

THE EFFECT OF FITNESS INNOVATIVENESS ON HEDONIC VALUE AND REVISIT INTENTION

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INTRODUCTION

Health club industry has been intensively expanded around the world. Data to date shows that more than 150,000 health clubs with 140 million members and a worth of USD\$ 77.5 billion were estimated (Cracknell, 2015). However, the rise of consumer power in the health club industry reinforced the management to focus on and elevate consumer service to meet the high expectation of their consumers (Robinson, 1998). In such a highly competitive service industry, continual delivery of new experiences to meet consumer's novelty need is a prerequisite for survival and success (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

Service firms often engage in identifying consumers with different innovative behaviors as an approach to differentiation when they seek to compete and/or attract new market segments (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000). This is particularly the case with 'facility-driven' leisure services such as fitness centers (Turley & Fugate, 1992). Previous study (Kim & Kim, 1995) confirms innovate consumers are more likely to continue buying the products/services, engage in using the services in various ways that increase their hedonic or utilitarian value. As well, offering innovative products/services can enhance the intention of consumer re-patronage (Lafferty, Goldsmith, & Hult, 2004; Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Understanding consumer innovativeness of fitness consumers can help managers design customized programs aiming at extending club loyalty of every customer.

Innovativeness is the degree to which an individual or other unit of adoption is relatively

earlier in adopting new ideas than other members of a social system (Rogers, 2003, p252). Midgley and Dowling (1978) defined innate innovativeness as "the degree to which an individual makes innovation decisions independently of the communicated experience of others" (p. 235). This definition was later termed as "consumption of newness", it is "the tendency to buy new product more often and more quickly than other people" (Roehrich, 2004, p. 671). Similarly, Goldsmith and Hofacker (1991) defined DSI (Domain Specific Innovativeness) as "the tendency to learn about and adopt innovations within a specific domain of interest" (p. 211). Exploratory buying behavior stimulates the senses (Baumgartner & Steenkamp, 1996). However, current studies of DSI consumer innovativeness and shopping value paid less attention to a possible moderating role of service use frequency. In addition, these studies ignore the empirical evidence of particularly a "facility-driven" services setting. Our study explores DSI consumer innovativeness in conjunction with his/her enduring service usage and emotional response toward a fitness center. A further understanding of these relationships can provide the managers with insights into fitness goer's behavior and the formation of segmentation strategy.

Consumer Innovativeness and Hedonic Value
Consumer's feelings of excitement and gratification can be generated by finding a variety of items (Kahn and Isen, 1993) and by encountering rare, novel, and innovative items (Roehm Jr., and Roehm, 2005). Product diversity not only helps variety seekers to reduce time

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costs and increase shopping efficiency, but also provides hedonic shopping value. Variety seeking buying results in the perception of hedonic shopping value in online auctions (Chang, 2002). Other researches support that product variety provides consumers with pleasant stimulation and novelty leading to excitement and enjoyment in shopping (Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1995; Roehm Jr., and Roehm, 2005). Therefore, we posit that in a facility-driven service setting such as fitness centers, innovative consumers tend to explore the different uses of service equipment. This internal drive for exploration could lead them to a state of excitement and enjoyment. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H1: Consumer innovativeness has a positive impact on hedonic value.

Hedonic Value and Revisit Intention

Hightower (2002) found that positive affect (e.g. happiness, enjoy, satisfaction, and delight) positively mediated the relationship between sport spectators' perception of servicescape and behavior intention. Additionally, Stoel (2004) found that hedonic shopping value mediated the relationship between consumers' satisfaction of mall attributes (e.g. cleanliness, spaciousness, and atmosphere) and re-patronage intention. However, these previous studies have paid little attention to exploring the interaction effect of consumer innovativeness on the perception of hedonic value that consequently affects customers' revisit intention in facility-driven service settings, such as a fitness center. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

H2: Hedonic value positively affects revisit intention.

MEASUREMENT AND SURVEY

This study adopted domain-specific innovativeness (DSI) scale from Goldsmith and Hofacker (1991) to measure consumer innovativeness. Roehrich (2004) found DSI scale is a high predictive validity scale among various innovativeness scales for measuring consumer innovativeness.

Hedonic value has been applied successfully to investigate consumers' utilitarian and hedonic feelings (e.g. practical and happy) toward

shopping (Stoel et al., 2004; Babin & Attaway, 2000). This study adapted the hedonic scale to explore the customer emotional value in the fitness center. The items utilized for measuring hedonic value are pleasure, attractiveness, exciting, interest and fun.

Two revisit intention items - "I want to visit again" and "this fitness center is my first choice" from Sherman et al. (1997) was designed for measuring revisit intention.

We adopted active survey method to collect data. Survey respondents were invited to fill out a questionnaire after they finished workout and were leaving the fitness center. One of largest sport centers in Taipei was selected for data distribution. There were 217 respondents in total participated the survey. Over half of the respondents (53%) were female and 47% were male. The majority of the respondents were aged between 25-34 years (47.5%). A large number of the customer (48.4%) spent one to two hours for each visit. Most customers (60%) visits the center more than or equal to twice. They strongly agree the importance of revisit (46.1%).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The path coefficient of fitness innovativeness and consumer's hedonic value ($\beta=0.388$, $t=3.026$, $p<0.01$) indicates that the adoption innovativeness exhibits a positive, significant effect on hedonic value, lending support to H1. This result consistent with the findings of Sharma (2006), consumer's desire for variety has been associated with feeling-based decision making and hedonic shopping motivation. The service equipment in variety uses leading to the innovation seekers evaluated the development of high hedonic value.

Furthermore, the path coefficient of consumer hedonic value and revisit intention ($\beta=0.156$, $t=8.446$, $p<0.01$) demonstrates that the consumer hedonic value exhibits a positive and significant effect on the revisit intention, lending support to H2. This result is broadly consistent with the findings of previous investigation (e.g., Babin & Attaway, 2000; Hightower, 2002; Stoel, 2004). It has confirmed that revisit intention can be mediated by hedonic value. Past research (Hightower, 2002; Pine & Gilmore, 1999) has suggested that using the physical equipment of

leisure related services frequently and intensely a consumer uses a product, the more quickly he or she will feel satisfied because of hedonic value. Stoel (2004) also concluded that hedonic shopping value mediated the relationship between consumers' perception of mall attributes and re-patronage intention. Thus, this study extends the past findings of this kind of research to the context of facility-driven service settings.

CONCLUSION

Previous researchers (Hightower, 2002; Pin & Gilmore, 1999, 1998) have suggested that the physical equipment of services ought to be refreshed periodically in order to improve the marketing performance of leisure services. However, not much has been reported about repeat fitness center visitors' development of hedonic shopping value due to the effect of their fitness innovativeness on hedonic value and revisit intention. Fitness owners and operators can refine their market positioning by understanding customer perceptions of the research constructs (fitness innovativeness, hedonic value and repurchase intention). Based on these constructs, marketing initiatives can be better directed to improving market performance. Adopting Pine and Gilmore's (1999) suggestion that leisure-related service need to refresh their consumer's experience frequently, service innovation or renewed service could be one of the most powerful strategies. This study suggests that fitness center providers should use the questionnaire developed in this study to assess consumers' innovativeness personality and their use rate so as to understand different segments of customers and develop communication strategies that the managers employ to promote the various usage of their service equipment. Thus, before renewing their service equipment, frequent visitors can evoke positive feelings from multiple usages. To encourage such usage behaviors, their study suggests that disseminating usage information and communicating the perceived benefits of additional services in details are very important.

Future studies could refer to concept of adoption innovativeness, such as use innovativeness, vicarious innovativeness and adoption innovativeness to develop a future

research agenda of cross-sectional studies. Each type of adoption innovativeness may play different roles in effectively service usage and use frequently and influence various consumer shopping value, for instance, utilitarian value and hedonic value.

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