Consumer's Textile Sensibility in regard to Purchase Experience of Apparel Products in e-Business

Shin, Sang-Moo
Associate Professor, Division of Textile Engineering, Soongsil University

Abstract

E-business has been regarded as new type of marketing channels and has been growing rapidly. The purpose of this study was to investigate textile sensibility depending on consumers’ purchase experience of apparel product in e-business.

The analyses of 202 questionnaires were conducted by frequency, mean, and standard deviation, and t-test using SPSS 10.0. Computer setting environment was 1280 x 1024 resolution with 96 DPI (dots per inch) for this experiment.

The results of this research were as follows:

Melton (flat axis), habutae (thin axis), suede (wet axis), and terry (rustic axis) showed that there were no significant differences in textile sensibility regarding purchasing experience in the cyber apparel store. But oxford (hard axis) showed that purchasing experience group perceived less modern and smooth textile sensibility than no purchasing experience group. In case of linen (dry axis), purchasing experience group showed less modern textile sensibility. In case of muslin (soft axis), purchasing experience group had more flat and less soft textile sensibility than no purchasing experience group. In case of homespun (thick axis), purchasing experience group perceived less modern textile sensibility than no purchasing experience group.

Key words: apparel e-business, on-line shopping, purchasing experience, textile sensibility

I. Introduction

Retail innovation has been spread rapidly all over the world. E-tailer (Electronic + Retailer) has been emerged in Internet cyber market. E-business has been regarded as new type of marketing channels and has been growing rapidly. E-business based on Internet provide quite different marketing environment with two-way communication and individualized intercommunication from traditional marketing channel (Shin & Lee, 2002).

According to National Computerization Agency research (2000), consumers who had purchasing experience for products in Internet shopping mall were 31.9% in the first half of 1999, and 53.4% in the latter half of the year.

Especially, textile/apparel e-business has been

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increased sales volume steadily. There has been 48.1% increased sales volume through apparel e-business. But apparel Internet shopping mall has some problems due to some characteristics of apparel as high involvement product characterized high-touch, and high-culture (Shin & Cho, 2002). Consumers are having difficulty on recognizing product quality such as fabric, color, and size through Internet buying (Lee, 1998). The most crucial disadvantage is that consumers can’t look-and-see, and touch-and-feel of the fabric.

Also, a new type of shopping behavior is emerging. Shopping experience is one of the important decision making factors for consumer purchasing behavior. Consumer would make better decisions if they had the right information on the attributes of apparel products. If they cannot get the required information readily, they will make wrong choices because of misjudgment. The improper provision of product information may therefore lead to consumer claims on apparel products, not only incurring monetary loss in the short run but also creating a negative brand image in the long term (Shin, 2000).

Previous researches have been focused on handle of fabrics (Kim & Na, 1999; Hong, 1994; Kim, 1999), and physical property of fabric (Davis, 1987), and development of new textile materials (Kang, 1999), and consumers’ attitude or textile sensibility under on/off-live environment (Shin & Lee, 2002; Shin, 2002). Very little verifying research has been done on investigating textile sensibility depending on consumers’ purchase experience of apparel product in e-business. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate textile sensibility depending on consumers’ purchase experience of apparel product in e-business.

II. Review of literature

1. Consumer’s purchase experience

Geissler and Zinkhan (1998) studied that the Web is viewed as helpful for educating consumers and it facilitates easier and quicker comparison shopping for high-involvement products. Two distinct nonusers groups were identified in their study - “true nonusers” and “triers”, and triers tend to have much more negative perceptions of the web than do true nonusers.

Consumer experiences consist of five types of modular experiences - sensory, affective, intellectual, bodily and social (Brakus, 2001). The theory describes how consumers respond to a broad variety of experiential marketing stimuli such as logos, packaging, advertising, retail environments, and web sites.

Shopping experience is one of the important decision making factors for consumer purchasing behavior among product perception, shopping experience, customer service, and consumer risk (Jarvenpaa & Todd, 1997).

According to Lee (2001), this study investigate the relationship between electronic commerce and shopper type and the level of purchase experience such as purchase experience, just visiting the web site, and not ever visiting web site. The group who had purchase experience in e-commerce tends to have more positive attitude on e-commerce than those who had not.

Based upon Kerin (1992), purchase experience is closely related repurchasing behavior with provoking preference about that product. Also, Zeithaml (1988) indicated that consumer’s purchasing experience could influence on value of product.
2. Textile sensibility in e-business

Sensibility is psychological reaction and achieved emotion from inside of human being by outside physical stimuli (Lee, 1996). Sensibility is categorized by perceived sensibility from design, color, and outer-shape of products, functional sensibility from function and quality of product, and cultural sensibility from individual life style, value, and social status (Lee, 1997). Nowadays, Perceived sensibility emphasized on individual taste is more important rather than functional sensibility emphasized on rational quality. In e-business, this trend is more important and influential because consumers can involve the apparel production process reflecting their preferences on textile, color, and design with Quick Response based Mass-Customization (Shin, 1999, 2001). Furthermore, modern fashion business is driving differentiated marketing strategy with textiles of apparel product that is important component of apparel price and quality.

Davis (1987) studied adjectives regarding the relationship between textiles and sensibility. Kim (2000) categorized textiles according to 8 axes of textile sensibility (table 1). For this research, 8 axes of textile sensibility were wet, soft, thin, rustic, dry, hard, thick, and flat.

III. Methodology

1. Selection of fabric

For this research, 8 textile swatches were selected by the studies of Kim (2000), and Chu (2000) with 8 axes on textiles: RUSTIC-FLAT, HARD-SOFT, DRY-WET, THIN-THICK.

One representative swatches per 1 axis were selected from the previous researches (I-biznet.com, 2000; samsungdesign.net, 2000): terry for rustic, melton for flat, oxford for hard, muslin for soft, habutae for thin, homespun for thick, linen for dry, and suede for wet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
<th>Textile swatches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of fabric</td>
<td>Fiber contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>homespun</td>
<td>wool 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oxford</td>
<td>nylon 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muslin</td>
<td>cotton 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>melton</td>
<td>wool 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>habutae</td>
<td>silk 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>linen</td>
<td>linen 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suede</td>
<td>cotton 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terry</td>
<td>wool 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<Table 1> textiles based on 8 axes of sensibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thick</th>
<th>cotton</th>
<th>linen</th>
<th>wool</th>
<th>silk</th>
<th>synthetic fiber</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>corduroy, velvet</td>
<td>plain</td>
<td>homespun</td>
<td>velvet</td>
<td>tweed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oxford, denim</td>
<td>plain</td>
<td>tweed</td>
<td>taffeta</td>
<td>taffeta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>denim</td>
<td>plain</td>
<td>tweed</td>
<td>georgette</td>
<td>tweed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rustic</td>
<td>corduroy</td>
<td>amunzen</td>
<td>tweed</td>
<td>georgette</td>
<td>tweed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>organza</td>
<td>muslin</td>
<td>muslin</td>
<td>muslin</td>
<td>voil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft</td>
<td>shelli</td>
<td>muslin</td>
<td>serge</td>
<td>chiffon</td>
<td>tricot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wet</td>
<td>velvet</td>
<td>plain</td>
<td>flannel</td>
<td>satin</td>
<td>taffeta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flat</td>
<td>broad</td>
<td>plain</td>
<td>serge</td>
<td>taffeta</td>
<td>taffeta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Research development

The purpose of this study was to investigate consumer's attitude on textile image under on-line depending on apparel purchasing experience in e-business. Based upon I-biznet research, Internet using rate of age twenties and thirties were 95.2%. Therefore random sampling was done by age for twenties and thirties, female and male consumers for this research. To measure texture sensibility on textile image generated by CAD with programming HTML of scanning textile products, we developed questionnaire based on the studies of Samsung fashion research institute (2000), and Kim (1996). The analyses of 202 questionnaires were conducted by frequency, mean, and standard deviation, and t-test using SPSS 10.0. Computer setting environment was 1280 x 1024 resolution with 96 DPI (dots per inch) for this experiment.

Measurement items for texture sensibility with 7 point Semantic Differential Method are as follows: glossy, soft, transparent, thin, sandy, strong, nice, dense, comfortable, high-class, modern, practical, sexy, elegance, refreshing, plain, flat, natural, smooth, and warm.

IV. Results and Discussion

Demographic information was as follows:

Respondents were female (58%) and male (42%). Twenties were over 60%. More than 10 months in Internet using period was 93%, and Internet using time per day were 1-2hours (38%), 2-3hours (26%), less than 1hour (21%), and more than 4hours (10%).

39% respondents had purchasing experience of apparel products through e-business, and 61% had not purchasing experience in e-business.

In case of terry, there was no significant difference in sensibility adjectives regarding purchasing experience of apparel product in e-business.

But oxford (hard axis) showed that there were significant differences in modern and smooth textile sensibility, that is, purchasing experience group perceived less modern and smooth.

In case of linen (dry axis), there was significant difference in modern textile sensibility, that is, purchasing experience group showed less
modern textile sensibility.

There were no significant differences in textile sensibility regarding purchasing experience about habutae (thin axis).

Also, melton (flat axis), and suede (wet axis) showed that there was no significant difference in textile sensibility regarding purchasing experience.

In case of muslin (soft axis), there were significant differences in soft and flat textile sensibility. Purchasing experience group had more flat and less soft textile sensibility than those of no purchasing experience.

In case of homespun (thick axis), there was significant difference in modern textile sensibility regarding purchasing experience. Purchasing experience group perceived less modern than no purchasing experience group.

V. Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to investigate consumers’ textile sensibility regarding to purchasing experience of apparel product in e-business.

Melton (flat axis), habutae (thin axis), suede (wet axis), and terry (rustic axis) showed that there were no significant differences in textile sensibility regarding purchasing experience.

But oxford (hard axis) showed that there were significant differences in modern and smooth textile sensibility, that is, purchasing experience group perceived less modern and smooth textile sensibility than no purchasing experience group.

In case of linen (dry axis), there was significant difference in modern textile sensibility, that is, purchasing experience group showed less modern textile sensibility.

In case of muslin (soft axis), there were significant differences in soft and flat textile sensibility. Purchasing experience group had
more flat and less soft textile sensibility than no purchasing experience.

In case of homespun (thick axis), there was significant difference in modern textile sensibility regarding purchasing experience. Purchasing experience group perceived less modern than no purchasing experience.

As we mentioned above, there are still several problems of on-line apparel shopping to interfere with consumer’s buying behavior in respect to look and touch of fabric. On-line retailing strategy based on cyber consumer behavior is needed for getting competitive advantages in e-business world. A strategy to pull consumers into the apparel on-line shopping and them purchase apparel goods should be developed through the investigation of on-line shopping behavior. It is important to identify “on-line shoppers” who have experience in purchasing apparel goods and to examine how they are different from group who has no experience in purchasing apparel goods in cyberspace while they use the Internet.

References

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