

Motivations and Characteristics of Hashtag Users

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Abstract

In social environments, hashtags have been widely adopted and have become a new form of language for users. The current study attempts to enhance our understanding of users and their motivations to use hashtags when posting fashion-related information. Specifically, this study examines whether user characteristics (fashion leadership, conspicuousness) influence their motivations to use hashtags (curation, self-presentation, information diffusion), which then leads to behavioral intentions to continue to use hashtags and recommend the same to others. An online survey was administered to test our research questions. A total of 136 consumers in their 20s, 30s, and 40s living in Korea were used for data analysis. Structural equation modeling was conducted, which revealed that fashion leadership and conspicuousness had a positive impact on users' motivations of curation, self-presentation, and information diffusion. Motivations of self-presentation and information diffusions were found to affect users' behavioral intentions while curation had no significant impact. Practical implications are presented.

Keywords : hashtags motivations, fashion leadership, conspicuousness

I. Introduction

In Web 2.0 environments, individuals freely share thoughts and opinions; enjoy information posted by other consumers; and produce and distribute information even if they are not professional journalists (Tuten & Solomon, 2013). In this environment, social network service (SNS) is positioning itself as a major communication channel for consumers, especially for young

consumers, aided by its attractive features such as the internet-based two-way communication structure, easy production of information, and effective supply and sharing. As SNS enables users to have access to information of interest, it serves as a hub of community for users in the form of direct participation.

The earlier days of SNS services were led by SNS platforms focusing on texts and social interactions such as Facebook and Twitter.

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Then, so-called 'third-generation SNS' like Instagram and Pinterest has emerged, which focus on images around topical themes and offer curation functions (Korea Internet & Security Agency, 2014).

With the rapid growth of users and communications via SNS, the information as well as conversations have been enormously accumulated at a fast rate. With the deluge of information, SNS users have come to face difficulties in detecting the information useful to them. Then the hashtag (#), employed first by Twitter users as a navigation function, has become widely adopted by users of other SNS platforms to detect and organize the information effectively. A keyword behind '#' shows that the post is about the relevant keyword. Thus, a hashtag was implemented for convenience of searching and organizing posts, which allow users to view and collect only the keyword-related information.

As hashtags have become widely adopted, the use of hashtags has evolved from for simple tagging for information to for other motivations such as diffusing information on certain topics and revealing themselves in public. For example, according to DMC Report, 40.7% of people use hashtags mainly to share personal views and feelings, and 34.1% use them to search brand categories that they are personally interested in (DMC Media, 2015). Moreover, the use of hashtags can be an effective marketing tool since hashtags help posts exposed to other users in SNS. For instance, celebrities naturally post their daily clothes or fashion accessories on SNS, which attract users who follow them or have similar interest. Fashion items used by celebrities or individuals have advertising impact since they are repeatedly exposed on SNS (Son, 2015). Also, some people use hashtags to show

off by adopting hashtags preceded by their own creative keyword like '#coolstagram' or '#clothestagram'. Thus, hashtags can be employed from the strategic approach (Morrison, 2015).

Communication through hashtags is an interesting social phenomenon since social media have become a major communication vehicle for young consumers and hashtags have become a language for them (Morrison, 2015). Moreover, hashtags can be utilized as a marketing tool since posts with hashtags as well as the users can influence readers and even other people who rarely use social media since hashtags are capable of connecting posts to external sources. However, little research has been conducted on this phenomenon of using hashtags. Especially, little research has identified user characteristics that drive the use of hashtags even though users can be influential in others and thereby have an advertising impact. Thus, the current study attempts to explore consumers' characteristics associated with hashtag usages, and their motivations to continuously use hashtags in their posts. Furthermore, this study examines whether these motivations lead to their behavioral intention to continue using and recommending hashtags to others.

II. Literature Review

1. Motivations for Using Hashtags

A Hashtag is the "specific name for a tag" (p. 173, Huang, Thornton, & Efthimiadis, 2012). It appears first in Twitter, which marks a message with a # symbol (hash mark) to show the nature of the post. In SNS environments, where an

enormous volume of posts and comments are accumulated at a fast rate, it is hard for individuals to find the useful contents with them and to keep posts exposed to other people. In such an environment, hashtags become useful in searching the content of interest and connecting the posts to outside of the platform. By starting with the # symbol in a post, the post becomes conveniently linked to other contents and people that use the keyword. Aided by hashtags, people can conveniently expose their information for others to detect easily, in order to achieve collective sharing of values through communication focused on topical information. Moreover, hashtags allow users to express their own thoughts and ideas to easily disseminate their posts, and to search or organize the interested information by tagging keywords. Thus, people adopt hashtags based on the values that hashtags provide, which include collecting and categorizing topical conversations (Rossi & Magnani, 2012); diffusing information (Liu & Jansen, 2013; Huang et al., 2012); and representing users' identity and characteristics (Tidlund & Ohman, 2015).

1) Curation

The curation function describes a filtering system to restructure massive online data according to themes by collecting and organizing the selected information (Choi, 2014). Hashtags play a mediating role to help users have a prompt access to massive data in desired forms (Ahn, 2015). Thus, users can effectively collect and categorize the information and social conversations desired by them.

Probably one of the most desired benefits of using hashtags is that it serves as a bookmark of content (Efron, 2010). By using hashtags,

contents are linked to similar topics even in external environments. Moreover, hashtags allow users to locate other people and communities with similar interest by tracking the hashtags. Thus, users can track the information of particular topics, posted URLs, retrievals, other users, and communities using associated hashtags, and classify the clusters of such information on an ongoing basis. Besides, previous research has identified that information seeking is a key motivation for using SNS (Lee & Choi, 2015). The study especially points out that through SNS people also obtain others' experiences posted on SNS, which serves as a key benefit of using SNS (Lee & Choi 2015). In social media environments, people desire to acquire much information that may include others' experiences (Lee & Choi, 2015). Hashtags then serves as a tool to facilitate the seeking process and help users to gain the useful information with ease.

Social curation function has become a major means of effective contents organization and a key motivations to use SNS (Rossi & Magnani, 2012). Ko, Shin, Ko, and Chae (2014) shows that curation is one of the key motivational factors of using image-focused SNS such as Instagram. The study explains that the curation function, through which users selectively collect and share desired information, is gaining more importance (Ko et al., 2014). Especially in the third-generation SNS like Instagram or Pinterest, people tend to use SNS as a form of scrapbook (Phillips, Miller, & McQuarrie, 2014), which implies that users now take only the useful information with them and organize the information around particular topics or themes. In such a case, hashtags serve as a role in detecting and classifying the information desired by users. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect

that the curation function of hashtags is one of the key motivations for users to continue using hashtags in their posts and recommending to others.

2) Self-presentation

Besides the navigational role of hashtag, another role that hashtags can serve is the expressive value of users and the content (Schau & Gilly, 2003; Yang, Sun, Zhang, & Mei, 2012). Expressive value of self-presentation is one of the main motivations that people use social media (Park & Cho, 2004; Lee & Choi, 2015). People voluntarily expose themselves in SNS by posting information authored and constructed by themselves (Lee & Choi, 2015). By posting, they want to share their current state with others and/or like to show off through their own self-presentation strategies (Schau & Gilly, 2003).

Self-presentation is the intentional components of identity to convey the desired impression (Goffman, 1959). In digital environments, it is possible for users to manage their presentation of self to project their "ideal self" by manipulating their photos and texts (Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006). As Schau and Gilly (2003) mention "we are what we post," consumers self-present themselves online by posting self-constructed content. Since self-presentation is contextual (Goffman, 1959), users use materialistic possessions as a contextual cues to self-present themselves. In digital environments, users construct their posts by selecting and manipulating texts, images, and commercial referents such as clothes, automobiles, personal experiences in any given context. Such a "digital self" can be presented and communicated beyond temporal and

physical limitations in social media.

In SNS environment where conversations are piled up exponentially, hashtags become a useful means to facilitate the process of self-presentation. With hashtags, posts can be communicated to reveal users and/or communities effectively since keywords with hashtags are devised to express the nature of the posts and the characteristics of writers and/or communities (Tidlund & Ohman, 2015). Besides, people select and create their own vocabulary to provide meanings in their own understanding when tagging (Adler, 2013). For example, some hashtags are presented in order for readers to have a glimpse of the nature of posts and/or characteristics of the user, which attracts people. Thus, posts with hashtags can be considered by-product of self-presentation. Based on the literature, we suggest that the self-expression is one of the motivations that influence individuals' intentions to use hashtags and recommend to others.

3) Information Diffusion

Another key benefit from using a hashtag is in its' ability of diffusing information (Liu & Jansen, 2013; Huang et al., 2012). Digital environments allow users to communicate beyond the limits of physical boundaries and ecological characteristics. Thus, information can be widely disseminated through this vehicle.

Information effectively spread through hashtags (Karr, 2015). People use a hashtag acknowledging that the posts can be detected by people who search the hashtag. Since people can track and follow one's content through hashtags, one's ideas and posts can be disseminated to anonymous users through hashtags. Tidlund and Ohman (2015) asserts

that hashtags play as actors in the production of communication, which reach out audiences through hashtags and entices other contents with similar topics.

Hashtags leverage connections across multiple platforms (Karr, 2015). Thus, one's information can be effectively disseminated to the wide range of users and platforms external to social media from friends and acquaintances to complete strangers (Rzeszotarski et al., 20). Such characteristics of hashtags have marketers utilize hashtags creatively in order to have a advertising impact (Karr, 2015; Morrison, 2015). Based on the discussions above, it is expected that users' motivation of diffusing the information influences their behavioral intention to continue using hashtags in their posts and recommending to others.

2. User Characteristics

1) Fashion Leadership

Fashion leadership refers to the degree of an individual's influence over the public in adopting innovations in the process of innovation diffusion (Lee, 2013; Moon & Choo, 2008; Sung & Kim, 2015). Individuals with a high level of fashion leadership tend to be more interested in fashion, explore new information, and possess more information about fashion than others with a low level of fashion leadership (Studak & Workman, 2004). Also, fashion leaders tend to be more confident in their information and their own taste (Kaiser, 1990). From the behavioral perspective, fashion leaders are more likely to acquire information on fashion through fashion magazines and attend fashion shows (Goldsmith Heitmeyer, & Freiden, 1991; Mason & Belleger, 1973-74), to spend more time and money for

fashion items (Goldsmith et al., 1991), and to adopt new fashion items faster than others (Kaiser, 1990). Such characteristics are also observed in digital environments, as fashion leadership has been show to positively influences WOM communication through SNS (Park, Chung, & Jeon, 2012).

Fashion leaders have an access to a wide range of information sources mostly from marketer-dominated sources (Polegato & Wall, 1980). While fashion leaders acquire the fashion information from marketer-dominated sources to evaluate and comprehend the information, fashion followers tend to depend on consumer-dominated sources (Polegato & Wall, 1980). This implies that fashion leaders, compared to followers, are relatively confident in evaluating the quality of information that they acquire, and feel comfortable in comprehending the fashion items using the marketer-provided information.

Furthermore, previous research shows that people with a high level of fashion leadership, compared to those with a low level of leadership, are more likely to be interested in gossips (Lee & Workman, 2013). Gossips are particularly important form of WOM communication in communicating fashion items among consumers (Lee & Workman, 2013). This implies that people with a high level of fashion leadership tend to have a high intention to engage in gossips and to spread the information to others, which thereby influence others in SNS. They are also shown to have a tendency to express the self and to be conscious about others' behaviors (Lee & Workman, 2013). Moreover, fashion leaders tend to know which information is needed at the time of searching since they are knowledgeable in fashion information and be confident in evaluating the

quality of information (Polegato & Wall, 1980; Studak & Workman, 2004). Thus, it is expected that those with a high level of fashion leadership are more comfortable in expressing their tastes and themselves.

The findings show that fashion leaders are more confident in their opinions and the information they acquired, and feel comfortable in providing them to other consumers. Thus, consumers with a high level of fashion leadership are more likely to express their opinions through SNS. Moreover, they are more likely to use hashtags to disseminate fashion-related information, to self-present their own tastes and identity, and to detect and organize the information that they specifically want. Therefore, it is expected that users' fashion leadership positively influence their motivations to use hashtags, which include information diffusion, self-presentation, and information curation.

2) Conspicuousness

Conspicuousness refers to an individuals' propensity to attract attention and to show off (Zhao & Cho, 2014). In a materialist world, conspicuousness is associated with individuals' propensity to show off through conspicuous goods (Kim et al., 2004). Veblen coined the term, conspicuous consumption, to explain the phenomenon of people consuming conspicuous goods and displaying their participations in the unproductive leisure and unnecessary consumptions in order to enhance their social status (Veblen, 1899). In the capitalistic culture, individuals' conspicuousness and conspicuous consumption contribute to the growth of a consumer society (McCracken, 1987).

As societies evolve, the form of conspicuous

consumption behavior has changed: in modern-capitalist society, unique and expensive goods such as diamonds were consumed and served to signal users' social status (Chaudhuri & Majumdar, 2006). In post-modern era, however, individuals consume not the product itself but the symbolic meaning of a product as a status symbol (Chaudhuri & Majumdar, 2006). As the self-expression and self-presentation (or representation) become what matter to consumers in post-modern society, symbolic consumption becomes a means to define the self and to communicate the desired impressions (Firat, 1991).

In the realm of symbolic consumption, monetary value of goods becomes less useful to display one's conspicuousness. Rather, taste-symbols, which show a person's "elite" experiences or high taste, become objects to display one's status (Chaudhuri & Majumdar, 2006). Thus, conspicuous consumption behaviors can be shown through exhibitions of taste-based consumption.

In digital spaces such as social media, users can display their tasteful experiences through their posts (Schau & Gilly, 2003). SNS becomes an effective vehicle to learn others' experiences and tastes as well as to express one's own experiences. In such environments, consumers' use of hashtags will facilitate acquiring information to cultivate tastes, diffusing the information, and revealing their tasteful experiences to show off and share with others. Thus, it is expected that individuals' conspicuousness is positively related to motivations to use hashtags.

III. Method

1. Research Methods

Based on the previous discussion, the following research questions are proposed:

RQ1: To examine whether fashion leadership influence consumers' motivations for using hashtags (curation, self-presentation, and information diffusion).

RQ2: To examine whether consumers' conspicuousness influence consumers' motivations for using hashtags (curation, self-presentation, and information diffusion).

RQ3: To influence consumers' motivations for using hashtags (curation, self-presentation, and information diffusion) influence their behavioral intentions.

2. Data Collection and Sample Characteristics

We used the online survey for data collection. Consumer panels were employed through a Korean market research firm. The firm distributed an invitation to the survey's URL to potential respondents, and collected the sample from those who agreed to participate in the survey. The firm was asked to use a quota sampling on gender, and to collect participants who met the following criteria of our data collection: consumers who aged from 20 to 49, and who have ever used hashtag(s) when posting fashion-related information in their posts. Consumers in their 20s, 30s, and 40s were selected as our target population since SNS is mostly used by them ("Age distribution of active social media users," 2015). A total of 136 consumers expressed that they have used hashtag(s) in their posts, and were thereby used

for the data analysis.

As can be seen in Table 1, female (50.7%) were slightly more than male (49.3%). Most of respondents were in their 20s (29.5%) and 30s (42.6%). 59.9% of the respondents were single. By occupation, clerical workers(47.1%) were predominant, followed by students (22.1%) and professional workers (9.6%). Majority of the respondents are college students or college graduates (84.6%). By household monthly income, 25% of the respondents reported their average monthly income to be between 4,000,000 won and 5,000,000 won, and 23.5% of the respondents to be between 3,000,000 won and 4,000,000 won.

3. Measures

All multi-item measures were adapted from previous studies. To measure fashion leadership, five measure items were adopted from Moon and Choo (2008). Conspicuousness was measured using four items from Zhao and Cho (2014). Curation motivation was adopted from three items from Ko et al. (2014) to measure curation. Self-presentation motivation was measured using three items from Lee and Choi (2015). Information diffusion was measured using two items from Hong (2014). Behavioral intentions to use hashtags are measured using four items from Lee et al. (2012). The items were modified to reflect the context of hashtags. All items were rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale with anchors of "strongly disagree" as 1 to "strongly agree" as 7.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

Characteristic		<i>n</i>	%
Gender	Male	67	49.3
	Female	69	50.7
Age range	20–29	66	48.5
	30–39	58	42.6
	40–49	12	8.8
Marital status	Single	80	58.8
	Married	56	41.2
Occupation	Self-employed	3	2.2
	Sales and service work	7	5.1
	Manufacturing work	4	2.9
	Office work	64	47.1
	Professional	13	9.6
	Student	30	22.1
	Housework	8	5.9
	Others	7	5.1
Education	Highschool and below	7	5.1
	Bachelor's and college students	115	84.6
	Postgraduates and graduate students	14	10.3
Household monthly income	Less than 1,000,000	7	5.1
	1,000,000 – less than 2,000,000	7	5.1
	2,000,000 – less than 3,000,000	19	14.0
	3,000,000 – less than 4,000,000	32	23.5
	4,000,000 – less than 5,000,000	34	25.0
	5,000,000 – less than 6,000,000	18	13.2
	More than 6,000,000	19	14.0

IV. Results

1. Measurement Model

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test the measurement model using AMOS 21 with the maximum likelihood estimation method. After deleting problematic items, the acceptable fit was achieved ($\chi^2=111.937$, $df=75$, $p<.01$, $CMIN/DF=1.492$, $SRMR=.048$, $CFI=.961$,

$RMSEA=.060$) (Hair, Babin, William, & Anderson, 2009). As can be seen in Table 2, convergent validity was confirmed with significant factor loadings of each item above .671, composite reliability (C.R.) above .708, and average variance extracted (AVE) above .548. Also, discriminant validity was confirmed with AVE estimates larger than the corresponding squared correlation estimates between paired constructs.

Table 2. Characteristics of Measure Items

Construct	Items	Std. Est.	C.R.	AVE
Fashion Leadership	I am one of the most influential among friends regarding trends.	.801***	.817	.600
	My friends sometimes ask me about trends or new styles.	.841***		
	If I come across a new design, I sometimes want to wear it even if others do not.	.671***		
Conspicuousness	I want to be rich so that I can buy anything I want.	.754***	.838	.724
	I will be happier if I have enough to buy the things I want.	.938***		
Curation	I save time while I use 'curation' function of hashtags.	.789***	.842	.641
	I can get suitable information through 'curation' function of hashtags.	.848***		
	I can get information that I wanted through 'curation' function of hashtags.	.763***		
Self-presentation	I can express my behavior through hashtags.	.700***	.807	.583
	I can present my identity through hashtags.	.778***		
	I can freely express my mood or emotions through hashtags.	.809***		
Information Diffusion	I can share the information on my interest with other users through hashtags.	.920***	.772	.629
	It becomes easy to send my opinions out through hashtags.	.794***		
Behavioral Intentions	I intend to use hashtags more often in the future.	.712***	.708	.548
	I will recommend others to use hashtags.	.768***		

Note. *** $p < .001$

2. Structural Model

To test the proposed research questions, structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis was conducted, which revealed a acceptable fit to the data ($\chi^2=158.092$, $df=80$, $p < .001$, $CMIN/DF=1.976$, $SRMR=.077$, $CFI=.918$, $RMSEA=.085$). The first research questions on the relationships between fashion leadership and hashtag usage motivations (curation, self-presentation, and information diffusion) were found to be all significant in a positive direction.

That is, fashion leadership had a positive impact on curation ($b=.461$, $t=4.656$, $p < .001$), on self-presentation ($b=.586$, $t=5.563$, $p < .001$), and on information diffusion ($b=.445$, $t=4.708$, $p < .001$), which suggests that users with a high level of fashion leadership are more likely to use hashtags for categorizing desired information, displaying their opinions and conduct, and spreading their posts effectively.

The examination of the second research questions showed the positive effect of conspicuousness on curation ($b=.395$, $t=4.567$,

$p < .001$), on self-presentation ($b = .299$, $t = 3.596$, $p < .001$), and on information diffusion ($b = .303$, $t = 3.831$, $p < .001$). The findings suggest that users with a higher level of conspicuousness are more likely to utilize hashtags to detect and categorize the useful information with them, to self-present, and to diffuse the information than those with a lower level of conspicuousness.

The third research questions were about the relationship between three motivational factors and users' behavioral intentions toward hashtags. SEM revealed that users' motivations of hashtags for self-presentation ($b = .416$, $t = 3.263$, $p < .01$) and for information diffusion ($b = .527$, $t = 3.499$, $p < .001$) did have an impact on their behavioral intentions, suggesting that users who use hashtags as a way to effectively present themselves and diffuse the information are more likely to have intention to continue using hashtags in the future and to recommend hashtags' usages to others. However, curation function was not found to be related to users' behavioral intention. Table 3 summarizes the results of SEM.

V. Conclusion

This study empirically verifies the relationship between motivations of using hashtags and behavioral intention by delineating three motivations referred by the previous studies on motivations for using SNS. Moreover, three motivations of using hashtags (i.e., curation, self-presentation, information diffusion) are examined to see if they are positively related with users' individual characteristics of fashion leadership and conspicuousness.

The results of the study show that users' fashion leadership and conspicuousness positively influence their motivations of using hashtags, which include curation, self-presentation and information diffusion. This suggests that users who are influential in others' decisions in the category of fashion tend to be motivated to use hashtags for curating contents on the web, presenting the self, and diffusion their contents to others. The findings show that characteristics of fashion leaders are applicable to the usage of hashtags in SNS. Since many

Table 3. Estimates of Research Questions

Research Questions	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p
RQ1-1: Fashion leadership → Curation	.461	.099	4.656	<.001
RQ1-2: Fashion leadership → Self-presentation	.586	.105	5.563	<.001
RQ1-3: Fashion leadership → Information diffusion	.445	.095	4.708	<.001
RQ2-1: Conspicuousness → Curation	.395	.087	4.567	<.001
RQ2-2: Conspicuousness → Self-presentation	.299	.083	3.596	<.001
RQ2-3: Conspicuousness → Information diffusion	.303	.079	3.831	<.001
RQ3-1: Curation → Behavioral intention	.037	.114	.325	.745 (n.s.)
RQ3-2: Self-presentation → Behavioral intention	.416	.128	3.263	<.01
RQ3-3: Information diffusion → Behavioral intention	.527	.151	3.499	<.001

Note. n.s.=non-significant

fashion leaders, called 'fashionista,' communicate with others through SNS, the results of the study showing the relationships of fashion leadership to a behavioral aspect of SNS is interesting to note, which contributes to the knowledge of fashion leadership.

The results also suggest that users who have a tendency to show off are likely to utilize hashtags for curating information, presenting the self to others, and diffusing their contents through SNS. Considering the notion that one's high taste becomes a new symbol to signal their status in this post-modern society, it is interesting to note that users who want to show off would utilize hashtags to effectively manage their posts on SNS. The findings of the study extends Schu & Gilly's (2003) notion, 'we are what we posts,' in that hashtags can foster users' motivations to show off through SNS.

Of users' motivations to affect behavioral intentions toward hashtags, motivations to self-present and to diffuse the information are found to have a significant impact while curation was not significantly related to behavioral intention. The significant effects of motivations of self-presentation and information diffusion suggest that if hashtag users benefit from using a hashtag in presenting the self and diffusing the contents, they are more likely to continue using hashtags and to make recommendations of hashtags. However, a hashtag's curation function fails to affect behavioral intention toward hashtags. This may mean that users value a hashtag's capabilities of revealing and spreading their contents rather than detecting and classifying the contents from the web, which suggests that users value hashtags when they post their own contents rather than when they detect and organize posts written by others. It is because a hashtag's functions to

foster self-presentation and information diffusion are from the information-sender's perspective while curation function is more closely related to information-receiver's perspective. Nonetheless, we are not sure whether users' curation motivation influence their behavioral intentions or not. It may also be because due to our participants for this study or to measurement issues. Thus, further research is needed to verify the relationship between curation motivation and behavioral intention.

The present study examines whether SNS hashtag users' characteristics (i.e., fashion leadership, conspicuousness) influence three motivational factors (i.e., curation, self-presentation, information diffusion) when using some of the functionalities of hashtags such as addressing, connecting multimedia-rich presentation, and sharing contents. The functions, in other words, are eventually connected to user-side behavioral intentions of continuous use and making recommendations of using hashtag. In the fashion market where fashion leaders play a crucial role in the diffusion process, hashtags naturally become important and contributing tools in making of one's fashion-leading image by presenting oneself to the others through various contents and fostering indirect experiences on the fashion items.

Hashtags, in fact, have become a new form of presentation of conversations in SNS, and are now employed by several different platforms such as Twitter, Google+, Instagram, and Facebook. The number of platforms that will employ hashtag function will grow in the near future. Since hashtags are designed and utilized for calling selected pieces of specific data set from a remote data repository, practitioners are recommended to make sure that .

Now it becomes a different way of presenting information and making conversations that is seen and shared, and becomes influential to the majority of end users. Thus, user-side adoption of hashtag usage will be prompted by its benefit of the usability. The current study makes a realistic contribution to the business operators since SNS posts play a role in generating new advertising opportunities and, of course, revenue in a way hashtags evolves into user experience. In this phase, it is important to understand and design digital platforms from the perspective of how it will be understood and used by a human user.

Throughout the study, the results find that the distinctive functions of hashtags, such as expressive and diffusing contents, influence users' behavioral intentions. Being proficient in using hashtags, users can be more expressive than the ones who are just staying with ordinary web functions. Being expressive means how much they will be visible to the others who are getting information feeds from the designated user. The visibility, in turn, could create the image of opinion leadership and conspicuousness. In the process of being visible, hashtags' features such as curation have come in active use. As we have appreciated much on a huge wave of data stream, called big data, the relevant industry is likely to have an option they should opt for. Utilizing the data and building a better designed platforms will answer the inquiries. As does any empirical study, the current study has several limitations that readers should note. First, a significant portion of our participants expressed that their favorite social media is Facebook. Since Facebook does not represent the social media and since the nature of Facebook is on social networking among friends and acquaintances,

future research may need to utilize quota sampling considering the different nature of various social media platforms. Second, participants are limited to users in their 20s to 40s. However, more than 90% of our participants were in their 20s and 30s. Thus, the findings of the current study may be limited to young users in their 20s and 30s. Considering that the trend of age distribution of SNS users progressively goes up, showing that SNS are gradually adopted by older generations, future research needs to include older generations in their sample. Third, this study focuses on users who use hashtags and SNS for their posts about fashion. Thus, the findings of the current study may not be applicable to users' characteristics and motivations to use hashtags when posting contents about other categories of products than fashion. Furthermore, measurement improvements are possible and required for further research. Although we have employed modified measurements from existing research, most research has been based on the SNS usage not on hashtag usage since little consumer research has been conducted on this topic.

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