

Fashion Consumers' Perception and Adoption of Virtual Fitting Rooms (VFRs): A Perspective of Regulatory Focus

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Introduction Virtual Fitting Rooms (VFRs) are among the most promising technologies that can overcome inherent problems of online apparel shopping—mainly, the inability to have the experience of trying on an item before making a purchase (Kim & Forsythe, 2008). While VFRs have started to become available in the online fashion retail environment, they are still in early stages of consumer adoption and are yet to be widely implemented in the fashion industry (Blazquez, 2014; Lee & Xu, 2019). Moreover, research fully investigating influential factors and examining consumers' adoption of VFR technology is limited. As consumers are the final determinants of market demand, it is important to understand the VFR adoption process from the user perspective. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the importance of consumer experiences on consumers' adoption of VFRs from the perspective of regulatory focus. The objective of this study was twofold. On one hand, from the integrated consumer experience perspective, this study aimed to examine the influences of consumers' perceptions of functional, experiential, and social value on their VFR adoption. On the other hand, considering the newness of VFR technology, this study aimed to investigate how a consumer's enduring motivational orientation, regulatory focus, influences their perceived functional, experiential, and social value toward VFRs.

Literature Review The values that consumers believe and expect that a technology provides to them are key determinants of technology adoption (Verhagen, Feldberg, Hooff, & Meents, 2012). Consumer experiences are integrative in nature due to consumers' processes of multiple values, derived from their core functional, experiential, and social needs as postulated in the customer value frameworks (Smith & Colgate, 2007). With virtually simulated visuals (e.g., 3D presentation) or advanced interactive functions in VFRs (e.g., social media sharing system), individuals' beliefs and expectations toward functional, experiential, and social values of VFRs can serve as key predictors for their adoption intention (Pachoulakis & Kapetanakis, 2012; Park et al., 2008). At the same time, the newness of VFRs can induce individuals to rely on enduring traits due to unfamiliarity, which act as motivational orientations for processing objects, thereby influencing individuals' perceptions based on regulatory fit (Song & Qu, 2019; Wang & Lee, 2006). From the user perspective, consumers can have stable, relatively enduring motivational orientations at the trait level, regardless of the specific activities in question (Choi, Im, & Kim, 2014). Thus, regulatory focus, an enduring goal-specific motivational orientation akin to

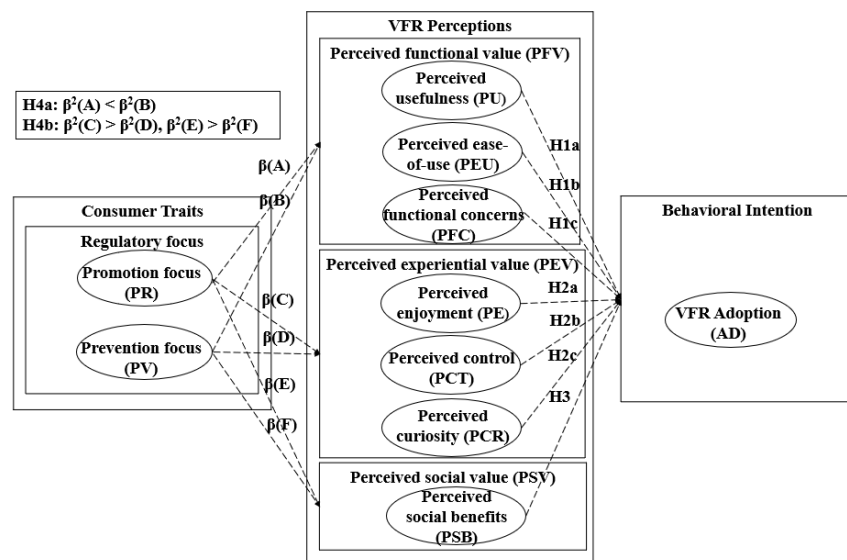


Figure 1. Research Framework

7-point Likert scales with items adapted from existing scales with acceptable reliabilities ($\alpha > .70$). Then, structural equation modeling and multi-group comparison were conducted to test the proposed relationships (Figure 1).

Results Both the measurement model ($\chi^2=1567.192$, $df=695$, $p=.000$, $SRMR=.037$, $TLI=.949$, $IFI=.955$, $CFI=.954$) and the structural model ($\chi^2=1917.062$, $df=718$, $p=.000$, $SRMR=.066$, $TLI=.932$, $IFI=.938$, $CFI=.938$) showed acceptable fit. The SEM results suggested positive influences of PU ($\beta=.260$, $p<.001$), PEU ($\beta=.121$, $p<.001$), PE ($\beta=.356$, $p<.001$), PCR ($\beta=.267$, $p<.001$), and PSB ($\beta=.152$, $p<.001$) on AD toward VFRs (H1a, H1b, H2a, H2c, H3, supported), whereas PFC ($\beta=-.003$, n.s.) and PCT ($\beta=.032$, n.s.) did not show significant influences. Regarding H4, the percentage of variance explained was calculated by squaring standardized path coefficients as suggested by Overby and Lee (2006) to predict which RF played a stronger role in perceiving respective perceived value. As hypothesized, PV had a much stronger influence on PFC than PR. However, contrary to the expectations, PR had a much stronger influence on PU and PEU than PV, partially supporting H4a. Meanwhile, H4b was all supported as PR played a stronger role than PV in perceiving experiential and social value.

Conclusion Academically, the results of this study revealed psychological mechanisms that bring consumers' adoption of VFRs, identifying the inherent reasons why consumers attend to different components of VFRs and convey varying beliefs toward VFRs. Instead of just investigating the influences of consumers' perceptions on their intention to adopt VFRs by focusing on what a technology can do for consumers, this study addresses the trait-level reasons that affect consumers' perceptions and subsequent adoption intentions. Managerially, the findings can lend insightful implications to practitioners in the VFR industry in their endeavors

personality traits (Higgins, 1997) was proposed to predict consumers' internal process and experiences (Bosnjak, Galesic, & Tuten, 2007; Song & Qu, 2019).

Methodology Data were collected from 480 consumers between ages 21 and 64, who have experienced online apparel shopping and at least heard of VFRs in the past via an online survey. A convenience sample was used. The survey included

to encourage consumers' adoption of the technology, by recommending the importance to 1) capture individuals' demands which differ by their traits so that they can develop segmented marketing strategies for different target markets, and 2) enhance the design effectiveness of VFRs by excelling on the core and added value (i.e., functional, experiential, social) that drove consumers' adoption.

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