



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jretconser

Consumer need for mobile app atmospherics and its relationships to shopper responses

Yoojung Lee*, Hye-Young Kim

Retail Merchandising, University of Minnesota, 240 McNeal Hall, 1985 Buford Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108-6136 United States

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Mobile app atmospherics
Mobile shopping intentions
Uses and gratifications

ABSTRACT

This study developed and tested a conceptual model delineating the interrelationships among hedonic shopping orientation, consumer need for mobile app atmospherics, entertainment gratification, mobile irritation, and intention to reuse mobile apps for apparel shopping. A total of 216 U.S. mobile shoppers in the age range of 18–34 participated in the study. Consumers with a higher need for mobile app atmospherics tended to experience increased entertainment gratification and reduced irritation in using mobile apps. Hedonic shopping orientation was found to be an antecedent of consumer need for mobile app atmospherics. However, hedonic shoppers' mixed emotions toward mobile apps were confirmed through the positive influences of hedonic shopping orientation on both entertainment gratification and irritation. Consumer need for mobile app atmospherics played a significant role in predicting the intention to reuse mobile apps for apparel shopping, along with entertainment gratification and mobile irritation. This study extended the research scope of mobile shopping behavior and provided implications for mobile app retailing.

1. Introduction

With the rapid increase in the number of smartphone owners, mobile apps have become a game changer in the retail world (Smith, 2016). A mobile app, or mobile application, is a software program installed on a smartphone that presents formatted information to users, based on a self-contained user interface (Charland and Leroux, 2011; Kim et al., 2014). According to Emarketer (2016), the adoption and usage of mobile apps for shopping by smartphone users has grown continuously in recent years. Specifically, in the past few years, the volume of mobile apps that allow users to shop has increased by 174% year-over-year (Khalaf, 2015).

However, it is reported that consumers use mobile apps for shopping less than what retailers have expected. Although U.S. smartphone users download multiple mobile shopping apps, only 25% of them make a purchase through the apps stored in their phones (Emarketer, 2014, 2016). Despite that the ability to make purchases directly in apps has been around for several years, a large number of mobile shopping apps fail to convert a user's exploratory visit into an actual transaction. This low conversion rate has raised an important research question regarding why smartphone users are reluctant to shop via mobile apps.

Some researchers have suggested that those failures could result from a service provider's disregard for what consumers actually expect from mobile app shopping (Hausman and Siekpe, 2009; Lim, 2013).

Indeed, current mobile app marketing largely overlooks a duality of motivations in consumer behavior, such as the distinction between performing an act to “get something” versus doing so because “you love it” (Babin et al., 1994, p.644; Batra et al., 2012, p.11; Chang et al., 2004). While using mobile apps, users may be motivated to shop not only due to instrumental needs such as competitive pricing or product assortment but also because of the environmental quality of a shopping encounter. As consumers can use mobile apps to actually make purchases, not just supplement their in-store shopping experiences (Smith, 2016), it is critical for retailers to create standalone mobile app atmospherics.

Adopting the perspective of mobile app users, this study builds on the contentions that fulfilling consumer need for retail atmospherics is important in mobile retailing, and that mobile app atmospherics should be strategically designed in order to generate desirable shopper responses. Although prior research confirms the significant effects of retail atmospherics on consumer shopping behavior (e.g., Dailey, 2002; Mehrabian and Russell, 1974), empirical investigations on mobile app atmospherics are few and remain largely unexamined. Therefore, this study attempts to expand our current understanding of mobile shoppers by providing novel insight relevant to consumer need for mobile app atmospherics. This study aims to contribute to the literature on the effectiveness of mobile app retailing.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: leex8229@umn.edu (Y. Lee), hykim@umn.edu (H.-Y. Kim).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2017.10.016>

Received 16 June 2017; Received in revised form 26 September 2017; Accepted 25 October 2017
0969-6989/ © 2017 Published by Elsevier Ltd.

2. Background

In general, retail atmospherics is defined as “the conscious designing of space to produce a positive purchase environment for consumers in order to make specific emotional effects, which may improve buying probability” (Kotler, 1973, p. 174). Such atmospheric cues as music, color, or aroma can be manipulated by retailers to enhance consumers’ emotional responses (Dailey, 2002; Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). Since the inception of the Internet, web atmospherics has emerged as an important topic in retailing research. Web atmospherics can include all cues manipulated by web designers, such as background color and pattern, image, typeface, menus, background music, interactive web applications, hyperlinks, and web borders (Eroglu et al., 2003; Dailey, 2002; Wu et al., 2008).

Ever since mobile shopping entered the retail scene (Smith, 2016), researchers have begun to focus on various aspects of this new medium. Extending Kotler’s (1973) conceptualization, one recent study conceptualized mobile app atmospherics as “the conscious designing of mobile app environments to create positive effects on users in order to increase favorable users’ responses” (Vrechopoulos et al., 2010, p. 350). While the atmospheric qualities of a mobile shopping app has emerged as a particularly interesting and important topic, the role of atmospherics in mobile shopping is still unclear. Few empirical investigations have generated viable answers to the question of whether the demonstrated effect of retail atmospherics on online shopping behaviors can be applied to mobile app shopping contexts. In an attempt to address this research void, we propose a conceptual model shown in Fig. 1.

Specifically, it is proposed that consumers with a higher need for mobile app atmospherics will be likely to experience increased entertainment gratification and reduced irritation in using mobile apps. However, the need for mobile app atmospherics will be more easily formed and activated in a particular shopper group, most clearly among hedonic shoppers seeking entertainment and fun in their shopping experiences. Thus, hedonic shopping orientation is proposed as an antecedent of consumer need for mobile app atmospherics. Given that some, not all, hedonic shoppers are mobile shoppers (Smith, 2016), our model highlights hedonic shoppers’ psychological ambivalence toward mobile apps by proposing the positive influences of hedonic shopping orientation on both entertainment gratification and irritation. In addition, it is proposed that the need for mobile app atmospherics will predict the intention to reuse mobile apps, along with entertainment gratification and mobile irritation. We examine the reuse intention construct in an apparel shopping context in that apparel products require higher levels of tactile input to make product evaluations (Citrin et al., 2003). Apparel may be considered as the least likely product to be sold via mobile apps given that consumers cannot physically evaluate fit and feel. By testing the reuse intention in this conservative manner, this study demonstrates the robustness of the proposed model.

3. Hypotheses

3.1. Hedonic shopping orientation

Shopping orientation is the way in which consumers perform their task of shopping, which may cause individual differences in shopping behavior (Sinha, 2003). Prior research suggests that consumers’ hedonic shopping orientation is a key variable explaining online shopping behavior (e.g., Handa and Gupta, 2014; Swaminathan et al., 1999). Numerous studies support the notion that hedonic shoppers are inherently attuned to retail atmospherics even when they are exposed to a technology-mediated shopping environment (e.g., Brown et al., 2003; Donthu and Garcia, 1999; Handa and Gupta, 2014). Research on online store atmospherics suggests that such design cues as the colors, borders, background patterns, typestyles and fonts, animation, music and sounds, entertainment (e.g., games or contests), and pictures other than the merchandise (e.g., for decorative purposes) can be used to increase the hedonic value of shopping (Eroglu et al., 2003). Therefore,

H1: A high level of hedonic shopping orientation will lead to a high level of consumer need for mobile app atmospherics.

Extending the notion of consumer ambivalence (Otnes et al., 1997), it is likely that hedonic consumers’ mixed emotions are formed in the mobile environment. Although they are inherently geared toward entertainment gratification enhanced by an interactive shopping environment, the technology-mediated process may still cause irritation. The shopping process and structure of mobile apps may fail to support hedonic shoppers’ need for immediate, relevant, and frictionless mobile experiences. For instance, they may get frustrated when they are asked to register without having yet received any hedonic value from the app (Gove and Mirza, 2016). They may feel irritated when they are presented with poor visual feedback or when they are exposed to heavy checkout forms and limited payment options (Gove and Mirza, 2016). Therefore, these process and structure problems can still cause hedonic shoppers’ negative experiences while shopping with a mobile app, triggering their mixed emotions of gratification and irritation. Also, recent reports indicated that 55% of consumers aged between 18 and 34 years, who are the largest percentage of smartphone users in the U.S., still expect a mobile-friendly atmosphere when they are shopping through mobile apps (Emarketer, 2015; Marketing Charts, 2015). Thus, there is still a room for improvement in mobile app atmospherics that may affect hedonic shoppers’ mobile shopping behavior. Therefore,

H2: A high level of hedonic shopping orientation will lead to a high level of entertainment gratification.

H3: A high level of hedonic shopping orientation will lead to a high level of mobile irritation.

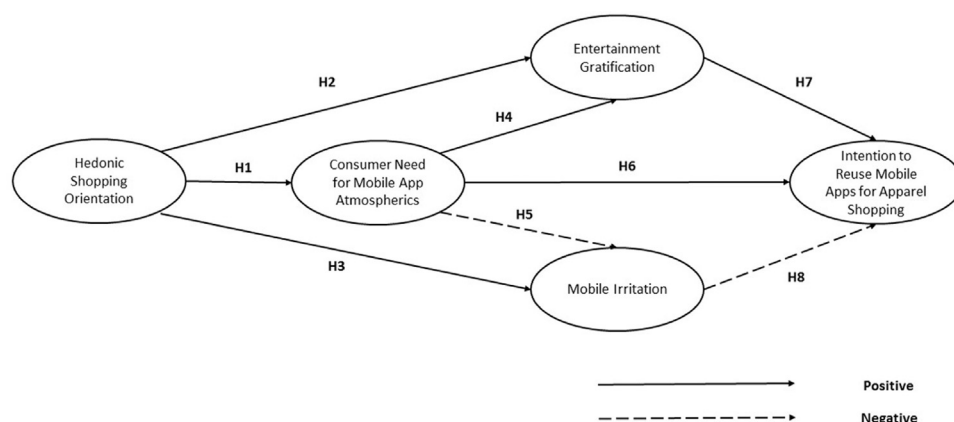


Fig. 1. Proposed model.

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات