APPLICATION OF BRAND CONCEPT MAPS TO GAP INC.

by

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(Under the Direction of Yoo-Kyoung Seock)

ABSTRACT

John, Loken, Kim and Monga (2006) offered a "brand concept map" (BCM), which identified important attributes associated with a brand, showing how these attributes are interconnected and conjured in consumers' minds. Applying " the Brand Concept Map" (BCM) method, the present study attempted to identify fashion brand association networks in Banana Republic, Gap, and Old Navy. Korchia's 15 attribute categories associated with fashion brand were used to classify fashion brand associations. This study provides a tool for assessing their company's brand image for fashion marketing managers; that is, which brand associations are more or less important, which brand are associations directly or indirectly linked and how changes of brand associations can affect other associations.

INDEX WORDS: Brand Concept Map, Brand Image, Brand Association, Product Involvement, Brand Association Category, Gap, Banana Republic, Old Navy

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

<u>Background and Justification</u>

Consumers usually have a relationship with a specific brand based on their emotional experiences to the symbolic image they associate with the brand. Such emotional attachment and brand images are often an outcome of consumers' prior experience with the brand in conjunction with diverse corporate marketing and communication activities. In the excessively competitive environment that exists today, differentiation through brand image has emerged as an important marketing method. According to Keller (1993), brand image refers to the set of associations linked to the brand that consumers hold in their memory. Similarly, brand association is defined as "anything 'linked' in memory to a brand" (Aaker, 1996). Consumers associate brands with various aspects such as product features, price and packaging, which can influence their purchasing decision when faced with a range of products. In addition, brand associations help the consumer to process, organize, and retrieve information from memory to aid product choice (Aaker, 1991). In consumer memory, these usually exist as a network of associations. Therefore, understanding the brand-association structure that is formed in consumers' minds could provide marketers a significant advantage in managing their brand image and brand equity. The importance of brand association networks has been highlighted in previous research. For example, Keller (1993) states that understanding brand equity involves identifying a network of strong, favorable, and

unique brand associations in consumer memory. Aaker (1996) mentions that this association network constitutes a brand's image, identifies the brand's uniqueness and value to consumers; thus, managers who can correctly identify the network benefit because it holds clues to how brand equity can be leveraged in the marketplace.

Accordingly, marketers have used several methods to create a brand association network, in order to administer the brand image effectively. Many methods are available for eliciting brand associations from consumers: these range from qualitative techniques, such as collages and focus groups, to quantitative methods, such as attribute rating scales and brand personality inventories (John, Loken, Kim & Monga, 2006). John et al. (2006) offered a new "brand concept map" (BCM), which delivers a consensus brand map. The BCM method identifies the most important associations in order to show consumers' connection to the brand, and also how these associations are interconnected. The BCM method can offer managers a visual network that can be used to better understand the brand image that is conjured in consumers' minds. Such a visual network affords managers seeking to transform their brand image a means to identify which associations are vital to the brand which attributes can be changed. In addition, a BCM can help managers differentiate the perceptions of the various consumer segments. Also a BCM can help to decide which elements of the integrated marketing communication mix have to be modified to correct brand image problems or to improve the synergy (Céline & Charles, 2006). This is because the integrated marketing communication mix can help to build strong relationships with consumer by using a coordination of all kinds of marketing communication tools such as advertising, promotion, and so forth.

According to Céline and Charles, the BCM method can aid managers in understanding how the brand is perceived by consumers in general, or by a particular segment as well as how this perception corresponds to the brand positioning, which can help them determine and adjust their integrated communication strategy (2006). Another advantage of using the BCM method is that managers can track changes in brand associations over time. BCM methodology can also be used on a long-term basis to evaluate whether consumer perceptions of the brand have changed, as a result of branding programs or competitive activity (John et al., 2006). Thus BCM methods offer an improvement over positioning strategies, which are commonly based on comparisons between brand images across markets. Positioning strategies, typically do not aid in the management of brand image over time; instead, they lead managers to focus on short-term, market-driven factors, such as current consumer needs and competitors (Park, Jaworski & Maclnnis, 1986). However, the applicability of BCM methods to various branding contexts has not been ascertained. John et al. (2006) introduced the BCM method by applying it to a clinical service, but suggested future research evaluation of how well it operates for different types of brands with such associations as "more attribute-related, more product-related or more experience-related." Other researchers have investigated BCM methods for managing brand image in relation to single brands only. Céline and Charles (2006), for instance, applied the BCM method to Lipton's Ice Tea in the European market. In fact, it could be difficult to generalize the application of the BCM method to all branding contexts. It is therefore essential to extend the research to other types of brands.

The present study applies the BCM method to fashion brands. The fashion industry is regarded as the "one industry that faces conspicuous consumption," (Korta, Caulkins, Hartl & Feichtinger, 2005) and their strategies cannot depend only on functionality (Amaldoss& Jain, 2005a, 2005b; Belk, 1988; Grubb & Grathwhohl, 1967; Leibenstein, 1950; Chao &Schor, 1998). Consumers tend to have a stronger and more personal attachment to fashion brand images. Due to the importance of brand images in the fashion industry, the BCM method could also be an efficient way to manage fashion brand associations. Many studies exist on only brand associations in terms of brand equity and brand category structure for the fashion industry. Important brand associations and visual connections between them, however, have yet to be identified. The present study attempted to fill this gap by applying BCM methods to fashion brands that evoke various associations.

In addition, this study attempted to categorize fashion brand associations. Brand association categorizations are not well defined in the fashion industry. For example, because the fashion industry is strongly related to symbolic image, other associations are regarded as less important brand images. However, these associations might be related to the strongest brand associations in consumers' mind. Thus, to see consumers' perception of brand image, these associations should be included into association categories. In the research of Korchia (n.d.), the researcher indicates 15 distinct categories by investigating the case of two French fashion brands. Korchia's categories include company, other organizations, brand personality, celebrities, users, product category, usage, price, communication, distribution, product-related attributes, functional benefits, experiential benefits, symbolic benefits and attitudes. Even though

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there might be some problems with criteria of brand associations, the researchers explained well about the structure of classifications of the fashion brand images. Therefore, the present study adapted Korchia's categories for better understanding of brand association categories by applying it to more fashion brands.

In the study, Gap Inc. was chosen as a representative of the fashion industry in order to examine the perception of consumers' brand images. Among young women, Gap is a trademark with a high level of familiarity, use, and fondness (Kwon, 2005). Consumers' awareness of Gap might be caused from many other aspects of the brand which might be related to brand images. Thus this study expected to elicit more brand associations for Gap Inc. from participants than other less familiar brands. Also, it is important to compare brand images of various brands in one company. Companies can use their companies' brand image to each their own brand images as a positive marketing factor. However, they do not want to cannibalize their own product while competing with their brands. Therefore, managers attempt to differentiate their products by using different marketing tools. Accordingly, this study selected Banana Republic, Gap, and Old Navy in Gap Inc. in order to compare each brand image and also to investigate how a company's image affects each brand.

Also, this study examined how fashion brand associations can be described by BCM methods for consumers with different levels of product involvement of fashion clothing. The product involvement of fashion clothing means "the place fashion clothing product occupies in consumers' lives" (Mittal & Lee, 1989; O'Cass, 2000 and O'Cass & Choy, 2008). It is an important concept in the fashion industry because it affects the tendency of shopping such as frequency and expenditure of shopping (Shim

& Kotsiopulos, 1993). Accordingly, if consumers think the fashion clothing products are important in their lives, they might go shopping more frequently and spend more money during their shopping. These consumers are regarding as an important consumer group for marketing practitioners to introduce their products (Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1993). Thus it is meaningful to investigate their perceptions of brand image by comparing with low involvement groups.

Also, involvement can affect consumers' brand status and attitudes which refers to brand perceptions related to a status or success symbol (O'Cass & Choy, 2008). O'Cass & Choy (2008) found that consumers with high involvement tended to attach brand status more than consumers with low involvement. As mentioned the effects of involvement to shopping tendency and brand attitude, consumer's behaviors can be different when they shop for fashion clothing according to different levels of involvement. Thus this fact can affect consumers' purchase decision in the fashion clothing markets. Accordingly, product involvement can have influences on consumers' perception of brand image which can be highly related to consumers' purchase decisions.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to apply BCM to three brands: Banana Republic, Gap, and Old Navy in order to investigate consumer perceptions of brand images according to product involvement of fashion clothing and to compare the brand images according to Korchia's brand association categories.

<u>Research Objectives</u>

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. Using BCM (brand concept map) method, to identify the perceptions of fashion brand associations of Banana Republic, Gap, and Old Navy among consumers within different levels of product involvement of fashion clothing.

2. Using Korchia's brand association categories, to classify fashion brand associations of Banana Republic, Gap, and Old Navy among consumers within different level of product involvement of fashion clothing.

<u>Conceptual Definition</u>

Brand association consists of informational nodes that are linked to the brand nodes in memory, which contain the meaning of the brand for consumers (Keller, 1993).

Brand image is defined here as perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory (Keller, 1993).

Brand maps are networks of brand associations organized in a network in a manner consistent with the associative network models of memory (Anderson, 1983). This association network constitutes a brand's image, identifies the brand's uniqueness and value to consumers (Aaker, 1996).

Brand concept map refers to a methodology that elicits brand association networks (maps) from consumers, and aggregates their individual maps into a consensus map of the brand (John et al., 2006).

Product involvement of fashion clothing refers to place the fashion clothing product occupies in consumers' lives (Mittal & Lee, 1989; O'Cass, 2000; O'Cass& Choy, 2008).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

<u>The Importance of Brand</u>

Historically, brands have emerged as a means of recognizing products; therefore, their importance has continuously increased in marketing strategy. Today, only a few unbranded products remain in actual markets because consumers perceive branded products as a point of reference when making purchasing decisions (Dew & Kwon, 2010; Sirgy, 1982).Companies regard brands as an essential part of building marketing concepts (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2006). According to a book entitled *Strategic Brand Management* by Keller (2003, p.4), a brand is not only a product but also "one that adds other dimensions to differentiate it in some way from other products designed to satisfy the same need." According to the American Marketing Association, a brand is a "name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition" (n.d.). Thus, these elements of brands can clarify the source of the product to the consumers. Brands also protect producers from vigorous competition.

To consumers, brands play important roles in "the identification of sources of the product," "the assignment of responsibility of product makers," "risk reduction," "search cost reduction," "promises, bonds, or pacts with makers of products," "their usage of symbolic devices," and "a sign of quality." (Keller, 1998, pp.7–8) This is because consumers might perceive branding as an important value-added aspect of products, as it

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usually denotes certain attractive characteristics (Brand, 2010). These also play considerable roles in the fashion industry. The fashion industry is regarded as the "one industry that faces conspicuous consumption," and its strategies cannot depend only on functionality (Korta, et al., 2005; Amaldoss & Jain, 2005a, 2005b; Belk, 1988; Grubb & Grathwhohl, 1967; Leibenstein, 1950; Chao & Schor, 1998), including performance, quality, price, reliability, and logistics (Blackwell, et al., 2006). Consumers tend to have a stronger and more personal attachment to the images of fashion brands than to any other type of products. Therefore, brands can satisfy consumers' emotional needs and reduce social risks. Besides, another reason why brands are significant in the fashion industry is that consumers find it impossible to evaluate and compare all the information about fashion products, including their quality, because the wide range of fashion products is extremely diverse. Thus, brands are one of the major decision factors for assessing the quality of products (Lee, 2007).

Additionally, to producers, brands function as a "means of identification to simplify handling or tracing, means of legally protecting unique features, sign of the quality level to satisfied customers, means of endowing products with unique associations, sources of competitive advantage, and sources of financial returns" (Keller, 1998, p.9). Accordingly, when a brand performs these important roles successfully, it also enables companies to offer unique and customized services to consumers that facilitate their daily activities and enrich their lives.

<center>Brand Image and Brand Association</center>

Brand association refers to anything that "links" a brand to a consumer's mind (Aaker, 1991). It comprises other informational nodes that convey the meaning of the

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brand to consumers (Keller, 1993). A brand image is defined as perceptions about a brand reflected by the brand's associations held in consumer memory (Keller, 1993); it refers to a set of brand associations (Aaker, 1991). Both brand association and brand image represent the perceptions of consumers as well as the bases for their purchase decisions. Brand associations can develop values by facilitating the processing/retrieving of information, differentiating the brand, providing a reason for purchase, creating a positive attitude/opinion among consumers, and lending a basis for brand extension (Aaker, 1991). Therefore, through these channels, marketing practitioners communicate with consumers for constructing their brand concept and achieve a positive brand image with strong, favorable, and unique associations to the brand in consumers' memory. According to "Brand Concept Management" by Park, Jaworski, & Maclnnis (1986), when a concept based on consumers' needs is selected, it can be used to guide positioning decisions. Positioning is closely related to the concepts of brand association and brand image. In other words, a well-positioned brand will have a competitively attractive position supported by strong associations (Aaker, 1991). On the basis of these positioning strategies, marketing practitioners develop a marketing mix according to given a competitive situation. That is, the positioning of a brand reflects how its manufacturer is attempting to be perceived in the market. In addition, marketing efforts spanning from a positioning strategy to the marketing mix affect consumers' perceptions of the image position of the brand; that is, how consumers perceive a brand. In conclusion, brand associations play important roles not only in a positioning strategy but also in brand position in terms of the construction of the brand concept.

Measuring Brand Association

The concept of brand equity is vital not only for building a strong brand in marketing strategies but also for understanding how marketing strategies are implemented, although definitions of brand equity vary greatly. According to Keller (1993), brand equity is defined as the differential effect of brand knowledge in terms of brand awareness, and a strong, favorable, and unique brand association. Building and managing brand equity effectively is based on understanding the current and desired brand knowledge structures of consumers (Keller, 1998). The structures in consumers' minds refer to "mental maps" aimed at understanding exactly what exists in their minds about brands—all their opinions, feelings, beliefs, and attitudes toward different brands; these maps help consumers make a brand decision (Keller, 1998). Brand equity can be assessed in two ways. The indirect way to assess its potential sources is to identify and track consumers' brand knowledge structures; the direct way involves asking the consumer about the impact of brand knowledge (Keller, 1998).

In his book, *Strategic Brand Management,* Keller (1998) outlined qualitative and quantitative research techniques used in the measurement of sources of brand equity. Qualitative research techniques include free association, projective techniques, the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET), and the measurement of brand personality and values. The free association method involves simply asking consumers what they can recall when they think of the brand; for instance, "What does the brand name Rolex mean to you?" Through this process, marketers can clarify the range of possible associations and assemble a brand profile (p.312). This method usually involves collecting oral responses rather than written ones in order to capture spontaneous thought

(Aaker, 1991). Projective techniques are diagnostic tools for uncovering the actual opinions and feelings of consumers when they are unwilling or otherwise unable to express themselves on these matters (Keller, 1998). Instead of focusing on the brand, the discussion centers on the use experience, decision process, brand user, or off-the-wall perspectives, for example, considering the brand to be a person or an animal (Aaker, 1991).

Another research technique, ZMET, involves a method that draws on consumers' images and elicits the metaphors, constructs, and mental models that drive consumers' thinking and behavior (Keller, 1998). More details will be discussed in the latter part of the literature review because brand concept map (BCM) is based on the concept of ZMET. Finally, brand personality requires different ways of measurement because this concept involves human characteristics or traits that can be attributed to a brand (Keller, 1993).

Even though qualitative research techniques elicit some type of verbal responses from consumers, limitations such as difficulties in numerical representations exist. On the other hand, quantitative research techniques typically employ various types of scale questions. According to Keller (1993), quantitative measures of brand knowledge can be employed to better assess the depth and breadth of brand awareness and its strength, favorability, and uniqueness.

<div align="center">Concept Mapping Methodology</div>

Although numerous researchers and marketing practitioners have noted the importance of brand-image management, the methods used to measure brand image have been more or less the same. Measuring perceptions of brand image has typically

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depended on forced-choice instruments (e.g., traditional approaches to perceptual mapping; Joiner, 1998). In forced-choice instruments, respondents are given two or more desirable options and then choose the one based on their own decision. Because options are developed from researchers, forced-choice methods are oriented from researchers. A concept map, however, is an open-ended method because it extracts information from consumers to provide a better understanding of what they associate with major brands. Therefore, the concept map method is recommended now from some researchers (Joiner, 1998).

The conceptual basis for the concept map methodology is activation theory and the associative network model of memory, in which it is assumed that properties can be represented several times in a person's memory and that information is not organized hierarchically (Céline and Charles, 2006). Once a structure is activated, a person should be able to report the majority of that structure's content (Joiner, 1998). In a concept map, concepts are depicted in the form of boxes or circles, and each concept is connected to another concept as a line. These cross-links help to illustrate how a concept in one domain of knowledge represented on the map is related to a concept in another domain shown on the map (Novak and Canas, 2008). Therefore, the concept map can show associative relationships among concepts in a person's mind. Figure 2.1 is an example of a concept map.

Such concept maps are used frequently in educational and counseling research (Céline and Charles, 2006). Novak (1972) developed the concept map method to understand children's knowledge of science and found that the best way to represent a cognitive knowledge structure as held by a learner is in the form of a concept map.

Concept maps have also been applied in social psychology and several other fields

(Joiner, 1998)

Figure 2.1.

Concept Map of Fashion Brand: Kookai
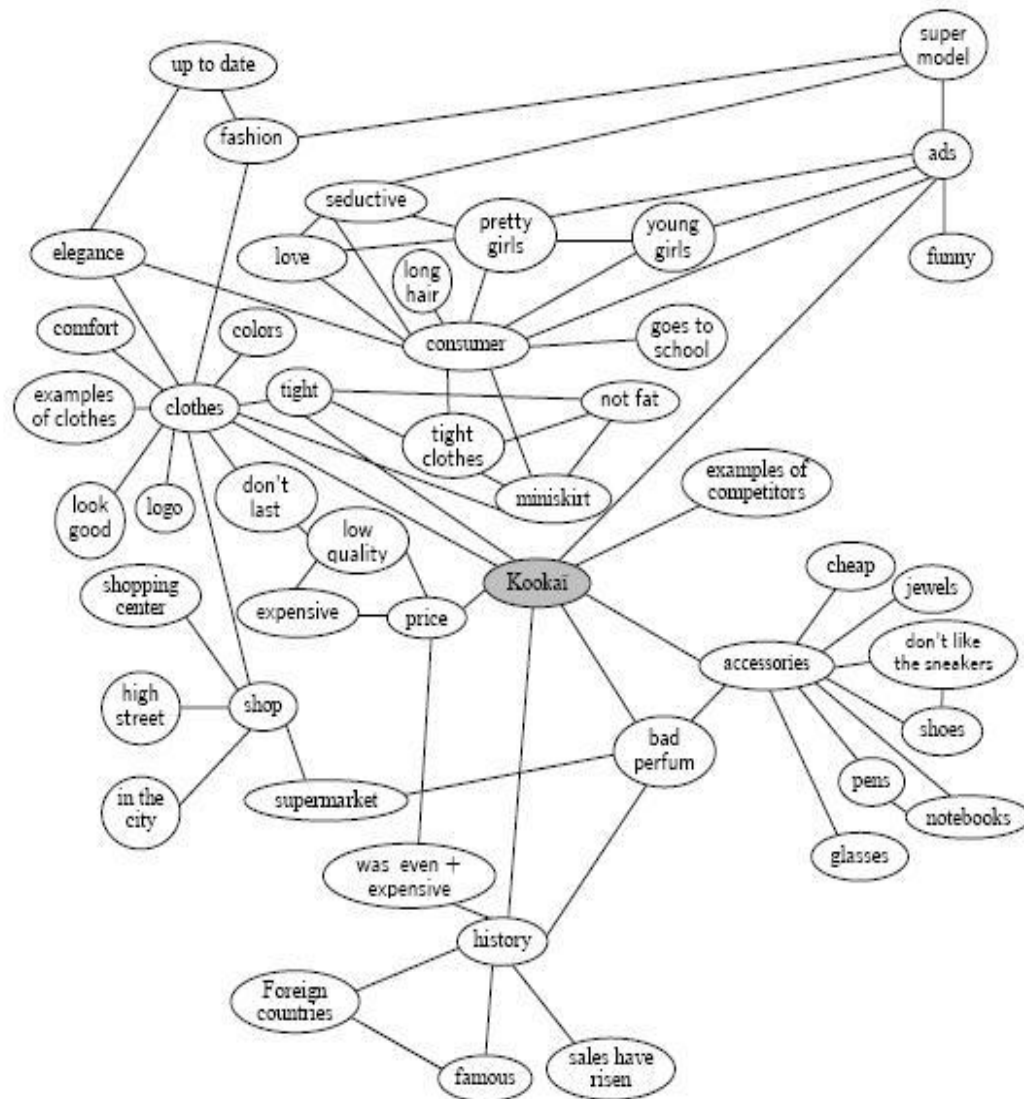
(Korchia, n.d.)

The application of this method in the marketing field began in the 1990s. Dobni

and Zinkhan (1990) focused on branding by summarizing a variety of methods in order to

understand brand image. Mackay and Easley (1996) researched international differences in product perception by using concept maps. Joiner (1998) demonstrated usefulness of concept maps in marketing research by examining how concept maps could be used along with marketing-related stimuli to elicit salient concepts. Carbonara and Scozzi (2006) analyzed new product development process by applying concept maps. There are two concept mapping methods in the branding field: Zaltman's Metaphor Elicitation Technique and John et al.'s Brand Concept Map.

<u>Zaltman's Metaphor Elicitation Technique</u>

Zaltman's Metaphor Elicitation Technique, or ZMET, the most well-known consumer mapping method, refers to a method that draws on consumers' images and elicits metaphors, constructs, and mental models (Keller, 1998). It is used to understand consumers' thoughts about and behavior towards brands and product categories (Zaltman and Coulter, 1995, John et al., 2006). Zaltman and Coulter (1995) introduced ZMET because they believed that important opportunities to learn from consumers were being overlooked when researchers ignored nonverbal channels of communication during the research process. They developed the ZMET from seven premises that improve research methods to understand consumers' thinking structures.

"First, most human communication is nonverbal. Second, thoughts typically occur as nonverbal images even though they are often expressed verbally. Third, metaphors are essential units of thought and are the key windows/mechanism for viewing consumers' thoughts and feelings and for understanding behavior. Fourth, sensory images provide important metaphors. Fifth, consumers have mental models—interrelated ideas about a market experience—that represent their knowledge and behavior. Sixth, hidden

or deep structures of thought can be accessed. Lastly, emotion and reason are forces that commingle in the minds of consumers." (Zaltman & Coulter, 1995, p.36-40)

Based upon these promises, the ZMET helps access nonverbal information about consumers' insights and generate core constructs and reasoning connecting them to form mental models driving consumer thought and action. ZMET is one way to provide consumer information to marketing practitioners as a communication tool.

ZMET method has three stages: elicitation, mapping, and aggregation. In the elicitation stage, 20–25 people are selected to express their feelings and thoughts about 12 images associated with the brand—including name, term, sign, symbol, and design, or a combination of these—for the study. Seven to ten days later, a two-hour personal interview is conducted to elicit a number of constructs. In the mapping stage, participants draw a map by using the constructs from the elicitation stage. In the aggregation stage, a consensus map is created that contains the most important constructs and their relationship. The ZMET is a useful method when there has not been much previous research and the unconscious associations of a brand must be investigated. By eliciting brand associations, the researchers can uncover the nonverbal aspect of consumers' thinking. However, this technique is not easy to administer because the process is labor intensive. Interviewers must be specially trained in cognitive psychology and neuroscience, while respondents must be willing to participate in two interview sessions and prepare pictures for them (Céline and Charles, 2006).

<u>Brand Concept Maps</u>

Among concept map methods, the BCM method is the newest approach to consumer mapping. Compared to ZMET, the process of the BCM is less labor intensive

and does not require as much specialized training on the part of interviewers. Particularly in the elicitation stage which gathers associations from consumers' mind, the BCM can make it easier by using existing consumer researches or brief surveys. John et al. (2006) introduced the BCM method, which can help answer the need for a more accessible and standardized method of producing brand maps. The BCM methodology elicits brand-association networks from consumers, and aggregates individual maps into a consensus map of the brand. Consensus brand maps include the core brand associations that define "the brand image, and show which associations are linked directly or indirectly to the brand" (p.549).

In their study, there are three stages in creating a brand concept map. The first is the elicitation stage, in which the purpose is to identify the salient associations of the brand. There are four criteria: the data should be gathered from the same consumer population that will be used in the mapping stage; the data should be made up of consumer responses to open-ended questions; the most frequently mentioned brand associations should be selected to form the final set and, in selecting the exact phrasing for salient brand associations, it is important to retain the wording that consumers use, rather than the wording that researchers or managers more commonly use (John et al., 2006).

The next stage is mapping, in which consumers are asked about constructs they associate with brands in order to make a map. Based on these associations and their responses in the elicitation stage, respondents are asked to draw a map by connecting concepts using between one and three lines (Figure 2.2), with more lines representing a stronger connection.

Table 2.1

Aggregation Rules for BCMs

Step	Measures	Rules
1. Select core brand associations	Frequency of mention Number of interconnections	Select brand associations that are •Included on at least 50% of maps. •Included on 45%–49% of maps if the number of connections for core associations we identified previously.
2. Select first-order brand associations	Frequency of first-order mentions Ratio of first-order mentions Type of interconnections	Select core brand associations that •Have a ratio of first-order mentions to total mentions of at least 50%. •Have more superordinate than subordinate interconnections.
3. Select core brand association links	Frequencies for association links	Select core brand association links by •Finding inflection point on frequency plot. •Inflection point = target number. •Including all association links that appear on or above the target number of maps.
4. Select non–core brand association links	Frequencies for association links	Select non–core brand association links that are •Linked to a core brand association. •Linked on or above the target number of maps.
5. Select number of connecting lines	Mean number of lines used per link	Select single, double, or triple lines for each brand association link by •Determining the mean number of lines used per link. •Rounding up or down to the next integernumber (e.g., 2.3 = 2).

(John et al., 2006)

The last stage is aggregation, in which a single consensus map of how consumers see a brand is created. Frequency is used to interconnect each brand association. The table 2.1 sets out the aggregation rules for BCMs.

Figure 2.2

Brand Concept Map
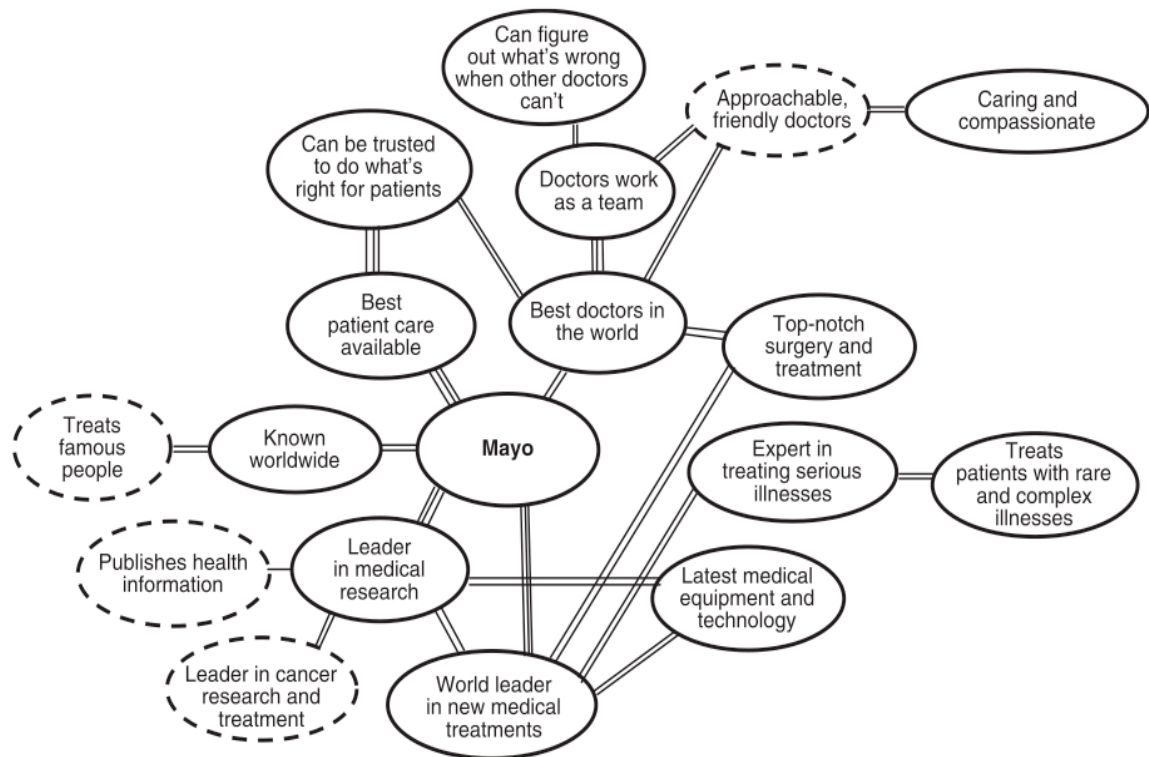
(John et al., 2006)

John et al. also divided the two groups randomly to check reliability and validity, and accordingly obtained strong evidence that the BCM produces a valid representation of consumer brand perceptions. They also found that the individual brand maps correlate well with results from standard surveys. Their two studies provided evidence that the BCM method can depict consumers' brand perceptions effectively.

In particular, a BCM may be an effective way of differentiating the brand image for various segments and resolving the marketing communication mix, to build a strong brand image, or to correct an image problem. According to research by Céline and Charles (2006), marketing managers can see the associations that define a brand's core identity, and the associations that must be changed to alter a brand's image. They found that the different segments in the European Ice Tea brand elicit different perceptions and established brand perceptions that were not consistent with European perceptions. As a result, they found that the main problem was in the communication campaign. Thus, when applied to real market brands, a BCM offers in-depth information, such as brand associations that may be problematic, and ways in which brand associations are connected for an integrated marketing communication mix.

In addition, the BCM method makes it possible to measure changes in brand associations, investigate how one brand association affects another, and examine the entire brand image over time. The BCM methodology can be repeated on a long-term basis to establish whether consumer perceptions of the brand have changed as a result of branding programs or competitive activity (John et al., 2006). In contrast, another method commonly and traditionally used in the apparel industry—a perceptual positioning map (Figure 2.3)—does not show how the image can be managed over time(Park, Jaworski, and MacInnis, 1986). Comparing the BCM (Figure 2.2) and the perceptual positioning map (Figure 2.3), we can see that the BCM method is more helpful when tracking problematic associations from the past, and in ongoing management of the brand image. However, the perceptual positioning map can help to compare various brands according to researchers' criteria.

Figure 2.3.

Perceptual Positioning Map

Common Space Chart
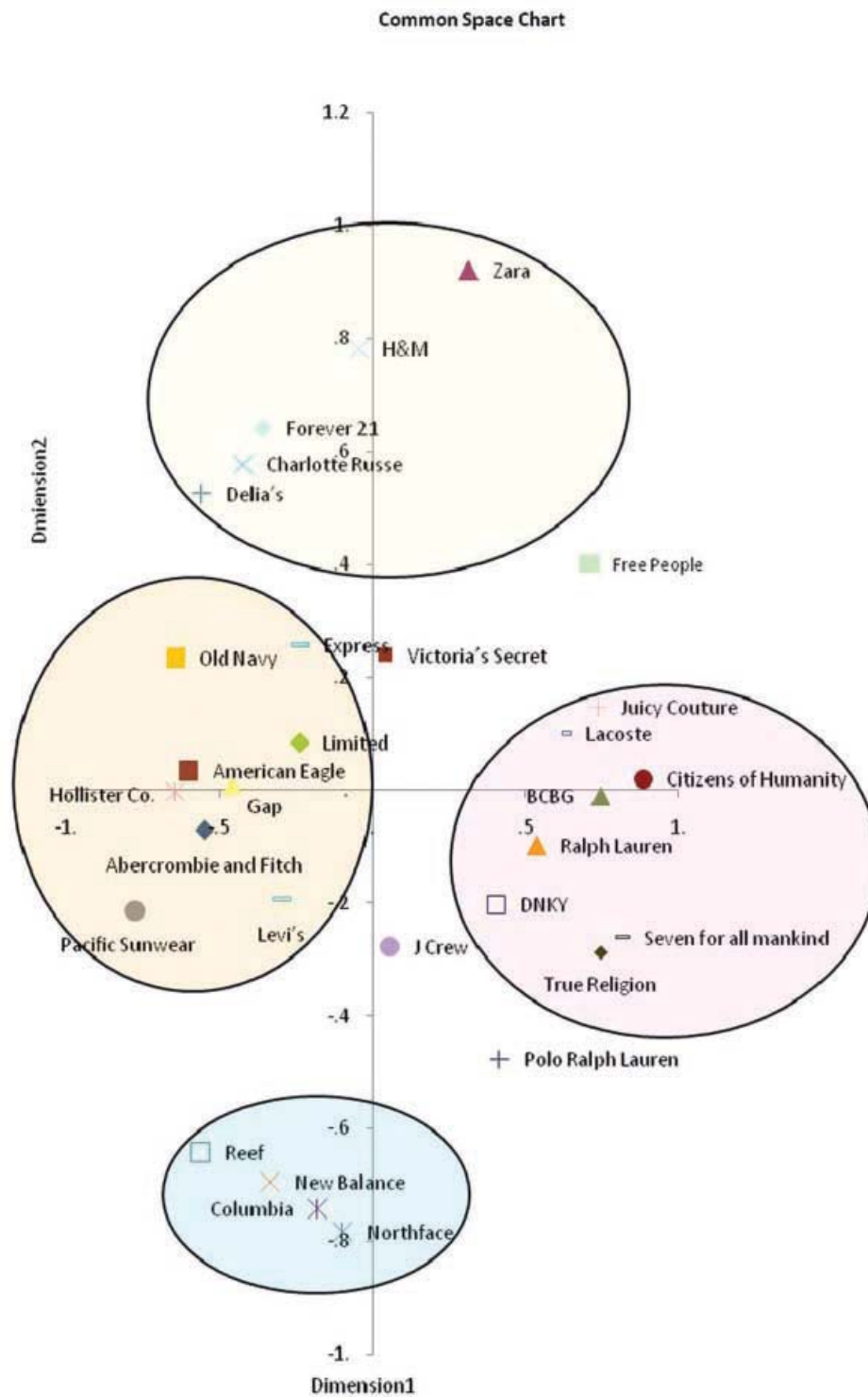
(Dew & Kwon, 2010)

The BCM has not been applied to many different brand contexts. As noted, John et al. (2006) introduced the BCM by applying it to a health care brand, the Mayo Clinic. They drew the BCMs by comparing the associations drawn by two groups, patients and non-patients, dividing the groups randomly to check reliability and validity analyses, and applying another sample to investigate the correlation with standard survey research techniques. Their results proved the validity of the BCM and also showed that the BCM and survey rating scales converged well in terms of BCM's hierarchical placement of brand association and selection of connecting lines, even though these are different in orientation.

Céline and Charles (2006) apply the BCM to the European Ice Tea markets and classify the consumer segments according to the perception of image. Céline and Charles (2008) widened the application of the BCM to city branding, validating earlier studies on the BCM and confirming the improvement of the methodology. Céline, Charles, Christian, and Allard (2009) investigated the effects of consumer exposure to a new brand on a similar brand name, examining how the perception of the image of the senior brand changed; they measured the effects of this exposure on brand image confusion by using the BCM. Céline, Chales, Christian and Allard (2010) applied the BCM to apprehend "doppelganger brand image," which defines the appearance of negative associations at the brand reputation level. Even though these applications to different types of brands have been investigated, researchers have not yet attempted to analyze other types of brands that may have different associations.

All in all, the research on BCM is considerably important as it suggests that the technique may help fashion marketing managers assess brand images. In particular, it can

help discover which brand associations are more or less important, which brand associations are directly or indirectly linked, and how changes in brand associations can affect other associations.

<div align="center">Brand Association Categories</div>

When consumers decide to purchase one among several products, they may associate products with various aspects of the brand, such as attributes, price, packaging, and so forth. Brand association is defined as "anything 'linked' in memory to a brand" (Aaker, 1996). The diverse brand associations make up the brand image, which is regarded as the most important marketing factor in a differentiation strategy.

According to Keller (1993, 1998), these associations are classified into three major categories: attributes, benefits, and attitudes. Attributes are those descriptive features that characterize a brand, such as what a consumer thinks the brand is or has, and what is involved in its purchase or consumption. Benefits are the personal value that consumers attach to the brand attributes, that is, what consumers think the brand can do for them. Brand attitudes are consumers' overall evaluation of a brand (Belen del Rio, Vazquez, and Iglesias, 2001; Keller, 1998). Korchia (n.d.) extends Keller's categories into 6 broad dimensions, or 15 total dimensions, as outlined in Table 2.2.

In Korchia's categories, associations related to the company and other organizations are included. These association categories are related to the firm or competitors and also government. In addition, some associations are shown as the entire brand image including brand personality/life style, celebrities/event, user imagery, and usage imagery. Brand personality/life style refers to human characteristics associated

Table 2.2.

Korchia's Brand Association Categories (Korchia, n.d.)

Category		Definition
1	The company	Knowledge of facts related to the firm: its country of origin, its strategy, its story, and so forth
2	Other organizations	Competitors comparing them with the brand of concern, to government, charity funds, and so forth.
Evoke universe :		
3	Brand personality/life style	Human characteristics associated with the brand
4	Celebrities/event	Events or Celebrities' expertise, attractiveness and so forth create an association with a brand by advertising.
5	User imagery	Associations about the typical user or other user having different characteristics such as age, physical appearance, job and so forth.
6	Usage imagery	Associations about the typical usage situation: the location, personal experience or information search
Non-product-related attribute(7-10):		
7	Product category	Associations about the product category to which some of the products of the brand belong.
8	Price	Consumer often strongly associate the price, for example, with the quality of the brand
9	Communication	Mainly about the ads and the catalogue
10	Distribution Associations	Associations about the distribution networks, the decoration of the stores, the shop assistants.
11	Product-related attributes	The ingredients necessary for performing the product function sought by the consumer.
12	Functional benefits	Physiological and safety needs, and desires for problem removal or problem avoidance.
13	Experiential benefits	What it feels like to use the product.
14	Symbolic benefits	Underlying needs for social approval or personal expression and outer-directed self-esteem.
15	Attitudes	An index of the degree to which a person likes or dislikes an object.

with the brand and it mostly represents as life style. Celebrities/event is created by marketing communication mix like product placement. User imagery includes associations about the typical user or other user. Usage imagery includes associations about the typical usage situation such as the location, personal experience or information search (Korchia, n.d.).

Also, non-product-related attributes include product category, price, communication, and distribution associations. Each definition is explained in Table 2.2. While non-product-related attributes are divided into 4 dimensions, product-related attributes are a singular dimension. It refers to ingredients necessary for performing the product function sought by the consumer (Korchia, n.d.). Additionally, benefits-related associations include functional benefits, experiential benefits, and symbolic benefits. Functional benefits are physiological and safety needs, and desires for problem removal or problem avoidance (Korchia, n.d.). Experiential benefits are associations related to feeling about the products. Symbolic benefits are association related to social approval or personal expression and self-esteem. Lastly, attitudes are associations related to whether a consumer favor to a product or not. The present study adapted the association category concept from Korchia (n.d.) because the apparel industry strives to enhance the consumer's own brand image as well as the product's functionality.

<div align="center">Product Involvement of Fashion Clothing</div>

Product involvement refers to the place a product occupies in consumers' lives (Mittal & Lee, 1989; O'Cass, 2000; O'Cass & Choy, 2008). In other words, it means how important a product is in people's lives. It occurs when a product category is related to a person's centrally held values and self-concept (Warrington & Shim, 2000). Product

<div align="center">25</div>

involvement has been used to examine fashion clothing in numerous previous studies. High fashion involved consumers, as a driver of fashion adoption process, have historically been important to fashion researchers and marketing practitioners (O'Cass, 2000). They tend to shop more frequently and spend more money on clothing than other consumers. Thus marketing practitioners focus on attracting these consumers (Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1993; Warrington&Shim, 2000).

The involvement and consumer behavior has been researched over 40 years (Mittal, 1989; O'Cass & Choy, 2008). It includes various topics such as advertising involvement by Krugman (1966), purchases involvement by Slama and Tashchian (1985), purchase decision involvement by Mittel (1989), and so forth. Among many researchers, O'Cass developed product involvement scales and purchase decision involvement scales in fashion products (2000). Also, O'Cass and Choy applied these scales to investigate Chinese consumers' perception of fashion products and it explained well about relationship between fashion products and brand status (2008). In this study, scales from the study of O'Cass and Choy (2008) are adopted in order to compare the fashion brand associations of two groups according to product involvement of fashion clothing. Because their scales are structured only in fashion clothing by including unique features of fashion clothing products, their product involvement is a great tool to explain differences of brand images rather than advertising involvement, purchases involvement and so on. Samples of the scale include "Fashion clothing means a lot to me," "Fashion clothing is significant to me," "For me personally fashion clothing is important," "I am interested in fashion clothing," "I pay a lot of attention to fashion clothing," and "How involved you are with fashion clothing."

<center>The Brand Images of Gap Inc.</center>

This study applied the BCM to three fashion brands, Banana Republic, Gap and Old Navy, as samples for the fashion industry. Previous studies have shown that Gap is a trademark with a high level of familiarity, use, and fondness among young women (Kwon, 2005). The research of Park and Lennon (2008) also indicate that it is a well-known brand. Furthermore, Gap has a high brand value, ranking 84th among the best global casual wear brands and 23rd among the most valuable U.S. retail brands (Interbrand, 2010). Such awareness of Gap among consumers is related to consumers' perception of other aspects of Gap as a brand image. Thus, in the brand image of Gap, consumers are expected to include a variety of associations even though they have not purchased a Gap's products.

Gap Inc. has different targeted brands, such as Banana Republic, Gap, and Old Navy. According to a marketing report on Gap Inc. (Gap, n.d.), Banana Republic's target is 25-35 aged male and female focusing on consumers seeking an accessible luxury brand. Also, the annual report of Gap Inc. (Gap Inc., 2011) described that "Banana Republic is a sophisticated and fashionable casual brand with higher price points than Gap." In a case of Gap, the target is men and women aged between 18 and 25 which are younger than Banana Republic (Gap, n.d.). Its price point is lower than Banana Republic but higher than Old Navy and its product categories is casual wear including fashion apparel, accessories, and personal care products (Gap Inc., 2010). Old Navy is the lowest price point among three brands (Gap, n.d.). Old Navy offers basics products for family (Gap Inc., 2010). Thus its target markets are wider ranged than Banana Republic and Gap.

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CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Sample & Population

The population for the present study was composed of female college students at

the University of Georgia in Athens-Clarke County, Georgia. A convenience sample of

female college students included thirty students for the pre-test and 22 students for the

main study. Participants were undergraduate and graduate students between the ages of

19 and 25.

Procedure

This study focuses on (1) the identification of fashion brand associations in the

minds of consumers and (2) the classification of these associations. For purposes of

comparison, two groups were formed according to their product involvement of fashion

clothing. The present study follows the method of John et al. (2006) which were

described in the literature review.

Once the Institutional Review Board approved this research method on February

7th (Appendix A), the pre-test was administered (Appendix B). The purpose of pre-test

also called as the elicitation stage was to select salient brand associations for mapping the

brand images of Banana Republic, Gap and Old Navy. During the pre-test, a word bank

was provided for respondents. Expressions in the word bank were adopted from many

different researches (Table 3.1). Some words related to three brands were selected from

the pages of explanations about Gap, Banana Republic, and Old Navy in the website of

Table 3.1

Expressions of Brand Image

Gap	Banana Republic	Old Navy	Bhat & Reddy (1998)	Aaker (1997)	Brengman & Willems (2009)
American	accessible	fun	practical	honest	chic
casual	luxury	cheap	down-to-	wholesome	snobbish
essential	high-quality	family	elegant	cheerful	upscale
great-fitting	work to	retro	prestigious	daring	selective
cool	uncomplicat	old	exciting	spirited	welcoming
confident	modern	young	distinctive	imaginative	enthusiastic
around	prestigious	comfortable	sophisticate	up-to-date	lively
young	elegant		romantic	reliable	dynamic
sweat shop	chic		successful	intelligent	friendly
black denim			unique	upper class	congenial
			stylish	charming	hardy
			glamorous	tough	solid
			expressive		reputable
					thriving
					leader
					imposing
					well-
					trustworthy
					outmoded
					conservativ

the Gap Inc. Items relating to brand evaluation and brand user were selected from Bhat

and Reddy (1998), dimensions of brand personality-brand image as a person were chosen

from Aaker (1997), and expressions of fashion brand store personality were included

from Brengman and Williems (2009). A few identical words were excluded for this

study (Table 3.1).

These associations were reorganized by interviews with 3 graduate students because

some words may not be related to each brand such as "tough'" and "hardy." Therefore,

17 words were deleted and overall 50 words were included for the pre-test (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2

Word Bank for the Pre-test

American style	accessible	honest	basic	fun
casual	luxury	chic	stylish	cheap
essential	high-quality	upscale	friendly	family
great-fitting	work to casual	selective	daring	retro
cool	exciting	wholesome	spirited	elegant
confident	uncomplicated	distinctive	imaginative	old
around world	modern	sophisticated	up-to-date	comfortable
young	down-to-earth	romantic	reliable	reasonable
sweat shop	practical	successful	intelligent	interesting
black denim	prestigious	unique	upper class	reputable

The pre-test involved a survey in a classroom setting on February 22th with 22

undergraduate students and 8 graduate students, using a word bank which contains

expressions related to three brands. Furthermore, open-ended questions about brands (e.g.,

"When you think of [brand], what comes to mind") were provided to responders in order to determine other brand associations which this study might overlook.

Table 3.3

Word Bank for Banana Republic

high quality	confident	upscale	business oriented	interesting	successful
sophisticated	basic	friendly	somewhat fashion oriented	great fitting	color
work to casual	older women	25-35 aged targets	men and women	contemporary	staple
stylish	elegant	reliable	fun	useful	plain
modern	upper class	practical	clean cut	moderate price	mature
chic	comfortable	luxury	higher price	mature	feminine
reputable	conservative	simple	medium to high quality	not exciting	accessible
business casual	neutrals	wholesome	trendy	not fashion forward	honest
classy	clean	selective	many different styles	well-made	old
American style	reasonable	more expensive	humorous body types	cool	around world
classic	casual	adult	clean store	romantic	semi-young
professional	sometimes overpriced	young adult	nicely decorated	moderate priced	

By collecting individual expressions in the pre-test, overall 71 associations were listed for Banana Republic, 72 associations were listed for Gap, and 65 associations were listed for Old Navy (Table 3.3-5).

Table 3.4

Word Bank for Gap

basic(s)	uncomplicated	cool	plain patterns	Christmas Commercial	modern
reasonable	expensive/over priced	affordable	retro	clean	blue
comfortable	down to earth	trendy	modern	good quality	architect
casual	wholesome	work to casual	fun	school clothes	minimalistic
family	successful	old	very affordable	baking	carefree
American style	reputable	friendly	versatile	ugly	increasing prices
Jeans/denim	cheap	around world	sophisticated	old-women	natural
practical	plain	conservative	chic	not good fit	staple
accessible	colors(ful)	all ages	exciting	plain	honest
stylish	reliable	simple	chic	well-known	upscale
classic	essential	moderate price	spirited	recently trendy items	professional
young	middle price	work clothes	casual T-shirt	low price point but well made	black denim

Table 3.5

Word Bank for Old Navy

cheap(low)	trendy	Laid-back	lively and upbeat store	poor fit	down to earth
family	nice commercials	sometimes new	able to wear one or two season	average	annoying TV commercial
basic(s)	old	sometimes interesting	sales	dog	cheaper(lower) prices
casual	youthful	carefree	stylish	mainstream	young
young(er)	sweat shop	well priced	denim	full-figured	mannequins commercial
comfortable	fun	uncomplicated	layering pieces	good for fast growing kids	
mannequins	reasonable	all ages	cheaply made	fast fashion	
fun	colorful	wider target	tries to trendy	essentials	
poor(low) quality	bad clothes	epitome	cheap fabrics	fresh	
accessible	conservative	not fashion forward	wholesome	for everyone	
American style	fleeces	clean cut	friendly	reliable	
practical	plain	pop colors	spirited	honest	

The following was the mapping stage which held two separate ways to gather individual's maps. It was conducted on March 9th in a classroom setting for 10 responses and also one-on-one interviewed from March 10-16th for 12 responses. In order to administer the procedure, overall 22 participants were recruited and received an incentive as 15$ gift card to compensate them for their time. The whole process took approximately 50 minutes to complete. Any questionnaires were not discarded because there was not any missing part in answers (Appendix C).

In this mapping stage, three sections were provided for participants. First, they were presented with an example of BCM (Figure 2.2) with enough directions to draw their own maps. The example provided the types of associations that might be included on a map and the ways in which these associations might be linked to the brands and to one another. The specimen also included lines that indicated the strength of an association to the brand or to another association. More lines indicated a stronger the association. After explaining specifically how to draw a map, they were asked to think about Banana Republic, Gap and Old Navy. In this process, they were shown several website images, including logos, packages, stores, products, and so on (Appendix D). These stimuli were selected from their press kit, seasonal advertisements and merchandises selling online based on their marketing strategies of each brand. The respondents developed their own BCMs for three brands by using word banks.

In addition, they were asked to indicate fashion clothing product involvement, using a number between 1 ("strongly disagree") and 7 ("strongly agree"), This questionnaire included the following statements adopted from O'Cass and Choy (2000) : "Fashion clothing means a lot to me," "Fashion clothing is significant to me," "For me

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personally fashion clothing is important," "I am interested in fashion clothing," "I pay a lot of attention to fashion clothing," along with the question "How involved you are with fashion clothing?" Lastly, they were asked relevant demographic data, such as age, race, social class, and monthly allowance, besides pre-purchase experiences of the brands.

Once all data were collected, individual maps were aggregated into one consensus map. The aggregation stage requires five steps to make a consensus map (Table 2.2). The first of these was to select core brand associations as a means of measuring the frequency that brands were mentioned and interconnected. Associations found on at least 50% of the maps were included as core associations. Those on 45-49% of the maps were included if the number of interconnections was equal or higher than the core associations. The example of *High Involvement of Banana Republic* is shown in Table 3.6. Among many other associations, 10 associations were included as core associations. The rest of frequency tables for Gap and Old Navy attached in Table A.1-5 (Appendix E).

Table 3.6

Core Association (High Involvement for Banana Republic)

Associations	Frequency of Mention	Number of Interconnections
high quality	7	8
professional	6	18
reliable	6	10
simple	6	9
well made	6	9
business clothes	6	9
elegant	6	7
clean cut	6	4
classic	5	14
men and women	5	4

The second step was to select first-order brand associations. For this procedure, this study used measures of the frequencies, ratios, and interconnection types of first-order mentions in individual maps. If the ratios of first-order mentioned associations were 50% or more, or if the associations with superordinate connections were more than those with subordinate connections, the former were included in the first-order brand associations (Table 3.7 and see Table A.1-5, Appendix E for tables for Gap and Old Navy)

Table 3.7

First-order Association (High Involvement for Banana Republic)

Associations	Frequency of First-Order	Ratio of First-Order Mention	Subordinate Connections	Superordinate Connections
high quality	6	85.7	0	7
professional	3	50.0	5	11
simple	3	50.0	3	5
well made	0	0.0	3	6
business	4	66.7	2	6
elegant	5	83.3	1	6
classic	3	60.0	1	12
men and	2	40.0	0	0

As a third step, core brand associations were linked on the map. In advance, the frequencies of links between specific associations were measured across all the individual maps. In comparison to the previous measures, the frequencies of different association links were measured on one map, two maps, and so on (Table 3.8 and see Table B.1-5 in Appendix E for tables for Gap and Old Navy).

Table 3.8

Frequency of Interconnections (High Involvement for Banana Republic)

Interconnections	Frequency
classic-simple	6
business clothes-professional	5
business clothes-high quality	4
high quality-reliable	3
professional-well made	3
professional-reliable	3
classic-professional	2
luxury-classy	2
professional-sophisticated	2
reliable-reputable	2
classy-sophisticated	2
professional-luxury	2
clean cut-simple	2
business clothes-conservative	2
professional-clean cut	2

Note: core associations are in bold.

Graphs, which contain frequency counts according to the number of maps, were prepared and used to find the inflection point as a target number which means a point at a sharp increase (Figure 3.1 and see Figure A.1-5 in Appendix F for Gap and Old Navy). All core association links that appeared on or above the target numbers of the maps were included. For example, the inflection point occurred at two, and the decision rule was to include all core associations links when the frequency of interconnections was from two to six in the consensus map.

Figure 3.1

Graph of Association Pairs (High Involvement for Banana Republic)

Number of Association Pairs (target point =2)
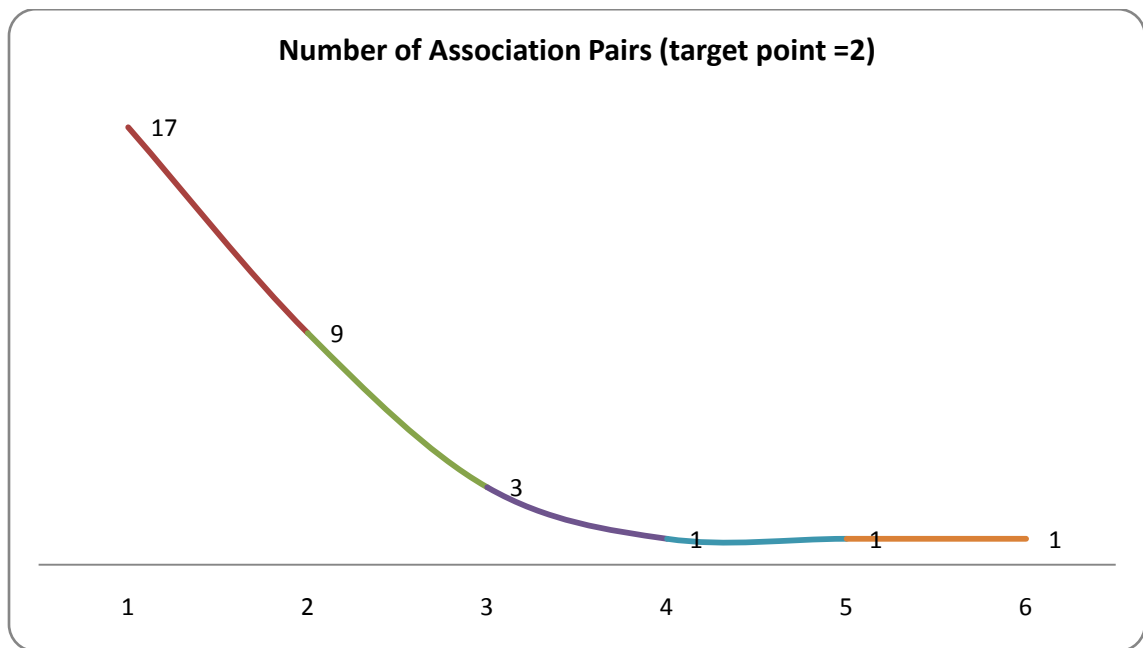
The fourth step was to select non-core brand association links, which were uncovered in the previous step. These associations were added to place in the consensus map when these were mentioned as related to core-associations or the brands directly (Table 3.9). The tables of Gap and Old Navy are attached in Table C.1-5 in the Appendix E. To distinguish core associations, non-core associations were represented as bubbles with dotted lines in aggregated maps.

Finally, in the fifth step, the number of connecting lines, gauged by three levels of strength—single, double, or triple—were selected by determining the means of the number of lines per link, and these means were rounded up or down to the next integer number (Table 3.9-10). As a result, by using the BCM method, six maps were developed:

two maps of Banana Republic, two maps of Gap and two maps of Old Navy according to

high- and low- involvement group (Figure 4.1-6 in Result).

Table 3.9

Numbers of Lines of Core-associations (A High Involvement for Banana Republic)

Interconnections	Frequency	Number of Lines	Mean of Lines
classic-simple	6	15	2.5
business clothes-professional	5	15	3.0
business clothes-high quality	4	9	2.3
high quality-reliable	3	8	2.7
professional-well made	3	8	2.7
professional-reliable	3	3	1.0
classic-professional	2	2	1.0
luxury-classy	2	5	2.5
professional-sophisticated	2	2	1.0
reliable-reputable	2	3	1.5
classy-sophisticated	2	5	2.5
professional-luxury	2	2	1.0
clean cut-simple	2	5	2.5
business clothes-conservative	2	6	3.0
professional-clean cut	2	3	1.5

In the second principal part of the study, fashion brand associations in the BCMs

were classified. According to Korchia's categorization (n.d.), these associations were

ordered and accounted as company, other organizations, brand personality/lifestyle,

celebrities/event, users' imagery, usage imagery, product category, price, communication,

distribution association, product relation, functional benefits, experiential benefits,

symbolic benefits, and attitudes.

Table 3.10

Numbers of Lines of Brand-Connected Directly Associations (High Involvement for

Banana Republic)

Associations	Frequency	Number of Lines	Mean of Lines
high quality	6	18	3.0
professional	3	8	2.7
simple	3	9	3.0
well made	0	0	0.0
business clothes	4	10	2.5
elegant	5	11	2.2
classic	3	9	3.0
men and women	2	5	2.5

Data Analysis

According to the BCM method, maps for Banana Republic, Gap and Old Navy were completed in order to gather associations. Each map had various associations with different levels of connection within high- and low-involvement group. This study attempted to see differences and similarities between high- and low-involvement groups according to three brands. Besides, the result could answer these questions: how associations are related to each other, how strong these are related to each other, which associations are related to their brand image significantly, what the most important associations are in each brand and each group, and so on. Moreover, by the classification process, associations were identified as main and minor categories for fashion industries. This analysis made it possible to determine the most significant categories for the fashion industry according to fashion product involvement. Also this study investigated the relationship between fashion product involvement and perception of brand image.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH RESULTS

Demographics of the Sample

This study included 22 samples, which were aggregated for a brand concept map. All respondents, whose profiles are summarized in Table 4.1, were female students from the University of Georgia.

Table 4.1

Profile of the Sample

		Frequency	Percentage
Age	19.00	4	18.2
(mean = 21.8)	20.00	3	13.6
	21.00	1	4.5
	22.00	6	27.3
	23.00	2	9.1
	24.00	5	22.7
	25.00	1	4.5
Race	Caucasian	11	50.0
	African American	4	18.2
	Hispanic	1	4.5
	Asian	6	27.3
	American Indian	0	0
	Other	0	0
Education	Freshman	2	9.1
	Sophomore	2	9.1
	Junior	6	27.3
	Senior	4	18.2
	Graduate	8	36.4
Monthly	$0–$99	7	31.8
expenditure for	$100–$199	9	40.9
fashion products	$200–$299	6	27.3
	Over $300	0	0

They ranged from 19 to 25 years of age, with a mean age of 21.8 years. Those who were 22 years old accounted for more than a quarter of the respondents (27.3%), while those of other ages were somewhat or much less represented: 24 years old, 22.7%; 19 years old, 18.2%; 20 years old, 13.6%; 23 years old, 9.1%; and 21 and 25 years old, 4.5% each.

Half of the respondents were Caucasian (50%), 27.3% were Asian, 18.2% were African American, and 4.5% were Hispanic. Graduate students comprised more than one-third (36.4%) of the respondents, juniors 27.3%, seniors 18.2%, and freshmen and sophomores 9.1% each. Their monthly expenditure for fashion products ranged from $0–$99 to $200–$299, with no respondent indicating that she spent $300–$399, $400–$499, or over $500 per month. In all, 40.9% indicated that their monthly expenditure ranged from $100 to $199, 31.8% from $0 to $99, and 27.3% from $100 to $199. More than three-quarters of the responding students had made purchases at Gap (81.8%) and Old Navy (77.3%), and over half (54.5%) at the Banana Republic (Table 2).

Table 4.2

Previous Purchase Experiences

		Frequency	Percentage
Purchase Experiences	Banana Republic	12	54.5
	Gap	18	81.8
	Old Navy	17	77.3

Grouping by Product Involvement of Fashion Clothing

Before mapping the three brands, all respondents were divided into two groups according to their product involvement in fashion clothing. The scales of O'Cass and Choy(2000) were adopted in this study (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3

Scales of product involvement of fashion clothing

Fashion clothing means a lot to me.
Fashion clothing is significant to me.
For me personally fashion clothing is important.
I am interested in fashion clothing.
I pay a lot of attention to fashion clothing.
How involved you are with fashion clothing?

Two groups were formed on the basis of the mean scores of overall involvement levels (4.81). If an individual's average score was higher than 4.80, she was placed in the high-involvement group; if it was less than 4.79, she was placed in the low-involvement group. As Table 4.4 indicates, the high-involvement group and low-involvement group were composed respectively of 10 students (mean = 6.10) and 12 students (mean = 3.73) respectively.

A summary of their characteristics according to the respondents' involvement is shown in Table 4.5. Of the high-involvement group, 22-year-olds comprised 50%; 19-

Table 4.4

Involvement Level

Group	Frequency	The level of Involvement
High-Involvement	10	6.10
Low-Involvement	12	3.73
Overall	22	4.80

year-olds 20%; and 21-, 23-, and 25-year-olds 10% each. There were no students aged 20

or 24 years in this group. In the low-involvement group, 24-year-olds formed the

majority (41.67%), followed by those 20 years old (25%), 19 years old (16.67%), and 22

and 23 years old (8.33% each); there were no 21- and 25-year-olds.

In both groups, Caucasian students formed the majority (H = 40%, L = 58.33 %),

and Asians, the second largest (H = 30%, L = 25%). African Americans made up 20%

and 16.67% of the high and low-involvement groups respectively. Hispanics had only

one respondent in the former group.

The education levels of the high-involvement group included freshmen (20%),

seniors (30%), and graduates (50%), but no sophomores and juniors. The low-

involvement group comprised many juniors (50%) and graduates (25%), sophomores

(16.67%), and seniors (8.33%), but no freshmen.

Forty percent of the high-involvement group spent \$200–\$299 monthly

compared to only 16.67% of the low-involvement one. Thirty percent of the respondents

in the former group spent between \$100 and \$199 monthly, as did 50% of those in the

low-involvement group. Lastly, expenditures of \$0 to \$99 were made by 30% of the high

and 33.33% of the low-involvement groups.

Table 4.5

Profile of Involvement Groups

		High-Involvement		Low-Involvement	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Age (mean = 21.8)	19.00	2	20.0	2	16.67
	20.00	0	0.0	3	25.00
	21.00	1	10.0	0	0.00
	22.00	5	50.0	1	8.33
	23.00	1	10.0	1	8.33
	24.00	0	0.0	5	41.67
	25.00	1	10.0	0	0.00
Race	Caucasian	4	40.0	7	58.33
	African American	2	20.0	2	16.67
	Hispanic	1	10.0	0	0.00
	Asian	3	30.0	3	25.00
Education	Freshman	2	20.0	0	0.00
	Sophomore	0	0.0	2	16.67
	Junior	0	0.0	6	50.00
	Senior	3	30.0	1	8.33
	Graduate	5	50.0	3	25.00
Monthly Expenditure for Fashion Products	$0–$99	3	30.0	4	33.33
	$100–$199	3	30.0	6	50.00
	$200–$299	4	40.0	2	16.67
Purchase Experiences	Banana Republic	5	50.0	7	58.33
	Gap	10	100.0	8	66.67
	Old Navy	10	100.0	7	58.33

More than half of the respondents had previously made purchases at Banana

Republic, Gap, and Old Navy. All of the students in the high-involvement group had

bought products from Gap and Old Navy, but only half had purchased merchandise from Banana Republic. In the low-involvement group, 66.67% of the students had made purchases from Gap and 58.33% from both Banana Republic and Old Navy. Therefore, with the exception of Banana Republic, the high-involvement group tended to have acquired Gap's and Old Navy's products more than the low-involvement group did.

<div align="center">Results of Mapping</div>

According to the two different levels of product involvement in fashion clothing, two maps were created for Banana Republic and two each for Gap and Old Navy. The mapping methods and procedures for these six maps were described in Chapter 3. In this section, each brand concept map is analyzed by comparing the frequency of mentions and the interconnections within the maps of the two groups and the association categories. There are four comparison criteria for the two groups within the three brands. First, the total number of core or non-core associations is analyzed. Second, the most frequently mentioned associations are identified as the most important ones for brands by analyzing interconnections. Third, same or similar associations that appeared in both high- and low-involvement groups are determined. Finally, associations are classified according to Korchia's (n.d.) categories and definitions, in order to compare the most frequently mentioned categories and their interconnections. On the basis of these cumulative findings, comparisons of the three brands are reported in order to gauge differences in consumer associations among Banana Republic, Gap, and Old Navy.

<div align="center">**Brand Concept Maps for Banana Republic**</div>

Banana Republic maps of the high-involvement and low-involvement groups are shown in Figures 4.1 and 4.2 respectively.
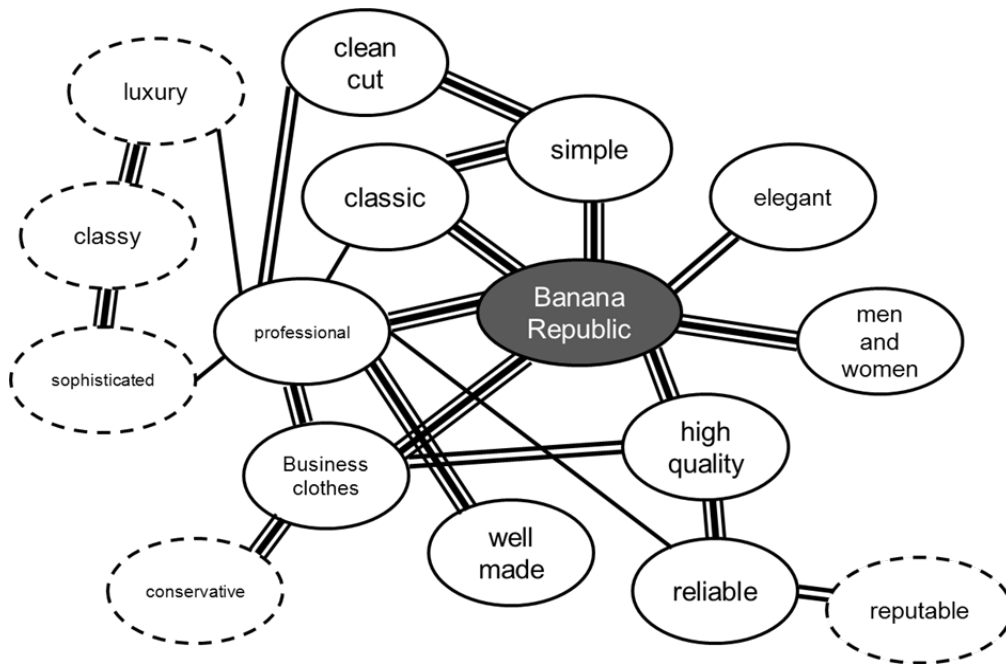
Figure 4.1

Banana Republic Concept Map for a High Involvement Group (N = 10)
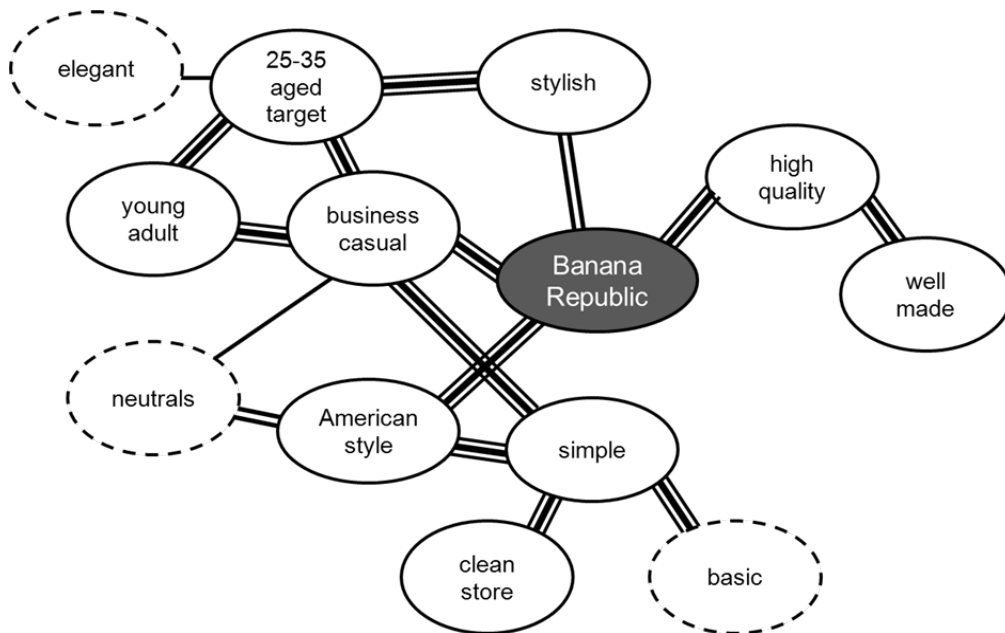
Figure 4.2

Banana Republic Concept Map for a Low Involvement Group (N = 12)

Notes: The dashed-line circles are non-core associations.
    Three lines indicate the strongest relationship between two associations.

In the map for the high-involvement group (Figure 4.1), 10 core associations are indicated (business clothes, classic, clean cut, elegant, high quality, men and women, professional, reliable, simple, and well made). The non-core associations are classy, luxury, reputable, and sophisticated (n = 5). In comparison, the map of the low-involvement group (Figure 4.2) shows 9 core associations (targets aged 25–35 years, American style, business casual, clean store, high quality, simple, stylish, and well made) and three non-core associations (elegant, basic, and neutral). Therefore, the high-involvement group made more associations (n = 15) than the low-involvement group did (n = 12) and was more likely to form these associations for Banana Republic than the low-involvement group.

Table 4.6 shows that in the high-involvement group, "high quality" was the most frequently mentioned association (n = 7) and "professional" the most highly interconnected one (n = 18). The low-involvement group mentioned "business casual" most often (n = 12) and as the most interconnected association (n = 27). Even though the most frequently mentioned associations differed in the two groups, "business casual (clothes)" was important to both. As the map of the high-involvement group shows (Figure 4.1), "business clothes" was related to "professional," which had the most interconnections. Therefore, marketers must consider positive, interconnected associations, such as "conservative" and "high quality" for high-involvement groups and "simple" and "neutrals" for low-involvement ones, if they are trying to build the brand image of Banana Republic.

Furthermore, "business clothes," "high quality," "simple" and "well made" were other important attributions for identical or similar associations for Banana Republic in

Table 4.6

Associations for Banana Republic

High-Involvement Group			Low-Involvement Group		
Associations	Frequency of Mention	Number of Inter-connections	Associations	Frequency of Mention	Number of Inter-connections
high quality*	7	8	**business casual***	12	27
professional*	6	18	**American style***	10	14
Reliable	6	10	**high quality***	8	10
simple*	6	9	**simple***	7	16
well made*	6	9	**targets aged 25–35 years**	6	10
business clothes*	6	9	**stylish***	6	10
elegant*	6	7	**clean store**	6	7
clean cut	6	4	**young adult**	6	6
classic*	5	14	**well made**	6	5
men and women*	5	4	sometimes overpriced	5	2
Luxury	4	9	basic	4	14
Conservative	4	6	neutrals	4	13
Sophisticated	4	6			
Classy	4	5			
Reputable	4	4			

Notes: The core associations are in bold.
Asterisks are used to mark the first-order associations.

Table 4.7

Common Associations for Banana Republic between Both Involvement Groups

high quality	simple	well made
business casual(clothes)		

both groups. They were stated by all the participants in this study regardless of their involvement levels. Because these 4 associations were identical or analogous among the total 15 associations in the high-involvement group and the total 12 associations in the low-involvement group, many other associations were identified by both groups (Table 4.6-7). Therefore, product involvement in fashion clothing may play a different role in the consumer perception of Banana Republic.

To analyze the characteristics of these associations by comparing groups, Korchia's 15 brand association categories of fashion products (n.d.) were applied (company, other organizations, brand personality, celebrities, users, product category, usage, price, communication, distribution, product-related attributes, functional benefits, experiential benefits, symbolic benefits, and attitude). Some associations—company, other organizations, celebrities, communication, experiential benefits, and attitude—do not relate to the categories of this study; therefore, they were deleted. The results are summarized in Table 4.8.

The high-involvement group drew mainly symbolic benefits for Banana Republic. This finding suggests that such consumers are more taken by symbolic images of class and status when they imagine Banana Republic. This group also tended to associate Banana Republic with "brand personality." "Reliable" was associated with "professional," "reputable," and "high quality" among the association categories. In comparison, the low-involvement group tended to associate distribution with this retailer. Additionally, associations related to user imagery differed in the two groups. The high-involvement group regarded the brand as a unisexual image ("men and women"), while the low-involvement group saw it as "targets aged 25–35 years" and "young adult."

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Table 4.8

Association Categories for Banana Republic Maps

	High Involvement Group	Low Involvement Group
Brand personality, lifestyle	Reliable	
Users imagery	men and women	target aged 25–35 years, young adult
Usage imagery	business clothes	business casual
Distribution associations		clean store
Product-related attributes	clean cut, simple(design)	neutrals, simple(design), basic
Functional benefits	high quality, well made	high quality, well made
Symbolic benefits	elegant, professional, luxury, conservative, sophisticated, reputable, classy, classic	American style, stylish, elegant

Brand Concept Maps for Gap

As shown in Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.4, the two maps of Gap are the most complicated of the six brand maps. In the high-involvement group's map, there are 17 associations in all. Of these, 12 are core associations (comfortable, casual, denim/jeans, well-known, American style, all ages, basic, practical, simple design, middle price, reasonable, and reputable) and five non-core (classic, clean, school clothes, business casual, and work to casual). In a low-involvement group's map, there are 14 associations in all, of which 12 are core associations (e.g., simple, American style, denim/jeans,
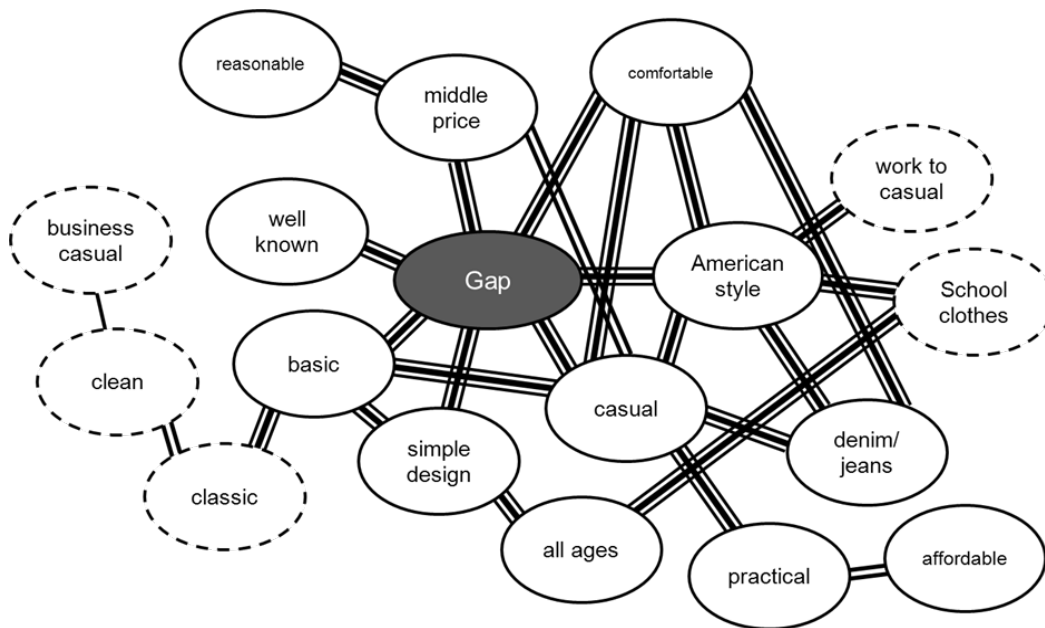
Figure 4.3

Gap Concept Maps for a High Involvement Group (N = 10)
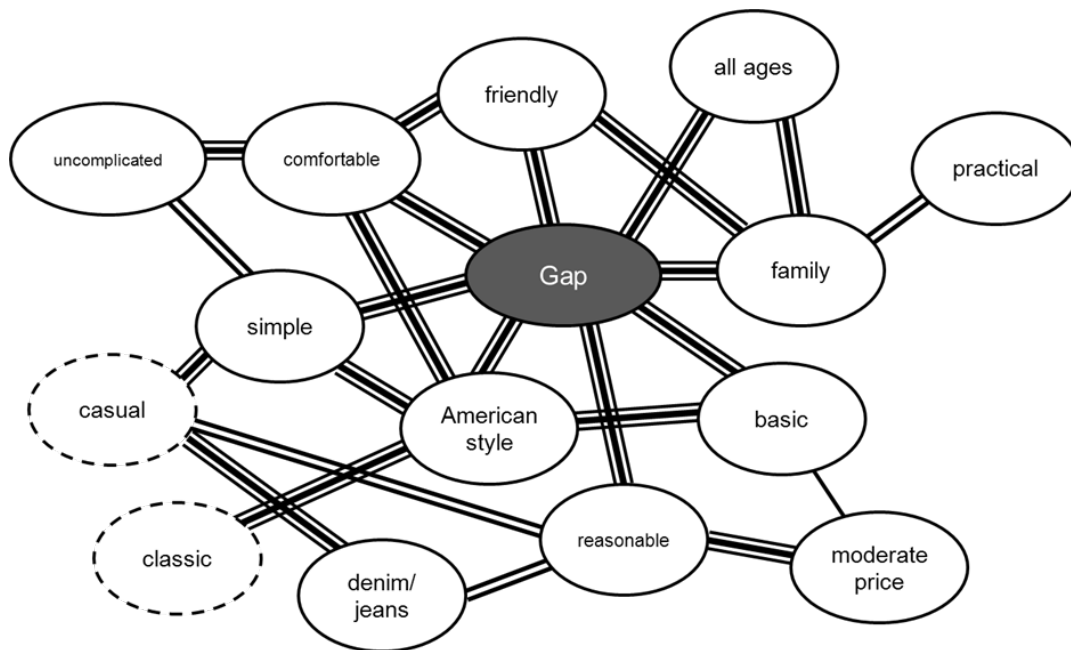
Figure 4.4

Gap Concept Map for a Low Involvement Group (N = 12)

Notes: The dashed-line circles are non-core associations.
       Three lines indicate the strongest relationship.

comfortable, practical, family, uncomplicated, moderate price, reasonable, basic, friendly, and all ages) and two non-core (casual and classic).

Table 4.9

Associations for Gap

High Involvement Group			Low Involvement Group		
Associations	Frequency of Mention	Number of Inter-connections	Associations	Frequency of Mention	Number of Inter-connections
comfortable*	8	21	**simple***	12	15
casual*	8	14	**American style***	10	22
denim/jeans	7	9	**denim/jeans**	10	12
well-known*	7	4	**comfortable***	9	12
American style*	6	14	**practical**	9	9
all ages	6	11	**family***	8	23
basic*	6	11	**uncomplicated**	8	9
practical	6	11	**moderate price**	7	8
simple*	5	6	**reasonable***	7	7
middle price*	5	3	**basic***	7	28
reasonable	5	2	**friendly***	6	9
reputable	5	1	**all ages***	6	6
classic	4	12	*casual*	5	18
clean	4	7	*classic*	5	5
school clothes	4	6			
business casual	4	2			
work to casual	4	2			

Notes: The core associations are in bold.
      Asterisks are used for first-order associations.

Table 4.9 identifies the most important associations of the two groups. In the high-involvement group, "comfortable" and "casual" were the most frequently mentioned associations, while "simple" was most often stated by the low-involvement group. However, "casual" was rarely selected in the former group. In addition, "comfortable"

was mostly mentioned in the low-involvement group. Thus, it had an important association value for both groups, as did "American style," which was not only a first-order association but also frequently cited. Even though "denim/jeans" was not a first-order association, respondents included it into their maps. Therefore, the students associated "comfortable," "American style," and "denim/jeans" with Gap, regardless of their involvement level. However, the interconnections of the four associations greatly differed, except for those of "American style and comfortable" and "casual and denim/jeans." In the high-involvement group, "comfortable" was related to "casual" and "denim/jeans," while in the low-involvement group, it was related to "friendly" and "uncomplicated." Further, in the high-involvement group, "American style" was connected to "casual," "denim/jeans," "school clothes," and "work to casual," while in the other group, it was linked to "simple," "classic," and "basic."

Table 4.10

Common Associations for Gap between Both Involvement Groups

all ages	American style	basic
casual	classic	comfortable
denim/jeans	middle price(moderate price)	practical
reasonable	simple	

Finally, in the high-involvement group, "denim/jeans" was related to "American style" and "comfortable," and in the low-involvement group, it was associated with and "reasonable." Therefore, marketers of Gap should consider these associations and

interconnections when reworking their brand image, for example, when launching new products. Comparing the same or similar associations of the groups, 11 were identified (Table 4.10). It seems that associations did not vary between the groups, since these 11 accounted for more than half (H = 17, L = 14).Thus, the involvement levels of Gap have little influence on the consumer perceptions of brand image.

Table 4.11

Associations Categories for Gap Maps

	High-Involvement Group	Low-Involvement Group
Brand personality, life style		Friendly
Users imagery	all ages	family, all ages
Usage imagery	school clothes, business casual, work to casual	
Product category	casual, denim/jeans	casual, denim/jeans
Price	middle price, reasonable	moderate price, reasonable
Product-related attributes	basic, simple (design), clean,	basic, simple (design),uncomplicated,
Functional benefits	practical	Practical
Experiential benefits	comfortable	Comfortable
Symbolic benefits	American style, reputable, classic	American style, classic

Because of the identity of and similarity between the associations of the two groups, their association categories were not markedly different. Both groups aptly associated product categories, prices, product-related attributes, functional benefits,

experiential benefits, and symbolic benefits with Gap. Other categories, such as company, other organizations, celebrities, communication, distribution, and attitudes, were deleted because they were not relevant (Figure 4.3 and 4.4). However, there were two differences between the groups. The high-involvement group included more associations related to usage imagery (school clothes, business casual, and work to casual) and the low-involvement group had more associations to brand personality (friendly).

<div align="center">

Brand Concept Maps for Old Navy

</div>

Figures 4.5 and 4.6 illustrate the maps of Old Navy. In the high-involvement group, overall associations were equal to 15 (Figure 4.5) and core associations were 6 (colorful, American style, casual, cheaper price, family, and sales), and the latter were first-order ones. Non-core associations were identified (fun, youthful, basics, fleeces, basic, cheap fabric, not fashion forward, annoying TV commercial, and poor quality).

Compared to the other maps, that of Old Navy indicates that the high-involvement group contains many non-core associations, since the individual maps included various associations; thus, it was difficult to construct an aggregated map, and it was necessary to include many different associations from each consumer's map according to the frequency of mention. In the low-involvement group, overall associations amounted to only nine, leading to the simplest of the six maps (Figure 4.6). Core associations were "casual," "comfortable," "practical," "family," "American style," "cheap," "plain," and "basics," and the non-core association was "friendly." Given these results, it appears that consumers with a low involvement in fashion products tend to associate less with Old Navy than consumers with a high involvement.
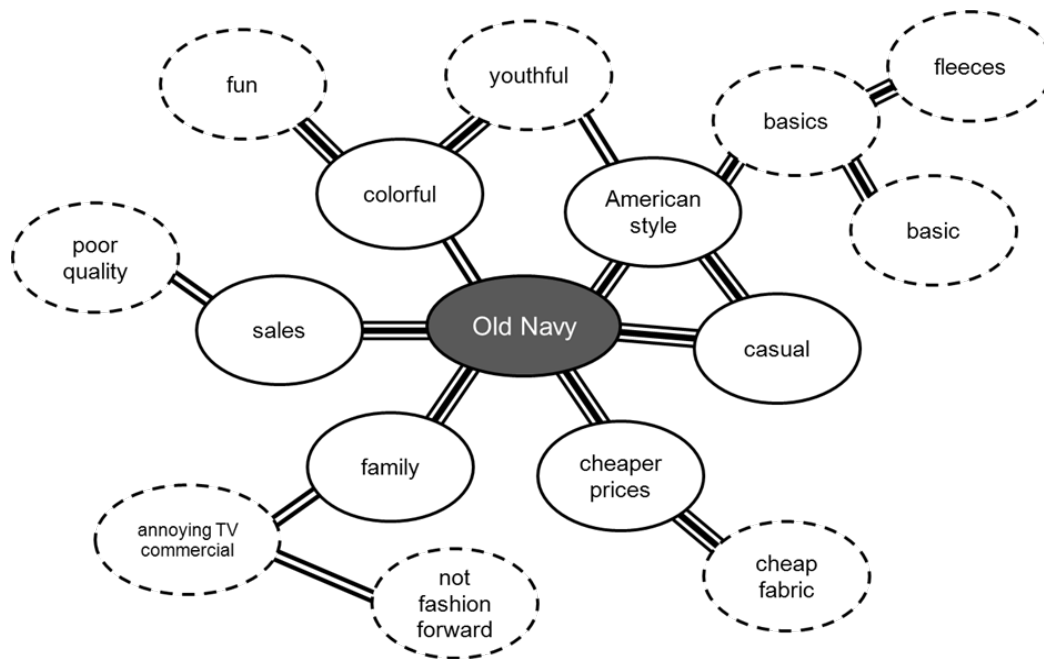
Figure 4.5

Old Navy Concept Map for a High Involvement Group (N = 10)
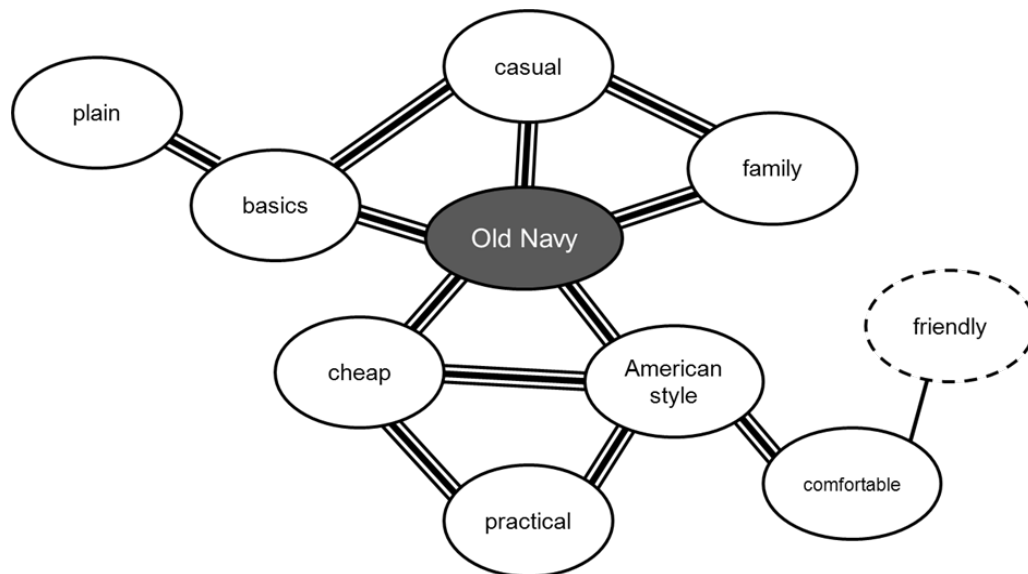
Figure 4.6

Old Navy Concept Map of a Low Involvement Group (N = 12)

Notes: The dashed-line circles are non-core associations.
    Three lines indicate the strongest relationship.

Table 4.12

Associations for Old Navy

High-Involvement Group			Low-Involvement Group		
Associations	Frequency of Mention	Number of Inter-connections	Associations	Frequency of Mention	Number of Inter-connections
colorful*	9	11	**casual***	12	26
casual*	8	2	**comfortable**	10	14
cheaper prices*	7	4	**practical***	10	12
Sales	6	8	**family***	8	12
American style*	5	9	**American style***	7	18
family*	5	7	**cheap***	7	17
not fashion forward	4	13	**plain**	6	6
basics	4	13	**basics***	6	4
basic	4	10	friendly	5	5
youthful	4	9			
fun	4	7			
poor quality	4	6			
annoying TV commercials	4	5			
Fleeces	4	4			
cheap fabrics	4	4			

Notes: The core associations are in bold.

Asterisks are used for the first-order associations.

Table 4.12 and 13 shows the frequency of mention and the number of interconnections of Old Navy in both groups. They cited "casual" most often, though they differed in terms of the interconnections of the concepts (H = 2, L = 26). Therefore, it was the most important concept for both groups. Moreover, "colorful" and "cheaper prices" were most cited by the high-involvement group. "Colorful" was related to "youthful" and "fun," and "cheaper prices" was related to "cheap fabrics." There were no connections between "colorful" and "cheaper prices" without relationships with the brand.

On the other hand, "comfortable" and "practical" were most often cited by the low-involvement group. It was likened to "American style" and "friendly."

Table 4.13

Common Associations for Old Navy between Both Involvement Groups

casual	cheaper prices	American style
family		

For the two groups, "casual," "cheaper prices," "American style," and "family" had identical and similar associations. Another interesting finding is that all of these were first-order associations; that is, when participants imagined Old Navy, their first impressions, whether positive or negative, were similar in both groups. Therefore, the brand image of Old Navy is strongly drawn in consumers' minds.

Finally, the associations of company, other organizations, celebrities, usage, distribution, and attitudes are not utilized, since they did not appear in either group. In the high-involvement group, product categories and product-related attributes had the most associations (n = 3), and brand personality did not appear. Further, communication was included only in this group. However, in low-involvement group, "friendly" and "comfortable" appeared as emotional attachments, related to categories such as personality and experiential benefits.

In addition, the high-involvement group was more likely to view Old Navy in a negative light, whereas the other group had only one negative association ("cheap") on its map. The former group spoke of an "annoying TV commercial" and "cheap fabric" in its

map, while the other group did not. Further, in the category related to functional benefit, the high-involvement group cited "poor quality" and the low-involvement group cited "practical."

Table 4.14

Association Categories for Old Navy Maps

	High-Involvement Group	Low-Involvement Group
Brand personality, life style		friendly
Users imagery	family, youthful	family
Product category	casual, basics, fleeces	casual, basics
Price	cheaper prices, sales	cheap
Communication	annoying TV commercials	
Product-related attributes	colorful, basic, cheap fabrics	plain
Functional benefits	poor quality	practical
Experiential benefits	Fun	comfortable
Symbolic benefits	American style, not fashion forward	American style

Brand Image Analysis of Banana Republic, Gap, and Old Navy

In order to compare associations of Banana Republic, Gap, and Old Navy, this study employed map analysis criteria (frequencies of core or non-core associations, the

most frequently mentioned associations and interconnections, frequencies of identical associations in both groups, and classification by association categories).

Among the three brands, the most associations were made by the high-involvement group for Gap (Table 4.15), while the least associations were made by the low-involvement group for Old Navy. Consumer perception of Gap tended to be slightly more varied than that of other brands. In addition, the high-involvement group tended to form more associations than the low-involvement one. Hence, consumers strongly involved in fashion products were inclined to associate brands actively in their minds. However, the involvement levels of the Gap were less likely to influence consumers' perception of the brand image, since the Gap had more common associations than other brands (Table 4.15).

Except for "casual" and "classic" as common non-core associations in the Gap, all other common brand associations were important in both groups (Table 4.15). Other common associations are organized in Table 4.16. Among the three brands, only the Gap includes non-core associations (casual and classic) in the common associations of the two groups. Common associations among the three brands were related to "casual" (business clothes or casual in Banana Republic and casual in Gap and Old Navy), which indicates that Gap Inc. has the strongest image. "Simple" was linked to Banana Republic and Gap, and "American style" was linked to Gap and Old Navy. However, there was no single identical association between Banana Republic and Old Navy.

Table 4.16 indicates the brand association tendency of the three brands. Some items are not found in the overall maps, so these are excluded when determining the classification categories (company, other organizations, celebrities, and attitude). In other words,

participants tended to link brands strongly with associations related to brand personalities,

user imagery, product categories, price, distribution associations, communication,

product-related attributes, functional benefits, experiential benefits, and symbolic benefits.

Table 4.15

Comparison of Banana Republic, Gap, and Old Navy

	Banana Republic		Gap		Old Navy	
	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
Frequency of Associations	15(5)	12(3)	17(5)	13(2)	15(9)	9(1)
Common Associations	business clothes, high quality, **simple**, well made		all ages, **American style,** basic, comfortable, denim/jeans, middle price, practical, reasonable, **simple**		**American style, casual**, cheaper prices, family	
Non-core Associations			**casual**, classic			

Note: The numbers in parentheses are the frequencies of non-core associations.
        The common associations between or among brands are in bold.

Considering this result, it is clear that consumers hold quite different views of three

brands. In terms of brand personality, Banana Republic was seen as "reliable" and Gap

and Old Navy as "friendly." The user imagery of Banana Republic included expressions

such as "men and women," "targets aged 25–35 years," and "young adult." "youthful."

This result is explained by the Gap Inc.'s popularity in the target markets. In terms of

usage imagery, Banana Republic was cited as a retailer of "business clothes,"

and the Gap, of "school clothes," "business casual," and "work to casual." However,

Gap comprised "all ages" and "family," and Old Navy comprised "family" and

Table 4.16

Brand Association Category within Banana Republic, Gap, and Old Navy

	Banana Republic		Gap		Old Navy	
	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
Brand personality, life style	reliable			friendly		friendly
Users imagery	men and women	Aged 25–35 years, young adult	all ages	family, all ages	family, youthful	family
Usage imagery	business clothes	business casual	school clothes, business casual, work to casual			
Product Category			casual, denim/jeans	casual, denim/jeans	casual, basics, fleeces	casual, basics
Price			middle price, reasonable	moderate price, reasonable	cheaper price, sales	cheap
Distribution Associations		clean store				
Communication					annoying TV commercial	
Product-related attributes	clean cut, simple (design)	neutrals, simple (design), basic	basic, simple (design), clean	basic, simple (design), uncomplicated	colorful, basic, cheap fabrics	plain
Functional benefits	high quality, well made	high quality, well made	Practical	practical	poor quality	practical
Experiential benefits			comfortable	comfortable	fun	comfortable
Symbolic benefits	elegant, professional, luxury, conservative, sophisticated, reputable, classy, classic	American style, stylish, elegant	American style, reputable, classic	American style, classic	American style, not fashion forward	American style

there was no such association for Old Navy. As for functional benefits, respondents' expressions were slightly different, citing "high quality" and "well made" for Banana Republic, "practical" for the Gap, and "poor quality" and "practical" for Old Navy.

Gap and Old Navy had associations related to the product category, price, and experiential benefits. The product category image of Gap was "casual" and "denim/jeans," while that of Old Navy was "casual," "basic," and "fleeces." The price image of Gap was "middle (moderate) price" and "reasonable," and that of Old Navy was "cheaper price (cheap)" and "sales."Because of its strong "sales" image, which was tied to other associations such as "poor quality," consumers were more likely to think of Old Navy negatively. The experiential benefit of Gap was "comfortable," while that of Old Navy was "comfortable" and "fun." "Clean store" in the distribution associations dimension was earned only by Banana Republic, and "annoying TV commercial" in the communication dimension was levied only at Old Navy.

Product-related attributes and symbolic benefits contained the greatest number associations of the three brands. As shown in Table 4.16, Banana Republic was termed "clean cut," "simple (design)," "neutrals," and "basic"; Gap was termed "basic," "simple (design)," "clean," and "uncomplicated"; and Old Navy was termed "colorful," "basic," "cheap fabrics," and "plain." Also, the symbolic benefits of Banana Republic were "elegant," "professional," "luxury," "conservative," "sophisticated," "reputable," "classy," "classic," "American style," and "stylish." The images of Gap were "American style," "reputable," and "classic" and those of Old Navy were "American style" and "not fashion forward."

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

<u>Discussion</u>

In this study, consumer perceptions of fashion brand associations were investigated through the application of the BCM method and Korchia's brand association categoriesto two different levels of fashion product involvement. Among Gap Inc. brands, Banana Republic, Gap, and Old Navy were chosen, since they represent three distinguished brand concepts in one large family company. The study sought to demonstrate that the BCM method and Korchia's categories offer an efficient means of comparing of diverse brand management strategies through consumer perceptions of brand images. On the basis of mapping analysis and category classification, its findings are as follows.

First, the level of involvement in fashion products may have had an impact on consumer perceptions of Gap Inc. The participants who were highly involved in fashion products tended to associate more attributes with the brands than those with low involvement did. This is because more consumers with the high involvement have purchased Gap and Old Navy than the low involvement consumers. Thus, consumer involvement in fashion products can be an important marketing factor to consider when companies build brand image strategies. However, although the number of associations was much greater for consumers who were highly involved in fashion products, the variety of association categories was not significantly different for both groups of

consumers. For example, both made associations only for categories related to brand personality and symbolic benefits. Therefore, involvement in fashion products does not significantly influence association categories.

Second, Gap had the strongest brand image among the three brands, according to consumer perceptions, since the number of Gap's associations was greater than those of Banana Republic and Old Navy. In addition, both the high and low involvement groups more often made associations for Gap, indicating that its brand image is strongly posited in the minds of consumers.

Third, four of Korchia's categories—company, other organizations, celebrities, and attitudes—were not shown in the aggregated maps of the three brands. Associations related to these categories were not greatly posited in consumer perceptions of Gap Inc. brands. Therefore, this study failed to compare the company image to each brand's image. Although this objective was not attained, the evidence indicates that it may be related to the company's marketing performance. For example, a sweatshop issue has been distressing Gap's image as a socially responsible corporation ("Sweatshop," 2011), which has had a negative impact on sales, forcing the company to attempt an image change (Gap Inc., n.d.). This issue could be one of the factors affecting their company's brand images, but consumers in this study did not greatly associate it with Gap. Additionally, many celebrities have officially endorsed Gap, such as Missy Elliott, Lenny Kravitz, Ashton Kutcher, Lindsay Lohan, and Sarah Jessica Parker ("Gap," n.d.). However, no participants mentioned any of them in their maps because they do not have any images relating to celebrities.

In addition, by employing Korchia's categories, this study indicates that symbolic benefit is the most associated category and that product-related attributes are next. Compared to Korchia's analysis of two fashion brands (n.d.)—Kenzo and Kookai association categories for two brands were mostly linked to users, product-related attributes, and distribution. Therefore, association categories for fashion brand image are commonly linked to product-related attributes. Consequently, this study reveals that consumers are likely to associate product-related attributes with fashion brands. Future studies should attempt to research a relationship between fashion brand and associations related to product-related attributes.

Fourth, the company's marketing intentions for targets, price, and other images corresponded considerably to consumer perceptions. This study demonstrates that consumers associate Banana Republic with targeted 25–35-year-old men and women and that their products were considered simple, neutral, basic, clean cut, well made, high quality, and business casual. Its brand images were seen as reliable, elegant, professional, luxurious, conservative, sophisticated, reputable, classy, classic, American style, and stylish. These features approximated the company's actual performance. According to a marketing report on Gap Inc. (Gap, n.d.), "Banana Republic deemed Gap Inc.'s affordable luxury brand.… Its target market is the 25–35 age group. Banana Republic specializes in higher-end clothing and basics, carrying suits, personal care, and intimates." In addition, the annual report for Gap Inc. (Gap Inc., 2011) indicates that "Banana Republic offers sophisticated, fashionable collections of casual and tailored apparel, shoes, accessories, and personal care products for men and women at higher price points than Gap."

Likewise, Gap's performance and its brand image in this study were not markedly different. A report of Wikinvest (2011) indicates that "Gap brand's main focus is casual attire targeted at consumers between the ages of 18 and 25." The 2010 annual report of Gap Inc. points out that "Gap stores offer an extensive selection of classically styled, high-quality, casual apparel at moderate price points. Products range from wardrobe basics such as denim, khakis, and T-shirts to fashion apparel, accessories, and personal care products for men and women." The participants of this study identified Gap as an American style brand suitable for all ages and all family members. Its casual wear products, including denim and jeans, were seen as appropriate for school clothes, business casuals, and work to casual. Their other images were basic, simple, clean, practical, comfortable, reputable, and classic.

In comparison, Old Navy tended to have an image related to a cheaper price point. According to the Wikinvest (2011), "Old Navy offers lower-priced basics." The annual report of Gap Inc. describes this retailer as marketing "for value-priced family apparel." As in this company statement, this study finds that Old Navy was regarded as a cheaper than the other two Gap Inc. brands. Its products were also described as colorful, basic, cheap fabric, plain, and practical, and its product categories, as casual, basics, fleeces. Its consumer image was regarded as friendly, fun, comfortable, and American style. However, its price image attracted more negative comments than the other brands of this study. The negative associations included annoying TV commercials, cheap fabrics, poor quality, and not fashion forward. By tracking the interconnections in the maps, this inquiry reveals that these associations were related to price. Accordingly, BCM method makes it possible to not only compare the brand images held by consumers

with company strategy but also uncover consumer perceptions. Therefore, the Gap Inc. should consider the image management of Old Navy because these images might have a negative effect on their sales and also their company brand's image.

Finally, no associations were mentioned identically across the maps, but some were made between two brands. The term "simple" was used for Banana Republic and Gap, and "American style" and "casual" were used for Gap and Old Navy. However, the interconnections of these attributes were very different in each map. This finding implies that aspects of brand images might be shared by the brands, since they are all part of Gap Inc. Hence, when markers of Gap Inc. want to differentiate their brand images, they should keep tracking these associations and interconnections.

<u>Implications</u>

The application the BCM to Banana Republic, Gap and Old Navy is a attempt to suggest a brand management tool for managers in the fashion industries. In this study, the maps were shown as a visual format of how consumers perceived   the brands of Gap Inc. and it was greatly helpful to investigate their important associations and connections in consumers' mind. Especially, this study could track the negative image of Old Navy and find the negative associations interconnections. Therefore, the BCM method could be used efficiently for changing negative brand associations, when marketers manage their images to protect their brands. Also, because involvement of fashion products influences their brand images differently based on their features of brands, marketers should consider their targeted consumers' involvement of fashion products to build strong brand images.

In addition, marketers should classify their brand associations according to the

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Korchia's brand association categories in order to assess their brand image performance because they need criteria to analyze brands' images. This category could also aid to compare consumers' brand image to the company's strategy. For example, when the company's target was analyzed to compare with the consumers' perceptions, association categories from brand personality, life style to users imagery were used.

<u>Limitations and Future Research Direction</u>

The findings of this study cannot be generalized because of the size of its sample (n=22) and the use of a convenience sample. This sample was not wholly representative of all female students at the University of Georgia. The percentages of African Americans (18.2%) and Asians (27.3%) were relatively high as compared to the UGA fact book of 2010 (African Americans =7.7%, Asians = 8.2%). Similarly, graduate students formed the largest percentage (36.4%); however, the UGA fact book indicates only 20.4% of the student population fell into this category.

Additionally, the findings cannot be extended to the entire fashion industry, since only three Gap Inc. brands were selected. As they are all American casual brands, the results might have been different had the method been applied to sportswear, designer brands, and so on. Therefore, this method must be used for a wider range of fashion products.

Finally, in the course of the study, some problems related to word choices appeared, which could affect the results. In the pre-test and mapping stages, participants' feelings toward the terms employed might have changed. For example, some people might have regarded "simple" as an association relating to design, while others might have linked it to user image. To correct this weakness, associations that reflect the minds

of consumers more accurately are needed, ones that would emerge from better-structured pre-tests than those employed in this inquiry. In addition, associations, sometimes ambiguous, were hard to classify into the categories. In particular, the dimension of product-related attributes, functional benefits, and symbolic benefits were highly correlated. Depending on consumers, "high quality" could be included in product-related attributes and functional benefits and "basic" and "American style" could belong to product-related attributes and symbolic benefits. Accordingly, this study attempted to organize each association into categories on the basis of the researcher's perspectives. Hence, future research should attempt to categorize more specifically defined associations and investigate correlations among association categories.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

IRB Approval Form

The University of Georgia

Office of The Vice President for Research
DHHS Assurance ID No. : FWA00003901

Institutional Review Board
Human Subjects Office
612 Boyd GSRC
Athens, Georgia 30602-7411
(706) 542-3199
Fax: (706) 542-3360
www.ovpr.uga.edu/hso

APPROVAL FORM

Date Proposal Received: 2011-01-18   **Project Number:** 2011-10517-0

Name	Title	Dept/Phone	Address	Email
Dr. Yoo-Kyoung Seock	PI	Textiles, Merchandising, and Interiors 307 Dawson Hall 706-542-4892		yseock@fcs.uga.edu
Ms. Sungha Shin	CO	Textiles, Merchandising, and Interiors 706-248-9179	104 College Station Rd #E 109 Athens, GA	misshiny@uga.edu

Title of Study: Application of brand concept maps to Gap Inc.

45 CFR 46 Category: Administrative 2
Parameters:
Waiver of Signed Consent 46.117 (c) (2);

Change(s) Required for Approval:
Revised Consent Document(s);

Approved : 2011-02-07   **Begin date :** 2011-02-07   **Expiration date :** 2016-02-06

NOTE: Any research conducted before the approval date or after the end data collection date shown above is not covered by IRB approval, and cannot be retroactively approved.

Number Assigned by Sponsored Programs: **Funding Agency:**

Your human subjects study has been approved.

Please be aware that it is your responsibility to inform the IRB:
. . . of any adverse events or unanticipated risks to the subjects or others within 24 to 72 hours;
. . . of any significant changes or additions to your study and obtain approval of them before they are put into effect;
. . . that you need to extend the approval period beyond the expiration date shown above;
. . . that you have completed your data collection as approved, within the approval period shown above, so that your file may be closed.

For additional information regarding your responsibilities as an investigtor refer to the IRB Guidelines.
Use the attached Researcher Request Form for requesting renewals, changes, or closures.
Keep this original approval form for your records.

Chairperson or Designee,
Institutional Review Board

Appendix B

Pre-test Questionnaire

Pre-test for Brand Concept Map

The objective of this survey is to collect words associated to Banana Republic, Gap, and Old navy for the next step as developing brand concept maps.

1. When you think of Banana Republic, what comes to mind? Please feel free to select words as much as you can. You can use this word bank at the next page and also make your own expression.

2. When you think of Gap, what comes to mind? Please feel free to select words as much as you can. You can use this word bank at the next page and also make your own expression.

3. When you think of Old Navy, what comes to mind? Please feel free to select words as much as you can. You can use this word bank at the next page and also make your own expression.

Word Bank

American style	accessible	honest	basic	fun
casual	luxury	chic	stylish	cheap
essential	high-quality	upscale	friendly	family
great-fitting	work to casual	selective	daring	retro
cool	exciting	wholesome	spirited	elegant
confident	uncomplicated	distinctive	imaginative	old
around world	modern	sophisticated	up-to-date	comfortable
young	down-to-earth	romantic	reliable	reasonable
sweat shop	practical	successful	intelligent	interesting
black denim	prestigious	unique	upper class	reputable

Thank you for your participant in this survey. Your responses are anonymous and will be used only for purposes of my thesis.

Sungha Shin
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Appendix C

Questionnaire

The Survey on Brand Concept Map

Date: March 9, 2011

Dear Participants

I am a graduate student under the direction of professorYoo-KyoungSeock in the Department Textiles, Merchandising, and Interiors at the University of Georgia. I invite you to participant in a research study entitled "Application of Brand Concept Maps   to Gap Inc." The purpose of this study is to identify the perceptions of fashion brand associations among consumers within different levels of fashion product involvement and to classify fashion brand associations among consumers.

All participants must be female college students aged 18-24 at the University of Georgia. Your participation will involve answering the questionnaire with drawing three maps and should only take 50 minutes to complete. Your involvement in the study is voluntary. After you finish the questionnaire, you will receive a 15$ gift card as an incentive. You may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.

This survey is anonymous and any follow-up survey will not be conducted. The results of the study may be published, but your name will not be included. The published results will be presented in summary form only.

The findings from this research may provide information on consumers' brand image structures as a map and brand association classification according to fashion product involvement. There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to call me at (706)248-9179 or send an e-mail to misshiny@uga.edu. Questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant should be directed to The Chairperson, University of Georgia Institutional Review Board, 612 GSRC, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; telephone (706)542-3199: e-mail address irb@uga.edu.

By completing and returning this questionnaire, you are agreeing to participate in the above describedresearch project.

Thank you for your consideration. Please keep this letter for your record.

Sincerely,

Sungha Shin

Section 1

Please read this explanation carefully below and feel free to ask if you have questions
anytime during survey.
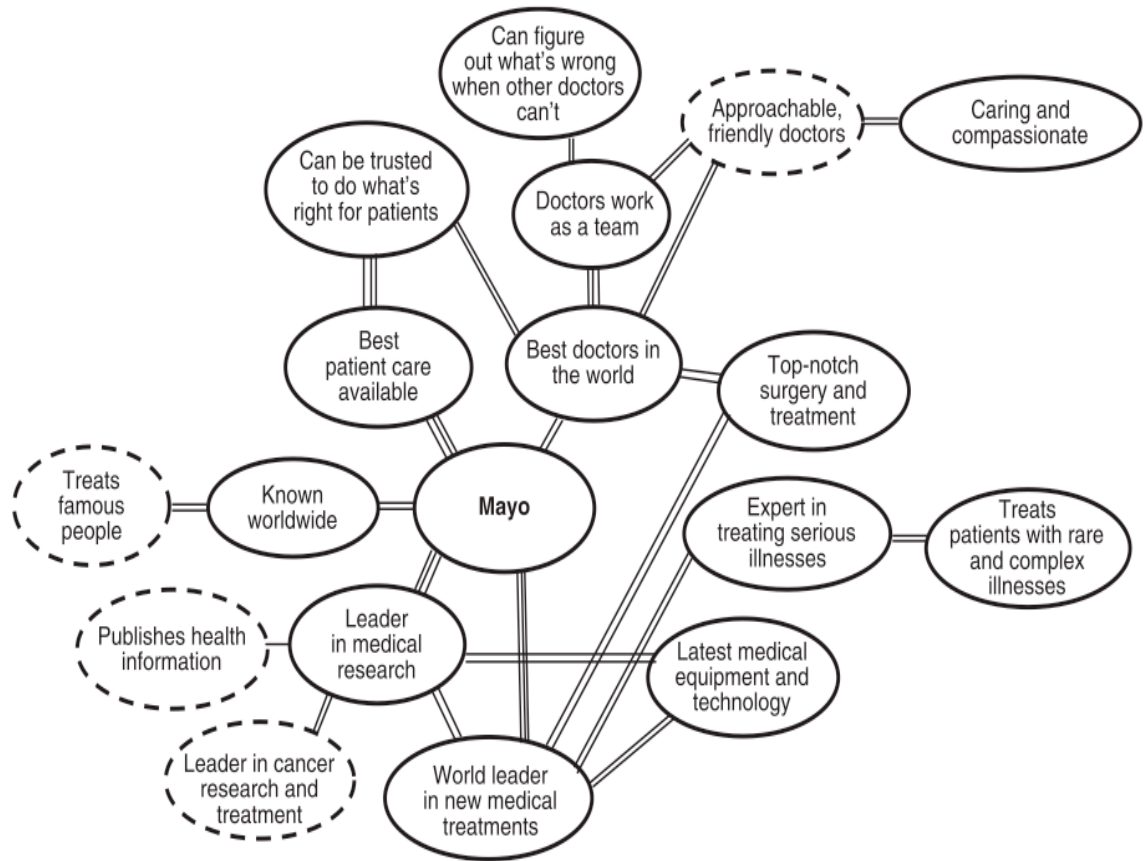
Brand Concept Map (John et al, 2006).

*This is an example of brand concept map. In this map, Mayo as a healthcare brand
located in the center has various words with different lines. (Do ignore the dotted
circles.) When people image Mayo Clinic, the first images coming to their mind are
located in the nearest circles to the center circle. For examples, "Best patient care
available,""Known worldwide,""Leader in medical research," and Best doctors in
the world."are shown in this map. And also, other circles are linked by lines. One
line means the weakest strengthbetween two circles and three lines are strongest.

Go to the next page for drawing maps.

1. When you think of **Banana Republic**, what comes to mind (see the screen)? If you can imagine any words from your mind, please include these for mapping. Please draw a map freely in the next page by using words from a word bank below.

Word Bank

high quality	confident	upscale	business oriented	interesting	successful
sophisticated	basic	friendly	somewhat fashion oriented	great fitting	color
work to casual	older women	25-35 aged targets	men and women	contemporary	staple
stylish	elegant	reliable	fun	useful	plain
modern	upper class	practical	clean cut	moderate price	mature
chic	comfortable	luxury	higher price	mature	feminine
reputable	conservative	simple	medium to high quality	not exciting	accessible
business casual	neutrals	wholesome	trendy	not fashion forward	honest
classy	clean	selective	many different styles	well-made	old
American style	reasonable	more expensive	humorous body types	cool	around world
classic	casual	adult	clean store	romantic	semi-young
professional	sometimes overpriced	young adult	nicely decorated	moderate priced	

Please draw a map here!
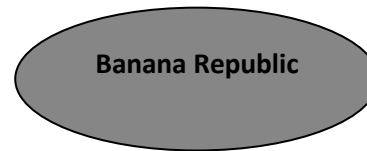
Banana Republic

2. When you think of **Gap**, what comes to mind (see the screen)? If you can imagine any words from your mind, please include these for mapping. Please draw a map freely in the next page by using words from a word bank below.

Word Bank

|					
basic(s)	uncomplicated	cool	plain patterns	Christmas Commercial	modern
reasonable	expensive/over priced	affordable	retro	clean	blue
comfortable	down to earth	trendy	modern	good quality	architect
casual	wholesome	work to casual	fun	school clothes	minimalistic
family	successful	old	very affordable	baking	carefree
American style	reputable	friendly	versatile	ugly	increasing prices
Jeans/denim	cheap	around world	sophisticated	old-women	natural
practical	plain	conservative	universal chic	not good fit	staple
accessible	colors(ful)	all ages	exciting	plain	honest
stylish	reliable	simple	chic	well-known	upscale
classic	essential	moderate price	spirited	recently trendy items	professional
young	middle price	work clothes	casual T-shirt	low price point but well made	black denim

Please draw a map here!
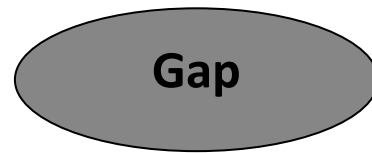
Gap

3. When you think of **Old Navy**, what comes to mind (see the screen)? If you can imagine any words from your mind, please include these for mapping. Please draw a map freely in the next page by using words from a word bank below.

Word Bank

cheap(low)	trendy	Laid-back	lively and upbeat store	poor fit	down to earth
family	nice commercials	sometimes new	able to wear one or two season	average	annoying TV commercial
basic(s)	old	sometimes interesting	sales	dog	cheaper(lower) prices
casual	youthful	carefree	stylish	mainstream	young
young(er)	sweat shop	well priced	denim	full-figured	mannequins commercial
comfortable	fun	uncomplicated	layering pieces	good for fast growing kids	
mannequins	reasonable	all ages	cheaply made	fast fashion	
fun	colorful	wider target	tries to trendy	essentials	
poor(low) quality	bad clothes	epitome	cheap fabrics	fresh	
accessible	conservative	not fashion forward	wholesome	for everyone	
American style	fleeces	clean cut	friendly	reliable	
practical	plain	pop colors	spirited	honest	

Please draw a map here!

Old Navy

Section 2

Please circle the one number from 1 (stronglydisagree) to 7(strongly agree) that best answer each question describing your involvement of fashion products.

1. Fashion products mean a lot to me.

   disagree 1————2————3————4————5————6————7 *agree*

2. Fashion products are significant for me.

   disagree 1————2————3————4————5————6————7 *agree*

3. For me personally fashion clothing is important.

   disagree 1————2————3————4————5————6————7 *agree*

4. I am interested in fashion products.

   disagree 1————2————3————4————5————6————7 *agree*

5. I pay a lot of attention to fashion products.

   disagree 1————2————3————4————5————6————7 *agree*

6. How involved you are with fashion products.

   low   1————2————3————4————5————6————7 *high*

Section 3

Please answer the following questions concerning your information.

1. Age _____
2. Race/Ethnicity _____ Caucasian
    _____ African American
    _____ Hispanic
    _____ Asian
    _____ American Indian
    _____ Other
3. Classification _____ Freshman
    _____ Sophomore
    _____ Junior
    _____ Senior
    _____ Graduate
4. Monthly _____ $0-99
    expenditure for _____ $100-199
    fashion products _____ $200-299
    _____ $300-399
    _____ $400-499
    _____ Over $500
5. Have you ever purchased any product of Banana Republic?

    yes _____   no _____
6. Have you ever purchased any product of Gap?

    yes _____   no _____
7. Have you ever purchased any product of Old Navy?

    yes _____   no _____

Thank you for your participation in this survey. Your responses are anonymous and will be used only for my thesis.

Appendix D

Stimulus

Slide 1

Survey for Brand Concept Map

Date : March 9th 2011
Sungha Shin
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Athens, GA 30605
Phone: (706)248-9179
E-mail: misshiny@uga.edu

Slide 2

Direction

1. Please read the questionnaire carefully.
2. This study includes to draw three maps. I will
   give 10-15 minutes for each map.
3. During survey, images will be provided by
   power point slides. You can use those for
   imagining three brands: Banana Republic, Gap,
   and Old Navy.
4. You will receive a 15$ gift card individually, after
   completion the questionnaires.

*** Please feel free to ask if you have questions
anytime during the survey.**

Slide 3

Brand Concept Map
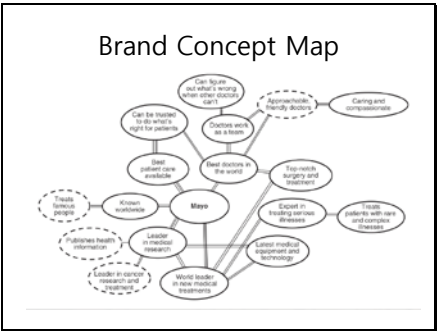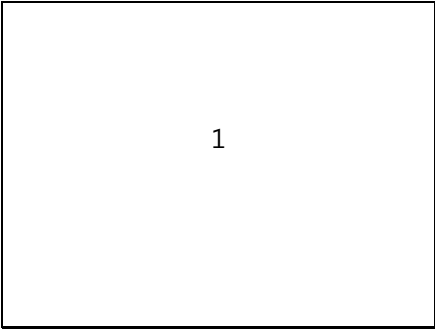
Slide 4

Slide 5

Slide 6

Slide 7

Slide 8

Slide 9
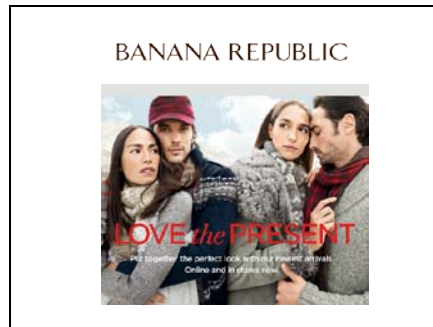
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Slide 14

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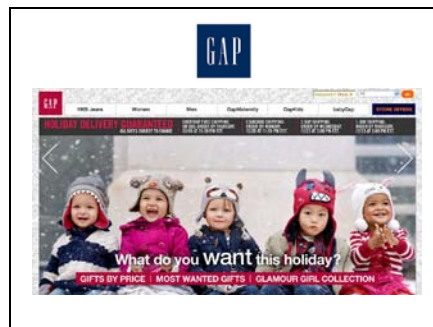
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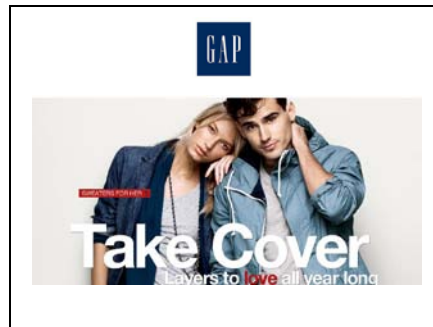
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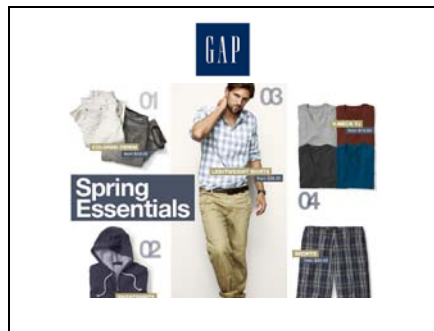
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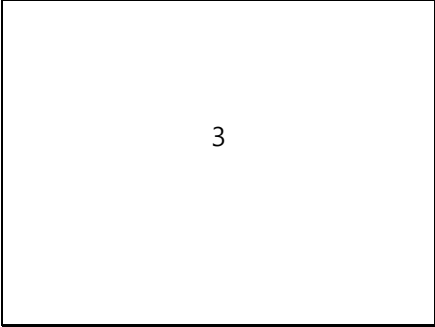
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Slide 23

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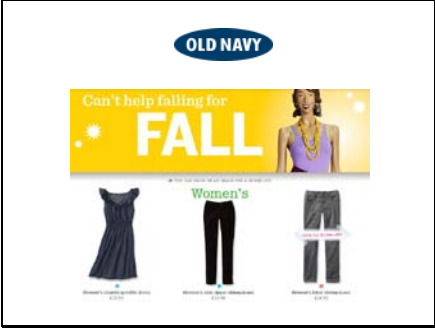
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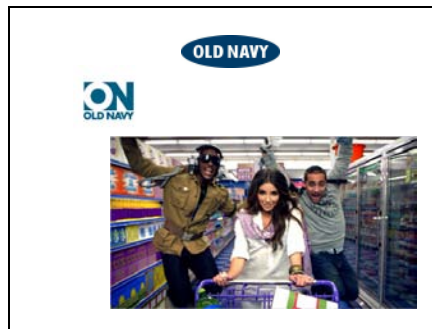
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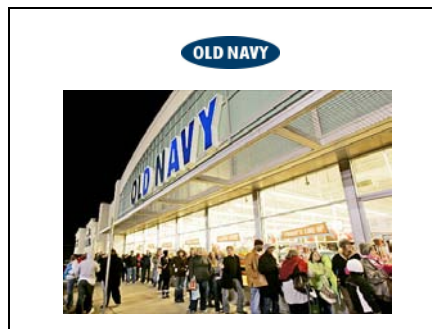
Slide 31

Thank you!

Appendix E

Extra Tables

Table A.1

Core and First-order Association (Low Involvement of Banana Republic)

Associations	Core Association		First-Order Association			
	Frequency of Mention	Number of Inter-connections	Frequency of First-Order Mention	Ratio of First-Order Mention (%)	Subordinate Connections	Superordinate Connections
business casual*	12	27	10	83.3	10	15
American style*	10	14	6	60.0	4	10
high quality*	8	10	4	50.0	4	6
simple*	7	16	0	0.0	4	11
25-35 aged targets	6	10	1	16.7	5	3
stylish*	6	10	4	66.7	5	5
clean store	6	7	0	0.0	3	3
young adult	6	6	2	33.3	3	3
well made	6	5	0	0.0	4	1

Note: Asterisks (*) are used to mark the first-order associations.

Table A.2

Core and First-order Association (High Involvement of Gap)

Associations	Core Association		First-Order Association			
	Frequency of Mention	Number of Inter-connections	Frequency of First-Order Mention	Ratio of First-Order Mention (%)	Subordinate Connections	Superordinate Connections
comfortable*	8	21	7	87.5	6	15
casual*	8	14	2	25.0	2	12
denim/jeans	7	9	2	28.6	6	3
well-known*	7	4	6	85.7	4	0
American style*	6	14	6	100.0	2	12
all ages	6	11	2	33.3	10	1
basic*	6	11	2	33.3	3	8
practical	6	11	1	16.7	5	5
simple design*	5	6	4	80.0	1	5
middle price*	5	3	4	80.0	0	3
reasonable	5	2	2	40.0	1	0
reputable	5	1	0	0.0	1	0

Note: Asterisks (*) are used to mark the first-order associations.

Table A.3

Core and First-order Association (Low Involvement of Gap)

Associations	Core Association		First-Order Association			
	Frequency of Mention	Number of Inter-connections	Frequency of First-Order Mention	Ratio of First-Order Mention (%)	Subordinate Connections	Superordinate Connections
simple*	12	15	5	41.7	6	8
American style*	10	22	8	80.0	10	11
demin/jeans	10	12	2	20.0	7	5
comfortable*	9	12	2	22.2	3	8
practical	9	9	3	33.3	5	4
family*	8	23	6	75.0	11	12
uncomplicated	8	9	1	12.5	6	3
moderate price	7	8	0	0.0	4	3
reasonable*	7	7	4	57.1	4	3
basic*	7	28	7	100.0	15	10
friendly*	6	9	3	50.0	4	5
all ages*	6	6	2	33.3	2	5

Note: Asterisks (*) are used to mark the first-order associations.

Table A.4

Core and First-order Association (High Involvement of Old Navy)

Associations	Core Association		First-Order Association			
	Frequency of Mention	Number of Inter-connections	Frequency of First-Order Mention	Ratio of First-Order Mention (%)	Subordinate Connections	Superordinate Connections
colorful*	9	11	4	44.4	1	9
casual*	8	2	4	50.0	1	1
cheaper prices*	7	4	2	28.6	1	2
sales	6	8	2	33.3	3	3
American style*	5	9	2	40.0	1	7
family*	5	7	4	80.0	1	3
colorful*	9	11	4	44.4	1	9
casual*	8	2	4	50.0	1	1

Note: Asterisks (*) are used to mark the first-order associations.

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Table A.5

Core and First-order Association (Low Involvement of Old Navy)

Associations	Core Association		First-Order Association			
	Frequency of Mention	Number of Inter-connections	Frequency of First-Order Mention	Ratio of First-Order Mention (%)	Subordinate Connections	Superordinate Connections
casual*	12	26	5	41.7	10	15
comfortable	10	14	3	30.0	9	5
practical*	10	12	0	0.0	2	9
family*	8	12	6	75.0	4	5
American style*	7	18	6	85.7	9	9
cheap*	7	17	6	85.7	9	6
plain	6	6	0	0.0	5	1
basics*	6	4	4	66.7	2	2

Note: Asterisks (*) are used to mark the first-order associations.

Table B.1

Frequency of Interconnections (Low Involvement of Banana Republic)

Interconnections	Frequency
business casual-young adult	6
simple-basic	5
business casual-25-35 aged targets	4
high quality-well made	4
clean store-simple	3
American style-simple	3
American style-neutrals	3
business casual-simple	3
25-35 aged targets-young adult	2
American style-young adult	2
business casual-neutrals	2
25-35 aged targets-elegant	2
25-35 aged targets-stylish	2

Note: The core associations are in bold.

Table B.2

Frequency of Interconnections (High Involvement of Gap)

Interconnections	Frequency
casual-comfortable	5
American style-comfortable	4
basic-casual	3
middle price-reasonable	3
American style*-casual	3
business casual-clean	3
casual-denim/jeans	3
all ages-simple design	2
basic-simple design	2
middle price-casual	2
American style-work to casual	2
American style-school clothes	2
American style-denim/jeans	2
basic-classic	2
comfortable-denim/jeans	2
reliable-successful	2
reputable-successful	2
all ages-school clothes	2
casual-practical	2
practical-affordable	2
clean-classic	2

Note: The core associations are in bold.

Table B.3

Frequency of Interconnections (Low Involvement of Gap)

Interconnections	Frequency
all ages-family	4
American style-basic	4
American style-classic	4
family-friendly	4
moderate price-reasonable	4
simple-casual	4
basic-moderate price	3
denim/jeans-reasonable	3
uncomplicated-simple	3
well-known-around world	3
American style-comfortable	3
American style-simple	3
comfortable-friendly	3
comfortable-uncomplicated	2
denim/jeans-casual	2
family-practical	2
reasonable-casual	2

Note: The core associations are in bold.

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Table B.4

Frequency of Interconnections (High Involvement of Old Navy)

Interconnections	Frequency
cheaper prices-cheap fabric	5
colorful-fun	4
colorful-youthful	4
family-not fashion forward	3
basic-basics	3
American style-youthful	3
Sales-poor quality	3
not fashion forward-annoying TV commercial	3
American style-casual	2
cheaper prices-not fashion forward	2
American style-basics	2
basics-fleeces	2

Note: The core associations are in bold.

Table B.5

Frequency of Interconnections (Low Involvement of Old Navy)

Interconnections	Frequency
American style-comfortable	6
basics-casual	6
American style-practical	5
basics-plain	4
casual-family	4
cheap-practical	3
American style-cheap	3
comfortable-friendly	2

Note: The core associations are in bold.

Table C.1

Numbers of Lines of Associations (Low Involvement of Banana Republic)

Interconnections	Frequency	Number of Lines	Mean of Lines
business casual-young adult	6	16	2.7
simple-basic	5	15	3.0
business casual-25-35 aged targets	4	12	3.0
high quality-well made	4	10	2.5
clean store-simple	3	9	3.0
American style-simple	3	9	3.0
American style-neutrals	3	7	2.3
business casual-simple	3	8	2.7
25-35 aged targets-young adult	2	6	3.0
American style-young adult	2	5	2.5
business casual-neutrals	2	3	1.5
25-35 aged targets-elegant	2	2	1.0
25-35 aged targets-stylish	2	5	2.5

first-order Associations	Frequency	Number of Lines	Mean of Lines
business casual	10	29	2.9
American style	6	17	2.8
high quality	4	10	2.5
simple	0	0	0.0
stylish	4	9	2.3

Note: The core associations are in bold.

Table C.2

Numbers of Lines of Associations (High Involvement of Gap)

Interconnections	Frequency	Number of Lines	Mean of Lines
casual-comfortable	5	15	3.0
American style-comfortable	4	12	3.0
basic-casual	3	9	3.0
middle price-reasonable	3	9	3.0
American style*-casual	3	9	3.0
business casual-clean	3	3	1.0
casual-denim/jeans	3	8	2.7
all ages-simple design	2	5	2.5
basic-simple design	2	5	2.5
middle price-casual	2	3	1.5
American style-work to casual	2	6	3.0
American style-school clothes	2	6	3.0
American style-denim/jeans	2	6	3.0
basic-classic	2	5	2.5
comfortable-denim/jeans	2	6	3.0
reliable-successful	2	6	3.0
reputable-successful	2	6	3.0
all ages-school clothes	2	6	3.0
casual-practical	2	5	2.5
practical-affordable	2	4	2.0
clean-classic	2	3	1.5
casual-comfortable	5	15	3.0
American style-comfortable	4	12	3.0

first-order Associations	Frequency	Number of Lines	Mean of Lines
comfortable	7	19	2.7
casual	2	6	3.0
well-known	6	17	2.8
American style	6	16	2.7
basic	2	6	3.0
simple design	4	11	2.8
middle price	4	11	2.8

Note: The core associations are in bold.

Table C.3

Numbers of Lines of Associations (Low Involvement of Gap)

Interconnections	Frequency	Number of Lines	Mean of Lines
all ages-family	4	11	2.8
American style-basic	4	12	3.0
American style-classic	4	10	2.5
family-friendly	4	12	3.0
moderate price-reasonable	4	12	3.0
simple-casual	4	11	2.8
basic-moderate price	3	4	1.3
denim/jeans-reasonable	3	6	2.0
uncomplicated-simple	3	7	2.3
well-known-around world	3	8	2.7
American style-comfortable	3	8	2.7
American style-simple	3	9	3.0
comfortable-friendly	3	9	3.0
comfortable-uncomplicated	2	5	2.5
denim/jeans-casual	2	6	3.0
family-practical	2	4	2.0
reasonable-casual	2	4	2.0
first-order Associations	Frequency	Number of Lines	Mean of Lines
simple	5	13	2.6
American style	8	22	2.8
comfortable	2	6	3.0
family	6	17	2.8
reasonable	4	11	2.8
basic	7	19	2.7
friendly	3	8	2.7

Note: The core associations are in bold.

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Table C.4

Numbers of Lines of Associations (High Involvement of Old Navy)

Interconnections	Frequency	Number of Lines	Mean of Lines
cheaper prices-cheap fabric	5	15	3.0
colorful-fun	4	11	2.8
colorful-youthful	4	12	3.0
family-not fashion forward	3	5	1.7
basic-basics	3	8	2.7
American style-youthful	3	7	2.3
Sales-poor quality	3	5	1.7
not fashion forward-annoying tv commercial	3	6	2.0
American style-casual	2	6	3.0
cheaper prices-not fashion forward	2	4	2.0
American style-basics	2	6	3.0
basics-fleeces	2	5	2.5
cheaper prices-cheap fabric	5	15	3.0
colorful-fun	4	11	2.8
colorful-youthful	4	12	3.0

first-order Associations	Frequency	Number of Lines	Mean of Lines
colorful	4	9	2.3
casual	4	11	2.8
cheaper prices	2	6	3.0
sales	2	6	3.0
American style	2	6	3.0
family	4	12	3.0

Note: The core associations are in bold.

Table C.5

Numbers of Lines of Associations (Low Involvement of Old Navy)

Interconnections	Frequency	Number of Lines	Mean of Lines
American style-comfortable	6	17	2.8
basics-casual	6	18	3.0
American style-practical	5	15	3.0
basics-plain	4	11	2.8
casual-family	4	10	2.5
cheap-practical	3	8	2.7
American style-cheap	3	8	2.7
comfortable-friendly	2	2	1.0
first-order Associations	Frequency	Number of Lines	Mean of Lines
casual*	5	15	3.0
practical*	0	0	0.0
family*	6	15	2.5
American style*	6	15	2.5
cheap*	6	16	2.7

Note: The core associations are in bold.

Appendix F

Extra Figures

Figure 1

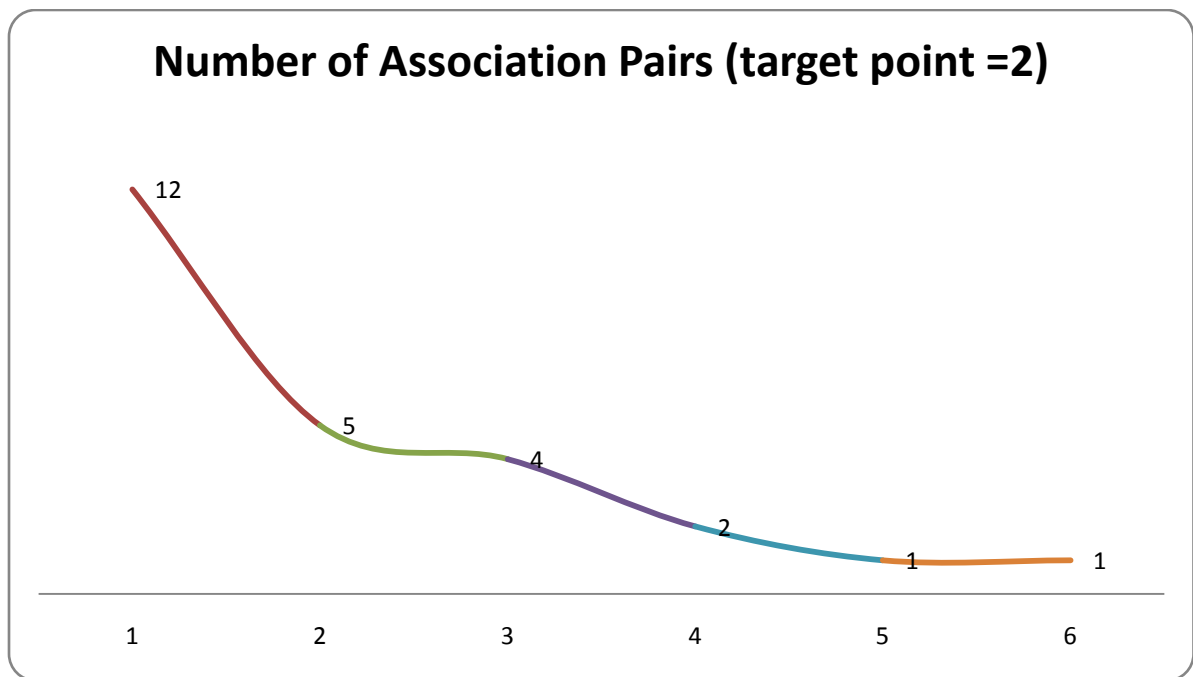Graph of Association Pairs (Low Involvement of Banana Republic)
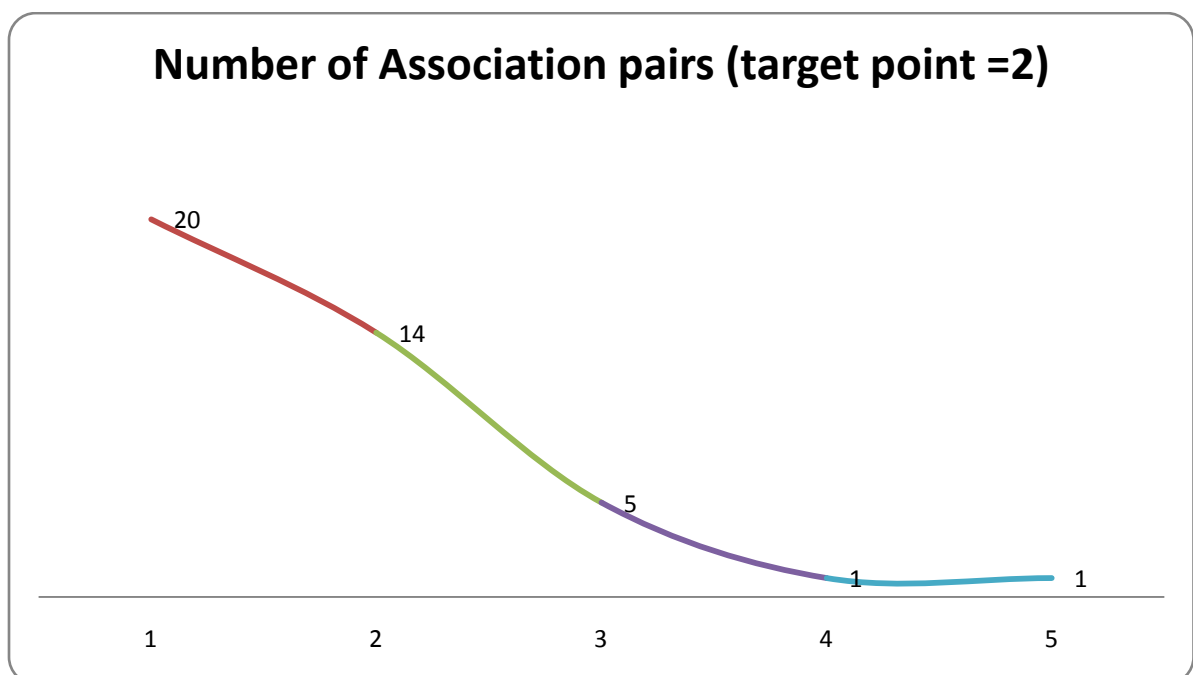

Number of Association Pairs (target point =2)

Figure 2

Graph of Association Pairs (High Involvement of Gap)

Number of Association pairs (target point =2)

Figure 3

Graph of Association Pairs (Low Involvement of Gap)

Number of Association pairs (target point =2)
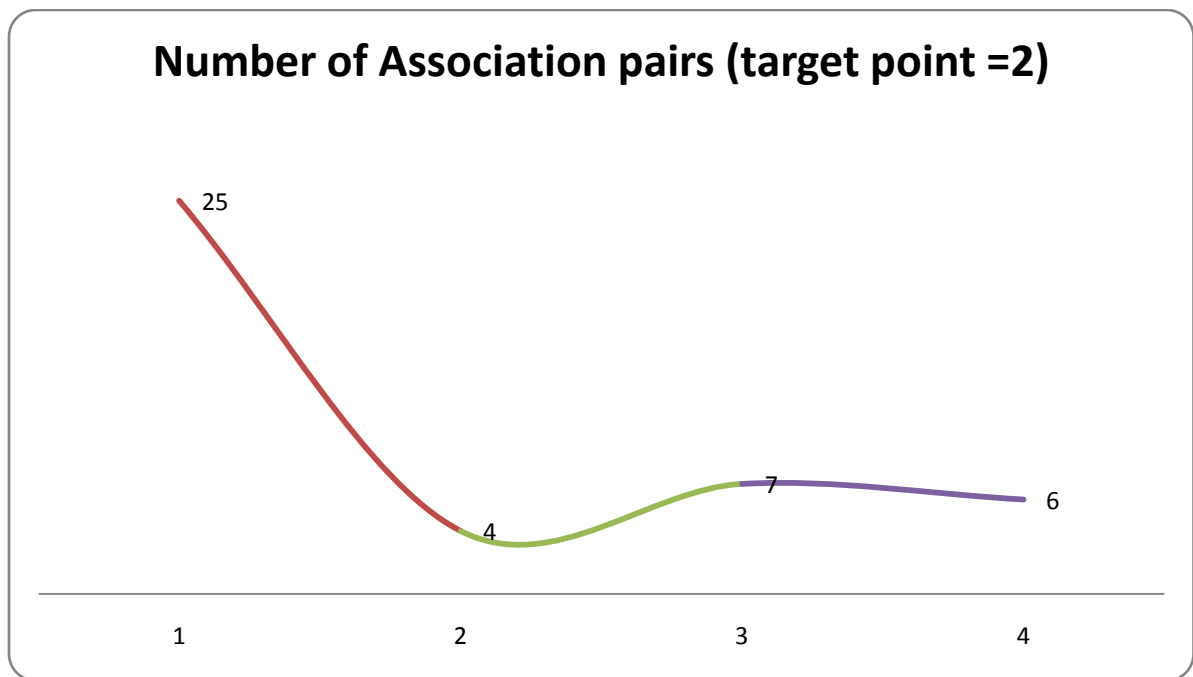
Figure 4

Graph of Association Pairs (High Involvement of Old Navy)
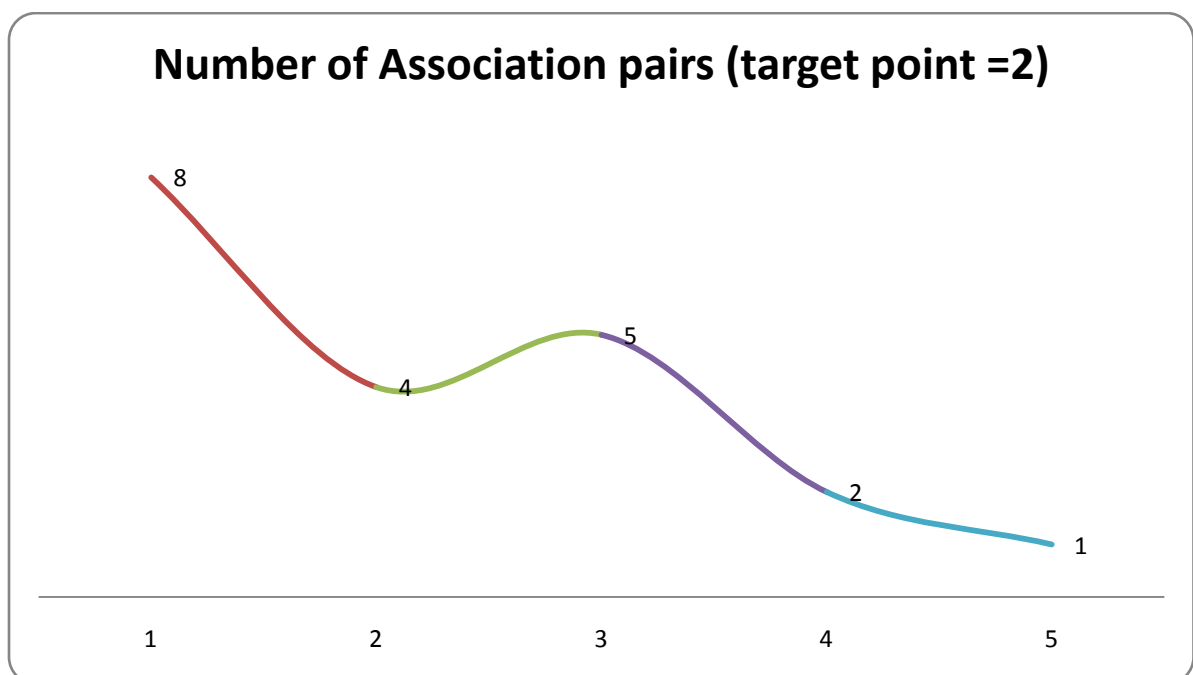

Number of Association pairs (target point =2)

Figure 5

Graph of Association Pairs (Low Involvement of Old Navy)