Facebook Commerce Platform and Social Shopping for Apparel: Testing a Mowen's 3M Model

Ju-Young M. Kang, University of Hawaii at Manoa, USA
Kim K. P. Johnson, University of Minnesota, USA

Keywords: Facebook commerce, gratifications, social shopping

Significance. Facebook commerce (F-commerce) refers to the buying and selling of goods or services through Facebook. From a marketer's perspective, a Facebook storefront gives marketers an additional outlet to facilitate consumers spreading the word about the products they are interested in purchasing (O'Neill, 2009). From a consumer's perspective, the social e-shopping applications allow consumers to search for products, share their opinions of those products with other Facebook users, post items on their wish lists, and ask their Facebook friends what they think before they make purchases (HyQuality media, 2011). Well-known apparel retailers (e.g., Levi's, Lands' End, Express) have begun to sell products on Facebook pages. The incorporation of f-commerce into a retailer's marketing strategy is trending upward. Thus, the research objectives were to investigate (1) whether intention to social e-shop apparel using Facebook was affected by Facebook users' personality traits, psychographic characteristics, and gratifications and (2) whether tie strength (i.e., the potency of the bond between members of a network) and homophily (i.e., the perceptual similarity of their beliefs/experiences) moderated the links between gratifications and intention. The results not only verify theoretical conceptions regarding intention to social e-shop apparel in f-commerce but also inform managerial e-strategies into the development of social e-shopping application.

Theoretical Framework. Applying the "Meta-Theoretic Model of Motivation and Personality (3M Model)" (Mowen, 2000), this study tested a conceptual model that indicated four levels of trait hierarchy: (1) elemental traits, (2) compound traits, (3) situational traits, and (4) surface traits. Personality traits examined as elemental traits were: openness to experience, material resource needs, and arousal needs. Consumer psychographic characteristics examined as compound traits were: market mavenism (e.g., "I enjoy giving people tips on shopping"), social browsing (e.g., "I often look for new fashion products/brands that are popular among my friends"), and value consciousness (e.g., "I am concerned about low prices and product quality"). Gratifications were examined as situational traits: socializing and information-seeking gratifications. Intention was examined as a surface trait.

Method. U.S. Facebook users from 18 to 44 years of age who had online social shopping experience were recruited from a consumer panel. Participants browsed the Express Facebook page and then completed an online self-administered survey.

Participant Characteristics. The purposive sample ($n = 601$) was composed of more females (64.4 %) than males (35.6%). Participants' mean age was 31.23 years and median income was $50,000-$59,999.

Results. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to test the convergent and discriminant validity and composite reliability of the set of measures. A structural model exhibited a good fit with the data ($\chi^2 = 1890.76$ with 765 df, $\chi^2/df = 2.47$, CFI = .96, NNFI = .96, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .06). The structural model test result demonstrated that socializing ($\beta = .26$, $t = 5.77$) and

information-seeking ($\beta = .46$, $t = 10.15$) gratifications were related to intention ($p < .001$) (H1-2). Market mavenism (H3) was related to socializing gratification ($\beta = .09$, $t = 2.37$, $p < .05$) and intention ($\beta = .24$, $t = 6.17$, $p < .001$). Social browsing (H4) was related to socializing gratification ($\beta = .53$, $t = 13.67$, $p < .001$), information-seeking gratification ($\beta = .41$, $t = 10.22$, $p < .001$), and intention ($\beta = .10$, $t = 2.41$, $p < .05$). Value consciousness (H5) was related to information-seeking gratification ($\beta = .27$, $t = 6.90$, $p < .001$) and intention ($\beta = .12$, $t = 3.86$, $p < .001$). Openness to experience (H6) was related to market mavenism ($\beta = .32$, $t = 7.17$, $p < .001$). Arousal needs (H7) were related to social browsing ($\beta = .11$, $t = 2.55$, $p < .05$). Material resource needs (H8) were related to market mavenism ($\beta = .46$, $t = 10.63$, $p < .001$), social browsing ($\beta = .58$, $t = 13.96$, $p < .001$) and value consciousness ($\beta = .17$, $t = 3.80$, $p < .001$). Tie strength (H9) (low vs high; median split = 3.67) moderated the relationships between both types of gratifications and intention ($\Delta\chi^2 = 11.44$, $\Delta\,df = 2$, $p =. 003$). Homophily (H10) (low vs high; median split = 3.25) moderated the relationships between both types of gratifications and intention ($\Delta\chi^2 = 5.84$, $\Delta\,df = 2$, $p = .04$).
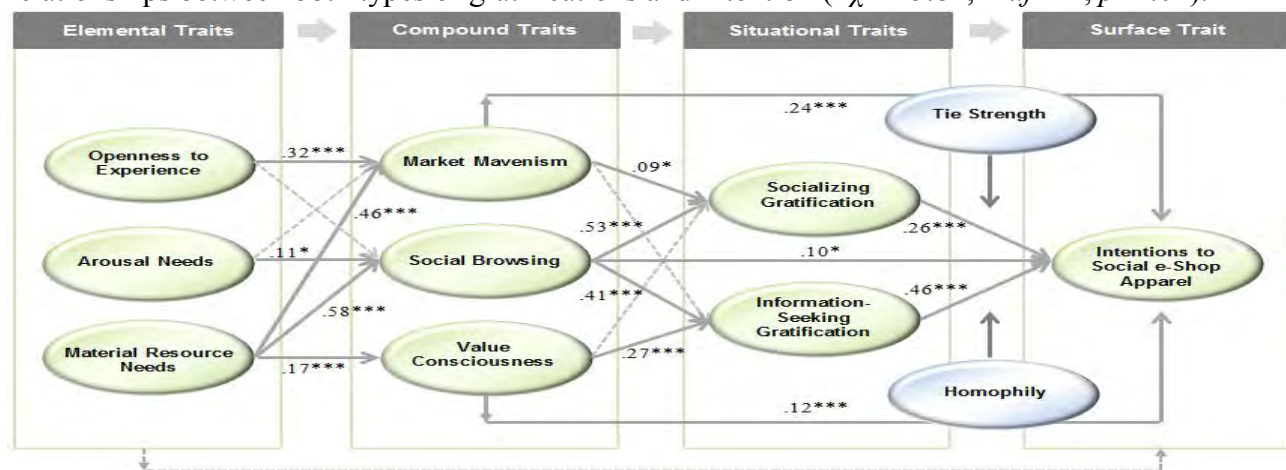

Figure1. Final model

        <u>Conclusions and Implications.</u> The effects of elemental traits (i.e., personality traits) were not directly associated with a surface trait (i.e., intention). Surprisingly, users who were market mavens were not likely to social e-shop using Facebook for the purpose of information-seeking. This insignificant relationship may be due to the developmental stage of Facebook's social shopping services. They may not yet satisfy these market mavens' information needs. To satisfy users' information-seeking and socializing gratifications and market mavenism, retailers may need to reinforce user-generated product reviews and ratings, merchant supplied videos of the product, community forums for conversations among customers, and customer supplied information concerning product use. To satisfy users' social browsing and value consciousness, retailers could link f-coupons directly to their f-loyalty programs and provide pop-up f-stores (i.e., limited-time events and limited group of products).

References

HyQuality media (2011). *The next level of social shopping f-commerce*. Retrieved from
    http://hyquality.com/the-next-level-of-social-shopping-f-commerce

Mowen, J. C. (2000). *The 3M model of motivation and personality*. Boston, MA: Kluwer Academic
    Press.

O'Neill, N. (2009). *The open graph API: What does it mean?* Retrieved from
    http://www.allfacebook.com/the-open-graph-api-what-does-it-mean-2009-10