

## The Influence of Perceived Relational Benefits on Relational Commitment and Customer Loyalty in Internet Clothing Purchase

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### 인터넷 의류구매에서의 관계혜택지각이 관계몰입과 충성도에 미치는 영향

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#### Abstract

Companies can build a close relationship by providing benefits that consumers want. As long relationships between consumer and company are stressed these days, it is very important for the growth and development of companies to assess what benefits consumers perceive and how they reflect them to their buying behaviors. Thus, this study aims to examine the relational benefits that consumers perceive in internet clothing purchase and how these perceived relational benefits affects relational commitment and customer loyalty. This study surveyed 343 male and female in their 20s and 30s for empirical analysis who have ever purchased clothing through internet shopping malls. Descriptive statistics, factor analysis, ANOVA analysis, Duncan test, and  $\chi^2$ -test are carried out using SPSS for Windows 12.0 for statistical analysis. The results are as follows. First, the dimensions of relational benefits perceived by consumers in internet clothing purchase are found 6 including customization, economic, psychological, social, shopping convenience, and informational. Second, consumers' perception of relational benefits significantly affect on relational commitment and loyalty, thus consumers with greater recognition of relational benefits have higher relational commitment and loyalty. Third, based on the dimensions of consumer's perceived relational benefit, consumers are categorized into 6 types: group perceiving social benefit, group perceiving economic/shopping convenience benefit, group perceiving shopping convenience benefit, group perceiving customization benefit, group perceiving informational benefit, and group perceiving psychological benefit. The group perceiving customization benefits have higher relational commitment and loyalty than the others. It is expected that this study will help internet companies establish customer relationship management strategies, which are needed to promote relationships with customers and to enhance customers' loyalty to internet shopping malls.

**Key Words:** Perceived relational benefits, Relational commitment, Customer loyalty, Internet clothing purchase; 관계혜택지각, 관계몰입, 충성도, 인터넷 의복구매

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## I. Introduction

For the last several years, internet companies have had difficulties in maintaining customers and obtaining profits because of the increase of competitive companies in internet market(Srinivasan et al., 2002). To maintain the relationship with customers for a long time, companies provide benefits that customers want. When consumers get benefits from their transacting companies, they keep transactions with them and have a deep commitment and higher loyalty to them(Gwinner et al., 1998; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Customers with loyalty give profits to the company in many ways such as purchasing repetitively over a long period, transmitting positive reviews by word of mouth to others and paying premium prices while having a low sensitivity to the price(Reichheld, 1996). As long relationships between consumers and companies are stressed a lot these day, it is meaningful to verify empirically the effects of consumers' perception of relational benefits on relational commitment and loyalty in internet purchase.

There has not been a lot of research on consumers' perceptions of relational benefits in transactions with internet companies carried out. Compared to offline purchases, internet purchases have advantages such as more communication and interaction, cost efficiency, purchasing convenience and economic efficiency so the relational benefits that consumers perceive in internet purchases may be different to those perceived in off-line purchases. Thus, this study aims to examine the relational benefits that consumers perceive in purchasing clothes through internet shopping malls and how these perceived relational benefits affects relational commitment and loyalty. To this end, this study first examines the dimensions of relational benefits that consumers perceive in internet clothing purchase, second, analyzes the effects of consumers' perceived relational benefits on relational commitment and loyalty, and third, finds out the characteristics of relational commitment and loyalty according to the consumer types based on the dimensions of the perceived relational benefits.

## II. Literature Review

### 1. Relational Benefits

Due to the maturity of online markets, competition among internet companies is keen and creating new customers is becoming difficult. Thus companies have been concentrating on relationship marketing which maintains customers who have loyalty(Fornell, 1992). The relationship can be maintained and promoted when a company and its customers both have the perception of getting some benefits from the relationship. In this respect, building strong relationships between companies and customers can be one way to maintain the upper hand in competition.

Gwinner et al.(1998) demonstrated that the relational benefits that companies provide to their customers to build and maintain their relationship include all types of benefits as well as the basic benefits of core service. He referred to the benefits provided to customers as social, psychological, economic, and customization benefits in his study of service industry. Besides Gwinner et al.(1998)'s study, there are many studies that demonstrate various types of relational benefits. Beatty et al.(1996) mentioned that the benefits that customers can obtain through the relationship with salesmen at department stores are functional and social benefits; functional benefits include time saving, convenience, fashion advice, and improvement of purchasing decision-making, and social benefits include trust and intimate feelings. Lee(2004) examined social, psychological, economic, and functional benefits in his study of skin treatment services. Meanwhile, as internet purchasing is increasing, in regard to the benefits consumers obtain through internet transactions, Kim and Park(1999) mentioned three factors; time saving, ability to find rare products, and price reduction. Hong et al.(2008) indicated three factors psychological, economic, and social benefits in their study of purchasing cosmetics.

In many studies, it was found that the benefits or advantages consumers get from companies serve to maintain the customer's relationship with the companies and to promote relational commitment and customer loyalty(Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Morgan and

Hunt(1994) demonstrated that relational benefits directly affect long-term commitment, which is the ultimate objective in relationship marketing and they concluded that the perception of relational benefits is a core factor in developing relationships between companies and customers. In domestic research(Lee, 2004; Park et al., 2002), it was found that perception of relational benefits had positive effects on relational commitment. In Ju(2003), Ko and Lee's(2005) research regarding purchasing fashion products, it was shown that the relational benefits that consumers perceive affected the relational commitment and a long-term relationship to the store.

By the results of the studies above, the contents of relational benefits that consumers perceive are found to be different according to the object of the study. So this study aims to examine the dimensions of relational benefits consumers perceive in internet clothing purchase and to differentiate consumers depending on the dimensions of perceived relational benefits.

## 2. Relational Commitment

According to many researchers who defined consumers' relational commitment, Dwyer et al.(1987) defined it as an 'implicative or explicit pledge between the exchange partners about the persistence of a relationship'. Moorman et al.(1992) defined it as a 'persistent desire to maintain a valuable relationship'. Relational commitment has been actively studied in relationship marketing research as a variable that represents the degree of success in building a relationship between companies and consumers. Manfred et al.(1994) demonstrated that relational commitment is the final stage of mutual dependence between consumers and companies and it occurs when the buyer and seller are as satisfied as they are willing to give up on searching for alternative partners. Ulrich(1989) says relational commitment creates a long-term loyalty or devotion and committed customers are devoted to the company as they become regular customers with a long-term and mutually dependent relationship with the company.

Many researchers indicate the multiple dimensions of relational commitment. They have different opin-

ions about the contents of the multiple aspects as follows; Mathieu and Zajac(1990) said that relational commitment had different motives to maintain relationships and they divided relational commitment into emotional and calculative commitment. Allen and Meyer(1990) conceptualized the dimensions of relational commitment like emotional, continuous, and normative commitments. Lee and Jang(2002) divide relational commitment into 4 dimensions; normative, continuous, emotional commitments and identification, in their study of online membership of mobile communication companies. Ko and Lee(2005) classified them as emotional, calculative and normative commitment in their study of purchasing clothes through internet shopping malls.

Consumers' relational commitment affects their purchasing behaviors. In Donald et al.(1995) and Heskett et al.(1994)'s studies, it is found that relational commitment has positive effects on the intention to maintain continuous relationships. In the studies by Park et al.(2002), Park and Hong(2007), relational commitment has positive effects on customer loyalty. Meanwhile, Hoffman and Novak(1996) studied the effect of relational commitment on purchasing behavior online and it was shown that relational commitment promoted the intention to revisit.

## 3. Customer Loyalty

In internet purchase, consumers immediately move to another shopping mall when they think the cost of products is slightly more expensive or the quality of service is low because the expense of change and the expense of searching are very small(Bakos, 1997). Due to this characteristics of consumers, internet companies have been focused on getting and keeping customers with high loyalty in order to have stable management and profits.

In matured markets where the market is saturated, competition is keen among companies and it is important to use a defensive strategy for keeping existing customer rather than an aggressive strategy for getting new customers(Fornell, 1992). Companies can reduce their operating expense by maintaining long-term relationships with existing customers and

also cut down on advertising expenses for getting new customers, personnel cost, initial expenses on new transactions, and inefficiency expenses incurred while customers get accustomed to the service(Reichheld, 1996).

In the above studies about the perception of relational benefits and relational commitment, it is found that consumer's perception of relational benefits and relational commitment to the company affect customer loyalty(Gwinner et al., 1998; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Park et al., 2002; Park & Hong, 2007). This study aims to examine whether or not there are any effects of consumers' perceived relational benefits and relational commitment on loyalty in internet clothing purchase.

### III. Methods

#### 1. Research Questions

1. examine the effects of consumers' perceived relational benefits on relational commitment and customer loyalty in internet clothing purchase.

1-1. find out the dimensions of consumers' perceived relational benefits and relational commitment.

1-2. examine the effects of consumers' perceived relational benefits on relational commitment and customer loyalty.

2. categorize consumers based on the dimensions of perceived relational benefit and find out the characteristics of relational commitment and loyalty according to the perceived relational benefits based consumer types.

2-1. categorize consumers based on the dimensions of perceived relational benefit.

2-2. examine the characteristics of relational commitment and loyalty according to the perceived relational benefits based consumer types.

2-3. examine the characteristics of purchasing behaviors and demographics according to the perceived relational benefits based consumer types.

As shown <Fig. 1>, a path model for examining the effects of consumers' perceived relational benefits on relational commitment and loyalty is set up.

#### 2. Measures

For an empirical study, questionnaires are used, which are made up of questions about the perceived relational benefits, relational commitment, customer loyalty, and purchasing behaviors(frequency of purchase, major purchase shopping mall) in internet clothing purchase and demographics. To measure the perceived relational benefits, the questions used in studies by Kim(2005), Cho(2005) are modified and complemented into 21 questions. To measure the relational commitments, the questions used in studies by Lee and Jang(2002), Park and Hong(2007), Ko and Lee(2005) are modified and complemented into 9 questions. To measure the customer loyalty, the questions used in studies by Lee(2004), Ra(2007) are modified and complemented into 4 questions. The perceived relational benefits, relational commitment, and customer loyalty are measured using 5-point Likert Scale. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  values of reliability coefficients of these measurements are 0.87, 0.89, and 0.81 each, which turns out to have internal consistency.

#### 3. Data Collection and Analysis

For a survey, male and female consumers in their 20s and 30s with online clothing purchase experience are selected using the convenience sampling, and 350 copies of questionnaires were distributed to them in July 2008. A total of 343 copies are used for the final analysis with inadequate 7 copies excluded. Effective respondents are made up of female 59.5%, male 40.5%, consumers in their 20s 50.4%, and 30s 49.6%. Descriptive statistics, factor analysis, ANOVA analysis, Duncan test,  $\chi^2$ -test, and path analysis are carried out

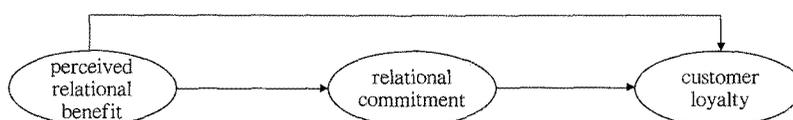


Fig. 1. Path model for perceived relational benefits on relational commitment and customer loyalty.

using SPSS for Windows 12.0 for statistical analysis.

## IV. Results and Discussion

### 1. The Effects of Consumers' Perceived Relational Benefits on Relational Commitment and Loyalty in Internet Clothing Purchase.

#### 1) The Dimensions of Consumers' Perceived Relational Benefits and Relational Commitment

Factor analysis is carried out using principal com-

ponent analysis and varimax rotation to discover the dimensions of consumers' perception of relational benefits in internet clothing purchase. The result of the analysis is that the dimensions of consumers' perception of relational benefits consist of 6 factors as <Table 1>.

Factor 1 is named the 'customization factor' because it has the characteristics of benefits that customers get the individual service differentiated from general customers in their transaction with shopping malls. Factor 2 is named the 'economic factor' because it has the characteristics of benefits that cus-

**Table 1. The dimensions of consumer's perceived relational benefits**

factors	measurement items	factor loadings	eigen value	% of var. (cumul. %)	Cronbach's $\alpha$
customization	Shopping malls provide different prices benefits to regular customers than to general customers.	.835	2.998	14.3 (14.3)	0.835
	Shopping malls provide special services to regular customers.	.810			
	Shopping malls have more careful concerns for regular customers than general customers.	.790			
	I use shopping malls more often because they know about me.	.595			
economic	Shopping malls give me many chances to buy products for a cheap price because they often sell at a discount.	.701	2.490	11.9 (26.1)	0.707
	The process and way to buy at shopping malls is simple and convenient.	.699			
	I can get price benefits such as mileage, discounts, and special prices using shopping malls.	.659			
	I don't regret buying products at shopping malls in terms of price.	.506			
psychological	I feel good after I shop at shopping malls.	.801	2.060	9.8 (35.9)	0.682
	I feel comfortable after I shop at shopping malls.	.725			
	It is good to shop at shopping malls because they have a lot of various products.	.520			
social	I can promote mutual friendship among other shoppers at shopping malls.	.690	1.874	8.9 (44.9)	0.615
	It is good to have people whose style is like mine or who have similar tastes at shopping malls.	.673			
	I'm concerned about and interested in the daily life of administrators of shopping malls.	.510			
shopping convenience	I can save time in searching for products or information if I use shopping malls.	.794	1.744	8.3 (53.2)	0.687
	Shopping malls can relieve my efforts to wander around many shopping malls.	.783			
informational	The information or advice shopping malls provide is helpful for shopping.	.631	1.692	8.1 (61.2)	0.665
	Shopping malls remember regular customers' special anniversaries.	.541			
	I can see the styles in vogue or fashion trends through shopping malls.	.525			
	I can get information about new products or discounts through shopping malls in advance.	.448			
	I can get shopping information that shopping malls send by e-mail or text message services.	.439			

tomers can purchase products for a lower price than off-line or get benefits that have the effect of cutting down the price such as mileages and discounts. Factor 3 is named the 'psychological factor' because it contains the psychological effects that customers feel comfortable or happy when they are shopping at internet shopping malls. Factor 4 is named the 'social factor' because it has the characteristics of benefits that customers have social relationships through interacting with administrators or other customers of shopping malls. Factor 5 is named the 'shopping convenience factor' because it has the characteristics of benefits that customers can save time or get rid of physical fatigue and Factor 6 is named the 'informational factor' because it includes benefits such as fashion information, shopping information and so forth that customers can get.

Next, the factor analysis using principal component analysis and varimax rotation showed that the dimensions of consumers' relational commitment are consisted of identified, calculative, and emotional commitment as shown in <Table 2>. Factor 1 is named 'identified commitment' because it has the characteristics of commitment that consumers consider the shopping mall as themselves and have attachment. Factor 2 is named 'calculative commitment' because it has the characteristics of commitment that consumers think about time and economic gain and loss. Factor 3 is named 'emotional commitment' because it has the characteristics of commitment that consumers think that shopping at internet shopping malls is fun and exciting.

In the results of this study, calculative and emotional commitment have also been found in the study

of Mathieu and Zajac(1990) and Hong et al.(2008) and identified commitment is indicated in the study of Lee and Jang(2002).

## 2) The Effects of Consumers' Perception of Relational Benefits on Relational Commitment and Loyalty

The effects of consumers' perceived relational benefits on relational commitment and customer loyalty, focusing on the dimensions of consumers' perception of relational benefits and relational commitment, are analyzed using regression analysis. As shown in <Table 3>, it is found that consumers' perceived relational benefits significantly affect on relational commitment and customer loyalty.

Also, as shown in <Fig. 2>, the results of path analysis showed that customization, economic, and psychological benefit have indirect effects through the relational commitment on loyalty as well as direct effects. On the other hand, social benefit doesn't have direct effect on loyalty but has indirect effects on it through relational commitment. Meanwhile, shopping convenience and informational benefit don't have any direct and indirect effect on loyalty.

Based on the results that consumers' perception of relational benefits affect loyalty directly, internet shopping malls need to develop marketing programs that make consumers perceive customization, economic, psychological, and social benefits in the process of purchasing to promote loyalty. For example, shopping malls can use methods such as letting customers know that they are special by using text messages or e-mailing them individually and by giving

Table 2. The dimensions of consumer's relational commitment

factors	measurement items	factor loadings	eigen value	% of var. (cumul. %)	Cronbach's $\alpha$
identified	I feel that this shopping mall's problem is like my problem.	.840	3.337	37.1 (37.1)	0.865
	I feel bad when other people criticize this shopping mall.	.824			
	I have a sense of belonging in this shopping mall.	.799			
	I feel that this shopping mall is like my friend.	.791			
	This shopping mall is meaningful to me personally.	.695			
calculative	I think I waste less time if I use this shopping mall.	.802	1.791	19.9 (57.0)	0.630
	I can get economic benefits if I use this shopping mall.	.786			
emotional	I feel interested when other people talk about this shopping mall.	.886	1.508	16.8 (73.8)	0.697
	To visit this shopping mall is fun.	.632			

**Table 3. The effects of consumers' perceived relational benefits on relational commitment and loyalty**

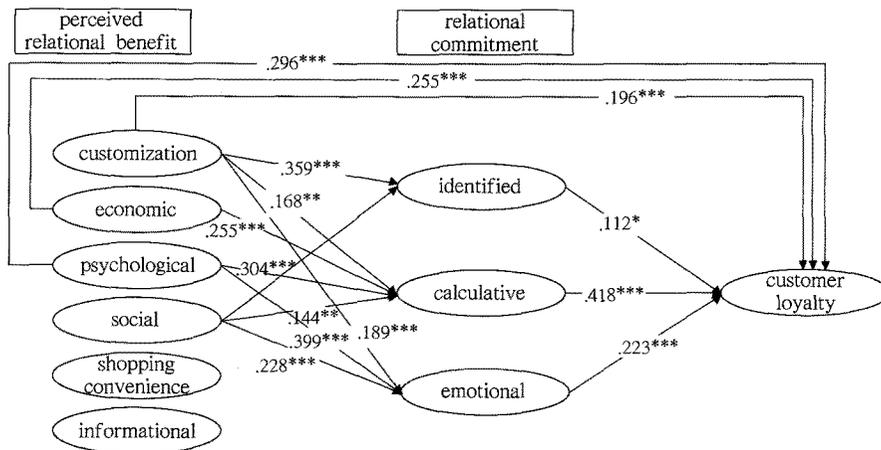
dependent variable		independent variable	$\beta$	t	F	adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	
customer loyalty	relational benefits	customization	.196	3.500***	26.695***	.311	
		economic	.225	3.861***			
		psychological	.296	5.257***			
		social	.070	1.280			
		shopping convenience	-.054	-1.037			
		informational	.009	.151			
	relational commitments	identified	.112	2.189*	82.706*	.417	
		calculative	.418	7.836***			
		emotional	.223	4.077***			
relational commitments	identified	relational benefits	customization	.359	6.468***	28.187***	.323
			economic	.046	.797		
			psychological	.099	1.774		
			social	.278	5.116***		
			shopping convenience	-.028	-.545		
			informational	-.061	-1.052		
	calculative	relational benefits	customization	.168	3.158**	35.055***	.374
			economic	.255	4.596***		
			psychological	.304	5.668***		
			social	.144	2.757**		
			shopping convenience	.011	.228		
			informational	-.038	-.685		
	emotional	relational benefits	customization	.189	3.571***	36.625***	.385
			economic	-.011	-.201		
			psychological	.399	7.506***		
			social	.228	4.407***		
			shopping convenience	-.073	-1.469		
			informational	.051	.924		

\* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$  \*\*\* $p < .001$

individualized custom benefits, constructing various communities to communicate with other members of shopping malls, activating the exchange of useful information and mutual friendships, operating various sales promotions to give practical economic benefits, and suggesting products with reasonable prices compared to their quality.

Next, in indirect effects of consumers' perception of relational benefits on loyalty through relational commitment, it is found that perception of customi-

zation and social benefit affect loyalty through identified, calculative, and emotional commitments, and perception of economic benefit affects loyalty through calculative commitment, and perception of psychological benefit affects loyalty through calculative and emotional commitment. So to speak, the more consumers think that they are being treated as special customers from shopping malls or that have fun in the relationship with the administrators and other members of the shopping malls, the higher their



\* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$  \*\*\* $p < .001$   
 Note: The numeral means standardized regression coefficient  $\beta$

**Fig. 2.** Path model for consumer's perceived relational benefits on relational commitment and loyalty.

commitment and loyalty. It is also shown that consumers have calculative commitment through perception of economic benefit and loyalty increases from this, so shopping malls might need to develop various programs that provide economic benefits to promote loyalty. It is also shown that loyalty can be obtained from emotional commitment through consumers' perception of psychological benefit so shopping malls should consider emotional concerns that make consumers feel good and comfortable when they are shopping.

**2. Consumer Types Based on the Dimensions of Perceived Relational Benefit and the Characteristics of Relational Commitment, Customer Loyalty, and Purchasing Behaviors Depending on Consumer Types**

*1) Consumer Types Based on the Dimensions of the Perceived Relational Benefit*

Using cluster analysis, consumers depending on the dimensions of relational benefits are categorized into 6 groups as shown in <Table 4>.

Group 1 is named 'group perceiving social bene-

**Table 4.** Consumer types based on the dimensions of the perceived relational benefit

consumer types / relational benefits	group perceiving social benefit (n=92)	group perceiving economic/shopping convenience benefit (n=36)	group perceiving shopping convenience benefit (n=80)	group perceiving customization benefit (n=51)	group perceiving informational benefit (n=41)	group perceiving psychological benefit (n=43)	F
customization	.032 c	-1.420 e	.455 b	.925 a	.054 c	-.875 d	63.569***
economic	-.072 bc	.679 a	-.714 d	.665 a	-.352 c	-.013 b	36.877***
psychological	-.630 d	-.244 c	.431 b	.497 b	-.647 d	.778 a	31.735***
social	.855 a	-.919 d	-.509 c	-.090 b	-.611 c	.577 a	51.743***
shopping convenience	.286 b	.664 a	.544 a	-.098 c	-1.240 e	-.882 d	49.175***
informational	-.166 c	-.045 bc	-.316 c	.250 b	.918 a	-.190 c	11.538***

\*\*\* $p < .001$

Note: Results from Duncan's multiple comparisons of means are indicated as 'a' and 'b'

fits' because they perceive social benefits the most. Group 2 is named 'group perceiving economic/shopping convenience benefits' because they perceive economic and shopping convenience benefits the most. Group 3 is named 'group perceiving shopping convenience benefits' because they perceive shopping convenience the most. Group 4 is named 'group perceiving customization benefits' because they perceive special treatment as customers the most. Group 5 is named 'group perceiving informational benefits' because they perceive informational benefits they can get from shopping malls the most. Group 6 is named 'group perceiving psychological benefits' because they perceive psychological benefits they can get from shopping the most.

**2) The Characteristics of Relational Commitment and Loyalty Depending on the Perceived Relational Benefits Based Consumer Types**

The results of analyzing whether or not there were any differences in relational commitment depending on the perceived relational benefits based consumer types showed that the group perceiving the customization benefit had higher commitment because that group had high scores to all relational commitment dimensions, while the groups perceiving the benefit of economic/shopping convenience and perceiving informational benefit had the lowest commitment because those groups had relatively lower commitment to all relational commitment dimensions as shown in <Table 5>. Also, the results of analyzing whether or not there were any differences in loyalty

depending on the consumers who perceived relational benefits showed that the group perceiving the customization benefits had the highest loyalty.

In view of the results of above, shopping malls need to provide personalized benefits to customers to promote relational commitment and loyalty. A way to that is to provide discriminative service and economic benefits based on the data of consumers' individual shopping propensity and purchasing behaviors and to give messages continuously to consumers that they receive special treatment as a customer. Meanwhile, as identified above, the group perceiving economic/shopping convenience benefits and the group perceiving informational benefits have the lowest commitment and loyalty, thus shopping malls need to hold participation events and develop programs for those consumers to visit and enjoy shopping with connectedness.

**3) The Characteristics of Purchasing Behaviors and Demographics Depending on the Perceived Relational Benefits Based Consumer Types**

As shown in <Table 6>, the results of analyzing whether or not there were any differences in purchasing behaviors and demographic depending on the perceived relational benefits based consumer types by using  $\chi^2$ -test showed that there were significant differences in major purchasing shopping malls and gender, while there were no significant differences in purchase frequency, age, marital status, and income. That is, regarding shopping malls to mainly shop at,

**Table 5. Differences in relational commitment and loyalty depending on the perceived relational benefit-based consumer types**

relational benefit, loyalty		consumer types	group perceiving social benefit	group perceiving economic/shopping convenience benefit	group perceiving shopping convenience benefit	group perceiving customization benefit	group perceiving informational benefit	group perceiving psychological benefit	F
		identified	calculative	emotional					
relational benefit	identified	2.51 b	1.74 d	2.27 bc	2.94 a	2.07 c	2.32 bc	14.946***	
	calculative	3.22 b	3.13 b	3.18 b	3.78 a	2.80 c	3.10 b	9.768***	
	emotional	3.24 bc	2.75 d	3.11 c	3.65 a	2.81 d	3.38 b	12.007***	
customer loyalty		3.40 b	3.27 b	3.39 b	3.90 a	3.24 b	3.48 b	7.790***	

\*\*\*p<.001

Note: Results from Duncan's multiple comparisons of means are indicated as 'a' and 'b'

**Table 6. Characteristics of purchasing behaviors and demographics depending on the perceived relational benefit based consumer types**

purchasing behaviors, demographics	consumer types	group perceiving social benefit	group perceiving economic/shopping convenience benefit	group perceiving shopping convenience benefit	group perceiving customization benefit	group perceiving informational benefit	group perceiving psychological benefit	total	$\chi^2$
major purchasing shopping mall	open markets	74(21.6 <sup>b</sup> ) 66.3 <sup>a</sup>	27( 7.9) 25.9	58(16.9) 57.6	35(10.2) 36.7	26( 7.6) 29.5	27( 7.9) 31.0	247( 72.0)	20.406*
	general shopping malls	8( 2.3) 14.5	7( 2.0) 5.7	11( 3.2) 12.6	13( 3.8) 8.0	10( 2.9) 6.5	5( 1.5) 6.8	54( 15.7)	
	other shopping malls <sup>1)</sup>	10( 2.9) 11.3	2( 0.6) 4.4	11( 3.2) 9.8	3( 0.9) 6.2	5( 1.5) 5.0	11( 3.2) 5.3	42( 12.2)	
gender	male	44(12.8) 37.3	17( 5.0) 14.6	39(11.4) 32.4	19( 5.5) 20.7	12( 3.5) 16.6	8( 2.3) 17.4	139( 40.5)	15.904**
	female	48(14.0) 54.7	19( 5.5) 21.4	41(12.0) 47.6	32( 9.3) 30.3	29( 8.5) 24.4	35(10.2) 25.6	204( 59.5)	
total		92(26.8)	36(10.5)	80(23.3)	51(14.9)	41(12.0)	43(12.5)	343(100.0)	

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

Note: <sup>a</sup>expected frequency, <sup>b</sup>percentage

Note: <sup>1)</sup> means fashion specialty shopping malls, SOHO shopping malls. and agent shopping malls for overseas

the group perceiving the social and economic/shopping convenience benefits tended to purchase more at open markets, the group perceiving the customization and informational benefits tended to purchase more at general shopping malls, the group perceiving the psychological benefits tended to purchase more at shopping malls specializing in fashion, soho shopping malls, and agent shopping malls for overseas buying.

It seems to reflect the characteristics of each shopping mall type well. In the case of open markets, consumers who consider economical efficiency tend to use open markets a lot because major open markets such as Auction and G-market guarantee the safety of purchases based on high recognition and reliability and provide products with a cheap and reasonable price. The groups perceiving customization benefits and informational benefits tend to use general shopping malls a lot because that shopping mall type provides useful information such as discounting brand products, fashion trend, and special events.

Also, the consumer types depending on the perceived relational benefits shows significant differences in gender: there are more male than female in

groups perceiving social benefit, economic/shopping convenience benefit, and shopping convenience benefit. while more female than male in groups perceiving customization benefit, informational benefit, and psychological benefit. This result reflects the characteristics of shopping behaviors that women are more sensitive to the purchase of fashion products and fashion information.

## V. Conclusions and Implications

To maintain the relationship between companies and customers, it is essential that there are mutual benefits between them. Companies can build strong relationship through providing benefits that consumers want. As long relationships between consumers and companies are stressed a lot these day, to find out the effects of consumers' perception of relational benefits on relational commitment and customer loyalty to internet purchase is very important to expand and develop companies. Thus, this study aims to examine the dimensions of various relational benefits consumers perceive in purchasing clothes through internet shopping malls and how these perceptions of

relational benefits affect relational commitment and loyalty. This study also aims to examine consumer types depending on the dimensions of consumer's perceived relational benefits and to find out the characteristics of relational commitment, customer loyalty, and shopping behaviors by consumer types.

The results are as follows. First, the dimensions of relational benefits perceived by consumers in internet clothing purchase are found 6 including customization, economic, psychological, social, shopping convenience, and informational. Second, consumers' perception of relational benefits significantly affect on relational commitment and loyalty, thus consumers with greater recognition of relational benefits have higher relational commitment and loyalty. Third, based on the dimensions of consumer's perceived relational benefit, consumers are categorized into 6 types: group perceiving social benefit, group perceiving economic/shopping convenience benefit, group perceiving shopping convenience benefit, group perceiving customization benefit, group perceiving informational benefit, and group perceiving psychological benefit. The group perceiving customization benefits have higher relational commitment and loyalty than the others.

Companies maintain long-term relationships with customers because they expect that the benefits they get through the relationship are more than the expense they have to pay for building and keeping relationships. Customers also maintain relationships with particular companies with loyalty because they think that the values they get from the companies are relatively higher than the level of competitive companies. Internet companies can get the abilities to save and utilize various consumer data such as individual shopping propensity and purchasing records. Furthermore, as this study has found various dimensions of relational benefits perceived by consumers in internet clothing purchases, it is expected that internet shopping malls will be able to find out the benefits that consumers want to get based on customer data and to utilize them in maintaining customers and promoting their loyalty.

This study examined the aspects of relational benefits consumers perceive with a focus on buying

clothes through internet shopping malls. There are various types of internet shopping malls consumers can buy clothes, which include open markets, general shopping malls, shopping malls specialized in fashion, soho shopping malls, and agent shopping malls for overseas buying. Since shopping malls used by consumers are different, it is necessary for future studies to analyze how different the characteristics of relational benefits perceived by consumers are depending on the types of internet shopping malls. In addition, since consumers perceive relational benefits differently, it is also necessary to study the characteristics of consumers that bring such differences, for example, interest levels in clothes or fashion, major standards for buying clothes, and psychological factors.

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## 요 약

소비자와의 장기적 관계 관리가 강조되는 현 시점에서, 소비자들이 인터넷 쇼핑몰에서 의류제품을 구매할 때 지각하는 관계혜택에 초점을 두고, 소비자들의 관계혜택지각이 쇼핑몰에 대한 관계몰입 및 충성도에 미치는 영향을 규명하고자 하였다. 본 연구를 위해 인터넷 의류구매 경험이 있는 20대 및 30대 남녀 소비자 343명에게 설문조사하였다. 연구결과, 인터넷 의류구매에서의 관계혜택지각은 쇼핑몰에 대한 관계몰입 및 충성도에 유의한 영향을 미쳐, 관계혜택지각이 클수록 쇼핑몰에 대한 관계몰입 및 충성도가 높은 것으로 나타났다. 또한 관계혜택지각 차원에 따라 소비자들을 유형화한 결과, 소비자들은 '사회적 혜택지각 집단', '경제/쇼핑편이성 혜택지각 집단', '쇼핑편이성 혜택지각 집단', '고재화 혜택지각 집단', '정보적 혜택지각 집단', '심리적 혜택지각 집단'으로 구분되었으며, 이들의 쇼핑몰에 대한 관계몰입 및 충성도에도 유의한 차이가 있는 것으로 나타났다. 본 연구는 인터넷 기업이 고객과의 관계를 결속시키고 나아가 쇼핑몰에 대한 충성도를 높이는데 도움을 줄 수 있을 것으로 본다.