Failure Experience and Rumination in Mobile Shopping of Fashion Products

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Introduction: A consumer shopping environment is on the trend of moving from offline to online and from online to mobile. Now, with more than half of all website traffic shopping worldwide from a mobile device, it is essential to make sure retailers primed for consumer's mobile experiences. In a mobile environment where face to face services are not available, research on consumer emotion is more important than in other shopping channels. Consumer failure experiences lead to negative emotions, such as anger and regret. These negative emotions result in a process called rumination, which refers to constant contemplation of the related event, the cause, the significance, and the outcome of the negative emotion (Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco, & Lyubomirsky, 2008). This study focuses on the experiences of consumers' service failure in the mobile environment and the process of cognitive appraisal. Moreover, the purpose of this study is to extend the scope of consumer psychology and behavior research by identifying the concept of rumination, which is not covered much in consumer research.

Literature Review: Rumination is a negative thought about the wrong situation and the subject who created it and can increase retaliation, avoidance, and bad intentions (Garland et al., 2010). Rumination involves attention to the past with a negative, judgmental quality and may be conceptualized as an attempt to make sense of an upsetting experience (Watkins, 2008). Customer rumination on service failure situations can lead to plan to adversely affect retailers, such as switching suppliers or negative words of mouth. Thus, negative emotional rumination can be a powerful tool to dissatisfy consumers and make it difficult to maintain relationships connecting consumers and retailers, thereby excluding sales. In this study, we tried to confirm the effects of rumination on the relationship between negative emotions, consumer coping strategies, and consumer responses.

Method: The qualitative inquiry considered most appropriate, as this study aims to understand and explore consumers' behaviors, perceptions, beliefs, and values, rather than to predict their behaviors (McCracken, 1988). Given these reasons, in-depth interviews with consumers seem to be most advisable, as they enable researchers to gain a more accurate and clear picture of a respondent's position or behavior (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2002). A total of 32 individual interviews conducted for women aged of 20s and 30s. Interviewing continued until redundancy was reached, implying theoretical saturation. The interviews took place in South Korea in the spring of 2019. With the participants' permission, each interview was audiotaped and transcribed.

Results: The participants responded that they visit mobile shopping sites more than five times a week on average, spend more than $100 for purchasing fashion products twice a month. The reasons for the preference for mobile shopping they mentioned were that there are no constraints in location, less physical energy is required, convenient to acquire shopping information, and that they can save a significant amount of time. Convenient payment systems, including various promotions, biometric authentications (iris and fingerprints), were also mentioned as the factor to prefer mobile shopping than other shopping channels. On the other hand, the participants mentioned that mobile shopping has the same inconvenience as online shopping does, which is the impossibility to examine and try on the actual products.

Failure experiences. The most common factor of unsuccessful mobile shopping experience was the quality of fashion products. More than half of the failed experiences were due to unsatisfactory quality or the difference between the actual and screen quality in terms of the products' color, material, and texture. Other common factors were inaccurate information on the websites and system errors. Therefore, the types of unsuccessful mobile shopping experiences can be classified into two categories: the failure related to the product itself and the failure related to the purchasing process.

Rumination of negative emotions. Irritation and disappointment were experienced most after the failures related to the quality of the products. On the other hand, anger more commonly experienced after the failures related to the purchasing process, such as system errors and inadequate customer services after unsatisfied experiences. Some experienced annoyance and anxiety from the fact that they have to solve the problems resulting from unsuccessful shopping experiences. The participants said that rumination lasted on the day of the unsuccessful mobile shopping experience, or lasted until the problem was solved. The rumination process-related specifically to fashion products also shown when the participants experienced the same negative emotions when they saw or wore the clothes related to their previous unsuccessful shopping experience. Mobile shopping, which requires more time to solve service problems such as delivery, exchange, or refund than offline, which is face to face service, has been shown to extend consumers' rumination.

Conclusions: This study shows that the consumers' failed mobile shopping experiences are related to specific negative emotions like irritation and anger. Consequently, rumination was experienced in general, though the intensity of rumination differed by the type of failures. Ruminating the unpleasant experiences led to negative recognition of the underlying factors, resulting in final decisions such as terminating the relationship with particular retailers. The recovery strategies the participants expect from the retailers after unpleasant experiences can classify into monetary rewards and emotional rewards. Final customers' failed shopping experience hinders them from maintaining the relationship with the retailers, and it is recommended for the retailers to explore further the link between customers' purchasing patterns

and emotions. Also, retailers' adequate reactions need to study in-depth, given the lack of face-to-face communication with the customers in mobile shopping environment.

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