



Exploring Factors Influencing Perceived Quality on Sportswear Fabric

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*Introduction:* We examine how hedonic and utilitarian motivations have impact on emotions, and in turn, influence perceived quality from Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) perspectives. Previous studies have been conducted to investigate the effects of different factors on quality of fabrics by considering product related attributes (such as fabric types, touch feelings, price, etc.) and individual characteristics (such as personality) (McCann et al., 2005). They have counted the functional aspects of fabrics but have not convincingly answered how psychological attributes influence consumers' perceptions about the quality of fabrics; practitioners need this vital information to better understand and conduct business around how consumers formulate their perceptions. For example, our findings can guide emotional design in sportswear fabrics (Hassenzahl, 2006). Also, we develop a more sophisticated theory that investigates what psychological constructs need to be considered. We, therefore, provide initial contributions that are both relevant to practitioners and rigorous to researchers.

*Literature Review and Hypotheses Development:* Motivations are important antecedents in formulating individuals' perceptions. Various studies rely on two different types of motivations in different contexts: hedonic and utilitarian motivations. Hedonic motivations refer to entertainment (e.g., fun and pleasure) (Song et al., 2014) whereas utilitarian motivations relates to functional aspects, such as usefulness (Jones et al., 2006). In other words, hedonic motivations are more subjective, and utilitarian motivations are more rational related (Engel et al., 2008). In this study, we argue that these motivations are antecedents of consumers' emotions. Emotion is an affective response to the perception of the environment or the situations (Tesser & Collins, 1988). Consumers can have either positive or negative emotions that can be the cue or tendency to cope with cognitive action. We employ the Pleasure-Arousal-Dominance (PAD) state model for studying emotions for sportswear consumers (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Also, we consider another type of response, called touch feelings, that consists of softness, hardness, thinness, and smoothness, all of which were used in this study (Picard et al., 2013). Additionally, perceived quality as our dependent construct is one of the important components in consumers' decision to buy products (Eckman et al., 1990). Perceived quality can be subjective and determined by the individual's opinion about an object (Holbrook & Corfman, 1985). As perceived quality can be improved based on perceptions, it is important to understand what influences perceived quality. Hence, perceived emotions reinforced by motivations and perceived touch feelings have an impact on perceived quality of sportswear fabrics. Therefore:

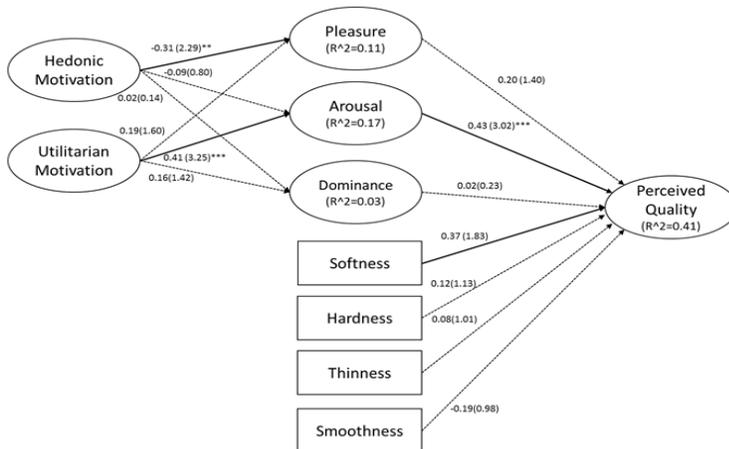
*H1: Hedonic and utilitarian motivations will affect emotions.*

*H2: Emotions will influence the perceived quality of the sportswear fabric.*

*H3: Touch feelings will influence the perceived quality of the sportswear fabric.*

*Methodology and Results:* This study employed a quantitative experimental design. A convenience sample was used and the total of 61 data was collected for preliminary data

analysis. Participants touched the sportswear fabric and answered survey questions. The average age of the participants was 21 and most of them were female (88.5%). Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to test hypotheses (Hair et al., 2014).



Based on the results, H1, H2, and H3 were partially supported. For H1, hedonic motivation negatively influenced pleasure and utilitarian motivation positively influenced arousal. For H2, arousal had a positive effect on perceived quality of the sportswear fabric. For H3, softness had a positive effect on perceived quality of the sportswear fabric.

**Conclusion and Implications:** We found that consumers' personal characteristics affected the emotions, and in turn, influenced perceived quality using the preliminary data analysis. Specifically, utilitarian motivation became a salient factor in determining consumers' emotions and perceived quality for the sportswear fabric. Among the first-hand feelings, softness was the most important in enhancing perceived quality. Therefore, perceived quality needs to be examined with various personal and emotional factors. Our findings emphasize the importance of personal and psychological factors when developing sportswear fabrics rather than only focusing on functional roles. This study has a limitation of sample, and a future study with different and more samples will be needed.

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