Semantic Network Analysis of Gorpcore

Hyun-Jung Lee, Hanyang University, South Korea
YeJin In, Hanyang University, South Korea
HyunJu Shin, Korea Polytechnics, South Korea
Seulah Lee, Hanyang University, South Korea
Kyu-Hye Lee, Hanyang University, South Korea

Keywords: gorpcore, semantic network analysis, outdoor

Introduction: The Korean outdoor clothing market has grown dramatically because of an increase in leisure time, changes in work-life balance, and the developing popularity of outdoor activities. Consumers have started to incorporate outdoor wear into their daily wardrobes, making the Korean outdoor clothing market one of the world's major markets. However, the outdoor market has become saturated as the number of brands has rapidly grown. Outdoor apparel brands have tried to expand the market in various ways and create new demand. They have created a new style called "gorpcore," which is the crossover phenomenon of outdoor wear. The purpose of this study is to investigate the gorpcore trend, which has greatly affected the fashion industry in recent years, through semantic network analysis.

Background: The term "gorpcore" was used at first in New York magazine The Cut in late May 2017. "Gorpcore" is the combination of "gorp" (short for the "granola, oats, raisins, and peanuts" enjoyed during outdoor activities) and "normcore" (Korea Research Institute for Fashion and Distribution Information, 2018). It refers to "a style of dress incorporating utilitarian clothing of a type worn for outdoor activities" (Oxford Dictionary, 2017). The Oxford Dictionary selected it as the 2017 word of the year. Consumers who prefer functional, practical apparel started a fashion trend by wearing sportswear as casual wear and are now turning to outdoor apparel for casual wear to mix and match (Lee, 2018). In the past, consumers have worn outdoor wear as their daily clothing; however, in recent years, the collaboration of outdoor and high fashion brands have introduced gorpcore products with both design and functionality. Gorpcore is not only a term used by consumers who wear outdoor clothing as a casual wear; it can be considered a new style in the fashion industry. The luxury brands' traditional images have been transformed, adding comfort and practicality to their lines. After leading luxury brands launched their gorpcore products, those styles spread all over the world and have become a fashion trend (Chen, 2017). However, although the trend has become global, not all consumers are participating; therefore, more research on the overall gorpcore trend is needed. To this end, this study investigated gorpcore trends through the semantic analysis of news articles.

Methods: Network analysis is a method of analyzing a network structure by identifying the types or regular patterns of relationships among interacting units(Wasserman & Faust, 1994); it is often used to analyze the structure of symbols, ideology, and knowledge (Otte & Rousseau, 2002). In

this paper, we extracted words from news article titles found using Google. Of the 2,530 articles from May 25, 2017, to February 28, 2019, we analyzed 291 articles that mentioned the gorpcore in the text. For semantic network analysis, the words were extracted using the KrKwic program. After processing the word data, an undirected network matrix was created consisting of 182 words from a total of 983 words. We visualized the semantic network using the NodeXL program and then analyzed network characteristics.

Results: As a result of the analysis, a matrix with 180 vertices and 1,092 edges was formed as shown in Figure 1. The average geodesic distance of the network was 2.288, and the graph density was .067. The most frequent words were "fashion" (63), "gorpcore" (51), "trend" (48), "new" (28), "now" (19), and "ugly" (17). This shows that gorpcore is a new fashion trend that pursues the counterpart of beauty, ugliness, in current clothing. As for the material, "fleece" frequently appeared, which is the main material used in gorpcore. Clothing items were represented by the words "jacket" (15), "anorak" (5), "hiking boots" (5), "pants" (4), "ugly shoes" (4), and "sneakers" (4). "Women" appeared twice, "men" appeared 15 times and "menswear" four times, meaning that gorpcore is more common in menswear. The words "collection" (9) and "fashion week" (6) also frequently appeared, which indicates designers are incorporating gorpcore in their collections. The preferred seasons for gorpcore are represented in the words "winter" (12), "fall" (8), and "autumn" (7) rather than "spring" (4) and "summer" (7). Traditional outdoor brands and luxury brands coexist, seen in words such as "Gucci" (7), "Patagonia" (6), "The North Face" (5), and "Balenciaga" (4). This means that luxury brands have also proven to be the driving force behind gorpcore fashion.

Discussion and Conclusion: This study analyzed the network structure of gorpcore through semantic network analysis. The gorpcore style is more prominent in menswear and outerwear used during the fall-winter season. Gorpcore has become a style. Middle-aged consumers who have usually been alienated in fashion have been embraced through gorpcore, which is preferred by the new generation "Z," who favors comfort over beauty. New start-up menswear and outdoor brands are ideal for positioning in the market. Specifically, applying gorpcore to outerwear and shoe design can emphasize brand characteristics.
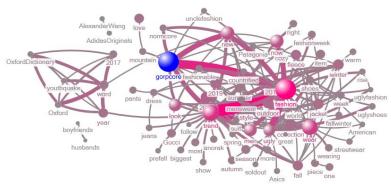

Figure 1. Semantic network analysis (Edge weight more than five)

References

Chen, J. (2017, May 25). First came normcore. Now get ready for gorpcore. *The Cut*, Retrieved from https://www.thecut.com/2017/05/new-fashion-trends-normcore-gorpcore.html

Korea Research Institute for Fashion and Distribution Information. (2018, January 19). Gorpcore. *CFT*, Retrieved from http://www.cft.or.kr/sub/?num=1549

Lee, M.-S. (2018). Dailiness in fashion: Focused on normcore, gorpcore, menocore. *Journal of Korea Design Forum, 23*(4), 19-30. doi:10.21326/ksdt.2018.23.4.002

Otte, E., & Rousseau, R. (2002). Social network analysis: A powerful strategy, also for the information sciences. *Journal of information Science, 28*(6), 441-453. doi:10.1177/016555150202800601

Oxford Dictionary. (2017). Word of the year 2017: The shortlist. Retrieved from https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/word-of-the-year/shortlist-2017

Wasserman, S., & Faust, K. (1994). *Social network analysis: Methods and applications*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.