

Implicit Personality Model and Sport Consumers' Choice Decision Tasks: Developing a Conceptual Framework

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(including questions)**

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In the past two decades, sport consumers' decision making process has received tremendous attention from scholars in the fields of sport marketing and general business marketing. Scholars examined a variety of topics including attitudes toward social services, purchase behavior, preference for tourism and hospitality, motivation, and information processing (Funk, Mahony, & Havitz, 2003; Sanchez, Callarisa, Rodriguez, & Moliner, 2006). While prior sport consumer research has examined the effects of sport consumers' psychological variables on their decision process and actual consumption behaviors, little research has been conducted to explore the effects of such fundamental constructs as consumers' inherent personality on their choice decision tasks to date. The lack of systematic research data in such areas can be a significant limitation for deeper understanding of sport consumer choice decision behavior. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to develop a conceptual model by applying and extending the implicit personality model (Dweck & Leggett, 1988) in the sport consumers' choice decision tasks.

In the field of psychology, the implicit personality model was proposed as a theoretical structure to explain the systematic meaning of attributions of human behavior across many different situations (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). According to the implicit personality model, a choice decision task is determined by diagnosing situations from the underlying personal traits and available information (Hong, Chiu, Dweck, Lin, & Dweck, 1999; Kunda & Nisbett, 1986). Mainly, implicit personality posits an inference that people differently hold beliefs about the mutability or immutability of attributes related to the self and their environment (Jain, Mathur, & Maheswaran, 2009). Therefore, the implicit personality model creates a framework for processing information, constructing representations of social events, and making inferences (Gervey, Chiu, Hong, & Dweck, 1999).

The proposed framework of the implicit personality model incorporates three existing implicit personality dimensions (i.e., cognitive, affective and motivational responses) to explain consumers' decision-making performance. Each response dimension can be identified by a dichotomous implicit personality to explain how people use information in decision processes: Entity and incremental personality. An entity personality orients a fixed attribute, while an incremental personality portrays a malleable attribute in the face of decision-making (Gervey et al., 1999). An entity theorist is likely to make a decision by focusing on available information. In contrast, an incremental theorist tends to focus on different situations and factors in explaining his or her processes of judgment.

Moreover, the implicit personality model also assumes that lay people show different cognitive, affective and motivational responses toward stimuli depending on given situations (Ben-Artzi & Mikulincer, 1996; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Cognitive attributions refer to trait inferences fostering judgments of behaviors (Dweck, Hong, & Chiu, 1995), just as affective attributions account for an appraisal of emotion from affective stimuli (Laboo & Mukhopadhyay, 2009). Motivational consequences are followed by cognitive and affective responses (Krueger, 2007); therefore, motivation for achievement emerges and generates behaviors with personal and social attributes (Dweck, 2000; Weiner, 2011). These three responses involve hierarchical processes in achieving choice decision tasks. The implicit personality model of choice decision tasks consists of the following three hierarchical responses:

Proposition: 1-1. Cognitive Responses: Lay people show their personal tendency to evaluate the information or tasks based on their traits (Mukhopadhyay & Yeung, 2010)

Proposition 1-2. Affective Responses: The effect of affective stimuli on expected behavior depends on affective-regulatory attributes with periodical properties. These attributes determine whether or not people act to improve their mood (Bagozzi, 1992; Labroo & Mukhopadhyay, 2009)

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Proposition 1-3. Motivational Responses: Motivation attributes in addition to cognitive and affective responses identify actual behaviors that are valued and differently sought out by individuals (Dweck & Leggett, 1988).

As a behavioral process, decision making performance is an ongoing process that requires complex integration of multiple sources of information (Wood & Bandura, 1989). To explain consumption behavior, the implicit personality model suggests two different domains: intrapersonal and interpersonal contexts. In intrapersonal contexts, the implicit personality model is used to judge or predict self-status (Labroo & Mukhopahyay, 2009). On the other hand, in the interpersonal domain, the model provides insight into how people interpret faced information in decision making (Levy, Stroessner, & Dweck, 1998).

In the sport product consumption, two domains in choice decision tasks are appropriate: self-regulatory systems and information processing. Self-regulatory systems provide the magnitude of individual consumption behaviors such as indulgent or impulsive purchasing (Mukhopadhyay & Johar, 2005); meanwhile, information-processes show how people deal with information in their decision making performance (Hong, 1994). To test the implicit personality model and decision-making performance on sport products, this study suggests next three propositions as follows:

Proposition 2-1. A self-regulatory system varies according to implicit personalities. Higher regulation, which is more related to long-term interest, arises more when people need to improve their current situation (i.e., traits, mood)

Proposition 2-2. People use different information processes according to implicit personalities. Implicit personality also reflects different information processes. Entity personality consumers tend to use central information, while incremental personality consumers use situational information.

Proposition 2-3. Since attitude change is influenced by cognitive and affective responses, it has no impact on motivational responses.

The proposed framework provides comprehensive lens that helps fully understand sport consumers' choice decision process. Once empirically tested, this framework will provide theoretical contribution to the sport marketing fields by offering a clear explanation of sport consumers' decision-making performance. In the sport industry, this systematic information can be used to develop market segment. Additionally, this information enables marketers to develop customized products and services to their target customers. Ultimately, the finding will offer insight into development of effective market and marketing strategies based on consumers' psychological profiles.