



The Importance of Fashion Pop-up Store Format and Brand Type on Enhancing Consumers' Brand Interest: The Moderating Role of Fashion Leadership

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Keywords: Pop-up store, SOR, Brand interest, Fashion leadership

Introduction Pop-up store, also named temporary, itinerant or guerrilla store, refers to a shop that operates in a temporary location for a short period of time (Picot-Coupey, 2014). Pop-up retail has been adopted by many retailers for diverse purposes, such as reaching consumers, promoting sales, launching new products, and testing niche markets (Ryu, 2011). The novel and unique shopping experiences are the key factors of pop-up stores that appeal to consumers (Kim *et al.*, 2010). Pop-up stores are usually established in stationary spaces of an existing structure, while pop-up stores could also be in a movable container, which is the mobile format of the pop-up store (Ryu, 2011). Mobile pop-up stores are often utilized by entrepreneurs rather than pre-existing brands to showcase and promote their merchandise within a limited budget (Feloni, 2014; Matthews *et al.*, 2016). Despite the diverse utilizations of pop-up stores, little is known about their marketing outcomes. This study aimed to compare the effects of 1) different formats of pop-up stores (stationary and mobile) and 2) pop-up stores launched by different types of brands (brands with both offline and online retail channels and e-commerce only brands) in leading to consumer emotions and brand interest. At the same time, the role of fashion leadership in pop-up retailing was investigated.

Literature Review The stimulus-organism-response model (SOR) by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) is a widely used theoretical framework to explore the influence of the environment on consumer behavior. In this study, pop-up store format and brand type were set as the stimulus. Two components from the PAD model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), arousal and pleasant, were adopted as organisms to depict consumer emotions, which will mediate the effect of the stimulus on consumer brand interest. Compared with the traditional pop-up store, which is established in an existing structure, the mobile pop-up store is relatively new and innovative for consumers, which is supposed to better meet consumers' expectations for novel shopping experiences and evoke excitement. Thus, the mobile pop-up store was hypothesized to lead consumers to greater arousal and pleasure than the stationary pop-up store (H1). The e-commerce only brands hold less opportunity for consumers to physically experience their products than those typical brands with brick-and-mortar stores. According to the Information Gap Theory (Loewenstein, 1994), the offline events by e-commerce only brands are more likely to arouse consumers' curiosity than typical brands. Thus, the pop-up store launched by e-commerce only brands was hypothesized to lead consumers to greater arousal and pleasure than those by typical brands (H2). In line with the SOR model, H3 proposed arousal and pleasure would have positive effects on consumer brand

interest. Fashion leadership captures consumer interest in fashion, which has a significant influence on consumer fashion-related behaviors (Goldsmith *et al.*, 1991). Consumer response toward fashion pop-up stores was proposed to be different among fashion leaders and non-fashion leaders (H4). Figure 1 shows the research framework.

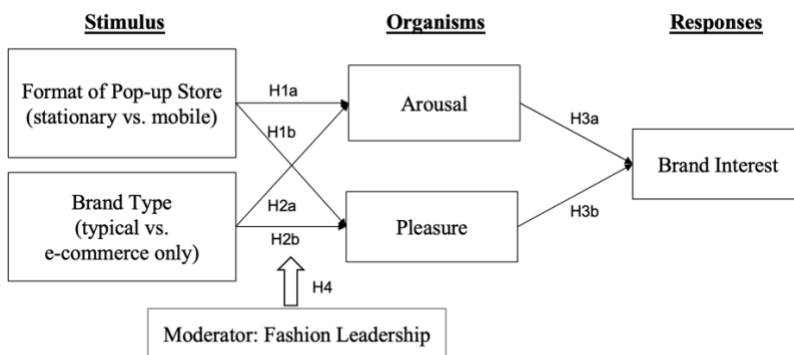


Figure 1. Research Framework

Method A 2 (stationary location vs. mobile pop-up store) \times 2 (typical brand vs. e-commerce only brand) experimental design was conducted via an online survey. Respondents were randomly and evenly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions. Multi-item scales adapted from previous studies were used to measure the main constructs of this study using 7-point Likert scales (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Goldsmith *et al.*, 1991; Speed & Thompson, 2000). A total of 189 Millennials and Gen Z consumers were recruited through MTurk. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to examine the validity and reliability of the measurement model, and multiple regression analysis was used to test the proposed hypotheses through JMP Pro 16.

Results The data analysis results showed that H1 and H2 were rejected, while H3 was supported for the whole group. The moderating effect of fashion leadership (H4) was supported. The findings indicate that when considering consumers' fashion leadership level, the type of pop-up store and the brand that launch the pop-up store could influence consumers' emotions and brand interest in pop-up retailing. Specifically, consumers who are more involved in fashion trends were aroused more when the pop-up store was conducted by typical brands than when it was by e-commerce only brands. This could be because of the characteristics of the brand types. E-commerce only brands are typically newly born or small-sized, while traditional brands which open pop-up stores are more likely to be well-known and large. Thus, high fashion leadership consumers, who usually care more about the brand names, may find pop-up store by typical brands as more novel. On the other hand, consumers who are less interested in fashion had positive emotions about the stationary pop-up stores, and ultimately, interested in the brand. The results imply that stationary pop-up stores were more appealing for consumers with low fashion

leadership, which might be due to the less perceived risk. This finding is consistent with previous literature (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979).

Conclusions This research generates several practical and theoretical implications. First, it is worth opening a pop-up store to draw the attention of fashion consumers even if the retailer already has both online and brick-and-mortar stores. Second, fashion marketers and retailers could segment consumers by their fashion leadership in pop-up retailing. When targeting consumers who care less about and are less involved in fashion, providing pop-up stores with specific locations rather than operating in a mobile format is recommended. Third, this study offers new insights into the literature and theories on innovative retail models.

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