

Does Apparel Purchase Involve Joint Purchase Decision-Making? -Interpersonal Influences between Spouse or Significant Others-

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Abstract

This study examined factors that influenced susceptibility to dyadic influences between opposite-gender couples on making apparel purchase decisions. This study focused on main effects of couple identity, product knowledge, clothing involvement and gender, and the interaction effects of gender with other factors for normative and informational influences. A survey was conducted on 155 males and 166 females currently married or in a relationship between the ages of 20 and 50 living in South Korea. For normative influence, the main effects of joint couple identity and clothing involvement (fashion interest, symbolism, and pleasure), and the interaction between gender and clothing involvement (fashion interest) were significant. The interaction between gender and other variables were insignificant. For informational influence, the main effects of partner's product knowledge, pleasure, and gender as well as the interaction effects between fashion interest and gender, and between pleasure and gender were significant. Marketers may find implications from the study results on how couples influence each other in making apparel purchase decisions.

Key words: Joint purchase decision, Apparel purchase, Interpersonal influence, Couple identity

I. Introduction

During various purchase situations, consumers rely on other people not only to seek for product information (Davis & Rigaux, 1974; Wilkes, 1975), but also to affirm their decision-making (Simpson et al., 2012). Even though diverse sources of information, including advertisements, the Internet, and store displays, are available, interpersonal sources are known to be particularly influential in consumer decision-making (Bloch et al., 1986; Park & Stoel, 2002). Consumer attitudes and behaviors are influenced by what other people say and think. This establishes that our understanding of consumer decision-making may be incomplete without proper consideration of interpersonal influ-

ences.

Owing to shared experiences, the time spent together, and the intimacy of couples, a consumer's spouse or significant other exerts a strong influence on their purchase decisions. Consumers tend to talk about things in more detail and specificity with their significant others than they do with other people (Friedkin, 1993). Therefore, when purchasing personal products such as apparel, consumers may be more susceptible to the influence of a spouse or significant other. Choosing an outfit is everyday decision; thus, a couple is likely to talk about this topic and about appearance in general on several occasions.

Husband-and-wife consumer purchase decisions regarding products such as automobiles, house, or home furnishings have often been studied in relation to the extent of influence on decision-making (Davis & Rigaux, 1974). However, few studies have examined the

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decision-making between couples for apparel products, perhaps because apparel products, unlike the previous examples, are not shared between couples. We suggest that the decision-making in apparel purchase should also be considered in terms of interpersonal influence between couples, because apparel products are socially visible and are a form of nonverbal communication that conveys the wearer's identity. Since couples are likely to spend time together and appear in public together, an individual may consider the partner's appearance as representative of his or her personal identity.

One of the factors that may influence the strength of interpersonal influence between couples is their commitment to the relationship (Reid et al., 2006; Simpson et al., 2012). It is expected that committed couples who consider their relationship integral to their self-identity may try to influence and become involved in the apparel purchase decisions of their partners to a larger extent than those who are less invested in their relationship. Another relevant factor is how an individual perceives his or her partner's expertise in apparel purchase decisions. That is, if the perception is that the partner has more expertise in apparel products, an individual may be more willing to accede to the partner's opinion. However, if individuals perceive that their partner lacks a similar expertise in apparel products, then they may become less susceptible to the personal influence of their partner.

Susceptibility to interpersonal influence may also differ by gender, depending on the areas or activities. Particularly for apparel shopping, female consumers are likely to be more fashion-conscious than are male consumers (Lee, 2005; O'Cass, 2004; Vieira, 2009). Women may be considered to have more expertise in this area than men have, because women tend to be more highly involved in apparel purchase (Chang et al., 2004). Therefore, for apparel purchase, men are more likely to seek information from their female partners, which is apparent from a research finding on male consumers in their 20s and 30s in South Korea that 44.2% of consumers went shopping with their wives or girlfriends (Lee, 2005) when purchasing suits.

Because opposite-gender couples seem likely to influence each other in apparel purchase decisions, the

dyadic influence between these couples is a topic of interest. However, previous research on decision-making between couples or within families has focused on the joint purchase decision for cars, homes, or vacations rather than for apparel (Ahn & Kim, 1996; Filiatrault & Ritchie, 1980).

This paper aims to understand the factors that influence an individual's susceptibility to dyadic influence on their apparel purchase decision when the individual is a member of an opposite-gender couple, whether married or unmarried. This study focuses on gender, couple identity, perceived product knowledge, and clothing involvement as the factors determining one's susceptibility to interpersonal influence from the spouse or significant other. Examining the factors that are related to the susceptibility to interpersonal influence between couples will allow marketing researchers to acquire more complete grasp of individuals' decision-making process, and in turn identify better strategies for customer communication.

II. Theoretical Background

1. Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence

Consumer behaviors tend to be influenced by people they interact with (Simpson et al., 2012) regardless of whether the product is intended to be shared with such people (Gorlin & Dhar, 2012). Consumers often use social information acquired through intimate relationships when making their decisions, especially in uncertain situations. In this regard, interpersonal influence in consumer decision-making is an important concept to consider. Bearden et al. (1989) asserted that susceptibility to interpersonal influence is a general trait that varies across individuals. They defined susceptibility to interpersonal influence as "the need to identify with or enhance one's image in the opinion of significant others regarding purchase decisions, and/or the tendency to learn about products and services by observing others or seeking information of others" (p. 474).

Traditionally, interpersonal influence is suggested to be a multidimensional construct, composed of various sub-dimensions such as 'normative influence', 'value

expressiveness,' 'utilitarian influence,' and 'informational influence' (Bearden & Etzel, 1982; Burnkrant & Cousineau, 1975). Some consumer research studies have suggested that normative influence actually encompasses value expressive and utilitarian influences (Bearden & Etzel, 1982; Bearden et al., 1989; Burnkrant & Cousineau, 1975; Hoffmann & Broekhuizen, 2009; Kim & Boo, 2008). Bearden et al. (1989) explored susceptibility to interpersonal influence in two dimensions: normative influence and informational influence.

Informational influence may be defined as the tendency to conform to the expectations of others due to their expertise (Kim & Boo, 2008). Informational influence operates through a process of internalization, which occurs if information from another person increases the individual's knowledge about some aspect of the environment (Bearden et al., 1989). Consumers are affected by informational influences upon evaluating product (Bearden & Etzel, 1982) or selecting product/brand (Burnkrant & Cousineau, 1975). In cases where it is difficult to evaluate the characteristics or quality of the products, consumers tend to be particularly influenced by the recommendations of experts or reliable sources of information.

Normative influence is the tendency to conform to the expectations of others (Burnkrant & Cousineau, 1975). This occurs when consumers satisfy the criteria or expectations of a reference group. Park and Rhee (1994) found that consumers tend to normatively conform to the clothing expectations of their spouse or significant other. Rabolt and Drake (1985) also found that career-oriented women were affected by the normative influence of male supervisors at work and male friends outside of work in such a way that they conformed to certain male expectations when they purchased their work clothing.

2. Influences on Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influences

1) Couple Identity

One aspect that may influence the susceptibility to interpersonal influence between opposite-gender couples is the strength of, or degree of commitment to, the

relationship. According to the literature, interpersonal influence tends to be stronger when the reference group is considered more important or relevant to the influenced individuals (Kiel & Layton, 1981; Kim & Boo, 2008). This may also hold true for opposite-gender couples. The strength of a relationship between married or unmarried couples, as well as their level of commitment, may be conceptualized by couple identity, or the degree to which an individual considers the relationship to be comprised of a team, rather than of two separate individuals with self-centered goals (Stanley & Markman, 1992). Couple identity is contingent upon the shared interaction of the couple engaging in both complementary and competing consumption practices (Epp & Price, 2008). We adopt a view of couple identity as mutually constructed, both internally between the couple and externally in relation to the perceptions of outsiders based on observable couple behavior. Because consumers are affected by normative pressures, couple identity is likely to affect normative influence. If a person is more committed to his/her relationship and considers it central to his/her self-identity, they are more likely to be influenced by their partner. Previous research on joint decision-making of couples or spouses examined only the relative magnitudes of influence on different product categories, and did not consider the strengths of the relationship. We considered the joint or independent couple identity to be related to interpersonal influences, by determining whether individuals perceive the purchase decision to be relevant to 'us' or just to 'me'.

2) Product Knowledge

Product knowledge can be defined as "product related information stored in memory, such as information about brands, products, attributes, evaluations, decision heuristics and usage situations" (Selnes & Grønhaug, 1986, p. 67). Subjective as well as objective knowledge related to the organization of an individual's knowledge structure have been used to study consumer product knowledge (Brucks, 1985; O'Cass, 2004; Selnes & Grønhaug, 1986; Vieira, 2009). Regarding apparel, objective product knowledge would include knowledge on specific elements such as brand names or fiber contents, whereas subjective product knowledge

would include an individual's perception of their knowledge on such elements. As it is documented that subjective knowledge is a better predictor of consumer decision-making than objective knowledge (O'Cass, 2004; Vieira, 2009), this study will consider subjective product knowledge only.

For an individual with expertise in apparel products, the role of interpersonal influence may be minimal. However, the individuals who do not have knowledge or expertise, may seek for advice from others (Kim & Boo, 2008), because they are unsure about their own decision. Researchers have reported negative relationships between cognitive product knowledge and interpersonal influence (Beatty & Smith, 1987; Kiel & Layton, 1981), thereby suggesting that consumers with a greater degree of information about a product are less affected by interpersonal influence. Thus, interpersonal influence is likely to be informational rather than normative. There may be individual differences among consumers in terms of how knowledgeable they feel about apparel products. Therefore, perceived apparel product knowledge on the part of both the individual and his or her partner will determine the extent of the dyadic interpersonal influence.

3) Clothing Involvement

The importance of clothing to the individual, or their involvement in clothing, may also influence their susceptibility to interpersonal influence. Involvement here denotes the level of personal relevance and/or interest induced by a stimulus within a specific situation (Anttil, 1984; Mitchell, 1979), and, as such, clothing involvement may be defined as the state of motivation, arousal, or interest caused by specific clothing-related stimuli and situations (O'Cass, 2004; Rhee, 1991). If an individual is highly concerned with appearance or is highly involved in clothing, they are more likely to seek information. Therefore, individuals with high clothing involvement may be more susceptible to informational influences.

4) Gender

Gender may be one of the factors that influence the degree of susceptibility to interpersonal influence (Carli, 1999; Park, 2000). Susceptibility to interpersonal

influence may differ by gender particularly for apparel shopping because female consumers are likely to be more fashion-conscious than are male consumers (Lee, 2005; O'Cass, 2004; Vieira, 2009), and men traditionally are less interested in fashion or clothes shopping and tend to be less knowledgeable about apparel products than women are (Park, 2000). In the case of married men and unmarried men, wives and girlfriends or mothers, respectively, usually take control of clothing purchases, and many men have found it difficult or uncomfortable to make a decision regarding their appearance (Moore et al., 2001; Park, 2000) or go shopping with their wife or girlfriend (Lee, 2005). Men seem to collect information about fashion products from their female partner and rely on their partner in making purchase decisions, possibly because they are less confident about their decision-making in this area. In other words, men are more likely to be susceptible to informational influence from their opposite-gender partner than are women.

Likewise, women than men are also more highly involved in apparel purchase (Chang et al., 2004; O'Cass, 2004). Evidence exists, however, that male consumers are increasingly interested in apparel products and are willing to express themselves through appearance management among younger generation (Lee et al., 1997), thereby becoming increasingly involved in clothes shopping (Summers et al., 2001). These fashion-conscious male consumers are also known to be highly knowledgeable in fashion (Preez et al., 2007), and may exhibit particular characteristics as to apparel purchase. Also, because female consumers are more likely to be highly involved in clothing (O'Cass, 2004), gender is likely to moderate the influences of other factors on susceptibility to interpersonal influences.

Based on the literature review, the following hypotheses are posited <Fig. 1>.

- H1. Couple identity will affect an individual's susceptibility to normative and informational dyadic influence on apparel purchase decisions.
- H2. Perceived self-product knowledge will affect an individual's susceptibility to normative and informational dyadic influence on apparel purchase decisions.

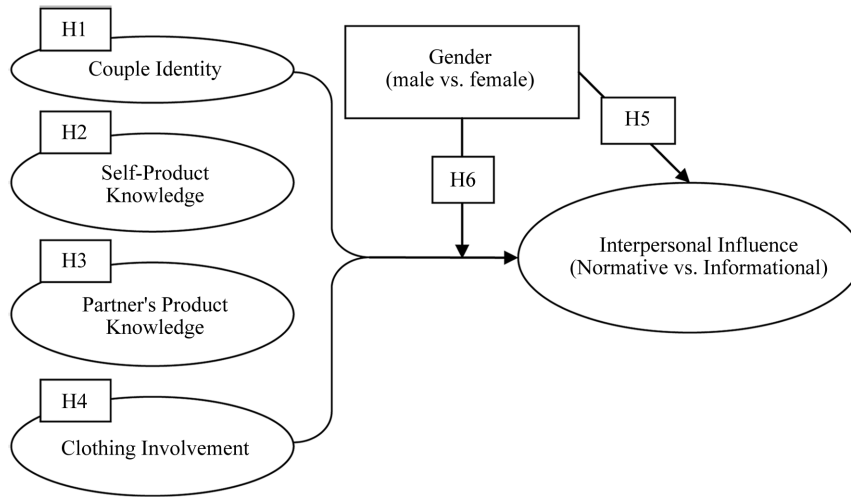


Fig. 1. Research model.

- H3. Partner's perceived product knowledge will affect an individual's susceptibility to normative and informational dyadic influence on apparel purchase decisions.
- H4. Clothing involvement will affect an individual's susceptibility to normative and informational dyadic influence on apparel purchase decisions.
- H5. Gender will affect an individual's susceptibility to normative and informational dyadic influence on apparel purchase decisions.
- H6. Gender will moderate the influence of perceived self-product knowledge, of the partner's perceived product knowledge, of clothing involvement, and of couple identity on individual's susceptibility to normative and informational dyadic influence on apparel purchase decisions.

III. Research Methods

1. Data Collection Method and Research Participants

The data were collected in South Korea from a sample of 155 males and 166 females aged between 20 and 50, all of whom are married or have ongoing relationship with opposite-gender partner. As a pilot test,

21 questionnaires were distributed to men and women aged between 20 and 50 by the researcher through purposive sampling in order to check the reliability and wording of the questions. Because the reliability scores for the measures calculated from the pilot data were high enough (higher than .70 for all variables) and respondents reported no difficulty answering the questions, the questionnaire was not modified for the main survey. The main survey was conducted by an online survey agency, the *EZ Survey*. The survey agency sent out email invitations to their panel members who already agreed to participate in survey research. The email invitation included a link to the online questionnaire, and the respondents who completed the survey were paid a certain amount of cyber money in return. A total of 300 questionnaires were collected online. A series of *t*-tests revealed no significant statistical differences between the online and offline (pilot) samples in terms of demographics or the major variables, and thus the data from two samples were combined and used for final analysis in order to have a bigger sample size ($n=321$).

The average ages of the male and female participants were 35.48 and 32.45 respectively (Table 1). The percentages of married and unmarried participants were 56.1% and 43.9% respectively. The average length of marriage or dating was 6.83 years for male

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

Demographics		Male (<i>n</i> =155)	Female (<i>n</i> =166)	Total (<i>N</i> =321)
Age	Mean (S.D.)	35.48 (6.96)	32.45 (6.80)	33.91 (7.03)
Duration of relationship	Mean (S.D.)	6.83 (6.21)	5.38 (5.49)	6.08 (5.88)
Marital status	Married	95.00 (61.3%)	85.00 (51.2%)	180.00 (56.1%)
	Unmarried	60.00 (38.7%)	81.00 (48.8%)	141.00 (43.9%)
Household income	Less than KRW 2million	14.00 (9.0%)	11.00 (6.6%)	25.00 (7.8%)
	KRW 2-4million	52.00 (33.5%)	56.00 (33.7%)	108.00 (33.6%)
	KRW 4-6million	60.00 (38.7%)	54.00 (32.5%)	114.00 (35.5%)
	KRW 6-8million	19.00 (12.3%)	25.00 (15.1%)	44.00 (13.7%)
	Above KRW 8million	10.00 (6.5%)	20.00 (12.0%)	30.00 (9.3%)
Personal income	No Income	4.00 (2.6%)	25.00 (15.1%)	29.00 (9.0%)
	Less than KRW 1million	28.00 (18.1%)	45.00 (27.1%)	73.00 (22.7%)
	KRW 1-2million	31.00 (20.0%)	51.00 (30.7%)	82.00 (25.5%)
	KRW 2-3million	34.00 (21.9%)	27.00 (16.3%)	61.00 (19.0%)
	KRW 3-4million	30.00 (19.4%)	13.00 (7.8%)	43.00 (13.4%)
	Above KRW 4million	28.00 (18.1%)	5.00 (3.0%)	33.00 (10.3%)

respondents, and 5.38 years for female respondents.

2. Measures

As consumers may react differently in terms of interpersonal influence depending on products (Bearden & Etzel, 1982; Calder & Burnkrant, 1977; Childers & Rao, 1992), we asked the research participants to consider the situation of purchasing a formal suit to wear in a business setting. The questionnaire included measures of Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence, Self-Perceived Product Knowledge, and Partner's Product Knowledge, Clothing Involvement, Couple Identity, and demographic characteristics.

For Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence, 12 items from Bearden et al. (1989) were used. The translated items by previous researchers in South Korea (Kim & Boo, 2008; Yang & Cho, 2000) were used for this study to ensure the validity of the measures for Korean samples. The measure was composed of two dimensions: Informational and Normative Influences. The reliability scores calculated as Cronbach's α were reported to be .82 or higher for the sub-scales. Self-Perceived Product Knowledge and Partner's Product Knowledge were measured using items revised from the scale by Kim (1998). This scale comprised items from previ-

ous research (Brucks, 1985; Johnson & Russo, 1984; Kim, 1998; Selnes & Grønhaug, 1986) and had been tested and validated for Korean consumers by Kim (1998). The Cronbach's α of this measure was reported to be .83. To measure clothing involvement, 21 items from the measure developed by Rhee (1991) were used. This scale had been validated in another study (Lim, 2001) with reported reliability of .79 or greater for sub-dimensions. Couple identity was measured using the scale developed by Stanley and Markman (1992). This scale examined multiple dimensions of a couple's relationship and consisted of six items-three positively worded and three negatively worded ones. The reliability was reported to be at least .70. The response format for each item was a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). The items were translated and back-translated and compared for their meanings and face validity by four doctoral students in fashion marketing area, all of whom are proficient in both English and Korean.

3. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS for Windows 12.0 and descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, independent *t*-test, factor analysis, and regression analysis were

employed.

IV. Results and Discussion

1. Factor Analyses

Factor analyses with Varimax rotation were conducted separately on Interpersonal Influence, Clothing Involvement, Product Knowledge, and Couple Identity for data reduction and validity testing.

1) *Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence*

Two interpersonal influence factors were identified from the factor analysis and the factor names were determined based on previous research (Bearden et al., 1989) (Table 2).

2) *Couple Identity*

As a result of the factor analysis, two Couple Identity factors (Joint and Independent) were identified. Joint

Couple Identity relates to an inclination to consider the relationship with the partner as comprising the individual's self-identity. Independent Couple Identity relates to the inclination to separate personal identity from the relationship or the partner. <Table 3> shows the results of the factor analysis and the items used in this study. The reliability ratings for Joint Identity and Independent Identity were .73 and .70, respectively.

3) *Product Knowledge*

The product knowledge factors for the self and the partner were identified as predicted. The factor scores for these were calculated for further analyses. <Table 4> shows that the two factors were extracted by factor analysis using the Varimax method. Cronbach's α for Self-Product Knowledge and Partner's Product Knowledge was .89 and .88, respectively.

4) *Clothing Involvement*

For the exploratory factor analysis, a total of 16

Table 2. Exploratory factor analysis of susceptibility to interpersonal influence

Factor name	Items	Factor loading	Eigen value	Variance explained % (Cumulative variance %)	Cronbach's α
Informational	I often consult my spouse or significant other to help choose the best alternative available from a product class.	.79	4.90	44.54 (44.54)	.82
	I often ask my spouse or significant other about the product if I have limited experience with a product.	.74			
	I frequently gather information from my spouse or significant other about a product before I buy.	.69			
	When buying products, I generally purchase brands that I think my spouse or significant other will approve of.	.67			
	It is important that my spouse or significant other likes the products and brands I buy.	.61			
	I rarely purchase the latest fashion styles until I am sure my spouse or significant other approves of them.	.56			
	I like to know what brands and products make good impressions on my spouse or significant other.	.46			
Normative	I often identify with my spouse or significant other by purchasing the same products or brands they purchase.	.84	1.32	11.97 (56.51)	.84
	I achieve a sense of belonging by purchasing the same products and brands that my spouse or significant other purchase.	.83			
	I often try to buy the same or similar brands that they buy if I want to be like my spouse or significant other.	.78			
	I often purchase the brand they expect me to buy if my spouse or significant other can see me using a product.	.64			

Table 3. Exploratory factor analysis of couple identity

Factor name	Items	Factor loading	Eigen value	Variance explained % (Cumulative variance %)	Cronbach's α
Joint Identity	I tend to think about how things affect "us" as a couple more than how things affect "me" as an individual.	.82	2.43	40.43 (40.43)	.73
	I like to think of my partner and me more in terms of "us" and "we" than "me" and "him/her".	.81			
	I am willing to have (or develop) a strong sense of identity as a couple with my partner.	.76			
Independent Identity	I am more comfortable thinking in terms of "my" things than "our" things.	.82	1.43	23.85 (64.28)	.70
	I want to keep the plans for my life somewhat separate from my partner's plans for life.	.81			
	I do not want to have a strong identity as a couple with my partner.	.73			

Table 4. Exploratory factor analysis of product knowledge

Factor name	Items	Factor loading	Eigen value	Variance explained % (Cumulative variance %)	Cronbach's α
Self-Product Knowledge	I know much about clothes.	.87	4.94	49.35 (49.35)	.89
	I have sufficient knowledge or information that is helpful when buying clothes.	.85			
	My acquaintances frequently ask me about clothes.	.82			
	The information or knowledge I have about clothes is accurate.	.82			
	I know what to examine when I buy clothes.	.71			
Partner's Product Knowledge	My girl/boy-friend or spouse knows much about clothes.	.85	1.99	19.91 (69.26)	.88
	My girl/boy-friend or spouse has sufficient knowledge or information that is helpful when buying clothes.	.82			
	Acquaintances frequently ask my girl/boy-friend or spouse about clothes.	.82			
	The information or knowledge my girl/boy-friend or spouse has about clothes is accurate.	.80			
	My girl/boy-friend or spouse knows what to examine when they buy clothes.	.73			

items, excluding the items with communality value under .50 (Yang, 2006), were used. As a result, three factors (Fashion Interest, Pleasure, and Symbolism) were identified (Table 5). The Fashion Interest factor was related to conformity to and interest in fashion trends. The Pleasure factor was related to the extent to which individuals found pleasure in clothes shopping. The Symbolism factor is related to an individual's interest in clothing as a symbol of their social status. Cronbach's α for Involvement-Fashion Interest, Involvement-Pleasure, and Involvement-Symbolism was .89, .82, and .70, respectively.

vement-Pleasure, and Involvement-Symbolism was .89, .82, and .70, respectively.

2. Influences on Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence

Two separate regression analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses. The model also included the main effects for Perceived Self-Product Knowledge, the Partner's Product Knowledge, two Couple Identity

Table 5. Exploratory factor analysis for clothing involvement

Factor name	Items	Factor loading	Eigen value	Variance explained % (Cumulative variance %)	Cronbach's α
Fashion Interest	I am always interested in what is in fashion.	.84	6.83	42.70 (42.70)	.89
	The novelty of fashion gives me joy because it always changes.	.79			
	I often think about clothes.	.73			
	I am interested in many things related to clothes.	.73			
	I enjoy experimenting with clothes.	.66			
	I enjoy visiting clothing stores even without a plan to purchase something.	.65			
	It is important to dress according to current fashion.	.61			
Pleasure	I do not care about clothes. (-)	.71	1.55	9.70 (52.40)	.82
	I think clothes show the taste of the wearer.	.70			
	It is important to dress well.	.69			
	Good looking outfits can give me joy.	.65			
	I feel good when others compliment my outfit.	.64			
	I enjoy the fact that clothes can make people look different.	.61			
Symbolism	I think clothes show the wearer's standard of living.	.80	1.25	7.83 (60.22)	.70
	I think clothes show the wearer's social status.	.77			
	I think other people evaluate me based on the clothes I wear.	.56			

(-): Reverse coding.

factors (Joint Couple Identity and Independent Couple Identity), and the Clothing Involvement factors (Symbolism, Fashion Interest, Pleasure) as well as interaction effects with these factors and gender.

Factor scores were used in this analysis to prevent multicollinearity among independent variables. The Durbin-Watson's value was almost 2, which indicated that the problem of self-correlation was not likely to be present. The following independent variables were entered in this order: Gender, Self-Product Knowledge, Partner's Product Knowledge, the three Clothing Involvement factors (Fashion Interest, Pleasure, and Symbolism), the two Couple Identity factors (Joint Identity and Independent Identity), and the interaction terms between the preceding variables and Gender.

The results of the regression analysis on Normative Influence was reported in <Table 6>. The independent variables accounted for a total of 36% of variance ($R^2=.36$, $F=11.34$, $p<.001$). Joint Couple Identity ($\beta=.20$, $t=2.39$, $p<.05$), Involvement-Fashion Interest ($\beta=.39$, $t=3.91$, $p<.001$), Involvement-Pleasure ($\beta=-.17$,

$t=-2.14$, $p<.05$), and Involvement-Symbolism ($\beta=.24$, $t=3.29$, $p<.001$) had significant main effects on normative influence. Hence, hypothesis 4 on normative influence is supported, and hypothesis 1 on normative influence is partially supported. However, hypotheses 2 and 3 are not supported on normative influence. The higher an individual's joint couple identity, fashion interest-related clothing involvement, and symbolism-related clothing involvement are, the more likely it is that the individual will be affected by dyadic normative influence. On the other hand, as pleasure-related clothing involvement increases, an individual is less likely to be affected by dyadic normative influence. The main effect of gender was not significant and hence hypotheses 6 on normative influence is not supported.

The interaction between Involvement-Fashion Interest and Gender ($\beta=-.18$, $t=-2.09$, $p<.05$) was significant, which indicates steeper slope (β) of Fashion Interest for men than for women. In other words, gender was found to moderate the effect of fashion interest-related clothing on normative influence, and the

Table 6. Regression result of independent variables on normative influence

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	β	t	R^2	F
Normative Influence	Joint Couple Identity	.20*	2.39*	.36	11.34***
	Involvement-Fashion Interest	.39***	3.91***		
	Involvement-Pleasure	-.17*	-2.14*		
	Involvement-Symbolism	.24**	3.29**		
	Involvement-Fashion Interest * Gender ¹⁾	-.18*	-2.09*		

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

1): male coded as "0", female coded as "1".

effect of fashion interest on normative influence is stronger for men than for women.

For Informational Influence reported in <Table 7>, the independent variables accounted for a total 41% of variance ($R^2 = .41$, $F = 13.82$, $p < .001$). The main effects of Joint Couple Identity ($\beta = .19$, $t = 2.33$, $p < .05$), Partner's Product Knowledge ($\beta = .30$, $t = 3.75$, $p < .001$), Involvement-Pleasure ($\beta = .31$, $t = 4.06$, $p < .001$), and Gender ($\beta = -.13$, $t = -2.58$, $p < .001$) were found to be significant on Informational Influence. Hence, for Informational Influence, hypotheses 3 and 5 are supported, hypotheses 1 and 4 on are partially supported, and hypothesis 2 is not supported. The higher an individual's joint couple identity, product knowledge of the partner, and pleasure-related clothing involvement are, the more likely it is that the individual will be affected by dyadic informational influence. In case of the female, they are less likely to be affected by informational influence than male consumers. Besides, the interaction effects between Involvement-Fashion Interest and Gender ($\beta = .21$, $t = 2.56$, $p < .05$), and Involvement-Pleasure and Gender ($\beta = -.18$, $t = -2.45$, $p < .05$) were also significant. In other words, the effect of Fashion Interest on Informational Influence is stronger for wo-

men than for men, which is to the contrary for Normative Influence. On the other hand, the effect of Pleasure on Informational Influence is stronger for men than for women. <Table 8> summarizes the results of the study related to the hypotheses.

V. Conclusions and Implications

This study examined the factors (i.e. gender, couple identity, product knowledge, and clothing involvement as influential factors) affecting consumers' susceptibility to dyadic influences between opposite-gender couples on their apparel purchase decisions. A survey was conducted to 155 males and 166 females aged 20-50 who were living in South Korea and married or in a relationship at the time of the survey.

To summarize, the analyses tested main effects of the influence of perceived Partner's Product Knowledge, Clothing Involvement, and Couple Identity on an individual's susceptibility to normative and informational dyadic influence on apparel purchase decisions and the moderating effect of gender on susceptibility to interpersonal influences. Two multiple regression analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses using

Table 7. Regression result of independent variables on informational influence

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	β	t	R^2	F
Informational Influence	Joint Couple Identity	.19	2.33*	.41	13.82***
	Partner's Product Knowledge	.30	3.75***		
	Involvement-Pleasure	.31	4.06***		
	Gender ¹⁾	-.13	-2.58**		
	Involvement-Fashion Interest * Gender ¹⁾	.21	2.56*		
	Involvement-Pleasure * Gender ¹⁾	-.18	-2.45*		

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

1): male coded as "0", female coded as "1".

Table 8. Hypotheses test results

H	Path	Result	
		Normative Influence	Informational Influence
H1	Joint Couple Identity → Interpersonal Influence	Partially accepted	Partially accepted
H2	Self Product Knowledge → Interpersonal Influence	Rejected	Rejected
H3	Partner's Product Knowledge → Interpersonal Influence	Rejected	Accepted
H4	Clothing Involvement → Interpersonal Influence	Accepted	Partially accepted
H5	Gender → Interpersonal Influence	Rejected	Accepted
H6	Moderating effect of gender → Interpersonal Influence	Partially accepted	Partially accepted

informational influence and normative influence as the dependent variable, respectively. Hypotheses were partly supported for both dependent variables.

For normative influence, Joint Couple Identity and Clothing Involvement (Fashion Interest, Pleasure, and Symbolism) had significant effects. The interaction effect between fashion interest and gender were significant. The higher an individual's joint identity, fashion interest, and symbolism, the more likely he or she will be affected by normative influence. On the other hand, an individual with higher involvement in pleasure-aspect of clothing is less likely to be affected by normative influence. That is, the fashion followers who are interested in fashion, or the conspicuous consumers who are high in symbolism-related fashion involvement make other-oriented decisions rather than relying on their own opinion (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004; Vorauer & Kumhyr, 2001). Consumer who have higher pleasure-related fashion involvement are less susceptible to normative influence, probably because clothing involvement usually comes from unique and different styles. The interaction between gender and fashion interest is found significant, which indicates that as men become more interested in fashion, it is more likely they become susceptible to normative influence, while it may not be the case for women.

For informational influence, the Joint Couple Identity, the Partner's Product Knowledge, pleasure in Clothing Involvement, and Gender, main effects were significant. The interactions between Fashion Interest and Gender and between Pleasure and Gender were also significant. Increases in Joint Couple Identity, Partner's Product Knowledge and Pleasure raise the likelihood and the case of female that an individual will be affected by informational influence. This result supports

the findings of previous research that show that informational influence is related to the perceived knowledge of others (Brucks, 1985; Kim & Boo, 2008; O'Cass, 2004; Selnes & Grønhaug, 1986). According to the results, men are more susceptible to informational influence than women in general. However, this tendency is contingent upon their fashion interest and pleasure. Men with higher involvement in fashion interest would be more susceptible to informational influence of their partners, while pleasure is a more important indicator of informational influence for women than for men. It is interesting to note that the interaction between fashion interest and gender is the opposite for normative influence and informative influence. Fashion interest has stronger effect on normative influence, but weaker effect on informative influence for men than for women.

The results of this study assert that fashion purchase decision-making may also be considered joint decision-making. The respondents acknowledged that their purchase decisions of apparel are influenced by their spouse or significant other, and the degree of such influence is related to their couple identity, product knowledge level, and fashion involvement. Marketers may vary their strategies for consumers with different couple identities. For couples with stronger joint couple identity, for example, marketers may present advertisements that contain styling ideas and that emphasize a couple's emotional bonds. For independent couples or for consumers with high clothing involvement, advertisements that emphasize independent thinking may be more effective.

This study examined the shopping behavior from the perspectives of interpersonal influences. The dyadic influence of opposite-gender couples has not been

fully explored in previous research. This study contributes to the current understanding of consumer behavior, especially in terms of gender differences, and recommends giving consideration to the decision-making of consumers as a couple, not just as individuals.

There are some limitations to this study. First, individuals who were married or had significant other rather than couples were studied, due to the difficulties of collecting large data from couples. However, in order to study the dynamics of interpersonal influence, it is more advisable to study dyadic couples. Also, the respondents were asked to assume a situation of purchasing suits, or a particular type of clothing. A different type of clothes, or a more general purchase setting may generate different results. Also, the research was conducted in South Korea through an online survey; thus, the cultural context should be considered when generalizing the results of the study to consumers in other countries. Consumers in collectivist culture (Hofstede et al., 1991) may exhibit stronger joint couple identity rather than independent couple identity. By contrast, consumers in individualist cultures may exhibit stronger independent couple identity, and the dyadic influence between the couple may be less strong than it is reported in this study. Therefore, future research may need to include samples from diverse countries to explore the cultural differences in opposite-gender couples' dyadic influences.

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