

A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ON THE MOTIVES OF PURCHASING HISTORICAL STORYTELLING PRODUCTS

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Abstract— The purpose of this study is to examine and categorize the motives of purchasing products built on historical storytelling in terms of socially responsible consumption. For this purpose, in-depth interviews were conducted with female college students in their 20s who have purchased products built on historical storytelling stimulated consumers' purchase intention were done. Participants perceived that product or brand built on historical storytelling and social responsibility has outstanding market competitiveness. They also stated that they are more encouraged to purchase because they feel the way that they are contributing to society by buying products and historical storytelling it contains. Through this study, it was able to find out the perception of socially responsible consumption based on history which reflects the changed social trend. It is also expected to function as empirical basis of product development and corporate marketing based on storytelling.

Keywords— Historical Storytelling, Socially Responsible Consumption, Storytelling, Purchase Motive, Phenomenological Study, Qualitative Research

1. INTRODUCTION

In consumer capitalism society, political consumerism has expanded by using consumption as a method to change market and society into one's desired way [1]. With these circumstances, socially responsible consumption is served as a medium to intervene in modern society's structural problem and to perform a right power in the market [1]. This led consumers to recognize 'consumer's global social responsibility' instead of solely considering individual interest [1].

Recently in Korea, political consumption in historical aspect is appeared in various ways [2]. For instance, Japanese market share in Korea has dramatically decreased due to political antipathy caused by historical conflict in the past [2]. A Korean college startup club 'ZOEN' has reached \$1,088,202 which is 879% of the original targeted sales in about 20 days by crowdfunding sweatshirt designed with the motive of 264(lee yuk sa – a Korean independent activist and a writer who expressed resistance of Korea against Japanese colonial rule) [3]. MARYMOND, a social responsibility has also showed growth rate of 200% every year since 2015 by selling products with pressed

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flower design created by comfort women [4]. This means that boycott or purchase built on history might have meaningful impact on the actual consumption scale.

Due to the behavior change of socially responsible consumption, empirical and probe study about this topic seemed to be necessary. However, Korean studies about socially responsible consumption tend to be focused on consumer boycott such as consumer ethnocentrism and unwillingness to buy foreign products [15] and influences of antecedents to consumers' Japanese brand boycott attitude and intention [2]. Studies of socially responsible consumption by purchasing historical products other than boycotts have been seldom found. Thus, this study is conducted to understand consumers' response and purchasing motive toward products that has branding or design related to historical storytelling empirically. Criteria of Miller(2009)'s social-cognitive model of social justice interest and commitment was applied in an academic point of view. Based on the fact that the ultimate purpose of socially responsible consumption is to achieve social justice, social-cognitive model of social justice interest and commitment would serve as the rationale and the major basis of initial interview guideline.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Subsections were chosen determining its importance as a basis of this study. Especially, precedent researches that are highly related to the purchase motive of consumers and methods to examine their responses are included.

2.1. SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION

The concept of socially responsible consumption has appeared when 'social consciousness' was presented as a component of market segmentation realizing that the numbers of consumers who are interested in social and environmental issues are increasing [5]. The idea of socially responsible consumption has expanded from eco-friendly consumption to conscious choice based on personal and moral conviction including organized movement like boycott, consumption activities by the way of purchasing or not purchasing, sharing opinions through market research [6]. Due to the fact that historical storytelling products are made for the aim of enhancing historical significance, research about interrelation between consumption of social(historical) products and social responsibility might be relevant.

2.2. PRODUCT STORYTELLING

Storytelling is one of the brand communication methods using make-believe story related to the product for advertising or sales promotion [7]. This creates rapport between consumer and product or brand by providing certain meaning or personal stories about the commodity [7]. Many marketers are focusing on storytelling as a method to deliver corporate values [8] because including stories in a brand or a product encourages consumers' attention, interest, strengthens brand identity and differentiation and maintains positive relationship with consumer [9]. By means of advanced researches, effective storytelling of a product or a brand seems to have positive influence on consumer's purchase motive. Therefore, this study included storytelling as a major factor of purchase motive.

2.3. SOCIAL-COGNITIVE MODEL OF SOCIAL JUSTICE INTEREST AND COMMITMENT

Based on social cognitive theory that insists human behavior as a result of complex interplay among cognitive, behavioral and environmental factors, social support and barriers.

Major components of this model are equivalent to [Figure 1] and main contents are as follows [11]: Social justice efficacy is a conviction about one's perceived ability about practicing social justice activities. Higher social justice efficacy means higher possibility of having interest in or committing social justice activities. Social justice outcome expectation is an expectation of positive consequences by social justice activities. The more one trust that the outcome will be successful, the interest and commitment of social justice activities will increase. Social justice interest means preference or indifference of social justice activities. Social justice commitment stands for putting planned social justice activities into action. Lastly, social justice social supports and barriers are known as contextual factors that lead to promotion or hindrance of social justice activities.

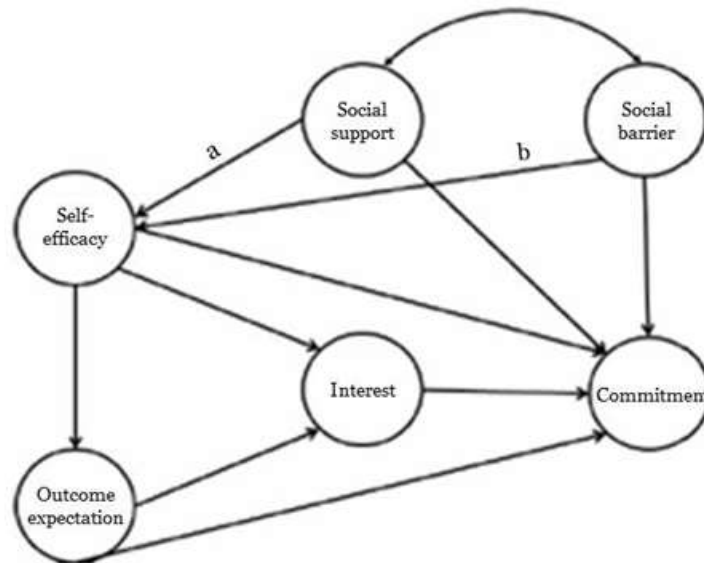


Fig. 1 Social-Cognitive Model of Social Justice Interest and Commitment: for Korean College Students: Adapted from [12]

2.4. PHENOMENOLOGY METHODOLOGY

Giorgi's phenomenology methodology, a well-known data analysis method of phenomenological study, focuses on understanding the underlying meaning of live experience based on interviewee's statement [13]. Psychiatric nursing study was conducted by Koivisto, Janhonen and Va'isa'nen applying Giorgi's method [16] as well as phenomenological study of suicide trials in elders which was conducted by Im and Kim [17]. Procedures are as follows:

First, identify natural meaning unit of participant's statement as it is [13].

Second, find out a theme that implies participant's statement and experience [13].

Third, identify focal meaning of the participant's experience that is relevant to participant by concretizing theme based on participant's statement [13].

Fourth, create a situated structural description which is the meaning of identified experience in a perspective of participants by integrating focal meaning [13].

Fifth, create a general structural description which is the meaning of identified experience in a perspective of participants through situated structural description [13].

3. METHOD

3.1. SURVEY

An in-depth interview was conducted on female consumers in their 20s who had purchased historical storytelling products. The objects were chosen because of the fact that ‘meaning out’ consumption is increasing among 20s in order to show their pursuit by consumption [14] and most of the historical storytelling brands are taking major steps to fight for woman’s right such as donating to comfort women [3]. Notice with detailed information of the study and participant qualification was given through social networking service. 6 voluntary participants were chosen by simple random sampling and participants’ characteristics are shown as Table I.

Table I. Characteristics of Participants

	Gender	Age	The number of purchase	Purchased brand	Purchased product
A	Female	22	4	Heeum, Marymond, Sonyeosang	Bracelet, Phonecase, Eco-bag, Badge
B	Female	23	4	ZOEN, Marymond, Heeum	Bracelet, Phonecase, Sweatshirt, Badge
C	Female	24	8	Marymond, Heeum	Laptop case, Sweatshirt, Phonecase, Card holder, Eco-bag, Bracelet, Phonecase
D	Female	23	5	Marymond, Heeum	Eco-bag, Phonecase, Apparel, Bracelet
E	Female	23	8	Marymond, Heeum	Bracelet, Eco-bag, Diary, Badge
F	Female	22	2	Marymond	Badge

3.2. MEASUREMENT

In-depth study was proceeded to research personal and inherent drive of consumers, as well as their purchase condition and cognition of historical storytelling product. Interviews were conducted in a café or E university in Seodaemun-gu, Seoul, Korea.

The rest of the interview was organized in semi-structured questions in order to let participants express their thoughts freely by changing the order of questions that fits the flow of the conversation. The purpose of the study was delivered to the participant beforehand asking whether to participate or not for research ethics. Advance information about confidentiality and anonymity of participant’s personal information and deep experience was also informed. Moreover, participants were told that they could interrupt the interview if wanted in order to prevent personal bias [18]. Interview lasted about 30 minutes each for two weeks from November 12th, 2019. All conversation was recorded with prior consent and the content of the record was transcribed in a verbatim form. Interview began by explaining the concept of ‘historical storytelling product’ with picture examples. Following interview was formed with open and thoughtful questions about interrelations between historical storytelling products and socially responsible consumption.

4. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This study was aimed to draw empirical conclusions on the basis of participants’ detailed statement and experience by using Giorgi’s phenomenological methodology. Two important issues were stand out. First, how purchase experience of historical storytelling presents the appearance of socially responsible consumption and second, how consumers recognize historical storytelling that is applied to a particular product. Meaningful parts of the interview were repeatedly listened to, trying semantic analysis

using ‘analysis model’ of Social-cognitive Model of Social Justice Interest and Commitment.

By in-depth interview, participants’ purchases were categorized by the components of Miller’s Social-cognitive Model of Social Justice Interest and Commitment and the results are shown as Table II. The results of this study were as follows: the participants were classified into two categories, socially responsible consumption and Product storytelling. First, socially responsible consumption was classified as five topics and 8 Sub-topics. And product storytelling was classified as two Topics of Product and Brand, and could be classified into three Sub-topics.

Table II. Results of this Study

Category	Topic	Sub-topic	Meaning	
Socially responsible consumption	Social justice interest	Discovery	Interest on Korean history Group purchase in secondary school Favorite celebrity’s use of the product Banner ads	
	Social justice commitment	Purchase experience	Repeated purchase Voluntary funding experience	
		Purchase plan	Purchase plan based on design and practicality	
	Social justice self-efficacy	Purchasing motive	Charity and patronage Unique brand value	
		Emotions after purchase	Pleased with oneself Helping others Advanced interest and confidence historical awareness Self-consciousness	
	Social justice outcome expectation	Personal outcome expectation	Improved design and practicality	
		Social outcome expectation	Improved historical awareness Widespread empathy on painful history Increased help for the disadvantaged Positive influences through SNS	
	Social support	Social response	Increased purchase of the product by promoting sympathy of others Negative response from others which makes one give up purchasing the product	
	Product storytelling	Product	Cognition of historical storytelling product	Social responsibility Outstanding market competitiveness
		Brand	Limitation of historical storytelling brand	Morality and transparency of socially responsible corporate Design limitations
Pursuit of historical storytelling brand			Clear brand storytelling and its continuance CSR(Corporate Social Responsibility)	

5. CONCLUSION

Participants perceived that product or brand built on historical storytelling and social responsibility has outstanding market competitiveness. They also stated that they are more encouraged to purchase because they feel that they are contributing to society by buying products and historical storytelling it contains. However, participants referred to the limitation of transparency and morality that is necessary to the brands that stand on social contribution. Accordingly, they stressed that these brands should disclose details

of donation and corporate philanthropy and continue such activities. Moreover, taking undue advantage of historical figure or event was opposed. Thus, consumers expected historical storytelling brand to sustain clear brand storytelling and fulfill responsibility as social enterprise.

This study has limitations that research was conducted on only female with few participants. However, it seems to have positive meaning of study that gives insights through in-depth interview. Since the study was about social phenomenon of consumption in particular, it is thought that have academic significance and it looked into not only purchase motive of the product itself but also extended its range to understand the meaning of storytelling that product or brand has. Additional research is expected based on this study and hope further research will be conducted on larger number of male/female participants with similar ratio.

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