Millennial Men's Shopping Orientation for Apparel: Comparison of Korean and American Consumers

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Introduction and Theoretical Background. Millennials are not only the largest generation in the world history, but also the highest purchasing consumers who are expected to be spending $10 trillion dollars over their lifetimes in the U.S. alone (Solomon, 2014). Compared to millennial women, millennial men spend slightly more per shopping trip and purchase designer fashion more (Hendrlksz, 2016; The men, 2014). Today's young male consumers are more frequently shopping for beauty and fashion products than ever before; however, there is limited research about their consumer behavior in apparel purchase. The Consumer Decision Process Model (Blackwell et al., 2005) describes the process of consumers' decision-making from initial need recognition to post-purchase opinion. Consumer's decision process is influenced by complex sets of factors. Shopping orientation reflects a consumer's motivations for shopping and general attitude about shopping; thus, it is a good indicator of consumer behavior (Vijayasarathy, 2003). Purchase decisions are also influenced by culture. According to Hofstede's (1980) theory of cultural dimensions, cultural values are reflected in consumers' product choice and preferences. For example, because of their collectivist culture, Korean consumers have a notable influence on the consumer behavior of peers and families. American consumers are more likely to accept of new or innovative products that are early in the fashion life cycle because the U.S. is a society with a high level of tolerance for a variety of ideas, opinions, and beliefs. Thus, shopping orientation may differ by distinctive cultural values. *The purpose of this study* was (1) to determine the important shopping orientations of millennial men in apparel purchase; (2) to examine differences in shopping orientations between Korean and American millennial men.
Method. Based on previous research, seven shopping orientations were included: brand-consciousness, convenience, fashion-consciousness, impulsiveness, price, quality, and recreation. Instrument was developed and the scales were adapted from previous studies (e.g., Lee & Kim, 2008). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, Levene's test for homogeneity of variances, and ANOVA. A survey was conducted using a convenience sample of 245 male college students in South Korea (n = 122) and the U.S. (n = 123). Mean age of the respondents was 21.9 years old (South Korea = 23.8; the U.S. = 20.1) in a range from 18 to 34. The largest age group was 21 – 25 (47.5%), followed by 18 – 20 (36.1%), 26 – 30 (16.0%), and 31 – 34 (.4%).
Findings. Results showed that quality (m = 3.76) received the highest mean score, followed by fashion-consciousness (m = 3.50), convenience (m = 3.39), brand-consciousness (m = 3.29), impulsiveness (m = 3.25), price (m = 3.24), and recreation (m = 3.10). ANOVA revealed that all shopping orientations, except of quality, were significantly different between Korean and American respondents: impulsiveness [F (1, 244) = 15.93, p = .000]; convenience [F (1, 244) = 41.63, p = .000]; price [F (1, 244) = 10.48, p = .001]; fashion-consciousness [F (1, 244) = 8.42, p

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= .004]; brand-consciousness [F (1, 244) = 5.50, p = .020]; recreation [F (1, 244) = 4.58, p = .033]. American respondents showed higher mean scores than South Korean respondents in convenience (3.72 vs. 3.07), fashion-consciousness (3.66 vs. 3.34), impulsiveness (3.48 vs. 3.01), brand-consciousness (3.43 vs. 3.14), price (3.39 vs. 3.10), and recreation (3.21 vs. 2.99).

Discussion and Implications. Results of the study indicated that quality was the most important shopping orientation for apparel purchase among millennial men regardless of culture. Thus, apparel manufacturers may pay extra attention in the intrinsic and extrinsic attributes of men's wear because millennial men may have high expectations in product quality. It is also suggested that fashion marketers need to understand the characteristics of consumers in global market and develop strategies that are tailored to satisfy the different needs and preferences. For example, convenience was the second most important to American respondents, while it ranked the fifth among Korean respondents. Thus, compared to Korean, more American millennial men may prefer the retailers that are conveniently designed, provide multiple channels, and help save their time during shopping. The second most important shopping orientation among Korean respondents was brand-consciousness, indicating that they may use well-known brand names for apparel shopping, believe that brand names mean good quality, and tend to be brand loyal. Fashion-consciousness was an important shopping orientation for Korean and American respondents, indicating that fashionable styling, dressing well, keeping wardrobe up to date are important. Millennial men are more likely to be confident consumers, consider themselves as good clothing shoppers, and buy without hesitation. Recreation was the lowest scored shopping orientation for both respondents, indicating that millennial men may not find apparel shopping as a leisure time activity or enjoy shopping if they do not plan to make purchases. Millennial men are highly attractive consumers to global fashion industry. Therefore, understanding how this young and trendy consumes make a purchase decision can help fashion marketers and retailers remain successful in this extremely competitive business.

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