

E-tail Uses and Gratifications to Understand Apparel Consumers

Jee-Sun Park* and Kyu-Hye Lee[†]

Dept. of Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism Management, The University of Tennessee, U.S.*

Dept. of Clothing and Textiles, Hanyang University, Korea

(2012. 3. 7. 접수일 : 2012. 3. 30. 수정완료일 : 2012. 4. 2. 게재확정일)

Abstract

The purpose of the study is to examine the role of consumer perceptions of websites'entertainment and informativeness in developing their attitudes (attitude toward the retailer and attitude confidence toward the product) in the context of apparel e-tailing. A structural equation model was developed for an empirical test based on the literature on uses-and-gratifications and attitude confidence. A sample of 119 consumers who live in the United States participated in the online survey. The results generally supported the proposed model. Specifically, the analyses revealed that consumers' purchase intention toward the displayed product is positively influenced by their attitudes toward the retailer and by their confidence in their attitudes toward the product. Interestingly, only one of the two cognitive antecedents, perceived entertainment, has a positive impact on consumers' attitude toward the retailer. Perceived informativeness, however, had a positive impact on attitude confidence. These findings suggest that consumers who have high perception of an e-tail website's entertainment are more likely to exhibit favorable attitudes toward the e-tailer, while consumers who have high perception of an e-tail website's informativeness are more likely to hold strong confidence in their attitudes toward the product displayed on the website. Both consumer attitudes toward the e-tailer and their attitude confidence lead to their purchase intentions.

Keywords: perceived entertainment, perceived informativeness, uses-and-gratifications, attitude confidence

I . Introduction

U.S. retail e-commerce has been growing at a faster pace than the total retail sales in the U.S. ("Quarterly retail e-commerce sales: 4th quarter 2011," 2012). Although the current economic crisis has slowed the pace, the retail e-commerce has been expected to be less affected by the economic process than their offline counterparts (Evans, Sehgal, Bugnaru, & McGoan, 2009). Compared to offline retailers, e-tailers can provide their consumers with

such advantages as a vast array of information and convenience in terms of shopping time and easy access, price comparisons at multiple stores (Brown, Pope, & Voges, 2003; Dennis, Harris, & Sandhu, 2002). However, e-tail environments have limitations due to consumers' perceived risks (Teo & Yu, 2005), a lack of presence (Freeman, 2000), and the inability of physically examine products before purchased and delivered (Huang, Lurie, & Mitra, 2009). Especially in apparel e-tail environments, the fact that consumers cannot touch and try on apparel products reduces consumers' confidence in their evaluations because

[†] 교신저자 E-mail : khlee@hanyang.ac.kr

they are concerned about fit and size of garments when they shop in e-tailers (Kim & Damhorst, 2010). Acknowledging the impediments to the success of e-tailers, numerous studies have explored factors that influence consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions. Kang and Kim (2006) argue that how much consumers like a website after their visits depends on the consumers' perception of the quality of the website. In this context, this study attempts to explore the factors that influence consumer attitudes toward a website as well as consumer confidences, which all influence their behavioral intentions at the website.

Why do consumers shop at a particular e-tailer? What makes consumers to like the e-tailer after visiting? Understanding consumer motivations and benefits that consumers receive from shopping online would help searching for answers. The benefits that consumers receive from the website are various including product information (e.g., product attributes, pricing information, product demonstration, and purchase opportunity), search information (e.g., access to previous purchases, articles on product category trends, expert product reviews, buying guides, governmental safety regulations, independently conducted product test information), social interaction (e.g., consumer product reviews, blogs), and the ability to efficiently conduct ongoing product search for personal enjoyment. Such experiences and information that consumers could currently gain in e-tail websites were those that they could obtain through using mass media, visiting offline retail stores, or physically trying products (Edwards, 2007). The previous research has shown that the uses-and-gratification approach is useful to understand consumer motivations for and benefits from the uses of media and websites (Ducoffe, 1996; Eighmey, 1997; Kang & Kim, 2006; Lin, 1996; Ruggiero, 2000; Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004). Therefore, applying the uses-and-gratification approach to the context of apparel e-tail websites, the current study aims to

understand factors that influence consumers' attitudes and behavior at e-tailers. Specifically, consumer perceptions of websites' key gratifications are considered the antecedents of consumer attitudes toward an e-tailer and confidence in their attitudes toward the product, which in turn influence their purchase intentions.

II. Background

1. Uses-and-gratification approach

A growing number of studies have employed uses-and-gratifications (U&G) approach (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973; McGuire, 1974) to understand consumers' uses of e-commerce websites (Hausman & Siekpe, 2009; Kang & Kim, 2006). U&G theory was first introduced to explain mass media's persuasion (Katz et al., 1973; McGuire, 1974). The theory proposes that people seek gratifications from media and the observed gratifications influence their decisions for using and evaluating a particular medium (Katz, et al., 1973; McGuire, 1974). Individuals seek gratifications since they choose to use a certain media over other sources of communications to satisfy their needs and to achieve their goals (Katz, Haas, & Gurevitch, 1973; Luo, 2002). Accordingly, many studies from the U&G approach has identified consumers' motivations for the use of media to fulfill their psychological needs (Rubin, 1994).

U&G approach is applicable to various situations especially involving computer-mediated communications (Lin, 1996; Ruggiero, 2000). Also, the literature has categorized multiple constructs related to U&G (Katz et al., 1973; Perse & Courtright, 1993; Rubin & Perse, 1987). Among the various constructs related to uses and gratifications, entertainment and informativeness are considered as most important and robust constructs (Edwards, 2007). Especially in the computer-mediated situations, both entertainment and informativeness have been shown to

influence consumer responses toward the Web (Eighmey & McCord, 1998; Katerattanakul, 2002; Korgaonkar & Wolin, 1999), the Web-based information systems (Negash, Ryan, & Igbaria, 2003), the Web advertising (Ducoffe, 1996; Ko, Cho, & Roberts, 2005; Zhou & Bao, 2002), and the e-commerce website (Chen & Wells, 1999; Eighmey, 1997; Hausman & Siekpe, 2009; Kang & Kim, 2006; Luo, 2002; Richard, Chebat, Yang, & Putrevu, 2010).

In order for e-tailers to succeed, they should know how to hold their consumers to remain in and revisit their online stores (Edwards, 2007). Content gratification (gratifications related to information and entertainment delivered by the media) as opposed to process gratification (gratifications associated with using the medium) is more important in enhancing the "holding power" of websites (Edwards, 2007). That is, the content of a website should fulfill users' needs. Given that the most important gratifications that consumers seek from websites are entertainment and information (Edwards, 2007), how consumers perceive whether an e-tail website is entertaining and informative will influence their response toward the website. Based on the previous literature, therefore, we incorporate perceived entertainment and perceived informativeness as the perceptual antecedents that affect consumers' attitudinal responses toward the product and the e-tail website, which, in turn, influence their purchase intentions.

As the quality of the content (informativeness and entertainment) provided by service providers influences users' satisfaction with their experiences with the providers (Negash et al., 2003; Rodgers, Negash, & Suk, 2005), e-tailers should provide consumers with the informative and entertaining websites, which is also contended by the literature indicating both practical utility (e.g., information search) and hedonic utility (e.g., experiential behavior) as two key categories of online shopping behavior (Hoffman & Novak, 1997; Kang & Kim, 2006; Katerattanakul,

2002).

Perceived entertainment is defined as the extent to which consumer's perception of an e-tailer's website is pleasurable and entertaining. It reflects an e-tail website's ability to provide consumers with pleasurable experiences (Richard et al., 2010). U&G research has indicated that individuals value entertainment of media since it fulfills their affective needs such as aesthetic, pleasurable and emotional experiences and needs for escapism and tension-release (e.g., Edwards, 2007; Katz et al., 1973). Moreover, the literature on hedonic shopping has emphasized that consumers value entertainment, fun, and enjoyment (Babin et al., 1994; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). Furthermore, the literature on the technology acceptance model has also emphasized the role of users' perceived enjoyment/fun in developing their attitudes (Dabholkar & Bagozzi, 2002; Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1992; Igbaria, Parasuraman, & Baroudi, 1996; van der Heijden, 2003). Taken together, it is expected that consumers' perceived entertainment of an e-tailer's website affects their evaluations about the e-tailers.

Perceived informativeness refers to the extent to which consumers perceive an e-tailer's website as informative and useful. It reflects an e-tail website's ability to provide important and relevant information about products, firms, non-commercial information, and transaction (Richard et al., 2010). In order for users to satisfy their needs for information as suggested by the U&G (e.g., Ducoffe, 1996; Edwards, 2007; Zhou & Bao, 2002), the content should be informative, which means it should be accurate, relevant, and useful (Kang & Kim, 2006). Besides, one of the major advantages of e-tailers is that they are able to provide as much information as possible while (Bickart & Schindler, 2001; Demangeot & Broderick, 2010; Jepsen, 2007). The richness of the information is crucial since it may reduce perceived risk associated with online shopping and compensate for

the lack of experience information (Bhatnagar, Misra, & Rao, 2000; Huang et al., 2009). Thus, it is expected that, as consumers perceive that an e-tail website transmits relevant and useful information, they are more likely to develop favorable attitudes toward the e-tailer.

The role of perceived entertainment and perceived informativeness in e-tailers' websites proposed above is further explained by the findings that identify information and entertainment as two primary constructs that consumers seek from the communicated media (Chen & Wells, 1999; Ducoffe, 1995, 1996; Ducoffe & Curlo, 2000; Edwards, 2007; Eighmey, 1997; Eighmey & McCord, 1998; Hausman & Siekpe, 2009; Kang & Kim, 2006; Katerattanakul, 2002; Ko et al., 2005; Korgaonkar & Wolin, 1999; Luo, 2002; Negash et al., 2003; Richard et al., 2010; Rodgers et al., 2005; Rubin, 1994; Zhou & Bao, 2002). Previous studies have evidenced that consumers are less likely to feel intrusive about a mediated communication such as advertising and commercial websites (Edwards, Li, & Lee, 2002) and more likely to form favorable attitudes toward the mediated communication when the mediated communication is perceived to be informative and entertaining (Chen & Wells, 1999; Ducoffe, 1996; Hausman & Siekpe, 2009; Kang & Kim, 2006; Luo, 2002; Negash et al., 2003; Zhou & Bao, 2002). Therefore, this study hypothesizes that consumers who perceive an e-tail website as more informative and entertaining are more likely to exhibit more favorable attitudes toward the e-tailer than those who perceive the website as less informative and entertaining.

Hypothesis 1: *Consumers' perceived entertainment positively influences their attitudes toward the e-tailer.*

Hypothesis 2: *Consumers' perceived informativeness positively influences their attitudes toward the e-tailer.*

Attitude, which refers to a global feeling about an object, has been considered a key determinant of their behavioral intentions, behavioral outcomes, and effectiveness of marketing (Aaker & Stayman,

1990). Attitudinal research has suggested that attitude is a central construct in the formation of behavioral intentions in such a way that more favorable attitudes, compared to less favorable attitudes, lead to greater purchase intentions (Bentler & Speckart, 1979). This chain of causation has been supported as a way to understand and predict consumer behavior in various settings (Sheppard, Hartwick, & Warshaw, 1988). As suggested by the previous literature, it is expected that online consumers' attitudes formed toward an e-tailer will influence their purchase intentions.

Hypothesis 3: *Consumers' attitudes toward the e-tailer positively influence their purchase intentions.*

2. Attitude confidence

Along with attitudes, attitude confidence has been suggested as a crucial indicator of marketing effectiveness and consumer behavior (Bennett & Harrell, 1975; Krishnan & Smith, 1998; Wan, Rucker, Tormala, & Clarkson, 2010). Attitude confidence (interchangeably used with attitude certainty in the literature) represents a metacognition reflecting one's subjective feeling of conviction about his or her attitudes (e.g., I am certain/uncertain that I like this sweater) (Abelson, 1988; Bennett & Harrell, 1975; Gross, Holtz, & Miller, 1995; Krosnick & Petty, 1995) while attitude refers to one's global feeling or evaluation about an object such as a brand or a product (e.g., I like this sweater) (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981). Attitude confidence in this study is defined as a degree of confidence with which the attitude is held toward the product displayed on the product webpage in an e-tail website. Previous research has established that attitude confidence is psychologically distinct from attitude itself in that, although two consumers can hold the same attitudes in terms of attitude valence or extremity, they can differ in their attitude confidence (Berger, 1992; Berger & Mitchell, 1989; Rucker & Petty, 2004; Tormala & Petty, 2002). That is, two consumers holding the same positive

attitude toward a product could be different in their behavioral intentions if one is extremely certain of his or her feelings about the product while the other is not.

Attitude confidence has a great relation with the information. Previous research has indicated that a high level of attitude confidence is more likely to operate in the situations that provide a great amount of quality information (Berger, 1992). For instance, the decision-making literature has shown that the amount of available and relevant information influences confidence in judgments in such a way that individuals' confidence in their judgment increases with increasing information (Koriat, Lichtenstein, & Fischhoff, 1980; Oskamp, 1965; Peterson & Pitz, 1988). In the literature on consumer attitudes, attitudes based on much information are found to be more influential (Davidson, Yantis, Norwood, & Montano, 1985). Moreover, previous research has revealed that attitudes based on the direct behavioral experiences, as opposed to the indirect experiences, and attitudes formed after repeated exposures to advertisements, compared to a single exposure, are held with a higher level of confidence (Berger & Mitchell, 1989; Fazio & Zanna, 1978a, 1978b; Glasman, 2006; Krishnan & Smith, 1998; Smith & Swinyard, 1983). The findings support the effect of the amount of information on confidence showing that consumers hold stronger attitudes in the situations where a greater amount of information is provided (Berger, 1992). It is because the direct experience offers not only the greater information with the experiential information that can be gained through the direct experiences but also the relevant and accurate information that is personally achieved. In a similar vein, the chances for consumers to recode and to retrieve the information become higher with repeated exposure.

Attitude confidence is influenced not only by the amount of information but also by the actual elaboration or the perception of elaboration (Barden &

Petty, 2008; Krosnick & Petty, 1995). One holds attitudes with a great confidence when s/he thinks much about an object and/or when s/he thinks s/he gives much thoughts about an object (Barden & Petty, 2008). Furthermore, according to the dual-processing models, such as H&M (Chaiken, 1980) and ELM (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981, 1986; Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983), attitudes based on the relevant information and a great amount of thoughts are more persistent and predictive of behavior than those based on peripheral cues.

If consumers perceive that an e-tailer provides information that is accurate, relevant, and useful, the likelihood that they are using the information will be high. With the useful information about a product, consumers are less likely to seek more information (Richard et al., 2010) and more likely to use the information available, which leads to a greater confidence in attitudes. If much information is perceived to be used in one's evaluation of a product, the evaluation is perceived to be correct (Barden & Petty, 2008). In contrast, if consumers perceive that the information is irrelevant and inaccurate, the likelihood that one's evaluation about a product is based on the information will be low. Based on the literature, attitudes based on little information and thereby little sources to elaborate on may lead to a lack of confidence in the attitudes. Thus, it is reasonable to expect that consumers develop a high level of confidence in their attitudes toward a product displayed on an e-tailer's website when they perceive the website as informative and useful. Therefore:

Hypothesis 4: *Consumers' perceived informativeness positively influences their attitude confidence.*

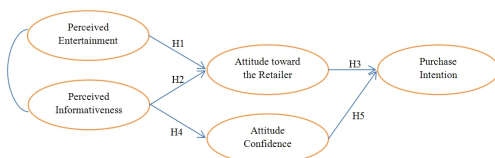
The literature on attitude confidence has shown that attitudes held with a strong confidence are more durable and have a greater influence in guiding behaviors than those held with a weak confidence (Krosnick & Petty, 1995). Previous research has demonstrated that attitudes held with high levels

of confidence are more persistent and resistant to change and more predictive of subsequent behavioral intentions than those with low levels of confidence (Berger & Mitchell, 1989; Fazio & Zanna, 1978a, 1978b; Rucker & Petty, 2004; Smith & Swinyard, 1983).

Since strongly held attitudes are more likely to be developed through the elaboration on the relevant and accurate information about products than weakly held attitudes which tend to be resulted from peripheral cues (Cacioppo, Petty, Kao, & Rodriguez, 1986; Chaiken, 1980; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981, 1986; Petty et al., 1983; Petty, Haugtvedt & Smith, 1995), consumers with strongly held attitudes carry more information in memory that are readily accessible and more diagnostic in their purchase decisions than those with weakly held attitudes (Berger, 1992; Feldman & Lynch, 1988; Lynch, Marmorstein, & Weigold, 1988). Hence, strong attitudes based on more information is more influential to behavioral outcomes (Davidson et al., 1985). In this context, when online consumers hold strong attitudes toward the product, they are more likely to purchase the product in the future. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 5: Consumers' attitude confidence positively influence their purchase intentions.

Based on the literature on the uses and gratification theory and attitude confidence, this study proposes a hypothesized model that examines the relationships among consumers' perceived entertainment and informativeness of an apparel e-tail website, attitudes, attitude confidence, and purchase intention (see Figure 1).



<Fig. 1> A hypothesized model.

III. Methods

1. Data collection and sample

An online survey was conducted to test the hypothesized model. Participants were provided with a webpage from a mock apparel e-tailer in order to reduce any prejudice caused by pre-existing e-tailers. One webpage was developed for this study after conducting a series of pilot-test for the selection of stimulus. Following the general format of existing apparel e-tailers, the webpage includes a fictitious brand name, a product image, product specification, and images of links to general information about the retailer. After browsing the webpage, they were asked to finish the online survey. Consumer panel sample was collected from a market-research company located in the United States. A total of 119 female consumers, who had shopped for or searched for information about outdoor clothing, participated in the study. Average age of the respondents was 46.5. 91.6% of the sample was Caucasian American. 75.6% of them was married or living with partners. In terms of education, 22.7% has high school degree or less and 56.3% has some college degrees.

2. Measures

Perceived entertainment, perceived informativeness, and purchase intentions were measured using seven-point Likert scale ranging from “very strongly disagree” (1) to “very strongly agree” (7). Three items measuring perceived entertainment (e.g., “The website that I've just browsed was enjoyable.”) and three items measuring perceived informativeness (e.g., “The website that I've just browsed supplied relevant information on the product.”) were adapted from Zhou and Bao (2002). The measure of purchase intentions was adopted from the previous literature (e.g., “It is likely that I would buy this jacket.”) (Putrevu & Lord, 1994). Three items for attitude confidence (“How certain are you of your opinion about the product evaluated above?”), adopted from

Barden and Petty (2008), used seven-point Likert scale ranging from “not at all” to “very certain (confident, sure).” Attitude toward the retailer were measured using four seven-point semantic differential scales adopted by Kempf and Smith (1998) and MacKenzie and Lutz (1989) (e.g., “bad/good” to the question “describe your feelings toward the online store.”). Since previous literature has shown that consumer expertise and previous experiences can influence their attitudes and online shopping behavior (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987; Graeff, 1997; Sujun, 1985; Zhou & Bao, 2002), consumers’ prior knowledge about the product category (e.g., “I know a lot about outdoor clothing”), their experience with the product category (e.g., “How often do you shop for outdoor clothing online?”), and the Internet usage (e.g., “How often do you use the Internet?”) were measured as covariates. The items were adapted from previous literature (Graeff, 1997; Zhou & Bao, 2002).

IV. Results and Discussion

1. Measurement model

Using AMOS 16.0, a measurement model was tested by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to confirm the convergent and discriminant validity of latent constructs. In confirmatory factor analysis, one item from perceived informativeness was removed and the errors of two items from attitude toward the retailer were correlated based on the high modification indices with cross-loadings, and

a close examination of the items. Overall, the modified measurement model fits the data well ($\chi^2=202.858$, $df=93$, $CMIN/DF=2.181$, $NFI=.919$, $TLI=.941$, $CFI=.954$). The convergent validities of latent constructs were verified by factor loadings, composite reliabilities, and average variances extracted (AVEs). All factor loadings for remaining items were significant at $p<.001$. The construct reliabilities of the factors were acceptable, ranging from .88 to .97, all exceeding the minimum criterion of .60 (Bagozzi & Youjae, 1988). The AVEs captured by indicators ranged from .64 to .91, exceeding the recommended threshold value of .50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Discriminant validity was examined by comparing the squared correlation estimates between all the possible pairs of constructs and the AVEs for the individual construct, which revealed that all the AVEs are greater than the shared variances between the constructs, indicating discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 1 presents the correlations of constructs and AVEs of the measurement model.

2. Testing the structural model

The proposed model of the current study posits that two cognitive antecedents (perceived informativeness and perceived entertainment) influence attitudinal responses (attitude toward the e-tailer, attitude confidence), which in turn influences purchase intentions. Consumer knowledge about the product category and their experiences with Internet usage and online

<Table 1> AVEs and squared correlations of constructs

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Perceived informativeness	.908				
2. Perceived entertainment	.721	.782			
3. Attitudes toward the retailer	.514	.607	.644		
4. Purchase intentions	.326	.466	.497	.878	
5. Attitude confidence	.251	.182	.120	.219	.896

Note. Diagonal elements are the square root of the average variance extracted. Off-diagonal elements are the squared correlations of constructs.

shopping for the same product category were used as covariates. Using AMOS 16.0, a structural equation modeling was developed to estimate the hypothesized relationships in the proposed model. The fit statistics indicated that the hypothesized model fits the data well ($\chi^2=254.601$, $df=133$, $p<.001$ CMIN/DF=1.914, NFI=.904, TLI=.937, CFI=.951). The results of hypotheses testing are summarized in Table 2.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 hypothesize the positive influence of consumers' perceived entertainment and perceived informativeness on their attitudes toward the e-tailer. While the effect of perceived entertainment was significant, that of perceived informativeness was not significant. Findings from this study showed that respondents' perceived entertainment ($b=.678$, $p<.001$) not perceived informativeness leads to their attitudes toward the e-tailer. Thus, H1 was accepted while H2 was rejected. The significant effect of participants' perceived entertainment of a retailer's website on their attitudes toward the e-tailer emphasizes the role consumer perceptions of website's entertainment in e-tailing, consistent with the previous literature. As consumers perceive that the e-tailer's website provides entertainment, they are more likely to develop favorable attitudes toward the e-tailer.

Although numerous studies in communication and information systems have supported the role of perceived informativeness as one of gratifications of their uses, however, this study fails to support the effect of the participants' perceived informativeness on their attitudes. The insignificant relationship may suggest that apparel consumers do not value information provided by apparel e-tailers. However, we cannot be sure since there are numerous possible explanations for the insignificant relationship. First of all, it is possible that the research design was not valid. The mock-webpage was not real and therefore was not enough to create variation in consumers' perception of website's informativeness. Second, since this study was conducted on female

consumers, it may be possible that female consumers were gratified by entertainment rather than information from e-tailers, which is consistent with a study suggesting that a greater percentage of men seek information (Teo, 2001). Third, since the participants' perceived informativeness was highly correlated with their perceived entertainment in the current study, the perceived informativeness might behave as a suppressant reducing its own effect, which in turn improves the predictive power of perceived entertainment. Fourth, it is possible that there are other factors that influence the effect of perceived informativeness on consumer attitudes. Previous research has shown that although the same content is provided to users, consumers' perception of the content may vary by individual characteristics and motivations (Hausman & Siekpe, 2009; Zhou & Bao, 2002). For instance, Zhou and Bao (2002) demonstrate that consumers with a high level of escapism motivation perceive the web advertising as more entertaining while those with a high level of information motivation perceive the web advertising as more informative. If the participants are prone to escapism motivation, they might value website's entertainment rather than informativeness. Furthermore, Lee and Choi (2005) found that perceived informativeness varies by individuals' cultural orientations in such a way that individuals with high levels of horizontal individualism perceive Web ad to be less informative than those with high levels of vertical individualism. In sum, other factors may explain the insignificant relationship.

H3 posits the positive effect of attitude toward the e-tailer on purchase intention. The results showed that consumers with a higher level of attitudes are more likely to exhibit their intentions to purchase the product ($b=.635$, $p<.001$), supporting H3. Consistent with the previous literature on attitudes (e.g., Davis et al., 1992; Sheppard et al., 1988), this study also evidences that consumer attitudes is a powerful indicator of purchase intention.

<Table 2> Summary of hypotheses testing

Hypotheses	Standard b estimates	t-value
H1: Perceived entertainment → Attitude toward the e-tailer	.678	4.782 ($p<.001$)
H2: Perceived informativeness → Attitude toward the e-tailer	.108	.810 ($p<.418$)
H3: Attitude toward the e-tailer → Purchase intentions	.635	7.891 ($p<.001$)
H4: Perceived informativeness → Attitude confidence	.398	4.863 ($p<.001$)
H5: Attitude confidence → Purchase intentions	.241	3.369 ($p<.001$)

With respect to the role of attitude confidence, H4 and H5 posit that a greater degree of perceived informativeness increases consumers' attitude confidence, which in turn influence their purchase intentions. The results demonstrated the significantly positive influence of the participants' perceived informativeness on their attitude confidence ($b=.398$, $p<.001$) and of attitude confidence on purchase intentions ($b=.241$, $p<.001$), in support of H4 and H5, respectively. Following the previous research supporting the role of confidence as an antecedent of behavioral intentions (Bennett & Harrell, 1975; Laroche, Kim, & Zhou, 1996), the results provide additional evidence that confidence in product evaluation, as well as attitudes toward the retailer, are important determinants of purchase intentions of the product. This supports the notion that attitude studies need to include consumer confidence because confidently held attitudes behave differently from weakly held attitudes (Krishnan & Smith, 1998). The role of consumer confidence appears to be especially important in online shopping behavior for apparel since consumers perceive high levels of uncertainty and risks caused by a lack of presence, the inability to physically examine and try on products, and the privacy concerns in online environments, as noted by numerous studies (Forsythe & Shi, 2003; Freeman, 2000; Kim & Damhorst, 2010).

V. Conclusion

This study provides an empirical examination of

the effects of consumer perceptions of two website's gratifications (perceived entertainment and perceived informativeness) on consumer attitudinal responses (attitudes toward the website and consumer confidence in their attitudes toward the product), which also have impact on their purchase intentions. The findings of the study contribute to the practical field of apparel e-tailing. As evidenced by the study, consumers' perceived entertainment plays an important role in forming their attitudes and purchase intentions. Thus, e-tailers should consider how to design their websites to increase consumers' perceived entertainment. For example, Hausman and Siekpe (2009) suggest that human factors, such as global search feature, humor, language options, links to similar websites, feedback features, gift services, and number of visitors to site, induce consumers' perceived entertainment of the website. The entertainment-inducing features may vary across website's characteristics. For instance, features that may induce perceived entertainment in the third-party websites may differ from those in B2C websites. Moreover, the features that increase perceived entertainment of consumers shopping for apparel may differ from those of those shopping for cars or computers. Future study can explore the entertainment-inducing features that apparel e-tailers can provide to consumers.

The effect of perceived informativeness on consumer attitudes was not significant in this study, which is inconsistent with the previous literature. As discussed before, the effect of perceived informativeness on consumer attitudes is inconclusive. Therefore, future research needs to explore a boundary

condition for the effect of perceived informativeness on consumer attitudes.

The results of the study highlight the role of consumer confidence in consumers' decision making, raising a need to explore antecedent factors that increase consumer confidence in this context. The literature on attitude confidence has revealed general antecedents such as knowledge, thoughts, attitude diagnosticity/accessibility, framing, and consistency of information among information sources (Gross et al., 1995; Smith & Swinyard, 1988). Future research is recommended to identify factors in online apparel e-tailers that can be commensurate with and/or induce such antecedents of consumer confidence. For example, which features of apparel e-tail websites can influence consumer attitude diagnosticity/accessibility? In relation, this study provides one of the antecedents: perceived informativeness. This study demonstrates that, as consumers believe that an e-tailer provides sufficient information about the product, they are more likely to become certain about their evaluations about the product displayed on the e-tailer's website. Given the important role of attitude confidence in online shopping environments, future research should uncover other antecedent factors of consumer confidence.

The current study used one webpage and asked the participants to imagine the situation. Since there was some level of lack of reality, the findings cannot be generalized to all online shoppers. The main population for this study was female consumers living in the U.S. who have shopped for or searched for information about outdoor clothing. Thus, generalization of the findings to other groups, such as consumers with little experience with online shopping, should be made with caution.

References

- Aaker, D. A., & Stayman, D. M.(1990). Measuring audience perceptions of commercials and relating them to Ad impact. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 30(4), 7-18.
- Abelson, R. P.(1988). Conviction. *American Psychologist*, 43(4), 267-275.
- Alba, J. W., & Hutchinson, J. W.(1987). Dimensions of consumer expertise. *The Journal of Consumer Research*, 13(4), 411-454.
- Bagozzi, R. P., & Youjae, Y.(1988). On the evaluation of structural equation models. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 16(1), 74-94.
- Barden, J., & Petty, R. B.(2008). The mere perception of elaboration creates attitude certainty: Exploring the thoughtfulness heuristic. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95(3), 489-509.
- Bennett, P. D., & Harrell, G. D.(1975). The role of confidence in understanding and predicting buyers' attitudes and purchase intentions. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 2(2), 110-117.
- Bentler, P. M., & Speckart, G.(1979). Models of attitude-behavior relations. *Psychological Review*, 86(5), 452-464.
- Berger, I. E.(1992). The nature of attitude accessibility and attitude confidence: A triangulated experiment. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 1(2), 103-123.
- Berger, I. E., & Mitchell, A. A.(1989). The effect of advertising on attitude accessibility, attitude confidence, and the attitude-behavior relationship. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16(3), 269-279.
- Bhatnagar, A., Misra, S., & Rao, H. R.(2000). On risk, convenience, and Internet shopping behavior. *Communications of the ACM*, 43, 98-105.
- Bickart, B., & Schindler, R. M.(2001). Internet forums as influential sources of consumer information *Journal of Interactive Marketing* 15(3), 31-40.
- Brown, M., Pope, N., & Voges, K.(2003). Buying or browsing? *European Journal of Marketing*, 37(11/12), 1666-1684.

- Cacioppo, J. T., Petty, R. E., Kao, C. F., & Rodriguez, R.(1986). Central and peripheral routes to persuasion: An individual difference perspective *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 51(5), 1032-1043.
- Chaiken, S.(1980). Heuristic versus systematic information processing and the use of source versus message cues in persuasion. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 39(5), 752-766.
- Chen, Q., & Wells, W. D.(1999). Attitude toward the Site. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 39, 27-37.
- Dabholkar, P. A., & Bagozzi, R. P.(2002). An attitudinal model of technology-based self-service: Moderating effects of consumer traits and situational factors. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 30(3), 184-201.
- Davidson, A. R., Yantis, S., Norwood, M., & Montano, D. E.(1985). Amount of information about the attitude object and attitude-behavior consistency. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 49(5), 1184-1198.
- Davis, F. D., Bagozzi, R. P., & Warshaw, P. R. (1992). Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation to use computers in the workplace 1. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 22(14), 1111-1132.
- Demangeot, C., & Broderick, A. J.(2010). Consumer perceptions of online shopping environments: A gestalt approach. *Psychology and Marketing*, 27(2), 117-140. doi: 10.1002/mar.20323
- Dennis, C., Harris, L., & Sandhu, B.(2002). From bricks to clicks: Understanding the e-consumer. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 5(4), 281-290.
- Ducoffe, R. H.(1995). How consumers assess the value of advertising. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*, 17(1), 1-18.
- Ducoffe, R. H.(1996). Advertising value and advertising the web. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 36(5), 21-35.
- Ducoffe, R. H., & Curlo, E.(2000). Advertising value and advertising processing. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 6(4), 247-262.
- Edwards, S. M.(2007). Motivations for using the Internet and its implications for Internet advertising In D. W. Schumann & E. Thorson (Eds.), *Internet advertising theory and research* (pp. 91-119). Mahwah, NJ Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Edwards, S. M., Li, H., & Lee, J.-H.(2002). Forced exposure and psychological reactance: Antecedents and consequences of the perceived intrusiveness of pop-up ads. *Journal of Advertising*, 31(3), 83-95.
- Eighmey, J.(1997). Profiling user responses to commercial web sites. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 37(3), 59-66.
- Eighmey, J., & McCord, L.(1998). Adding value in the information age: Uses and gratifications of sites on the World Wide Web. *Journal of Business Research*, 41(3), 187-194.
- Evans, P. F., Sehgal, V., Bugnaru, C., & McGoan, B.(2009). *US online retail forecast, 2008 to 2013*. In Forrester (Ed.), (February 2, 2009 ed.): Forrester Research Inc.
- Fazio, R. H., & Zanna, M. P.(1978a). Attitudinal qualities relating to the strength of the attitude-behavior relationship. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 14(4), 398-408.
- Fazio, R. H., & Zanna, M. P.(1978b). On the predictive validity of attitudes: The roles of direct experience and confidence 1. *Journal of Personality*, 46(2), 228-243.
- Feldman, J. M., & Lynch, J. G.(1988). Self-generated validity and other effects of measurement on belief, attitude, intention and behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 73(3), 421-435.
- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F.(1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39-50.

- Forsythe, S. M., & Shi, B.(2003). Consumer patronage and risk perceptions in Internet shopping. *Journal of Business Research*, 56(11), 867-875.
- Freeman, L.(2000). Keeping 'em happy. *Marketing Letters*, 34(10), 21.
- Glasman, L. R., Albarracín, D.(2006). Forming attitudes that predict future behavior: A meta-analysis of the attitude-behavior relation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 132(5), 778-822.
- Graeff, T. R.(1997). Comprehending product attributes and benefits: The role of product knowledge and means-end chain inferences. *Psychology & Marketing*, 14(2), 163-183.
- Gross, S. R., Holtz, R., & Miller, N.(1995). Attitude certainty In R. E. Petty & J. A. Krosnick (Eds.), *Attitude strength: Antecedents and consequences* (pp. 215-245). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Hausman, A. V., & Siekpe, J. S.(2009). The effect of web interface features on consumer online purchase intentions. *Journal of Business Research*, 62(1), 5-13.
- Hirschman, E. C., & Holbrook, M. B.(1982). Hedonic consumption: Emerging concepts, methods and propositions. *Journal of Marketing*, 46(3), 92-101.
- Hoffman, D. L., & Novak, T. P.(1997). A new marketing paradigm for electronic commerce. *Information Society*, 13(1), 43-54.
- Huang, P., Lurie, N. H., & Mitra, S.(2009). Searching for experience on the web: An empirical examination of consumer behavior for search and experience goods. *Journal of Marketing*, 73(2), 55-69.
- Igbaria, M., Parasuraman, S., & Baroudi, J. J.(1996). A motivational model of microcomputer usage. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 13(1), 127-143.
- Jepsen, A. L.(2007). Factors affecting consumer use of the Internet for information search. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 21(3), 21-34.
- Kang, Y.-S., & Kim, Y. J.(2006). Do visitors' interest level and perceived quantity of web page content matter in shaping the attitude toward a web site? *Decision Support Systems*, 42(2), 1187-1202.
- Katerattanakul, P.(2002). Framework of effective web site design for business-to-consumer internet commerce. *INFOR*, 40(1), 57-70.
- Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M.(1973). Uses and gratifications research. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 37(4), 509-523.
- Katz, E., Haas, H., & Gurevitch, M.(1973). On the use of the mass media for important things. *American Sociological Review*, 38(2), 164-181.
- Kempf, D. S., & Smith, R. E.(1998). Consumer processing of product trial and the influence of prior advertising: A structural modeling approach. *Journal of Marketing Research* 35(3), 325-338.
- Kim, H., & Damhorst, M. L.(2010). The relationship of body-related self-discrepancy to body dissatisfaction, apparel involvement, concerns with fit and size of garments, and purchase intentions in online apparel shopping. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 28(4), 239-254.
- Ko, H., Cho, C.-H., & Roberts, M. S.(2005). Internet uses and gratifications: A structural equation model of interactive advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, 34(2), 57-70.
- Korgaonkar, P. K., & Wolin, L. D.(1999). A multivariate analysis of Web usage. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 39, 53-68.
- Koriat, A., Lichtenstein, S., & Fischhoff, B.(1980). Reasons for confidence. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Learning and Memory*, 6(2), 107-118.
- Krishnan, H. S., & Smith, R. E.(1998). The relative endurance of attitudes, confidence, and attitude-behavior consistency: The role of information source and delay. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 7(3), 273-298.

- Krosnick, J. A., & Petty, R. E.(1995). Attitude strength: An overview. In R. E. Petty & J. A. Krosnick (Eds.), *Attitude strength: Antecedents and consequences* (pp. 1-24). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Laroche, M., Kim, C., & Zhou, L.(1996). Brand familiarity and confidence as determinants of purchase intention: An empirical test in a multiple brand context. *Journal of Business Research*, 37(2), 115-120.
- Lee, W.-N., & Choi, S. M.(2005). The role of horizontal and vertical individualism and collectivism in online consumers' responses toward persuasive communication on the web. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 11(1), 317-336.
- Lin, C. A.(1996). Looking back: The contribution of Blumler and Katz's uses of mass communication. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 40(4), 574-581.
- Luo, X.(2002). Uses and gratifications theory and e-consumer behaviors: A structural equation modeling study. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 2(2), 34-41.
- Lynch, J. G., Marmorstein, H., & Weigold, M. F. (1988). Choices from sets including remembered brands: Use of recalled attributes and prior overall evaluations. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15(2), 169-184.
- MacKenzie, S. B., & Lutz, R. J.(1989). An empirical examination of the structural antecedents of attitude toward the ad in an advertising pretesting context. *Journal of Marketing*, 53(2), 48-65.
- McGuire, W. J.(1974). Psychological motives and communication gratification. In J. G. Blumer & E. Katz (Eds.), *The uses of mass communications*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.
- Negash, S., Ryan, T., & Igbaria, M.(2003). Quality and effectiveness in Web-based customer support systems. *Information & Amp; Management*, 40(8), 757-768.
- Oskamp, S.(1965). Overconfidence in case-study judgments. *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, 29(3), 261-265.
- Perse, E. M., & Courtright, J. A.(1993). Normative images of communication media mass and interpersonal channels in the new media environment. *Human Communication Research*, 19(4), 485-503.
- Peterson, D. K., & Pitz, G. F.(1988). Confidence, uncertainty, and the use of information. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 14(1), 85-92.
- Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T.(1981). *Attitudes and persuasion: Classic and contemporary approaches*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T.(1986). *Communication and persuasion: Central and peripheral routes to attitude change*. New York: Springer.
- Petty, R. E., Cacioppo, J. T., & Schumann, D. (1983). Central and peripheral routes to advertising effectiveness: The moderating role of involvement. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 10(2), 135-146.
- Petty, R. E., Haugtvedt, C. P., & Smith, S. M. (1995). Elaboration as a determinant of attitude strength: Creating attitudes that are persistent, resistant, and predictive of behavior. In R. E. Petty & J. A. Krosnick (Eds.), *Attitude strength: Antecedents and consequences* (pp. 93-130). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Putrevu, S., & Lord, K. R.(1994). Comparative and noncomparative advertising: Attitudinal effects under cognitive and affective involvement conditions. *Journal of Advertising*, 23(2), 77-91.
- Quarterly retail e-commerce sales: 4th quarter 2011. (2012). Retrieved February 29, 2012, from U.S. Census Bureau News http://www.census.gov/retail/mrts/www/data/pdf/ec_current.pdf
- Richard, M.-O., Chebat, J.-C., Yang, Z., & Putrevu, S.(2010). A proposed model of online con-

- sumer behavior: Assessing the role of gender. *Journal of Business Research*, 63(9-10), 926-934.
- Rodgers, W., Negash, S., & Suk, K.(2005). The moderating effect of on-line experience on the antecedents and consequences of on-line satisfaction. *Psychology and Marketing*, 22(4), 313-331.
- Rubin, A. M.(1994). Media uses and effects: A uses-and-gratification perspective. In J. Bryant & D. Zillman (Eds.), *Media effects: Advances in theory and research* (pp. 417-436). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Rubin, A. M., & Perse, E. M.(1987). Audience activity and television news gratifications. *Communication Research*, 14(1), 58-84.
- Rucker, D. D., & Petty, R. E.(2004). When resistance is futile: Consequences of failed counterarguing for attitude certainty. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 86(2), 219-235.
- Ruggiero, T. E.(2000). Uses and gratifications theory in the 21st century. *Mass Communication & Society*, 3(1), 3-37.
- Sheppard, B. H., Hartwick, J., & Warshaw, P. R. (1988). The theory of reasoned action: A meta-analysis of past research with recommendations for modifications and future research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15(3), 325-343.
- Smith, R. E., & Swinyard, W. R.(1983). Attitude-behavior consistency: The impact of product trial versus advertising. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 20(3), 257-267.
- Smith, R. E., & Swinyard, W. R.(1988). Cognitive response to advertising and trial: Belief strength, belief confidence and product curiosity. *Journal of Advertising*, 17(3), 3-14.
- Stafford, T. F., Stafford, M. R., & Schkade, L. L.(2004). Determining uses and gratifications for the internet. *Decision Sciences*, 35(2), 259-288.
- Sujan, M.(1985). Consumer knowledge: Effects on evaluation strategies mediating consumer judgments. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 12(1), 31-46.
- Teo, T. S. H.(2001). Demographic and motivation variables associated with Internet usage activities *Internet Research: Electronic Networking Applications and Policy* 11(2), 125-137.
- Teo, T. S. H., & Yu, Y.(2005). Online buying behavior: A transaction cost economics perspective. *Omega*, 33(5), 451-465.
- Tormala, Z. L., & Petty, R. E.(2002). What doesn't kill me makes me stronger: The effects of resisting persuasion on attitude certainty. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83(6), 1298-1313.
- van der Heijden, H.(2003). Factors influencing the usage of websites: the case of a generic portal in The Netherlands. *Information & Management*, 40(6), 541-549. doi: 10.1016/s0378-7206(02)00079-4
- Wan, E. W., Rucker, D. D., Tormala, Z. L., & Clarkson, J. J.(2010). The effect of regulatory depletion on attitude certainty. *Journal of Marketing Research* 47(3), 531-541. doi: 10.1509/jmkr.47.3.531
- Zhou, Z., & Bao, Y.(2002). Users' attitudes toward Web advertising: Effects of internet motivation and internet ability. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 29(1), 71-78.