variable. To measure the purchase intention toward a real-looking faux fur coat, a three-item scale was adopted from Sweeney, Soutar, and Johnson (1999). Participants rated the extent to which they agreed with three statements about the likelihood of purchasing the presented faux fur coat (e.g., "I am likely to purchase this faux fur coat") on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

Moderator. The same 11-item scale used in Study 1 was used to measure perceived stigma.

Table 3. Summary of Measurements

Measurements	Source	Study #
Purchase intention toward real animal fur coats (3) 1. The probability that I would consider buying a real animal fur coat is 2. The probability of buying a real animal fur coat is 3. The likelihood that I would buy a real animal fur coat is	Jang et al. (2015)	1
Individual stigmatization (11) 1. I think that it is unethical to wear real animal fur 2. I think less of a person who wears real animal fur 3. I look down on a person who wears real animal fur 4. Once I know that a person wears real animal fur, I take his or her opinions less seriously 5. I think that a person who wears real animal fur is insensitive 6. I think that a person who wears real animal fur is less educated 7. I would be reluctant to become close friends with a person who wears real animal fur 8. I would treat a person who wears real animal fur differently 9. I would be reluctant to date someone who wears real animal fur 10. I would be reluctant to socialize with a person who wears real animal fur 11. I would be reluctant to accept a person who wears real animal fur as a close neighbor	Link (1987); Link et al. (1997)	1
Need for status (5) 1. I would buy a product just because it has status 2. I am interested in new products with status 3. I would pay more for a product if it had status 4. The status of a product is irrelevant to me 5. A product is more valuable to me if it has some snob appeal	Eastman et al. (1999)	1
Perceived stigma (11) 1. Most people think that it is unethical to wear real animal fur 2. Most people think less of a person who wears real animal fur 3. Most people look down on a person who wears real animal fur 4. Once they know that a person wears real animal fur, most people will take his or her opinions less seriously 5. Most people think that a person who wears real animal fur is insensitive	Link (1987); Link et al. (1997)	1 & 2

Table 3. (continued)

6. Most people think that a person who wears real animal fur is less educated 7. Most people would be reluctant to become close friends with a person who wears real animal fur 8. Most people in my community would treat a person who wears real animal fur differently 9. Most people would be reluctant to date a person who wears real animal fur 10. Most people would be reluctant to socialize with a person who wears real animal fur 11. Most people would be reluctant to accept a person who wears real animal fur as a close neighbor	Link (1987); Link et al. (1997)	1 & 2
Explicitness in faux-ness (3) 1. When other people see me in this coat in public, they will think that I am wearing a faux fur coat 2. It is clear to other people that this fur coat is faux 3. Other people will not mistake this coat as a real animal fur coat	Developed by the author	2
Purchase intention toward real-looking faux fur coats (3) 1. I am likely to purchase this faux fur coat 2. I will purchase this faux fur coat 3. I would consider purchasing this faux fur coat	Sweeney et al. (1999)	2

Data Collection

The 200 females who participated in Study 1 also participated in Study 2.

Procedure

Two-hundred participants were randomly and roughly evenly assigned to one of the four groups (coat #1 with the label, coat #2 with the label, coat #1 without the label, and coat #2 without the label). The first two groups belonged to the high explicitness in faux-ness condition; and the rest, to the low explicitness in faux-ness condition. All participants were instructed to imagine themselves shopping for a faux fur coat. Participants in the high explicitness in faux-ness condition were presented with one of the two images of faux fur coat with the label that says “FAUX FUR” affixed on the right cuff, in addition to the

magnified image of the label along with its dimension (8 inches x 4 inches). The prompt explicitly stated that the presented coat had a label affixed on the right cuff. Participates in the low explicitness in faux-ness condition were provided with one of the two images of faux fur coat without the label. All participants first rated the extent to which the presented coat would be perceived as faux by others. Then, they reported their purchase intention toward the presented coat. After rating their level of perceived stigma around wearing animal fur, participants rated their level of need for status. Next, participants rated the extent to which they themselves stigmatize wearing animal fur and reported their purchase intention toward real animal fur coats. At the end of the survey, they answered five demographic questions about their age, gender, education, annual household income, ethnicity, and living area. The survey took approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

Chapter 4

Results

In this chapter, the validity and reliability of the measurements, data analytic methods, and the results of hypothesis testing are discussed.

Evaluation of the Measurements

The reliability and the construct validity of each multi-item scale were evaluated prior to hypothesis testing. Cronbach's alpha values of the scales used in this study ranged from .92 to .97 (Table 4), and therefore all the measurements were deemed reliable (i.e., high internal consistency). For all measurements, EFA with Varimax rotation and eigen value above one as extraction criterion was performed. Results showed that all scales except the perceived stigma scale were unidimensional. The eigenvalues ranged from 1.34 and 8.55 across scales. Factor loadings of all items for the respective scale were also greater than .50 (Table 4). In case of the perceived stigma scale, unlike the pre-test result which showed unidimensionality, the 11 items were divided into two factors, consistent with the initial theoretical conceptualization. One item, however, was loaded to a conceptually wrong factor ("Once they know that a person wears real animal fur, most people will take his or her opinions less seriously"). It was loaded onto the social rejection factor when it should have been loaded onto the devaluation factor because this item measures a cognitive response (taking a person's opinions less seriously) as opposed to a behavioral response (i.e., social rejection). Therefore, this item was removed because it did not fit with the factor it was loaded to at a conceptual level. After removing the item, exploratory factor analysis with Varimax rotation was performed again. Subsequent exploratory factor analysis with Varimax rotation still showed two factors. Following the initial theoretical conceptualization, the two

factors were named devaluation and social rejection. The variances explained were 40% and 38.3%, and eigenvalues were 6.58 and 1.26, respectively (Table 5). All the 10 items were retained because they showed factor loadings greater than .50 and loaded onto the factors that were conceptually consistent with the items.

Table 4. The Results of Reliability Check for All Unidimensional Measurements

Measurements (# of items)	Cronbach α
Purchase intention toward real-looking fur coats (3)	.95
Explicitness in faux-ness (3)	.93
Need for status (5)	.92
Purchase intention toward real animal fur coats (3)	.96
Individual stigmatization (11)	.97

Table 5. The Results of EFA and Reliability Check: Perceived Stigma Scale

Item	Factor loadings	Eigen value	Variance explained	Cronbach α
Devaluation (5)		6.58	40.0%	.92
Most people look down on a person who wears real animal fur	.88			
Most people think that a person who wears real animal fur is insensitive	.89			
Most people think that a person who wears real animal fur is less educated	.53			
Most people think less of a person who wears real animal fur	.86			
Most people think that it is unethical to wear real animal fur	.87			
Social rejection (5)	.67	1.26	38.3%	.93
Most people would be reluctant to accept a person who wears real animal fur as a close neighbor				
Most people would be reluctant to date a person who wears real animal fur	.81			
Most people would be reluctant to socialize with a person who wears real animal fur	.87			
Most people in my community would treat a person who wears real animal fur differently	.86			
Most people would be reluctant to become close friends with a person who wears real animal fur	.87			

Hypothesis Testing

Study 1: Survey

Hierarchical moderated regression was conducted to test the effect of the need for status on the purchase intention toward real animal fur coats (H1) and to test the moderating effect of perceived stigma (H2). The results were as follows:

In H1, it was expected that consumers with a higher need for status would show higher purchase intention toward real-animal fur coats. As shown in Table 6, results showed that the need for status significantly and positively predicted the purchase intention toward real animal fur coats, controlling for individual stigmatization ($\beta = .24$, $p < .001$). There was no multicollinearity as the variance inflation factors (VIFs) were below the cutoff value of 10. Therefore, H1 *was* supported.

In H2, it was expected that the perceived stigma would weaken the positive relationship between the need for status and the purchase intention toward real animal fur coats. Hierarchical moderated regression analysis was performed by entering the independent variable and the control variable at step 1 (Model 1), adding the moderator variable at step 2 (Model 2), and including the interaction term at step 3 (Model 3). Results showed that there was a significant moderation effect of perceived stigma ($\beta = -.55$, $p < .05$) (Table 6). As hypothesized, participants with higher perceived stigma showed lower purchase intention toward real animal fur coats, controlling for individual stigmatization. Therefore, H2 *was* supported. Although VIF values of the independent variable and the interaction term exceeded 10, there was no need for a statistical remedy because a high correlation between the interaction term and the independent variable does not imply a multicollinearity problem (Disatnik & Sivan, 2016).

Table 6. Hierarchical Moderated Regression Analysis Results: Testing H1 & H2

Independent variable	*β*	*t-value*	*VIF*
Model 1			
Need for status	.24	3.85**	1.00
Individual stigmatization	-.38	-6.01***	1.00
R^2 = .21, *F-value* = 26.29, *p-value* = .00			
Model 2			
Need for status	.25	3.91***	1.00
Individual stigmatization	-.33	-4.02***	1.63
Perceived stigma	-.09	-1.12	1.63
R^2 = .22, *F-value* = 17.96, *p-value* = .00, *F change* = 1.25			
Model 3			
Need for status	.71	3.20**	12.84
Individual stigmatization	-.31	-3.84***	1.64
Perceived stigma	.15	1.10	4.72
Need for status x Perceived stigma	-.55	-2.18*	16.44
R^2 = .23, *F-value* = 14.91, *p-value* = .00, *F change* = 4.74*			

Dependent variable: Purchase intention toward real animal coats
*** p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05

Study 2: Experiment

Hierarchical moderated regression was used to test the effect of explicitness in faux-ness on the purchase intention toward real-looking faux fur coats (H3) and to test the moderating effect of perceived stigma on purchase intention (H4). Prior to hypothesis testing, a t-test was conducted to check for the effectiveness of the manipulation.

Manipulation Check. In the experiment, participants were presented with the images of faux-fur coats. Explicitness in faux-ness was manipulated by the absence and presence of the "FAUX FUR" label. It was expected that the presence of the label would make the faux-ness of the coat more explicit (i.e., high explicitness in faux-ness). The absence of the label was expected to make the faux-ness of the coat less explicit (i.e., low explicitness in faux-

ness). An independent t-test was conducted to confirm that the faux fur coats with and without the label were perceived as significantly different in their explicitness in faux-ness. First, Levene's test was used to determine whether the assumption of homogeneity of variance for an independent t-test was met. Results showed that this condition was met, with no difference in the variances between two experimental groups (p = .42). Results of the independent t-test showed that the coats with the label (M = 4.77, SD = 1.43) were perceived to be significantly more explicit in their faux-ness than the coats without the label (M = 3.60, SD = 1.48) (Table 7).

Table 7. Independent t-test Results: Manipulation Check

Condition	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-value*
High explicitness in faux-ness (with "FAUX FUR" label)	4.77	1.43	5.68***
Low explicitness in faux-ness (without "FAUX FUR" label)	3.60	1.48	

Dependent variable: Explicitness in faux-ness
*** p < 0.001

Testing hypothesis 3 and 4. In H3, it was hypothesized that the explicitness in faux-ness would increase the purchase intention toward real-looking faux fur coats. Results showed that there was no significant difference (β = .07, p = .30) in the purchase intention between participants presented with the coat with the "FAUX FUR" label (M = 2.80, SD = 1.82) and those presented with the coat without the label (M = 2.54, SD = 1.71) (Table 8). Therefore, H3 *was not* supported.

In H4, it was expected that the perceived stigma would strengthen the positive relationship between the explicitness in faux-ness and the purchase intention toward real-looking animal fur coats. Hierarchical moderated regression analysis was performed by entering the independent variable at step 1 (Model 1), adding the moderator variable at step 2

(Model 2), and including the interaction term at step 3 (Model 3). As shown in Table 8, there was no significant moderating effect of perceived stigma (β = -.30, p = .26). That is, participants with higher perceived stigma did not show higher purchase intention toward real-looking faux fur with be label. Therefore, H4 *was not* supported.

Table 8. Hierarchical Moderated Regression Analysis Results: Testing H3 & H4

Independent variable	*ß*	*t-value*	*VIF*
Model 1			
Explicitness in faux-ness	.07	1.04	-
R^2 = .01, *F-value* = 1.09, *p-value* = .30			
Model 2			
Explicitness in faux-ness	.09	1.30	1.00
Perceived stigma	.14	1.99*	1.00
R^2 = .03, *F-value* = 2.52, *p-value* = .08, *F change* = 3.95*			
Model 3			
Explicitness in faux-ness	.39	1.42	14.83
Perceived stigma	.22	2.20*	2.06
Explicitness in faux-ness x Perceived stigma	-.30	-1.12	14.87
R^2 = .03, *F-value* = 2.11, *p-value* = .10, *F change* = 1.26			

Dependent variable: Purchase intention toward real-looking fur coats
* p < .05

Chapter 5

Conclusion

In this last chapter, after a summary of the study is presented, the findings are discussed in detail in relation to the extant theories and previous studies. Then, theoretical and practical implications of the study are provided, followed by the study's limitations and suggestions for future research.

Summary of the Thesis

The purpose of this thesis was threefold. Firstly, it was to examine if consumers with a strong need for social status still desire animal fur coats, which have historically been deemed a status symbol, despite the heightened stigma around wearing animal fur. Secondly, it was to examine if making the faux-ness of real-looking faux fur coats explicit by attaching a label that says "FAUX FUR" can increase the purchase intention. Thirdly, it was to examine if the perceived stigma moderates the purchase intention toward both real animal fur coats and real-looking faux fur coats with the label. To achieve this purpose, four hypotheses were developed, based on the literature on status consumption and stigma as well as the recent developments in the fur apparel market. It was hypothesized that there would be a positive relationship between the need for status and the purchase intention toward real animal fur coats (H1), and that the perceived stigma would weaken the relationship between these two variables (H2). It was also hypothesized that the "FAUX FUR" label would increase the purchase intention toward real-looking faux fur coats (H3), and that the perceived stigma would strengthen the relationship between these two variables (H4). To test these hypotheses, two studies, a survey and an experiment, were conducted. The results supported two (H1 & H2) of the four hypotheses. As predicted, participants with a higher

need for status showed higher purchase intention toward real animal fur coats (H1), and participants with higher perceived stigma had lower purchase intention toward real animal fur coats (H2). On the other hand, participants showed no difference in their purchase intention toward real-looking faux fur coats with and without the label (H3). Participants with higher perceived stigma also did not show higher purchase intention toward real-looking faux fur coats with the label (H4).

Discussion of the Findings

Study 1: Survey

The results of Study 1 supported the theoretical analysis advanced in the previous chapters. The finding that consumers with a higher need for status have higher purchase intention toward real animal fur coats is consistent with previous findings that people who aspire to belong to high social class tend to desire products that symbolize wealth and membership to high social class (Goffman, 1951; Han et al., 2010; O'Cass & Frost, 2002; Packard, 1959). The finding that consumers with heightened perceived stigma around wearing animal fur desire animal fur coats less is consistent with the notion that status symbol is a social construct and that its meaning can change, dependent on social and cultural shifts in a given society (Puhl & Heuer, 2010). Recent social and cultural developments such as growing anti-animal fur consumption movements may have influenced the public perception of animal fur coats' symbolic value. For those who think that wearing animal fur is highly stigmatized, the stigma around wearing animal fur has tarnished the symbolic meaning of animal fur coats. This may be because animal fur coats no longer meet one of the two necessary criteria for status symbols: social desirability (Blumberg, 1974). Social undesirability is likely to have weakened the long-held association between animal fur

coats and high status. This weakened association in turn is likely to have hampered the demand for animal fur coats, particularly for those with a tendency to consume products that signal high status.

Study 2: Experiment

The results of the experiment did not support the hypotheses. Making the faux-ness of real-looking faux fur coat explicit with the label did not increase the purchase intention, and the perceived stigma did not strengthen the relationship between the explicitness in faux-ness and the purchase intention. In the study, only perceived stigma was considered as a factor that can influence the perceived social risk (devaluation and social rejection), which was expected to influence the purchase intention, a negative relationship that is well documented in previous research (e.g., Chang & Chen, 2008). The non-significant results can be explained by the confounding effects of another variable that can influence the perceived social risk: consumption context. The perceived social risk is reasoned to be also determined by the social context at the time of consumption, specifically the consumers' level of social closeness with other people who are present at the time of consumption.

First of all, it is likely that the three statements that participants rated for the manipulation check (e.g., "When other people see me in this coat in public, they will think that I am wearing a faux fur coat") prompted them to visualize themselves wearing the presented faux fur coat in public by imagining realistic scenarios. Depending on the scenarios each participant thought of, the "other people" they imagined could have differed, ranging from complete strangers, mere acquaintances, friendly coworkers, to close friends. This possibility is important to note because complete strangers, mere acquaintances, friendly coworkers, and close friends meaningfully differ on social closeness, which is "the degree of

affective, cognitive, and behavioral mutual dependence between two people, including the frequency of their impact on one another and the strength of impact per occurrence" (Dibble, Levine, & Park, 2012, p. 565). Previous research has shown that social closeness influences risk perception (So & Nabi, 2013). It can do so by influencing the two components of which interaction makes up the perceived risk: the probability that negative consequences would occur, and the magnitude of the negative consequences (Peter & Ryan, 1976). In this study, social closeness can determine the magnitude of the perceived social risk because people have more to lose when the relationship with their socially significant others, as opposed to one with strangers, is strained. It can also determine the probability because people have more frequent social interactions with socially significant others and because the nature of the relationship can dictate the risk management strategy, a decision that can have a direct impact on the probability of facing the negative social consequences.

In the case of wearing real-looking faux fur coats in public, the perceived social risk is low in consumption context involving social groups low on social closeness. The evaluations of complete strangers or mere acquaintances are of little importance (low magnitude), and there is a low likelihood of social interactions, which is a precondition of social rejection (low probability). The perceived social risk is high in consumption context involving social groups that lie on the middle of the social closeness continuum such as colleagues. While their evaluations are important (high magnitude), it is relatively difficult or inconvenient to find the right moment to correct the misidentification (high probability). The perceived social risk is low in consumption context involving social groups high on social closeness, such as family and close friends, because it is easy to prevent or reverse stigmatization, simply by verbally disclosing that the coat is not real (low probability). The

consumption context, operationalized as social closeness, could have confounded the results by reversing the directionality of the hypothesized relationship between perceived stigma and perceived social risk, which in turn influences purchase intention. For example, while it was reasoned that high perceived stigma would lead to high perceived social risk, the perceived risk actually could have been low if the "other people" participants imagined were family or close friends. Of course, day-to-day social interactions are not perfectly segregated by the level of social closeness. In a given day, people pass by and interact with other people varying in social closeness. This may suggest that the explicitness in faux-ness may be more of a determinant of the consumption intention - that is when consumers choose to wear the coat - rather than of the purchase intention. Whether a real-looking faux fur coat has a conspicuous identifier might not matter as much for consumers because they can easily choose not to wear it in situations where the perceived social risk is high.

An alternative explanation for the non-significant results is that participants may have thought that the label was not conspicuous enough to ensure accurate identification, despite the significant group difference in the explicitness in faux-ness. The average level of agreement with the three-item statements that measured the explicitness in faux-ness (e.g., "When other people see me in this coat in public, they will think that I am wearing a faux fur coat") was 4.77 (SD = 1.43), which lies between "Neither agree nor disagree" and "Somewhat agree." In the absolute term, the label may have failed to exceed the needed threshold of mitigating the fear of misidentification, to the degree that would have made the participants feel confident that the coat would not be misidentified. This failure to reach the minimum requirement to push the participants into the comfort zone may explain their low purchase intention (M = 2.8, SD = 1.82). In other words, the non-significant results could be

attributed to the label's failure to substantially reduce the perceived social risk (probability x magnitude) by meaningfully reducing the probability of stigmatization.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The findings of this study have theoretical implications for scholars and practical implications for fashion brands. In terms of scholarship, the current study extends the literature on status consumption and stigma, enhances an academic understanding of the consequences of the dynamic shifts in the fur apparel market, and introduces an unconventional, novel usage of product labeling to be explored in future research. For marketers and brand managers, the findings serve as a guideline for product development and provide support for the importance of continuously being attuned to the zeitgeist, which shapes the current trends and consumer demands.

Theoretical Implications

The findings have important implications for the status consumption literature, which has primarily focused on the relationship between consumer preference and the conspicuousness of brand logos (e.g., Han, Nunes, & Drèze, 2010). The current study incorporated stigma theory to provide a theoretical framework for understanding status symbol, namely its fluid nature and potential drivers of the change in its symbolic meaning over time. In studying the nature of status symbol and the potential cause of the change in its meaning, this study employed a multi-theoretical approach that had been limitedly attempted by previous research. In particular, by identifying stigma as a driver of the change and empirically examining its effect, this study provided further support for the fluid nature of status symbols and showed that stigma is one possible mechanism by which the symbolic value of status products can be tainted.

This study also extends the literature on stigma and its effect on consumer behavior that has primarily focused on a few consumer products such as cigarettes (e.g., Stuber, Galea, & Link, 2009), alcohol and drug (e.g., Room, 2005), and food (e.g., McFerran, Dahl, Fitzsimons, & Morales, 2010) by adding a new consumer product category. Very limited research to date has explored the effect of stigma in the fashion domain.

Despite the dynamic shifts in the fur apparel market, worth 1.57 billion dollars, very few studies have examined the changes in consumer perceptions of and attitudes toward animal fur garments and their alternatives. By including both the genuine and the synthetic alternative, the current study extends the literature on consumer attitude toward animal skin/fur fashion products, which has primarily focused on either one or the other (e.g., wool apparel products (Sneddon et al., 2014), alligator leather accessories (Xu et al., 2004), and eco-friendly faux leather (Kim et al., 2016)). In addition, it is one of the few studies to use an experimental design to capture the causal relationship in testing the effectiveness of the current industry practice in the fur apparel market, an approach that had been limitedly employed in previous research.

Lastly, the current study introduces an unconventional, novel usage of product labeling - communicating attributes of the product to others as opposed to the end users who would be purchasing and using the product. It can be argued that the label has become the medium for conveying desired messages to others and for imbuing a symbolic value to the product. In the case of real-looking fur coats, messages that are conveyed through the label that says “faux fur” can be “I am not the type of person who wears real animal fur coats,” “I do not kill animals for fashion,” or “Animals do not have to be killed for fashion.” The value of introducing this unconventional usage and testing its effect lies in its relevance to the

current culture where more consumers seek products that align with their values (Lai, 2018) and make social or political statements through consumption (Edelman, 2018). This relevancy makes the current study's attempt at understanding its effect meaningful even though no significant effect was found.

Practical Implications

The finding that real animal fur coats are still sought after by those with a strong need for status (i.e., aspirational shoppers) implies that, for this consumer segment, the symbolic value of real animal fur coats still drives its demand. However, perceived stigma was shown to weaken the demand for real animal fur coats - a finding that reinforces the notion that cultural, social, political, and economic forces influence consumer demand. One implication is that brands need to consider any developments in society that can influence the demand for their products and make informed decisions. In particular, in line with the industry practice of distributing merchandise tailored to the local demands, brands may want to analyze the regional level of stigma around wearing animal fur and send an appropriate product assortment to the local outlets. For example, they may choose not to send faux fur coats with high resemblance to animal fur to regions where stigma around wearing animal fur is particularly more salient.

This finding also suggests that the assumption about fake alternatives – the more a fake alternative looks genuine, the better – may not hold true for faux fur coats. For some consumers, the preferred aesthetics for faux fur coats may not necessarily be high visual resemblance to real animal fur coats. Therefore, in designing faux fur coats, rather than focusing on producing faux fur coats to look real as much as possible, fashion brands may want to consider other avenues for creating in-demand designs. One possibility is producing

products unique in silhouettes, colors or color combinations, and patterns by taking full advantage of the relative easiness and flexibility in designing with and dyeing synthetic fibers.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study has limitations that can serve as the springboard for future research.

First, the generalizability of the findings of the experimental study may be limited because the idiosyncrasies of the fur coat stimuli used for this study could have constrained the results. Replicating the study using different stimuli varying in designs would help establish the robustness of the results. It can also help identify the points of divergence and convergence, which can lead to a more nuanced understanding of the effect of the label.

Second, the experimental study tested the effect of a label containing a certain text ("FAUX FUR") in a certain size (8 in. x 4 in.), affixed to a certain location (the right cuff). These three elements (size, text, and location), in concert, determine the level of explicitness in faux-ness of real-looking faux fur coats. Testing with different variations of these elements might give different results, which would help identify the optimal combination that ensures the level of explicitness needed to meaningfully reduce the fear of misidentification and increase the purchase intention.

Third, the experimental study did not consider the contextual factors such as the social context at the time of consumption although it can influence the perceived social risk, which in turn influences the purchase intention. As discussed, the perceived social risk can be determined by consumers' social closeness with other people who are present at the time of consumption. Further research that examines such factors would allow for a more contextualized understanding. From the findings, marketers may be able to glean a marketing

strategy that can boost the sale of real-looking faux fur coats. One way would be developing marketing materials that prime and prompt consumers to visualize themselves in certain social situations where they feel comfortable wearing a real-looking faux fur coat in public, which can effectively nudge otherwise hesitant consumers to make a purchase.

Fourth, although it was reasoned that fear motivates consumers to not consume real animal fur coats and real-looking faux fur coats, the experimental study did not test the mediating effect. Further research should delve deeper into the precise mechanism of why consumers might feel hesitant about purchasing animal fur products or real-looking faux alternatives. The findings would have important theoretical and practical implications of deepening the understanding of consumer psychology and serving as a useful guide for brands seeking a targeted and effective remedy for boosting sales.

Lastly, the current study did not examine what drives the variance in the perceived stigma although it was reasoned that factors such as the exposure to the media coverage on the anti-animal fur consumption movements would influence the perceived stigma, based on the previous finding that people infer public opinion from the media contents (Gunther, 1998). Investigating the antecedents of the perceived stigma would help identify important criteria that can guide consumer segmentation. For example, if the exposure to media coverage is indeed shown to be an antecedent of the perceived stigma, brands may choose to analyze the volume of media coverage at the regional level and segment the market by this criterion. Potentially, regions with a high level of perceived stigma could be metropolitan cities such as Los Angeles where the anti-fur consumption movement is salient, as evinced by the ban on the sale of animal fur apparel. Based on this information, brands can merchandise their products to better cater to local demands.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Stimuli

Real-looking Faux Fur Coats	
Label	No Label
	
	

Magnified Label

Appendix B

Full Copy of Questionnaire

*For all groups, the survey questions are the same.

Group 1 - Label Condition (Coat #1)
Imagine yourself shopping for a faux fur coat (fake fur coat made from synthetic materials such as polyester). While you were browsing, you saw this faux fur coat. This coat has a label that says "FAUX FUR" on the right cuff (shown in the second picture). This label is part of the design, so it is not meant to be removed before use. The dimension of the label is 8 inches x 4 inches.   

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
When other people see me in this coat in public, they will think that I am wearing a faux fur coat	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
It is clear to other people that this fur coat is faux	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Other people will not mistake this coat as a real animal fur coat	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am likely to purchase this faux fur coat	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I will purchase this faux fur coat	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I would consider purchasing this faux fur coat	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Most people think that it is unethical to wear real animal fur	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Most people think less of a person who wears real animal fur	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Most people look down on a person who wears real animal fur	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Once they know that a person wears real animal fur, most people will take his or her opinions less seriously	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Most people think that a person who wears real animal fur is insensitive	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Most people think that a person who wears real animal fur is less educated	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Most people would be reluctant to become close friends with a person who wears real animal fur	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Most people in my community would treat a person who wears real animal fur differently	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Most men would be reluctant to date a woman who wears real animal fur	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Most people would be reluctant to socialize with a person who wears real animal fur	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Most people would be reluctant to accept a person who wears real animal fur as a close neighbor	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I would buy a product just because it has status	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I am interested in new products with status	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I would pay more for a product if it had status	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The status of a product is irrelevant to me	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
A product is more valuable to me if it has some snob appeal	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I think that it is unethical to wear real animal fur	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I think less of a person who wears real animal fur	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I look down on a person who wears real animal fur	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Once I know that a person wears real animal fur, I take his or her opinions less seriously	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I think that a person who wears real animal fur is insensitive	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I think that a person who wears real animal fur is less educated	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I would be reluctant to become close friends with a person who wears real animal fur	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I would treat a person who wears real animal fur differently	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I would be reluctant to date someone who wears real animal fur	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I would be reluctant to socialize with a person who wears real animal fur	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
I would be reluctant to accept a person who wears real animal fur as a close neighbor	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Please select a response that best matches your opinion.

	Extremely unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Somewhat likely	Likely	Strongly likely
The probability that I would consider buying a real animal fur coat is	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The probability of buying a real animal fur coat is	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The likelihood that I would buy a real animal fur coat is	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

What is your age? _____

What was your total household income before taxes during the past 12 months?

- O Less than $10,000
- O $10,000 - $19,999
- O $20,000 - $29,999
- O $30,000 - $39,999
- O $40,000 - $49,999
- O $50,000 - $59,999
- O $60,000 - $69,999
- O $70,000 - $79,999
- O $80,000 - $89,999
- O $90,000 - $99,999
- O $100,000 or more

Which of the following best describes you?

- O White
- O Black or African American
- O American Indian or Alaska Native
- O Asian
- O Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- O Hispanic/Latino
- O Other

What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?

- O Less than high school
- O High school graduate
- O Some college
- O 2-year degree
- O 4-year degree
- O Master's or Professional degree
- O Doctorate

Which of the following best describes the are you live in?

- O Rural
- O Suburban
- O Urban

Group 2 - Label Condition (Coat #2)

Imagine yourself shopping for a faux fur coat (fake fur coat made from synthetic materials such as polyester). While you were browsing, you saw this faux fur coat.

This coat has a label that says "FAUX FUR" on the right cuff (shown in the second picture). This label is part of the design, so it is not meant to be removed before use. The dimension of the label is 8 inches x 4 inches.

Group 3 - No Label Condition (Coat #1)
Imagine yourself shopping for a faux fur coat (fake fur coat made from synthetic materials such as polyester). While you were browsing, you saw this faux fur coat. 

Group 4 - No Label Condition (Coat #2)
Imagine yourself shopping for a faux fur coat (fake fur coat made from synthetic materials such as polyester). While you were browsing, you saw this faux fur coat. 

Appendix C

IRB Approval (Pre-test)

Date: January 6, 2019
IRB Protocol 15466 has been assigned Exempt status
Title: TATM Master's Thesis: Preliminary Study
PI: Jin, Byoungho Ellie

The research proposal named above has received administrative review and has been approved as exempt from the policy as outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations (Exemption: 46.101. Exempt b.2). Provided that the only participation of the subjects is as described in the proposal narrative, this project is exempt from further review. This approval does not expire, but any changes must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation.

1. This committee complies with requirements found in Title 45 part 46 of The Code of Federal Regulations. For NCSU projects, the Assurance Number is: FWA00003429.
2. Any changes to the protocol and supporting documents must be submitted and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.
3. If any unanticipated problems or adverse events occur, they must be reported to the IRB office within 5 business days by completing and submitting the unanticipated problem form on the IRB website: http://research.ncsu.edu/sparcs/compliance/irb/submission-guidance/.
4. Any unapproved departure from your approved IRB protocol results in non-compliance. Please find information regarding non-compliance here: http://research.ncsu.edu/sparcs-docs/irb/non-compliance_faq_sheet.pdf.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Appendix D

Consent Form (Pre-test)

North Carolina State University
INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH

Title of Study: Product Evaluation - Fur coats (15466)
Principal Investigator: Chloe Shin

What are some general things you should know about research studies?
You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty. The purpose of this research study is to gain a better understanding of consumers' evaluation of fur coats in different styles.

You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in a study. Research studies also may pose risks to those who participate. In this consent form you will find specific details about the research in which you are being asked to participate. If you do not understand something in this form it is your right to ask the researcher for clarification or more information. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If at any time you have questions about your participation, do not hesitate to contact the researcher named above or the NC State IRB office as noted below.

What is the purpose of this study?
The purpose of the study is to gain a better understanding of consumers' evaluation of fur coats in different styles and consumer perception of societal attitude toward wearing animal fur.

Am I eligible to be a participant in this study?
In order to be a participant in this study you must be a female aged 18 or above.

What will happen if you take part in the study?
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be presented with 20 fur coats and asked to evaluate each coat on the extent to which it looks like it is made from real animal fur. Then you will be asked to complete 11 questions about societal attitude toward wearing animal fur. The estimated time needed to complete this study is less than 15 minutes.

Risks and Benefits
There are minimal risks associated with participation in this research. There are no direct benefits to your participation in the research.

Confidentiality
The information in the study records will be kept anonymous. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

Compensation
For participating in this study you will receive $ .80 If you withdraw from the study prior to its completion, you will not receive any compensation.

What if you have questions about this study?
If you have questions at any time about the study itself or the procedures implemented in this study, you may contact the researcher, Chloe Shin at dshin7@ncsu.edu.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?
If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact the NC State IRB Office via email at irb-director@ncsu.edu or via phone at 1.919.515.4514. You can also find out more information about research, why you would or would not want to be in research, questions to ask as a research participant, and more information about your rights by going to this website: http://go.ncsu.edu/research-participant

Consent To Participate
"I have read and understand the above information. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled."

Appendix E

IRB Approval (Main test)

Date: March 15, 2019
IRB Protocol 16653 has been assigned Exempt status
Title: TATM Master's Thesis: Product Evaluation - Fur coats
PI: Jin, Byoungho Ellie

The research proposal named above has received administrative review and has been approved as exempt from the policy as outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations (Exemption: 46.101. Exempt d.2). Provided that the only participation of the subjects is as described in the proposal narrative, this project is exempt from further review. This approval does not expire, but any changes must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation.

1. This committee complies with requirements found in Title 45 part 46 of The Code of Federal Regulations. For NCSU projects, the Assurance Number is: FWA00003429.
2. Any changes to the protocol and supporting documents must be submitted and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.
3. If any unanticipated problems or adverse events occur, they must be reported to the IRB office within 5 business days by completing and submitting the unanticipated problem form on the IRB website: http://research.ncsu.edu/sparcs/compliance/irb/submission-guidance/.
4. Any unapproved departure from your approved IRB protocol results in non-compliance. Please find information regarding non-compliance here: http://research.ncsu.edu/sparcs-docs/irb/non-compliance_faq_sheet.pdf.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Appendix F

Consent Form (Main test)

North Carolina State University
INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH

Title of Study: <Product Evaluation: fur coats (16653)>
Principal Investigator: Chloe Shin

What are some general things you should know about research studies?
You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty. The purpose of this research study is to gain a better understanding of consumer attitude toward animal fur consumption.

You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in a study. Research studies also may pose risks to those who participate. In this consent form you will find specific details about the research in which you are being asked to participate. If you do not understand something in this form it is your right to ask the researcher for clarification or more information. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If at any time you have questions about your participation, do not hesitate to contact the researcher named above or the NC State IRB office as noted below.

What is the purpose of this study?
The purpose of the study is to gain a better understanding of consumer purchase intention toward fur coats.

Am I eligible to be a participant in this study?
In order to be a participant in this study you must be a female aged 18 or above.

What will happen if you take part in the study?
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be presented with 1 fur coat and asked questions about them. You will also be asked about your opinions on animal fur consumption. The estimated time needed to complete this study is about 15 minutes.

Risks and Benefits
There are minimal risks associated with participation in this research. There are no direct benefits to your participation in the research. The indirect benefit is gaining a better understanding of consumer purchase intention toward fur coats.

Confidentiality
The information in the study records will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. Data will be stored securely on an NC State managed computer. Your survey is linked to your amazon account, but the researcher cannot access this information. All information in the study records will be kept anonymous. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

Compensation

For participating in this study you will receive $.80. If you withdraw from the study prior to its completion, you will not receive any compensation. Within 3 days, the compensation will be transferred to your Amazon Mechanical Turk account.

What if you have questions about this study?

If you have questions at any time about the study itself or the procedures implemented in this study, you may contact the researcher, Chloe Shin at dshin7@ncsu.edu.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact the NC State IRB Office via email at irb-director@ncsu.edu or via phone at 1.919.515.4514. You can also find out more information about research, why you would or would not want to be in research, questions to ask as a research participant, and more information about your rights by going to this website: http://go.ncsu.edu/research-participant

Consent To Participate

"I have read and understand the above information. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled."