Consumers' Clothing Benefits and Expectations on Smartphone Fashion Apps

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Introduction. More than 90 million people used smartphones in the United States in 2012 (Alexander 2012). It is estimated that the smartphone application market will experience growth of more than 1,000% between 2010 and 2014 (Petty & Goasduff, 2011). Fashion brands and companies have created smartphone apps as a new communication tool to create a strong connection with consumers and ultimately lead to continuous purchases without site and time limitations (Kim 2010). Since this field has become competitive, fashion brands need to understand consumers' expectations and design more attractive apps to lead consumers to purchase them (Maceli, 2011). This study investigates what kinds of specific expectations consumer have about functions of smartphone fashion apps and how they differ from their benefit segmentations. This study will give ideas to app developers and fashion brands and/or companies when they are launching and managing fashion brand apps.

Literature Review. (1) *Smartphone fashion apps.* Consumers download different apps depending on categories and their needs. Smartphone users download games (60%), news/weather (52%), maps/navigation (51%), social networking (47%), and other categories including entertainment/food, sports, and shopping/retail (Indvik, 2010). In the research, we defined a fashion app as a smartphone app related to fashion that informs current fashion trends, delivers any information regarding retail shops, and help consumers' shopping, and provide them social platforms. To help fashion brands and companies design successful fashion apps, consumers' expectation on fashion apps need to be addressed. *(2) Clothing benefit and expectation for fashion apps.* Consumers who pursue different clothing benefits have different expectations for fashion brand apps. In particular, consumers' personal characteristics and pursuit of benefits affect which apps they download (Koo & Min, 2010). In this study, measuring scales of pursuing benefits on fashion brand apps were adapted from previous research (Matthews, et al., 2009; Kim, 2010; Koo & Min, 2010). As a result, 15 scales were developed to measure consumers' pursuit of benefits of fashion apps, and 12 scales were developed to measure consumers' expectation about specific functions on fashion apps.

Methods. In this study, 156 potential consumers (age; *m*=29.25, SD=6.79, range 18-68), 105 men and 51 women, who own smartphones and have used them to download fashion brand apps participated; these individuals are within the major demographics of smartphone users (Koo & Min, 2011). Participants were asked to respond to questionnaires through an on-line survey website that uses volunteers to complete human-intelligence tasks (www.mturk.com). Participants answered questions using a 7-level Likert-scale. The questions are consisted of two demographics, three smartphone app behaviors, fifteen pursuing benefits of smartphone fashion brand app, and six expecting functions of smartphone fashion brand apps, including both close and open-ended questions. After the quantitative data collection, five consumers who are using fashion apps based on their clothing benefits were observed to support the findings.

Results & Discussion. Quantitative as well as qualitative data analyses were conducted to examine the research questions. First, two dimensions of fashion app pursuing benefits, brand value and practicality, were identified by factor analysis (KMO: 0.911). For expectations of fashion apps, two dimensions of possession and practicality were identified (KMO: 0.906). Second, multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the dimensions of fashion app pursuit of benefits and expectation of fashion apps. As a result, consumers who pursued practicality in fashion apps appeared to feel a sense of possession of the brand and get practical functions by downloading fashion apps. Similarly, consumers who pursued brand value of fashion apps appeared to feel a sense of possession of the brand and wanted to get practical functions through downloading fashion apps. Third, consumers who feel a sense of possession of the brand from fashion apps wanted to get style inspirations from them, while consumers who get practical function from fashion apps wanted to know the location and stock of the store ($p<0.05$). Furthermore, the mean scores of desired function of fashion apps were examined through descriptive statistics. The most desired functions in order were access to store information (70.50%), shopping (70.50%), fashion source (68.58%), product information (64.10%), trend (63.46%), style advice (62.82%), game (60.30%), wardrobe organizer (61.5%), reality experience (59.00%), fun social experience (57.70%), networking (55.80%), recent fashion collection (51.30%), and wish list (50.00%). Lastly, these findings were supported by the observation.

Conclusion. The findings present a better understanding of the relationship between consumers' clothing benefits and consumers' expectations of fashion apps. This research will give ideas to app developers and fashion designers who are willing to create fashion apps that satisfy consumer needs. In the future, it would be beneficial to conduct in-depth qualitative research to support the findings.

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