



## Are Millennials Willing to Use Social Commerce in Apparel Shopping?

Tiffany Bounkhong, Eunjoo Cho, Kathleen R. Smith, University of Arkansas, USA

Keywords: Millennial, social commerce, apparel, shopping

By 2020, Millennials (birth years 1981 to 2000) will be the largest living generation, reaching 75.3 million people (Goodman, 2015). This generation heavily uses social media (Statista, 2016). Because of this generation's growing interaction with companies through social media, most marketers (96%) utilize social media as part of their digital marketing strategy (Stelzner, 2015). An increased number of apparel retailers are advertising and selling products through their internet websites and social media (Touchette, Schanski, & Lee, 2015). Young consumers' apparel purchase behaviors have been studied in the context of online and mobile commerce, however, little research has examined apparel shopping behaviors in social commerce. Given the rapid growth of social media users, further investigation is needed to understand the factors associated with young consumers' intentions to use social commerce in apparel shopping.

The technology acceptance model (TAM; Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1992) was adopted to develop a theoretical framework for the present study. The TAM explains that an individual's information technology acceptance behaviors are determined by five variables including perceived ease of use, usefulness, and enjoyment; as well as attitude and intentions to use information technology. Drawing on the TAM, we hypothesized that 1) perceived ease of use of social commerce will positively influence perceived usefulness and enjoyment of social commerce, 2) perceived ease of use, usefulness, and enjoyment of social commerce will positively influence young consumers' attitude toward social commerce, and 3) positive attitude will increase intentions to use social commerce in apparel shopping.

College students from five different colleges at a Mid-Southern university in the U.S. were recruited to participate in an online survey. To measure the five variables, reliable and valid scale items were adapted from existing literature. For example, scale items measuring three variables (i.e., perceived ease of use, usefulness, and enjoyment) were adapted from Kim, Ma, & Park (2009). The college student sample was appropriate because millennials are a highly educated generation who often obtain college degrees (Goodman, 2015) and most college students are social media users (eMarketer, 2015). A total of 531 participants completed the survey and the response rate was 70%. The majority of the sample were female Caucasian American students (71%) between the ages of 18 and 24 years old. Overall, the participants were heavy social media users; 84% of the sample reported visiting social media networking sites over four times a day. Instagram was the most popular social networking site, followed by Facebook and Twitter. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed in Mplus 7.0 to test the proposed six hypotheses in the theoretical framework.

Exploratory Factor Analysis with varimax rotation confirmed one factor for each variable with an Eigenvalue greater than 1. Items were retained with factor loadings of .50 or higher on one factor, but below .30 on the other factor. Reliability was supported for all variables, based on

Cronbach's  $\alpha$  values ( $>.83$ ). Results indicated that the five-factor measurement model yields a satisfactory fit to the data: [ $\chi^2 = 185.60$  ( $df = 80$ ),  $p < .000$ ], CFI = .99, RMSEA = .05, and SRMR = .02. The structural model was found to fit to the data well: [ $\chi^2 = 369.47$  ( $df = 84$ ),  $p < .001$ ], CFI = .96, RMSEA = .08, SRMR = .07. The proposed paths in the SEM model were positive and statistically significant ( $p \leq .001$ ), except for the path between perceived ease of use and attitude ( $\beta = .13$ ,  $t = 1.99$ ). These results indicated that perceived ease of use positively influenced usefulness ( $\beta = .79$ ,  $t = 34.58$ ,  $p \leq .001$ ) and enjoyment ( $\beta = .79$ ,  $t = 35.94$ ,  $p \leq .001$ ). Both perceived usefulness ( $\beta = .18$ ,  $t = 3.39$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ) and enjoyment ( $\beta = .62$ ,  $t = 12.61$ ,  $p \leq .001$ ) positively influenced attitude. Attitude positively influenced intentions to use social commerce in apparel shopping ( $\beta = .75$ ,  $t = 33.97$ ,  $p \leq .001$ ). Further, structural model analysis revealed an impact of usefulness on enjoyment ( $\beta = .51$ ,  $t = 10.95$ ,  $p \leq .001$ ).

The results confirmed that perceived ease of use, usefulness, and enjoyment of social commerce had a positive impact on millennials' attitude and intentions to use social commerce in apparel shopping. These findings imply that utilitarian and hedonic benefits are important to augment young consumers' positive attitude and intentions to purchase apparel on social media. While both perceived ease of use and usefulness positively influenced enjoyment, usefulness had a stronger impact than ease of use. Compared to usefulness, enjoyment had much stronger impact on attitude. These findings suggest that utilitarian benefits from an efficient, time saving experience may engender positive feelings (e.g., enjoyable, fun, and exciting), which are crucial to increase millennial shoppers apparel purchasing on social media.

#### References

- Davis, F. D., Bagozzi, R. P., & Warshaw, P. R. (1992). Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation to use computers in the workplace. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 22(14), 1111-1132.
- eMarketer. (2015). *College students still spend most social time with Facebook*. Retrieved November 22, 2016, from <https://www.emarketer.com/Article/College-Students-Still-Spend-Most-Social-Time-with-Facebook/1012955>
- Goodman, L. M. (2015). *Millennial coege graduates: Young, educated, jobless*. Retrieved March 28, 2017, from <http://www.newsweek.com/2015/06/05/millennial-college-graduates-young-educated-jobless-335821.html>
- Kim, J., Ma, Y. J., & Park, J. (2009). Are US consumers ready to adopt mobile technology for fashion goods? An integrated theoretical approach. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 13(2), 215-230.
- Statista. (2016a). Statistics and facts on internet usage and online shopping among U.S. Millennials. Retrieved October 11, 2016, from <https://www.statista.com/topics/2576/us-millennials-internet-usage-and-online-shopping/>
- Stelzner, M. A. (2015). 2015 Social media marketing industry report: How marketers are using social media to grow their businesses. Retrieved November 20, 2016, from <https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/SocialMediaMarketingIndustryReport2015.pdf>
- Touchette, B., Schanski, M., & Lee, S. E. (2015). Apparel brands' use of Facebook: An exploratory content analysis of branded entertainment. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 12(2), 107-119.