Who is using apparel tablet catalogs? Intention and behavior of fashion and IT innovators

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Purpose. This study aimed to uncover the potential characteristics of apparel tablet catalog application (TCA) users. The popularity of mobile devices has resulted in the proliferation of many additional new retailing platforms. The tablet catalog is one of the new outgrowths in the field of e-commerce and catalog shopping. It allows consumers to make transactions while browsing catalog pages within the application on mobile devices. Given the relative infancy of TCAs, however, there is a desire to investigate the relation between the users and their adoption intention and behavior. The results from this study provide a deeper understanding of consumers who adopt TCAs, which greatly benefits TCA marketers looking to formulate more effective marketing strategies.

Literature Review and Hypotheses. Drawing upon the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), a model was developed with two purposes: (1) to explain why certain consumers are more likely to adopt and use TCAs; (2) conduct a *post hoc* analysis to explore whether adopting TCAs would lead consumers to unsubscribe from print catalogs. While it is known that many other factors, such as application design and marketing techniques, may influence TCA adoption, this study emphasized the configuration among Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC), intention, and behavior in TPB. Ajzen (1991) indicated that PBC is a general concept, and its form varies across situations. Based on a series review of relevant literatures, four variables were identified as isomorphic forms with PBC in the current context. The variables are device usage, online shopping experience, fashion innovativeness, and information technology (IT) innovativeness. Empirical studies showed that prior relevant product knowledge and experience are positively related to the adoption of new technologies (Citrin, Sprott, Silverman, & Stem, 2000; Lassar, Manolis, & Lassar, 2005). In addition, many researchers indicated that domain-specific innovativeness is a strong determinant of adoption intention and behavior regarding new product/technology (Agarwal & Prasad, 1998; Goldsmith & Hofcker, 1991). Thus, we proposed: (H_1) Online shopping experience is positively related to consumers' intention (a) / actual behavior (b) of adopting TCAs; (H_2) Device usage is positively related to consumers' intention (a) / actual behavior (b) of adopting TCAs; (H_3) Fashion innovativeness is positively related to consumers' intention (a) / actual behavior (b) of adopting TCAs; (H_4) IT innovativeness is positively related to consumers' intention (a) / actual behavior (b) of adopting TCAs; (H_5) Consumers' intentions of adopting TCAs is positively related to consumers' actual behavior to adopt TCAs.

Method. A self-administered questionnaire was developed and pretested to check the reliability and validity of the adopted/modified scales. The Cronbach's α for fashion and IT innovativeness was 0.94 and 0.87 respectively in the pretest. Other predictors were single-item indicators. Device usage was measured by asking respondents how many hours they spent per day on their tablet device. Online shopping frequency was measured for online shopping experience and coded as a categorical variable. It is noteworthy that the actual behavior was measured by summating the scores of four items (Yes=1; No=0), "Do you have any (1) apparel retailers'

TCAs; (2) catalog aggregators' apps?" "Have you made any purchases through (3) apparel retailers' TCAs; (4) catalog aggregators' apps?" A total of 217 usable responses from U.S. tablet computer users aged 18 and older were collected through a national online consumer panel. Fifty-two percent of respondents were male. On average, respondents were 38 years of age. Among the respondents, 56 percent were iPad users and 54 percent had at least one apparel retailer's TCA downloaded on their tablet device. A Confirmative Factor Analysis was conducted to test the measurement model and the results suggested a fairly good model fit, χ^2 ($_{df=19}$) = 38.28, p <0.01, CFI=.99, TLI=.98, RMSEA=.07, SRMR= .03. The results of the SEM model, χ^2 ($_{df=49}$) = 75.21, p<.01, CFI = 0.99, TLI = .98, RMSEA = 0.05, SRMR = 0.03, demonstrated an excellent model fit for hypotheses testing. Thus, no modification indices were used to respecify the model.

Findings. The results showed H_1, H_{2b}, H_{3a}, H_{4a}, and H_5 were supported. The significant standardized coefficients of the proposed model paths are provided in Figure1. The result of the *post hoc* analysis showed that, despite the direct path coefficient, results failed to support that actual TCA adoption behavior influences the intention to unsubscribe from print catalogs, however, the online shopping experience has a significant total effect (β=.17, p<.05) on the intention to unsubscribe from print catalogs.

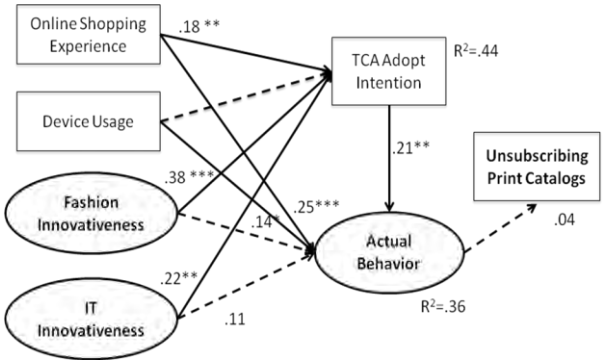

Figure 1. The proposed model

Discussion and Implication. The findings indicated that consumers with higher innovativeness levels in fashion and IT showed higher tendencies of adoption intention. Marketers should identify these consumers because they are potential early adopters who contribute to the initial dissemination of TCAs to later adopters. Moreover, consumers with more online shopping experiences are more likely to adopt/use TCAs. This implies that consumers see TCAs more as a shopping tool than as an information medium. As a result, marketers should ensure that they provide an unhindered and trustworthy transaction process for the shoppers. Last, from the sustainability standpoint towards the environment, further research is required to understand why consumers do not unsubscribe from print catalogs and what values/benefits a print catalog exhibits to consumers.

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