



CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN RURAL SOUTH KOREAN COMMUNITIES

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The purpose of this study was to investigate various aspects of rural South Korean consumers' shopping behavior. Factors previously tested with consumers in rural Iowa and Nebraska communities were expanded by cross-cultural testing of empirical variables regarding consumers' (1) moral, social, and economic motivations, (2) satisfaction with local retail establishment, (3) reciprocity, (4) attachment to their community, (5) intention to inshop, and (6) inshopping behavior. The effect of brand loyalty on consumers' purchasing was also explored by examining South Korean rural consumer brand preference for US versus Korean jeans.

Quantitative data were collected through a door-to-door survey technique in two rural communities in mid east South Korea with populations less than 10,000.

Simple and multiple regression analyses revealed that rural Korean consumers' inshopping intention with local retailers was strongly affected by their moral, social, and economic motivations; level of satisfaction with local retail establishment; reciprocity; and community attachment. Rural Korean consumers' overall brand loyalty, on the other hand, was weakly related to their intention to shop with local retailers. For Korean rural consumers, brand name was not a primary cue when evaluating the quality and values of jeans; however, the desire for buying Korean brands from local stores was significant.

This study will benefit small sized Korean retailers by providing information about Korean rural consumers' buying decisions regarding apparel products and brands. In addition to practical applications, findings will also contribute to the refinement of reciprocity's role in exchange theory and its application to consumer behavior.