Male Consumers' Socially Responsible Consumption by Product Category and Involvement

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Socially responsible consumption (SRC)—the consumption behaviors of socially conscious consumers intending to maximize beneficial effects and minimize harmful impacts of their purchasing choices on society (Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001)—has been spreading within the population. Noticeable growth in consumer demand and market size for socially responsible (SR) products has been reported (The Nielsen Company, 2015). Compared to food products, apparel is considered less important in SR shopping (Raynolds & Bennett, 2015). For example, some consumers buy clothing at Walmart to save money to later spend on SR food, thereby demonstrating contradictions in their purchasing patterns (Brown, 2013). Thus, there is still a missing link in our understanding of consumer behaviors, particularly between product category and SRC. Personal values and product involvement are influential factors in consumer purchase decisions, including SRC (e.g., Ma & Lee, 2012). Furthermore, little work has been conducted on value-involvement relationships regarding male consumers' SRC. The goal of this study was to (a) investigate male consumers' attitudes toward two SR products—apparel and food, (b) verify the existence of different profiles of socially conscious consumers regarding their attitudes toward SR apparel and SR food, and (c) examine the impacts of personal values on consumer attitudes toward each of two product categories (SR apparel and SR food) by the level of consumer product involvement.

The data were collected from a convenience sample of male consumers using a human intelligence task (HIT) posted on MTurk; 211 responses were collected, of which 204 were deemed usable for data analysis. The ages in the sample ranged from 19 to 69, with a mean age of 34.6 years. About half was white or European American (45.9%) and the other half was Asian American (45.4%). About equal numbers were single (46.6%) or married (46.6%), and most were employed (84.3%) and had achieved a four-year college degree or higher (67.1%). The questionnaire consisted of items assessing consumers' personal values (Schwartz, 1992), product involvement with apparel and food products (Zaichkowsky, 1985), and attitudes toward SR apparel and SR food products (Ma & Lee, 2012); answers were measured on a 7-point Likert scale. Demographic information was also collected. The data were analyzed using SPSS 23.0, employing Cronbach's *alpha* coefficients, K-means cluster, *t*-tests, and regression analyses. The reliability and validity of the multi-item measures were checked before further analysis.

The results of a paired-sample *t*-test revealed that attitudes toward SR food (m=5.87, SD=1.81) were higher than attitudes toward SR apparel (m=5.42, SD=1.07) with statistical support (t= 6.51, p<.001). Similarly, male consumers' product involvement with food products (m=6.08, SD=1.00) was significantly higher than with apparel products (m=4.82, SD=1.60; t=10.88, p<.001). Next, participants were grouped into two clusters using the K-means method: high and low product involvement for each of apparel and food products. Consumers' attitudes

were compared across the level of product involvement using a series of independent sample t-tests. The group high in apparel product involvement (HA) (m=5.83, SD= .94) held significantly more favorable attitudes toward SR apparel than the group with low apparel product involvement (LA) (m=5.09, SD=1.11; t=5.09, p<.001). Similarly, the group high in food product involvement (HF) had significantly higher attitudes toward SR food products (m=6.14, SD = .90) than the group low in food product involvement (LF) (m=4.85, SD= 1.13; t=7.82, p<.001). These findings suggested that those who place more importance on apparel products are likely to have more favorable attitudes toward SR apparel products than those who care less, and similarly for food products. A series of multiple regression analyses was conducted to identify which personal values influence consumer attitudes toward SR apparel and SR food by the level of product involvement. For the HA group, only achievement significantly predicted male consumers' attitudes (R^2=.38, F(10,113)=6.84, p<.001; β= .28, p<.05), while three personal values—universalism (β=.38, p<.01), conformity (β=-.43, p<.05), and benevolence (β=.56, p<.01)—significantly predicted attitudes for the LA group (R^2=.51, F(10,69)=7.25, p<.001). For the HF group, two personal values—achievement (β=.22, p<.05) and benevolence (β=.51, p<.001)—significantly affected attitudes toward SR food (R^2=.38, F(10,151)=9.30, p<.001). For the LF group, however, no personal values predicted male consumers' attitudes toward SR food. Consumers think that SR apparel products provide relatively fewer benefits to consumers than SR food products, which provide direct benefits to purchasers, such as being healthy (Niinimäki, 2010). The results of this study expand our understanding of how SR apparel consumers differ from SR food consumers in terms of personal values. Moreover, this study fills a gap in the current literature by demonstrating the importance of product involvement in explaining the relationships between personal values and consumer attitudes toward SR products.

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