

An Exploratory Study on Entertaining Apparel Shopping Experiences of College Students

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Abstract

This study explores the perceptions of fashion consumers on entertaining shopping experiences and investigates the factors important to the creation of these experiences. A convenient sample of 100 was used for the exploratory survey. Respondents were asked to complete open-ended questions (e.g., describe a recent store shopping trip that you remember as being pleasurable and entertaining) on a standardized form. A total of 97 questionnaires were completed and used for further analysis. Six entertaining shopping factors were identified: store-related factors were merchandise, service, the store environment, and events; customer-related factors were customer resources and social aspects. Five non-entertaining shopping factors were identified: the store-related factors were merchandise, service, and the store environment factor; customer-related factors included customer resources and social aspects. A survey with a convenient sample of 200 college students was administered to examine the importance of entertaining and non-entertaining factors. The merchandise factor (which includes products assortments and price-related items) were rated as the most important part of the entertaining store-shopping experience, followed by service factors in the store category, and customer resources in the customer category.

Key words: Fun, Entertainment, Shopping, Apparel

I. Introduction

Over the years, the competition among retailers has increased significantly due to the overflowing retail spaces in Korea, changes in transportation systems, the introduction of new retail format (e.g., Internet shopping), and changes in consumer shopping activities. In addition, due to the development of transportation systems and technology, the merchandise mix and product offerings of more retail stores have become similar, resulting in retail stores with too many stores offering too much of the same merchandise (Templin, 1997). Marketers discovered that customers are not just rational decision-makers: they

want to be entertained, emotionally affected, and creatively challenged by “experiencing” products or services. These phenomena provide the outlines of a type of marketing and management driven by experience (Schmitt, 1999, 2003).

As a result, entertainment has become an integral part of today's shopping experiences and will be a point of strategic differentiation for stores or shopping malls. Since most shopping malls offer similar national brands, consumers cannot tell the difference between one shopping mall and another. From the International Council of Shopping Center (ISCS) 1995 survey, more than 50% of the retailers participating in that survey used “entertainment” to describe their businesses (Mariwyn, 1999). Thus, it is important to create a unique and memorable place: that is, retailers make their stores to reflect their geographic area characteristics so as to offer a very unique store

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design and atmosphere, to have kiosks that bring differentiation and excitement to shopping malls.

Entertainment is important to retail store attributes because it induces exciting and fun shopping experience, which can result in consumer patronage (Haynes & Talpade, 1996). Pine II and Gilmore (1998) pointed out that the "leading-edge companies will find that the next competitive battleground lies in staging experiences." They suggest that an the experience occurs when a company "intentionally uses services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates memorable events." The retail strategy of integrating entertainment into a retail store's marketing mix to create positive experiences for customers has been gaining popularity. Apparel retail stores also provide various events or services that could increase entertaining shopping experiences: these include fashion shows, bridal fairs, gift-giving events, and taking pictures with Santa Claus during the Christmas holiday season.

Entertaining shopping experiences can be defined as fun and pleasurable shopping experiences (Babin & Darden 1995; Bloch et al., 1986; Hirshman, 1983; Unger & Kernan, 1983), and turning shopping into an entertaining experience has become a frequent strategy of many retailers (Berry, 1996). Although the importance of entertainment and providing pleasurable shopping experiences is recognized and has been thought to be a key for customer loyalty, research concerning this issue in the Korean retail area is limited. There are few researches studies on entertaining store attributes in Korea; indeed research on customer entertaining shopping experience is almost nonexistent. What do consumers think is an entertaining shopping experience? Understanding consumers' concepts of "entertaining shopping" is necessary prior to developing strategies to build consumers' entertaining shopping experiences in a retail stores.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore fashion consumers' ideas on entertaining - fun and pleasurable - experiences in a retail setting using a mixed methods approach. In study 1, consumer's concepts of entertaining shopping experiences were classified in order to construct a framework in which shoppers' experiences in retail settings could be fur-

ther explored. These findings informed study 2, which consisted of an examination of the importance that apparel consumers' place on entertaining shopping attributes via a survey. The findings can assist both researchers' and practitioners' understanding of consumers' concepts about entertaining shopping experiences and provide insight into entertaining shopping issues in the apparel retail industry.

II. Related Research

1. Hedonic Shopping Motivation

Researchers have discovered that people typically shop for both hedonic and utilitarian purposes (Babin et al., 1994; Possemier, 1980). Hedonic shopping motives are based on the quality of the shopping experience itself rather than on information gathering or purchasing products. Westbrook and Blake (1985) categorize consumers' shopping motives into three categories: product oriented, experiential and a combination of product and experiential. The product-oriented shopping motive refers to a store visit motivated by the desire to acquire product information or to purchase a product. The experiential-oriented shopping motive refers to a store visit motivated by the pleasure inherent in a store visit, in and of itself. A combination of the product and experiential motive occurs when the consumer visits a store to obtain product information or purchase a product, as well as to enjoy a recreational experience in the store. Hedonic shopping motives are based on the quality of the shopping experience itself, rather than on information gathering of purchasing products (Boedecker, 1995; Jarboe & McDaniel, 1987). Bloch et al. (1994) found that consumers view malls as a place not only for shopping, but also for other activities, such as entertainment, socializing with friends, and browsing with no intention to purchase products. A few researchers suggest that the main reason many people visit shopping malls is for the excitement of the experience (Stoltman et al., 1991). Thus, these multiple shopping motives indicate the importance of entertainment in shopping.

2. Experience Economy and Experiential Marketing

Pine II and Gilmore (1998) introduced a concept of "experience economy." The experience economy refers to a next economy following the agrarian economy, the industrial economy and the most recent service economy. They argued that because of technology, increasing competition, and the increasing expectations of consumers, service-based marketing offerings become look like commodities, a transition must be made to providing customers with memorable experiences in order to achieve competitive advantage. The experiential marketing based on experience economy has been applied widely by many corporations.

Experiential marketing refers to a live event of experience that gives the target market the opportunity to see a product and experience it for themselves (Schmitt, 1999). The goal of experiential marketing is to tie a product to an experience that is relevant to the target consumer, the premise being that letting people discover the characteristics of a product or service on their own is more effective than having them see or hear about it through a passive medium. The Schmitt (1998) proposes 'Strategic Experience Modules' (SEMs), which are different types of experiences, and 'Experience Producers' (ExPros) which are the various agencies that deliver these experiences. Experience marketing is the discipline of creating products and services that consider all elements of this framework. Schmitt (1998) identifies five different types of experiences or 'SEMs'. These are: sense, feel, think, act and relate. These five different types of experiences are conveyed to individuals through 'ExPros', which are vehicles such as, communications, identity, product presence, co-branding, spatial environments, and people.

Much previous research investigated experiential marketing aspect related to retailing; research on store special design or visual attributes and consumer's emotion and shopping experience (Kumar & Karande, 2000; Turley & Chebat, 2002), the relationship between shopping experience and consumer's shopping intentions (Swinyard, 1993) among others. Today, entertainment has become an integral part of

the shopping experienced and will be a point of strategic differentiation for shopping centers as well as individual stores. Many shopping center owners and managers have embraced entertainment as a way to bring customers to the all and keep them there.

3. Entertainment in Retailing

During the 1990s, new competitive strategies were awarded to differentiate the saturated retail industry, and they started being applied variously in order to draw in consumers. Retailers attempted to encourage customers to spend more time in shopping malls; as a result, there was a great effort to provide various forms of entertainment besides products and services. Thus, entertainment is a necessity of the shopping experience; as an essential factor in retail marketing, it is recognized as a way of strategic differentiation of future shopping malls (Evans, 1999).

"Retail entertainment" is a concept that is has gained increasing interest of the American and European retail industry since 1990. Its purpose is to provide a variety of paths to experience entertainment in a shopping center so that it makes consumers' experiences enjoyable rather than simply purchasing products. The goal is to make shopping fun and interesting in order to seduce more consumers into shopping centers, encouraging them to spend more time in these centers, and ultimately increasing the possibility of them purchasing more products and revisiting the centers. In the situation where retailers viciously compete, due to the limited time and consumption abilities, its purpose is to pursue differentiation with new distribution businesses through the factor of entertainment. With the implementation of 5-day work week in Korea, the family-centered leisure culture has expanded, and the demand in leisure, sports, and cultural industries has greatly increased. With the establishment of shopping cultures for the family, there is a demand for the creation of shopping locations and entertainment facilities that can be enjoyed by the whole family (Jung & Seo, 2001). Even within the country the concept of entertainment is being implemented in shopping malls (e.g., COEX Mall), and it is also being applied in various ways within

fashion shopping malls and stores. An entertainment shopping mall does not stop merely providing products, services, or entertainment: rather it provides "experiences" to its consumers through the products, facilities, space, and services provided. The Mall of America is often used as an example of the fusion of shopping and entertainment. In these mega shopping malls, there are hundreds retail stores, as well as a variety of entertainment facilities, such as amusement parks, restaurants, movie theaters, game centers, and sports facilities.

Then, do the enjoying experiences provided to consumers by retail entertainments affect retail stores sales? Although, in a 1995 ISCS survey, more than 50% of retailers surveyed used the word "entertainment" to describe their business (Mariwyn, 1999), the impact of entertainment in the shopping centers has been inconsistent. For instance, movie theaters in a shopping mall, one of the entertainment elements in retail entertainment, were found to increase property visits and to increase sales in food courts and book/music stores. Another key component of the entertainment mix, food (or restaurants), was found to have a more direct correlation than movie theaters on retail traffic (Mariwyn, 1999). However, not much concrete data to determine the impact of entertainment on sales have been studied. Evans' research (1999) showed that large movie theaters in shopping malls increase consumer inflow, and food courts, bookstores, and music stores all have positive influences on sales. Talpade and Haynes (1997) investigated the effects of the existence of entertainment on consumer shopping activities, and though the existence of entertainment does not expand the commercial dominance of the shopping mall, it revealed that it did have the tendency to attract families with children. When there is entertainment, visitors spend more time in shopping malls, but because they spent less time shopping, the number of stores visited is low, less money is spent on purchases, but these are increased visits to food courts. Thus, in the case of entertainment, it is successful in attracting family-unit consumers to shopping malls, but most show the tendency to leave the shopping mall after staying awhile, so while entertainment may be successful in

attracting consumers, results revealed that these customers do not have a great effect on product sales. Park and Park (2006) investigated the effects of entertainment service, shopping orientation and emotion on impulse buying behavior in Korea department stores and shopping malls. They found that consumers were affected to make a good mood by entertainment service in department stores, while consumers were influenced directly by entertainment service to be a good mood and to purchase impulsively apparel products in shopping malls.

While much research covered entertaining attributes in retailing and positive shopping experiences, there is also research on unfavorable shopping experience. Bitner et al. (1990) examined favorable and unfavorable service encounters from customers' perspective. They discovered that both satisfactory and dissatisfactory incidents could be attributed to one or more of three major types of employee behaviors: how the employee responded to a service delivery failure, how the employee responded to customer needs and requests, and unprompted or unsolicited employee actions. Later, Bitner et al. (1994) investigated the sources of satisfactory and dissatisfactory service encounters from the service employees' perspective. The results revealed four groups of satisfactory and dissatisfactory incidents: how employees responded to failure, to problem customers, to requests, and unprompted action by employees.

From the in-depth interviews with 113 consumers, Arnold et al. (2005) found sources of delightful and terrible shopping experiences. Delightful shopping experiences were grouped into two categories: interpersonal and non-interpersonal. In this interpersonal factor, five categories were emerged from the data: interpersonal efforts, interpersonal engagement, problem resolution, interpersonal distance, and time commitment. Customers were also delighted by occurrences other than the salesperson's behaviors. In the non-interpersonal factor, two categories were emerged: unanticipated acquisition, and unanticipated value.

On the other hand, terrible shopping experiences were also grouped into several categories: interpersonal with the salesperson, interpersonal with other customers, non-interpersonal with products or cus-

tomers' personal moods. In the interpersonal factor, seven categories emerged from the data: lack of interpersonal effort, lack of interpersonal engagement, lack of problem resolution, lack of interpersonal distance, lack of time commitment, lack of ethics, and lack of skill or knowledge. In the interpersonal factor, seven categories emerged from the data: lack of interpersonal effort (e.g., not helpful), lack of interpersonal engagement (e.g., not friendly), lack of problem resolution (e.g., would not correct the situation), lack of interpersonal distance (e.g., very pushy), lack of time commitment (e.g., took no time to help), lack of ethics (e.g., dishonest), and lack of skill or knowledge. In the non-interpersonal factor, two categories emerged: unanticipated acquisition (e.g., finding the right product), and unanticipated value (e.g., bargain). Interpersonal with other customers were also emerged as a source of terrible shopping experiences. Non-interpersonal related to products, including a lack of expected acquisition, value of quality and atmosphere of the store, which were also categorized as sources of terrible shopping experiences. Interestingly, customers' timing and mood were also mentioned as a source of terrible shopping experiences.

III. Study 1

1. Methods

1) Questionnaire Development

Given that the entertaining shopping experience for fashion products remains relatively unexplored, the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) was chosen as an exploratory research method to identify the underlying factors of entertaining and non-entertaining shopping experiences. The CIT has been widely used in previous studies in the service (Bitner et al., 1994; Bitner et al., 1990) and retail area (Arnold et al., 2005; Jones, 1999). Data were collected using the CIT with open-ended, structured open-ended questions. Respondents were asked to complete the open-ended questions on a standardized form. Open-ended questions used in this research were: 1) in the space below, please provide a detailed description of a recent shopping trip that you recall as being very pleasurable and entertaining; and 2) in the space below, please provide a detailed description of a recent shopping trip that you recall as not being very pleasurable and entertaining. Questions concerning respondent's demographic characteristics were also included.

able and entertaining; and 2) in the space below, please provide a detailed description of a recent shopping trip that you recall as not being very pleasurable and entertaining. Questions concerning respondent's demographic characteristics were also included.

2) Sampling

A convenient sample of 100 participants enrolled in clothing-related courses at a major university in Korea participated in this exploratory survey. Respondents were asked to complete the open-ended questions (e.g., describe a recent store-shopping trip that you remember as being pleasurable and entertaining) on a standardized form. A total of 97 questionnaires was completed and used for further analysis.

3) Data Analysis

A total of 97 questionnaires was completed and used for further analysis (female-59; male-38). The results of these questionnaires were content analyzed. First, the critical factors from the entertaining incidents were extracted. In order to uncover themes (factors) from the descriptions, the selective coding method was used for analysis. In order to enhance the reliability of the analysis, descriptions were analyzed by two analyzers. The results from the two were compared and were discussed to reconcile any differences that existed. Then a coding scheme was developed in order to classify the factors.

2. Results

The exploratory research indicated that certain attributes were reported to be important aspects that induced shoppers' entertaining and non-entertaining apparel shopping experiences.

1) Entertaining Store-shopping Experiences

Six factors in two categories emerged from the data analysis of apparel shoppers' entertaining and non-entertaining apparel shopping experiences. First, factors of entertaining shopping experiences can be categorized as store-related and consumer-related factors. Store-related entertaining store factors include: merchandise, service, the environment, and events.

Customer-related entertaining store factors include: customer resources and social aspects.

"Getting a good deal," emerged as the highest reported factor characteristic of entertaining shopping experiences. When respondents find a good bargain or a low price, the excitement was generated and this feeling seemed to become part of the entire entertaining shopping experience.

My pants were so used that I went to buy jeans. I looked around for a long time, then found a place having a sale, and was so satisfied for buying three for the price of one. (40)

Entertaining shopping experiences frequently occurred in a fashion store with a good selection of products and with a sales associate's friendly service (i.e., try-on merchandise, no-questions asked returns).

There was a summer one-piece I wanted to wear, but I couldn't find it in my size... after a long while I found clothing I wanted to buy. But when what I chose seemed to suit me well I felt really great. (17)

During winter I went to buy a coat. Coats are more expensive compared to other clothes so I looked around, trying out each, and shopping. But there were so many kinds of clothes and so many designs that it was fun. (39)

The salesperson was very pleasant, I went to the store twice and tried out many times but the salesperson never once showed any signs of being annoyed. Though I didn't buy anything the salesperson treated me so well that I felt good. (55)

I bought a T-shirt at the mall, but when I came home it folded and the printed parts would not separate. When I separated them, the print came off. When I took it back next week they changed it for me quite amicably, so I was happy. (46)

Another factor that emerged from the data was the store environment. Respondents mentioned this factor, which included the décor or interesting displays, store facilities including rest areas, or store layout that facilitated locating products easily. While most previous research on store entertaining attributes point out store design or layout as a major attribute (Bitner, 1992), respondents acknowledged this factor as a relatively minor one in this study.

Stores with interesting decorations or with very nice displays. It is very fun to look around here and there with friends, especially when we have spare time... I really like to go to the cosmetics stores where we can play with different make-up products, take a rest, chat with friends. (39)

Sales promotional events of a store or various event activi-

ties, where respondents shop were also mentioned as a factor of entertaining shopping experiences.

When I went shopping in Myeongdong a TV station was there filming, I was amazed to see celebrities, there were lots to see and eat there so it was fun. It was also fun eating a free donut. (17)

While most factors were associated with a store, there were also factors associated with customers, such as financial resources, time, and social company. Socializing with friends emerged as one of the most often-mentioned factors of entertaining shopping experiences. In many cases, respondents referred to the people with whom they were shopping.

I went shopping with my friends and bought a scarf and a skirt, and I really like them. Rather than shopping in itself, I like trying out clothes and talking with my friends. I think that shopping is fun when you go with fun friends. (59)

Respondents also mentioned that they spent spare/unlimited time browsing (window shopping) during their entertaining shopping experiences. Customer-related factors include customers' financial resources, time, and the people with whom they were shopping.

I went shopping for a T-shirt with a close friend. That day we didn't have anything planned so we looked around as much as we wanted without time constraints. The best part was that we could look around as much as we wanted. (52)

I went shopping at the mall with my mother. We had so many gift certificates so we just kept using them. I like going with my mother because there are no money constraints. (49)

Categories and factors of entertaining shopping experiences are shown in <Table 1>.

2) Non-entertaining Store Shopping Experiences

For non-entertaining store shopping experiences, five factors in two categories appeared. Factors of entertaining shopping experiences can be categorized as store-related and consumer-related factors, similar to those of entertaining shopping experiences. Store-related non-entertaining store factors include: merchandise, service, and the environment. Customer related entertaining store factors include: customer resources and social aspects. Among these five factors, the sales associate factor was the most reported characteristic of non-entertaining shopping experience. Respondents indicated that no service, aggressive service, or un-

Table 1. Factors and attributes of entertaining shopping experiences

Category	Factors		Entertaining attributes
Store	Merchandise	Price	- low price - mark-down
		Product	- various/good product selection - unique merchandise - finding what consumers wants
	Service	Sales associate	- sales associates' caring service
		Customer service	- good customer service offered (i.e., try-on merchandise, no-questions asked returns)
	Environment	Store design	- window display - store interior design
		Store amenities	- convenient location - rest area
	Events		- promotional events (i.e., fashion show)
Customer	Customer resources		- financial resources - time
	Social aspects		- shopping companions

friendly service from sales associates made their shopping experience miserable. Although this sales associates were mentioned as a factor of entertaining as well as non-entertaining apparel shopping experiences, the frequency of their being mentioned in non-entertaining shopping experiences was much higher than that of entertaining shopping experiences.

My friend went into a store to buy clothes for her grandmother. There was only one clothing item she wanted in the store but the sleeves dragged on the floor and were dirty so when we asked if there was a new one, the store employees didn't even look for it and just told us that there weren't and seemed to ignore us. We hadn't even left the store yet and the employees kept chatting and ignoring us. (7)

Usually I buy clothes at Dongdaemun or online, but sometimes I buy nice clothes at the mall. At the mall employees also follow you around as if you have to buy something so it was uncomfortable and I didn't like it. I wonder if it's because they think I will steal something? Are they suspicious of me? These ideas come up, so I was really frustrated. (87)

In addition, high prices and poor selection constituted another major factor in respondents' non-entertaining shopping experiences. Due to these reasons, consumers could not accomplish their shopping tasks.

I was trying to buy brown shoes at Myeongdong. They didn't have the ones I wanted in the color I wanted. Everywhere I went, they either didn't have the style I wanted or if they had the style they didn't have the color, so I was really irritated. (19)

I went to the mall to find clothes to wear for the album pictures. I looked around at various brands, and found clothes I thought were perfect... but they were so expensive I couldn't buy them. It makes me think I went to the mall for nothing... I have memories of coming back disappointed. (17)

Store environments, including crowded, unorganized, and unclean environments, were also mentioned as a factor of non-entertaining shopping experiences.

Since they were having a sale, I went to the mall with my mother but it was really crowded. There were so many people and so little space that I was irritated while trying to choose clothes, and could not even try them on properly. It was nice that the prices were cheap due to the sale, but I don't want to shop there anymore. (43)

For consumer-related factors, consumer resources emerged as one of the major factors of non-entertaining shopping experiences. Limited financial resources, limited shopping time, and consumers' physical well-being were mentioned in this study.

I usually go to the shopping mall with friends; I just go to do some window shopping... Actually it is not fun when going with friends. Because we do not have enough money so we can't buy the things we want, and even when eating we have to eat cheap. (62)

My two sisters and I went to the mall to buy my younger sister's clothes. We wanted to buy a hooded T-shirt, but the price was not right, so we kept looking around... We kept looking around and I was so tired that I just wanted to end it to come home and rest. (33)

Some respondents indicated that their shopping experience was not pleasurable or entertaining because of the people with whom they were shopping. Usually this resulted from different interests, not enjoying their company, or shopping alone. Respondents also indicated that having limited financial resources or time diminished pleasure from their shopping.

I went to the mall with my boyfriend to buy shoes. High heels were popular so I wanted to buy something with high heels, but my boyfriend kept insisting I buy shoes with low heels. As that went on I became frustrated and ended up coming home without buying any shoes. (19)

Categories and factors of entertaining shopping experiences are shown in <Table 2>.

IV. Study 2

1. Methods

1) Survey Questionnaire

From study 1, six entertaining shopping experience factors and five non-entertaining shopping experience factors appeared in two categories. While there are some factors that were mentioned more and others mentioned hardly at all in the data, the authors cannot conclude which factor affected the consumers' entertaining shopping experiences more from the content analysis data. Thus, the brief survey questionnaire based on the results of study 1 was developed in order

to examine consumers' importance based on certain entertaining and non-entertaining apparel shopping experience factors. Twenty statements of entertaining and non-entertaining shopping experience factors were presented, and consumers were asked to rate their importance on a seven-point scale, in which 1 is "not important at all" and 7 is "very important"

2) Sampling

A survey with a convenient sample of 200 apparel consumers was conducted. This convenient sample consisted of 200 students (female-139; male-61) who have shopped for apparel items during the previous 6 months participated in this survey. Undergraduate students enrolled at a large university located in a metropolitan area were recruited. Since college students are the main target market for casual wear in Korea, the sample is ideal for investigating the casual apparel products used in this study. Students enrolled in clothing-related courses were asked to participate. Those who agreed to participate filled out the questionnaire.

3) Procedure

Data were collected in classroom settings. Instructors were contacted for permission to allow the researchers to request participants for the survey. Two-hundred questionnaires were distributed on campus, and 198 questionnaires were used for the data analyses. Descriptive statistics were used for the

Table 2. Factors and attributes of non-entertaining shopping experiences

Category	Factors		Non-entertaining attributes
Store	Merchandise	Price	- high price
		Product	- poor product selection - low-quality merchandise - out-of-stock sizes or merchandise
	Service	Sales associate	- touting/too aggressive sales associates - unfriendly sales associates
		Customer service	- limited/no customer service (e.g., cannot return, cannot try on merchandise)
	Environment	Store amenities	- limited parking space
		Store atmosphere	- crowdedness - unclean store
Customer	Customer resources	- limited financial resources - limited shopping time - consumers' physical health	
	Social aspects	- unpleasant shopping companion	

analysis of data from study 2.

4) Characteristics of Respondents

Among the 200 participants who completed the questionnaire, a total of 198 students (female-137; male-61), ranging in age from 19 to 27 years, were included for the data analysis. Approximately 42% of the respondents have a household income of 2,000,000 to 4,000,000. More than 50% have shopped for apparel items from department stores. Other major shopping areas include: outlet stores, Dongdaemoon market area, and other street specialty stores. Participants reported spending an average of 113,000 for clothing and other fashion items per month.

2. Results

1) The Importance of Entertainment Shopping Experiences

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of entertaining shopping experience attributes, using 1 for "not important at all" to 7 for "very important." The merchandise factor that included products assortment and price-related items was rated the most important factor of entertaining store shopping, followed by the service factor in the store category, and customer resources in the customer category (Table 3). Consumers rated finding the right merchandise as the most important factor for their entertaining shopping experience, while store environment factors, including store design/atmosphere and the event factor, which previous research on entertaining shopping paid much attention to were rated relatively low. In addition, while customer-related factors have not received much attention in previous research, customer resources (e.g., financial, time) were found to be one of the major factors affecting consumers' shopping experiences.

2) The Importance of Non-entertainment Shopping Experiences

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of the non-entertaining shopping experience attributes, using 1 for "not important at all" to 7 for "very important." Similar to the findings of the entertaining

shopping experiences, the merchandise factor, which includes product assortment and price-related items, were rated as the most important non-entertaining store shopping factors, followed by the service factor in the store category and customer resources in the customer category (Table 4). Respondents indicated that not being able to find what they want is the most important factor of a non-pleasurable and non-entertaining shopping experience, while the social aspects factor in the customer category was rated as least important.

V. Conclusions

The present study has improved understanding of how apparel shoppers conceive entertaining shopping experiences. The results provide a broader framework that needs to be further investigated to better understand entertaining shopping experiences. Six factors in two categories were identified from the respondents' descriptions of entertaining shopping experience, and some of these factors were consistent with previous findings (Bitner, 1992; Jones, 1999). Most previous research covering entertaining shopping experiences in fashion retailing has concentrated on promotional events, store amenities, or store design areas. However, most factor characteristics of entertaining shopping experiences from this study were related to basic retail attributes (e.g., product, price, service), suggesting that going to the "basics" is imperative: offering a good selection of merchandise with the right prices and friendly customer service. Consumers expect a wide selection of unique products and good service. Failing to meet these expectations is most likely to produce non-entertaining shopping experiences. Apparel retailers' merchandise selection plays a major role in creating entertaining shopping experiences.

The feeling of "smart shopping" is important in creating entertaining shopping experiences. Respondents often indicated the excitement generated from finding bargain items or low prices, and this creates entertaining apparel shopping experiences; On the other hand, high-prices were a factor of non-entertaining shopping experiences, because they could not

Table 3. The importance of entertaining shopping experiences factors

(n=198)

Category	Factors	Items	Mean	SD
Store	Merchandise	good price merchandise	5.90*	1.20
		finding a "good deal" item	5.76	1.16
		various selection	5.80	1.15
		merchandise that I want	6.49	.90
		size that I want	6.15	1.08
	Service	sales associates' caring service	5.74	1.21
		no pressure to try-on merchandise	6.01	1.21
	Store environment	interesting store design	4.41	1.70
		good store interior design	4.92	1.36
		clean store	5.30	1.15
		resting area	4.10	1.53
		convenient location & parking	4.72	1.61
	Event	interesting events of places to watch near store	4.86	1.55
		various events	4.29	1.70
sales promotion activities		4.14	1.60	
Customer	Customer resources	no-time pressure shopping	5.47	1.19
		financial resources for shopping	6.16	1.02
	Social aspects	shopping with friends	4.69	1.61
		shopping with family	4.53	1.70

*1=not very important; 7=very important

Table 4. The importance of non-entertaining shopping experience factors

(n=198)

Category	Factors	Items	Mean	SD
Store	Merchandise	high price	6.06*	1.05
		poor product selection	5.57	1.17
		cannot find the merchandise that I want	6.16	1.08
		cannot find the size that I want	6.12	1.13
		poor-quality merchandise	6.06	1.15
	Service	touting sales associate	4.90	1.94
		unfriendly sales associate	6.12	1.22
		no attention from sales associate	4.45	1.78
		too aggressive sales associate	5.14	1.78
		cannot try-on merchandise	6.02	1.18
	Store environment	poor location & limited parking space	4.79	1.55
		hard-to-find the merchandise	5.65	1.20
		crowded store	5.30	1.39
		unclean store	5.84	1.22
Customer	Customer resources	limited financial resources	5.86	1.16
		not feeling well during shopping	4.74	1.58
		limited shopping time	4.90	1.55
	Social aspects	shopping alone	3.69	1.74
		disagreement with the shopping companion	3.79	1.67

*1=not very important; 7=very important

purchase the items they wanted or needed because they had to pay more than they had planned.

Most factors have the capability of enhancing or distracting from shopping experiences: the frequencies of occurrence differed across entertaining and non-entertaining shopping experiences in study 1.

For instance, sales associates were also mentioned as a factor of entertaining, as well as non-entertaining apparel shopping experiences. However, the frequency of their being mentioned in non-entertaining shopping experiences was much higher than that of entertaining shopping experiences. It appears that the

service factor, which includes customer service and sales associates, is relatively less noticed when consumers have entertaining shopping experiences.

This study identifies entertainment factors that have been neglected from the previous research in Korea. While most previous research on entertainment retailing in Korea (Park, 2001) has not paid any attention to consumer-related factors, the findings of this study indicate the importance of consumer-related factors, especially consumer resources. Customers' financial and time resources were found to be major factors affecting consumers' entertaining, as well as non-entertaining shopping experiences. Respondents expressed that having a feeling of sufficient or unlimited financial resources while shopping created fun and entertaining experiences. In addition, respondents also indicated that they enjoyed having a feeling of unlimited time to browse.

This study offers a number of implications for retailers who want to provide entertaining shopping experiences. The findings indicated that providing retail basics, such as merchandise selection, price, and customer service, is more important in creating entertaining shopping experiences than providing promotional events or creating interesting store décor. Apparel sales associates should provide friendly customer service, but should not be overbearing to customers. Respondents indicated that want sales associates' attention, as well as the freedom to look around. Customers want sales associate to be available when they need them.

There are several limitations to our research. First, the convenient sample was drawn from a college population for studies 1 and 2; thus, the participants' responses may not be typical of the shopping population in general. Further investigation is also needed to identify sub-dimensions of each factor in order to understand its effect on shopping experiences, and to compare the importance of the factors and the sub-dimensions of entertaining shopping experiences. Further research could investigate shopping experiences in different retail outlets, and the kind of entertainment attractions that are more likely to generate activity in a certain retail format. This could provide useful insights into how retail and entertainment can

be properly bundled to create an effective mix.

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