

Characteristics of Extreme Sports Participants' Lifestyles and Sportswear Benefits Sought -A Comparison between Participants of Extreme and Traditional Sports-

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Abstract

Extreme sports refers to sports activities with a high level of inherent danger, such as extreme skiing, snowboarding, mountain biking, motocross bicycling, aggressive in-line skating, wake-boarding, and paragliding. This study investigates the characteristics of extreme sports participants as group identities through an examination of the differences between extreme sports participants and traditional sports groups in lifestyle and sportswear benefits sought. We composed a total 108-item lifestyle profiles characterized by six lifestyle dimensions (dress, diet, home, recreation, consumption, and sense of values); in addition, we developed 32 items for sportswear benefits sought. The surveys targeted 422 sports participants living in Korea (216 men and 206 women, aged 15-23): 119 extreme sports participants and 303 traditional sports participants. All items were evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale, and SPSS 17.0, was used for data analysis. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to confirm the substructure of each lifestyle dimension and sportswear benefits sought. The results of the factor analysis on each lifestyle dimension are as follows: 5 factors in dress dimension, 4 in diet, 3 in home, 6 in recreation, 5 in consumption, and 6 in sense of values. Six factors of sportswear benefit sought were identified. A *t*-test revealed that there were significant differences between the two groups in lifestyle dimensions and sportswear benefits sought. This study reveals that the lifestyle characteristics of extreme sports participants are more likely than traditional sports group to be more self-expressive, more distinctive, more fashion-oriented, more conspicuous, and more brand-oriented, while preferring more active sports, more dynamic leisure, and a more sensible life. Another finding is that extreme sports participants seek the distinctive, conspicuous, and latest sportswear benefits.

Key words: Extreme sports, Subculture, Lifestyle, Sportswear benefits sought

I. Introduction

Extreme sports refers to certain sports activities perceived as having high levels of inherent danger such as extreme skiing, snow-boarding, mountain biking, motocross racing, aggressive in-line skating, wake-boarding, etc., and that are considered counter-cultural (*Webster's New Millennium Dictionary of English, Preview Edition (v 0.9.7) Copyright ©, 2003-2008*). These activ-

ities often involve great speed, height, a high level of physical exertion, highly specialized gear, and spectacular stunts. The origin of the term is unclear, however, it gained popularity in the 1990s when it was picked up by marketing and media companies to promote the annual competition for extreme sports such as X-Games. Activities categorized by media as 'extreme sports' differ from traditional sports due to a higher number of inherently uncontrollable variables.

Extreme sports tend to have a younger-than-average demographic, and have spread rapidly and widely throughout cable television and popular hard core

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music. A lot of TV commercials use extreme sports to reflect an image of youthfulness and vitality. Additionally, the extreme sports style, which includes snowboard suits and track jackets with dynamic music have become a trend in Korean fashion culture and have influenced on sportswear and youth markets (Park et al., 2008; Wheaton, 2004). Thus, extreme sports play an important role as a sub-culture within popular culture and fashion trends (Donnelly, 2006; Donnelly & Young, 1998; Solomon & Rabolt, 2004). Therefore, it is important to determine the point of difference between extreme sports participants and traditional sports groups for understanding their features and culture (Wheaton, 2004). The proportion of extreme sports research is still relatively low and previous studies have not comprehensively examined lifestyle characteristics as group identities. To address the limitation of previous studies, this study aims to investigate extreme sports participants' characteristics as group identities by examining the difference between extreme and traditional sports groups in lifestyle and the sportswear benefits sought. The specific objectives of this study are 1) to examine the sub-structure of lifestyle and sportswear benefits sought and 2) to compare extreme sports participants with traditional sports groups with regard to lifestyle and sportswear benefits sought.

II. Literature Review

1. Extreme Sports as a Subculture

Extreme sports are also referred to as alternative sports, lifestyle sports, outside sports, and post-modern sports (Gonzalez, 1998; Rinehart, 1998; Wheaton, 2000). By definition, the term 'extreme' implies that an athlete is performing under high risk conditions; the environment, terrain and weather. Recently, the term 'extreme' is frequently used concurrent with many of today's post-modern or non-traditional sports, generally by the media (Park et al., 2008). Large cable sports networks, such as the American network ESPN, caught onto the trend and were responsible for the metamorphosis of the extreme sports phenomenon into a nascent commodity. In 1993, ESPN created an

annual sports extravaganza for youth markets that were searching for innovative and alternative sports (Rinehart, 1998). Presently, the notion of extreme is presented as an attractive trend in youth culture, even within areas that have no access to extreme sports.

Extreme sports provide hedonic pleasure to participants due to the attraction of displaying their abilities and the thrill of overcoming seemingly unsurpassable limits. Thus, extreme sports are often described as highly motivating, danger risking, or innovation seeking (Park et al., 2008). In a qualitative study by Quester et al. (2006), the core values driving involvement in extreme sports such as freedom, belonging, excellence, and connection were identified. Accordingly, a lot of TV commercials use extreme sports to highlight the image of youthfulness and vitality. In addition, the clothing and music related to this genre are currently very fashionable and people, even non-participants, like to dress like extreme athletes such as surfers or skate boarders (Donnelly, 2006; Park et al., 2008; Rinehart, 1998). Especially, the highly visible lifestyle associated with extreme athletes has been adapted and marketed for mass consumption.

2. Lifestyle - AIO (Activities, Interests, Opinions) Approach

Lifestyle is a statement about who one is in a specific group and who one is not. Also, from a consumer culture perspective, lifestyle refers to a pattern of consumption reflecting a person's choices of how he or she spends time and money. We can determine group identities through their value, consumption, leisure activities, and everyday affairs (Solomon, 1998). Group identities, whether of fashion leaders, athletes, or hobbyists gel around forms of expressive symbolism. The self-definitions of group members are derived from the common symbol system to which the group is dedicated. Such self-definitions have been described by a number of terms including lifestyle, public taste, consumer group, symbolic community, and status culture (Solomon & Rabolt, 2004).

The lifestyle construct has a longstanding history in market research (Vyncke, 2002). A widely used approach to lifestyle measurements is AIO rating state-

ments (Wells & Tigert, 1971). AIO refers to measures of activities, interests and opinions. Activities are manifest actions (work, hobbies, social events, vacation, entertainment, clubs, community, shopping, sports, etc.). Interest in some objects, events or topics (family, home, job, community, recreation, fashion, food, media, achievements, etc.) is the degree of excitement that accompanies both special and continuing attention to it. Opinions are descriptive beliefs (in oneself, social issues, politics, business, economics, education, products, future, culture, etc.) (Plummer, 1974). Peter and Olson (1994) also defined lifestyle as the manner in which people conduct their lives, including activities, interests, and opinions. This approach provides a broader view of lifestyle patterns so that marketers or researchers can think about consumers more hierarchically.

Often very large batteries of AIO approach have been used, or revised. Wells and Tigert (1971) formulated 300 AIO items, while Cosmas (1982) used a questionnaire containing 250 AIO items. Also, Vyncke (2002) developed lifestyle typologies using both the AIO and a value system approach. He covered a number of items from attitudes, interest, and opinions to values, aesthetic styles, life visions, and media preferences in the new concept AIO approach. In a similar vein, Park (1996) composed a five-dimensional lifestyle profiles including dress, diet, housing, leisure, and culture. Hong and Park (2005) also proposed a nine-dimensional lifestyle profiles including dress, diet, home, leisure, consumption, marriage, child/education, environment/society, and beauty/health for classifying female adult consumers' lifestyles.

3. Sportswear Benefits Sought

Benefits sought is the demand or desire consumers subjectively feel related to the property of a specific product, and can be viewed as the subjective reward or expected as a positive result consumers hope to attain in relation to the use of the product (Peter & Olson, 1986). Benefits sought is influenced by psychological properties, and can be studied through the decision making process related to the consumer's selection of a product or store (Engel et al., 1986).

Clothing benefits sought have been identified throughout many studies. The common clothing benefits include the symbolization of fashion/aesthetic; social status; economy; practicality; brand orientation; sex appeal; individuality; etc. And it has been suggested that 'benefits' is a useful factor in explaining consumer behavior (Hwang, 2003; Lee & Kim, 2005).

Sportswear benefits sought has been also suggested by recent studies. In Hwang's (2004) study, four sportswear benefits sought, including figure compensation/ostentation, individuality, comfort/function, and youth-orientation, were identified and used for benefits segments to show the differences between shopping attitudes toward domestic/imported brands and sportswear purchase behavior. Cho and Koh (2008) also found six sub-factors of sportswear benefits sought including comfort/practicality, ideal body/good-looking, individual character, fashion/ostentation, price sensitivity, and brand orientation, which revealed significant differences among consumer segments using sports activity motivation.

III. Methods

1. Research Purpose

This study 1) examined sub-factors of lifestyle dimensions and sportswear benefits sought and 2) compared extreme sports' participants with traditional ones with regard to those factors of lifestyle dimensions and sportswear benefits sought.

2. Measurements

The three-part questionnaire was composed of lifestyle profiles, sportswear benefits sought, and demographics. To measure lifestyles, we chose the microscopic approach to lifestyle study by revising and applying Plummer's (1974) AIO (Activities, Interest, Opinions) method. Additionally, we composed lifestyle profiles characterized by six lifestyle dimensions based on Ahn and Shin (2005), Cho and Koh (2008), Choi et al. (2002), Hong and Park (2005), and Reynolds et al. (1977). The six dimensions, totaling 108 items, were labeled as dress dimension, diet

dimension, home dimension, recreation dimension, consumption dimension, and sense of values dimension. We further developed 32 items for measuring sportswear benefits sought with reference to Cho and Koh (2008) and Hwang (2004). All items were evaluated on a five-point Likert type scale, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (3) neither disagree nor agree to (5) strongly agree.

3. Data Collection and Sample Characteristics

For data collection, the surveys targeted sports participants living in Seoul, Korea. It was conducted from September 2007 to August 2008 due to the seasonality of extreme sports such as snow-boarding, wake-boarding, etc. A total of 440 questionnaires were collected initially. After excluding insincere questionnaires, 422 usable data sets were employed for data analysis (216 men and 206 women, ages from 15 to 23): 119 data sets from extreme sports participants (snow-boarders, wake-boarders, motocross racers, in-line skaters, etc.) and 303 data sets from traditional sports participants (fitness enthusiasts, soccer players, basketball players, swimmers, tennis players, etc.) (Table 1). For data analysis, descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis, cronbach's alpha, and *t*-tests were conducted using SPSS 17.0 PC+.

IV. Results

Prior to implementing the *t*-test to analyze comparisons between the two groups, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted to confirm the substructure of each lifestyle dimension and sportswear benefits sought.

1. Factor Analysis for Lifestyle Dimensions

<Table 2> shows the results of the exploratory factor analysis using Varimax rotation to test the validity and reliability of the conceptual construction of each lifestyle dimension. Seventeen items that had a low initial loading value or a dispersion of loading value were eliminated. The results of the factor analysis on each lifestyle dimension are as follows: Five factors in dress dimension, four in diet, three in home, six in recreation, five in consumption, and six in sense of values. The five factors of dress dimension were identified and labeled as fashion interest, practicality, distinction, importance of appearance, and high-end preference. The total variance percentage calculated by these five factors was 55.4%. The four factors of diet dimension were western style, gourmandism, fast-food, and healthy food with a total variance percentage of 65.6%. The three factors of home dimension were functionality, sensible decoration/western style,

Table 1. Respondents' characteristics - type of sports

traditional sports			extreme sports		
(n=303)	n	%	(n=119)	n	%
exercises (workout/jogging)	78	25.7%	snow-boarding	45	37.8%
soccer	55	18.2%	in-line skating	14	11.8%
basketball	42	13.9%	jet-skiing	14	11.8%
badminton	25	8.3%	wake-boarding	13	10.9%
yoga	21	6.9%	speed-skiing	11	9.2%
swimming	21	6.9%	bicycle motocross (BMX biking)	10	8.4%
weight training	18	5.9%	outdoor climbing	8	6.7%
tennis/squash	15	5.0%	scuba diving	4	3.4%
judo	8	2.6%			
jump rope	6	2.0%			
baseball	6	2.0%			
others (golf, taekwondo, etc)	8	2.5%			

Table 2. The results of factor analysis for lifestyle dimensions

dimension	factor	item	loading value	eigen value	cumulative %	α
dress	fashion interest	I tend to pay much attention to fashion information	.794	5.21	24.79	.86
		I often give advice or offer tips to friends about fashion	.743			
		I am a person with a sense of design and color	.729			
		I tend to adopt the latest fashions or trends early	.671			
		I often switch clothing, hair style, or accessories	.655			
	practicality	I wear matching outfits from head to toe	.643	2.13	34.95	.76
		I like being properly dressed	.667			
		I don't have a tendency to wear conspicuous outfits	.652			
		I like comfortable clothes	.636			
		I don't buy non easy-care clothing even if I like them	.635			
	distinction	I consider functionality rather than color and design when I choose clothing items	.608	1.82	43.60	.72
		I enjoy wearing outfits that express my individuality	.782			
		I tend to seek my individuality in clothes or shoes	.664			
	importance of appearance	I try to wear noticeable clothing that I love	.633	1.36	50.07	.53
		Cosmetic surgery is all right if it can make someone more beautiful	.697			
		In our country, people are respected and treated properly when they are dressed	.647			
		I think that clothing has a major impact on first impressions	.555			
	high-end preference	It seems good that men also use perfume or accessories	.493	1.13	55.43	.66
I prefer a single expensive clothing items rather than a large number of cheap clothes		.840				
diet	western style	I prefer famous clothing brands	.807	3.10	28.15	.71
		Western food is more suited to my taste than Korean food	.796			
		I prefer Western food to Korean food	.768			
		I don't feel satisfied until I've had a meal with a bowl of rice, soup, and side dishes (r)	.664			
	gourmandism	I tend to have meals with bread and milk more often than with a bowl of rice, soup, and side dishes	.648	1.72	43.82	.66
		I can well appreciate a subtle distinction in taste	.775			
		I tend to eat at delicious restaurants	.749			
	fast-food	I prefer going to restaurants with a luxurious atmosphere even if it is expensive	.734	1.25	55.23	.62
		I often eat fast food such as hamburgers or sandwiches	.804			
	healthy food	I enjoy having snacks or eating between meals	.784	1.14	65.55	.57
		I like a health food diet	.824			
	home	functionality	I tend to consider calories when I eat food	.803	2.13	23.67
I prefer functional furniture such as built-in wardrobes			.815			
I think that functionality is most important in interior decoration			.779			
sensible decoration/western style		Simplicity is best in interior decoration	.660	1.66	42.12	.51
		I tend to care about decorating a room	.650			
		Design and color are more important than practicality in interior decoration	.627			
		Living in an apartment is better than living in a detached house	.610			
convenient to access		Sleeping in a bed is better for me than in sleeping Korean style on the floor-heating room	.589	1.05	53.73	.
	I want to live within a stone's throw of my school or office even if it is somewhat complex	.875				

(r): reverse scored

Table 2. Continued.

dimension	factor	item	loading value	eigen value	cumulative %	α
recreation	sports activity	I usually exercise	.914	3.47	19.25	.90
		I regularly do my favorite exercise	.854			
		I spend most of my spare time exercising	.839			
		I like participating in sports activities more than watching game	.828			
	family orientation	I often spend time with my family	.900	2.18	31.37	.78
		I usually spend my vacation or holiday with family	.820			
		I often have time to pursue hobbies with my family	.728			
	dynamic leisure	I spend a lot of money on leisure activities compared with my income	.753	2.01	42.52	.64
		I recently made good use of my leisure time	.713			
		I often try to add variety to my everyday life	.695			
	hobby/civilized	I like making creative pieces or writing	.798	1.81	52.56	.57
		I enjoy a dilettante life	.670			
		I listen to music almost every day	.629			
		I often go to art galleries or performing arts centers	.558			
sociability	I enjoy socializing with people at night	.853	1.71	62.04	.70	
	I often attend social gatherings	.817				
traveling abroad	I want to travel abroad during a vacation or holiday	.664	1.06	67.95	.	
consumption	impulse buying	I only try to buy goods that I want	.876	3.13	16.50	.83
		I buy my favorite things all at once	.801			
		I often buy something based on my emotions	.787			
		I often unexpectedly buy goods	.760			
		I buy things in advance	.572			
	importance of price information	I often comparison shop	.766	2.43	29.31	.75
		I always check price information	.753			
		I used to research information about what I want to buy	.720			
		I get money-losing feelings when I pay at a fair price	.661			
	brand orientation	Whenever I buy something, I want famous brands even if they are expensive	.830	2.40	41.96	.76
		I used to buy well-known brands	.775			
		I trust well-known brands	.725			
		I trust renowned stores	.632			
	trend following	I always care about the latest fashion when I buy consumer goods	.820	2.15	53.29	.70
I am safe when I follow general trends (r)		.719				
I often buy common brands (r)		.704				
I used to adopt new products earlier than others		.528				
preference for discounted prices	I used to buy relatively low-priced goods	.825	1.43	60.84	.54	
	I try to wait for sales promotions if I can	.561				

(r): reverse scored

Table 2. Continued-1

dimension	factor	item	loading value	eigen value	cumulative %	α
sense of values	materialism	Financial power is very important to lifestyle	.869	2.31	13.58	.82
		A valuable job is required for a high salary	.836			
		A happy life is based on the premise of abundance	.807			
	company relationships	I like getting along with my co-workers	.814	2.06	25.72	.64
		I have a cheerful personality and easily make friends	.798			
		I want to be the leader of a group	.643			
	cybernaut	I actively participate in online communities	.772	1.82	36.45	.66
		It is essential to access the internet via cell-phone	.752			
		I can control my own world in cyberspace	.728			
	self-expression	I dislike being bound by rules	.777	1.70	46.44	.59
		I want to live in my own way	.714			
		Aptitude is more important than money or reputation when choosing a job	.680			
	family importance	I often help around my household	.826	1.49	55.19	.56
		I often have family conversations	.786			
individualism	I like Dutch treating for meals or other activities	.801	1.39	63.39	.53	
	It is uncomfortable for someone to invade my privacy	.777				

(r): reverse scored

and convenient to access with a total variance percentage of 53.7%. The six factors of recreation dimension were sports activity, family orientation, dynamic leisure, hobby/civilized, sociability, and traveling abroad with a total variance percentage of 67.9%. The five factors of consumption dimension were impulse buying, importance of price information, brand orientation, trend following, and preference for discounted prices with a total variance percentage of 60.8%. The six factors of sense of values dimension were identified and labeled as materialism, company relationships, cybernaut, self-expression, family importance, and individualism with a total variance percentage of 63.4%. Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from 0.51 to 0.90. A few factors exhibited low reliability levels. But, the correlation coefficients of items in each factor were all significant. Thus, the authors determined the factors with low reliability levels were important to explain the individual lifestyle dimensions.

2. Factor Analysis for Sportswear Benefits Sought

The factor analysis resulted in six factors of sportswear benefits sought. These were labeled as ideal

healthy figure/good impression, functions/comfort, distinctiveness, ostentation/latest fashion, low price preference, and brand-orientation. As shown in <Table 3>, the total explained variable was 65.3% and Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from 0.67 to 0.88.

3. Differences in Lifestyle Characteristics between Extreme Sports Participants and Traditional Sports Groups

The *t*-test was conducted to compare the group of extreme sports participants with the traditional sports group for lifestyle characteristics. The results indicate that there were significant differences between the two groups in lifestyle dimensions, except for diet (Table 4). In the dress dimension, significant differences were found between the two groups in the fashion interest and distinction factors. Extreme sports participants showed a higher mean value than traditional groups in the fashion interest factor (3.20>3.08). They also showed a higher mean value than traditional groups in the distinction factor (3.32>3.18). In the home dimension, there were significant differences in the sensible decoration/western style and convenient to access factors. Extreme sports partici-

Table 3. The results of factor analysis for sportswear benefit sought

factor	item	loading value	eigen value	cumulative %	α
ideal healthy figure/good impression	I choose sportswear that shows off my figure	.818	4.01	16.06	.88
	I buy sportswear that makes me look sophisticated	.810			
	I tend to wear sportswear that makes a favorable impression	.769			
	I prefer sportswear that gives me the appearance of an ideal body	.764			
	I have a tendency to buy sportswear that represents a masculine/feminine physique	.751			
	I try to choose sportswear that has a fashionable image	.604			
functions/comfort	I attach great importance to functionality when I purchase sportswear	.843	3.06	28.32	.84
	I usually buy comfortable sportswear that can I be active in	.764			
	I place importance on material and function rather than design when I purchase sportswear	.763			
	I like comfortable-fitting sportswear	.737			
	I consider physical comfort when I buy sportswear	.649			
distinctiveness	I prefer youthful-looking sportswear	.698	2.92	39.98	.81
	I want to wear the same sportswear as ideal person did wear	.692			
	I choose sportswear that creates to an active image	.691			
	I tend to buy sportswear to improve my image	.668			
	It is important to buy sportswear that appeals to my personality	.588			
	I try to wear unique sportswear that is different from others	.549			
ostentation/latest fashion	It is important to wear sportswear that is in the latest fashion	.715	2.63	50.49	.74
	I want to show off my status in sportswear	.703			
	It is important to wear fashionable sportswear	.566			
low price preference	I buy sportswear at sale prices	.868	2.10	58.91	.74
	I only buy discounted sportswear items	.863			
	I buy appropriately priced sportswear after browsing through a store	.611			
brand-orientation	I purchase a single piece of famous branded sportswear rather than several pieces of non-branded sportswear	.869	1.60	65.33	.67
	I tend to continually purchase branded sportswear that I like	.769			

Table 4. Differences between the extreme sports group and traditional sports group in lifestyle dimension

dimension	factor	extreme sports		traditional sports		t-value
		mean	std.	mean	std.	
dress	fashion interest	3.20	.579	3.08	.735	2.09*
	distinction	3.32	.579	3.18	.746	2.05*
home	sensible decoration/western style	3.30	.710	3.11	.623	2.47*
	convenient to access	3.25	.902	3.52	.926	-2.80**
recreation	sports activity	3.47	.721	2.98	.905	5.22***
	dynamic leisure	3.17	.642	2.77	.802	4.80***
	sociability	3.37	.729	3.70	.856	-3.68***
	traveling abroad	2.86	.934	2.40	.887	4.78***
consumption	brand orientation	3.45	.623	3.28	.713	2.45*
	preference for discounted prices	3.32	.613	3.55	.775	-2.70**
sense of values	self-expression	2.80	.769	2.44	.811	4.19***
	cybernaut	3.71	.557	3.83	.596	-2.03*

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

extreme sports group (n=119), traditional sports group (n=303)

only statistically significant factors in each dimension are listed in the table.

Table 5. Differences between the extreme sports group and traditional sports group in sportswear benefits sought

factor	extreme sports		traditional sports		t-value
	mean	std.	mean	std.	
distinctiveness	3.16	.561	2.90	.686	3.80***
ostentation/latest fashion	2.91	.547	2.52	.717	6.07***

*** $p < .001$

extreme sports group (n=119), traditional sports group (n=303)
only statistically significant factors are listed in the table

pants showed a higher mean value than traditional groups in the sensible decoration/western style factor (3.30>3.11). But, they had a lower mean value than traditional groups in the convenient to access factor (3.25<3.52). In the case of the recreation dimension, extreme sports participants had a significantly higher value than traditional groups in three factors; sports activity (3.47>2.98), dynamic leisure (3.17>2.77) and traveling abroad (2.86>2.40), but a lower value in the sociability factor (3.37<3.70). In the consumption dimension, extreme sports participants had a significantly higher value than traditional groups in the brand orientation factor (3.45>3.28). However, they had a lower mean value in the preference for discounted prices factor (3.32<3.55). In the case of the sense of values dimension, extreme sports participants had a significantly higher value than traditional groups in the self-expression factor (2.80>2.44), but a lower value in the cybernaut factor (3.71<3.83).

4. Differences in Sportswear Benefits Sought between Extreme Sports Participants and Traditional Sports Groups

The *t*-test was conducted to compare the group of extreme sports participants with the traditional sports groups for sportswear benefits sought. The results indicate that there were significant differences between the two groups (Table 5). Extreme sports participants had a significantly higher value than traditional groups in the distinctiveness (3.16>2.90) and ostentation/latest fashion (2.91>2.52) factors.

V. Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this study is to examine the life-

style characteristics and sportswear benefits sought for extreme sports participants (snow-boarding, in-line skating, jet-skiing, wake-boarding, etc.) in comparison to traditional sports groups (exercises, soccer, basketball, badminton, etc.). Firstly, we identified the structure of six lifestyle dimensions from a AIO perspective and sportswear benefits sought through survey data from extreme and traditional sports participants. And then, the comparison between the two groups were analyzed.

As a result, significant differences between the two groups were found in the five lifestyle dimensions (dress, home, recreation, consumption, and sense of values). To explain in detail, there were significant differences in two factors in the dress dimension (fashion interest and distinction), two in home (sensible decoration/western style and convenient to access), four in recreation (sports activity, dynamic leisure, sociability, and traveling abroad), two in consumption (brand orientation and preference for discounted prices), and two in sense of values (self-expression and cybernaut). Meanwhile, no significant difference was found in the diet dimension. In the case of sportswear benefits sought, there were significant differences between the two groups in the distinctiveness and ostentation/latest fashion factors.

This study focused on a comparison between extreme sports participants and traditional sports groups for addressing characteristics of extreme sports participants' lifestyles and the sportswear benefits sought. Consideration of the characteristics of extreme sports participants are as follows: First, one of the overriding features of extreme sports participants is that they are very self-expressive and want to be distinctive. To put it concretely, the noticeable difference between the groups was found in the self-expression factor of

the sense of values dimension. Also, similar patterns were examined in the distinction factor of the dress dimension and in the distinctiveness factor of sportswear benefits sought. That is to say, these results indicate that extreme sports participants are more likely to pursue individual expression and display their abilities or appearance. These results are supported by Quester et al. (2006) who identified extreme sports participants' core values such as excellence, distinctiveness, and freedom.

Second, another outstanding characteristic of extreme sports participants is that they are very active and prefer dynamic leisures. Given the differences between the two groups in the recreation dimension, results indicate that extreme sports participants are more likely to enjoy sports activities, dynamic leisure, and foreign traveling for their recreation. On the other hand, traditional sports participants are more likely to have a social gathering in their leisure time. These results can be interpreted as the feature of extreme sports participants that they pursue active leisures.

Third, one distinguishing feature of extreme sports participants is that they are very fashion-oriented, conspicuous, and brand-oriented. Considering the mean scores of factors in dress dimension, consumption dimension, and sportswear benefits sought, we could see that extreme sports participants had higher mean scores than traditional sports groups. It means that extreme sports participants are more likely to consider fashionability, uniqueness, and brands than traditional sports groups. These findings are related with previous studies (e.g., Donnelly, 2006; Park et al., 2008; Rinehart, 1998) which stated that fashion and music were served as important symbols of extreme sport participants for their identities.

The findings of this study suggest theoretical and practical implications. This study is one of the initial studies to examine lifestyle and sportswear benefits sought for extreme sports participants compared with traditional sports groups. Also, this study contributes to enriching the understanding of sportswear consumers whether extreme or traditional. From a practical standpoint, recommendations for marketers are as follows: First, sportswear should be provided with

latest fashion and distinctive style when targeting young extreme sports consumers because they want to show their uniqueness and make a good impression. Second, another practical implication is that sportswear brands targeting extreme sports participants should emphasize on vitality (or activity) and sensible atmospheres in branding and promotion. Because, our findings indicate that extreme sports participants are more active and place more preferences on a sensible decoration and western style interior than traditional sports groups. Lastly, if sportswear brands target young traditional sports consumers, they should include social gatherings and online community promotion prominently. Because, the traditional sportswear participants were found to place more value on sociable activities in their leisure time, and participate in cyberspace more actively than extreme sports groups.

Meanwhile, this study views extreme sports as a sub culture and examines the characteristics of this group; they are more self-expressive, more active, more conspicuous, and more brand-oriented than traditional sports groups. Interestingly, these characteristics are similar to Generation Y consumers' features (Bennett & Lachowetz, 2004). Generation Y is also described as being conspicuous, active, and brand-oriented. Generation Y, which appeared in the early 1990's (also known as the Millennial Generation, Generation Next, Net Generation, and Echo Boomers), are described as the demographic cohort following Generation X. Hence, we propose future studies comparing the relationship between Generation Y and extreme sports group would also be interesting.

In addition, we just focused on lifestyle and sportswear benefits sought between extreme sports participants and traditional sports groups and did not investigate specific variables such as social, cultural, and psychological factors. So, social, cultural, and psychological factors need to be considered in future research to understand both holistic characteristics of extreme sports participants and their cultures and identities.

The sample used in this study was limited to urban residents in Seoul, Korea. Thus, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to other extreme sports

participants and sports groups.

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