

A Study on Consumers' Characteristics according to their Fashion Leadership – Focused on Body Cathexis, Self-Efficacy and Shopping Orientation –

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Abstract : The purposes of this study were to determine consumers' characteristics that were shown according to their fashion leadership through examining the differences found with consumers' self-conception like the body cathexis and self-efficacy and clothing shopping orientation. The data were collected from 263 female college students using questionnaire. The results could be summarized as follows: First, the household income, subjective social class and clothing expenditure of the fashion leader group was larger than those of the fashion follower and laggard groups. Second, the fashion leader group showed higher body cathexis than the fashion follower and laggard groups in the lower body, the abdominal region, the bust shape, and the whole body shape. Thirdly, the higher was the fashion leadership, the higher was the self-efficacy. Forth, it was proved that the higher was the fashion leadership, the higher were the clothing shopping orientation such as home-shopping preference, hedonic shopping, impulsive purchasing, and brand loyalty.

Key words : fashion leadership, body cathexis, self-efficacy, shopping orientation

INTRODUCTION

Consumers of this modern times show new and various propensities in consuming clothing due to the increase of income, individualization, and high-quality taste by a great change of life style. In these circumstances, it is an essential task for the fashion industry to understand and predict consumers' changing behaviors and needs, and to develop new fashion products that can satisfy their needs, by target marketing.

The fashion leadership means the influential extent of new fashion style upon other people's adoption of clothing, at the same time, it is a variable of behavioral standard for the purpose of market segmentation. The consumers are classified into two groups according to the fashion leadership; the group of leading fashion and the other group of following fashion. The characteristics of the former group are different from those of the latter group in many aspects, such as demographic and psychological characteristics, and behavioral patterns related with clothing.

Recently, as the length of fashion products' life cycle is gradually getting reduced, the important things are the target group's rapid adoption of clothing and the maximal expansion of the fashion. Accordingly, the fashion leaders' role that purchases the new fashion products in its

early stage of time, communicate fashion trend and advices on clothing, and help follower to accept new fashion products is getting important more and more. Also, the fashion leaders have remarkable social status and high visibility and are small number of people. So the fashion marketer can easily predict what new fashion products will be popular through them, without spending much expense or effort. For the above reasons, it is a very significant things to clarify the real identity of the fashion leader, and to closely examine the psychological characteristics such as self-conception and clothing purchasing behavior for fashion marketing strategy.

This study classified female college students who were usually concerned about their appearance and new fashion trends, and had a great effect upon the fashion industry, according to the degree of their fashion leadership. The purposes of this study were to understand consumers' characteristics that are shown according to their fashion leadership through examining the differences found with consumers' body cathexis, self-efficacy and clothing shopping orientation. And This study will provide helpful marketing data that are for understanding of consumers' needs and behavior in their clothing life style.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Fashion leadership and body cathexis

Body Cathexis represents the degree of satisfaction with several body parts and the main element that forms a physical self. Body Cathexis is influenced more by sub-

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jective evaluation and recognition about body size and shape than by actual body shape. And female college students or young women in their teens or twenties in Korea usually regard the excessively thin body type as an ideal one. In consequence, most of them are not satisfied with their own body shapes; particularly, the degree of satisfaction with the lower part of the body was proved to be lower than those with any other body parts.

Clothing is directly connected with the physical self, a part of the self, at the same time, it is important and symbolic means for social interaction, so that many preceding studies have been concerned about the relations among the body image, degree of clothing satisfaction, and clothing behavior, focused on body cathexis. With regard to clothing, Labat & DeLong (1990) clarified that female consumer's body cathexis had a significant correlation with clothing satisfaction. Kim (1992) showed that the persons who showed a high degree of body cathexis also showed a high degree of interest in design, fashion, purchasing of clothing and so on. Kim (1996) asserted that a constant significant correlation was found among female college students' fashion leadership, their clothing satisfaction, and body cathexis. Hwang (1998) clarified that the body cathexis and ideal body images had a significant influence upon clothing attitudes and fashion innovation.

Therefore, the persons who were satisfied with their bodies had a high degree of concern about appearance, clothing, and fashion trend. Furthermore, if examining the body cathexis in each part of the body according to the degree of fashion leadership, the influences of body cathexis upon the fashion leadership could be clarified more specifically and effectively.

Fashion leadership and self-efficacy

Self-Efficacy represents a self-conception concerning self-ability, that is, a judgment on self-ability that organizes and implements necessary actions for the purpose of achieving specific results (Bandura, 1986), which concept seems to be similar to self-confidence or self-esteem.

Silver *et al.* (1995) found that the persons who had a higher degree of self-efficacy also were different with the persons who had a lower self-efficacy, in the comprehension of accomplishment results or the next trial for another performance. Jang (1993) asserted that adolescents decided not only their imitation degrees of the same age's group behaviors, group language, or clothing styles but also the moral sense, values, social behaviors according to the self-efficacy.

Jo (1997) said that the persons who showed a higher degree of social self-efficacy enjoyed their changed appearances by clothing, felt self-confident and regarded clothing as an important means to express their values.

Also Mun & Yu (2001) insisted that a high social self-efficient person were concerned about the latest fashion.

On the other hand, Lee's study (1998) on the relationships between high school female students' clothing behaviors and their self-efficacy obtained the result that the lower was the degree of social self-efficacy, the higher was the degree of fashion leadership. And the study by Yu & Kim (2001) proved the fact that generally, when purchasing clothing, the lower was the self-efficacy, the higher was the motive of fashion-pursuit.

As shown in the above, many different opinions about the relations among the self-efficacy, the clothing behavior and the fashion leadership had not been corresponded to with one another yet. However, there were few studies conducted on the self-efficacy in the field of clothing and textiles, it is difficult to discuss and decide one consistent effect until this moment.

Nevertheless, the self-efficacy includes personal judgments concerning how much efficiently and successfully they can conduct certain tasks in actual situations, it is surely expected that the self-efficacy will have a great effect upon personal thinking and behaviors related with clothing. Therefore, the further studies are inquired in the future too.

Fashion leadership and clothing shopping orientation

Generally, consumers' shopping orientation represents social, economic, psychological phenomena as well as entertaining, which plays a very important role in establishing the fashion marketing and the distribution strategies. Many studies related to consumers' shopping orientation showed various study results. Kim & Lee (1994) classified consumers into four groups according to their clothing-shopping orientation; shopping types of high involvement, pursuing enjoyment, economical efficiency, and low involvement, in which study, it was proved that each type respectively showed different demographic characteristics, different store evaluation criteria, and different kinds of perceived risk of clothing. Shin & Park (1999) made it clear that consumer's clothing shopping orientation was consisted of six dimensions on the whole; shopping enjoyment, brand loyalty, confidence in shopping activities, practicality in shopping, planning in shopping activities, and conformity.

The above studies clarified that clothing shopping orientation included not only the various behavioral characteristics but also the actual feelings, needs and satisfaction experienced during shopping. For that reason, the clothing shopping orientation became a important variable in understanding and clarifying consumers' characteristics.

This study is to clarify the influences of fashion lead-

ership on shopping orientations such as home-shopping preference, hedonic shopping, rational shopping, impulsive purchasing, and brand loyalty, which have been pointed to as major clothing shopping orientations by preceding studies.

PROCEDURE

Sample and data collection

The sample used in this study were female college students at Seoul. They were selected by a convenience sampling; 300 questionnaires were distributed in August, 2001, and 263 copies were collected and used for the final statistical analysis. With respect to the distribution of sample, the freshman was 27.2%, sophomore was 13.4%, junior was 29.9%, and senior was 28.7%. With regard to the monthly household income, the rate of income under two million won was 20.9%, from two million to four million won was 52.9%, from four million to six million won was 14.1%, and over six million won was 8.9%. And as for clothing expenditure, the less than a hundred thousand won was 18.7%, from a hundred thousand to two hundred thousand won was 36.9%, from two hundred thousand to three hundred thousand won was 19.8%, and from three hundred thousand to four hundred thousand won was 12.3%, and over four hundred thousand won was 11.5%.

The questionnaire and variables measured

The method of study was a questionnaire survey, and the specific variables consisting the questionnaire were as follows.

The fashion leadership was defined as scores indicated by subjects' degree of agreement with 7 statements adapted from the preceding studies (Lee, 1996) on a 5-point Likert scale.

The body cathexis was defined as the scores of subjects after rating their satisfaction with 19 body parts on a 5-point Likert scale. Body parts measured were as follows: head area (head, face), neck area (thickness and length of the neck), bust area (girth of the bust, sag degree of the bust), abdominal area (thickness and length of the waist, projection of the abdomen), hip area (girth of the hip, sag degree of the hip), arm area (thickness and length of the arms), lower body area (thickness of thighs, calves and ankles, length of the legs), height, weight, and the whole body shape.

The measure of self-efficacy was defined by 31 statements translated and modified from SES (self-efficacy scale) of Sherer *et al.* (1982) on a 5-point Likert scale.

The shopping orientation in clothing included home-shopping preference, enjoyment orientation, hedonic shopping, rational shopping, impulsive purchasing, and brand loyalty

was measured by 36 statements on a 5 point Likert scale.

The demographic characteristics, the items such as the household income by a million won scale, subjective social class, and the level of clothing expenditure were measured. And examining the level of clothing expenditure, in the last 3 months, were measured by a hundred thousand won scale.

Cronbach's α , factor analysis, one-way ANOVA and Duncan's multiple range test were conducted for the statistical analysis of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Group segmentation according to fashion leadership

The sample was classified into three classes, according to scores of fashion leadership; the upper class of 25%, the middle class of 50%, and the lower class of 25%. Each class is respectively named 'fashion leader group', 'fashion follower group', and 'fashion laggard group'. The score distribution range and the frequency number of each class were shown in Table 1.

Demographic characteristics according to fashion leadership

The one-way ANOVA was used in order to clarify demographic characteristics of consumers according to fashion leadership, and the results are shown in Table 2.

It was proved that significant differences were found between each three groups in the total amount of household income, subjective social class and the level of clothing expenditure, except school grade. And it was also proved that the household income of the fashion leader group was larger than those of the fashion follower and the fashion laggard group, that the subjective social class of the fashion leader group was higher than those of the fashion follower and the fashion laggard group, and

Table 1. Group classification according to fashion leadership

Item	Fashion leader	Fashion follower	Fashion laggard	Total
Frequency (%)	77(25%)	107(50%)	79(25%)	263(100%)
Mean	3.67	3.33	2.67	3.22

Table 2. Demographic characteristics according to fashion leadership

Item	Fashion leader	Fashion follower	Fashion laggard	F
Household income	4.54A	3.62B	3.88B	2.569*
Subjective social class	4.03A	3.95AB	3.7B	3.027*
Clothing expenditure	3.67A	2.44B	2.46B	9.645***

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Table 3. Area of body part for measuring body cathexis

Factor	Body parts	Factor loading	Eigen value cum.variance
Lower body	thickness of thighs	.810	4.374 14.413
	thickness of calves	.757	
	thickness of ankles	.694	
	girth of hips	.512	
Abdominal region	thickness of waist	.746	1.806 28.808
	projection of abdomen	.743	
	length of waist	.580	
Face and cervical region	length of the neck	.832	1.397 40.985
	thickness of the neck	.775	
	face	.477	
Limbs length and height	length of the legs	.736	1.145 52.690
	length of the arms	.735	
	height	.529	
Bust	bust girth	.741	1.044 61.033
	sag degree of the bust	.689	

that the clothing expenditure level of the fashion leader group was higher than those of other groups. In particular, there were the largest significant differences between each group in the clothing expenditure. And these results proved that the fashion leaders play the most important role in the fashion industry.

Body cathexis according to fashion leadership

Area of Body part for measuring body cathexis : For the purpose of measuring body cathexis in each body part, a factor analysis was conducted. As results, 5 factors were extracted as Table 2, and the cumulative variance was 61.03% in total.

The first factor consisted of the thickness of thighs, calves, ankles and girth of hip, which was named 'lower body'. The second factor was composed of the parts of thickness and length of waist and projection of the abdomen, which was named 'abdominal region'. The third factor consisted of the length and thickness of the neck and face, which was named 'face and cervical region'.

The forth factor was composed of the length-related parts of length of the legs, length of the arms, and height, which was named 'limbs length and height'. And fifth factor was made up of the chest girth and sag degree of the breast, which was named 'bust area'.

The results told the facts that the samples usually evaluate their degree of satisfactions in each different body part, such as the lower body, the abdominal region, the face region, height and the bust part. And this results was different from those of Hwang (1997) and Shim *et al.* (1991), who divided the whole body into 5 divisions; the lower body (legs, calves, knees, feet), head/upper body (face, hair, eyes, nose, teeth, voice), height (overall height, leg length), weight (overall weight, waist, hips, thighs), and torso (bust, neck, muscular strength).

The difference of body cathexis according to fashion leadership in each different body part : In order to examine the differences of body cathexis according to the

Table 4. The body cathexis according to fashion leadership

Item	Fashion leader	Fashion follower	Fashion laggard	F
Lower body	2.96 A	2.38 B	2.35 B	9.10***
Abdominal region	2.89 A	2.61 B	2.48 B	4.31*
Face and cervical region	3.26	3.11	3.03	1.66
Limbs length and height	2.95	2.71	2.66	1.76
Bust	3.05 A	2.83 AB	2.71 B	2.77*
Whole body shape	2.98 A	2.40 B	2.37 B	7.69**

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

fashion leadership in each different body parts, the one-way ANOVA and Duncan's multiple range test were conducted, and the test results are shown in Table 4.

With respect to each different body part, the fashion leadership group showed significant differences of body cathexis respectively in the lower body, the abdominal region, and the bust. The fashion leader group showed higher degree of body cathexis with the lower body, the abdominal region, the bust, and the whole body shape than the fashion follower group and the fashion laggard group. The fashion follower and laggard group showed very low degree of body cathexis with the lower body, which caused a large gap in comparison with the fashion leader group. The above result was related with the results from the studies of Lee (1996), and Nam & Lee (2001); most female college students were dissatisfied, particularly, with the lower body, such as legs, hips, and the lower abdomen.

Self-efficacy according to fashion leaderships

Examining the differences of self-efficacy according to fashion leaderships, the one-way ANOVA and Duncan's multiple range test were conducted, and the test results are shown in Table 5. As a result, the fashion leader group showed a higher self-efficacy than the other two groups.

The result was contrary to the assertion of Lee (1998); the lower is the social self-efficacy, the higher is the fashion leaderships, that is, the female university students who showed a higher degree of social self-efficacy were more self-confident so that they didn't feel it quite less necessary to attract the others' attention or favorable impression by fashionable style than the students who had lower self-efficacy.

However, it is a noticeable characteristic that fashion

leader usually accepted and tried to fashionable style and unusual styles more actively or progressively, which other persons did not accept or try yet. These facts were said to be caused by their self-confident mind in their own ability, therefore, it might be true that those who had a higher fashion leadership also show a higher self-efficacy than the fashion follower and laggard.

The difference of clothing shopping orientation according to fashion leaderships

In order to examine the difference of clothing shopping orientation that was shown according to the fashion leaderships, the one-way ANOVA and Duncans multiple range test were conducted, and the test results are shown in Table 6.

There were significant differences among three groups those were divided by the fashion leaderships, in consumers' clothing shopping orientation, such as home-shopping preference, hedonic shopping, impulsive purchasing, and brand loyalty. Since the fashion leaders were more sensitive to the latest trend and had a higher body cathexis with their own body than the other two groups, they have the tendencies of hedonic shopping and impulsive purchasing. Also, since the fashion leader had a higher self-confidence than the other groups, they had a propensity of home-shopping preference, which had a higher perceived risk than the fashion follower and laggard group.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The purposes of this study were to understand consumers' characteristics that were shown according to their fashion leaderships through examining the differences found with consumers' self-conception like the body cathexis and self-efficacy, and clothing shopping orientation. The consumer group was divided into three groups by a quartile deviation; fashion leader group, fashion follower group, and fashion laggard group.

The results could be summarized as follows.

First, it was proved that the monthly household income, subjective social class and clothing expenditure of the

Table 5. Self-efficacy according to fashion leaderships.

Item	Fashion leader	Fashion follower	Fashion laggard	F
Self-efficacy	81.47 A	77.83 B	77.69 B	2.74*

*p<.05

Table 6. Clothing shopping orientation according to fashion leaderships

Item	Fashion leader	Fashion follower	Fashion laggard	F
Home shopping preference	2.74 A	2.61 B	2.60 B	2.81*
Hodonic shopping	4.05 A	3.73 B	3.47 C	9.63***
Rational shopping	3.81	3.76	3.75	.31
Brand loyalty	3.29 A	3.09 B	3.08 B	2.37*
Impulsive purchasing	3.66 A	3.26 B	3.09 B	7.45**

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

fashion leader group was larger than those of the other groups.

Second, female college students evaluated their body cathexis in each body part, dividing the whole body into several regions; the lower body, the abdominal region, face and neck, height, and the bust region. And the fashion leader group showed higher body cathexis in the lower body, the abdominal region, the bust shape, and the whole body shape.

Third, the higher was the fashion leaderships, the higher was the self-efficacy.

Fourth, it was proved that the higher was the fashion leadership, the higher were the clothing shopping orientation such as home-shopping preference, hedonic shopping, impulsive purchasing, and brand loyalty.

The conclusion and marketing implications can be summarized as follows.

It was found the clear differences between the fashion leader group and the other two groups in the characteristics of not only self-conception like body cathexis and self-efficacy but also the clothing shopping orientation in the behavioral characteristic. In particular, since the fashion leader group has very affirmative and satisfactory feelings about their body as well as their ability of adopting new fashion styles that might include high social risks, they usually play an important role in making new products in vogue in the target market. Besides, the fashion leaders' high body cathexis and their self-confident about ability, generally increase their preference toward hedonic shopping, impulsive purchasing that always depend on emotion, or preference toward home-shopping.

This study had been conducted with a convenience sampling from female college students, therefore, the results cannot be generalized, of course. And the future study should continually research consumers' psychological and behavioral variables that clearly clarify the fashion leaders' characteristics.

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