Antecedent Configurations of the Sport Fashion Consumption Involvement

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This study attempts to examine the antecedents of sport fashion consumption involvement, which include three types of self-sport relationships in terms of participation, lifestyle, and spectator sports. The involvement in the self-sport relationships will be transferred to sport fashion consumption involvement.

As a symbolic innovation, fashion reflects a society, its culture, and how people define themselves. Although people tend to equate fashion narrowly with only characteristics of individuals’ appearance such as clothing, accessories, hair styling, and cosmetics (Jackson & Shaw, 2001; Solomon & Rabolt, 2009), fashion influences all types of cultural phenomena (Solomon & Rabolt, 2009) such as the clothing we wear, the sport in which we participate, the player we support, the lifestyle we like to pursue, and how we spend our leisure time (Yurchisin & Johnson, 2010). Fashion is about how the inner you is translated to the outside world. Many people cannot play this sport but love the sport dress in the style.

People often buy products not for what they do in terms of utilitarian functions, but for what they mean in terms of social, symbolic, and psychological meanings (Jackson & Shaw, 2001; Solomon & Rabolt, 2009). Consumers may choose a brand or an activity that has an image consistent with their underlying needs and values, making a lifestyle statement about the type of person they want to be. The product, the brand, the consumption, or the activity helps establish the customer’s identity. The consumption choice or the participation behavior places an individual into a social role, which helps demonstrate who s/he is (Solomon & Rabolt, 2009). The fashion consumption has become a means for individuals to create identities, express themselves, and project an image of how they see themselves and would like to be seen (Evans, 1989; Jackson & Shaw, 2001). The external objects considered a part of oneself make up the extended self. For example, an attachment to a sport team allows fans to feel like they are rooted in their larger social environment (Solomon & Rabolt, 2009).

The interaction between an object and an individual can be viewed in the level of involvement. High fashion involvement implies greater relevance to self (O’Cass, 2000, 2004). Within the context of sport fashion consumption, the construct of involvement clarifies specific meanings of sport fashion products, serves as the heart of the consumer-fashion merchandise relationships, and implies the extent to which the consumer views the fashion consumption activity as a central part of their life, a meaningful and engaging activity in their life (O’Cass, 2000, 2004).

From the perspective of the self-concept or the expression of self, the self-sport relationships (Gau, 2011) in terms of participation, lifestyle, and spectatorship are identified as antecedents to sport fashion consumption involvement. Sport participants not only buy sport merchandise but also pursue sport fashion to express themselves. If individuals with a level of commitment participate in their sports, they very likely purchase special sport merchandise for themselves (Chae, Black, & Heitmeyer, 2006).

Compared to serious sport participants, sports lifestyle enthusiasts place less importance on playing specific sports, but want to be associated with a sporting image (CBI Market Information Database, 2011). These sports lifestyle enthusiasts live their lives with information about sports, positive attitudes toward sports, and experiences in various sport activities. Sports lifestyle enthusiasts not only buy sport merchandise to project their sport lifestyle image, but also consume sport fashion.

From the spectator sport perspective, people may like a team or a sport star and the team or the player endorses a brand or product. This may be the reason that fans involve in the sport fashion. If these sport fans who are involved in a team or player acquire vicarious achievement by supporting the team or player, they are likely involved in sport fashion. That is, sport fans not only buy endorsed sport merchandise or their team’s merchandise to be associated with their favorite player or team, but also pursue sport fashion to express themselves.
The scale of self-sport participation (SSP) has three items asking the extent to which respondents agree that playing sport is an important, meaningful, and valuable activity for them. The scale of self-sport spectatorship (SSS) has three items asking the extent to which respondents agree that watching sport is an important, meaningful, and valuable activity for them (Gau, 2011; Gau & Woodside, 2011). The scale of self-sport lifestyle (SSL) has four items: I do exercise at least three times every week; Engaging in physical activity is one of my major leisure activities; I enjoy doing active exercise; I think it is a good lifestyle to participate in sports frequently (Gau & Chang, 2012; Yang, Cheng, & Yu, 2012). The scale of sport fashion consumption involvement (SFCI) has three items asking the extent to which respondents agree that sport fashion merchandise means a lot to them, is a significant part of their life, and is a central part of their life (O’Cass, 2004). All items use a seven-point Likert scales from “1 strongly disagree” to “7 strongly agree.” Questionnaires were distributed in a sport shopping area in central Taiwan. In total we collected 150 valid questionnaires. The reliabilities of the scale were between 0.96 and 0.84.

Analysis of Pearson correlation coefficients showed that the coefficients among SSP, SSL, and SSS were between 0.59 and 0.67; the coefficients between SSP and SFCI, between SSL and SFCI, between SSS and SFCI were 0.26, 0.30, and 0.41. Regression analysis showed that 16% variance of SFCI was explained by SSP, SSL and SSS, but only the regression coefficient of SSS was significant. This implied that SSS could be a mediator for the relationships between SSP and SFCI, and between SSL and SFCI. In other words, sport fashion consumption involvement is more directly related to spectator sports, but indirectly related to sport participation and sport lifestyle. With this understanding and empirical evidence, sport managers may be able to apply fashion promotion to attract sport merchandise customers through spectator sports directly and sport participation and sport lifestyle indirectly.